Pursuing the International Relations of Islam: A critique of IR theory

Faiz Ahmed Sheikh

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that the appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

This thesis aims to develop an embryonic theory of Islamic international relations (IR). Rather than attempt to fully articulate an Islamic concept of IR, a task that will be argued to be unachievable, the thesis will instead use the case of Islamic IR, loosely defined, to challenge certain central concepts in IR that are seen as immutable. In this way, the thesis is using the case of Islam as an example of a tradition on the margins of IR, to critique the 'centre'. The research will therefore pursue dual themes: 1) Exploring what an Islamic construction of IR looks like and 2) Analysing the impediments that an Islamic IR faces when interacting with other, more dominant paradigms and concepts in the discipline.

The above goals are explored by using a two stage analysis. In the first stage, the thesis examines the dominant concepts in IR which prevent the articulation of religious politics generally and Islamic politics specifically, in the international sphere. The thesis will argue that these otherwise immutable IR concepts are secularism in the discipline and the continuing centrality of the state. The thesis frustrates the immutability of these concepts given the specific cultural and religious setting of their genesis. After the first stage of this analysis the thesis will have created a space in which alternative theories, which do not sit well with secularism or the state, can develop; in the Islamic example this is represented by the concept of the *umma* (community of Muslims). In the second stage of analysis the thesis will construct, as much as is possible, a notion of IR derived from an Islamic heritage. This construction of IR will be communally and rationally based, as opposed to being based on theological guidance or abstract rationality.

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List of Abbreviations

IR	International Relations
EU	European Union
FPA	Foreign Policy Analysis
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
OIC	Organisation of Islamic Cooperation
UN	United Nations

Glossary of Arabic Terminology

Ahl al-Kitab	People of the Book
Al-ihsan	Virtue
Al-iman	Faith
Al-Haqiqah	The Truth
Al-islam	Submission
Al-Shari'ah	The Law
Al-Tariqah	The Path
'Aqa'id	Profession of faith
Dar-al-Islam	Domain of peace/Islam
Dar-al-harb	Domain of war
Dar-al-ahd	Domain of treaty
Da'wah	Call to Islam
Dhimmis	Protected minorities
Din-wa-dawla	Islam as religion and state
Falsafa	Islamic philosophy
Faqih	Islamic lawyers
Fiqh	Jurisprudence
Hadith plural. *Ahadith*	Recorded saying or action of the Prophet Muhammed
Hekmet	Wisdom
Hijra	The Prophet's migration from Mecca to Medina in the seventh century

Ijma'	Consensus
Ijma' al-fi'l	Consensus of action
Ijtihad	Exercise of reason
Kalam	Theology
Madhab plural .*Madhahib*	School of thought
Muhadithun	Specialist in *hadith*
Mahdi	12th, hidden, Shi'a Imam
Masjid	Mosque
Nas	Nation/peoples
Qiyas	Analogy
Rashid plural. *Rashidun*	Rightly guided Caliph
Shahadda	Declaration of faith
Shari'a	Islamic holy law
Sunna	'Way' of the Prophet Muhammed
Taqlid	Imitation
Ulema	Muslim religious scholars
Umma	Community (of believers)

Introduction

This thesis aims to develop an embryonic theory of Islamic international relations (IR). Rather than attempt to fully articulate an Islamic concept of IR, a task that will be argued to be unachievable, the thesis will instead use the case of Islamic IR, loosely defined, to challenge certain central concepts in IR that are seen as immutable. In this way, the thesis is using the case of Islam as an example of a tradition on the margins of IR, to critique the 'centre'. Similar critiques could be made by other traditions, religious or otherwise, and Islam is chosen as it is a tradition which the author has a degree of intimacy with. The research will therefore pursue dual themes: 1) Exploring what an Islamic construction of IR looks like and 2) Analysing the impediments that an Islamic IR faces when interacting with other, more dominant paradigms and concepts in the discipline.

The above goals are explored by using a two stage analysis. In the first stage, the thesis examines the dominant concepts in IR which prevent the articulation of religious politics generally and Islamic politics specifically, in the international sphere. The thesis will argue that these otherwise immutable IR concepts, which will be identified in the following chapter, *Islam in International Relations Scholarship*, as being secularism in the discipline and the continuing centrality of the state, to be unfounded given the specific cultural and religious setting of their genesis. After the first stage of this analysis the thesis will have created a space in which alternative theories, which do not sit well with secularism or the state, can develop; in the Islamic example this is represented by the concept of the *umma* (community of Muslims). In the second stage of analysis the thesis will construct, as much as is possible, a notion of IR derived from an Islamic heritage.

This introductory chapter proceeds by providing background and context to the broad themes presented above, before moving on to present and explain the research questions that inform this thesis. Finally, the introduction will provide a summary of the remaining chapters of the thesis.

Background

Islam and politics

Much of the literature on Islamic jurisprudence, or *fiqh,* and its relation to politics - loosely speaking the literature on political Islam - has a very specific focus on the domestic rather than international sphere.[1] Much of this dialogue is reactionary, with influential Islamist writers such as Sayyid Qutb and Abdul A'ala Maududi developing their ideas as a response to the situations in their own countries.[2] For example, Qutb was writing in the shadow of an oppressive Nasserite regime and Maududi was clearly influenced by British rule in India and the subsequent partition into a secular Pakistan.[3]

The Qur'an itself defines its function to the believer: "And We have sent down to thee the Book explaining all things".[4] However, there is debate over whether the explanation provided by the Qur'an pertains to every little detail of an individual's 'temporal life', or moral norms of behaviour which deal with an individual's relationship with the transcendental or 'divine life'. In Sunni orthodoxy[5] the overarching understanding is that the Qur'an is not a legal document, but a source of moral norms.[6] This is derived from chapter 2, verse 2 of the Qur'an: "This is the Book in which there is no doubt, a guide for those who are God-conscious".[7] The Qur'an defines its role here as a guide, distinct from law or doctrine. Joseph Van Ess argues[8] the closest the Qur'an gets to being canon is chapter 2, verse 177:

> Righteousness does not consist in whether you face the East or West. The
> righteous man is he who believes in God and the Last Day, in the angels and the

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[1] The thesis takes a loose view of what 'politics' means, so not to pre-empt what form Islamic IR might look like. As a starting point, the thesis adopts the perspective of Dale Eickelman and James Piscatori when they describe politics as the setting of boundaries. The setting of boundaries between secular/religious and obligatory/forbidden will be particular locations of interest as the thesis develops. For more, see Eickelman, Dale and Piscatori, James: *Muslim politics,* (Princeton Princeton University Press, 1996), pg. 18

[2] Ayubi, Nazih: *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World,* (London: Routledge, 1991), pg. 64

[3] *Ibid.*, pg. 128

[4] *Qur'an, 16:89*

[5] Defined as rulings from the 4 Sunni *madhahib* (Hanifi, Maliki, Shafi'i and Hanbali).

[6] Rahman, Fazlur: *Islam,* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1979), pg. 37

[7] *Qur'an, 2:2*

[8] Van Ess, Josef: *The Flowering of Muslim Theology,* (London: Harvard University Press, 2006), pg. 14-15

Book and the prophets; who, though he loves it dearly, gives away his wealth to kinsfolk, to orphans, to the destitute, to the traveller in need and to beggars, and for the redemption of captives; who attends to his prayers and renders the alms levy.[9]

Again, the Qur'an is general about what it is that constitutes belief. Such general, normative advice lends itself to the argument that the Qur'an is a source of moral norms, rather than law. Another contributor to Islamic law is the sayings of the Prophet Muhammed, *ahadith* (singular: *hadith*). This catalogue of Prophetic actions and sayings help the jurisprudent extrapolate the sometimes abstract guidance in the Qur'an and 'fill the gaps' of Qur'anic content. *Ahadith* are considered the second most important source of Islamic knowledge, behind the Qur'an[10].

For all that they do cover, neither the Qur'an nor *ahadith* contain explicit guidance on the state or international relations. Ayubi notes that the very notion of an Islamic state is a 'novel' idea, conceived in the early twentieth century by Rashid Ridda and the Muslim brothers. The concept of the Islamic state developed as a "response to the dissolution of the Turkish caliphate and in reaction to the pressures put on Muslim societies by the Western powers and by the Zionist movement"[11], not by Qur'anic imperative.

The lack of *explicit* guidance has not stopped Muslims in their quest for a government informed by religion rather than the secular nation-state model inherited from Europe after decolonisation (though the thesis will show in chapter 2 how the very notion of a 'secular nation-state model' can be contested). Such belief is articulated in the phrase *din-wa-dawla*, translated as religion and state. However the belief that Islamic guidance spans from the otherworldly concerns of worship to the temporal concerns of governance is hard to substantiate. As Qamaruddin Khan notes, "if the first thirty years of Islam were excepted, the historical conduct of Muslim states could hardly be distinguished from that of other states in world history".[12] Rather than explicit guidance or a separate body of law, international relations in Islam is an extension of law regarding Muslim and non-Muslim interaction at a personal

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[9] *Qur'an, 2:177*
[10] Hourani, Albert: *A History of the Arab Peoples,* (London: Faber and Faber, 1991), pg. 69-71
[11] Ayubi, Nazih: *Political Islam*, pg. 64
[12] Khan, Qamaruddin: *Political Concepts in the Qur'an,* (Lahore: Islamic Book Foundation, 1982), pg. 74

level. So strictly, "there is no Muslim law of nations in the sense of the distinction between modern municipal (national) law and international law based on different sources and maintained by different sanctions".[13]

Even if the *din-wa-dawla* slogan was true, one would still be hard pressed to find any information on the *how* an Islamic state would participate in the international system. Indeed, political Islam is very much concerned with the domestic, defining what it *is* and not how it would fit into or implement an international order.[14] In classical Islamic thought the world is simply demarcated into *dar-al-Islam* and *dar-al-harb,* the domains of peace (or Islam) and the domain of war, though a later addition by the Ottoman Empire saw the creation of *dar-al-ahd*, the domain of treaty.

Majid Khadduri's exemplary work on war and peace in Islam posits the problem of a 'deficient' conceptualisation of international relations in a different way. Khadduri states that "[s]imilar to the law of ancient Rome and the law of medieval Christendom, the Muslim law of nations was based on the theory of a universal state"[15]. In short, "[t]he Muslim law of nations recognizes no other nation than its own".[16] Failure to even recognise polities outside of its borders helps us to understand why the Islamic body politic is so embroiled in itself, its definition, capacities and functions toward its citizens, not the international system.

Warming Up: The State vs. The *Umma*

The dominant political structure post World War II has undoubtedly been the liberal-democratic state that has dominated Western political philosophy.[17] This state was prescribed upon the rest of the world following decolonisation. As Jeffrey Herbst notes of African states, "[i]t was immediately assumed that the new states would take on features that had previously characterized sovereignty [in Europe], most notably unquestioned physical control over a

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[13] Khadduri, Majid: *War and Peace in the Law of Islam,* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1955), pg. 46
[14] Butko, Thomas: "Revelation or Revolution: a Gramscian Approach to the Rise of Political Islam", (*British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 1, 2004), pg. 60
[15] Khadduri, Majid: *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, pg. 45
[16] *Ibid.*, pg. 44-45
[17] Kymlicka, Will: *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pg. 88

defined territory".[18] Unquestioned control of territory here reads as adopting the state system. In Herbst's African example, those communities were only accepted into the international system because they accepted what Turan Kayaoglu refers to as the 'Westphalian narrative'; this narrative "maintains that Westphalia created an international society, consolidating a normative divergence between European international relations and the rest of the international system".[19]

If the modern state creates a bias in IR whereby only those who accept this European normative heritage are to be accepted into 'international' society, to what extent is that society international? Kayaoglu argues that the society of states is a European society extended over the entire globe. Much in the way the Islamic polity (or the Roman or medieval Christian polities) did not recognise those power structures beyond its borders, so too has the state system become universalised in such a way that no alternative is tenable.

Nicholas Onuf posits that the condition of anarchy is not a falsifiable assertion; one must be *told* that they live in a condition of anarchy, it cannot be proved. In constructing the conditions in which the state developed as a system of order, "it is by no means clear that the Western state system is the only concrete instance of international relations available for study".[20] With this as a point of departure, in analysing what it is about the *umma* construct that makes it incompatible with the state system, the research will highlight some of the deficiencies in IR theory and/or the *umma* concept.

The historical Islamic polity (the pre-World War 1 caliphate) is described by Sami Zubaida as a 'political model', he stops short of calling it a state.[21] Of primary importance in this distinction is the practice of rule over people, not territory. The modern state exercises control over territory, such unquestioned control being one of the cornerstones of state sovereignty.[22] In the *umma* however, illustrated here however imperfectly in reference to the Ottoman

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[18] Herbst, Jeffrey: "Responding to State Failure in Africa", (*International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 3, 1996), pg. 121-122
[19] Kayaoglu, Turan: "Westphalian Eurocentrism in International Relations Theory", (*International Studies Review*, Vol. 12, No. 2, 2010), pg. 193
[20] Onuf, Nicholas: *World of Our Making: Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations,* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989), pg. 16
[21] Zubaida, Sami: *Islam, the People & the State*, 2nd ed. (London: IB Tauris, 1989), pg. 130-140
[22] Herbst, Jeffrey: "Responding to State Failure in Africa", pg. 121-122

Empire, "law was still... personal rather than territorial".[23] Despite this quite fundamental difference, some still think of the *umma* construct as an *equivalent* to the state[24] when rather, it is an *alternative*.

Turning to chapter 2, verse 143 of the Qur'an to substantiate the particularity of the *umma* construct: "Thus have we made you an umma justly balanced, that you might be witnesses over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves".[25] In the same verse both the words *umma* and 'nation' (*nas*) are used, indicating the distinction between the two in the Islamic tradition. Beyond this, as already mentioned, the *umma* is concerned with legislating over people, regardless of location, while the state legislates over territory.

As Islamic traditions of political organisation were dismantled during the colonial era to be replaced with modern state units,[26] IR, which uses the state as its unit of analysis, requires that contemporary political Islam define itself in a similar way in order to be accepted by the discipline. A return to what Michel Foucault describes as a 'pre-liberal' voice, that is, Islamic statecraft, may prove impossible given the "totalizing discourse of Western, capitalist modernity".[27] However, this research will attempt to locate those "genealogical fragments" of Islamism, and the *umma* in particular, which may challenge the 'best practice' of IR.

The Main Event: Liberalism vs. Islamism vs. Poststructuralism

For Michael Barnett regional order in the Arab world is not only achieved by "a stable correlation of military forces, but also because of stable expectations and shared norms".[28] His emphasis on shared norms is peculiar as normative theory is not generally considered a legitimate topic in IR, the discipline instead "[takes]

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[23] Davidson, Roderic: "Turkish Attitudes Concerning Christian-Muslim Equality in the Nineteenth Century", in Hourani, Albert, Khoury, Philip, and Wilson, Mary, (eds.): *The Modern Middle East: A Reader,* (London: IB Tauris, 1993), pg. 62

[24] Ayubi, Nazih: *Political Islam*, pg. 1-10

[25] *Qur'an*, 2:143

[26] Donner, Fred: "The Sources of Islamic Conceptions of War", in Kelsay, Johm and Johnson, James, (eds.): *Just War and Jihad: Historical and Theoretical Perspectives on War and Peace in Western and Islamic Traditions,* (London: Greenbridge, 1991), pg. 58

[27] Shani, Giorgio: "De-colonizing Foucault", (*International Political Sociology*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 2010), pg. 212

[28] Barnett, Michael: *Dialogues in Arab Politics: Negotiations in Regional Order,* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), pg. 6

for granted that the aim should be primarily descriptive and/or explanatory".[29] This section of the research, in dealing with ideology and 'meta-narrative' will explicitly challenge the bias in IR towards objective explanation and against value judgements; "[n]ormative questions are not answered by pointing to the way things are in the world".[30]

There exists the popular notion that to the norms of the liberal state Islam is "repellent and strange... The notion commonly associated with it is the Sharia... which would seem to be incompatible with the rules of enlightened reason".[31] Political Islam may overlap geographically with liberal 'spheres of influence', but operates "relatively independently of the circuits and networks that define the structure of global liberalism"[32]. Indeed, Fiona Adamson calls political Islam and liberalism a competing set of ideologies.[33] This will not come as a surprise to some, like John Schwarzmantel, who contend that as a pervasive hegemon of ideology, liberalism is bound to conflict with any other belief system. He elucidates:

> While Liberal-democratic systems might in theory [have allowed] a wide range of political ideas to be departed and considered so that nothing was forbidden, in practice the span of effective political opinion was constrained by a dominant ideology which limited political debate to a set of questions concerned with managing the established system, and which blocked by various filter mechanisms any more systematic questioning or challenging of that system.[34]

While this thesis does not seek to argue that liberalism is not as dominant as supposed by Schwarzmantel, the relationship between liberalism and political Islam is analysed further. In an attempt to peel back the reasons for the antipathy between liberal and Islamist positions (acknowledging that there are substantial overlaps between these positions at times[35]) the thesis introduces a

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[29] Frost, Mervyn: *Ethics in International Relations: A Constitutive Theory,* (Cambridge Cambridge University Press, 1996), pg. 12
[30] *Ibid.*, pg. 2
[31] Van Ess, Josef: *The Flowering of Muslim Theology*, pg. 1
[32] Adamson, Fiona: "Global Liberalism Versus Political Islam: Competing Ideological Frameworks in International Politics", (*International Studies Review*, Vol. 7, No. 4, 2005), pg. 548
[33] *Ibid.*
[34] Schwarzmantel, John: *Ideology and Politics,* (London: Sage publications ltd., 2008), pg. 11
[35] Kurzman, Charles: *Liberal Islam: A Source Book,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)

poststructural critique of liberalism specifically, and Enlightenment philosophy in general. While the poststructural critique breaks down the constitutive elements on both sides of the debate, allowing the thesis to explore the foundations of this problematic dialogue, it creates an interesting question about poststructuralism and religion which will be covered in later chapters; religious adherents, specifically those of the Abrahamic faiths, believe in a foundational truth: God. Poststructuralism however, is premised on a profound scepticism over any such foundational truths. A more detailed discussion over the definition of poststructuralism and its usage in this thesis will occur in chapter 2, as it is related to the analytical framework of the thesis. The same is true of the concept of Constructivism, which while also discussed in more depth in chapter 2, is briefly overviewed here.

Political Islam has, in a similar way with its dialogue with sovereignty, failed to make use of contemporary Constructivist debates in IR. More traditional IR theory would contend, in accordance with Realist or neo-Realist theory, that ideologies are merely "useful adjuncts to political power and are nurtured for that purpose"[36] by the actors of the neo-Realist international system, states. The Constructivist approach however, contends that "the role of shared ideas" is an "ideational structure constraining and shaping behaviour".[37] Rather than framing forms of Realism and Constructivism as competing paradigms, the latter can be used to emphasise the human aspect of existence; the state does not exist in a vacuum but is maintained and administered by the individuals within it. As individuals are given greater prominence in Constructivism, so too can the Muslim achieve greater prominence in the society of states. It is this conclusion that violent proponents of political Islam fail to grasp, believing that they are unable to affect change without coming into a zero-sum conflict with the dominant liberal culture of international society.

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[36] Bill, James A. and Springborg, Robert: *Politics in the Middle East*, 5th ed. (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1999), pg. 25
[37] Copeland, Dale: "The Constructivist Challenge to Structural Realism: A Review Essay", (*International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 2, 2000), pg. 189-190

Having explored the conceptual debate surrounding what some regard as the ambivalent relationship between political Islam and IR, this thesis sets out to address the following primary research question:

- To what extent is an Islamic notion of international relations tenable?

To answer this primary research question, it is broken down into three secondary research questions, with the first secondary research question broken down once more into two subsidiary questions:

- How extensive is the guidance offered in Islamic source texts with regards to international relations?
    - How does one differentiate between Islam and Political Islam?
    - What are the defining or contentious features of an Islamic IR?
- What challenges does the concept of the *umma*, as an alternative to the state, pose to the discipline of international relations?
- To what degree is there a synthesis in poststructural and Islamic critiques of IR?

Academic contribution and originality

This thesis contributes to two distinct academic arguments. The first relates to the subject of enquiry while the second derives from the analytical framework employed.

The first contribution is to the literature on IR, wherein the thesis questions the nature and influence of religion in IR. Rather than examine Islam's place in IR, the originality of the thesis is in how it examines IR's place in Islam, revealing how IR's dominant interpretations fall short of the schema of Islam. Specifically, the centrality of the state and liberal individualism in IR are argued to derive from specific socio-cultural backgrounds, and so do not satisfy the needs of an Islamic IR. Such an analysis is only made possible by articulating what in fact constitutes Islamic IR for the purpose of this thesis. To be clear, the thesis does not define what Islamic IR is, but points out that whatever form it might take, it would be derived from communal sources, not abstract and universal reason, as is the case with dominant IR paradigms. This distinction between the abstract and the communally derived is one of the

locations of friction between IR and Islam, and more broadly, religion in general. As such, the thesis argues for a greater reflexivity on the part of IR scholars to not take for granted value neutral and universal claims within the discipline.

The second contribution is to the literature on political Islam. Here the thesis argues that political Islam struggles to articulate a notion of IR because it aligns itself to theology in a prohibitive way. Theology and the Islamic source texts are too broad and abstract to provide guidance on the contemporary international sphere. This is not unexpected however, as guidance on politics is argued to be distinct from guidance on how to develop a relationship to God. Moreover, Islamic source texts *are* argued to be texts that provide guidance, as opposed to canon, and always require interpretation with regards to temporal or mundane life. As such, the thesis builds on work that 'brings rationalism back in', supplementing theological guidance with other strands of Islamic thought. The originality of the thesis here however, lies in the way in which the thesis balances a poststructural framework with that of a foundational faith such as Islam. This balance is distinct from a synthesis between the two positions; rather, the thesis employs value pluralism to manage the incoherencies between the two positions (one foundational and the other anti-foundational), while these positions work together in a common critique of political modernity. Distinct form the commonly perceived threat that poststructuralism brings to Abrahamic (and other universal) faiths, undermining their belief in God, the thesis attempts, uniquely, to demonstrate how these incommensurable positions affirm the nature of value pluralism, and need not (indeed cannot) be rationally resolved.

Chapter Outlines

This research will be multidisciplinary, using concepts and theories drawn from both IR and theology. As a conceptual work it will be based entirely on secondary sources. The secondary research questions build upon one another to answer the primary question and constitute the different sections of the thesis, dealt with below.

The first chapter of the thesis attempts to frame much of the debate that will develop from the second of the secondary research questions: *What challenges does the concept of the* umma*, as an alternative to the state, pose*

to the discipline of international relations? Chapter 1 examines the major works that have applied IR to the Middle East, looking specifically for indication as to how those studies treat religion in the region. IR studies of the Middle East are chosen as once more, this is the geographical region which the author is familiar with. Any reference to Islam or Islamic practice will invariably be drawn from the Middle East region and while there might be considerable overlap with similar concepts drawn from other Muslim majority regions (South East Asia being the most obvious), the chapter does not speak to that overlap, or generalise away from the Middle East setting. Chapter 1 will argue that none of the IR approaches applied to the Middle East deal with religion on its own terms, instead subsuming religion into pre-existing categories of analysis ('culture' being the prominent category). The chapter will also glimpse here the beginnings of the debate between foundational and anti-foundational forces within IR, specifically with regards to the assumptions around liberal individualism, a theme that will be returned to in later chapters of the thesis.

In addition, chapter 1 will embark upon answering the first of the secondary research questions: *How extensive is the guidance offered in Islamic source texts with regards to international relations?* Here the chapter will make an important differentiation between Islam as it pertains to worship, Islam-as-faith, and Islam as it pertains to politics, Islam-as-politics. It is here the chapter will introduce the term Normative Political Islam, that is, the variant of political Islam which will be extrapolated upon in deriving a notion of Islamic IR. Using the term Normative Political Islam highlights the fact that the thesis is not speaking about a univocal tradition, or claiming to speak for how all Muslims are required to view the international sphere (a claim the thesis would refute in any instance). Rather, the thesis is differentiating its notion of Islamic politics from other variants. In doing so, the thesis is not making any claims to 'greater legitimacy' for, as will be seen in later chapters, it is important to acknowledge how IR might mean different things to different communities.

Chapter 2, *Exploring the Interaction Between Islam and IR: A Conceptual Framework*, will develop the tools needed to deal with the issues that chapter 1 will highlight. Chapter 2 will focus on explaining the methodology of the thesis in depth, expanding on the two stage analysis forwarded in the current chapter, and placing the study in the broader context of the study of religion in IR. The

thesis will define here its epistemological foundations as deriving from poststructuralism, that is, a scepticism towards meta-narrative and universalism. This chapter will purposefully leave the ontological position of the thesis somewhat ambiguous, as resolving the ontological position of a believer in God and a poststructuralist informs the discussion of the third research question, covered later in the thesis: *To what degree is there a synthesis in poststructural and Islamic critiques of IR*. However, chapter 2 does make some headway in regards to the third research question, in that the chapter will explain what synthesis there is between poststructuralism and Islamic critiques of IR, leaving discussion of the differences in these approaches to later chapters.

Chapter 3, *Sovereignty and Normative Political Islam*, takes on the task of the more constructive elements of the thesis, giving shape to Normative Political Islam. This chapter will finish answering the first of the secondary research questions: *How extensive is the guidance offered in Islamic source texts with regards to international relations?* While earlier chapters will have earlier arrived at a conclusion that Islamic source texts do not contain enough guidance to inform Islamic IR, chapter 3 will explore what *can* guide such a concept. The chapter will here identify sovereignty as a key marker of difference between Islamic notions of IR and more dominant, secular variants. Trying to resolve the question of Islamic sovereignty will lead the chapter to revive the exoteric, rational aspect of the Islamic message. The chapter will show here how exotericism fell out of favour in Islamic history, and why bringing it back in helps deal with the constitutive elements of Islamic IR which theological guidance (Islamic source texts) are silent or ambiguous on. Using rationalism, chapter 3 is able to be sensitive to the communal and societal origins of values that individuals hold. Chapter 3 concludes with a dual contract for deriving sovereignty which plays once more to the split made earlier between Islam-as-faith and Islam-as-politics.

Having given some substance to a nascent Normative Political Islam, chapter 4, *Islamic Community and International Relations*, attempts to show how the principles that inform Normative Political Islam relate to IR. The chapter will here specifically be dealing again with the second of the secondary research questions: *What challenges does the concept of the* umma*, as an alternative to the state, pose to the discipline of international relations?* Chapter

4 identifies the abstract universalism that liberalism is based upon; then, linking that universalism to the philosophy that resulted from the European Enlightenment, the chapter then argues that IR has also inherited that tradition of abstract universalism. The ramifications of this are discussed in the chapter, leading the chapter to argue that communitarian sensitivity to the role individuals and society play in the construction of values is better placed than abstract universalism to give agency to Normative Political Islam in the international sphere. The chapter shows that articulations of the *umma* in IR can range from thick to thin, giving more and less credence to the concept of the state. Lastly, chapter 4 demonstrates the shortfalls that these two positions, thick and thin-*umma*, have with regards to the international system and the *umma* respectively.

Chapter 5, *Pluralism Not Polarisation*, explores the ramifications of the communitarian IR elaborated in chapter 4. In addressing the secondary research question, *what challenges does the concept of the* umma*, as an alternative to the state, pose to the discipline of international relations*, the chapter explores the way different communities might articulate different values in IR, and whether that will inexorably lead to conflict between competing value systems. Here the chapter posits value pluralism as the solution to this question, arguing that managing conflict is a more just solution than attempting to eradicate conflict, the latter solution being one which the chapter ties to the Enlightenment philosophy critiqued throughout the thesis. The final part of chapter 5 puts to rest the final secondary research question of the thesis: *To what degree is there a synthesis in poststructural and Islamic critiques of IR?* In answering this question the chapter makes the claim that bounding poststructuralism is the only way to prevent it becoming a meta-narrative itself. At the same time, it is not inconsistent for a Muslim, believing in God, to utilise poststructural analysis in the construction of Normative Political Islam, as poststructuralism helps to remind the Muslim of the limits of divine guidance in this temporal world.

The final chapter of the thesis forwards the final conclusions on each of the secondary research questions, as well as concluding the primary research question: *To what extent is an Islamic notion of international relations tenable?*

Chapter 1: Islam in International Relations Scholarship

This chapter will problematise existing IR scholarship of the Middle East through the lens of (Sunni) Islam. The chapter will look to Islam, a religion believed by some Muslims to provide the basis of their social order, for guidance on the international sphere. In doing so, the chapter will articulate the nature of this guidance, and define political Islam for the purposes of the following discussion, addressing the secondary research question: *How extensive is the guidance offered in Islamic source texts with regards to international relations?* Following a definition of political Islam, the chapter will scrutinise existing IR scholarship on the Middle East region through this Islamic perspective. Rather than ask how Islam might surface to find compatibility with a world view defined by the European Enlightenment, the chapter will examine how the contemporary system is deficient in reference to an Islamic world view, addressing the secondary research question: *What challenges does the concept of the* umma*, as an alternative to the state, pose to the discipline of international relations?* This analysis will show that the two predominant reasons for the deficiency of current scholarship are:

1. The territoriality of the international system, briefly outlined here as an incongruence between 'state' and '*umma*' (community).
2. The incoherence in expecting liberal individualism to cater for the aspirations of the *umma*.

The two reasons outlined above fall into two distinct but interrelated areas of analysis; the international (state vs. *umma*) and the theoretical (liberal individualism vs. communitarianism). Thus, following the current introductory section, this chapter will be split into 3 sections which reflect these different themes. Firstly the chapter will interrogate political Islam to arrive at a working definition that will allow it to secondly; scrutinise IR scholarship of the Middle East as it relates to Islam, which will highlight thirdly; the problems that community and the *umma* place on liberal individualism.

The discipline of IR has traditionally treated religion as an adjunct to analysis. Religion played a role in the politics of different eras, but in the modern

world the international sphere is ruled by different sensibilities. Painting IR theories in broad brush strokes, the lack of space afforded to religion in the study of the Middle East, is seen in the politics of Realism, where material gain and a more abstract 'power' are the key influences on behaviour, over and above the power of norms or ideas, religiously founded or otherwise. In liberal thought vast structures of economic interconnectivity steady the hand of world leaders; if counter ideologies (depicted religiously through Islam) exist, these are only contested within the ideational boundaries defined by liberalism. Classical Marxist analysis (as distinct from neo-Marxism which will be discussed in later chapters) also places much weight on the material influences of behaviour; where ideology is accounted for, it is done so to reinforce its material analysis through 'false consciousness'. Constructivism begins to move away from such ideologically (and therefore religiously) dismissive analyses, looking to show how identity and discourse, religious or otherwise, play a powerful role in the international system. Such insights into identity help make Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) a strong explanatory force in the wider Middle East as it blurs the lines between domestic and international, showing how the internal dynamics of states affect their international relations. However, even in identity based IR analysis, religion is placed on the backburner as it is deemed an ideology that does not play out at a regional or international level but at a domestic level only.[38] Indeed, of all the work on political Islam, there are only three specific studies on the role of Islam in the contemporary international sphere.[39]

Of the three studies that explicitly focus on Islam in the international sphere, one is written by James Piscatori[40] and two by Peter Mandaville.[41] Piscatori's book - a study of Islam's place in the modern system of states - is not an explanation for events, as Islam *has no place* in the international system,

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[38] Barnett, Michael: *Dialogues in Arab Politics*, pg. 23

[39] There are many studies carried out, primarily by Muslim authors, on the historical narrative of Islamic international relations, *siyar* in Arabic, but these rarely provide insight on how Islam might play out in the modern world. See for example: Labeeb, Ahmed Bsoul: "Theory of International Relations in Islam", (*Digest of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 2007) and AbuSulayman, 'AbdulHamid: *Towards an Islamic Theory of International Relations: New Directions for Methodology and Thought,* (Virginia: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1993)

[40] Piscatori, James: *Islam in a World of Nation States,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986)

[41] Mandaville, Peter: *Transnational Muslim Politics: Reimagining the Umma,* (London: Routledge, 2001) and Mandaville, Peter: *Global Political Islam,* (London: Routledge, 2007)

at least as this system is currently conceived in IR scholarship (as an ideal). Piscatori's work then is normative, rather than analytical, and narrative and historically based, rather that paradigm based. This narrative/historical focus highlights a fault line between IR and study of the Middle East, what Louise Fawcett calls an "International Relations – Area Studies divide"[42]; as Piscatori's study is specific to the particular historical narrative of Islam, its use in IR scholarship is not to produce (indeed it does not attempt) a paradigm that is applicable outside of its specific narrative, that is, the Islamic Middle East. Rather, much like this thesis, Piscatori's work broadens the field of enquiry for IR scholars, using the example of Islam and Muslim history to reflect on IR.

Peter Mandaville's work is more of a paradigm work, however the subject matter, global religious affiliation, moves Mandaville away from the centre of the IR discipline. Much like Piscatori, Mandaville must work hard at showing how Islam can be relevant for study in the international sphere; in doing so, Mandaville in 2001 posited religion, as is often done, as a challenge to the dominant political experience. Specifically, he posits a global Muslim community (*umma*), as a challenge to the statist politics of the international system.[43] However six years later his opinion relaxed, the idea that the *umma* was a spent concept permeated his work; religion was no longer a challenge to the status quo, but had learned and must continue to learn to operate within the status quo[44], a position that is far more comfortable for IR as a discipline.

Counter to Mandaville's reading of Islam on the international stage, this chapter will argue that the relegation of religion to the peripheries of IR is problematic for the theories that purport to be applicable to the Middle East specifically, and the Islamic world more generally, and is indicative of a wider problem in the discipline of IR regarding the place of norms, ideas and religion. Before moving on to a more thorough analysis of IR theory and Islam, the chapter will now define that key term, Islam, and its specific relation to politics.

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[42] Fawcett, Louise: "Introduction: The Middle East and International Relations", in Fawcett, Louise, (ed.): *International Relations of the Middle East,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, 2nd edition), pg.2
[43] Mandaville, Peter: *Transnational Muslim Politics*, pg. 2
[44] Mandaville, Peter: *Global Political Islam*, pg. 342-343

That Islam offers guidance on the political is potentially a dubious assertion. For some scholars, like Josef Van Ess, the Islamic faith is not explicitly political, and extrapolation of religious methods would support his view; for example, "[f]rom time to time theologians or *muhaddithun* (specialists in the traditions or saying of the Prophet, *hadith*) did write professions of faith (*'aqa'id*) that can be compared to Christian creed, but these texts entailed no obligation and remained valid only for a circumscribed time and place".[45] This spatial relativity does not lend itself to a state encompassing all Muslim peoples, but does not deny smaller Islamic polities the potential to exist; in early or 'classical' Islam, Van Ess maintains that the prevailing wisdom of the time derived from the Qur'anic verse 2:256 which states that there shall be "no compulsion in religion".[46]

Unlike Christianity, it is not the 'narrow path' that leads to salvation but simply the *shahadda* (declaration of faith); it was considered that the wide path would save Muslims in the hereafter.[47] Such a relaxed posture is echoed by Qamaruddin Khan, who argues that the argument of the *din-wa-dawla* adherents, that is, the inseparability of the faith of Islam from politics, is not one substantiated by the early history of Islam. Indeed, "if the first thirty years of Islam were excepted, the historical conduct of Muslim states could hardly be distinguished from that of other states in world history".[48] Khan's statement is astute, if missing the point slightly. That the first thirty years of Islamic history *were* unique is the call of many modern Islamists. For such Islamists (placed in the broad category of salafism), the age old practice of *taqlid*, imitation, has failed them and as such the many changes and accommodations made by Muslim jurists since the time of revelation are not worth imitating. As such, it is no use in pointing out, as Khan does, that the Islamic polity behaved in much the same way as non-Muslim polities a thirty years *after* the revelation of Islam. This is something both sides of the debate agree upon. For the one side it is cause to point out how misguided Muslims have become following the passing

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[45] Van Ess, Josef: *The Flowering of Muslim Theology*, pg. 13
[46] *Qur'an*, 2:256
[47] Van Ess, Josef: *The Flowering of Muslim Theology*, pg. 39-44
[48] Khan, Qamaruddin: *Political Concepts in the Qur'an*, pg. 74

of the *rashidun*, Rightly Guided Caliphs[49], for the other, it is cause to show how novel the idea of an Islamic state is. As such, both sides of the debate talk *past* each other, never addressing the points or grievances of the other. Engaging with such an on going debate is problematic as there is little chance to rest conclusively on one side or the other. However, attempting to do so is a necessary pursuit if the chapter is to arrive at a position that can then be used to examine IR.

Dale Eickelman and James Piscatori infer that the constant differentiation between the *rashidun* and their successors implies a cleavage between religion and state. Going further, perhaps this division happened at the Prophet Muhammed's death as he was the seal of the prophets, and thus no one could succeed his religious authority.[50] A similar yet different argument claims that the separation of religion and state happened during the reign of Abbasid Caliph Ma'mun (813-833). Ma'mun was sympathetic to Mu'tazilite theology and, to put it crudely, adopted it as a 'state' religion. This was rejected by the majority of Muslims, the Hanbali school in particular, effectively freeing religion from state. Going against the Caliphate in this way distinguished the limits of its authority, especially with regards to religion; "[h]enceforth, the Caliphate was no longer the sole identifying symbol or the sole organizing institution, even for those Muslims who had been most closely identified with it".[51]

These arguments do not claim that Islam and politics did not co-exist at one time; whether that ended with the death of the Prophet, the passing of the *rashidun* or the reign of Ma'mun, does not matter. Rather, for one side of the argument, that of the unspectacular nature of Muslim politics, the separation of religion and state represents a precedent that means modern Muslims are able to live in and interact with political systems ostensibly 'foreign' to them. The opposing side of the debate, the *din-wa-dawla* advocates, see the cleavage between religion and state as a sign that modern Muslims have lost their way, emulation of the early Muslims is the key component of politics for these ideologues. Such emulation, for them, includes an Islamic State and distinct political system. A third position, and the position that this chapter will pursue, is

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[49] The first four successors to the Prophet Muhammed, according to Sunni Muslims
[50] Eickelman, Dale and Piscatori, James: *Muslim politics*, ed. 47
[51] Lapidus, Ira: "The Separation of State and Religion in the Development of Early Islamic Society", (*International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 4, 1975), pg. 383

an approach that allows a synthesis of Islam and politics, but challenges the all-encompassing and literal exhortations of *din-wa-dawla* advocates.

But why is Islam the basis of this culturally specific normative foundation? Why not Arabism or some other ethnic affiliation? The thesis argues that Islam is peculiar, though not unique, in its ability to incorporate many differing axes of identity into its ideology. One can be a student, male, female, a parent, elderly, nomadic, sedentary, upper class, lower class, Moroccan, Egyptian, Afghani, and still be Muslim.[52] In addition, Islam has been articulated as a project that strives for anything, from upholding the politics characterised by modernity, to mass emancipation within the boundaries of contemporary politics, all the way to a rejection of the system and complete revolution. For example, Youssef Choueiri claims that Said Qutb, Maulana Maududi and Ruhollah Khomeini articulated their political Islams as revolutionary; "[t]o them, change had to be total, comprehensive, and revolutionary".[53]

Khaled Abou El Fadl does not share the idea that revolution is the 'true' articulation of political Islam. Rather, it is a possible source of emancipation for Muslims from Orientalism, Westernisation and modernity, by taking control of power and its symbols.[54] However, what is specifically jarring to the Muslim world about the West or political modernity is not defined by Abou El Fadl. Indeed, it often is not defined by authors trying to debunk essentialist accounts of Islam. This mistake is sometimes referred to as Orientalism in reverse, Occidentalism, whereby the author essentialises 'the West' for the purpose of their argument. Regardless, what El Fadl emphasises is that the pursuit of power by political Islam carries with it a potential emancipatory character, bringing power to Muslims where power currently rests in non-Muslim hands, though the nature of this power is entirely undefined beyond finger pointing to 'the West'.

Bryan Turner deals with Islam's emancipatory nature in a much more articulate way. Here too is the assertion that political Islam, over an ethnic

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[52] Ayubi, Nazih: *Over-stating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East,* (London: IB Tauris, 1996), pg. 28-29
[53] Choueiri, Youssef: "The Political Discourse of Contermporary Islamist Movemets", in Sidahmed, Abdel Salam and Ehteshami, Anoushiravan, (eds.): *Islamic Fundementalism,* (Boulder: Westview, 1996), pg. 32
[54] Abou El Fadl, Khaled: "Islam and the Theology of Power", (*Middle East Report*, Vol., No. 221, 2001), pg. 33

affiliation or nationalistic projects, represents the potential global political system. Crucially, Turner articulates Abou El Fadl's 'West' as cultural baggage that accompanies modernisation, namely, "a post-Enlightenment system of thought".[55] Rather than using the language of emancipation, Turner prefers to use 'opposition' as his key word; "[Islam] can operate globally as an oppositional force".[56] This is a developed and nuanced position; for Turner political Islam is an ideology with the potential to contest the very Enlightenment rationality that current political structures are founded upon. The methods of this challenge are not so well defined; it is neither a revolution as described by Choueiri, nor, clearly, an ideology working within the boundaries of the contemporary political system. Beyond describing political Islam as filling an oppositional void left by the collapse of Communism, Turner, like many other writers on political Islam, does not attempt to explain what political Islam is *for,* but rather defines the concept by articulating what it is *against.*

Despite the problem of defining what political Islam stands for, the argument presented here is that political Islam, over and above ethnic affiliation, nationally or regionally focused identity, presents a strong challenge to the discipline of IR. Briefly, that challenge is conceptualised as an Islamic politics based on a specific normative basis derived from the Islamic faith. To get to this position, the chapter must first deal with two competing visions for Islam in politics, that of the unspectacular nature of Islamic politics on one end of the spectrum, and the unique inseparability of religion and politics on the other end of it. The next section will begin by looking at the unspectacular nature of Islamic politics.

Unique Politics in early Islam?

Fazlur Rahman believed that the Prophet Muhammed, through revelations and his religiously authoritative personal guidance, was the sole religious and political guide for Muslims during his lifetime. With his death this guidance was cut off, but the first four Caliphs, those who knew the Prophet best, "met the ever-arising new situations by applying to these their judgements in the light of the Qur'an and what the Prophet had taught them".[57] Only after the passing of

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[55] Turner, Bryan: *Orientalism, Postmodernism and Globalism,* (London: Routledge, 1994), pg. 8
[56] *Ibid.*, pg. 12
[57] Rahman, Fazlur: *Islam*, pg. 43

the *rashidun* did the first theological sects emerge. While Rahman shows why many Muslims revere this period of Islam's history, a period before any infighting occurred between the Muslims, this chapter argues that he inaccurately portrays the Prophet Muhammed as the sole political guide for Muslims in this era, a case put forward by Ali Abd al-Raziq.

Al-Raziq claims that there is a difference between 'kingly and 'prophetic' rule.[58] Prophets, according to al-Raziq, have a special nature that cannot be emulated; "[the] Messenger may tackle the politics of his people as a king would, but the Prophet has a unique duty which he shares with no one"[59], that is, delivering the message of God to humankind. This is not a characteristic that can be replicated after the passing of the last of the Prophets, Muhammed; no one can hope to reproduce this prophetic authority and as such the period of Muhammed's rule is politically unique, and cannot be replicated. Now considering al-Raziq says a prophet *may* tackle the politics of a king, it is necessary to clarify how a prophet exercising kingly authority is not as unique a situation as a prophet delivering a religious message. Carrying a religious call demands of a prophet leadership skills. These are skills which may also make a prophet a capable 'king', in al-Raziq's language. But were a prophet to exercise kingship, as Muhammed undoubtedly did in commanding the *hijra* to Medina, his negotiations with the various communities at Medina and his generalship at the battle of Badr and Uhud[60], these actions may not be inspired by God. Such 'worldly' matters often fall beyond the prevue of prophets. In exercising political authority, a prophet would draw upon his high status within a community, not his unique relationship to God (though the two are undoubtedly related). This however, is not the only line of reasoning that al-Raziq takes. Rather, he seeks to further define Muhammed as a unique figure in history:

> [T]he authority of the Prophet, peace be upon him, was, because of his Message, a general authority; his orders to Muslims were obeyed; and his government was comprehensive... This sacred power, special to those worshipers of God whom He had raised as messengers, does not hold within it the meaning of kingship, nor does

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[58] Al-Raziq, 'Ali-'Abd: "Message Not Government, Religion Not State", in Kurzman, Charles, (ed.): *Liberal Islam: A Sourcebook,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pg. 29-36
[59] *Ibid.* pg. 30
[60] Hourani, Albert: *A History of the Arab Peoples,* pg. 17-18

it resemble the power of kings, nor can the [authority of the] sultan of all sultans approximate it.[61]

If one wants to call the community of Muhammed's followers a state, and Muhammed their king, then this is a matter of semantics to al-Raziq. The important point is that the politics practiced by the Prophet was grounded in his religious message, and as such is not a system of politics that can be replicated, nor should one try. The difference between prophets and kings is that the former governs over the heart while the former over material things; "[t]he former is a religious leadership, the latter a political one – and there is much distance between politics and religion".[62] Muhammed Khalaf-Allah, defines the roles of prophets as "explanation and analysis of Qur'anic texts – especially that which deals with beliefs, worship, and [social] interactions".[63] This is a role that the *ulema*, Muslim religious scholars, have taken on with the passing of the last of the Prophets. That being the case, Khalaf-Allah states it is an error, in the contemporary world, to look to *ulema* for guidance on politics; as the practice of politics was not the primary role of the prophets, so "religious scholars cannot do what the prophets, peace be upon them, could not do". [64]

So, the politics practised by Muhammed was unique by virtue of his divine guidance in those matters, which no other can replicate. Also, the Prophet's politics was concerned only with delivering the message, and any governance he conducted "was only a means that the Prophet, peace be upon him, would seek for the strengthening of his religion, in support of the call".[65] Al-Raziq does not answer the question as to *why* the Prophet's successors could not pursue politics with a similar aim; what is particular of the call to Islam that is, for al-Raziq, incongruous with politics? Interestingly this is the same question that is not answered by IR scholars. Indeed, it is not even asked by the field, what is it that makes Islam incompatible with politics? As the second section of the chapter will show, the predominant reason IR of the Middle East is deficient is the Eurocentric assumption that the relationship between religion and politics

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[61] Al-Raziq, 'Ali-'Abd, "Message Not Government, Religion Not State"31
[62] *Ibid.* pg. 31
[63] Khalaf-Allah, Muhammed: "Legislative Authority", ibid., pg.39
[64] *Ibid.* pg. 39
[65] Al-Raziq, 'Ali-'Abd: "Message Not Government, Religion Not State", ibid. pg. 35

that played out in Europe, happened the same way the world over, or *should* play out in this mould.

However there are some very real reasons that assuming a coherent and distinctive Islamic politics is not achievable, namely the fractious reality of the religion. As Piscatori observes, "[i]n practical terms, although not in theology, there are as many Islams as there are Muslims"[66]; the lack of unity within the faith makes it unfeasible and unnecessary to unite politically. The aforementioned lack of unity is not posited here as a negative thing, an issue that needs resolving. Rather, differences within the faith of Islam are taken to be a divine mercy, as chapter 10, verse 99 of the Qur'an states: "If your lord had willed it, all the people on the earth would have come to believe, one and all".[67] As demonstrated earlier in the chapter, there is *something* distinctive to Islamic politics, specifically the politics of the Prophet Muhammed, but what this is and whether it is applicable after the death of the Prophet Muhammed remains to be seen. Before proposing the content of this Islamic distinction, the chapter will look at the most vehemently argued nature of this distinction, that of *din-wa-dawla,* the inseparability of religion and politics.

Taking Issue with *din-wa-dawla*

Eickelman and Piscatori take great pains to highlight the problems regarding *din-wa-dawla*. For them:

> The presupposition of the union of religion and politics, *din wa-dawla*, is unhelpful for three reasons... First, it exaggerates the uniqueness of Muslim politics... Second, the emphasis on *din wa-dawla* inadvertently perpetuates "orientalist" assumptions that Muslim politics, unlike other politics, are not guided by rational, interest based calculations... Third, the *din wa-dawla* assumption contributes to the view that Muslim politics is a seamless web, indistinguishable in its parts because of the natural and mutual interpretation of religion and politics.[68]

That the *din-wa-dawla* assertion is unhelpful cannot be denied. As already noted in this chapter, Muslim politics is not so unique that it fails or failed to

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[66] Piscatori, James: *Islam in a World of Nation States*, pg. 10
[67] *Qur'an*, 10:99
[68] Eickelman, Dale and Piscatori, James: *Muslim politics*, pg. 56

interact and integrate with international systems now and through history. But the other points raised by Eickelman and Piscatori are not so easily substantiated. The Orientalist problem is interesting as this is not a problem that cannot be overcome; 'inadvertent' ignorance is not a problem of the *din-wa-dawla* position, but of students of political Islam and as such is not a criticism that can be levied towards the position itself. In addition, it was noted earlier there is *something* distinct about Islamic politics, but whether that leads to difference and an Orientalist understanding remains to be seen. Indeed, Eickelman and Piscatori's criticisms of the *din-wa-dawla* position radiates with assumptions about secular rationality, "that Muslim politics, unlike other politics, are not guided by rational, interest based calculations"[69], suffers itself from a problematic assumption; why can a synthesis of religion and politics not be rational and interest based? The third part of Eickelman and Piscatori's criticism is the most interesting of all. That a combination of religion and politics that is indistinguishable of its separate parts is an issue at all highlights some of the limits of IR. *Din-wa-dawla* Islamists recognise little, if anything, which separates humanity other than faith. The state, that most fundamental of building blocks in IR, unacceptably divides the unity of believing Muslims and so is problematic to such Islamists. This is presumably one of the types of the inseparability of religion and politics that Eickelman and Piscatori allude to with their final criticism of *din-wa-dawla* adherents, and is one that previous work has tried to overcome by analysing how Islamism might be conceived in such a way as to 'fit' seamlessly with the discipline of IR, notably in James Piscatori's work *Islam in a World of Nation States.*[70] Rather than assume that secular rationality is inherently superior to a religious rationality, as Eickelman and Piscatori seem to do, this chapter will instead proceed by critiquing the *din-wa-dawla* position as being theologically unsound, as defined by Islamic precedent itself rather than a comparison to Western understandings of politics and religion. The thesis will save further discussion on the nature of secular rationality in IR for the following chapter, which will deal explicitly with the analytical framework employed.

If the call to Islam is not totally congruous with politics it is because unlike more spiritual elements of the religion which are explicitly dealt with in the

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[69] *Ibid.*
[70] Piscatori, James: *Islam in a World of Nation States*

Qur'an and s*unna* (catalogued sayings and practices of the Prophet Muhammed), politics and other such 'worldly' matters are not. With regards to Qur'anic guidance, the Qur'an comments on the nature of political community; in chapter 49, verse 13, it says that God had "made you as nations and tribes so that you may come to know each other".[71] Another far more explicit excerpt states that "if God had willed, He would have made them one community".[72] This could be interpreted as either, 'He would have made the Muslims one community' or 'He would have made humanity one community'. Either way, the meaning is explicit when applied to political unity. But of course the Qur'an, like historical precedent, can be interpreted to support both those who do and do not conform to the practice of the state. For example, a non-conformist, *din-wa-dawla* position which would argue that the state system is one that unacceptably divides the Muslim community can cite chapter 3, verse 103, which commands believers to "hold fast all together the rope which Allah stretches out for you, and be not divided among yourselves".[73]

Regarding the *sunna* and its relation to Islamic law*, during the Prophet's time guidance on politics was not an issue as the Muslim community then could seek divine guidance on such matters. The need to codify law was mute when the Prophet held *de facto* authority (which *de jure* was vested in God) on religion. Religious law, *shari'a*, only coalesced approximately 100 years after the death of Prophet Muhammed.[74] Islamic law, then, is developed through readings of the Qur'an, the *sunna*, *qiyas* (analogy) and *ijma'* (consensus). This is a system that was developed by Imam Shafi'i in the ninth century AD but later was adopted by all Sunni Muslims. When referring to Sunni Muslims the theses is referring to the four schools (*madhahib*) of Sunni orthodoxy, the Hanifi, Maliki*, Shafi'i and Hanbali schools, named after Abu Hanifa, Malik, al-Shafi'i, and Ibn Hanbal respectively. The first of these *madhahib*, that of Abu Hanifa, was formed in the eighth century AD and the last, that of Ibn Hanbal, near the end of the ninth century.[75] In the time immediately after the death of the Prophet each provincial capital was itself a seat of learning, leading to differences in doctrine

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[71] *Qur'an*, 49:13
[72] *Ibid.* 48:48
[73] *Ibid.* 3:103
[74] Rahman, Fazlur: *Islam*, pg. 43
[75] *Ibid.* pg. 81-83

between Mecca, Basra, Kufa and Medina and so on; each of these cities could conceivably have possessed their own *madhab* and orthodoxy.[76]

Eventually, in the ninth century AD, geographical location lost its importance and instead allegiance to a teacher became the way one would associate with a *madhab*.[77] There is no play for dominance between these 4 *madhahib* and all are considered orthodox in their views. Matters of ritual, prayer and the like are explicitly covered in the Qur'an and *sunna* and so differences between the *madhahib* on these matters are negligible. In other, more 'worldly' matters, the *madhahib* represent mere interpretations and extrapolations of the principles found in the Qur'an. The *madhahib* cannot and do not claim to be as authoritative as the word of the Qur'an and so each can accept the others as legitimate interpretations of the same source text. This is easily explained by remembering that the Qur'an "is primarily a book of religious and moral principles and exhortations, and is not a legal document". [78] Conversely, advocates of *din-wa-dawla* would "claim to speak for a univocal body of legislation which is not grounded in the vast historical experience of Muslims... [and] also speak in terms of explicit and demonstrable commands deriving from scriptural statements".[79] That the 'singular' stand point of Sunni orthodoxy is itself comprised of four different perspectives points to the fallacy of a univocal body of legislation, as *din-wa-dawla* advocates would claim.

When the period of the *rashidun* passed there was still "no fully developed system of doctrine or law"[80] and only then did theological divisions in Islam begin to appear, the emergence of the Kharijite sect during the time of the last *rashid,* Ali, being a notable exception.[81] Piscatori in *Islam in a World of Nation States* argues that the presence of theological division marks the *practice* of Muslim polities acknowledging territorial pluralism, even if the dogma of some (*din-wa-dawla*) would reject it. Speaking of theological tradition, Van Ess observes that for Muslims, "orthopraxy is more important than orthodoxy"[82],

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[76] Van Ess, Josef: *The Flowering of Muslim Theology*, pg. 4-6
[77] Schacht, Joseph: *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950), pg. 6-10
[78] Rahman, Fazlur: *Islam*, pg. 37
[79] Al-Azmeh, Aziz: *Islam and Modernities*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 1996), pg. 11
[80] Hourani, Albert: *A History of the Arab Peoples*, pg. 24
[81] Lewis, Bernard: *The Arabs in History*, 6th ed. (Oxford Oxford University Press, 1993), pg. 63
[82] Van Ess, Josef: *The Flowering of Muslim Theology*, pg. 16

a point that Piscatori forwards to highlight the validity of *ijma' al-fi'l*, consensus of action, understood here as an approximate term to historical precedent.

That there is the urge for Muslims to unite, either a unity amongst themselves or amongst all of humanity, does not take away from the fact, which Piscatori defends, of "the actual *non*-universality of the Islamic community, and thus of ideological and political – and perhaps territorial – divisions".[83] Evidence for such plurality is not exclusively historical. What is apparent with both historical precedent and Qur'anic guidance is how inconclusive such arguments are when relating to the state and IR. Evidence for both sides of the debate can be found, and the weight of evidence only begins to fall on the side of state conformists the further away from the Prophet's time examples are drawn. For this reason the chapter argues that history does not actually form any precedent as far as *din-wa-dawla* adherents are concerned; if examples of plurality and *realpolitik* cannot be found in the Prophet's time then for these ideologues the argument is already won. To cite Umayyad, Abbasid, and Ottoman examples of plurality, as for example Piscatori does, only strengthens the argument of non-conformists that after the time of the Prophet the Muslim community has gone astray. This chapter would echo such a sentiment, though not to the extent that *din-wa-dawla* advocates do;   calls for an Islamic polity united by the same call to faith as experienced during the Prophet Muhammed's time are doomed to fail as with no definitive dogma to guide Islamic politics one must ask: To *which* Islam should such a polity adhere?

There certainly exists a core concept of faith which Sunni orthodoxy and even Shi'a and Wahhabi creeds can adhere to. This core would centre around the basic tenants of the faith, commonly referred to as the '5 pillars' of Islam; Belief in God and his Prophet Muhammed; prayer; fasting; charity; and pilgrimage. With this limited unity in mind Pakistani founder of the *jamaat-e-Islami*, Maulana Maududi, comments that the Shari'a is not a method of governance but rather "has always aimed at bringing together mankind into one moral and spiritual frame-work".[84] The political lies beyond the unifying spiritual framework that Maududi mentions, and so rather than asking to which *Islam* an

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[83] Piscatori, James: *Islam in a World of Nation States*, pg. 46, original emphasis
[84] Maududi, Abu A'la: "Nationalism and Islam", in Donohue, John and Esposito, John, (eds.): *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), pg. 95

Islamic polity should call to, the correct question would be to which *political* Islam the call should be made?

The Third Perspective: Normative Political Islam

Accepting then that political Islam is distinct from Islam-as-faith, then politics is not an articulation of the faith, as *din-wa-dawla* ideologues would have it. Rather, political Islam is the pursuit of politics that adheres to Islamic norms and values and facilitates the practice of the religion. What this signals for the argument of the thesis is a distinction between Islam-as-faith and Islam-as-politics. The former references the link a believer might have to the transcendental, the articles of faith. The latter refers to the practice of politics, which is argued to fall outside of the explicit guidance of Islam-as-faith, but might still influence and be influenced by faith, depending on interpretation. In this way, political Islam may well be wholly compatible with the international system if interpreted as such. Equally, political Islam could present an alternative to the international system as it stands, if it is possible to interpret it in that way. The distinction between Islam-as-faith and Islam-as-politics is one that the thesis will return to and elaborate further in chapter 3, *Sovereignty and Normative Political Islam.* For now, this chapter continues by returning the discussion to IR, and discussing the unit of analysis in the discipline, and its relationship to the unit of analysis in Normative Political Islam's IR, that is, the relationship between the *umma* and the state.

Driven by their ideological world view of how the world *should* be, some political Islamists take issue with the structure of the international system, especially the centrality of the state. For them, Islam sees little that divides persons except faith. In this world view political association to a state which divides the unity of believing Muslims is problematic. Their solution: the *umma,* typical of Medieval Islam, whereby one is affiliated to a political construct based on their faith. The *umma*, then, is distinct from the 'Islamic state', which articulates itself in the language of any secular state, having no 'Islamic' character on the world stage; Arab/Muslim states having, by-and-large, accepted the existing juridic and political state system.[85] So Political Islam, in regards to the *umma/*state discussion, is "an attempt to link religion by way of

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[85] Ayubi, Nazih: *Political Islam*, pg. 122-123

resisting it – political Islam is thus still on the whole a protest movement (with the partial exception of Iran)".[86] In asking how the *umma* might interact on the international stage this thesis posits the *umma* as a different form of political affiliation than the Islamic state, and the two should not be confused in this exposition.

Nazih Ayubi describes the European state as having developed through individualism, law and justice while the Islamic equivalent, in contrast, developed on justice, group and leadership.[87] These are small differences to Ayubi who proceeds to analyse the *umma* as an equivalent to the state. Rather, the *umma* will be argued in this section to be an *alternative* to the state. The form of affiliation in the *umma* is based on notions of community (rule over people), which is traditionally what the word *umma* denotes. The modern state, conversely, is based on territorial boundaries as formulated by Weber's definition of the state. Islamic tradition, however, makes little distinction over territory and instead focuses on individuals. Khadduri's classic work, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, explains how the *shari'a* bound a community, not territory; "the legal position of a territory would depend on the allegiance of its people to Islam, not a mere proclamation that it belongs to Islam".[88]

Often used to justify the particularity of the *umma* is verse 143, chapter 2 of the Qur'an, in which God proclaims: "Thus have we made you an umma justly balanced, that you might be witnesses over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves".[89] In this verse the word *umma* is used in contrast to nations or peoples, *nas*, highlighting the difference between the two concepts. In reference to the contemporary world, the thesis can note the that *umma* might be articulated in any number of ways: from Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) resembling, perhaps, a global network of mosques, to global media activity, to state controlled articulation by way of 'Islamic states', to finally the re-emergence of the Caliphate.[90] The list offered here is in no way exhaustive, but represents different points on a spectrum wherein 'spiritual' articulations of the *umma* are placed at one extreme and 'political' articulations

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[86] *Ibid.* pg. 123
[87] *Ibid.* pg. 1-10
[88] Khadduri, Majid: *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, pg. 155
[89] *Qur'an*, 2:143
[90] Mandaville, Peter: *Global Political Islam*, pg. 300-301

at the other extreme. Such a spectrum is not ideal, as it embraces a rather arbitrary separation of the spiritual from the political, again foreshadowing the discussion of secularism in IR to follow in the next chapter. What the spectrum does allow is the discussion of the *umma* as a unit of political affiliation, and firmly place this discussion in the remit of IR. As a unit of political affiliation, the *umma* does not have a separate body of law but rather is an extension of law regarding Muslim – non-Muslim interaction, further emphasising the importance of rule over people not territory. Khadduri states that "[s]trictly speaking, there is no Muslim law of nations in the sense of the distinction between modern municipal (national) law and international law bases on different sources and maintained by different sanctions".[91]

In this way the chapter designates an *umma* as a community of believers who are bound by the laws of that community irrespective of territorial boundaries. It is in this manner that Christians and Jews who partook of alcoholic drinks in Muslim territory during the Ottoman period, an otherwise punishable act for Muslims, as long as this was not done in public, were committing no offence as they were instead bound by the rules of their own communities.[92] Conversely the state, as derived from the Peace of Westphalia, defines itself on the notion of territorial sovereignty [93] and in this very fundamental way differs from the *umma* which has, in theory, no such notion.

Presuming that the units which constitute political Islam's concept of the international sphere are *ummas*, not nation-states, then is it necessary for political Islam to develop a more substantive theory of international relations, or find a place to 'fit' within the current discipline? This is a question that the thesis will come back to in the next section of the chapter. For now, it is enough to have established that one of the centres of contention between Normative Political Islam and the current international system is the distinction between state and *umma.* However, this challenge at the international sphere also holds challenges for the dominant epistemology and ontology that IR is based upon.[94]

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[91] Khadduri, Majid: *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, pg. 46
[92] Davidson, Roderic, "Turkish Attitudes Concerning Christian-Muslim Equality in the Nineteenth Century"pg. 62-70
[93] Kayaoglu, Turan: "Westphalian Eurocentrism", pg. 193
[94] Broadly understood, this challenge is referred to as the 'postsecular turn' in IR. The term has two meanings, both of which are relevant to this thesis. The first meaning is the attempt to explain the apparent resurgence of religion in modern life. The second is the idea that secularism, rather than being inclusive and value neutral, is in fact excluding and dependent on

For example the *umma*, which does not respect territorial boundaries but rather communal affiliation over individual liberty, has to address the dominance of liberal individualism in IR. As the interplay between secularism and the discipline of IR will be discussed in the following chapter, for now the chapter will briefly explain the entry point of the discussion of liberalism and political Islam, a discussion that is returned to in more depth in chapter 3 and beyond.

A 'traditional' (Orientalist) view of Islam's incompatibility with liberalism is, unfortunately, still common place. This view sees Islam as inherently illiberal, due to some undefined yet all powerful characteristic within the faith.[95] Gregory Gause describes this uninformed yet prevalent position on the politics of the Middle East as the idea that:

> [T]ribalism and Islam lead to a number of consequences for the political process: institutions are meaningless, as all politics are personal; the forms of rule which exist now in these states have existed for hundreds of years, if not from time immemorial; political participation is not a serious issue; political loyalty is given and withdrawn on the basis of religious criteria.[96]

Josef Van Ess puts it more succinctly when he states that to the norms of the liberal state Islam is popularly considered to be "repellent and strange... The notion commonly associated with it is the Sharia... which would seem to be incompatible with the rules of enlightened reason".[97] To such assumptions Richard Bulliet replies that Islam has always been a mode of *resisting* despotic

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a particular socio-historical background. Such work, especially on the second definition, often does not carry the label 'postsecular'; indeed, this thesis does not use the term postsecular as it commonly pertains to the work of Jurgen Habermas, which is incompatible with the Foucaultian poststructuralism employed in this thesis. For more on the term postsecular, see: Mavelli, Luca and Petito, Fabio: "The postsecular in International Relations: an overview", (*Review of International Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 5, 2012); Calhoun, Craig, Juergensmeyer, Mark, and VanAntwerpen (eds.): *Rethinking Secularism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press,2011); Asad, Talal: *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity,* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003); Habermas, Jurgen and Ratzinger, Joseph: *The Dialectics of Secularization: On Reason and Religion,* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007); Habermas, Jurgen: *Between Naturalism and Religion: Philosophical Essays,* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008)

[95] For an example of a supposed authoritarian Islamic nature responsible for current despotic regimes in the Middle East, see Friedrichs, Jorg: "Global Islamism and World Society", *International Relations Research in Progress Seminars* (University of Sussex: 2012)

[96] Gause, Gregory: *Oil Monarchies: Domestic and Security Challenges in the Arab Gulf States,* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1994), pg. 3

[97] Van Ess, Josef: *The Flowering of Muslim Theology*, pg. 1

rule, a type of rule which existed in the Middle East long before the trauma of colonialism, though he admits, "[t]he merest glance at the history of the Islamic Middle East reveals that, in fact, Islam did *not* effectively prevent despotism".[98] Regardless, Islam was still a site for protest, and continues to be in the present day. The problem, as Bulliet sees it, is that Islam has not dealt with the realities of power, as a resistance movement it is defined by what it is not, but has not articulated sufficiently what it stands *for*.[99]

Islamism in command of the powers of the state is the unknown that is feared and assumed to be inherently despotic. For Sami Zubaida this comes as little surprise, for while religion has been stripped of much of its authority and social functions in 'modern' societies, it remains one of the most persistent markers of identity and difference.[100] It is little wonder to Zubaida that Islam is thus perceived as inherently problematic in the Western world, as it is religion and the religious 'other' must be different to 'us', must be illiberal. The assumption that religion, as a marker of difference, is necessarily problematic, will begin to be discussed in the final section of the chapter dealing with the liberal individualism and the *umma*. More broadly, the theme of difference in IR and how it is conceptualised and then managed is one the thesis will return to throughout. Currently, the chapter turns once more to the international sphere and specific IR studies of the Middle East, in order to outline the problems that IR has in accounting for Islam in its analysis.

IR Applied to Islam in Middle East Region

This section of the chapter will highlight the problematic ways religion is (not) accounted for in the discipline of IR. Such analysis is a critique of theory, dubbed meta-theory, which is distinct to IR theorising on the dynamics of the international system. As Alexander Wendt explains:

> The objective of this type of theorizing [meta-theoretical] is also to increase our understanding of world politics, but it does so indirectly by focusing on the

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[98] Bulliet, Richard: "Twenty Years of Islamic Politics", (*Middle East Journal*, Vol. 53, No. 2, 1999), pg. 192, original emphasis
[99] *Ibid*. pg. 196
[100] Zubaida, Sami: *Beyond Islam: A New Understanding of the Middle East,* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), pg. 3

ontological and epistemological issues of what constitute important or legitimate questions and answers for IR scholarship, rather than on the structure and dynamics of the international system *per se*.[101]

As such, the thesis acknowledges that the ramifications for IR studies in not accounting for religion may not affect its analyses of the international system in any substantive way (though this depends on the nature of that analysis, as will be demonstrated). The stronger claim the thesis can lay claim to, is to highlight the way in which certain questions around the nature and influence of religion in IR are not considered.

There are only a handful of IR treatments of the Middle East, all of which broadly fall under five methodological categories: Marxist; Realist, English School, Constructivist; and Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), with cross cutting approaches between these categories. The chapter will here will argue that the treatment of religion in all these approaches is lacking for two main reasons. Firstly, an Orientalist misunderstanding of Islam and its relationship to society often leads to the idea that Islam is equivalent to despotism. Secondly, and demanding a more reflexive understanding of IR, is the problem of overly materialistic or statist accounts of Middle East politics. The studies of this latter category are less problematic regarding an Orientalist understanding of Islam, but instead reinforce a post-colonial legacy of Westphalian politics, as outlined by Kayaoglu in the journal article, *Westphalian Eurocentrism in International Relations Theory.[102]* These are two criticisms that will recur numerous times as the chapter moves through the broad methodological and epistemological boundaries of IR scholarship of the Middle East.

Marxist Inspired Study of the Middle East

Of the two studies broadly categorised as Marxist in epistemology if not methodology, Simon Bromley's *Rethinking Middle East Politics* will be considered first. Bromley is very aware and critical of theory that derives from analyses of Europe a set of categories, and then applies these to the rest of the world. In this way, he holds up Karl Marx's methodology as avoiding this

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[101] Wendt, Alexander: "Bridging the theory/meta-theory gap in international relations", (*Review of International Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 4, 1991), pg. 383
[102] Kayaoglu, Turan: "Westphalian Eurocentrism"

problem, "it does not begin by privileging Western societies and then move on to explain non-Western development as a deviation. Rather, it applies a common methodology of explanation to all social orders". [103] Bromley wholeheartedly endorses Edward Said's critique of Orientalism but rather than try to take a more nuanced and specific definition of terms like Islam, he would emphasise the less abstract and historically precise "social relations and material practices that constitute and transform societies". [104] In essence, Bromley seeks to avoid the 'problem' of cultural explanations by tying them to material ones and making them one and the same; as a result, "Islam remains rooted in broader sets of social and material practices, and thus its changing forms must also be related to the historically given organization of economy and polity".[105] Such an account of religion over emphasises material concerns,[106] and denies the way in which ideas can affect the behaviour of agents in ways that might be in contrast to their material interests.

Furthermore, as Bromley takes on board Said's critique of Orientalism and emphasises the internal divisions of Islam, this becomes another reason for Islam to be neglected as a focus for analysis. Curiously, a lack of unifying nature means Islam cannot act as "a cultural form operating to block other social and historical determinations",[107] the assumption being that if it were a unified concept, it might have more of an interaction with material interests. This is problematic for two reasons. Firstly, while there are a plethora of Islamic sects or schools of thoughts, even between the largest schism, that of the Sunni and Shi'a divide, there is a certain continuity of the basic articles of faith (the *shahadda*, declaration of faith). This continuity is largely abstract and theoretical, as in practice affiliation to different schools of thought has concrete implications, notably represented in recent times by competition for 'leadership' of the Palestinian struggle between Iran and Saudi Arabia.[108] Regardless, Bromley is incorrect in asserting that there is *no* unity in the faith, and is unspecific as to

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[103] Bromley, Simon: *Rethinking Middle East Politics,* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1994), pg. 9
[104] *Ibid.* pg. 13
[105] *Ibid.* pg. 43
[106] That Bromley and later, Halliday, place such emphasis on material interests is not to deny the way in which much contemporary Marxist scholarship attempts to move into a post-material reality, for example see: Hardt, Michael and Negri, Antonio: *Empire,* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000)
[107] Bromley, Simon: *Rethinking Middle East Politics* pg. 43
[108] Mabon, Simon: *Saudi Arabia and Iran: Soft Power Rivalry in the Middle East,* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013)

the *degree* of unity needed, and in what areas, before Islam can take a more constitutive place in his theory. Secondly, that Islam has geographical and theological differences does not mean that religion centred around different seats of learning, for example, could not have a more substantial effect on the material or social reality of people in the Middle East. 'Islam' may not be precise enough a term to chart such influence, but maybe the 'Islam of Baghdad' had considerable influence on the peoples and policies emanating from this historic seat of power. Likewise the 'Islam of Damascus', 'Islam of Andalusia', 'Islam of Fatimid Egypt' and so on and so forth, surely had a more specific role on a specifically defined geographical area, than Bromley gives credit for.

The second Marxist inspired approach, broadly defined, is that of Fred Halliday's book, *The Middle East in International Relations*. Like Bromley, Halliday emphasises the material interests of actors. However, Halliday takes a more nuanced position than Bromley with regards to Islam. Islam is rarely directly referenced as it falls under ideology and culture, as defined by Halliday. However he goes to great pains to emphasise that timeless terms like Islam or an 'Arab mind' are not accurate descriptions of such culture or ideology; "[i]t is rather a matter of how, under modern political and social conditions, states, elites, whole political systems come to operate in broadly similar ways, in other words, how they are moulded by modernity and regional context alike".[109] Here Halliday identifies the erroneous ways in which Islam has been invoked in previous scholarship, and in his effort to avoid similar mistakes, like Bromley, he incorporates Islam into other material and social factors effectively subsuming Islam into categories of analysis far more comfortable for his historical sociological approach, rather than deal with Islam on its own basis, that is, an ideology that helps constitute the realities of its believers. In Halliday's own words, "[i]t is often mistaken to assume that a *difference of position within the international system* is necessarily equated with *difference of cultural perspective*".[110]

Halliday leans towards material analysis as the impact of ideas and beliefs are, for him, related to understanding in terms of 'perception', and

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[109] Halliday, Fred: *The Middle East in International Relations: Power, Politics and Ideology,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pg. 39
[110] *Ibid.* pg. 34, original emphasis

distinct from objective, 'real' criteria. While a balance must be struck between the two, as invariably the perceptions of actors affects their reality, Halliday is too cautious about approaches that emphasise ideology, namely Constructivism; he explains: "Constructivism and its outriders run the risk of ignoring state interests and material factors, let alone old-fashioned deception and self-delusion".[111] With this criticism in mind, the chapter will now move to two broadly Constructivist analyses of international relations in the Middle East.

Constructivist Inspired Study of the Middle East

Two main studies stand out in this category; Michael Barnett's *Dialogues in Arab Politics* and Shibley Telhami and Michael Barnett's edited volume *Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East*. A third work by Gregory F. Gause, *Oil Monarchies: Domestic and Security Challenges in the Arab Gulf States,* also runs contrary to the systemic tendencies of Marxist based theories though he does not argue an explicitly Constructivist epistemology. Barnett's solo work has more exposition on the Constructivist method than that found in the other two works, so this section will begin with *Dialogues in Arab Politics*. Barnett explains that:

> Building on various strands of sociological theory, constructivism posits that the actions of states, like individuals, take on meaning and shape within a normative context, that their interactions construct and transform their normative arrangements, that these norms can in turn shape their identity and interests, and that the "problem of order" is usually solved through social negotiations and a mixture of coercion and consent.[112]

A Constructivist approach places much more emphasis on process rather than structure in explaining behaviour. The move away from structure distances Constructivism from more Marxist inspired theory, which classically focuses on a global structure which allows the continuity of a "universal History".[113]

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[111] *Ibid.*, pg. 32-33
[112] Barnett, Michael: *Dialogues in Arab Politics*, pg. 5
[113] Ernesto, Laclam and Mouffe, Chantal: *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 2001), pg. 2. This work by is an example of neo-Marxism, that surrenders the universality of the tradition and detatches itself from material

The lack of focus on structure leads Barnett to completely relegate Islam out of his analysis of inter-state behaviour in the Middle East. Indeed, the term 'Islam' appears only 3 times in the index of his book. Unlike the work of Halliday and Bromley, who subsume Islam into structural factors in their analysis, Barnett explicitly ignores political Islam, as for him its primary challenge is to the domestic level rather than the regional or international level.[114] This reading of political Islam can be linked to the lack of structural focus in Constructivism; by paying little heed to structure Barnett is unable to see that when he argues that political Islam is preoccupied with the domestic, as this is the sphere which it is able to influence, it is in fact the structure of the international system and of IR scholarship that *ensures* that political Islam does not challenge the international sphere. Political Islam does compete in the international sphere through the concept of the *umma* (vs. state), as argued in the first part of the chapter. However the challenge is hard to articulate without reference to the structure of the international system and scholarship, namely the Westphalian narrative, which Barnett cannot attempt due to his inability, or unwillingness, to account for structure in his Constructivist approach.

Moving to Telhami and Barnett's work, the focus is still on Constructivist methods, but more nuance is applied to the apparent rejection of systemic analysis. Telhami and Barnett state that the prevalence of identity politics in the Middle East region helped to make the region seem unique to scholars. Systemic IR theory removes the 'uniqueness' of the region, allowing IR to ostensibly explain it, and this is the reason Telhami and Barnett use to explain the popularity of systemic IR analyses of the region. What separates Telhami and Barnett from the dangers of cultural and narrative based explanations of the Middle East is the constitutive nature of culture that they constantly emphasise.[115] Rather than a monolithic Islam or a peculiar and standardised 'Arab mind', the authors emphasise the fact that terms such as Islam or

interests. However, by and large such a perspective has not had bearing on Marxist study of the Middle East.

[114] Barnett, Michael: *Dialogues in Arab Politics*, pg. 22-23

[115] Telhami, Shibley and Barnett, Michael: "Introduction: Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East", in Telhami, Shibley and Barnett, Michael, (eds.): *Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East,* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 2002), pg. 18

Arabism do not have a causal standing in the behaviour of Arab states, but "conditions the possible and the actual".[116]

While Constructivist theory affords much more space and power to the world of ideas, Telhami and Barnett struggle to separate and define clearly the difference between religion, culture and identity. In actuality very little attempt is made to understand religion except as related to culture, and then primarily only as a reaction to the forces of globalisation.[117] The lack of Constructivist theorising on religion highlights where future research might go, and certainly an application of Constructivist theory to political Islam will be central to this thesis. However, space must be made for a political Islam (in the form of the *umma*) on the international level, which can only be done after recognising and deconstructing the structures in place that reinforce the narrative of states in international relations. Acknowledgment of systems in this way can be dubbed as 'soft' Constructivism. Such theory does not ignore the state or material interests, as Halliday feared, but rather "the environment in which agents/states take action is social as well as material".[118] Such a view acknowledges the material focus of systemic theory, but seeks to *supplement* it rather than displace it. This synthesis of material factors and Constructivist theory is apparent in Gregory Gause's work. In *Oil Monarchies: Domestic and Security Challenges in the Arab Gulf States,* Gause demonstrates a far more developed understanding of Islam as a factor, divorced from culture, which has bearing upon politics.

Briefly, Gause claims the constitutive role of Islam (to which he ascribes a level of social and political constructivism) is reliant upon the state; "the institutions of Islam are now much more dependent upon the state, and much more a subordinate part of the state apparatus, than was the case in the past".[119] Gause describes Islam as 'tamed', and as such it becomes an important part of the state, "providing institutional support and ideological legitimation".[120] In this way Gause is emphasising that the role Islam plays in Muslim countries is by no means politically unimportant, as other Constructivist

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[116] *Ibid*. pg. 7
[117] *Ibid*. 1-13
[118] Checkel, Jeffery: "The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory", (*World Politics*, Vol. 50, No. 2, 1998), pg. 325
[119] Gause, Gregory: *Oil Monarchies*, pg. 11
[120] *Ibid*. pg. 14

theorists would have it. Neither is Islam purely a contest on the domestic level, as ideological competition between Saudi Arabia and Iran, involving the concept of political Islam, has regional implications in the Persian Gulf, for example.[121] The interplay between political Islam and the state is what is important, the fact the state attempts to control the meaning of political Islam as a method of legitimising its rule does not mean that the concept is not contested. That this contestation is possible is testament to the power of Social Constructivism, and the interplay between the power of ideas and the power of material concerns. Further analysis of Constructivist theory at large will be found in the next chapter which develops the analytical framework of the thesis. Presently, the chapter returns to another study of the Middle East which constitutes somewhat of a fusion between the two approaches already mentioned, Constructivism and Marxism.

Roger Owen's *State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East* endeavours to analyse state-society relationships in the Middle East, and this emphasis on the dynamics of state-society interaction is why it is placed loosely in a Marxist tradition. While Middle Eastern states appear to function like European states, Owen argues that in most cases Middle Eastern states have quite different relationships with their citizens, which then affects their behaviour.[122] The Constructivist influence is apparent with Owen's emphasis on identity. Like Telhami and Barnett, Owen ties up religion with identity, but distinguishes it from culture. Rather, religion has a prominent place in the building of the state as it is "inextricably involved with central questions of identity and of communal values".[123] He applies some depth to his understanding of religion, identifying that it is not religious experience, theology, or law that is relevant, only those aspects of the religious that provide "motives and programmes for political action".[124] This is important as the thesis moves forward, as the distinction between Islam-as-faith and political Islam is a distinction which holds the key to the applicability of a transnational Islamic *umma,* while a transnational faith or theology remains impossible. Additionally, Owen identifies the problem political Islam has in defining itself in oppositional

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[121] *Ibid.* pg. 32
[122] Owen, Roger: *State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2004), pg. 3
[123] *Ibid.* pg. 154
[124] *Ibid.*

terms; in doing so he reinforces Bulliet's notion that Islam *in power* is an unknown entity, with some notable exceptions like the *wilayat al-faqih* of Iran, Hamas in Gaza, the Taliban in Afghanistan, Omar al-Bashir and Hassan al-Turabi's implementation of *shari'a* in the north of Sudan, and most recently the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and *Ennahda* government in Tunisia. As Owen states:

> [T]here is a general air of uncertainty about what a Muslim, or Jewish, polity would look like. And this in turn helps to explain some of the widespread opposition to religious movements which might conceivably seize state power without anyone being able to know in advance how exactly they would put it to use.[125]

Owen's approach is a positive step forward, acknowledging structural factors more than Constructivist theory, yet taking heed of the power of ideas to shape reality more so than classical Marxist oriented theory. However, Owen still operates within a bounded reality whereby the state as a unit of analysis on the international stage is uncontested. He comments that for Islamists, "the gap between religion and politics, religion and the state, impiously opened up by Western interference, had to be closed without delay".[126] Here is the implicit assumption that the wish to close the gap between religion and politics *is* the quest to close the gap between religion and state. The question of the state's significance to religion, to Islam, is not even present. This is a fundamental problem of IR scholarship which the chapter will return to later.

Theoretical Pluralism: FPA and Realist Inspired Study of the Middle East

The remaining IR works applied to the Middle East region adopt a theoretically pluralist approach, incorporating much of what has already mentioned, alongside more FPA and Realist theory. The first study is that of Gerd Nonneman's edited volume titled *Analyzing Middle East Foreign Policies and the Relationships with Europe*. Nonneman describes his approach as theoretically eclectic, though his emphasis remains on FPA which "must be

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[125] *Ibid.* pg. 155
[126] *Ibid.* pg. 157

multi-level and multi-causal, as well as contextual".[127] Nonneman's use of three levels of analysis, domestic, regional and international, allows him to incorporate the structural or systemic theories of Marxist inspired theory at the international level, while giving credence to the constitutive power of ideologies and religion at the domestic and regional levels.[128] Islam is rendered as a transnational ideological issue, and thus only becomes a foreign policy determinant on the regional level. Its power has reduced as state identities have consolidated, but much in the same vein as Gause, Nonneman states that "[n]ever the less, [Islam] may become more problematic in times of crisis, not least because of popular pressure".[129] Most interestingly, Nonneman begins suggest a possible bias in IR and FPA scholarship regarding North-South politics. This bias sets the agenda for study as 'Euro-MENA (Middle East and North Africa)' relations, for example, while the other perspective of 'MENA-Euro' relations remains neglected. The opportunity teased at here, which will be examined in this thesis, is identifying the reason *why* political Islam does not play out at the international level of analysis. The chapter will argue that the answer is a by-product of the North-South relationship which Nonneman is referring to, in this instance played out through a Westphalian narrative that perpetuates the state as the only form of social organisation on the international level.

Louise Fawcett's edited volume, *International Relations of the Middle East,* echoes the critique of Western-centric scholarship of the Middle East made by Nonneman. Fawcett remarks, optimistically, that "International Relations scholarship has increasingly freed itself from its Western origins: it has slowly become 'globalized', with more and more critical voices getting heard". [130] Unfortunately, like Nonneman, she unwittingly reinforces this Western-centric view by failing to recognise the foreign systems of influence that prop up the state system in the Middle East, instead naïvely stating that "[d]espite its contested, and at times fluid properties, the state system in the

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[127] Nonneman, Gerd: "Introduction", in Nonneman, Gerd, (ed.): *Analyzing Middle East Foreign Policies and the Relationships with Europe,* (London: Routledge, 2005), pg. 2
[128] Nonneman, Gerd: "Analyzing the Foreign Policies of the Middle East and North Africa: A Conceptual Framework", in Nonneman, Gerd, (ed.): *Analysing Middle East Foreign Policies and the Relationships with Europe,* (London: Routledge, 2005), pg. 12-15
[129] *Ibid.* pg. 12
[130] Fawcett, Louise, "Introduction: The Middle East and International Relations", pg. 7

Middle East has proved remarkable for its survival and durability".[131] Barry Buzan and Ana Gonzalez-Pelaez's edited book, *International Society and the Middle East* also adopts a problematic take on the perceived 'neutrality' of the international system (of states), when applied to the Middle East. This work broadly identifies as an application of the English School of International Relations to a regional subsystem, in the tradition of Buzan's revival of the English School in recent years. Unlike Fawcett, however, the neutrality of the state system in Buzan and Gonzalez-Pelaez's work is not an unspoken assumption but is actively argued in Halliday's contribution, in the first chapter of *International Society and the Middle East*, an argument the chapter turns to presently.

Initially it would seem that much of the nuance of Halliday's *The Middle East in International Relations* carries over to his contribution to this English School treatment of the Middle East. For example, he talks about the double challenge in applying any paradigm to a specific region, whereby the theory must attempt to explain "a particular history, state or region", but also see "how far this specific case… itself challenges the theory".[132] Halliday's statement here, in a way, encapsulates the broad thrust of this thesis, an examination of the way political Islam challenges the IR theories used to explain it. However, while Halliday acknowledges the way in which pan-Islam might challenge territorially based analyses, he does not seek to explore how that challenge plays out with the English School. Rather, he pushes pan-Islam into a conceptual box that 'fits' within the state based analysis of the English School.[133] Too much, Halliday claims, is made of religious and cultural difference; "[i]n no supposedly different cultural or religious context are such universal principles as the right of nations to self-determination or the sovereignty of states formally or even implicitly rejected".[134] It appears Halliday himself struggles to believe this statement, as later he contradicts himself when writing:

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[131] *Ibid.* pg. 5
[132] Halliday, Fred: "The Middle East and Conceptions of 'International Society'", in Buzan, Barry and Gonzalez-Pelaez, Ana, (eds.): *International Society and the Middle East,* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pg. 2
[133] *Ibid.,* pg. 10
[134] *Ibid.,* pg. 11

The European 'state system' did indeed spread across the world, but in large measure by defeating, subjugating, forming and deforming the societies and polities with which it came into contact. The difficulties the modern world has with the non-European world are, therefore, not the result of an incomplete spread of Westphalian values, or the resistance of undemocratic, or Islamic, or Asiatic societies and polities to democratic values, but to the very character, and violence, of that spread itself.[135]

The two positions shown here, between on the one hand an assertion that the spread of the state system is unproblematic, resting on universally accepted principles of sovereignty and self-determination, and on the other hand an acknowledgement that the spread of these 'universal' principles involved violence, are ones that this English School treatment of the Middle East struggles to reconcile. Halliday attempts to circumvent this tension by emphasising the difference between the state system that spread from Europe (which for him is universally acceptable), and the nature of that spread, referring to, presumably, the violence associated with colonisation and decolonisation which gave birth to many of the states in the Middle East. Without further study as to the relationship between the use violence and coercion involved in the spread of the state system, and the nature of the system itself, the assertion that there is a qualitative difference between the two is somewhat weak, as it infers that violence in the spread of the system has no wider bearing on the normative grounding of that system. Put another way, Halliday's emphasis on the distinction between the spread of the system and the nature of the system, reads as a belief that 'yes coercion was regrettable, but those Middle Eastern states would have adopted the same system on their own eventually. Now that they have adopted the state system it affirms the universality of the system.' Regardless of the narrative Halliday uses to inform his history of the state system, he is accepting that Islam bears little relevance to the international system. Before the chapter moves onto establishing some of the commonalities between all the surveyed applications of IR theories to the Middle East, this section will analyse one final case, that of Hinnebusch and Ehteshami's edited work, *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*.

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[135] *Ibid.*, pg. 18

Hinnebusch defines his approach as a modified Realism; "Realist solutions to the problem of order remain more relevant in the Middle East than elsewhere because… transnational norms restraining interstate conduct are the least institutionalized there".[136] The reason a modified Realism is used by Hinnebusch is an acknowledgement of the particular circumstances Middle Eastern states were established in, after the First World War. Given the arbitrary nature of state boundaries, irredentism, "dissatisfaction with the incongruity between territorial borders and "imagined communities"",[137] is especially prevalent in the Middle East, though it is by no means a phenomenon unique to the region. Hinnebusch observes that the "state system was imposed on a pre-existing cultural and linguistic unity that more or less persists";[138] more explicitly put, he is saying that the existence of a pre-existing trans-national identity, whether it be an Arab or Islamic one, combined with a legitimacy deficit for Middle Eastern states, requires Realism to adapt; the peculiar dynamics of irredentism in the Middle East frustrates the national interest traditionally assumed by Realism.

Unfortunately, Islam is not dealt with as a religion that helps constitute the reality of its believers. Instead it is treated as a surrogate for Arabism,[139] or is only mentioned as an oppositional force – opposing increased Western intervention in the Middle East. The problematic way in which Islam in perceived here is evident where the terms 'Middle Eastern' and 'Islamic' are used interchangeably; in doing so, Hinnebusch is not identifying, as Owen does, the ways in which Islam, even in the narrow confines of a trans-national ideology which Owen places it in, operates in different ways to culture. The adoption of a Realist epistemology and methodology, even modified ones, leads to an over emphasis of the power of the state, for ideas are only entertained that play within the boundaries and use the vocabulary of 'the state'.

Having reviewed the ways in which Islam is side lined or subsumed into material factors by existing IR scholarship of the Middle East, it becomes apparent that further study of Islam in IR requires a different or at least modified

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[136] Hinnebusch, Raymond: "Introduction: The Analytical Framework", in Hinnebusch, Raymond and Ehteshami, Anoushiravan, (eds.): *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States,* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), pg. 21
[137] *Ibid.* pg. 7
[138] *Ibid.* pg. 8
[139] *Ibid.,* pg. 10

analytical framework to adequately pay heed to the constitutive power of the faith. The development of this framework is the focus of the following chapter; for now, the next section will return to the underlying problem that Islam faces when articulated on the international level: the legacy and power of the state system.

The Westphalian Narrative in International Relations Scholarship

The study of the Middle East in IR, using as its unit of analysis the nation-state, demands that political Islam define itself in similar terms to be accepted by the discipline. Piscatori notes that Muslim elites were keen to accept and adopt the nation-state system as it granted them supposed immunity from external powers and *legitimacy* externally;[140] Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his reforms to the Turkish republic being a prime example. The concerns of greater Muslim unity paled in comparison to the threats faced by Imperial Europe. Put crudely, political Islam must 'play the game', at least a little, to be considered a 'legitimate' theory.

Such a position of necessity is one echoed by Maududi, who while scornful of the nation-state, saw it as necessary for his native India to be able to gain independence from Great Britain. The nation-state however, was not to be an end point in and of itself. Instead, having achieved independence the Muslim states could begin to unify again without interference from colonial powers.[141] While the first part of his vision was realised, and independence was gained, the second phase never really materialised. Muslim states, as Ayubi notes, give no special treatment to fellow Muslim states, territorial sovereignty is adhered to and there is no preferential treatment between Muslim states in economic terms.[142] Given the advent of supranational organisations, especially, for example, the European Union (EU), it may be possible to talk of a European *umma* already existing. A group of nation-states in this instance united on common normative grounds (which would be the unity easiest achieved in a Muslim *umma*) as well as, substantially, economic and some judicial grounds. This being the case, is may be possible for a Muslim *umma* to coalesce from the state centric foundations in IR that have been evidenced in the preceding

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[140] Piscatori, James: *Islam in a World of Nation States*, pg. 69-71
[141] *Ibid*. pg. 101
[142] Ayubi, Nazih: *Political Islam*, pg. 122-123

review of IR studies of the Middle East, an assertion the thesis will explore in later chapters.

In the discipline of IR the predominance of power, self-interest and material factors often closes the doors to other, less well articulated themes in the relations of states. Globalization represents a contemporary challenge whereby "sovereignty and nation-states are undergoing severe delimitation and mutation".[143] Former UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, wrote his now infamous *Agenda for Peace* in 1992, within which he highlights the predicament for the 'old' Westphalian ideal. He stated that:

> The foundation-stone of this work [maintenance of international peace and security] is and must remain the State. Respect for its fundamental sovereignty and integrity are crucial to any common international progress. The time of absolute and exclusive sovereignty, however, has passed.[144]

Rather than claim, as Boutros-Ghali did, that the time of absolute sovereignty has passed (if indeed it ever existed in practice), the starting point of this thesis is to recognise that at the least, the world exists in a period of flux; as notions of sovereignty are changing the opportunities for alternative theory are many, and the chance to bend conceptual boundaries and reshape the discipline, if only slightly, is far more achievable than was so when Maududi envisioned a Muslim *umma* sprouting from the various nationalistic projects at the end of Empire. Indeed, Mandaville's assertion that "the authority of statist politics is currently under threat from a variety of... transformations which serve to disembed political identities from national contexts and also stretch social relations across time and space"[145], reads almost exactly as the challenge the *umma* construct brings to IR.

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[143] Dean, Mitchell: *Governing Societies: Political Perspectives on Domestic and International Rule,* (Berkshire: Open University Press, 2007), pg. 5
[144] Boutros-Ghali, Boutros: "An Agenda for Peace: Preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping," United Nations, 1992, Accessed on 7/5/13
http://www.unrol.org/files/A_47_277.pdf
[145] Mandaville, Peter: *Transnational Muslim Politics*, pg. 2

The Legacy of Westphalia

While the Western state system appears to be the dominant mould to conduct international relations, it is not the only instance of IR available for study. As such, it is worth analysing, briefly, how the state system became the prevailing instance of IR. Political modernity was achieved, so the story goes, with the advent of the modern state system, which coalesced in the seventeenth century with the Treaty of Westphalia. This development came with far more than the idea of territorial sovereignty; the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw "the birth of modern capitalism, modern science and technology and [Christian Protestantism]".[146] In this narrative of development, political modernity is seen as progression, "from the mythical to the scientific, from the barbaric to the rational/democratic, from the constrained, ordered subject to the utilitarian individual "free to choose"".[147] Taking these binary distinctions as staple in IR, a community is looked down on that does not develop or articulate its politics in the mould that Europe did in the seventeenth century. Jim George speaks of the "post-Kantian sovereign man"[148] who represents the rationale for states in Hobbes' anarchical world. For him, this is the moment where the absolute pursuit of rationalism, 'logocentrism', became embedded in Western thought.[149] This logocentrism is apparent in IR especially, which Assis Malaquias describes as "fundamentally a scientific attempt to explain – and, if possible, predict – the behavior of states in the complex relationships with each other".[150] Here the logocentrism is twofold: firstly is the emphasis on scientific explanation, and secondly is the emphasis on states, a far more subversive example which typifies the state-centrism in IR theory in broad terms, and Realism more specifically. As such, "the Kantian moment represents not just Enlightenment progress, potential, and openness but also devastating closure, the closure of critical, historical, and social reflection upon critiques, histories and societies".[151]

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[146] Malaquias, Assis: "Reformulating International Relations Theory: African Insights and Challenges", in Dunn, Kevin and Shaw, Timothy, (eds.): *Africa's Challenge to International Relations Theory,* (Baisingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), pg. 12

[147] George, Jim: *Discourses of Global Politics: A Critical (Re) Introduction to International Relations,* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994), pg. 42

[148] *Ibid.* pg. 201

[149] *Ibid.* pg. 191-216

[150] Malaquias, Assis, "Reformulating International Relations Theory: African Insights and Challenges"12

[151] George, Jim: *Discourses of Global Politics,* pg. 201

Turan Kayaoglu argues that if the peace of Westphalia created an international society, it did so by creating a normative divergence between these 'civilised' states and the rest of the world; "[n]on European states, lacking this European culture and social contract, remained in anarchy until the European states allowed them to join the international society".[152] In this way, 'international relations', with its suppositions about sovereignty and secularism, is not truly 'international'. The legacy of Westphalia, perhaps, is the legacy of a lack of global pluralism in the discipline. IR, according to Kayaoglu, should abandon the Westphalian narrative for four reasons:

1. It misrepresents the emergence of the modern international system.
2. Its state centrism can lead to misdiagnoses of many aspects of IR.
3. It prevents the theorising of cross civilisational interdependencies as many 'international' norms are posited as transcendental.
4. It prevents the development of global pluralism in the discipline.[153]

Points 3 and 4 are the most relevant to this thesis, as if the attempt at articulating an Islamic IR is to be attempted, a key component will be the 'cross civilisational' dialogue between, in this example, the state and *umma*. The term 'cross civilisational' is problematic however as it resonates with essentialist character, which the chapter will now briefly explore.

Essentialism posits that there is an essential element to entities that "determine[s] or limit[s] the possibilities of their social and political developments".[154] Oliver Roy critically summarises this essentialist view of Islam as a closed, specific and timeless system that is "the major obstacle prohibiting access to political modernity".[155] However Islam is an unsatisfactory term. It does not explain, for example, Saddam Hussein's decision to invade Kuwait, so there is more than an 'Islamic character' at work in the Middle East.[156] Equally, there is no 'West' with which to grapple with, Western normative authority can emanate from Australia just as easily as it can from Europe or the American continent. The plurality of theorising *within* this normative block is also underplayed in Islamist literature. Bobby Sayyid's

[152] Kayaoglu, Turan: "Westphalian Eurocentrism", pg. 193
[153] *Ibid.* pg. 195
[154] Zubaida, Sami: *Islam, the People & the State*, pg. 122
[155] Roy, Olivier: *The Failure of Political Islam,* (London: IB Tauris, 1994), pg. 7
[156] Halliday, Fred: *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation,* (London: IB Tauris, 1996), pg. 207-210

account of the War on Terror, is a prime example of this. Sayyid states that "[t]he crusade on Islam(ism) demonstrates the failure of legitimacy, and the difficulties Western cultural practices and values have in trying to pass themselves off as universal and natural".[157] Here Sayyid's use of the word crusade incorrectly lumps the entirety of 'Western' culture with the actions of Roman Catholics in the Middle Ages, giving that 'timeless quality' to the term that Roy criticises. Also, in claiming that Western cultural practices find no currency in Muslim countries, Sayyid also incorrectly depicts the two positions as zero-sum, all or nothing. While it is true that the struggle against the cultural dominance of the 'West' has found currency with the populations of many Middle Eastern, Muslim countries, this animosity is tempered by the fact that the governments in these countries still buy weapons, medicine and develop significant economic ties with Western states.[158] Often things are far more complex than Islamist writers may profess. One need not balk at the notion of 'Western' cultural notions when there is nothing intrinsic to many of these notions that prevent the practice of the religion of Islam.

That is not to say there is no cause to reject the notion of European norms relating to the state, if the arguments to this end attempt more than playing towards an essentialist, 'us' verses 'them' mentality. Rather than broad sweeping statements, Peter Mandaville is far more nuanced and specific when he claims that:

> As the sovereign nation-state system began to reproduce itself in parts of the world culturally and historically distinct from Europe – settings possessing their own understandings of how religion and politics do or do not fit together – it was inevitable that tensions would flare around the question of secularism.[159]

Reconciling a place for religion in IR will be one of the main challenges of this thesis, but rather than a broad statement about reconciling 'Islam' with the 'West', the thesis will attempt to specifically reconcile the *umma* and the state.

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[157] Sayyid, Bobby: *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and The Emergence of Islamism,* (London: Zed Books, 2003), pg. xvii
[158] Halliday, Fred: *The Middle East in International Relations*, pg. 155
[159] Mandaville, Peter: *Global Political Islam*, pg. 7

Beyond this, a second challenge the *umma* poses, if indirectly, to the international system, is the notion of the community over the individual. It is this dichotomy that this third and final section of the chapter now addresses.

Liberal Individualism, the *Umma* and Communitarianism

Liberalism is a term that is not well defined in IR, though it is a term that permeates the discipline. Michael Doyle wrote in the late 1980s that "[t]here is no canonical description of liberalism".[160] Yet, the entire Western political system is founded on its principles, that is, the principles of the European Enlightenment.[161] The fundamental pillar of liberalism is the respect for individual autonomy.[162] This respect leads to a collection of rights that differentiate liberal states from other, non-liberal states; these include, but are not limited to, "equality before the law, free speech and other civil liberties, private property, and elected representation".[163] As noted earlier in the chapter, there exists the notion that to the values of the liberal state Islam is "repellent and strange",[164] political Islam and liberalism are perceived to provide competing discursive opportunities.[165] To assess the validity of such positions this section will look at the ontological groundings of liberalism, followed by its criticisms.

According to contemporary liberalism "it is the rights and duties of citizenship which constitute the shared bonds of political community".[166] The idea of Kant's sovereign human being, a rational actor fully able to articulate and realise their own wants and needs, heavily underpins liberal thought. This sovereign person, in creating civil society, would bring the world to a state of perpetual peace.[167] Kant says specifically, when "men come nearer to their

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[160] Doyle, Michael: "Liberalism and World Politics", (*The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 80, No. 4, 1986), pg. 1152
[161] Ramsay, Maureen: *What's Wrong with Liberalism?: A Radical Critique of Liberal Political Philosophy,* (London: Continuum, 2004), pg. 1
[162] Haidar, Hamid Hadji: *Liberalism and Islam: Practical Reconciliation Between the Liberal State and Shiite Muslims,* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pg. 7; Ramsay, Maureen: *What's Wrong with Liberalism?*, pg. 1
[163] Doyle, Michael: "Liberalism and World Politics", pg. 1151
[164] Van Ess, Josef: *The Flowering of Muslim Theology*, pg. 1
[165] Adamson, Fiona: "Global Liberalism Versus Political Islam", pg. 548
[166] Chandler, David: "Critiquing Liberal Cosmopolitanism? The Limits of the Biopolitical Approach", (*International Political Sociology*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 2009), pg. 62
[167] Knutsen, Torbjorn: *A History of International Relations Theory,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), pg. 137-144

principles, as consequence of progress in their civilisation, the difference of language and of religions leads to and secures a well-founded peace".[168] For Kant, as societies develop they will share certain characteristics, the most important being that the population exercise more power over their lives, that they develop a democratic, or in his terms, republican mode of government. Since Kant believes that war only benefits the rulers of the population and not the populace themselves, a democratic government will always seek to avoid war. The lowest common denominator in such a liberal world view is the individual. When free, these individuals can come together and form society later. For Islam the *modus operandi* is reversed: society is assumed to exist already, an Islamic society that is, and its aim on the social level is to bring individual Muslims into that society.[169]

Maureen Ramsey sees Kant's 'abstract individual' as a fallacy; it is not true to reality to believe in the existence of an "asocial, atomistic, solitary and self-sufficient individual".[170] The idea of individuals as "sole generators of their wants and preferences"[171] is misleading as individuals are, at the very least, influenced by their surroundings as much as they constitute them. For Ramsey a liberal theory that pursues individual freedom with such a "radical conviction"[172] may undermine the cause of justice; such is the debate between positive and negative liberty. Negative liberty is characterised by a freedom *from* oppression. Isaiah Berlin notes that freedom in this schema is the area in which one can act "unobstructed by others"; if an individual is prevented from doing what they want to do, then they are not free.[173] Positive liberty, on the other hand, would see the highest goal of society to prevent any external factor impinging on an individual's decisions. As such, a transcendental authority is required to coerce society towards some goal "which they [society] would, if they were more enlightened, themselves pursue, but do not, because they are blind or ignorant or corrupt".[174]

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[168] Kant, Immanuel: *Project for a Perpetual peace: A Philosophical Essay,* (London: Printed by S. Couchman for Vernor and Hood, 1796), pg. 41
[169] Labeeb, Ahmed Bsoul: "Theory of International Relations in Islam", pg. 72
[170] Ramsay, Maureen: *What's Wrong with Liberalism?*, pg. 32
[171] *Ibid.* pg. 32
[172] *Ibid.* pg. 253
[173] Berlin, Isaiah: *Four Essays on Liberty,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), pg. 122
[174] *Ibid.* pg. 132-133

The former, negative liberty is perhaps best exemplified by John Mill, who states "that there ought to exist the fullest liberty of professing and discussing, as a matter of ethical conviction, any doctrine, however immoral it may be considered".[175] Such a view point, with such uninhibited proclamation of what it is to be free, is described as "comprehensive" liberalism, which can be contrasted to the "softened" liberalism of John Rawls.[176] Rawlsian liberalism represents the positive liberty standpoint of this on going debate. Whether one agrees with Rawls or not, his theory "dominates the field", as writers on liberalism who disagree with Rawls *have* to justify why.[177] Contemporary debates on liberalism centre on agreement or disagreement with Rawls' concept in *Political Liberalism*.[178]

Rawls' position is deemed to be representative of positive liberalism as in his conception of the individual he acknowledges that some individuals have access to greater resources than others. Access to resources, education and wealth, for example, affect social justice.[179] Therefore, some measure of redistribution is required by way of the state, which impinges the absolute freedoms of Mill so to provide equity in society. In essence, Rawls' theory aims to provide a 'level playing field' for all individuals of society, so that those less advantaged might achieve their worth. So this concept of freedom "directly derive[s] from views of what constitutes a self, a person, a man".[180]

The two variants of liberalism are indicative of another dichotomy, that of moral and political liberalism. Mill's liberalism has a transcendental quality to it, in that the rights of the individual stem from some outside source, irrefutable, universal, to all humanity. This is characterised as moral liberalism. Political liberalism, on the other hand, typified by Rawls, is more "neutral", deriving its theory of equality not from a transcendental source of rights, but from the rationality of an individual. For Rawls the "original position", is a sort of fictional state of nature, wherein no individual knows their status in society, their abilities

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[175] Mill, John Stuart: "On Liberty", in Wootton, David, (ed.): *Modern Political Thought: Readings From Machiavelli to Nietzsche,* (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing, 1996), pg. 614
[176] Haidar, Hamid Hadji: *Liberalism and Islam*, pg. 2
[177] Kymlicka, Will: *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, pg. 55
[178] Rawls, John: *Political Liberalism: Expanded edition,* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005)
[179] *Ibid.* pg. 299-300
[180] Berlin, Isaiah: *Four Essays on Liberty*, pg. 134

or disabilities, ethnicity or gender.[181] In this position, when distributing resources no one person is able to effect the outcome so to benefit their 'in group' as, in the original position, behind what Rawls refers to as "the veil of ignorance", no one can know to which in group would they belong. Kymlica elucidates that Rawls' contract theory helps "render vivid our intuitions, in the same way that earlier theorists [Mill] invoked the state of nature to render the idea of natural equality".[182]

For Hamid Haidar, Rawls' liberalism is less secular than Mill's or Kant's, and so, paradoxically, is more tolerant of alternative ideologies, in Haidar's case Shi'a Islam.[183] Removing the secularism from liberalism helps to reconcile it with Islam. As liberalism is concerned with "tolerance, individual liberty, and rights" and secularism with "separating life or politics from religious concerns", a less secular liberalism may lead to an Islamic liberalism.[184] The absolute dominance of liberal ideals in IR scholarship means that the debate is almost always one of either 'how best to raise Islam to a level where by it is compatible with liberalism', or a zero-sum conceptualisation whereby *only* liberalism *or* Islam can exist in contemporary international relations. This thesis will attempt the reverse, much in the same way as the state vs. *umma* debate; the thesis will endeavour to develop a form of political Islam and then assess the ways in which *liberalism* falls short of its schema.

John Schwarzmantel is very critical of any merging of religion in politics; for him, religion and liberalism are challengers for the same ontological space, incapable of living together as religion offers "illusionary consolations for poverty and misery in the real world which could in fact be cured by human action".[185] In the teleological world view of liberalism, ever marching on towards progress, religion represents a "reversal of the modernist Enlightenment project", and something to avoid.[186] Schwarzmantel's preference for secular ideologies rather than religion lies in the fact he sees religion as a particularly divisive form of

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[181] Rawls, John: *Political Liberalism: Expanded edition*, pg. 305
[182] Kymlicka, Will: *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, pg. 68
[183] Haidar, Hamid Hadji: *Liberalism and Islam*
[184] *Ibid.* pg. 21
[185] Schwarzmantel, John: *Ideology and Politics*, pg. 120
[186] *Ibid.* pg. 121

cultural identification, undermining the unity offered by secular ideologies.[187] So, rather than an age of 'post-ideology', an age of postmodern rejection of grand narratives, Schwarzmantel maintains "[a] more accurate view sees such post-ideological diversity as existing within and contained by a more pervasive dominant ideology of neo-liberalism".[188] Such a teleological view of progress is problematic as by singling out religious ideology as being divisive, he does not acknowledge the divisiveness of secular ideologies. Haidar's analysis also focuses on secularism as the fault line between political Islam and liberalism. This thesis will argue instead that the focus of any perceived incompatibility can be more correctly attributed to a notion of universal individualism inherent in the liberal ideology, not to secularism. As chapter 5, *Pluralism not Polarisation*, will demonstrate, the notion that liberalism is somehow neutral to competing values is problematic. For now, this chapter will continue by highlighting briefly the ways in which liberalism can be divisive, problematising Schwarzmantel's notion of liberal 'progress'.

If the historical precedent of the Second World War or the Cold War were not enough to point out that secular ideologies may come into conflict as much as religious ones might, one can look to the critical takes on liberalism in the contemporary world, such as Mark Duffield's *Development, Security and Unending War*.[189] For Duffield, even in this post-Cold War era of liberalism's dominance, there exists a sovereign frontier between developed and undeveloped peoples which "acts across and blurs the conventional national/international dichotomy".[190] This frontier represents the gap between those developed states, which enjoy the benefits of the liberal world view and those undeveloped states, who fall outside of this schema. Duffield states that "[a] democracy is not necessarily liberal, nor is liberalism of itself democratic".[191] Liberal states on the one side of the global divide use development aid as a tool to govern what Duffield refers to quite disparagingly as "surplus life", on the other end of the divide.[192] Here liberalism is portrayed as explicitly divisive of

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[187] *Ibid.* pg. 123
[188] *Ibid.* pg. 168
[189] Duffield, Mark: *Development, Security and Unending War: Governing the World of Peoples,* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007)
[190] *Ibid.* pg. 79
[191] *Ibid.* pg. 6-7
[192] *Ibid.* pg. 19

peoples, and yet for Schwarzmantel it is acceptably the pervasive 'glue' to hold the ideologies of the world together. The absolute priority of the individual undermines the cause of social justice, and so Ramsey concludes that "[t]o bring forward the emancipatory project liberalism once embarked upon, we can retain the respect for the equal worth of each individual, but we must jettison the liberal conception of that individual and all that follows from it".[193]

The contemporary phenomenon of 'human security' is for Duffield the liberal solution to 'surplus population'; it is "less an analytical concept than a signifier of shared political and moral values".[194] In pursuing the security of individuals over the security of states, liberalism has apparently taken ownership of the term 'humanity'. The pursuit of social justice for all people, regardless of where they live, is a 'liberal' pursuit undertaken by 'liberal states'. When Duffield explains how "sovereignty over life within ineffective states is now internationalized, negotiable and conditional",[195] he means that sovereignty over life is negotiable *with liberal states* and conditional *upon the ruling of liberal states*. This is not a huge criticism to bring to the international community; after all there are very prudent reasons states and communities do not look to North Korea or Zimbabwe to adjudicate on humanitarian crises but rather look to (liberal) institutions such as the UN. The point that can be made is that if sovereignty over life is a developing feature of study in IR, then political Islam is capable of offering its own conception of humanity as an alternative to the conception of humanity monopolised by liberalism. However, political Islam's concept of humanity rests on a different understanding of the individual than liberalism, as alluded to earlier in this section. This being the case, then to engage political Islam with liberalism in the contemporary political environment may give Islam a greater degree of agency in IR. Such a dialogue would form the 'glue' to mesh an Islamic union and secular, liberal union together.

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[193] Ramsay, Maureen: *What's Wrong with Liberalism?*, pg. 254
[194] Mack, Andrew: "The Human Security Report Project: Background Paper," (Vancouver: Human Security Centre, Lui Institute for Global Issues, University of British Columbia, 2002), pg. 2
[195] Duffield, Mark: *Development, Security and Unending War*, pg. 185

Conclusions

Having highlighted the fact that political Islam has many competing variants, this chapter arrived at a working definition of the *type* of political Islam which will be used in this thesis, which was dubbed Normative Political Islam. This definition implied a separation between Islam as it is understood as a faith, and Islam as it is understood in politics. Such a separation derived from an understanding of the Prophet Muhammed's goal as being the spread of the faith, not the establishment of an Islamic empire. Furthermore, the acknowledgement of the separation between Islam-as-faith and Islam-as-politics does not necessarily deny a unique, transcendental element to the politics of that early Muslim polity. Rather, the thesis accepts the limitations of human capacity to replicate the polity overseen by The Prophet. The 'normative' aspect of Normative Political Islam refers to the way in which certain practices are overshadowed by a commitment to Islam-as-faith, though this is only true in the broadest sense, as will be examined in subsequent chapters. In beginning to give substance to Normative Political Islam, this chapter has established a definition that makes some progress in answering one of the thesis' research questions, namely, *how extensive is the guidance offered in Islamic source texts with regards to IR?* This chapter has shown that such guidance is limited, but the extent to which commitment to the transcendental elements of the faith influences the practice of politics has yet to be established, something that chapter 3, *Sovereignty and Normative Political Islam,* will attempt to establish. For now, the next chapter will move onto establishing the framework which the thesis will use to construct its argument.

Chapter 2: Exploring the Interaction Between Islam and IR: A Conceptual Framework

Having outlined the problems with existing IR theorising of the Middle East in relation to its poor conception of religion, and Islam specifically, the current chapter will now discuss the conceptual framework which will be employed to analyse that phenomenon. The chapter will outline the relationship of the thesis with IR and Islam, as well as its method of synthesising the two. Briefly, by way of summary, this chapter will outline the position of the thesis as second order IR theorising, in doing so it will draw on a diverse range of disciplines, not just IR but theology, history and philosophy. To make conceptual space for this endeavour the ontological and epistemological foundations of the thesis will be argued to be poststructural, influenced by the work of Foucault.[196] In showing Islam and poststructuralism to converge in the critique of IR, but diverge in the construction of alternatives, the chapter addresses the secondary research question: *To what degree is there a synthesis in poststructural and Islamic critiques of IR?* The chapter then moves on to arguing the reasons for studying religion in IR, opening another necessary space with regards to the secularism of the discipline. After creating this conceptual space, the chapter will expand on the method used to unpack concepts into this newly created space, specifically, the use of Constructivism to distinguish Islam-as-politics from Islam-as-faith. Finally, the chapter will outline some methodological concerns deriving from the problems in defining 'Islam', and Edward Said's warning against Orientalism. In this final section the chapter will explain and define the limitations of the concepts used throughout the thesis.

Previous chapters have outlined the overarching aim of this research as an analysis of IR theory and the problems that this theory presents in the face of Islam's conception of politics in the international sphere. Such a study is meta-theoretical, as mentioned in the preceding chapter; that is, this thesis uses theory as its object of study, rather than using theory as a tool to make empirical data its object of study. Both types of inquiry have a place in international

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[196] While the thesis acknowledges that Foucault worked hard to avoid the labelling, seeing his ideas as "instruments". In *Society Must be Defended* he states that "Ultimately, what you do with them [Foucault's ideas as instruments] both concerns me and is none of my business". See: Foucault, Michel: *Society Must Be Defended*, trans. Macey, David (London: Penguin Books, 2004), pg. 2. As the chapter unfolds it will clarify the use of Foucault and poststructuralism.

relations scholarship, and serve two distinct purposes. Using empirical data the object of study gets to the crux of IR, constructing arguments about, and explaining the dynamics of the international system. The study of theory is related to those same goals, but rather has a regulatory effect on that first type of theory. The two types of study are dubbed first order (empirical based) and second order (theory based) theory by Alexander Wendt.[197]

The aims of this thesis root it firmly in second order theorising; as such, the thesis will be problematising the epistemological groundings of various IR theories. Second order theorising requires a certain level of abstraction, but by defining 'Islam' as centred on Sunni orthodoxy and using the Middle East as its location of enquiry, the thesis here outlines exactly what level of abstraction it requires. With regards to the term 'Islam', the thesis does not use the term in an *entirely* abstract sense; rather, 'Islam' refers to Sunni orthodoxy, as mentioned in the previous chapter. Beyond this, the thesis uses the Middle East as its location of enquiry. As the thesis is engaged in second order theorising, to locate its enquiry in the Middle East is not done to make empirical claims about the region, but rather to allow discussion of the questions posed in a more accessible, less abstract way. Indeed, to make empirical claims on the Middle East given the analytical framework presented in this chapter would represent a methodological inconsistency, related to Edward's Said's critique of reading secondary sources as a source of Oriental 'reality', in place of actual empirical study.[198]

The analysis of epistemology, the nature of knowledge, might also be categorised as critical theory, in the way Robert Cox defined it in 1981. For Cox, critical theory "is critical in the sense that it stands apart from the prevailing order of the world and asks how that order came about".[199] It is in Cox's mould of critical theory that this thesis attempts to challenge and broaden the research agenda of IR, allowing it to pose new questions and thus pave the way to new and different first order work. As Wendt summarises, the most important contribution of second order questions is the way in which, "making explicit and

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[197] Wendt, Alexander: "Bridging the theory/meta-theory gap", pg. 383
[198] See: Said, Edward: "Shattered Myths", in Naseer, Aruri, (ed.): *Middle East Crucible,* (Wilmette: Medina University Press, 1975) and Said, Edward: "Arabs, Islam and the Dogmas of the West", in Macfie, Alexander Lyon, (ed.): *Orientalism: A Reader,* (New York: New York University Press, 2000)
[199] Cox, Robert: "Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory", (*Millennium: A Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 1981), pg. 129

critiquing the foundational assumptions that structure research agendas they [second-order questions] may free up first order theorists to ask more questions than they have previously".[200]

If a conceptual framework defines and outlines the ontological and epistemological positions of a study, and the methodology explains how a study relates to and interacts with its object of inquiry, then the two are analogous in this thesis. The ways in which this research might place itself in disciplinary terms is a continuing question for the thesis. It is not exclusively IR theory, as the thesis draws as much on political philosophy and theology, as it does on IR scholarship. It is not area studies, as there is no interest in incorporating non-Western social constructs into pre-established frames of reference.[201] Once more turning to Wendt, the chapter notes what he describes as the 'insider/outsider dichotomy'. Diagnosing this dichotomy as a holdover of a positivist legacy, it is the idea that outsiders explain while insiders understand, and the purpose of science, and the purpose of social science, is to explain. IR may be a social science, but does that ensure that study which hopes to *understand* is not important in IR? Wendt argues there is a place for both in the discipline; insider/outsider explanations often deal with different questions, but it is not the case there are *always* two stories to tell. Depending on the question being asked, one account will make more sense than the other. In the case of Islam in IR scholarship, it has been argued that the existing treatments do not understand Islam, and religion in general, and therefore their accounts do not always hold up to scrutiny on these terms. This thesis explains why that is so, by attempting to *understand* the faith as it relates to believers, and thus explain more rigorously Islam's place in the discipline of IR.

Epistemological Foundations

To allow Islam, and other religions, to be accounted for in IR, some conceptual space needs to be opened up for such alternative concepts to be fully articulated and so scrutinised. Addressing the concern that currently political Islam is too often defined by what is not, rather than what it may stand for,[202]

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[200] Wendt, Alexander: "Bridging the theory/meta-theory gap", pg. 392
[201] Dallmayr, Fred: "Exit from Orientalism", in Macfie, Alexander Lyon, (ed.): *Orientalism: A Reader,* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), pg. 365
[202] See the previous chapter for the various ways Islam is conceptualised in IR

this section of the chapter argues the dominant epistemology of the Enlightenment, as transmitted to the present day through concepts of political modernity, is one of the impediments to the failure of political Islam to articulate a theory of IR. Perhaps of equal concern in this regard is the failure of Islam to come to terms with the realities of power in the modern world; while Islamists revere the system of international politics last operationalized from the medieval period to the early nineteenth century Islam,[203] this leaves Muslims in positions of power confused as to how that 'ideal' can in any way come to be in the world of nation-states. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to grapple with the nature of religious 'reform' or 're-focus' that is might be needed for Islam were able to take a more constitutive role in IR.[204] Instead this thesis focuses on IR theory and opening the conceptual space for narratives not tied to the Enlightenment to be expanded upon, an Islamic narrative of IR being just one of such alternate voices. This is not to say that these alternative voices are any more valid or authentic than current theory. Indeed, "we must be extremely wary of sliding from references to new possibilities of thinking, acting, and being to a *positive* evaluation of such possibilities".[205] But unless these voices have the space to develop, their worth can never truly be evaluated, leading to arguments defined by what they are opposed to rather than what they support.

The point of departure regarding the epistemology of this thesis will be Foucault because, as will be demonstrated later in the chapter, his epistemology has informed an already very successful analytical framework which is heavily related to the topics of this thesis, namely, Edward Said's Orientalism.. Referring to 'truth' as a goal, perhaps *the* goal of knowledge, Foucault elucidates his perspective:

> In societies like ours, the 'political economy' of truth is characterised by five important traits. 'Truth' is centred on the form of scientific discourse and the institutions which produce it; it is subject to constant economic and political

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[203] Piscatori contests the homogeneity of the behaviour of Muslim polities in this period, undermining the claims of some idealised Islamic past from which to draw lessons about the IR of modern Muslim states. See: Piscatori, James: *Islam in a World of Nation States*

[204] A compelling study into the changes needed in Islamic theological disposition to politics and IR is presented by 'AbdulHamid AbuSulayman. See: AbuSulayman, 'AbdulHamid: *Towards an Islamic Theory of International Relations*

[205] Bernstein, Richard: "Foucault: Critique as a Philisophical Ethos", in Michael, Kelly, (ed.): *Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate,* (London: The MIT Press, 1994), pg. 231. Original emphasis

incitement (the demand for truth, as much for economic production as for political power); it is the object, under diverse forms, of immense diffusion and consumption (circulating through apparatuses of education and information whose extent is relatively broad in the social body, not withstanding certain strict limitations); it is produced and transmitted under the control, dominant if not exclusive, of a few great political and economic apparatuses (university, army, writing, media); lastly, it is the issue of a whole political debate and social confrontation ('ideological' struggles).[206]

What Foucault is getting at here is the fact that much of what is considered 'truth' is knowledge that has particular motives behind it; his examples are the quest for political power, truth as a commodity, truth produced or legitimised through certain institutions, and finally truth as ideologically contested. Essentially he rejects, in the broadly poststructuralist tradition, the idea of some totalising or universal narrative of knowledge.[207] There are, following from this, culturally specific truths, not *a* truth. For Fredrich Nietzche, whose ideas Foucault used extensively, the nature of human experience is always changing and evolving, and relying on truth as a fixed quantity is fallacious.[208] Where Nietzsche's insight reminds us of the temporal relativity of truth and knowledge, "Foucault emphasized the local character of critique".[209] All of this is not to claim emphatically on Foucault's behalf that an objective truth is not possible. It is the ambiguity here between objective truth and anti-foundationalism that is one of the reasons some might resist classifying Foucault as a poststructuralist. For the purposes of the thesis however, Foucault is the route taken into the debates over the status of knowledge production; it is his focus on anti-foundationalism and his emphasis on excavating "subjugated knowledges", that is, "historical contents that have been buried or masked in functional coherences or formal systemizations", [210] which aligns Foucault with poststructuralism for the purposes of this thesis. Different aspects of Foucault's ideas, taken in different contexts, may well conflict with the poststructural label used here, and such

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[206] Foucault, Michel: *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977,* (Harlow: Longman, 1980), pg. 131-132
[207] Gaus, Gerald and Kukathas, Chandran (eds.): *Handbook of Political Theory*, (London: Sage Publications Ltd,2004), pg. 46-47
[208] Nietzsche, Fredrich: *Human, All Too Human,* (London: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), pg. 23-24
[209] Shani, Giorgio: "De-colonizing Foucault", pg. 210
[210] Foucault, Michel: *Society Must Be Defended*, pg. 7

ambiguity betrays the limitations of labels and categorisations and indeed, can be attributed to the opaque nature of Foucault's body of work. As Foucault leads us to poststructuralism, which itself is an ambiguous term, the next section will spend some time defining that concept.

A Note on Terminology

Nicholas Rengger jests that "[p]ostmodernism is one of those words that has a tendency to reduce sensible people to a mad scramble for the nearest and deadliest instrument of destruction that they can find".[211] The same, presumably, can be said for the term poststructuralism, which is employed in this research. There is some ambiguity between the terms postmodernism, poststructuralism and more besides. This section will briefly try to clear up some of the confusion with these terms, as the thesis will proceed to use those terms in this and following chapters.

Bryan Turner makes the distinction between postmodern political theory and the 'postmodern condition' or 'postmodernity'. He writes that "[b]y... [postmodernism], we should mean the philosophical critique of grand narratives, and by... [postmodernity], we should mean the postmodern social condition".[212] This social condition is defined rather broadly by Jane Bennett as simply "a state of fragmentation plagued by a crisis of meaning"[213] but is elaborated on by Turner to refer to the effects of "information technologies, globalization, fragmentation of lifestyles, hyper-consumerism, deregulation of financial markets and public utilities, the obsolescence of the nation-state and social experimentation with the traditional life-course".[214] The intellectual resistance to postmodernism can often derive from the misunderstanding that postmodern political theory is somehow linked to or accentuates the postmodern condition. Even when the distinction between postmodern political theory and the postmodern condition is acknowledged, scepticism about postmodernism might also derive from the belief that "the claim that the collapse of representation… [has] left us only with the realization that our categories are merely infinitely

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[211] Rengger, Nicholas: "No Time like the Present? Postmodernism and Political Theory", (*Political Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 3, 1992), pg. 561
[212] Turner, Bryan: *Orientalism, Postmodernism and Globalism*, pg. 14-15
[213] Bennett, Jane: "Postmodern Approaches to Political Theory", in Gaus, Gerald and Kukathas, Chandran, (eds.): *Handbook of Political Theory,* (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 2004), pg. 53
[214] Turner, Bryan: *Orientalism, Postmodernism and Globalism*, pg. 14-15

different and more or less preferable, never better or worse".[215] Unlike this misconception, postmodern political theories do not necessitate a rejection of 'rational' thinking or Enlightenment values, but rather attempts to remove any universal grounding to that reason. Rengger speaks of Richard Rorty's position in exemplifying the above assertion; "[f]or Rorty, therefore, there is nothing wrong with believing in the hopes of the Enlightenment since our [European] societies are largely built on these hopes; we simply do not need a transcendental grounding for them".[216]

In Turner's analysis, poststructuralism would appear to be a synonym for postmodernism, and both are distinct from the postmodern condition. Distinct from Turner's usage, this thesis uses the term poststructuralism in the way Jim George and David Campbell use the term, as challenging "the foundationalism and essentialism of post-Enlightenment scientific philosophy, [and] its universalist presuppositions about modern rational man [and woman]".[217] In this way, poststructuralism and postmodernism are differentiated in that the former is an ontological statement about the indeterminacy of knowledge (resembling Foucault's position outlined earlier), while the latter refers to the particular set of circumstances in the late twentieth century that gave rise to the current scepticism of meta-narratives (resembling the tradition of Jean-Francois Lyotard's use of the term postmodern [218]). Simplified another way, poststructuralism would maintain that humanity *has not and will not* find a universal and objective standpoint from which to judge actions, while postmodernism would say that humanity is currently unable to lean on a universal and objective standpoint *because of late twentieth century changes in society*. While both terms may come to the same 'end point', the former is an ontological and meta-theoretical statement, while the latter is linked to a specific historical narrative. This chapter arrives at this end point through the former position, poststructuralism, which in turn is arrived at, however imperfectly,

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[215] Rengger, Nicholas: " Postmodernism and Political Theory", pg. 563
[216] *Ibid.*, pg. 565
[217] George, Jim and Campell, David: "Patterns of Dissent and the Celebration of Difference: Critical Social Theory and International Relations", (*International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 3, 1990), pg. 280
[218] Lyotard, Jean-Francois: *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Bennington, Geoff and Massumi, Brian (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), pg. 3-6

through the ideas of Foucault, and poststructuralism and postmodernism will continue to be differentiated throughout the remainder of this thesis.

It needs noting here that in making an ontological statement about the indeterminacy of knowledge, poststructuralism does not embrace an alternative ontology, as to do so would represent a truth claim the likes of with it is inherently uncomfortable with. Rather, it leaves its ontological position ambiguous, maximising the scope for geographical and temporal specific truth claims. As such, the term 'poststructural perspective on ontology' will be used in this thesis, in place of where one might expect the phrase 'poststructural ontology', to highlight this ambiguity.

The relation of a poststructuralist epistemology to IR is related to the Enlightenment and political modernity, as alluded to earlier. In one understanding, political modernity "is understood in developmental terms, as a progression – from the mythical to the scientific, from the barbaric to the rational/democratic, from the constrained, ordered subject to the utilitarian individual "free to choose"."[219] Here the idea that there is but one end point of knowledge and understanding of politics, represented on a scale with mystics and barbarians on the one hand and democratic scientists on the other, proves problematic. The argument of this thesis is not 'why can there not be mystics and barbarians in the contemporary age', but rather 'why *must* modernity be defined by only democratic scientists?' The connection between political modernity and the Enlightenment is explained by John Gray, who comments that "Western societies are governed by the belief that modernity is a single condition, everywhere the same and always benign… Being modern means realising *our* values – the values of the Enlightenment, as we like to think of them".[220] While unfairly brushing all IR paradigms with a systemic brush, François Debrix argues that IR is governed by "the idea and belief that there is or must be one discourse, one modality of knowledge, and one practice of the global and the political to which "we" all participate".[221] This line of reason is

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[219] George, Jim: *Discourses of Global Politics*, pg. 42
[220] Gray, John: *Al Qaeda and What it Means to be Modern,* (London: Faber and Faber, 2003), pg. 1 Original emphasis
[221] Debrix, François: "We Other IR Foucaultians", (*International Political Sociology*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 2010), pg. 198

shown in practice when one looks at the legacy of Westphalia as it relates to the non-European world, as outlined in the previous chapter. Poststructuralist epistemology helps to resolve the dilemma regarding mystic barbarians and scientific democrats; the emphasis on challenging hitherto truths creates exactly the space needed to be able to take Islam on its own terms in IR, where it is currently constrained by these 'truths', to try and articulate itself in the mould of scientific democrats or not at all.

Islam, Postcolonialism and Modernity

Islamic discourse is also preoccupied with the Enlightenment and modernity. The quintessential Islamic reformer, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, talks of science and civilisational progress as tied to achieving modernity. Unlike Enlightenment rationality, however, this modernity is not a recreation of some European model. For him, science is not bound to nations, so the idea of 'Muslim' or 'European' science is a fallacy. [222] This position is reflected in al-Afghani's student Muhammed Abduh, who believed the European history of Enlightenment is an Islamic destiny. [223] Such a perspective, even if implicitly critical of the Enlightenment sees the solution to Islam's place in the world as *more* Enlightenment. [224] The chapter now turns to consider two more Muslim perspectives on modernity which closer align to poststructuralist epistemology as has been defined in this section.

Founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hasan al-Banna, claimed that the first and foremost reason for the creation of the brotherhood was the failure of the Western way of life. He explains that:

The Western way of life – bounded in effect on practical and technical knowledge, discovery, invention, and the flooding of world markets with mechanical products – has remained incapable of offering to men's minds a flicker of light, a ray of hope, a

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[222] Al-Afghani, Jamal al-Din: "An Islamic Response to Imperialism", in Donohue, John and Esposito, John, (eds.): *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), pg. 16-19

[223] 'Abduh, Muhammed: "Islam, Reason, and Civilisation", ibid. (Oxford Univeristy Press, 1980) pg. 26-27

[224] Such a position is typical of Jurgan Habermas, who while critical of the Enlightenment, sees postmodernism and Foucault specifically, as throwing the baby out with the bathwater. See: Habermas, Jurgen: *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, trans. Lawrence, Frederick (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1991)

grain of faith, or of providing anxious persons the smallest path towards rest and tranquillity.[225]

Al-Banna here emphasises the technical and scientific nature of his 'Western way of life'. The relation these elements have with day to day life is not the focus of this thesis, as it was for al-Banna. Instead, what can be recognised in al-Banna's critique are the same methods with which poststructuralism critiques the Enlightenment sciences. The final Muslim voice to consider in this brief appraisal of Muslim positions regarding the Enlightenment is Aziz al-Azmeh.

Al-Azmeh explains that Islamic political thought should not be thought of as analogous to modern political thought. Islamic political theory, according to al-Azmeh, "is not so much a coherent , deliberate and disciplined body of investigation and enquiry concerning a well defined and delimited topic, but is rather an assembly of statements on topics political, statements dispersed in various discursive locations".[226] Here again the suitability and power in using a poststructural epistemology becomes apparent, as this epistemology proceeds from a view that the Enlightenment provided an "oppressive straightjacket"[227] to social science – that which could not be counted, measured or in essence "reduced to numbers" becomes at best suspect but at worse an illusion.[228] Islamic political theory, as outlined by al-Azmeh, falls outside of the 'straight jacket' of the Enlightenment, and it is little wonder that Islamic ideas have such a difficult time unpacking their concepts in IR. Adopting a poststructural epistemology helps legitimise use of theological arguments, for example, in a discussion of IR theory. That is not to say that poststructuralism is the only route to embracing Islam in IR. Postcolonial literature offers a similar engagement with 'modernity', centred on the Enlightenment.

Postcolonial Critiques of Modernity

Gurminder Bhambra attempts to summarise postcolonial approaches as "[working] to challenge dominant narratives and to reconfigure them to provide more adequate categories of analysis, where adequacy is measured in terms of

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[225] Al-Banna, Hasan: "The New Renaissance", in Donohue, John and Esposito, John, (eds.): *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), pg. 79
[226] Al-Azmeh, Aziz: *Islam and Modernities*, pg. 128
[227] Knutsen, Torbjorn: *A History of International Relations Theory*, pg. 274
[228] Adorno, Theodor and Horkheimer, Max in: *ibid.*

increasing inclusivity".[229] The similarity with the broad approach of this thesis is more than a passing one, as Dipesh Chakrabarty comments:

> [I]t would be wrong to think of postcolonial critiques of historicism (or of the political) as simply deriving from critiques already elaborated by postmodern and poststructuralist thinkers of the West. In fact, to think this way would itself be to practice historicism, for such a thought would merely repeat the temporal structure of the statement, "first in the West, and then elsewhere".[230]

Historicism here stands in for the Enlightenment rationalism and developmentalism defined previously. Postcolonial studies also attempts to engage with dominant political forms linked to political modernity and, like poststructuralism, recognises many aspects of that modernity as being rooted in a European heritage, thereby opening the door to questions of universalism. Turning once more to Chakrabarty for a summary of the overlap between postcolonial and poststructural engagement with modernity:

> European thought is at once both indispensable and inadequate in helping us
> to think through the experiences of political modernity in non-Western nations,
> and provincializing Europe becomes the task of exploring how this thought –
> which is not everybody's heritage and which affect us all – may be renewed
> from and for the margins.[231]

Furthermore, while the thesis is focused on Islam's place in IR, certainly an endeavour on the 'margins', as Chakrabarty explains it, more broadly the thesis is concerned with religion's place in IR. The exploration of religion's place in IR shares much of the critique of postcolonialism, as seen briefly here, but does not share the postcolonial context that the study of Islam might do. Put another way, the (meta-theoretical) study of religion in IR is on the margin of the discipline, but not the same margin that Chakrabarty's

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[229] Bhambra, Gurminder: *Rethinking Modernity: Postcolonialism and the Sociological Imagination,* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007), pg. 15
[230] Chakrabarty, Dipesh: *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference,* (Princton: Princton University Press, 2000), pg. 6
[231] *Ibid.,* pg. 16

postcolonialism is coming from, even while both might engage with the same concept of secularism, for example. As such, this thesis has come to the critique of Enlightenment rationalism in IR via poststructuralism, and it is poststructuralism that supplies the specific meanings to the terms used, and commits the thesis to a certain ontological perspective. Acknowledging the above however, does not mean that this thesis cannot utilise postcolonial studies at all. Rather, the lines between postcolonial studies and poststructuralism can be blurred further by turning to the work of Said.

Said developed an analytical framework which pertains to the content which this thesis is grappling with. That framework was an analysis of various representational practices which he dubbed 'Orientalism', and the remainder of this section will assess the contribution Said's work will make to the framework of this thesis. Said's work sits at the boundary of postcolonial and poststructural studies, and indeed Said, like this thesis, arrives at poststructuralism via Foucault, and uses those concepts in his work. Said's concept of Orientalism critiqued knowledge production on the 'Orient' as being tied to the needs and presuppositions of those who studied it in the West. One of his responses to this was to highlight how categories like 'East' and 'West' are deficient analytically, as they draw upon essentialist, racist stereotypes to give them meaning. However, Said drew significant criticism on how when trying to remove the ontological categories of 'East' and 'West', Said unwittingly relies on and reinforces these categories.[232] Aijaz Ahmed summarises this criticism when he states that "Said quite justifiably accuses the Orientalist for essentialising the Orient, but his own processes of essentialising 'the West' are equally remarkable".[233] Ahmed identifies different and irreconcilable uses of the term Orientalism in Said's work. In one reading Orientalism is synonymous with colonialism, Orientalism perhaps being a by-product of colonialism but, in another reading, Orientalism is a trans-historical process that is apparent even in ancient Greek stories.[234] John Hobson puts the problems with Said's use of Orientalism down to the reductivist way in which Said's uses the term; "the

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[232] al-'Azm, Sadik Jalal: "Orientalism and Orientalism in Reverse", in Macfie, Alexander Lyon, (ed.): *Orientalism: A Reader,* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), pg. 219
[233] Ahmed, Aijaz: "Between Orientalism and Historicism", ibid., pg. 289
[234] *Ibid.*, pg. 288

widely-used Saidian conception of Orientalism has to perform a great deal of leg-movement beneath the waterline in order to keep it afloat".[235]

In an attempt to address these criticisms of Said's Orientalism, Hobson presents a framework for understanding Orientalism which separates various *types* of the phenomenon. To avoid the reductivism in Said's usage, this thesis will employ the adapted framework of Hobson, outlined below.

Whereas Orientalism bundled together various concepts, Hobson attempts to separate these into *racism*, *Eurocentrism*, *agency*, *imperialism*, *Western triumphalism*, and *the standard of civilisation*. It is worth here replicating in full Hobson's table outlining the differences between Said's reductive concept of Orientalism and Hobson's non-reductive conception.

Table 1: Alternative conceptions of Orientalism/Eurocentrism[236]

	Said's reductive conception of Orientalism	'Non-reductive' conception of Eurocentric institutionalism & scientific racism
Relationship of Orientalism and Scientific Racism	**Inherent** Racism, especially social Darwinism and Eugenics, is merely the highest expression of imperialist-Orientalism	**Contingent** Racism and Eurocentric institutionalism are analytically differentiated even if they share various overlaps
The centrality of the 'standard of civilization'	**Yes**	**Yes**
Agency is the monopoly of the West	**Inherent** The West as hyper-agency the East has none	**Contingent** The West always has pioneering agency, while the East ranges from high to low levels of agency; but where these are high they are deemed to be regressive or barbaric

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[235] Hobson, John: *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics: Western International Theory, 1760-2010,* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univeristy Press, 2012), pg. 13

[236] *Ibid.,* pg. 4

Propensity for imperialism	**Inherent**	**Contingent** Can be imperialist and anti-imperialist
Sensibility (Propensity for Western triumphalism)	**Inherent**	**Contingent** Racism is often highly defensive and reflects Western anxiety. Some racist thought and much of Eurocentric institutionalism exhibits Western self-confidence, if not triumphalism

Table 1 shows that non-reductive Orientalism need not always imply racism, as Eurocentric institutionalism would claim that all humans, from any race or society, can 'progress' into civilisation given the right institutions (modelled after European institutions.[237] Likewise, non-reductive Orientalism does not always imply that the 'East' has no agency as when combined with racism, ideas of the 'yellow peril' imply high levels of agency, but racism allows for the distinction between progressive and regressive or barbaric agency. [238] Eurocentrism combined with another type of racism would see non-reductive Orientalism not necessarily synonymous with imperialism, as a fear of racial-contamination might lead to a fear of any interaction between 'East' and 'West'.[239]

While Hobson continues at length to outline and define the nuances of his non-reductive Orientalism, [240] it is sufficient to point out here that in the remainder of this thesis 'Orientalism' is used as a catch-all term for all the different but overlapping concepts of *agency*, *imperialism*, *Western triumphalism*, and *the standard of civilisation*. Where appropriate the thesis will differentiate what *type* of Orientalism is being employed in reference to Table 1. One final note on Orientalism is to clarify the usage of the terms 'East' and 'West'. Given the fact the thesis is engaged in a critique of the distinction between East and West, it may seem objectionable to continue to use these terms. This section finishes by turning to Hobson one last time to clarify the usage 'East' and 'West:

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[237] *Ibid.*, pg. 4-5
[238] *Ibid.*, pg. 9
[239] *Ibid.*, pg. 8
[240] See especially pg. 5-9 of *ibid.* for discussion of paternalistic and anti-paternalistic Eurocentrism

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I deploy these terms because they are fundamental to the lexicon of Eurocentrism/racism and that, as such, what matters is not the geographical dimension but the ideational. That is, within Eurocentrism and scientific racism, East and West are constructs that are differentiated not by geography but either by a rationality/civilizational divide or a rationality/racial divide.[241]

Poststructuralism and Islam: A Shared Agenda?

The use of poststructuralism is not without its limitations; Bryan Turner is overtly critical of the capacity of such an epistemology to help study the Middle East. He states that "[poststructural] epistemologies do not promise an alternative orthodoxy and reject the possibility of 'true' descriptions of the 'real' world. This epistemological scepticism does not lend itself either to political action or to the development of alternative frameworks".[242] It is true that being critical of the concept of truth can lead one to question whether a reformulated notion of Islam in IR is any more a representation of the 'truth' as the current take on Islam and religion in IR. Moreover, Turner here is foreshadowing the discussion in chapter 5, *Pluralism Not Polarisation,* about the compatibility of Islam's call to truth (the *shahadda* being an exemplar of this truth), and the scepticism inherent in poststructural analysis.

The chapter turns first to the point concerning the perceived inability for poststructural analysis to provide alternative understandings. While Turner sees such a paradox as epistemological scepticism, he is perhaps too involved in meta-theoretical pursuits; there is ample cause to attempt a reformulation of Islam in IR as first order IR theorists try to analyse and account for increasingly Islamised politics in North Africa and the continuing Islamic politics of the Persian Gulf region. Turner is correct to highlight the problem here, but it cannot become an insurmountable one due to scepticism alone; as Wendt posits, "[h]aving once explicated and reformulated such assumptions, however, the trick is then to move the discussion off of the level of meta-theory and onto the task of constructing substantive arguments about world politics".[243] To the second point concerning the compatibility of a religious truth and poststructural analysis, that is not a question addressed in this chapter. Rather, taking a cue

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[241] *Ibid.*, pg. 22-23
[242] Turner, Bryan: *Orientalism, Postmodernism and Globalism*, pg. 101
[243] Wendt, Alexander: "Bridging the theory/meta-theory gap", pg. 392

from the incongruity presented by the two approaches, the chapter utilises a two stage analysis. The first stage exploits the symbiosis in the critique of IR offered by both Islamic and poststructural sources. The second stage will explore the divergence between Islam and poststructuralism, attempting to reconcile them. Having outlined the epistemological foundations of the thesis, and shown how Islamic perspectives on modernity can represent different aspects of, and are congruous with certain poststructural (and postcolonial) debates on what constitutes modernity, the chapter will move on to demonstrate the first stage of the thesis' analysis with a brief scrutiny of the place of religion in IR.

The Study of Religion in IR

Religion, whether articulated as fundamentalism or purely as a marker of difference, is re-emerging as a prominent factor in international conflict. As seen in the literature on IR in the Middle East, Islam is a factor that can rarely be ignored when discussing the region (though it need not always be accommodated by being subsumed into socio-economic factors). To summarise the preceding chapter, Elizabeth Hurd points out that:

> [T]he power of this religious resurgence in world politics does not fit into existing categories of thought in academic international relations. Conventional understandings of international relations, focused on material capabilities and strategic interaction, exclude from the start the possibility that religion could be a fundamental organizing force in the international system.[244]

Hurd's study is fascinating, revealing two distinct stands of secularism that contribute to IR's presumed 'neutrality'; the first is laicism, "[presenting] itself as having risen above the messy debate over religion and politics, standing over and outside the melee in a neutral space of its own creation".[245] The second is referred to as Judeo-Christian secularism, through which secularism becomes an extension of religious tradition, exclusively the Jewish and Christian religions.[246] Both of these varieties of secularism are, for Hurd, present in IR;

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[244] Hurd, Elizabeth: *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), pg. 1
[245] *Ibid.,* pg. 5
[246] *Ibid.,* pg. 6

they are "part of the cultural and normative basis of international relations theory… [they] are part of the ontological and epistemological foundation of the discipline".[247] Both versions of secularism problematise the place of Islam in IR while at the same time ignoring the way that the Judeo-Christian norms underlay that very notion of secularism or neutrality. She states that "[i]n this [Judeo-Christian] evaluative stance, political Islam is the manifestation of a unique, culturally rooted and irrational commingling of religion and politics that is distinct from the Judeo-Christian separationist approach to religion and state."[248] Here Hobson's non-reductive Orientalism reveals that Judeo-Christian secularism demonstrates the pioneering agency of the West, and while political Islam possesses agency enough to refuse that particular mould, its agency is regressive and less enlightened than the aforementioned Western position. In attempting to renegotiate the place of religion in IR it is necessary to be reflexive and recognise that an unquestioned acceptance of a secular separation between politics and religion is a source of much of the difficulty in accounting for Islam on its own terms in IR.

Islam as it relates to politics, that is, political Islam, is for Hurd "a modern language of politics that challenges, sometimes works outside of, and (occasionally) overturns fundamental assumptions about religion and politics that are embedded in the forms of Western secularism that emerged out of Latin Christendom."[249] Muhammed Arkoun pre-empted Hurd's assessment of the modern secular space as a reformulation of medieval Christian ideas, and goes so far as to refer to modern day ideologies "secular religions".[250] Arkoun concludes that the relationship between Christianity and secularism means that the latter has common features with all religions (though that relationship cannot be asserted outside of the Abrahamic faiths). Specifically, both secular and religious society are built on order, it is therefore the nature of this order, the nature of power, which needs to be understood *vis-à-vis* Islam.[251] Beyond finding space in secularism, political Islam is poised to find space in IR; in a post-Communist era the implication of political Islam (and other 'alternative'

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[247] *Ibid.*, pg. 10
[248] *Ibid.*, pg. 126
[249] *Ibid.*, pg. 19
[250] Arkoun, Mohamed: "Rethinking Islam Today", in Kurzman, Charles, (ed.): *Liberal Islam: A Sourcebook,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pg. 218
[251] *Ibid.*

frameworks such as feminism or humanism, for example) becoming global political systems is not impossible. That a space has presented itself for alternative theories to develop, [252] may go some way to explaining the resurgence of religion in IR, as Hurd sees it. Beyond space for religion and Islam in IR, this section will also briefly discuss the space for IR in Islamic studies. Bassam Tibi problematises the space Islamic studies affords to IR, and it is worth recounting his concerns here as they relate to the dearth of Muslim literature on this issue, and adds impetus to the study carried out in this thesis. Tibi highlights that "Islamic studies are mostly dominated by disciplines other than the social sciences, not to mention international relations… which is almost absent from Islamic studies".[253] Having defined secularism, and found space for religion in IR, as well as space for IR in Islam, so it becomes necessary to further scrutinise political Islam and its meaning in this thesis.

Oliver Roy points out the difference between an Islamic fundamentalist and a political Islamist or Islamist; the former wants 'a return to the old ways', while the latter wishes to develop their societies on the basis of modern technology and politics. [254] Arriving at Roy's definition of an Islamist or fundamentalist is not as easy as it would seem; John Voll states that "[t]he wide diversity of individuals and groups associated with Islamic fundamentalism indicates that it is not a monolithic movement and renders a simple definition difficult".[255] For example, Henry Munson claims the modern usage of the term fundamentalist refers "to anyone who insists that all aspects of life, including the social and the political, should conform to a set of sacred scriptures believed to be inerrant and immutable". [256] By Munson's understanding the difference between Roy's Islamist and Islamic fundamentalist is trivial as both seek to establish God's rule on earth. For Sami Zubaida the term is even broader, any modern political movement seeking to establish an Islamic state is in fact fundamentalist, [257] and there are differences in opinion besides. For the

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[252] Turner, Bryan: *Orientalism, Postmodernism and Globalism*, pg. 6
[253] Tibi, Bassam: *Islam's Predicament with Modernity: Religious Reform and Cultural Change,* (London: Routledge, 2009), pg. 4
[254] Roy, Olivier: *The Failure of Political Islam*, pg. 1-27
[255] Voll, John: "Fundamentalism in the Sunni Arab World: Egypt and the Sudan", in Marty, Martin and Appleby, Scott, (eds.): *Fundamentalisms Observed, The Fundamentalism Project* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1991), pg. 347
[256] Munson, Henry: *Islam and Revolution in the Middle East,* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), pg. 4
[257] Zubaida, Sami: *Islam, the People & the State*, pg. 38

purposes of this thesis it is necessary to see, as Roy does, a distinction between an Islamic fundamentalist and an Islamist. A fundamentalist is, for this thesis, one who seeks to establish in this modern world a pocket of the medieval Islamic polity, the polity of the Prophet's era and that of his closest followers, the *rashidun.* In this way they are distinct from Islamists, who are also trying to establish an Islamic polity but, unlike fundamentalists, are not restricting themselves to medieval modes of production or governance, or "exclusivist and literal interpretation"[258] of Islam. Islamists are akin to reformers, trying to give modern concepts of governance and economics an Islamic character or develop (rather than replicate, as fundamentalists do) their own independent alternative to the dominant Western model.[259]

Having dealt with the 'political' of political Islam, it is necessary to deal with the 'Islam'. Here the chapter will draw heavily on the problematisation of Islam and IR by Bassam Tibi, who while presenting a similar problem to this thesis (though with far more prescriptive aims), takes the alternative, Habermasian approach to resolving what he terms *Islam's predicament with modernity.*[260] For Tibi, the 'religion' of Islam is articulated as a cultural system. In connecting the two, he reinforces Hurd's assessment of religious resurgence in the world. Tibi explains that "under conditions of globalization tensions do emerge that are articulated in religious and cultural terms… political, social, and economic problems are shaped by a cultural language of religion. This is a religionization of these problems, and that is exactly what "Islamic Politics" is all about".[261]

In addition to a system of culture, religion can be a marker of identity and difference. Such a position echoes Sami Zubaida, who argues that as religion is "stripped of many of its social functions and authority, its communal-identity aspect has come centre stage nowhere more dramatically than in the case of Islam".[262] So Islam-as-faith is not only a religious system of belief connecting believers to the transcendental, but plays out in the temporal world as a cultural

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[258] Voll, John, "Fundamentalism in the Sunni Arab World: Egypt and the Sudan", pg. 347
[259] Karawan, Ibrahim: *The Islamist Impasse*, vol. 314, Adelphi Paper (Oxford: Oxford University Press for The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1997), pg. 9
[260] This approach is laden with issues of the essentialism of 'Islamic civilisation', and is not one which the thesis subscribes to with any great zeal. See: Tibi, Bassam: *Islam's Predicament with Modernity*
[261] *Ibid.*, pg. 5
[262] Zubaida, Sami: *Beyond Islam*, pg. 3

system, conferring identity and hence is a marker of difference. Having made the space for Islam in IR, and before moving to the specific methods this thesis will use to begin to coalesce an Islamic theory of IR, this section will end by briefly dealing with Zubaida's assertion that Islam should not be a substantial factor in the study of the Middle East.[263]

Zubaida problematises the place of Islam next to modernity much in the same way that Tibi does, and finds issue with many of the issues already discussed in this thesis: Islamic history perceived as utopian by Muslims; the perception of a unitary Islamic politics; the trouble with speaking through religion to a secular Western world.[264] It is frustrating for Zubaida to see analysis of the Middle East so skewed by the above issues, and his solution is to trouble the very notion that Islam is a term with any meaning, considering the vast spatial and temporal differences in concepts that are lumped together as 'Islamic'. Instead, Zubaida identifies two main styles of politics in the Middle East, "the modern politics of ideology and organization, and the universal politics of faction, kinship and patronage".[265] Islam is not constitutive of either form of politics, but its language is used as a mask for both. Troubling the unitary nature of Islamic politics to such an extent as to remove it from the political realm is, perhaps, a way to escape the frustrating accounts of the Middle East so prevalent in IR, however, this obfuscates the constitutive nature of religion on people. Zubaida's desire to remove it from analysis is in fact *overcorrecting* when it comes to Islam and politics. It is possible to deny unitary treatments of Islam and politics and yet still recognise the constitutive role the many *Islams* of believers can have upon their behaviour.[266] What to take from Zubaida is the knowledge that attempting to grasp at fundamentals or universals applicable to all Muslims, everywhere, for all time, is always problematic. That is not to say that analytical endeavours in local or otherwise specific terms are un-valid, and presents a methodological imperative for this thesis to avoid invoking a 'universal' Islamic politics. As the chapter has begun to talk of a more specific methodology, it

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[263] Such a position coincidentally lines up with much IR theorising of the region that chooses to relegate Islam as a factor out of its analysis. However, unlike those IR treatments of the Middle East, Zubaida's account of Islam is far more deliberately argued and nuanced.
[264] Zubaida, Sami: *Beyond Islam*
[265] *Ibid.*, pg. 104
[266] See: Piscatori, James: *Islam in a World of Nation States* for a similar, nuanced and far less problematic approach to Islam(s) and politics

continues with more on how Islam might unpack its concepts with regards to IR, followed by further methodological concerns and limitations.

Unpacking Political Islam using Constructivism

Regarding the two stage analysis of the thesis, this chapter provided the critical tools necessitated by the first stage, to make space for Islam in IR, but those same poststructural tools are complimented by Constructivism in the second stage of the analysis. As has been noted briefly, and will be explored later in the thesis, the synthesis between Islam and poststructuralism is problematic in the formation of 'alternative orthodoxies', and it is here that Constructivism helps the thesis. IR Constructivism is a perspective that focuses on "the content and sources of state interests and the social fabric of world politics".[267] With an emphasis on social fabric, Constructivism is a theory that seeks to give a greater place to ideas in international relations. The theory, first articulated[268] in IR by Alexander Wendt, claims that rather than the structure of IR presumed by neo-Realism, a structure beyond our control, vested in the nature of man or the security dilemma, IR is a social reality we make for ourselves. In this way Wendt proposes that "[i]f self interest is not sustained by practice, it will die out".[269] This is a contentious claim to say the least, as to presume individuals can shape their surroundings with impunity leans too heavily towards the agency side of the agency/structure debate. A more nuanced understanding is offered later in Wendt's *Social Theory of International Relations*, wherein it is explained that while individuals are capable of changing their social reality, that reality has already shaped the individual to some extent, and so the relationship is more cyclic than would first appear[270] (see point three, below). The basics of Wendt's theory make it distinct from other IR theorising for three reasons:

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[267] Checkel, Jeffery: "The Constructivist Turn", pg. 324
[268] These ideas have a passing resemblance to Marx's statement that "[m]en make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past". See: Marx, Karl: "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," 1852, Accessed on 31st May 2013: https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1852/18th-brumaire/ch01.htm
[269] Wendt, Alexander: *Social Theory of International Politics,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pg. 369
[270] *Ibid.,* pg. 371-372

1. Constructivism emphasises the social aspect of existence; "the role of shared ideas as an ideational structure constraining and shaping behaviour".[271]

2. The theory gives ideas a role in constituting actors, not just regulating their behaviour.

3. Ideas and actors "co-constitute and co-determine each other". As alluded to earlier, "[s]tructures constitute actors in terms of their interests and identities, but structures are also produced, reproduced, and altered by the discursive practices of agents".[272]

Accepting these points, nothing need be taken for granted in IR. Relating this to political Islam and the *umma*, for example, Constructivism allows scholars of IR to not take the concept of the state as their unit of analysis, if political reality is constructed to that end.

Nickolas Onuf, another Constructivist theorist, makes the claim that IR represents a bounded social reality[273]; that neo-Realism, for example, holds universal explanatory power falsely limits the behaviour of actors; they become bounded by this universalism. That a universal and therefore a-historical view of IR sees a bipolar world as "the best of all possible worlds",[274] betrays the fact the theory was heavily influenced by the time of its dominance during the Cold War; a "historical moment has left its indelible mark upon this purportedly universalistic science".[275]

In comparison to Onuf's more hard line Constructivism, Jeffery Checkel sees Constructivism not as a theory but as an approach to bridge the divide between 'mainstream' and poststructural IR theorists, thus, the Constructivist's point of contention with mainstream theory is ontological, not epistemological.[276] The social aspect of life which Wendt emphasises has indeed broadened the contours of the discipline of IR. However Checkel warns that it lacks as a theory of agency, often over relying on structures and norms. As such, Checkel is less

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[271] Copeland, Dale: "The Constructivist Challenge", pg. 189
[272] *Ibid.* pg. 190
[273] Onuf, Nicholas: *World of Our Making*, pg. 6
[274] Cox, Robert: "Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory", in Keohane, Robert, (ed.): *Neorealism and Its Critics,* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), pg. 248
[275] *Ibid.* pg. 248
[276] Checkel, Jeffery: "The Constructivist Turn", pg. 327

blunt in his appraisal of the place of ideas in IR. For him, "the environment in which agents/states take action is social as well as material".[277] Such a view acknowledges the material focus of Realism but seeks to *supplement* it rather than displace it. Checkel's approach, which builds upon Wendt's own desire to "find a *via media* between positivism and interpretivism",[278] highlights a dualism which on the one hand refuses to accept that ideas are explained solely by material interest, but on the other hand asserts that one can know about the world through scientific enquiry.[279]

Whether one defines Constructivism as an approach or a theory, Onuf would reject the dualism of Wendt and Checkel, and would like IR to move away from the idea of scientific endeavour, as for him there can be no paradigm theories in the discipline. Base assumptions are something you have to be told in IR (in this case anarchy), they cannot be proven, like in the natural sciences. Onuf's hard line Constructivism sees "no one world more real than others. None is ontologically privileged as the unique real world".[280] Such an ontological position shares much with the poststructural position outlined above, and indeed Onuf relates his Constructivism to the ends pursued in this thesis when he states that "while it was claimed that anarchy is the distinctive condition to which the discipline responds, it is by no means clear that the Western state system is the only concrete instance of international relations available for study".[281]

Onuf's position, representative of hard Constructivism, which shares much with the poststructural position outlined earlier, also shares poststructuralism's weakness. Recalling Turner's critique of poststructuralism (which equally applies to hard Constructivism), "epistemological scepticism [of the real world] does not lead itself either to political action or to the development of alternative frameworks".[282] As explained earlier in the chapter, this tension will manifest itself as an incoherence between the assertion of faith by the Muslim and the scepticism of such assertions by poststructuralists, and will be

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[277] *Ibid.* pg. 325
[278] Wendt, Alexander: "Social Theory as Cartesian science: An auto-critique from a quantum perspective", in Guzzini, Stefano and Leander, Anna, (eds.): *Constructivism and international relations : Alexander Wendt and his critics* (London: Routledge, 2006), pg. 182
[279] *Ibid.*, pg. 183
[280] Onuf, Nicholas: *World of Our Making*, pg. 37
[281] *Ibid.* pg. 16
[282] Turner, Bryan: *Orientalism, Postmodernism and Globalism*, pg. 101

dealt with later in the thesis. That being so, it is the dualism[283] of Wendt and Checkel which the thesis will use to give meaning to the term Constructivism; in this way, Constructivism is poised to act as a bridge between the ideational and the material. As Ronald Bleiker and Mark Chou put it, albeit when discussing Nietzsche and IR: "Acknowledging an inevitable link between form and content is not to deny that facts exist in the real world. But it is to acknowledge that these facts only make sense through our practices of interpretation".[284]

While Constructivism has "succeeded in broadening the theoretical contours of [international relations]",[285] allowing ideology and the realm of ideas to play more of a role in how one constructs and implements a world view, political Islam fails to keep up in this regard, and for this reason Constructivism is uniquely placed to help this thesis construct a concept of Islamic IR. Constructivism helps to blur the lines between different disciplines, sociology and international relations in particular, helping also to penetrate the barriers between 'domestic' and 'international' levels of analysis. Here Constructivism's role in ameliorating the divide between poststructuralism and 'mainstream' IR becomes apparent. Political Islam's rudimentary conception of the international sphere could thus capitalise on a Constructivist approach to IR, helping it 'construct' a more comprehensive world view from its existing religiopolitical foundations. Having outlined the use of Constructivism in the framework of this thesis, as a bridge between the ideational aspects of poststructuralism and the more material aspects of dominant IR paradigms, the final part of the chapter will deal explicitly with some methodological problems and limitations.

Problems and Limitations

This research cannot claim to represent the views of the entire global Muslim population. The 'Islam' referred to in this research, unless stated otherwise,

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[283] The dualism referenced here is not unproblematic in its usage, but is embroiled in much the same dilemma as this thesis is; where this thesis seeks a position tenable to both poststructuralist *and* Muslim, so too does Wendt's constructivism seek a position tenable by both materialism *and* interpretivism. For more on this debate on constructivism see: Suganami, Hidemi: "Wendt, IR, and philosophy: A critique", in Guzzini, Stefano and Leander, Anna, (eds.): *Constructivism and international relations: Alexander Wendt and his critics,* (London: Routledge, 2006) and more broadly: Kratochwil, Fredrich and Ruggie, John: "International organization: a state of the art on an art of the state", (*International Organization*, Vol. 40, No. 4, 1986)

[284] Bleiker, Ronald and Chou, Mark: "Nietzsche's style: on language, knowledge and power in international relations", in Moore, Cerwyn and Farrands, Chris, (eds.): *International Relations Theory and Philosophy: Interpretive dialogues,* (London: Routledge, 2010), pg. 17

[285] Checkel, Jeffery: "The Constructivist Turn", pg. 325

consists of Sunni orthodoxy. That is, the four schools of thought *Hanbali*, *Shafi'i*, *Maliki* and *Hanifi*. Limiting this key term gives focus to the research, whose aim is to comment on IR theory, not make comments on theological positions. To talk about how the entirety of Islam perceives the practice of IR would be a separate project; comparing Islamic notions of IR to the Western notion requires the thesis to limit the use of these terms to make the project feasible. Sunni Islam is the site of analysis as it is one which the author is most familiar. However, other denominations of Islam will be used to illustrate points where appropriate, specifically, the thesis will turn to Shi'a thought on politics and the state in particular, in chapter 3.

Even within Sunni orthodoxy, the thesis does not claim there is a univocal body of opinion to draw upon; there is no single *shari'a* code, even in the four schools of Sunni orthodoxy, which constitute some sort of 'canon' with regards to Sunni thought on politics. One of the fundamental differences between Sunni Islam and Roman Catholicism, for example, is that Sunni Islam has no 'church' structure or hierarchy of clergy, in the way Catholics do. While Papal decree might be observed to be the 'definitive' Catholic view on matters, no such authority exists in the Sunni Muslim world. Therefore, the research will look at the jurisprudence of all four schools, where necessary, in an attempt to glean information about state conduct. If one school of thought offers more on this subject than the others that will not lessen the applicability of the research's findings as the four schools *together* are considered theologically orthodox; that some schools may not offer as much guidance on the criteria assessed in this thesis does not take away any credibility from these sources. Specifying Sunni orthodoxy as the definition of 'Islam' for this thesis helps it be precise with religious sources. How these sources are interpreted by the author immediately removes it from the Sunni orthodox position by a measure of some degree. In a sense the position of this thesis becomes just one more Islam amongst many, and so boxing it into a denominational, or similar definitional category, would be counterproductive.

Similarly, when talking about 'IR' or indeed 'Western IR', the research cannot hope to grapple with the disparate strands of theory that make up the discipline. Rather the thesis engages with two dominant concepts in IR: that of the state, and liberal individualism.

In Sunni orthodoxy Islamic law derives from four sources, including the Qur'an, the word of God, and the *ahadith*, example of the Prophet Muhammed, *ijma'* (consensus) and *qiyas* (analogy).[286] *Qiyas*, the use of analogy, or applying reason is how jurisprudents, *faqih*, expanded on the specific matters covered in the Qur'an and *sunna*, to all aspects of life. This "disciplined exercise of reason"[287] is known as *ijtihad*. However disciplined, this exercise of reason is very subjective, so, "alongside this free, individual legislative activity [qiyas/ijtihad], which... produced an uncoordinated body of opinion, went another balancing and complementary movement of coordination and unification [ijma']"[288]. *Ijma'*, consensus, was formalised by ninth century jurist, al-Shafi'i, as tool to balance the individualistic tendencies of *ijtihad*. Theorising on an Islamic state only crystallised in the early twentieth century with Rashid Rida and later the Muslim Brothers of Egypt, effectively modern day attempts of *ijtihad* and reinterpretation of Islamic source texts. In this way, the research engages not only with the Islamic source texts but also with the more contemporary interpretative scholarship on Islam and politics in modern times.

At this point the chapter comes up against a Saidian criticism which specifically relates to the methods outlined above. This criticism centres round the idea that reading into secondary sources temporally distinct from modern events always deals with ideals and abstractions, never more pertinent and historically relevant factors.[289] Said summarises this critique, claiming that "abstractions about the Orient, particularly those based on texts representing a 'classical' Oriental civilization, are always preferable to direct evidence drawn from modern Oriental realities".[290] While this research does use classical texts to abstract on ideas ostensibly Islamic, as second order theorising the thesis is not making any substantial claim as to the applicability of these abstractions to the realities of Muslims. As stated earlier in the chapter, any such abstractions derived from these sources will be applicable at a philosophical and theoretical level. Only after such a position is shown to be tenable theoretically can those abstractions be compared to and integrated with the lives of Muslims and

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[286] Schacht, Joseph: *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*, pg. 1-5
[287] Hourani, Albert: *A History of the Arab Peoples*, pg. 68
[288] Rahman, Fazlur: *Islam*, pg. 72
[289] See: Said, Edward, "Shattered Myths"and Said, Edward, "Arabs, Islam and the Dogmas of the West"
[290] Said, Edward, "Arabs, Islam and the Dogmas of the West", pg. 104

'Oriental realities', as Said puts it. Going further, the realities of many Muslim peoples, in a diverse range of countries from Tunisia to Egypt, to Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, is a call to an 'Islamic state' or 'Islamic politics', a concept of IR being part and parcel of any such politics; at the level of 'reality' people are reaching for a concept that is either missing or insufficiently articulated at that second, 'theoretical' level, which is where this thesis operates.

Conclusions

In summary, this chapter has explained the framework of the thesis as consisting of a two stage analysis. In the first stage, the thesis will 'make space' in IR for the articulation of alternative, in this case religious, specifically Islamic, conceptions of IR. This will be done by exploiting the synthesis between poststructural and Islamic critiques of the European/Western rootedness of the discipline. This rootedness has been argued to lie in the foundational ideas that spawned out of the European Enlightenment.

Poststructuralism was defined broadly as a scepticism towards universalising narratives. There is considerable divergence on what the term poststructuralism means. However, taking a cue from Said's framework, the thesis comes to poststructuralism through Foucault, and however imperfect the label, it is Foucault's ideas that furnish the term poststructuralism in this thesis. For the purposes of this thesis then, poststructuralism is defined as distinct to postmodernism, the latter being tied to a historical moment of scepticism, the former an ontological statement about the nature of knowledge. The great limitation of poststructuralism for this thesis is that while there might be considerable similarity in the criticisms made of IR by poststructuralism and Islamic sources, they diverge considerably in the construction of alternative theories; Islam involves a call to truth (the *shahadda*), and poststructuralism is sceptical towards such a position. The way in which these two positions, sometimes diverging and sometimes converging, interact with each other will be explored in the later chapters of the thesis.

If the first stage of analysis is concerned with the synthesis between Islam and poststructuralism, the second stage of the analysis concerns their divergence. In this second stage the thesis employs Constructivism as a means to give agency to new notions of Islam-as-politics that might be created to fill the

conceptual gap the first stage of analysis will open up in the discipline of IR. Again, the term Constructivism is broad, and the chapter overviewed briefly the advent of this mode of thought in IR, starting with Wendt. Wendt's Constructivism was described as being sympathetic to material interests as well as ideation ones, which is in contrast to Constructivists like Onuf who argue that the ideational takes precedence over all other factors. The chapter concluded that the position of Wendt is what the term Constructivism will refer to throughout the thesis. Given that the thesis is operating in the second order or meta-theoretical level of analysis, it is appropriate to use Constructivism as this approach also gives a prominent place to the world of ideas. Indeed, the review of Constructivist study of the Middle East identified those studies as coming closest to being able to account for Islam on its own terms, and so presents the best opportunity moving forward for this thesis. In addition to the meaning attributed to Constructivism in this thesis, and the reason it is so appropriate, the chapter highlighted the *way* which Constructivism will be used; resonating with Checkel's usage of Constructivism, the thesis will use the theory as a bridge between the ideational world of poststructuralism and the more material world of the dominant IR paradigms.

The ramifications of the Enlightenment and the way in which its ideas find their way into modern IR were discussed briefly with regards to the concept of secularism. Here the chapter explored the way in which secularism represents a development of a specifically Christian tradition, now remade as a value free institution. The implications for Islam-as-politics when faced with this 'secular bias' in IR is that it always appears as an aberration. In challenging this secular bias the chapter argued that it is incorrect to speak of Islam as a belief system binding all Muslims of the world together. Rather, Islam-as-faith represents a diverse archive of tools, symbols and norms for (many forms of) Islam-as-politics to draw upon.

When discussing Islam, the chapter narrowed its definition to refer to only Sunni Islam as this provides a clear and concise example as the thesis interacts with IR; similar analyses could be made with other non-Western traditions, but Sunni Islam represents the subject matter the author is most acquainted with.

Having now dealt with and fully articulated the framework of this thesis, the next chapter, *Sovereignty and Normative Political Islam*, while intersecting with all the research questions of the thesis, pays particular focus on *how extensive is the guidance offered in Islamic source texts with regards to international relations*.

Chapter 3: Sovereignty and Normative Political Islam

Political Islam presents itself in a wide variety of guises. Generally the use of the adjective 'political' implies a distinct object of analysis from simply 'Islam'. That may be true for, broadly speaking, Western analysts, but making that very distinction, or not, is something that can define what it means to be an Islamist. As outlined in Chapter 1, *Islam in International Relations Scholarship*, much of what gives Islamism its vitality and appeal is related to the simplicity of *salafi* inspired thought over the inseparability of faith and politics of the temporal world, of *din wa dawla*. To paraphrase Eickelman and Piscatori, *din wa dawla* proponents exaggerate the unique nature of Muslim politics, inadvertently propagate the view that Muslim politics is irrational and present Muslim politics as a mesh of various world views, due to the 'natural' fact of the inseparability of faith and politics.[291] In contrast to the *din wa dawla* approach, Carl Brown eloquently writes about how "[n]o one suggests a timeless and unchanging Christian approach to politics. The same should not hold for Islam. The possible difference in its worldly manifestations between the Christianity of Paul, Augustine, Aquinas, or Luther is readily accepted. Christianity has a history. So does Islam".[292] It is this Islamic history which will be explored in more depth in this chapter, in an attempt to answer the secondary research question: *How extensive is the guidance offered in Islamic source texts with regards to IR?*

Chapter 1 reached a workable definition of political Islam that was neither reliant on religious source texts to provide a 'unique' slant on Muslim politics, nor was it incumbent on a 'Muslim reformation' that would separate the temporal and otherworldly as happened in Christendom – a result that is highly unsatisfactory doctrinally, as, for example, chapter 5, verse 40 of the Qur'an demonstrates regarding sovereignty, where it says "Knowest thou not that to Allah alone belongeth the dominion of the Heavens and the Earth".[293] Rather, this thesis defined political Islam as the pursuit of politics that adheres to Islamic norms and values and facilitates the practice of the faith. This definition

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[291] Eickelman, Dale and Piscatori, James: *Muslim politics*, pg. 56
[292] Brown, L. Carl: *Religion and State: The Muslim Approach to Politics,* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), pg. 175
[293] *Qur'an*, 5:43, see also: 3:26, 5:40, 5:120 and 6:12

necessarily distinguishes between the faith, as derived from religious source texts, and Islamic norms and values. Reference to this definition of political Islam was labelled 'Normative Political Islam', and that is the term used as the argument of this thesis continues. On top of the fact that this definition is exceptionally broad and relatively permissive, deriving a political model is difficult as norms and values are far more nebulous and harder to define than the tenants of the faith. While norms and values may well be attributed to and derive from religious source texts, source texts are not the *only* source of their content, unlike the tenants of faith.

With a definition in hand the chapter will move to explore the implications of Normative Political Islam in the international sphere, leading to a discussion on the prime articulation of political Islam, normative or otherwise, on IR: transnational Islam and the *umma*. The essence of the challenge transnational Islam poses to IR will be argued to centre on sovereignty, and resolving the issue of sovereignty is the primary focus of this chapter.

The thesis finds two specific reasons for the focus on sovereignty: First is the want to ensure God remains sovereign over Muslims, creating tension with vesting sovereignty in an individual or institution; second is the nature of authority in *fiqh* (jurisprudence) residing not over territory, as in the state that originated in Europe, but rather over people. The second divergence with dominant notions of sovereignty in IR, the distinction between rule over people rather than rule over territory, has little resonance in the modern world as Muslim states by definition, work within the framework of states and territory. The importance of sovereignty however, becomes apparent when looking at the notion of God as sovereign, as Muslim rulers try, in a variety of ways, to display their adherence with this principle to their citizens as a way to shore up legitimacy for their regimes. It is this problem then, which the current chapter will move to explore, that is, the notion of God as sovereign.

The need for distinctions between Islam, political Islam and Normative Political Islam demonstrates that Islamic source texts are at best ambiguous about forms of government, Islamic or otherwise. Ambiguity does not mean that there is nothing to be gained from further analysis; Islam-as-faith needs to be refined in order to have a constructive impact in politics.

This chapter answers the dilemma of how to refine theological guidance by outlining the *other* parts of the Islamic message, namely mysticism and rationalism.[294] The chapter argues that this is exactly the method used in Iran to develop a Shi'a Islamic State. Doing so in that instance relied heavily on a gnostic and mystic philosophy that has a prominent role in Shi'a tradition.[295] That being true, the chapter posits that many of the reasons Sunni Islam struggles with a coherent notion of Islamic rule in the mould of Iran is because unlike Shi'ism, gnostic philosophy is marginal in Sunni Islam, resting primarily with Sufi orders. The chapter looks therefore at the ways in which exoteric, rationalist philosophy, which has a long, if currently maligned tradition in Sunni Islam, might develop and refine the nature of Islam's role in politics.

After tracing the rational tradition in Islamic philosophy, the chapter then applies this branch of philosophy to resolving the question of maintaining the sovereignty of God in a world of nation states. Abu Zayd Abdu al-Rahman ibn Muhammed ibn Khaldun al-Hadrami, hereafter referred to as Ibn Khaldun, was a prominent historian, sociologist and philosopher in the fourteenth century. He applied the rational tradition in his study of Muslim politics and history, and the chapter will use his work to access a theory of sovereignty. In addition to the theological guidance explored in chapter 1, the chapter will build upon a theory of sovereignty that is centred on a dual agreement, as propounded by Majid Khadduri.[296] Muslims, by virtue of their declaration of faith, agree to the moral precepts of the *shari'a*, and in doing so respect the sovereignty of God. A second agreement with a temporal authority is also established, but in order for the polity to be considered 'Islamic' as per Normative Political Islam, the temporal authority must also respect that same commitment to the first agreement. The implications of this are twofold: Firstly, a Muslim is perfectly capable of adhering to the first contract in territories that do not govern in accordance with the declaration of faith. In other words, respect for God's sovereignty, given the ambiguous guidance on politics in religious source texts, does not imply a government wherein God is sovereign; secondly, the

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[294] By rationalism the thesis refers to Aristotelian logic and rationalism, as distinct from Kantian rationalism, for example.
[295] In Arabic gnosis, *erfan*, is a sub-field of *hekmat*, literally 'wisdom'. The thesis refers to gnosis in English but will use the Arabic for *hekmat*, as this has no clear equivalent in the English language.
[296] Khadduri, Majid: *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, pg. 9-12

agreement that relates directly to the temporal world is one that is based on rationalism and human ingenuity (which will be shown to currently be a 'silent' partner of contemporary political Islam), so escaping the need to derive all models and theories of politics from theological sources.

The chapter begins with an overview of political Islam as it relates to the state, exploring the differing epistemologies of various theoretical positions, all of which rely on *kalam* (theology) as their means of deriving knowledge of the world. The chapter will then discuss two other strands of the Islamic message and the ways in which these relate to politics: the philosophy of mysticism will be discussed primarily in relation to the politics of Ayatollah Khomeini and the philosophy of rationalism will be discussed in the Arab Sunni Muslim world. After this, the rational tradition will be explored, as expounded by Ibn Khaldun, and the chapter will posit a theory of sovereignty that satisfies obedience to both transcendental and temporal authorities. The current chapter therefore employs the two stage conceptual framework of this thesis in firstly breaking down existing notions of Islamic sovereignty, and identifying in those existing notions areas of knowledge that have been neglected. The second part of the conceptual framework is employed in the drawing together of the aforementioned neglected components of the Islamic message (rationalism and mysticism) to form a notion of sovereignty that can be taken forward into the next chapter of the thesis, *Islamic Community and International Relations,* which will deal specifically with Normative Political Islam in the international sphere. Resolving the issue of sovereignty for Normative Political Islam is a fundamental step in understanding the way in which that polity might behave in IR.

Political Islam and the State

Despite the fluctuations and metamorphoses of the international sphere in the last century, widely referred to as the process of globalisation, the state endures as a dominant locus of politics in the international sphere (even as the distinction between international and local is challenged). How political Islam might interact with the state has been a key debate ever since Muslim majority countries began to win independence from their former colonial masters. Claims that Islam "offers a single vision for uniting the individual quest for virtue with the

social goods of justice and solidarity"[297] do not recognise the nuance and the differing visions that spin out of the singular message of Islam-as-faith. John Esposito elucidates this point when he writes that "[t]hough often described in monolithic terms as "the Islamic alternative" or "the system of Islam," a diverse and prolific assortment of Islamic ideologies, actors, political parties, and organizations have reemerged in Muslim politics, grouped under the umbrella of Islam".[298]

What Esposito's statement teases at is the distinction between what Islam means as a faith, and what it means as politics. This distinction between Islam-as-politics and Islam-as-faith will inform the remainder of the chapter as it pursues a notion of Islamic sovereignty. To begin, the chapter will briefly try to highlight the many ways in which political Islam interacts with the state.

The famous student of Muhammed Abduh, Rashid Rida, saw a place for nationalism and the state in Islamic politics. Living through the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, Rida warned that while a national spirit is compatible with a Muslim's faith, care must be taken to maintain priorities:

> In his [a Muslim's] service of his homeland and his people he must not, however, neglect Islam which has honoured him and raised him up by making him a brother to hundreds of millions of Muslims in the world. He is a member of a body greater than his people, and his personal homeland is part of the homeland of his religious community. He must be intent on making the progress of the part a means for the progress of the whole.[299]

Is this summation there is a political Islam that happily works with the state system, as long as Muslim states working within that system do not put their own needs above the needs of the wider Muslim community. The Organization Islamic Cooperation (OIC) ostensibly carries out the role of ensuring Muslim solidarity comes before the needs of individual states; the second statement in the OIC's charter states that its purpose is the "promoting and consolidating the

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[297] March, Andrew: "Islamic Foundations for a Social Contract in Non-Muslim Liberal Democracies", (*American Political Science Review*, Vol. 101, No. 2, 2007), pg. 236
[298] Esposito, John: *Islam and Politics*, 4th ed. (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1998), pg. 312
[299] Rida, Rashid: "Patriotism, Nationalism, and Group Spirit in Islam", in Donohue, John and Esposito, John, (eds.): *Islam in Transition,* (Oxford: Oxford Univeristy Press, 2007, 2nd ed), pg. 43

unity and solidarity among the Member States in securing their common interests at the international arena".[300] However, while it holds regular meetings at a variety of levels, it "has tended over the years to become identified more with the rhetoric rather than the practical implementation of Islamic unity".[301]

The notion of Islam working within and as part of the state, what this thesis will refer to as the 'Islamic state', is a novel idea initially propagated by Rida after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.[302] In contrast, Nazih Ayubi in fact sees all Islamic theories of government as a novel rather than traditional theory[303] as in his summation: "although Islam is a religion of collective morals, it is not a particularly political religion".[304] Marking a break from Rashid Rida and others, [305] scholars like Ayubi "attach more importance to the religious relationship with the absolute of God than to the vehement demonstrations of political movements".[306] This articulation of political Islam is important as it is defined by the *lack* of the political. Or perhaps, if there is a political element to the faith, it is to be defined and implemented by human beings rather than divine and otherworldly direction. Such a position is especially prevalent with Muslim scholars dealing with issues of human rights and democracy, such as Abdullahi An-Na'im[307] and S.M. Zafar[308].

A third orientation of political Islam is heavily inspired by Maulana Maududi and sees political Islam working within the state system as before, but rather than the state and Islamic considerations being two different concerns in a hierarchical relationship, for Maududi the Islamic state would be a natural symbiosis of politics and religion. As Roy Jackson puts it, "Maududi's Islamic society is completely in line with nature. In fact, it *is* nature".[309] Maududi places Allah as legal and political sovereign in his state, and talks of laws as divine

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[300] Organisation of Islamic Cooperation: "Charter of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation," Accessed on 24th August 2012: http://www.oic-oci.org/page_detail.asp?p_id=53

[301] Mandaville, Peter: *Global Political Islam*, pg. 287

[302] Ayubi, Nazih: *Political Islam*, pg. 64

[303] *Ibid.*, pg. 146

[304] *Ibid.*, pg. 120

[305] Such ideas are classically attributed to Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammed Abduh, Rashid Rida and Hasan al-Bana

[306] Arkoun, Mohamed, "Rethinking Islam Today", pg. 205

[307] An-Naim, Abdullahi: "*Shari'a* and Basic Human Rights Concerns", ibid., pg. 222-238

[308] Zafar, S.M.: "Accountability, Pariament and Ijtihad", ibid., pg. 67-72

[309] Jackson, Roy: *Mawlana Mawdudi and Political Islam: Authority and the Islamic State,* (London: Routledge, 2008), pg. 86

creations.[310] Here the chapter takes a step closer to the *din wa dawla* position of brooking no separation between Islam-the-faith and Islam-as-politics. In this summation, the presence of an Islamic state is not a peripheral addition to one's relationship with God, but is central to it – an affirmation of faith in its own right.

The overview above is not a complete taxonomy of positions within the umbrella of political Islam, but covers the key points of difference between them. Only the third variation, that representative of Maududi's position, bears a direct effect on IR as it is commonly demarcated, for it challenges the *nature* of what a state is. Much like the debate around Iran being 'different' from or somehow 'less rational' than other states due to its religious character, Maududi's Sunni Islamic state would pose similar questions to IR scholars. The first two positions, those characterised by Rashid Rida's hierarchy of national and Islamic interests in the first instance, and Nazih Ayubi's non-political Islam in the second instance, both work within the prevailing international system and so pose far fewer questions to the discipline of IR. The former institutionalises the concepts of nation and state into an Islamic world view, while the latter takes the 'political' out of political Islam, emphasising the constitutive power of believers and minimising the divine elements of the perspective.

Rather than engage with the debate on religious rationality,[311] the chapter will now look to a form of political Islam as yet unexplored in this thesis, yet posing challenges to IR at least as poignant as those brought forward by Maududi's Islamic State. This strand of political Islam is transnational Islam, and it focuses on the politics of the *umma.* The chapter will look at the ways in which the politics of the *umma* relates to Normative Political Islam, and the challenges this brings to IR.

In the decline and abolition of the Ottoman Empire, debate raged as to the correct form of Islamic politics. As Piscatori notes: "To the question, 'How should the *umma* be constructed now?' little agreement emerged, with however, the significant exception: the spiritual unity of the *umma* required political

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[310] Maududi, Abu A'la: *First principles of the Islamic state*, trans. Ahmed, Kurshid, 2nd ed. (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1960), pg. 22-25
[311] For more on the debate on religious rationality see: Wilson, Erin: *After Secularism: Rethinking Religion in Global Politics,* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), and: Hurd, Elizabeth: *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations*

expression".[312] Herein lays the crux of transnational (political) Islam: the notion of religious solidarity, loosely defined and centred on community, is its guiding principle. Questions around this notion and its compatibility with the state, and the depth of solidarity required of the *umma*, are widely contested. Amr Sabet is critical of the ability a heavily contested Islam, political or otherwise, has to "illuminate, comprehend or conceptualize".[313] Therefore for the purposes of this thesis, if the *umma* is to have any analytical purchase, it is necessary to refine and in some regards define the notions of transnational Islam as related to Normative Political Islam.

The political expression of the *umma* in Normative Political Islam mirrors much of what the thesis has stated about Normative Political Islam thus far. Within Normative Political Islam, the politics of the *umma*, or transnational Islam, is less about the creation of a political union of Muslim peoples, or indeed holding such a union as an article of faith. Rather, it is about fostering a culture of unity and solidarity, as was discussed in chapter 1, *Islam in International Relations Scholarship*. This is a distinction also made by Piscatori, where Pan-Islam, "that is, giving concrete form to the idea of Muslim political unity", and pan-Islamism, "the ideology promoting unity" are two different, if often overlapping, phenomena. [314] For this thesis, transnational Islam is representative of Piscatori's pan-Islamism. In practice, this would be much like the way inalienable human rights, as set out in the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, codifies a sense of commonality with far flung peoples who are denied these rights; so too would an *umma* under Normative Political Islam codify a sense of commonality amongst Muslims. Likewise, the ways in which human rights are challenging the power and internal efficacy of the state, so too would the politics of the *umma*, centred round rule over people rather than rule of territory, challenge centrality of the state in IR.

Peter Mandaville paints in broad strokes a further challenge transnational Islam presents to IR: "By locating 'the political' within the state, conventional IR theory reproduces a set of political structures unsuited to circumstances in which political identities and processes configure themselves across and

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[312] Piscatori, James: "Imagining Pan-Islam: Religious Activism and Political Utopias", (*Proceedings of the British Academy*, Vol. 131, 2005), pg. 427

[313] Sabet, Amr: *Islam and the Political: Theory, Governance and International Relations,* (London: Pluto Press, 2008), pg. 183

[314] Piscatori, James: "Imagining Pan-Islam", pg. 426

between forms of political community."[315] The state is tied to notions of political modernity whereby religion is relegated to the private sphere. Mandaville continues: "By reasserting itself in public space, Islam is hence disrupting the modernity which lies at the root of the state".[316] Hence transnational Islam 'undermines' modernity in a way that the human rights discourse, being a secular discourse, does not, despite the fact the underlying issue is the same (rule over people vs. rule over territory). A unique way in which transnational Islam, and the various strands of political Islam more broadly, represent a departure from secular debate on the rule of the individual vs. rule over territory, is the transcendental element of the Islamic message, specifically, the transcendental nature of sovereignty in political Islam, and this is where the focus of the chapter lies. The importance of sovereignty is identified by Mandaville as the remaining challenge for Islamist parties vying for power in democratic processes,[317] as the notion of power sharing with God or with the *shari'a* is still controversial in theory, even if it is circumvented in practice by many Muslim rulers.[318]

The Qur'an explicitly tells believers that all power rests with God: "Say: 'To whom belongeth all that is in the Heavens and on Earth?' Say: 'To Allah!'"[319] The problem faced by any rulers in an Islamic state is that of legitimacy. If sovereignty rests with God then why are Muslim citizens obliged to obey the commands of a monarch, president, or other ruler? In the Islamic Republic of Iran the Supreme Leader is believed to have a unique relationship with God, whereby he is uniquely qualified to interpret His commandments. To disagree with the supreme leader is close to, if not actual blasphemy, in the opinion of the regime. The situation in Sunni orthodoxy is somewhat different as there is no hierarchical clergy system as exists in Twelver Shi'ism. Jurisprudence in Sunni orthodoxy is "textual authority to justify what in effect is... interpretative license".[320] The acknowledgement of law as being a human interpretation of God's wishes, not his actual wishes, goes some way to explaining the existence of 4 separate schools of thought, *madhahib* (singular: *madhab*), in Sunni

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[315] Mandaville, Peter: *Transnational Muslim Politics*, pg. 5
[316] *Ibid*. pg. 14
[317] Mandaville, Peter: *Global Political Islam*, pg. 335
[318] The interplay between sacred and secular authority is explored in the context of Saudi Arabia in: Eickelman, Dale and Piscatori, James: *Muslim politics*, pg. 60
[319] *Qur'an*, 6:12, for more verses on the sovereignty of God see: 13:26, 15:43, 15:20
[320] Eickelman, Dale and Piscatori, James: *Muslim politics*pg, 54

orthodoxy. None of the *madhahib* can claim to be as authoritative as the Qur'an, the word of God, and so they accept each other's interpretations of matters not explicitly covered in the Qur'an and hadith as equally viable (matters explicitly covered in the Qur'an and hadith have very little deviance between the *madhahib*, such as prayer, for example).

Whilst the Qur'an tells Muslims they are God's vicegerents on Earth, legitimising a first amongst equals is problematic. This is an issue where the Qur'an, beyond many explicit references to God's sovereignty, is vague in its guidance on legitimising government. On the one hand one can find verses that seemingly justify a sort of natural law whereby some individuals are 'blessed' with more power than others,[321] while on the other hand there are verses that seem to emphasise the equality of man, and necessity for popular sovereignty.[322] While Qur'anic exegesis would look at the context of these revelations to discern greater clarity from the verses and resolve any contradiction, that is not the purpose of this chapter. Rather, assuming that there is no explicit guidance in the Islamic source texts on who should rule a Muslim community, the chapter seeks to supplement these texts in order to refine and better articulate a position regarding the political sovereignty of God. Theology takes us so far, it seems, but no further. To proceed in articulating sovereignty and the international relations of Normative Political Islam, the body of work the chapter now turns to is Islamic philosophy.

Islamic Philosophy and Political Islam

In addition to the normative and in some regards pluralistic elements of Normative Political Islam, another marker of difference between it and other interpretations of Islamic politics is the recognition of *shari'a* as *only one component* of the Islamic revelation. Those Muslims that call for 'a return to the *shari'a*' assume that the *shari'a* can offer guidance on all aspects of life. Built into that assumption is the idea that Islam-the-faith can be extrapolated out into Islam-as-politics, much as the thesis is attempting to do in exploring Normative Political Islam. However, *shari'a* is but one strand of Islamic knowledge, as explained by Hossein Nasr:

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[321] *Qur'an*, 6:165
[322] *Ibid.* 7:10

> Islam is hierarchic when considered in its total reality and also in the way it has manifested itself in history. The Islamic revelation possesses within itself several dimensions and has been revealed to humanity on the basic levels of *al-islam, al-iman,* and *al-ihsan* (submission, faith, and virtue) and from another perspective as *al-Shari'ah, al-Tariqah* and *al-Haqiqah* (the Law, the Path and the Truth).[323]

To cure the world's ills by 'returning to the *shari'a*' reveals an assumption that the *shari'a* represents the Islamic message. Put another way, *shari'a is* Islam. Here an inherent contradiction is revealed in extrapolating *all* knowledge, specifically vis-a-vis politics, from but one strand of the Islamic revelation. This is a trend that Fazlur Rahman notes when he laments the cessation of practicing *fiqh* after the eighth century AD, to simply studying and learning *fiqh* thereafter.[324]

Even within *kalam* (theology), the chosen strand of knowledge for *din wa dawla* advocates and political Islamists more generally, which relates to faith and the *shari'a* in Nasr's above summary, one can see calls for using other elements outside of theology to inform a Muslim's life. For example, *ahadith*, which are one of 4 key components in Islamic *fiqh* and *shari'a*,[325] can be used to give further credence to the separate strands of the Islamic revelation. Imam Nawawi's authoritative collection of hadith shows the trifurcation of Islamic knowledge has prophetic and transcendental weight to it where in the Prophet Muhammed explains the difference between submission, faith and virtue[326] (*al-islam, al-iman* and *al-ihsan* in Nasr's above summary). Acknowledging this separation in the revelation gives great utility to Normative Political Islam to derive an international order from Islamic sources, distinct from those that thus far have proven ambiguous in its guidance on politics (traditional *fiqh* sources). Submission and shari'a are related to theology, which has been explored in this and previous chapters. Faith and the Path are related to philosophy, while virtue and the Truth are related to gnosticism and esotericism (commonly identified

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[323] Nasr, Hossein: *Islamic Philosophy from its Origin to the Present: Philosophy in the Land of Prophecy,* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2006), pg. 31
[324] Rahman, Fazlur: *Islam*, pg. 102
[325] Schacht, Joseph: *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*, pg. 1
[326] an-Nawawi, Imam: *The Complete Forty Hadith*, trans. Clarke, Abdassamad (London: Ta-Ha Publishers, 2000), pg. 16-25

with Sufism). This section of the chapter proceeds by exploring the role philosophy and gnosticism might play in Normative Political Islam.

Gnosticism and the Shi'ism of Ayatollah Khomeini

As well as Shi'a majorities in Arab countries such as Iraq and Bahrain, Shi'ism is also the predominant faith of the people of Iran, which represents the only example of a successful Islamist revolution. The Islamic state, which functions under the stipulations of (Shi'a) *shari'a* law, provides us with information on how Islam-as-faith interacts with the modern state system and the methods used in that context to refine and make clearer the so far ambiguous guidance on politics within Islamic source texts. To do so effectively a brief overview of Shi'ism and Shi'a *fiqh* follows.

Shi'as derive their name from *shia'at 'Ali*, the party of 'Ali. 'Ali was the fourth of the *rashidun*, the 'rightly guided Caliphs', and cousin and son-in-law to the Prophet Muhammed. At first the split was political, as the 'party of 'Ali' wanted him to become the Caliph after the Prophet's death. Shi'as believe that the only people who can legitimately be Caliph are those descended from the Prophet, through the line of 'Ali and his wife, the Prophet's daughter, Fatima. Because of this, the first three Caliphs are considered 'usurpers' by the Shi'a community.[327]

Whereas Sunni Islam has no 'church' or religious hierarchy in the way that Christianity does, Shi'a Islam does have such a hierarchy. For Shi'as, as already mentioned, the only people worthy of exercising authority over the *umma* are the descendants of the Prophet. Such individuals are called 'imams', a word that is also used in Sunni Islam, but to mean a leader of a *masjid* (or mosque, Muslim 'church') or localised community. In Shi'ism, specifically mainstream 'twelver' Shi'ism, the imams are without sin, and possess an infallible understanding of the Qur'an and *sunna*, granted to them through their unique relationship with God. This relationship is tied to divine intellect, the truth of which is only glimpsed through gnosticism. As Tjitze De Boer comments on

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[327] Hourani, Albert: *A History of the Arab Peoples*, pg. 181-184

this esotericism, "[t]hat which the friend of God knows intuitively, remains hidden for ever from the discursive intellect of the learned".[328]

There are twelve imams (hence the 'twelver' adjective), the first being the Caliph 'Ali and the last being Muhammed al-Mahdi, who disappeared in 874AD. Shi'a faith is waiting for the return of this twelfth imam, the *mahdi* or guided one, to bring a reign of justice and establish the perfect society before the end of the world.[329] The perceived religious purity of Shi'a Imams grants them a similar interpretative licence and authority to the Prophet. Being able to hold such a religious authority in a way the Sunni successors to the Islamic state were unable to do so, goes some way to explaining the Iranian, Shi'a justification for that state. Such an argument only holds water if one believes that part of the Prophet's mission was political, which the founder of the current Iranian order, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, firmly believed. He states that "[j]ust as the Prophet was charged by God to execute holy decrees and establish Islamic order, and obedience to him was indispensable, the just *foqaha* must be both leaders and governors, executing decrees and establishing the Islamic social order".[330] However, chapter 1 established the thesis of Ali Abd al-Raziq thesis on the separate sources of authority the Prophet Muhammed drew upon, the 'kingly' and the 'prophetic'. In the face of that argument Khomeini's assertions are a less than self-evident, and so the current section will explore the theoretical justifications of the Shi'a state below.

Shi'a *fiqh* differs only slightly in its basic principles next to Sunni *fiqh*, with the issue of *hadith* and *ijma'* being contentious. Beyond this, the difference between Sunni and Shi'a law is in details only.[331] Concerning *hadith,* unlike the Sunni *fiqh* of the four *madhahib,* Shi'as only accept *ahadith* that are transmitted in the first instance by the Prophet's family. In addition, the Shi'as have incorporated the *ahadith* of the twelve imams into their source of *fiqh and* such *ahadith* are elevated to the same status as those of the Prophet. [332] In development of their body of *fiqh, ijma'* (consensus) was far less important, "its

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[328] De Boer, Tjitze: *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, trans. Jones, Edward (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1967), pg. 167
[329] Hourani, Albert: *A History of the Arab Peoples*, pg. 181-182
[330] Khomeini in: Moslem, Mehdi: *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran,* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2002), pg. 13
[331] Rahman, Fazlur: *Islam*, pg. 174-175
[332] Hourani, Albert: *A History of the Arab Peoples*, pg. 183

place is taken by the authority of the Imam".[333] It is this lack of *ijma'* that makes Shi'a *fiqh* so noticeably distinct from the Sunni variety. Khomeini is unabashedly dismissive of those that claim that Islam has little to say on governance. He writes:

> They have said that Islam has no relationship whatsoever with organizing life and society or with creating a government of any kind and that it only concerns itself with the rules of menstruation and child birth. It may contain some ethics. But beyond this, it has no bearing on issues of life and of organizing society.[334]

His contempt for such a view point is almost palpable, yet the evidence he gives to support his view is simply that the Qur'an and *hadith* books are superior to theses written by religious legists and commentators. This is considered a correct and orthodox opinion of the source texts, as demonstrated earlier, but it does not take away from the fact that these texts need interpreting, and such interpretations are human, fallible endeavours. Khomeini's argument that "[t]he belief that Islam came for a limited period and for a certain place violates the essentials of the Islamic beliefs"[335], is a just one. However, the answer does not have to mean, as Khomeini advocates, that Islam has prescribed a form of government for all peoples for all time. Instead, as Abdul Karim Soroush argues, the principles contained in the source texts, if continually reinterpreted, can yield different and differing answers to modern day problems.[336]

Above all else, it is the Prophet's authority that gives birth to Iran's Islamic state. This authority could not be replicated by the Sunnis but has been successfully co-opted by the Shi'a Imams. Khomeini states that the Prophet "was appointed ruler on earth by God so that he may rule justly and not follow whims".[337] While the accuracy of this statement could be argued, the fact of the matter is that Shi'as believe it to be true, and in a similar way they also believe that it is God that appoints the Imams, hence the name 'Ayatullah', literally 'sign

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[333] Rahman, Fazlur: *Islam*, pg. 173
[334] Khumayni, Ruhullah: "Islamic Government", in Donohue, John and Esposito, John, (eds.): *Islam in Transition,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, 2nd), pg. 333
[335] *Ibid.*, pg. 334
[336] Soroush, Abdul-Karim: "The Evolution and Devolution of Religious Knowledge", in Kurzman, Charles, (ed.): *Liberal Islam: A Sourcebook,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pg. 245-246
[337] Khumayni, Ruhullah, "Islamic Government", pg. 335

of God'. Khomeini himself elucidates, "[t]o the Shi'i the Imam is a virtuous man who knows the laws and implements them justly and who fears nobody's censure in serving God".[338] In essence, one man's interpretation of the source text (the Imam's) becomes canon and so, if he is looking for evidence of Islamic government and finds it, no one can dispute his finding. Theologically speaking, such a method of interpretation, while making use of *qiyas* (analogy), has no limits placed on it, limits that early Sunni thinkers had developed by way of *ijma'*. While the power of the Imam is ostensibly explained due to his singular ability to interpret the source texts, the case of Iranian political Islam is not akin to Sunni varieties which unwittingly equate *shari'a* with the totality of Islam-as-faith; Shi'a Iran in fact uses a second strand of Islamic knowledge, *al-ihsan* (virtue/gnosticism), to help construct its method of politics. This was glimpsed at when briefly discussing the Shi'a Imams' unique and esoteric relationship with God, and the chapter will now explore this further through the example of Ayatollah Khomeini, who in many respects was the architect (or arbiter) of the fusion of religion and politics at the inception of the Iranian republic.

In Khomeini's thought, "there are two essential qualities of leadership: first, knowledge of Islamic law; second, justice".[339] Already a divergence from Sunni political Islam appears, where knowledge of Islamic law *is* knowledge of justice, or the route to that knowledge. For Khomeini though these are two, separate wisdoms. The first, Islamic law, relates to *al-islam*, the second, knowledge of justice, relates to *al-ihsan*. Ayatollah Khomeini strove to acquire knowledge of justice and *al-ihsan* through mysticism and gnosis. These disciplines fall broadly under the banner of *hekmat* (literally 'wisdom') and had found refuge in Persia after an attack by theologians' on philosophy, broadly understood, in the eleventh century AD. In this Persian context it was Mullah Sadra who came to define the study of *hekmat* and his work greatly influences Khomeini.[340]

For Khomeini, the recourse to *hekmat* was an attempt to "transcend the standard offerings of jurisprudence and systematic theology"[341] given by the

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[338] *Ibid.*, pg. 337
[339] Ismael, Jacqueline and Ismael, Tarek: "Social Change in Islamic Society: The Political Thought of Ayatollah Khomeini", (*Social Problems*, Vol. 27, No. 5, 1980), pg. 614
[340] Moin, Baqer: *Khomeini: Life of the Ayatollah,* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999), pg. 40-41
[341] Ahkavi, Shahrough: "Islam, politics and society in the thought of Ayatullah Khomeini, Ayatullah Taliqani and Ali Shariati", (*Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 4, 1988), pg. 404

Shi'a clergy. This field of thought is very esoteric and inward looking, and Khomeini contrasts his thinking in this regard to that of 'the West' when he says, "[l]et them go to Mars or anywhere they wish; they are still backward in the sphere of securing happiness to man, backward in spreading moral virtues and backward in creating a psychological and spiritual progress similar to the material progress".[342] While he rejects rationality, that is, humanity's intellectual capacity, in his inner search for God, Khomeini uses reason extensively in his theological and formal arguments for clerical rule in Iran.[343]

In reaching beyond the traditional theological offerings of religious orthodoxy, Khomeini was able to refine and articulate the ambiguous guidance on politics found therein, and propose his take on Islamic politics. The conclusions on the content of that guidance and the veracity of his specific method will not be the subjects of this chapter's continuing enquiry. Rather, the procedures used by Khomeini point to something not tried in Sunni political Islam; the reach beyond theology and *shari'a* to inform their conception of politics, while still remaining in the Islamic tradition. Such an undertaking in the Shi'a context, and the resulting order it established, was equally "unprecedented in the history of Shiism in Iran".[344] Baqer Moin elucidates this novelty in Khomeini's approach when he comments on the rigidity of Shi'a orthodoxy (a claim equally applicable to Sunni orthodoxy), "[o]f the three paths to God, the only one they accept is that of total obedience and devotion. The other two, the rationalism of philosophy and the illumination of mysticism, have always been viewed as incompatible with what was revealed to the Prophet".[345] The following section will examine the claim that 'the rationalism of philosophy and illumination of mysticism' have always been divergent paths from theology, *shari'a* and orthodoxy in the Sunni context. In examining that claim the chapter will attempt to clarify the so far ambiguous theological guidance on politics offered by Normative Political Islam by reaching beyond the theology and *shari'a* which have become synonymous with the totality of the Islamic message.

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[342] Khomeini in: Ismael, Jacqueline and Ismael, Tarek: "Social Change in Islamic Society", pg. 616
[343] Ahkavi, Shahrough: "Islam, politics and society in the thought of Ayatullah Khomeini", pg. 428
[344] Moslem, Mehdi: *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, pg. 14
[345] Moin, Baqer: *Khomeini: Life of the Ayatollah*, pg. 46

Exotericism in Sunni Islam

Having explored *al-islam* earlier in this chapter, as well as in chapter 1, and having surveyed *al-ihsan* in the preceding Shi'a example, the remaining branch of knowledge to investigate is *al-iman* (faith), related to philosophy. Here the chapter refers explicitly to exotericism and (Aristotelian) rationalism, in contrast to the esotericism and mysticism of Khomeini's approach. The relationship between rationalism and mysticism is a complicated one in the Islamic tradition, and those familiar to philosophy as it developed in the European and broadly Western context can easily, and incorrectly, define only the rational tradition as philosophy in the Islamic setting. In fact, the term *falsafah* in Arabic refers both to *hekmat*, as the tradition came to be defined by Mullah Sadra, and the rationalism of Aristotle that was the purview of the Mu'tazilite group. In this thesis, the term philosophy will refer to rationalism specifically, while *falsafah* will refer to both *hekmat* and rationalism in the Islamic context. When contrasting *falsafah* with *kalam*, it is important to note the ways in which these traditions have an intertwined historically and have substantially co-constituted each other. Taking Hossein Nasr's overview of the subject, this chapter identifies 4 or 5 different 'eras' of the relationship between *falsafah* and *kalam*.[346] The first is in the early ninth century AD, when the Mu'tazilite school dominated both *kalam* and *falsafah*. This period of time is described by Nasr as one "of close association between *falsafah* and *kalam* in an atmosphere of more or less relative mutual respect".[347]

During the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates the rise of Ash'arite theology began a gradual incorporation of certain philosophical elements into *kalam*, while at the same time separating *falsafah* from more orthodox forms of knowledge.

A third period of this relationship was near the end of the Abbasid caliphate and was a period of intense opposition of *falsafah* by theologians, while at the same time borrowing heavily from the former.[348] This relationship is epitomised by Abu Hamed Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Ghazali,[349] an Ash'arite theologian who wrote his *tahafut al-falsafah* (The Incoherence of the

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[346] Nasr, Hossein: *Islamic Philosophy from its Origin to the Present*, pg. 49-51
[347] *Ibid.*, pg. 49
[348] De Boer, Tjitze: *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, pg. 154
[349] In Latin al-Gazali is known as Algazel

Philosophers) in the eleventh century AD. Even while doing so, Nasr comments that "*kalam* became even more "philosophical," employing both ideas and arguments drawn from *falsafah*".[350]

Once the 'dominance' of *kalam* was established in the Sunni world by al-Ghazali, a more peaceful existence between *falsafah* and *kalam* continued through to this day. A major development in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was the thought of Mullah Sadra, who represents a fifth stage in the relationship between these schools of thought. With Mullah Sadra, in the Persian setting, *falsafah* began to eclipse *kalam*, causing theology to become less important in that setting, as seen earlier in the example of Ayatollah Khomeini.

It is apparent that "the theological movement in Islam was strongly influenced by Philosophy".[351] What is important to emphasise here is that in reaching beyond theology to inform Normative Political Islam, the thesis is not participating in anything alien to the Islamic tradition, for what that statement is worth. The summary provided shows that the history of theology so vehemently defended and lauded as the 'true' Islamic way by *din-wa-dawla* adherents, is one that is not a product of immaculate, divine conception, but the result of much human endeavour and co-constitution with *falsafah*.

The previous sections and chapters have explored an Islamic order based on gnosticism (*al-ihsan*) in Khomeini's Iran and abstracted polities based on theology (*al-islam*) in the variations on political Islam. The third approach is that of *al-iman*, rationalism and philosophy as understood in the Western context. In the Muslim world rationalism is strongly tied to the introduction of Greek philosophy, which is commonly attributed to the Mu'tazilites and personified in the person of Abu Ya'qub al-Kindi. Al-Kindi was an early Peripatetic and grappled with expressing the work of Aristotle in Arabic, as well as what would become a central problem of philosophy in the Islamic world, the "harmonization of faith and reason"[352] (an endeavour that bears a passing resemblance with Wendt's pursued synthesis of science and interpretivism in his Constructivism, a resemblance that is returned to in later chapters). Moroccan philosopher Mohammed 'Abed al-Jabri sees this mission, the

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[350] Nasr, Hossein: *Islamic Philosophy from its Origin to the Present*, pg. 50
[351] De Boer, Tjitze: *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, pg. 154
[352] Nasr, Hossein: *Islamic Philosophy from its Origin to the Present*, pg. 109

exploration of faith and reason, to be key in expressing an Islamic modernity, and this chapter argues that the use of philosophy and rationalism is the key to expressing a coherent concept of politics in Normative Political Islam. 'Abed al-Jabri states that in carrying out this task "[w]e [Muslim Arabs] could thus rid our conception of tradition from that ideological and emotional charge that weighs on our conscience and forces us to perceive tradition as an absolute reality that transcends history".[353]

The exotericism of the Mu'tazilites was to be rekindled some decades after al-Kindi by Abu Naṣr Muḥammad ibn Muhammad Farabi, hereafter referred to as al-Farabi.[354] Al-Farabi lived in the late ninth, early tenth century AD, a time of fragmentation of Muslim political power. As such, his philosophy is overly concerned with unity, and "with some attempt at adaptation to the Muslim faith, he seeks to demonstrate that Plato and Aristotle harmonize with one another".[355] In the tenth century AD Abu ʿAli al-Husayn ibn ʿAbd Allah ibn Sina, hereafter referred to as ibn Sina,[356] lived as both a rationalist and a gnostic, personifying the spirit of *falsafah* in Muslim lands. De Boer claims the common perception that ibn Sina pushed beyond al-Farabi to a 'purer' Aristotelianism is incorrect, as ibn Sina and al-Farabi differed on many metaphysical issues, specifically around the nature of the soul.[357] While both men employed reason, ibn Sina was far more interested in mysticism than al-Farabi. When *falsafah* was criticised by theologian al-Ghazali, in the Arab Middle Eastern setting, perhaps beyond repair, ibn Sina's mix of rationalism and mysticism was the straw man used to do so.[358]

The main thrust of al-Ghazali's critique of *falsafah* was the refutation of reason as a means of understanding faith. Paraphrasing Fazlur Rahman's summary of a Mu'tazilite position, while al-Farabi or ibn Sina might say that "God has forbidden killing because it is bad; it is not bad because God has forbidden it"[359] (and reason is the means of divining why it is bad, and thus confirms the divine message), al-Ghazali would say the opposite. As De Boer

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[353] 'Abed al-Jabri, Mohammed: *Arab-Islamic Philosophy: A contemporary Critique*, trans. Abbassi, Aziz (Austin, TX: Center for Middle Eastern Studies, 1999), pg. 2-3
[354] In Latin al-Farabi is known as Alpharabius
[355] De Boer, Tjitze: *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, pg. 109
[356] In Latin Ibn Sina is known as Avicenna
[357] De Boer, Tjitze: *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, pg. 132-134
[358] 'Abed al-Jabri, Mohammed: *Arab-Islamic Philosophy*, pg. 57-59
[359] Rahman, Fazlur: *Islam*, pg. 104

summarises, "in contradiction to the Dialecticians and Philosophers, al-Gazali everywhere lays stress upon experience".[360] While al-Ghazali incorporates much philosophy while simultaneously refuting it, he never-the-less brought about the dominance of theology in the Arab Middle East as the sole carrier of exoteric method; as 'Abed al-Jabri elucidates, "[i]f indeed – as it has constantly been reiterated – philosophy never was able to recover from the blows dealt to it by Ghazali, this was only true in the case of the Arab Middle East".[361] It is in the West of Muslim lands, in al-Andalus especially, that exoteric philosophy continued to thrive.

Al-Andalus was the refuge of the Umayyad Caliphate after its fall to the Abbasids, and the spokesperson for the cultural and ideological project of that caliphate in the eleventh century AD was Abu Muhammad ʿAli ibn Ahmad ibn Saʿid ibn Hazm. Ibn Hazm's focus on rationalism was in absolute contrast and an attempt to erase "the imprint of Shi'ite and Sufi "illumination""[362] from Sunni thought. Ibn Hazm is very critical of esotericism, and says that "God's (praise be to Him) religion is purely exoteric and is by no means esoteric. It is entirely obvious and hides no latent secret. It is entirely based on proof and nothing in it is left to chance".[363] The Almohad dynasty, some 50 years after ibn Hazm's death, carried on his exoteric doctrine in the person of Abu al-Walid Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Rushd,[364] who the Almohad court sponsored to compile commentaries on Aristotle.[365] Ibn Rushd was "above all a fanatical admirer of the Aristotelian Logic",[366] and sought to show that truths are only relevant and 'true' in their own frames of reference. Therefore those conclusions of Aristotle that are not compatible with Islam can still be true, but not universal or absolute; "[t]heir veracity is conditioned by the system from which they are derived".[367] Aristotelian rationalism is thereby conceived as compatible with the Islamic message; Ibn Rushd, in the tradition of al-Farabi, argued that "[p]hilosophy and

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[360] De Boer, Tjitze: *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, pg. 167
[361] 'Abed al-Jabri, Mohammed: *Arab-Islamic Philosophy*, pg. 59
[362] *Ibid.*, pg. 72
[363] Ibn-Hazm in: *ibid.*, pg. 76
[364] In Latin ibn Rushd is known as Averroes
[365] 'Abed al-Jabri, Mohammed: *Arab-Islamic Philosophy*, pg. 82-83
[366] De Boer, Tjitze: *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, pg. 189
[367] 'Abed al-Jabri, Mohammed: *Arab-Islamic Philosophy*, pg. 89

the religion of Islam do not therefore contradict each other. They express the same truth in different forms".[368]

Exotericism and Politics

Having outlined the tradition of exoteric thought and rationalism in the Muslim world, it now falls to operationalise the abstract notions of rationalism into a conception of politics that might inform Normative Political Islam. 'Abed al-Jabri states that the achievements of the European tradition will remain foreign to Muslims detached from their history and tradition. Referring to an Arab-Islamic future, al-Jabri is adamant that such a future must be constructed "from our own reality, from the specificity of our history and the constituents of our personality, its historical consciousness".[369] The importance of overviewing the lesser drawn upon aspects of the Islamic message, exotericism and gnosticism, which preceded this section, was to show the ways in which rationalism, gnosticism and theology are constitutive elements of an 'Islamic personality'. Given that theology and the *shari'a* provide only limited or ambiguous guidance on politics, when the thesis proceed to look at intellectual traditions outside theology, it did not stray beyond the Islamic message (which after all is constituted by *al-islam*, *al-iman* and *al-ihsan* concurrently). This chapter continues by building on the exotericism of the Sunni tradition in an attempt to refine and add to the theological guidance on politics. The route taken into operationalising this tradition is via another who has already done so, Ibn Khaldun.

Ibn Khaldun became acquainted with the exotericism of Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd in the court of the Marinid Sultan in Fes.[370] Ibn Khaldun wrote his treatise, the *Muqaddimah* (an Introduction to History) in the fourteenth century AD and in it acknowledges, in agreement with 'Ali al-Raziq, that the time of the Prophet was an atypical time in history with regards to politics, a rare instance where the divine played a role. With the passing of the *rashidun* it is humanity that defines politics and in this way Ibn Khaldun's theories are humanist, if not secular.[371] If political Islam "draws much of its strength from a conviction that there is no need for a detour through the labyrinths of Western history, before one can

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[368] Hourani, Albert: *A History of the Arab Peoples*, pg. 78
[369] 'Abed al-Jabri, Mohammed: *Arab-Islamic Philosophy*, pg. 130
[370] *Ibid.*, pg. 105
[371] Ibn-Khaldun: *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. Rosenthal, Franz, vol. 1 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1958), pg. lxxiii-lxxx

arrive at a vision of the good life and a just order",[372] this chapter will lean heavily on Ibn Khaldun as a Muslim thinker who avoided such a 'labyrinth'. In fact Khadduri, when explaining that the state (an approximation for authority in the Muslim schema) is essential for society's survival, and that without the state humanity's evil nature would ruin society, he points out that this Hobbesian position was grasped some 300 years before Hobbes, by Ibn Khaldun.[373]

Returning to the debates concerning transnational Islam, Normative Political Islam, and the sovereignty of God, this section of the chapter will now use the work of Ibn Khaldun to help derive a theory of Islamic sovereignty. Sovereignty being the remaining impediment for Islamism coming to power, in Mandaville's summation. As Mandaville sees it, in circumstances where the modern nation state model is accepted, "the issue of shari'ah and the question of political power sharing… represent the sole outstanding issues that cause problems with regard to Islamist participation in democratic politics".[374] Whether sovereignty is the *sole* impediment to Islamist participation in democratic politics is contentious given the events that have transpired since the publication of Mandaville's *Global Political Islam* in 2007. Indeed, Mandaville made that assertion in the year after Hamas came to power in Gaza, and five years before the Muslim Brotherhood's Mohammed Mosri came to power in Egypt.

While the empirical reality might be fluid with regards to Islamism dealing with the realities of power, this thesis has established that the theoretical problems with regards to holding God as sovereign must still be resolved. Specifically, the thesis has yet to explore the ways in which accepting the nation state system might undermine or limit the ways in which the sovereignty of God might be articulated. Hamas has felt the repercussions of the incongruence between theory and practice, suspending the implementation of an Islamic state after the 2008 war with Israel in order to deal with the aftermath of that conflict. As Max Rodenbeck and Nicolas Pelham state, "Hamas has become captive to its own success as it struggles now to reconcile the pressing needs of day-to-day governance with the ideology it preached in opposition".[375] To avoid the

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[372] Sayyid, Bobby: *A Fundamental Fear*, pg. xxii
[373] Khadduri, Majid: *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, pg. 6-7
[374] Mandaville, Peter: *Global Political Islam*, pg. 335
[375] Pelham, Nicolas and Rodenbeck, Max: "Which Way for Hamas" (*The New York Review of Books*, Vol. 56, No. 17 2009). [Accessed 12 June 2013]. Available from: http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2009/nov/05/which-way-for-hamas/.

same fate for Normative Political Islam, this chapter will be using Ibn Khaldun's exoteric method, and in combination with the guidance of *kalam*, derive a notion of sovereignty that might be more satisfactory to both *din wa dawla* advocates on the one hand, and Muslim secularists on the other. The analysis of its position vis-a-vis the discipline of IR will be left for the subsequent chapter. For now, it is enough to extrapolate a theory from the methods stated, though comparisons will be made throughout to Western theories and theorists when pertinent.

Ibn Khaldun, Exotericism and Sovereignty in Islam

Ibn Khaldun shows the necessity of social organisation in his explanation of human behaviour, left unchecked by external influence, in an approximate 'state of nature':

> Each [individual] will stretch out his hand for whatever he needs and (try simply to) take it, since injustice and aggressiveness are in the animal nature. The others, in turn, will try to prevent him from taking it, motivated by wrathfulness and spite and the strong human reaction when (one's own property is menaced). This causes dissention. (Dissention) leads to hostilities, and hostilities lead to trouble and bloodshed and loss of life which (in turn) lead to the destruction of the (human) species.[376]

Rather than a 'state of nature', as humanity in anarchy or without society is referred to in Social Contract Theory, Ibn Khaldun's condition ends with the destruction of humanity, and as such cannot be described as 'natural'. In this way, government or society is instead the 'natural' condition of humanity, as without it we would cease to exist; as Ibn Khaldun explains, "[p]eople, thus, cannot persist in a state of anarchy".[377]

In the Western liberal tradition, the impingement of the individual's rights is a central debate as the 'natural' state of being is contested; is humanity's natural state one of total freedom, where the individual will consent to only the minimum of government interference necessary to allow society to function? In

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[376] Ibn-Khaldun: *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, pg. 380
[377] *Ibid.*

the Islamic tradition transmitted by Ibn Khaldun, this is not the case. Following from the ideas of the rationalist al-Farabi, who was mentioned earlier, Khadduri sees the history of Muslim societies as group centred. The individual counts for little, as "[o]nly through the family, clan or *civtas* to which the individual belonged, could he claim the right to protection by means of custom or social mores".[378] Considering the fundamental difference between dominant Western and Islamic conceptions of the natural state of humanity, the term: 'state of nature' would seem to no longer apply. If used in the Islamic worldview, the state of nature would imply that the destruction of the species is humanity's natural condition, when in fact it is group relations and society that is more common. Therefore, the chapter will adapt the terminology of John Rawls, who rather than use a state of nature, employed the term 'original position'. For Rawls, individuals in the original position "[act] in ways best suited to achieving their ends",[379] and in this way were self interested, as would coincide with Ibn Khaldun's conception of human nature. So rather than refer to Rawls' original position, this chapter will refer to the 'Khaldunian original position' to make reference to the condition of humanity without society, in this Islamically derived world-view.

The Khaldunian original position is one where humanity, in its self-interest and vice, would destroy each other. It is a condition where such anarchy is untenable, and would result in the destruction of humanity. Hence, the 'natural' position derived from that assumption is one of individuals in a societal structure,[380] rather than the atomised individuals of liberal social contract theorists. With this in mind, the next section will move to construct the final part of the puzzle, as it were, for Normative Political Islam; the remainder of the chapter will address the issue of sovereignty by examining the transition from the Khaldunian original position to a society based on Muslim norms, with an emphasis on the issue of sovereignty in such a society.

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[378] Khadduri, Majid: *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, pg. 4
[379] Lessnoff, Michael: *Social Contract: Issues in Political Theory,* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1986), pg. 132
[380] Ibn-Khaldun: *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, pg. 89-90

Synthesising the Sovereignty of God and Exotericism in Normative Political Islam

Muslims, like the ancient Greeks before them, envisioned human kind living together, as members of a society. However as mentioned already, "the individuals rights and obligations were always defined in terms of (though subordinate to) the community's interests".[381] Ibn Khaldun derives his conclusions on the place of the individual in society from proto-sociological rigour; humanity, at least in the deserts of North Africa and the Arab peninsula, is unable to obtain the food necessary for survival on its own, and also cannot protect its belongings in such a condition. This leads to Ibn Khaldun's observation that, "[w]hen, however, mutual co-operation exists, man obtains food for his nourishment and weapons for his defense. God's wise plan that man(kind) should subsist and the human species be preserved will be fulfilled".[382] Hence Ibn Khaldun makes the formation of society and government an act of faith, such that proponents of the *din wa dawla* position would jump upon. However, the place of the divine is yet to be deciphered, and will be interrogated more thoroughly as this section continues.

Returning to the subject of state formation, the chapter must ask how individuals in the Khaldunian original position *form* their societies. For while Ibn Khaldun insists society is 'natural', such a statement provides little information on the composition of that society, or the way in which sovereignty is derived. Regarding the equality of persons in Ibn Khaldun's conception of society, the egalitarian nature of Islam is as chequered as that of political liberalism. While Islam freed people of the Middle East from the authority of kings hundreds of years before Europe did the same, it quickly reverted back to hereditary royal authority. Likewise, Islam provided an unheard of level of women's and minority rights at its inception, though these rights seem stagnant and insufficient with the advent of social or democratic liberalism. But to hold up the record of historical Islamic governance with that of modern day liberalism is a fallacy, as liberalism too, has its dark periods. Domenico Losurdo points out, for example, that "[s]lavery is not something that persisted despite the success of the [eighteenth and nineteenth century European and American] liberal revolutions.

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[381] Khadduri, Majid: *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, pg. 3
[382] Ibn-Khaldun: *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, pg. 91

On the contrary, it experienced its maximum development following that success".[383]

Political liberalism has matured over hundreds of years yet even now is argued by Mark Duffield of having maintained large zones of exception across the world, which ensure 'our' liberties by denying 'theirs', whoever they may be,[384] much in the same way that "exception clauses"[385] have allowed for 'liberal' slavery and 'liberal' colonialism. All the above is to say, that despite the place of *dhimmis* (protected minorities) or women who were denied civic rights at various times and places in various classical Islamic polities, Islam has a strong egalitarian current that maintains that "[m]ost noble among you in God's eyes is he who fears God most".[386] The Qur'anic verse is often used to show that there is no social distinction between Muslims, except that of piety. A more detailed analysis of the relationship between liberalism and Normative Political Islam forms the basis of the next chapter, *Islamic Community and International Relations*. The present chapter continues the discussion of sovereignty.

In addition to the proposed equality of persons in political Islam, Khadduri highlights another recurrent theme in Ibn Khaldun's work, that of authority. As Khadduri eloquently states, "[authority] is regarded as absolutely necessary since society without authority [is] impossible; for, though man is a social animal by nature, he is not a well-behaving animal".[387] This much has already been demonstrated in Ibn Khaldun's thinking, but what remains to be discussed is how in a society of equals, a rational, that is, outcome maximising individual, might consent to be ruled by another. Further still, how does this rational individual consent to being ruled by God, as Muslim states must come to terms with chapter 5, verse 43 of the Qur'an when it states, "[k]nowest thou not that to Allah alone belongeth the dominion of the heavens and the earth?"[388]

A Muslim sovereign, in the Sunni orthodox ideal, is constrained, to some extent, by God's *shari'a*; for the Muslim sovereign to go against the *shari'a* is to lose legitimacy, and in this limited way respects the sovereignty of God. If

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[383] Losurdo, Domenico: *Liberalism: A Couner-History*, trans. Elliot, Gregory (London: Verso, 2011), pg. 35
[384] Duffield, Mark: *Development, Security and Unending War*, pg. 192
[385] Losurdo, Domenico: *Liberalism: A Couner-History*, pg. 342
[386] *Qur'an*, 49:13
[387] Khadduri, Majid: *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, pg. 5
[388] *Qur'an*, 5:43

Normative Political Islam were to place *shari'a* in the position of natural rights and laws, perhaps in a similar way to inalienable human rights, what results is a sovereign that has the legitimacy of God, through respect of the *shari'a*. This is somewhat similar to John Locke's social contract, wherein political authority is legitimised *both* by popular consent *and* that authority's respect for the natural rights that individuals enjoyed in the state of nature.[389]

That is not to say that the sovereign, as legitimised in Locke-style social contract, is always right in its actions. For Locke, even if a society gives their complete consent to a sovereign, it does not make the sovereign's actions right if it does not respect the natural law.[390] In effect, if individuals in a society governed by Normative Political Islam consent to actions that infringe their natural rights (their duties interpreted through *shari'a*), then these actions are morally wrong, though that is not to say that the action cannot be carried out. The space afforded by Locke to natural rights and natural law, which is an articulation of God's will in his schema, seems to meld well with the notion of God's sovereignty in Islamic society.

Crawford Brough Macpherson's socialist critique of Locke argues that Locke's concept of human nature is intrinsically linked with capitalism. He refers to this human nature as "possessive individualism".[391] An Islamic notion of sovereignty is far more communitarian in nature than the asocial individualism propounded by liberal thinkers. This is alluded to in the base assumption of liberalism that humanity by natural condition is free, while in Ibn Khaldun's approach humanity by natural condition is social. Communitarianism argues that "people's private identity really is tied to certain [communal] ends".[392] Sunni orthodoxy's treatment of minority communities highlights the difference between the individualism practised by modern liberal states and the communitarianism of historical Islamic polities, wherein group tolerance was preferred over individual autonomy. The different minority groups in the Ottoman Empire (recognising that only the other Abrahamic faiths, the *ahl al-kitab*, were afforded such a status), for example, were "permitted to practice their religions and earn

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[389] Medina, Vicente: *Social Contract Theories: Political Obligation or Anarchy?,* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1990), pg. 39
[390] *Ibid.*, pg. 40
[391] Macpherson, Crawford Brough: *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*, 8th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), pg. 3
[392] Kymlicka, Will: *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, pg. 240

their livelihood, as long as they deferred to Muslim authority and kept a low profile".[393] This form of group tolerance did not respect the rights of the individual; while the group remained unmolested, the individual was not able to leave his community without being accused of apostasy, a crime punishable by death. In this regard Will Kymlica describes the Ottoman method of rule over minorities as "antithetical to the ideals of personal liberty".[394]

The debate on the extent to which an Islamic society might respect individual freedoms, and beyond that an analysis of the pros and cons respect for such freedoms would yield, is not integral to the present discussion on sovereignty. However, the conclusions reached on the matter of sovereignty will have direct impact on the nature of individual rights in Normative Political Islam, and is a subject that will be returned to in the next chapter. Currently, the chapter has reached a possible solution to the first part of the puzzle: a ruler can respect the sovereignty of God by obeying the *shari'a*. As seen earlier though, the *shari'a* can be very opaque when dealing with political issues, and as *shari'a* is a result of human interpretation, it has problems with legitimacy outside any particular orthodoxy. *Shari'a* represents theology, and injunctions in the source texts in and of themselves cannot provide enough guidance to Normative Political Islam. Khomeini's political theory builds on theology *with mysticism* to develop an Islamic notion of politics. The approach of the mystics is derided by more orthodox Muslims as it vests exclusive knowledge of 'the truth' in an 'elite' or otherwise blessed few individuals, taking away from the egalitarian message of Islam. Moving beyond the sovereignty of God to justifying the sovereignty of a leader amongst equals, whilst simultaneously refining ambiguous theological guidance, is the remaining task for an Islamic exoteric method.

Deriving Political Sovereignty via an Exoteric Method

Majid Khadduri describes a dual agreement amongst the Muslims of Medina to explain the transition of sovereignty from the Prophet Muhammed to his successors. He explains that "[u]nder Muhammad not only the executive, but

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[393] Deshen, Shlomo and Zenner, Walter: "Jews Among Muslims in Precolonial Times: An Introductory Survey", in Deshen, Shlomo and Zenner, Walter, (eds.): *Jews among Muslims: Communities in the Precolonial Middle East,* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), pg. 15
[394] Kymlicka, Will: *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, pg. 231

also the legislative and judicial functions of Allah were united… In more precise terms we may argue that only the possession of sovereignty resided with Allah, while its exercise was delegated to Muhammad".[395] During the Prophet's lifetime, then, a single contract was needed to justify a Muslim's loyalty to the Prophet Muhammed. As Muhammed's authority was synonymous with God's, granting sovereignty to one was tantamount to granting sovereignty to the other. With the death of the Prophet, those who had interpreted their contract to lie with Muhammed sought to reject the authority of Medina, the capital of the nascent Islamic polity. Those who interpreted their contract to lie with God were left to appoint a successor to Muhammed, "entrusted with the execution of the divine commands which were still binding upon the Muslims".[396]

Khadduri identifies the two contracts used to delineate sovereignty in the period of the *rashidun* and beyond to be:

1. A contract between the Muslims, and God and Muhammed, represented by submission to Islam, the declaration of faith, *shahadda*.
2. A contract between the Muslims and the Caliph (or approximate leader), the Muslims empowering the Caliph to enforce the divine law.[397]

Related to the use of dual contracts to resolve the issue of God's sovereignty next to the sovereignty of a temporal ruler, Pakistani journalist turned political writer, Abdul A'ala Maududi, identified a distinction between a 'Muslim' and 'Islamic' state.[398] These two concepts fall on the same lines as Khadduri's two contracts, but Maududi articulated them in the form of two different kinds of sovereignty, political and legal. "Political sovereignty thus naturally means ownership of the authority of enforcing legal sovereignty".[399] Here Maududi has introduced a hierarchy to the dual contract. The one, pertaining to legal sovereignty, is superior to the second, pertaining to political sovereignty. Legal sovereignty is also referred to as the 'Divine Code' by Maududi, and in this way he finds space for God, through the *shari'a*, to legislate in the Islamic State. The political sovereignty he describes is that of a "vicegerent of God" and therefore, "the scope of its activities will naturally be restricted within the limits ordained by

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[395] Khadduri, Majid: *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, pg. 10
[396] *Ibid.*
[397] *Ibid.*, pg. 9-12
[398] Ayubi, Nazih: *Political Islam*, pg. 128
[399] Maududi, Abu A'la: *First principles of the Islamic state*, pg. 18

the Almighty Himself".[400] In this way he does not contradict the Qur'anic injunction on chapter 2, verse 229, "[t]hese are the limits ordained by God; so do not transgress them".[401] Such a stalwart belief in the *shari'a* however, fails to acknowledge the fact that it is created through human interpretation, not divine creation, as Maududi would believe.

If Muslims, by virtue of their *shahadda*, automatically abide by the first contract with God and the prophet Muhammed, then does this reinforce the arguments of *din wa dawla* proponents? For such ideologues, the inseparability of politics from religion would mean no second contract were necessary, as adherence to the laws of God and His Messenger is all that is needed to form an Islamic state. Eickelman and Piscatori's assumptions as to the nature of "sacred authority" are of great utility in the present discussion. The two assumptions the authors make is that firstly, sacred authority is one kind of authority amongst others. As not all authority is based on religion, then religious authority is not all-encompassing, as *din-wa-dawla* proponents argue; and secondly that sacred authority does not assume religion and politics are independent spheres of activity. They are separable and intersect according to context.[402] The dual Islamic contract relies on the separation of religious and other forms of authority to function, but that will not do to silence *din-wa-dawla* ideologues.

Ibn Khaldun, as alluded to earlier, also linked the formation of society and government to religious duty, though for him this was done in an attempt to incorporate the rule of Muhammed and the *rashidun* into his work; Lenn Evan Goodman claims that Ibn Khaldun "cheerfully admits that Muhammad does not fit within his model of leadership"[403] when in fact much of Ibn Khaldun's argument applies *solely* to the prophet Muhammed and his immediate successors. In Ibn Khaldun's description of the early years of Islam and the Islamic polity, a large emphasis is placed on religion. In this era, people had what Ibn Khaldun described as a 'restraining' influence within themselves. He talks about the asceticism of early Islam, and the *rashidun* in particular, as a key to the self-restraint that was indicative of this early caliphate. For Ibn Khaldun,

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[400] *Ibid.*, pg. 27
[401] *Qur'an*, 2:229
[402] Eickelman, Dale and Piscatori, James: *Muslim politics* pg. 57
[403] Goodman, Lenn Evan: "Ibn Khaldun and Thucydides", (*Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 92, No. 2, 1972), pg. 253

then, the predominance of the faith in the early period of Islam was the reason only one contract, the first *shahadda* contract, was needed to form government at that time. Such is not the situation today, and the *shahadda* does not bind the Muslim community in the way it once might have; the authority of the *rashidun* was "indistinguishable from the public body"[404] in their time, but under the Umayyad dynasty of the seventh and eighth century, authority became distanced from civil society. The death of the Prophet and an end to direct access to divine guidance meant the need for a second contract to legitimate authority in the Islamic polity was evident. This recognition of changing social and religious conditions in the story of Muhammed and the *rashidun* is what separates Ibn Khaldun from *din wa dawla* advocates. As Ibn Rushd's rationalist tradition dictates, 'truths' for the *rashidun* and Muhammed, the need for one pact with society to legitimise sovereignty, do not transfer to social situations distinct from the one those 'truths' were conceived. Therefore, for those without direct access to the divine message, a feat achieved in Khomeini's conception of Shi'ism, a second contract, while breaking from the tradition of the Prophet and the *rashidun*, becomes necessary.

The second contract is an explicitly political contract when compared to the first, which being related to the Muslim's declaration of faith, can be described as explicitly religious in nature. The second contract relates to life in the temporal world. The distinction between the temporal and the transcendental is one that recurs in Islamic discourse, and as recalled in chapter 1, much of the ambiguity about political guidance in Islamic source texts centres on temporal and transcendental aspects of the *shari'a*. For Ibn Khaldun an Islamic government, by which he is using the Caliphal paradigm of government, is a substitute for the role of Muhammed, "in as much as it serves, like him, to preserve the religion and to exercise (political) leadership of the world".[405] Therein lays the two aspects of Islamic leadership, which equate to the two contracts between government and the individual. The first is grounded in religion, and is an authority that "will be useful for life in both this and the other world".[406] The second is an authority that is based on an "intellectual

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[404] Rahman, Fazlur: *Islam*, pg. 79
[405] Ibn-Khaldun: *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, pg. 386
[406] *Ibid*.

(rational) basis",[407] and is only of benefit to this temporal world. When the theoretical Muslim contractors of this thesis agree to the second contract, they are agreeing primarily to prevent anarchy, which would lead to the demise of humanity. As a secondary concern, they are empowering the Caliph to enforce the divine law as agreed in the first contract.

This second contract is built on the first, in the hierarchy that Maududi alludes to. The first, *shahadda* contract binds Muslims to the law, and "[t]he law… precedes the state: it provides the basis of the state".[408] Does this law, presumably the *shari'a*, restrict the ability of the polity to function? In adhering to the first contract, adhering to the tenants of Islam, an Islamic state might behave in ways that could be perceived as irrational (not self-serving), or be compelled to break the peace in ways a secular state could avoid. Khadduri's historical account of the Islamic polity would seem to reinforce this view. He states that, "[t]he nature of such a [universal, Islamic] state is entirely exclusive; it does not recognize, by definition, the co-existence of a second universal state. While Islam tolerated Christianity and Judaism as religions, Islamdom and Christendom, as two universal states, could not peacefully coexist". [409] Piscatori puts this point of view regarding religion and politics, one he is not an advocate of, succinctly when he writes, "religious zealotry of all kinds demands enemies to be eliminated".[410] The above view of religion and politics, and critiques of a political contract being somehow secondary to a religious contract, can be refuted in three ways.

Firstly the thesis argues that in certain circumstances the Muslim contractor, in agreeing to the second political contract, is not necessarily agreeing to the enforcement of divine law. In such circumstances the political authority has perhaps succumbed to the evils that can result from it, "such as tyranny, injustice, and pleasure-seeking".[411] If such a case was not possible, then for what reason does Ibn Khaldun expound upon a taxonomy of the various authorities in Muslim lands? In fact, there is a difference between a Caliph (or Imam, which Ibn Khaldun uses as an approximate term) and a Sultan or Mulk (king). The former satisfy *both* contracts with the Muslims, the latter only

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[407] *Ibid.*
[408] Khadduri, Majid: *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, pg. 16
[409] *Ibid.*, pg. 17
[410] Piscatori, James: *Islam in a World of Nation States*, pg. 148
[411] Ibn-Khaldun: *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, pg. 391

the second in its purely temporal nature. Both are possible, and it is possible for Muslims to consent to both types of authority. For Ibn Khaldun history was cyclical, just because the period of the *rashidun* satisfied both Muslim contracts does not mean that Muslims must not deviate from this precedent. As Franz Rosenthal notes, "[i]n Ibn Khaldun's orthodox Muslim environment, it was believed that human intellectual power was always constant and capable of producing the highest civilisation at any given time. Therefore, Ibn Khaldun could hardly have assumed that steady progress in human civilisation was possible or even necessary".[412] If a Muslim is able to practise their faith, then the first contract is upheld. That the second contract is not used to its full advantage, to uphold and enforce Islamic values in a given territory, does not mean that its lesser function, that of maintaining government, is not of value. Upholding government is necessary for Muslims to practise their faith, and functionally necessary to avoid the destruction of the species.

A second argument countering the admonition of religion blended with politics is that of Piscatori in his work, *Islam in a World of Nation States*. In it, Piscatori uses Qur'anic verse and historical precedent to show how Islam endorses a pluralistic political life, thereby nullifying the universalism of the *faith* in the realm of the *political*. Among many verses used by Piscatori to this end,[413] the most poignant is chapter 42, verse 8, which states, "[i]f God had so willed, He would have made them one community".[414] This verse lays the foundations for ideological and political divisions in Muslim territory and perhaps, even, territorial divisions. On historical precedent, Piscatori references the pacts made by Muhammed with the Jews of Medina, Christians of Aqaba and the polytheists of Mecca. After the period of the *rashidun* he points to the Umayyad relationship with the Byzantines, where one caliph established truce and tribute with the Byzantines, another accepted aid from them to decorate the Prophet's Mosque and the Great Mosque in Damascus. "The Abbasids rather more routinely concluded treaties with foreigners"[415], and during the Crusades several formal treaties were established between the Muslims and the European,

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[412] Rosenthal, F. in *ibid.*, pg. lxxxiv
[413] See *Qur'an*, 49:13, 4:59 and 42:8, and Piscatori, James: *Islam in a World of Nation States*, pg. 45-46
[414] *Qur'an 42:8*
[415] Piscatori, James: *Islam in a World of Nation States*, pg. 49

Christian kings.[416] Piscatori concludes that, against the perceived universality of Islamic politics, "Muslim rulers found no difficulty at all in having formal diplomatic dealings with non-Muslims when it was necessary to do so".[417] So if the Sunni Islamic social contract does not *always* demand that political authority support the cause of Islam-as-faith, so long as that authority does not impinge on the Muslims, and the ideological, political and territorial universality of Islam are not as universal as once believed, there is one final reason to contest the idea that religion and politics cannot mix (in the case of Islam).

For this final point the thesis turns to Mohamed Arkoun, who makes reference to "secular religions" like Marxism and Fascism, and believes that secularism and religion have common features.[418] John Gray talks further on these common features, and comments on the similarities between the religious fundamentalism of al-Qaeda and other Western, secular, political ideologies. It is not, for Gray, religion that is a cause of what is considered 'irrational' behaviour, rather the characteristics of political modernity. Al-Qaeda's assertion that they can create a perfect order on earth is a peculiar myth shared by Nazism, Communism and Positivism.[419] The only difference between religious brutality in the past and contemporary religious or ideological brutality is that previously damage was done to individuals and society for the sake of life after death, whereas now it is done for the sake of some idealised utopia that can be realised in the here and now.[420] There is nothing inherent in religion, and specifically in Normative Political Islam as it is defined in the pages of this thesis, that should be feared on the international sphere.

Conclusions

This chapter sought to engage Normative Political Islam with transnational Islam, which was identified to be the articulation of political Islam that exposes the most poignant sites of conflict with IR. The foremost challenge transnational Islam poses to IR was argued to be sovereignty, specifically the sovereignty of God.

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[416] *Ibid.*
[417] *Ibid.*
[418] Arkoun, Mohamed, "Rethinking Islam Today"218
[419] Gray, John: *Al Qaeda and What it Means to be Modern*, pg. 1-4
[420] *Ibid.*, pg. 117

Having demonstrated that the guidance in the Qur'an on politics is ambiguous, and building on the recognition of 'kingly' and 'prophetic' rule by 'Ali 'Abed al-Raziq outlined in chapter 1, this chapter sought to refine and supplement this theological guidance, to arrive at a notion of Islamic politics. This was achieved by looking outside theology, to philosophy and mysticism. In the exploration of mysticism the chapter discussed the ways in which Ayatollah Khomeini utilised *hekmat* to give credence to the notion of a privileged knowledge of God and truth by Shi'a Imams. This esoteric knowledge allows for one person's interpretation of religious texts to become *the* interpretation of that subject. In Sunni Islam it was established that one of the roots of law, '*ijma*, is used to prevent just such an appropriation of interpretative licence, explaining the reason that there is such theological resistance to the idea of one 'true' Islamic path in Sunni orthodoxy.

Despite the resistance of religious scholars, Islamists show more and more their insistence that all guidance on politics can be derived from the *shari'a*, if correctly interpreted. The chapter looked then to the last strand of Islamic knowledge, philosophy, to supplement religious guidance on politics much in the way Khomeini attempted with mysticism. Tracing the exoteric, rational and demonstrative tradition in Sunni Islam, from al-Kindi through to al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Ibn Hazm and Ibn Rushd, the chapter arrived at Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah* as a means to operationalise the abstract notions of rationalism to the domain of politics and sovereignty.

The chapter concluded that a theory of sovereignty that is centred on a dual agreement, as propounded by Majid Khadduri[421], adequately resolves the need for Muslims to recognise God's sovereignty as well as the sovereignty of temporal leaders. Muslims, by virtue of their declaration of faith, agree to the moral precepts of the *shari'a*, and in doing so respect the sovereignty of God. A second agreement with a temporal authority is also established, but in order for the polity to be considered 'Islamic' as per Normative Political Islam, the temporal authority must also respect that same commitment to the first agreement.

Two major implications of this dual agreement were explored. First was the notion that a Muslim is perfectly capable of adhering to the first contract in

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[421] Khadduri, Majid: *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, pg. 9-12

territories that do not govern in accordance with the declaration of faith. In other words, respect for God's sovereignty, given the ambiguous guidance on politics in religious source texts, does not imply a government wherein God is sovereign. Such a conclusion respects the differentiation between rule over territory and rule over people; if Muslims are bound by God's commandments with respect to Islam-as-faith, then that is true regardless of the territory in which the Muslim lives. Secondly, the agreement that relates directly to the temporal world is one that is based on rationalism and human ingenuity, and so the need to derive all models and theories of politics from theological sources is avoided. Such a method answers the pleas of Moroccan philosopher 'Abed al-Jabri, who calls for a return of Aristotelian logic to Arab and Islamic thought.

The ways in which this notion of sovereignty might interact with the international system remains unexplored, and is the subject of the next chapter. In it, the chapter will investigate what the focus on community, rather than the individual, might mean in the context of IR. The notion of communitarianism that has been touched upon in this chapter will be more thoroughly explored and related to the concept of political modernity and the idea of 'multiple modernities'. In such ways, the following chapter will deal primarily with the secondary research question: *What challenges does the* umma*, as an alternative to the state, pose to discipline of international relations?*

Chapter 4: Islamic Community and International Relations

L. Carl Brown summarises the importance of community when he states that "Islam has – for all its cultural and territorial diversity – maintained among its adherents a communal solidarity".[422] Given the many forms in which the *umma* might be articulated in the international sphere,[423] it is not inevitably the state which represents the locus of friction with Normative Political Islam. The state is an adjunct to and derivative of the wider processes of political modernity. Commitment to the *umma* does not *necessitate* abandoning the state in practice or in theory. While chapter 2 argued that the *umma* is an alternative, not equivalent, of the state, it does not follow that these alternative methods of governance (rule over territory and rule over individuals) cannot co-exist. As Sohail Hashmi argues with regards to the pan-Islamic movement, *umma* might be articulated as thick or thin. Thick conceptions are represented by *dar-al-Islam* or individuals linked through transnational organisations; "[a]ccording to this vision, the *umma* has a life apart from the state or states". Alternatively thin conceptions of *umma* see it as an internationalist enterprise, perhaps an interstate society.[424] While Hashmi is making explicit overtones to the English School of international relations, the summary is befitting the Constructivist view point of the thesis that, if "anarchy is what states make of it",[425] so too is the *umma* what Muslims make of it.

This chapter argues that conceptions of the *umma* are constrained by the assumptions of the European Enlightenment project that spawned the concepts of political modernity, including the state. These assumptions, broadly, are linked to the insistence on abstracting individuals out of the social conditions which they live to find a rational concept of how one should govern and consent to be governed, to find 'the good life'. In abstracting away from social realities, Enlightenment philosophy was attempting to find a universal concept of the good life, and here in is the central issue with a Normative Political Islam.

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[422] Brown, L. Carl: *Religion and State*, pg. 59
[423] Mandaville, Peter: *Global Political Islam*, pg. 1-24
[424] Hashmi, Sohail: "Islam, the Middle East and the Pan-Islamic Movement", in Buzan, Barry and Gonzalez-Pelaez, Ana, (eds.): *International Society and the Middle East,* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pg. 170
[425] Wendt, Alexander: "Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics", (*International Organization* Vol. 46, No. 2, 1992), pg. 395

Normative Political Islam finds it necessary to locate its practices in cultural values in order to account for the sovereignty of God. This was achieved using a rational, exoteric method, so that the familiar charge of theocracy would struggle to find purchase with Normative Political Islam. Rather, it is notions of individual liberty, as distinct to communitarian values, that will challenge this conception of sovereignty specifically, and the *umma* more generally; as Peter Mandaville puts it, "according to conventional accounts of modernity, religion has been relegated to the domain of the private. By reasserting itself in public space, Islam is hence disrupting the modernity which lies at the root of the state".[426] If this challenge is couched in the liberal/communitarian divide, an exploration of this schism will help the thesis to assess whether Normative Political Islam can operate in the schema of the Enlightenment, and what the implications are if it can, or cannot. Before that, the chapter will discuss the ways in which Islam might interact with community more thoroughly. First, a note on what is meant by community, and why.

Acknowledging that Muslims in the Middle East represent and construct community, and relate this to faith, in different ways from Muslims in South East Asia, for example, it is necessary to focus on specific Muslim communities in the coming section. As the thesis must narrow down the Islam discussed to Sunni orthodoxy, so it follows that the thesis must narrow down its discussion of Muslims and community to a specific context, in this case, (Sunni) Muslims residing in the MENA region that was formally part of the Ottoman Empire. Being specific in this regard helps us to avoid essentialising some 'Islamic' society as a unifying essence of Muslims the globe over. As Sami Zubaida articulates, "[c]ulture is a process, part of the historical flux, and cultural patterns are not fixed but reproduced at every generation in relation to different situations and conjectures".[427]

Does it now follow that each different Muslim community might develop a different relationship with the international sphere (thick or thin conceptions of the *umma*, for example)? Perhaps so, and the heterogeneity of positions created poses important questions about the applicability of different conceptions of community co-existing in the same geographical space. For

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[426] Mandaville, Peter: *Transnational Muslim Politics*, pg. 11
[427] Zubaida, Sami: *Islam, the People & the State*, pg. 123

example, some British Muslim communities might associate themselves with a thin conception of *umma,* perhaps articulated through a supra-national body like the OIC, but of course the United Kingdom is not a member of the OIC. In another case, a Baluchi Sunni community in Iran might seek a thick conception of *umma* centred on transnational solidarity with scholars at Al-Azhar in Egypt. How such a community would negotiate their obligations to the state verses their obligations to transnational solidarity, and how the state might react to those obligations, are pertinent questions to ask. The chapter will make some head way in answering these types of questions, but that is not the main purpose of the argument presented here. Instead, it is the challenge that this particular community holds to IR that preoccupies the chapter. That a Middle Eastern Sunni Muslim community is the one specified, does not take away from the ways it challenges IR to account for *any* community. A similar challenge could be posed by communities in Europe, Shi'a communities, communities in Africa and others, in so far as these communities necessitate a stance on the international sphere. An international community of Star Trek fans, in contrast, would likely not engage in discussions on how their community should engage with IR.

Islam as Community? Islam as Citizenship?

Civil society, as distinct from the political order, is described as "voluntary associations of individuals… outside the realm of the state".[428] This type of society, argues Zubaida, does not exist in Arab states. Instead, "political society"[429] is a more appropriate term. Individuals in political society do not relate to the state as citizens, but as groups staking a claim on rights and services the state provides, the claim being that "in much of the Arab world, the politics of citizenship are often eclipsed by the politics of community".[430] Nazih Ayubi refers to Hisham Sharabi's theory of neo-patriarchy to make a similar statement: "[I]n it [modern Arab society] the individual has no individuality: he/she is lost if he breaks with the family, tribe or the sect... The individual's sense of morality is collectivist and applies only within his primary group but not

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[428] Zubaida, Sami: "Islam and the Politics of Community and Citizenship", (*Middle East Report*, Vol., No. 221, 2001), pg. 21
[429] Chatterjee, Partha in *ibid*.
[430] *Ibid*.

in the larger society".[431] Mandaville too makes a similar point when he states that Islam presents "circumstances in which political identities and processes configure themselves across and between forms of political community".[432] The citizen as established from the 'Western' model derives their rights and duties as a citizen by an abstracted rationality, universally applied, as opposed to being derived from the community they live in. Such a method of deriving citizenship is intimately tied to liberal epistemology and very much derived from a method and practice that is typified by the Enlightenment. That liberal epistemology does not, as noted in this section, necessarily transfer seamlessly to Arab and Islamic communities, calling into question either the nature of those communities as 'backward', or the universality of Enlightenment rationality. The remainder of this section will explore which of the preceding two statements can be substantiated.

The practices that constitute an Islamic community are as contested as the discussion on what might constitute an Islamic polity. On the one hand, Amr Sabet is very critical of social theory's 'reduction' of Islam "from a meta-narrative to middle ranged categorizations based largely, though not exclusively, on what different Muslim adherents are perceived to say or do".[433] The idea that different communities might conceive of their Islam differently is not acceptable for Sabet, who stresses that "[w]hen one talks about Islam, one is referring to the universe and cosmology of revelation as uniquely represented by primary texts and scriptures. Hence there is only one Islam, and not many Islams".[434] A similar view, or in this case fear, about Islam's supposed 'singular vision' for society is seen in Andrew March's attempt at folding in Muslims living in liberal democracies into John Rawls' ideal of liberal citizenship. March states that Islam "offers a single vision for uniting the individual quest for virtue with the social goods of justice and solidarity".[435] The thesis has already argued that such positions do not sufficiently account for the agency of Muslims in interpreting what may well be static source texts. Fazlur Rahman shows the relationship between Islam and community in a more dynamic way when he talks of the source texts as primarily a source of moral practices. Rahman notes

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[431] Ayubi, Nazih: *Over-stating the Arab State*, pg. 166
[432] Mandaville, Peter: *Transnational Muslim Politics*, pg. 5
[433] Sabet, Amr: *Islam and the Political*, pg. 178
[434] *Ibid.*, pg. 187
[435] March, Andrew: "Islamic Foundations for a Social Contract", pg. 236

than "Muslim law books are full of moralising themes"[436] and that this moral and religiously ethical centre, while it may struggle to be an authoritative guide to communities, it is still "alive with a keen sensitivity to right and wrong… [which is] in any age better for humanity than an expediently clever and effective law".[437]

Such differing interpretations of this moral code leads to the "diverse and prolific assortment of Islamic ideologies, actors, political parties, and organizations… grouped under the umbrella of Islam".[438] This diverse range of positions might even include interpretations which deny any political meaning Islam might bring to a community; Mohamed Arkoun talks of the "silent Islam" of "true believers who attach more importance to the religious relationship with the absolute of God than to the vehement demonstrations of political movements".[439]

Both March and Sabet emphasise the challenge for an Islamic liberalism to consist of reconciling a liberal order "which at the same time preserves and consolidates Islamic principles of religiosity".[440] Conceivably this religiosity is expressed by the 'truth' these authors claim to exist in the way Islam interacts with the community. As long as nothing is metaphysically 'superior' to Islam then there is no contradiction for Muslims to accept a liberal concept of citizenship. The problem arises with the neutrality of the liberal citizen who, "in establishing no collective goals that require adherence to a controversial metaphysical doctrine",[441] must afford an equal status to all faiths, including even, for example, Pastafarianism, a faith founded in 2005 to challenge the teaching of intelligent design in US schools.[442] Sharing the same ontological space with the Flying Spaghetti Monster (the deity of Pastafarianism) is not a matter of rhetoric, as March argues, which the state could manipulate to make sure Muslims are not "asked to *profess* something contrary to Islam or even endure quietly the glorification of a contrary truth".[443] Rather, it assumes a common commitment to liberal neutrality which cannot be taken for granted in

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[436] Rahman, Fazlur: *Islam*, pg. 116
[437] *Ibid.*
[438] Esposito, John: *Islam and Politics*, pg. 312
[439] Arkoun, Mohamed, "Rethinking Islam Today", pg. 205-206
[440] Sabet, Amr: *Islam and the Political*, pg. 189
[441] March, Andrew: "Islamic Foundations for a Social Contract", pg. 251
[442] Henderson, Bobby: "Open Letter To Kansas School Board," 2005, Accessed on 21st February 2013: http://www.venganza.org/about/open-letter/
[443] March, Andrew: "Islamic Foundations for a Social Contract", pg. 251

all Muslim communities. This is teased at by Mushir Ul-Haq, who makes a separation between a secular *state*, which for him is permissible by the historical precedent of Islamic governance,[444] and secularism as a doctrine, which he considers incompatible with Islam.[445] The distinction is subtle, showing in the first instance a procedural acceptance of being neighbours with people of different faiths and avoiding conflict on account of that difference (faith in the case of secularism, but faith can be broadened to community for the purpose of the present discussion). The second instance, secularism as a doctrine, involves accepting a transcendental truth about the nature of all religions as uniformly equal in worth, and a distinction between the public and private spheres.[446] While subtle, this distinction between secularism as practice and secularism as doctrine proves a highly salient point.

The distinction of secularism as a doctrine and secularism as a practice rests once more on the notion of an abstracted value. Secularism as a doctrine is applicable to all peoples by virtue of its universal validity. This is in contrast to secularism as a practice, which is based in the experience of individuals embedded in a community (in this case a multi faith community). This is not a unique observation. Tibi goes to great lengths to firstly identify a similar problem as was argued in the last chapter, namely, the decline of a rational tradition in Islamic thought, and then to argue for its revival through a whole-hearted embrace of the Enlightenment project. On diagnosing the problem, Tibi states that "the major problems of contemporary Muslim civilization are related to the eclipse of rational discourse since the decline of the Islamic rationalism of the medieval age. In this context, I reiterate the call of al-Jabri for a return to rationality as the ultimate way out of this unsatisfactory position".[447] While the starting point is evidently similar with the current discussion, Tibi emphasises the need for Islam to reform and embrace modernity, which is viewed by him to be universally applicable and attainable.[448] Such a position belies a developmentalist and essentialist position, two positions that according to

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[444] Piscatori refers to this as ijma' al-fi'l in: Piscatori, James: *Islam in a World of Nation States*, pg. 74
[445] Ul-Haq, Mushir: "Islam in Secular India", in Donohue, John and Esposito, John, (eds.): *Islam in Transition,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pg. 134
[446] Hurd, Elizabeth: *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations*, pg. 11
[447] Tibi, Bassam: *Islam's Predicament with Modernity*, pg. 58
[448] *Ibid.,* pg. 30

Zubaida are separate categories to analyse 'compatibility arguments' (Islam's compatibility with modernity).

Developmentalism assumes that "there are systematic processes of historical development in stages which apply to all societies".[449] This position is reflected in Tibi's belief in a universal concept of modernity. The essentialism perpetrated here is not one of Islam, which in fact is conceptualised in a similar way as Normative Political Islam is presented in this thesis; Tibi states that for him "Islam is conceptualized as a cultural system that is always in flux, and is therefore placed in a historical and social context".[450] Tibi's essentialism is related to his presentation of political and cultural modernity. The 'West' achieved some wondrous marvel in political modernity, and this is now something all other cultures can access given the right reforms. Recalling Hobson's non reductive Orientalism presented in chapter 2, Tibi's assertion here represents the West's pioneering agency, of which Tibi's 'East' does not posses. Instead, Tibi's Islamic societies are reduced to emulating the path already travelled by an enlightened West. In this way, the Orientalism displayed by Tibi is not tied to racism, as he is not stating that the East is unable to achieve this modernity without the West's tutelage, only that the West got there first (and indeed, the end point reached by the West is the only legitimate end point for societies, due to the 'universal' nature of modernity). The idea that the Enlightenment and the modernity it spawned was and is contested is not in question for Tibi. As John Gray summarises: "Western societies are governed by the belief that modernity is a single condition, everywhere the same and always benign… Being modern means realising our values – the values of the Enlightenment, as we like to think of them".[451] Tibi's unquestioning acceptance in the existence and virtue of this singular Enlightenment modernity complements his argument that a rejection of universality cannot be compatible with Islamism, which itself is universal.[452] Here is the familiar argument that an Islamic politics is engaged in a zero-sum competition with the politics of the Enlightenment and the 'West'. In presenting such a relationship, Tibi, who earlier is so careful to avoid essentialising Islam, is forced to do so in describing

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[449] Zubaida, Sami: *Islam, the People & the State*, pg. 123
[450] Tibi, Bassam: *Islam's Predicament with Modernity*, pg. 7
[451] Gray, John: *Al Qaeda and What it Means to be Modern*, pg. 1
[452] Tibi, Bassam: *Islam's Predicament with Modernity*, pg. 60

the "face of Islamism" as uniformly totalitarian (preceding the Islamic reform he argues is necessary for Islam to embrace modernity).[453]

While Tibi seeks to 'modernise' Islam, Sami Zubaida's *Beyond Islam* seeks to dis-embed Islam from discussions of politics in the Middle East. While Tibi struggles to disassociate Islam-as-faith from Islam-as-politics, and in so struggling, he talks of universal Islamic politics, Zubaida makes the distinction between Islam and political Islam very prominent. He argues that "there are many Muslim societies, and that the range of their variation is comprehensible in terms of the normal practice of social and political analysis, like any other range of societies".[454] While Zubaida's approach seems to find a lot of resonance with Normative Political Islam, there is still the issue of modernity. For Zubaida this is a term that is not subject to the same nuance as Muslim society, instead presented as a singular truth, much as in Tibi's work. When religion is devoid of political meaning, except that which individuals choose to place into it, Zubaida sees no impetus to engage with the notion of modernity. He insists that "[m]odernities are not alternative: they are ideologically contested",[455] implying once more the singular conception of a political future for all peoples. It follows that if a religion interacts with politics in a way constructed by that religions' adherents, as theorised with Normative Political Islam, then the same is true with a concept of political modernity. If modernity is evacuated of the Enlightenment's propensity for universalism, it too takes meaning in ways constructed by the participants of that modernity. What needs to be revived and cultivated in any discussion of Islam and political modernity is the notion of community.

As shown in this section, Muslim community as a referent object for deriving politics is often at odds with an abstracted and, most relevant for the discussion here, faithless individual (though that individual is also genderless, raceless, classless etc). This is most clearly seen with regards to the state as a method of governing people and secularism as an inherent doctrine of that governance. Both instances, state and secularism, can show insensitivity to communal practices and lives, justifying that insensitivity through a belief in a universal notion of justice derived from the abstracted individual. It is at the level

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[453] *Ibid.*
[454] Zubaida, Sami: *Beyond Islam*, pg. 32
[455] *Ibid.*, pg. 8

of analysis of the community (indicative of al-Jabri's call to Aristotelian principles) and the individual (indicative of the liberalism of the Enlightenment) that is the crux of the issue with regards to Normative Political Islam's engagement with modernity. Accounting for community seems to reaffirm Mohammed 'Abed al-Jabri's conclusion that "[a]s for the human legacy in general, with its universal attributes, a nation always experiences it within its own tradition and not outside it".[456]

The next section of the chapter will explore the debate between liberalism and communitarianism. Doing so will highlight the ways in which modernity is not a fixed concept but one that is debated and challenged by those even within the 'West' who supposedly 'possess' this modernity. This discussion overlays with the discussion of Normative Political Islam's emphasis on values derived from specific cultural contexts; values which inevitably will impact on politics. Through the coming discussion the thesis hopes to discover if the rationality of Normative Political Islam can interact with the rationality of the Enlightenment, or if there is a zero-sum relationship between the two, as Tibi argues.

Liberalism and Communitarianism

Alisdair MacIntyre, whose powerful critique of Enlightenment philosophy the chapter will return to later, characterises what he refers to as 'the Enlightenment project'; this project is a "systematic attempt to discover a rational justification for morality".[457] This rational justification of morality took the form of liberalism, and its attempt "to identify a universal conception of human needs or human rationality, and then… [invoke] this ahistorical conception the human being to evaluate existing social and political arrangements".[458] However, to paint liberalism in such broad strokes is to do a disservice to the tradition. Richard Bellamy identifies two general liberal traditions; one is based on "a doctrine which is neutral between different conceptions of the good", and the other "avowedly communitarian in nature: that is, as linked to a definite type of society and presupposing a shared understanding of its values".[459] Within both 'forks' in

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[456] 'Abed al-Jabri, Mohammed: *Arab-Islamic Philosophy*, pg. 129
[457] MacIntyre, Alisdair: *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 2nd ed. (London: Duckworth Publishers, 1985), pg. 39
[458] Kymlicka, Will: *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, pg. 209
[459] Bellamy, Richard: *Liberalism and Modern Society,* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), pg. 218

this liberal trajectory there are many further distinctions to be made regarding the very nature of justice, narrow and wide concepts of liberal neutrality, thick and thin conceptions of community etc. It is not necessary here to account for a history of ideas, be they communitarian or liberal. Rather, the thesis here adopts much the same position of Philip Petit when he states: "I occasionally deal in general, ideal-typical characterization of the past, as in discussing the Enlightenment and counter-Enlightenment, but I hope the lines I take will be more or less uncontroversial".[460] It suffices for this argument, then, to talk about liberalism in reference to its universal aspirations and assumptions about neutrality, which are explored in more detail presently.

Liberal Universalism?

Maureen Ramsay asserts that "[i]t is not an exaggeration to say that the whole of the Western political system was founded on and shaped by liberal principle and values".[461] The pervasiveness of this ideology justifies the initial characterisation of the Enlightenment project as more than MacIntyre's rational justification for morality, but rather a *universal* rational justification for *liberal* morality. This rational universality is achieved, as mentioned earlier in the chapter, by abstracting the individual out of their social situation in such a way that "the liberal individual has her own independent conception of the good".[462] This independence is a matter of contention for Normative Political Islam in much the same way it is contentious for communitarians, that is, if Islamic politics (for Normative Political Islam) or notions of justice (for communitarians) are derived from communal understandings, then there cannot be such a thing as 'universal' values. Michael Sandel, a critic of the universal liberal position, caricatures the liberal individualist perspective and it is worth quoting at length his description to grasp fully the communitarian critique of that position:

> Freed from the dictates of nature and the sanction of social roles, the human subject is installed as sovereign, cast as the author of the only moral meanings there are. As participants in pure practical reason, or as parties to the original

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[460] Pettit, Philip: "Liberal/Communitarian: MacIntyre's Mesmeric Dichotomy", in Horton, John and Mendus, Susan, (eds.): *After MacIntyre: Critical Perspectives on the Work of Alasdair MacIntyre,* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), pg. 176
[461] Ramsay, Maureen: *What's Wrong with Liberalism?*, pg. 1
[462] Gauthier, David: "The Liberal Individual", in Avineri, Shlomo and De-Shalit, Avner, (eds.): *Communitarianism and Individualism,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pg. 154

position, we are free to construct principles of justice unconstrained by an order of value antecedently given. And as actual, individual selves, we are free to choose our purposes and ends unbound by such an order, or by custom or tradition or inherited status. So long as they are not unjust, our conceptions of the good carry weight, whatever they are, simply in virtue of our having chosen them.[463]

Here one can see the allusions to neutrality and universality tied up with the notion of an unbounded rationality, unrelated to social context. If societies and cultures do not embrace liberal values, it is because they are not 'rational' enough. The concept of rationality, and hence liberalism, is considered as value neutral; John Rawls for example, is keen to show that his famous notion of 'justice as fairness' is not dependent on certain philosophical claims, "for example, claims to universal truth, or claims about the essential nature and identity of person".[464]

The communitarian critique of this position sees a universal theory of justice as unattainable; "[t]here is no such thing as a perspective external to the community, no way to step outside our history and culture".[465] Such a position has resonance with al-Jabri's claim that human legacy is experienced "within… [a nation's] own tradition and not outside it".[466] With regards to Normative Political Islam's interaction with communitarianism, an immediate concern arises in the notion of no perspective being held externally to community. Clearly, the Islamic message necessitates submission to the external will of God, and the notions of justice derived therein. Here the distinction made between Islam-as-faith (where claims of universality can be located) and Islam-as-politics (which is argued in chapters 1 and 3 to allow a plurality of competing claims), can aid the current discussion. Talk of how one should be ruled is different from how one should worship; if indeed there is a singular conception of Muslim worship, the thesis has established that there is considerable variance in how one should be ruled in the Islamic tradition. Accepting such plurality does not take away from the ontological problem of transcendental 'truth', which is something Islam-as-faith lays a claim upon, while the

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[463] Sandel, Michael: "The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self", (*Political Theory*, Vol. 12, No. 1, 1984), pg. 87
[464] Rawls, John: "Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical", (*Philosophy & Public Affairs*, Vol. 14, No. 3, 1985), pg. 223
[465] Kymlicka, Will: *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, pg. 211
[466] 'Abed al-Jabri, Mohammed: *Arab-Islamic Philosophy*, pg. 129

communitarian approach that will be expanded upon presently, and the poststructural position on ontology that the thesis has hitherto embraced, both deny that such a truth exists. This is a problem returned to in the next chapter, for now the present section continues with an analysis of communitarianism and liberalism, aware of the limitations of engaging Normative Political Islam with the former.

When discussing justice it has been noted that liberalism assumes a position whereby 'rationality' determines the goods which are to be distributed, and to whom. Communitarian positions, like liberal ones, cover a range of divergent positions on the nature of community, and respect given to communal practices. Communitarian positions, in general terms, sees autonomy as dependent on social context. More pertinent for the present discussion is the moral claim that an individual, in being a member of a community, is "included within moral calculations",[467] as opposed to developing those considerations outside of the society in which they develop. Put another way by Emanuel Adler, "[r]ationality lies less in the act of instrumental choice between alternatives on the basis of true theories than in acting in ways that 'stand to reason' given people's background expectations and dispositions".[468] It is not the purpose of this chapter to show which and what type of politics is most appropriate for Normative Political Islam. Rather, if the assumptions of this thesis about the plurality of competing claims about justice, as derived from differing social contexts, is correct, then the search for 'the politics of Normative Political Islam' is a futile one. Normative Political Islam merely allows individuals and communities to construct their structures of government in ways they find appropriate for them to achieve their communal ends.

Such an approach, however, is not a justification for social conservatism or cultural relativism, a criticism often levied against communitarianism. As Michael Walzer argues, "pluralism does not require us to endorse every proposed distributive criteria or to accept every would-be-agent".[469] The relativism critique implies communitarian based politics is always contingent

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[467] Shapcott, Richard: *Justice, Community, and Dialogue in International Relations,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pg. 3
[468] Adler, Emanuel: *Communitarian International Relations: The Epistemic Foundations of International Relations,* (London: Routledge, 2005), pg. 21
[469] Walzer, Michael: *Spheres of Justice: A Defence of Pluralism and Equality,* (New York: Basic Books Inc, 1983), pg. 5

and contextual, whereas the rationality of liberalism is universal. Indeed, Veit Bader laments that communitarian positions dilute the meaning of morality:

> If communitarianism, for all its versions, pretends to be an identifiable position in practical philosophy, then it must mean that in all hard cases the particularist requirements of community must trump the universalist ones of justice... Universalist principles and rights should not only trump prudentialist utility but also the ethics of particular communities.[470]

Bader's position clearly highlights a notion of justice that is universally applicable. Such a position is intimately tied with the ideas of 'progress' indicative of the Enlightenment. If a universalist ethic trumps communally based ones, a notion of developmentalism is introduced whereby it is acceptable to enforce a universal ethic as it is more 'advanced' that justice derived from community. The thesis has argued that in fact the universalism of liberalism is contingent on a specific understanding of community. In addition, politics that derive from community need not be 'irrational', seen in the theory of deriving sovereignty in Normative Political Islam via an exoteric method. Universal applicability and interaction between different notions of justice is a theme returned to later in the chapter when it overlays the present discussion upon the international sphere and Islamic IR. Before looking at communal theories of IR, the chapter will continue by exploring what communitarianism might offer to Normative Political Islam. Such an exploration is necessary as later it will be seen that talk of community in international relations, especially in the English School, builds upon, often in an unconscious manner, the debate being presented here between liberalism and communitarianism.

Communitarianism and Normative Political Islam

Michael Walzer's communitarian argument in *Spheres of Justice* argues for an inherent plurality in the notion, or better put, *notions* of justice; there is no set of criteria to decide on who gets what.[471] Speaking directly to the atomism of liberalism, he claims that "[w]e cannot say what is due to this person or that until

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[470] Bader, Veit: "Citizenship and Exclusion: Radical Democracy, Community, and Justice. Or, What is Wrong with Communitarianism", (*Political Theory*, Vol. 23, No. 2, 1995), pg. 216
[471] Walzer, Michael: *Spheres of Justice*, pg. 4

we know how these people relate to one another through the things they make and distribute. There cannot be a just society until there is a society".[472] However, Walzer's communities and societies are idealised, generally culturally homogenous and deny the historical and contemporary violence needed to create these communities.[473] There is a conspicuous lack of recognition that societal structures perpetuate themselves sometimes not through consenting agents, but rather "mirror the balance of power of the various groups within them and the conventions and customs of the economic and political practices in which their members are engaged".[474] Bader highlights that Walzer is over reliant on the state to provide a sense of 'closure' to his community, preventing the splintering of people into smaller and smaller groups. The state, for Walzer, is "necessary and legitimate to defend shared meaning, values, and ways of life".[475] Such an argument, however, "clings to the superposition of ethnic, cultural, and national identities and citizenship".[476]

So there is presented on the one hand liberalism's universalism which denies cultural or 'lived' truths, while on the other hand there is presented a communitarian perspective which alludes to a community that bears little resemblance to multicultural realities. If it is true that "[j]ustice is relative to social meanings"[477], then operationalising that dictum is proving difficult. For example, when an individual considers a practice unjust within the community they are a part of, does that infer that the individual is no longer part of the community? Such a view would see gradual splintering of 'community' to "a thousand petty fortresses".[478] Normative Political Islam has avoided this problem somewhat by the emphasis on a dual contract between the individual and government.

Recalling the dual contract in the style of Majid Khadduri,[479] argued for in the previous chapter; one contract is between Muslim and God through the declaration of faith (*shahadda*) and a second between the Muslim and a temporal authority. Such a separation of sovereignty allows for Muslims to live

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[472] *Ibid.*, pg. 312-313
[473] Bader, Veit: "Citizenship and Exclusion", pg. 217
[474] Bellamy, Richard: *Liberalism and Modern Society*, pg. 249
[475] Bader, Veit: "Citizenship and Exclusion", pg. 213
[476] *Ibid.*
[477] Walzer, Michael: *Spheres of Justice*, pg. 312
[478] *Ibid.*, pg. 39
[479] Khadduri, Majid: *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, pg. 9-12

in non-Muslim territory, as long as the temporal authority does not impede upon the individual's ability to fulfil the first contract. Likewise in Muslim territory, any method of government is acceptable and does not contravene God's sovereignty, in so far as the Muslim temporal power respects the commitment to the first agreement.

Connecting the discussion of liberalism and communitarianism to sovereignty derived from Normative Political Islam, it is noted that the first agreement, between the Muslim and God, resembles the universalism of liberal notions of justice in two ways. Firstly, just as liberalism is a broad and contested tradition, a Muslim's concept of what constitutes their agreement with God in their declaration of faith is not pre-determined in scripture. Secondly, both liberalism and the *shahadda*, while contested, assume a certain agreement in what constitutes the *core* tenants of those terms. The extent of this agreement may well be thin, and certainly does not extend to separate 'doctrines', be that between the market-liberalism of Friedrich Hayek and the communitarian-liberalism of John Rawls,[480] or the Sunni-Shi'a divide. The meaning of a commitment to liberalism, or the Muslim's declaration of faith, share a universalist tendency that tries to give both concepts meaning detached from the social context in which they are used. The second of Khadduri's contracts, between the Muslim and the temporal ruler, resembles much more the communitarian commitment to deriving meaning from social context. As Muslims need not be bound by any transcendental commandments about political life (the difference between Islam-as-politics and Islam-as-faith), it is up to human ingenuity to develop a model for politics.

The thesis finds great difficulty in trying to accommodate both the universalism of the *shahadda* and the specificity of the different cultural and religious practices of Muslims. Islam-as-faith can be interpreted to rest on certain truths, though it has been argued that these do not necessarily translate to Islam-as-politics. The truths of Islam-as-faith can be broadly understood as the universal pretensions of Khadduri's first contract (with God), in other words, divine truths that exist independent of social context. On the other hand, the interpretivism of Islam-as-politics broadly maps onto the cultural specificity of communitarianism and is inherently bound to and reliant upon social context.

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[480] Bellamy, Richard: *Liberalism and Modern Society*, pg. 218

While separating the two notions in a dual contract allows the resolution of this tension theoretically, in practice these Muslim contractors are asked to at once embrace universalism and particularism, and to keep the two conceptually separate as they go about giving life to Normative Political Islam. The incongruence between the two positions of the dual contract is one that will be repeated when the notion of communitarianism is applied to IR in the following section of the chapter. After having articulated this same problem in the international sphere, the next chapter will attempt to frame the problem fully and attempt to resolve this incongruence.

Having established the thesis' critique of universalism as a hallmark of rationalism, this chapter has argued that Normative Political Islam's exoteric method is capable of constructing notions of justice that derive from or in some way reflect the societies in which that notion of justice is to hold sway. The chapter has so far teased at the possibilities of engaging with this debate, and foreshadowed a prominent incongruence with applying both universalism and particularism in deriving an Islamic notion of sovereignty, and now will take a similar dialectic and apply it to IR. In doing so, the remainder of the chapter will examine the prospects for Islamically derived, communal relations on the international sphere. Thinking back on this chapter, consider replacing the use of the word community with the word *umma* and the possibilities for engaging the debate between communitarianism and liberalism at the international level, to give agency to the *umma*, becomes clear.

Communitarian International Relations

Communitarian international relations, according to Emanuel Adler, is a focus on knowledge "that gives meaning to material reality and consequently helps explain the constitutive and casual mechanisms that participate in the construction of social reality".[481] For this thesis such an approach is intertwined with the Constructivist framework outlined previously, and the Aristotelian perspective of Normative Political Islam, deriving values from social contexts. Constructivism and communitarianism might not seem entirely in synthesis with each other; while both share an emphasis on the social aspect of existence, Constructivism places a focus on the individual's place in constituting their

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[481] Adler, Emanuel: *Communitarian International Relations*, pg. 4

surroundings. In IR, however, referring to the community gives it actor qualities, taking away from the individual's agency in some regard. The interaction between individual and community happens at one level of analysis, identified here as the domestic level. Much of the discussion in the previous section would occur at this domestic level, discussion over the nature of justice, the place of values in relation to the individual and the community etc. It is not the purpose of this thesis to resolve these multitude questions for Normative Political Islam at the domestic level as indeed, if such questions are dependent on societal circumstance, then it is erroneous to attempt to prescribe a form of governance in an abstract sense.

At the international level, as has been discussed in an earlier chapter, there is an antipathy towards the notion of religious politics. Recalling Joseph Van Ess' caricaturisation of popular opinion to Islamic politics as "repellent and strange... The notion commonly associated with it is the Sharia... which would seem to be incompatible with the rules of enlightened reason".[482] This particular tension with Islam is exacerbated by a more general resistance to religion in the discipline, in what Elizabeth Hurd calls a secular bias, reviewed in chapter 2. This bias, for Hurd, reveals that "[c]onventional understandings of international relations, focused on material capabilities and strategic interaction, exclude from the start the possibility that religion could be a fundamental organizing force in the international system".[483] Normative Political Islam must overcome both these perceptions at the international level if it is to give agency to the notion of *umma*.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, articulating the *umma* on the international level could happen on a scale from 'thick' conceptions, between individuals transcending the state, and 'thin' conceptions, reliant on interaction between Muslim states, perhaps in a transnational organisation.[484] In accordance with the framework of the thesis, it would be presumptuous to claim that it is possible to create a conception of the *umma* abstractly, and then apply this to all Muslims. Even while it has been stipulated that the thesis is working within the confines of Sunni Islam, it is up to the community that defines itself as such to conceptualise the *umma*. What will be attempted here is not a

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[482] Van Ess, Josef: *The Flowering of Muslim Theology*, pg. 1
[483] Hurd, Elizabeth: *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations*, pg. 1
[484] Hashmi, Sohail, "Islam, the Middle East and the Pan-Islamic Movement", pg. 170

prescriptive account of Normative Political Islam's IR, but an exploration of the two poles of thick and thin conceptions of the *umma*. In so doing the thesis maintains its engagement with second order IR theorising, "making explicit and critiquing the foundational assumptions that structure research agendas".[485]

Thin conceptions of the *umma*

Locating the *umma* within the state and in transnational interaction as would be posited by a thin conception of the *umma* is problematic for a number of reasons. In the first place, the *umma* does not *necessitate* any concept of the national at all, though it often includes it. Another problem rests with Muslim minorities in non-Muslim countries, who would still need to feel part of any institutionalised conception of the *umma*. Even the term 'Islamic state' is problematic for many as it is unclear who, if anyone, can authoritatively define a state as Islamic. The concept of transnationalism also does not sit well with the locating politics in individuals or communities. As the nation *can* be entirely left out of the schema of the *umma*, to call it a transnational organisation is somewhat of a misnomer. At this point, then, it becomes necessary to truncate the definition of *umma* being used; as other transnational institutions, like the EU, are based upon the states that comprise it, so too would a theoretical thin-*umma* be based upon Muslim states, as doing so allows such a concept to work with the term transnationalism. The disadvantages of conceptualising a state based *umma* are significant: Such a structure would not be representative of the 'whole' *umma* as it would not include substantial numbers of Muslims living as minority populations in non-Muslim states; Muslim communities not affiliated to the state, NGOs and charities, for example, are also not represented. In addition, developing criteria for what constitutes a 'Muslim' state is not easy. These are very acute problems with a state based conception of the *umma*, for sure, but the discussion continues, as it has so far, not looking to solve the operative problems associated with the *umma*, but here looking to explore the problems with religious based identity in IR. In order to do this, the chapter proceeds by placing this religious identity and the thin conception of *umma*, however arbitrarily, in the vessel of states.

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[485] Wendt, Alexander: "Bridging the theory/meta-theory gap", pg. 392

Transnational institutions can engender a communal identity, for example the EU's attempts at creating a European identity. Going by the earlier appraisal of the units constituting the international system, for the EU to exist in the international sphere it must behave like a state. Turning to Ian Manners' problem with EU studies, which broadens out to IR more generally: the EU as a super-state entity is shaped by norms which lead to "a willingness to disregard Westphalian conventions".[486] The EU is able to disregard these conventions as, unlike a state, the EU is not constituted by the Westphalian example. Returning to Manners for a concise summary of the EU's challenge to more traditional IR:

> The creative efforts of the European integration process have changes what passes for 'normal' in world politics. Simply by existing as different in a world of states and the relations between them, the European Union changes the normality of 'international relations'. In this respect the EU is a normative power: it changes the norms, standards and prescriptions of world politics away from the bounded expectations of state-centricity.[487]

Manners is not arguing that statism is undermined, but rather *changed*. It is evident that the EU is reliant upon the states that constitute it, but the relationship between states and the super-national institution that is born out of them can be related to the Constructivist notion of co-constitution. Naveed Sheikh makes a similar point when commenting on the OIC. Sheikh states that "as an intergovernmental organization, the idiosyncrasy of the OIC is categorical, for whilst adhering to the secular logic of multistate functionalism, its… purpose is guided by a single imperative, that of… ideational subscription to a unification, or integration, of Muslim peoples".[488] The approach of the OIC or EU, in pursuing integration across state boundaries, seems to share a similar purpose with that of the thin-*umma*; such an approach could be adopted by Muslim states to engender some form of Islamic solidarity which is currently missing from the international relations of these states,[489] representing a source

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[486] Manners, Ian: "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?", (*Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 2, 2002), pg. 239

[487] Manners, Ian: "The Normative Ethics of the European Union", (*International Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 1, 2008), pg. 65

[488] Sheikh, Naveed: *The New Politics of Islam: Pan-Islamic Foreign Policy in a World of States,* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), pg. 16

[489] Ayubi, Nazih: *Political Islam*, pg. 122-123

of illegitimacy vis-a-vis their domestic populations.[490] It has been observed that the plans that Islamists visualise "have not been tested by the realities of power, nor have they themselves had to organize and staff ministries, meet budgets, or implement policies".[491] Beyond these tests of power, it is also true and perhaps more troublesome for Islamists, that they lack the theoretical framework for such religious transnationalism in the secular world of nation states.

How are such claims about political Islam's lack of framework substantiated when the OIC's existence is testament to the interaction between pan-Islam and the state system?[492] Naveed Sheikh's study, *The New Politics of Islam*, addresses this concern in the manner of first order theory, that is, in an empirical investigation into the workings of the OIC, its main actors and so on. Sheikh's study concludes that the OIC is more an arena for states vying for power and less an instrument for achieving the politics of the *umma*. He argues that "[w]hile the very theorem for the establishment of the OIC was the transnational body of believers, the OIC remains, in fairness, a secularized association of states rather than an international society".[493] The notion of secularism that Sheikh draws upon betrays the way in which the OIC has been socialised into existing forms of IR. The OIC, the thesis posits, is the result of an attempt to give saliency to Islamic IR without first challenging the basis of IR as it is commonly understood. Recalling the two stage analysis of the thesis, the OIC is an attempt at the second stage of analysis, the construction of Islamic IR, without the first stage's analysis of the unspoken assumptions in the discipline. That is not to discount the achievement of establishing a religiously based international organisation; indeed as Sheikh points out, the OIC's existence as an Islamic organisation is "an ontological achievement".[494] It is possible that in the construction of a thin-*umma* in this chapter, an institution will be created that resembles the OIC in whole or part. However, the chapter is not attempting to solve the OIC's operative problems. If the thin-*umma* described in this chapter results in a resemblance to the OIC, then that will be coincidental. It is the focus on a meta-theoretical thin-*umma* that the chapter returns to now.

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[490] For a detailed discussion on the power of Islamic discourse and symbolism in Muslim politics, see: Eickelman, Dale and Piscatori, James: *Muslim politics*, pg. 57-67
[491] Bulliet, Richard: "Twenty Years of Islamic Politics", pg. 196
[492] Sheikh, Naveed: *The New Politics of Islam*, pg. 2
[493] *Ibid.*, pg. 42
[494] *Ibid.*, pg. 138

The transnationalism represented by the EU is not so easily replicated in the *umma* as there is resistance to the notion of Islamic, religious solidarity, as Thomas Risse-Kappen demonstrates when he warns that "there is no reason to assume that transnational relations regularly promote "good" causes". [495] Unfortunately, the supporting example of a "bad" cause for Risse-Kappen is an ill-defined Islamic fundamentalism.[496]

Recalling the universal aspirations and rights based approach to community inherent in liberalism, versus the geographical and historical specificity of community afforded by communitarian and Constructivist theory. The lack of clarity with regards to the extent and nature of unity amongst Muslims resonates with this liberal/communitarian division. On the one hand, a popular and in some senses 'classical' understanding of Islamic IR, *siyar*, bears much resemblance to the universality of liberalism. Ahmed Bsoul Labeeb tries to emphasise exactly this when he states that, "Islam is a universal message and its rulings cover and refer to all people without distinction and without favouring one group or race over another. Islamic law aims to establish one society under one system".[497]

The quintessential Islamic reformer, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, also alludes to this universality, but betrays a naivety in the power he affords religion in this instance. For al-Afghani, Islamic solidarity is at least comparable to nationalism and he believed that by being loyal to their faith, Muslims can put sectarian considerations aside in the creation of their *umma*.[498] Much as liberalism is imbued with Eurocentric allusions about the 'neutrality' of such a position, so too is al-Afghani's reference to broad Islamic universalism laden with essentialism. This is a position criticised at length by Aziz al-Azmeh, who notes that Islamists, "claim to speak for a univocal body of legislation which is not grounded in the vast historical experience of Muslims".[499] He argues that generalisations made about social groups in terms of religion incorrectly overwrite socio-economic factors, when in fact "religious difference underwrites and does not

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[495] Risse-Kappen, Thomas: "Bringing transnational relations back in: introduction", in Risse-Kappen, Thomas, (ed.): *Bringing transnational relations back in: Non-state actors, domestic structures and international institutions,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pg. 4
[496] For a concise taxonomy of Muslim groups that might be termed 'fundamentalist', see: Ayubi, Nazih: *Political Islam*, pg. 67-69
[497] Labeeb, Ahmed Bsoul: "Theory of International Relations in Islam", pg. 72
[498] Al-Afghani, Jamal al-Din, "An Islamic Response to Imperialism", pg. 21-23
[499] Al-Azmeh, Aziz: *Islam and Modernities*, pg. 11

overdetermine social exclusivism".[500] In moving away from the idea that some pre-political consensus exists amongst Muslims, perhaps al-Azmeh goes too far, denying the co-constitutive relationship of religious ideas on the behaviour of actors, instead arguing that behaviour is already determined by socio-economic factors and subsequently given legitimacy through religious discourse. Using Constructivism as a middle ground, how can Normative Political Islam better relate the religious urge for some kind of Muslim solidarity, represented through the *umma*?

While the Constructivist method opens space for the study of identity, the secular bias in IR identified by Hurd ensures that religious identity is under-theorised (as was noted with Barnett's and Telhami and Barnett's studies in chapter 2). Abdul Latif Tibawi pre-empted some of the conclusions of Hurd's study when he wrote in 1964 that without understanding Islam as it is understood and experienced by a believer, scholarly work is ensured to be disconnected from the realities of Muslim people.[501] As Mandaville asserts, "[e]ven if Muslim identities remain primarily nationalized, this does not mean that it is not possible for them to make common cause with co-religionists elsewhere, or to sympathise with "Muslim" issues".[502]

Despite the problems with current Constructivist study (or omission) of Islam's relation to identity, Constructivism still holds much potential for theorising the *umma*. The often heard slogan of *din-wa-dawla*, the inseparability of religion and politics, is again not representative of the realities of Muslims, nor an appreciation of Islamic texts.[503] As argued previously, there is little about the faith of Islam that predisposes its believers to a specific political order; this being so, the scope for developing a framework for common identity is huge.

The problem, of course, is deciding on *what* norms are to constitute Muslim identity. 'Abdul Hamid Abu Sulayman's study into the content of an Islamic IR makes a first attempt at deciding what these norms should be. For Abu Sulyman, self-determination, justice, peace, self-exertion, and a respect for

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[500] *Ibid.*, pg. 3
[501] Tibawi, Abdul Latif: "English-Speaking Orientalists", in Macfie, Alexander Lyon, (ed.): *Orientalism: A Reader,* (New York: New York University Press, 2000)
[502] Mandaville, Peter: *Global Political Islam*, pg. 341
[503] Eickelman, Dale and Piscatori, James: *Muslim politics*, pg. 56

and fulfilment of commitments represent the normative basis of Islamic IR,[504] which could be adapted to form the basis of Muslim transnational identity. *Which* norms constitute Muslim identity is not clearly defined; even Abu Sulayman's norms are ambiguously tied to Islamic texts. The OIC, the almost thin-*umma* example, is testament to the problems involved in deriving 'proper' Islamic norms; rather than a consensus of opinion on the nature of Islam-as-politics - a kind of civilizational behemoth - "the case of the OIC vividly illustrates that the dynamics of trans-national, or pan-national alignment, fall in a spectrum from utilitarianism to hedonism".[505] But other transnational identities, like European identity, for example, are not derived from some essential European character; there are no 'European source texts' that bind Europeans through time and space. Rather, the identity is constructed in the here and now, in a geographically and temporally specific instance. So too can Muslim identity be formed and relevant to Muslims *now* rather than all Muslims throughout time, as is so often the urge for Muslim thinkers. Being more concerned with what binds Muslims together in the now rather than throughout time, would go some way to account for the broad spectrum of positions that Muslim states take within the OIC, for example. Similarly, it is not contradictory for EU states to take differing positions on key issues, they do not betray some 'essential' European character when divergent opinions within the Union appear. Rather such divergence signals the on-going processes of delineating what being 'European' means in the international sphere. So too could a thin-*umma* support divergence in the views held by its members, as part of an on-going appraisal of what be 'Muslim' means in the international sphere.

What is seen in theorising a thin conception of the *umma* is that the state system places considerable constraints on the nature of the community. Constructivism allows a desire for greater solidarity between Muslims to come to fruition through the mechanisms of an international organisation. However, such an organisation would have to be geographically limited by the states that constitute it, and therefore compromise much of what makes the *umma* unique and desirable for Muslims, namely, a sense of solidarity with *individual* Muslims, regardless of the territory they live. But as an example of religious based

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[504] Gledd, Perry: "Book Review: The Islamic Theory of Interntional Relations: New Directions for Islamic Methodology and Thought", (*American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 1992), pg. 124-125
[505] Sheikh, Naveed: *The New Politics of Islam*, pg. 137

identity, the state conception of the *umma* serves; indeed, the OIC is testament to the Islam-as-faith's "secularization-resistant profile… in international society".[506]

The chapter will proceed by looking at how to move to a thicker conception of the *umma*, which would allow for a greater solidarity exclusive of territorial limits, incorporating diaspora and non-state groups.

Moving from thin to thick conceptions of the *umma*: The English School of International Relations

The debate which this chapter is engaged with, between universalism and particularism, between liberal autonomy and societal values, has many similarities with a debate found in the English School of international relations, namely, the relationship between the international system, international society, and world society. Broadly reflecting Martin Wight's three traditions of IR, representative of the ideas of Hobbes, Grotius and Kant, Barry Buzan offers an explanation of each of these three key English School terms: International system "puts structure and process of international anarchy at the centre of IR theory"; international society "puts the creation and maintenance of shared norms, rules and institutions at the centre of IR theory"; world society "puts transcendence of the states-system at the centre of IR theory".[507] The terms international system, international society and world society, when used hereafter, refer to these concepts as they are explained in the English School. Further still, "English school theory has a lot to offer those interested in developing societal understandings of international systems",[508] and this chapter wishes to avail itself of this framework as a stepping stone for articulating community in IR.

International society for this thesis represents a local or communal rationality that is argued to be representative of the *umma* and communitarian notions of deriving value from community. As Rengger stresses about international society, it rests on notions of "common interests and values,

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[506] *Ibid.*, pg. 139
[507] Buzan, Barry: *From International to World Society? English School Theory and the Social Structure of Globalisation,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pg. 7
[508] *Ibid.*, pg. 1

common rules and institutions".[509] In so far as international society is heavily dependent on states, so it resembles a thin conception of *umma*. World society, in contrast, resembles the universal tendencies of Islam-as-faith, or the liberalism of the Enlightenment project. The relationship between world society and universalism is made as world society implies global pacifism through globally applicable notions of justice; Andrew Linklater highlights a tension similar to that between communitarianism and liberalism when he states that, "[t]he analysis of the expansion of international society [into a world society] raises large questions about the relationship between moral and legal universals and support for respect for cultural differences".[510] Broadly speaking, the thick-*umma* is engaged somewhere between the notions of international society and world society, though this is somewhat problematic, as will now be explored.

International society is "built around the state as the defining unit",[511] justified by an empirical statement about the "historical sociology of international relations".[512] This emphasis on the state's neutral, yet unchallengeable place the state system poses problems very similar to the thin-*umma,* expanded upon in the previous section. Indeed, the thin-*umma* is quite comparable to a 'regional society' as is shares the assumptions that constitute an international society as Hedley Bull understands it, that is, "common interests and values".[513] However, the English School makes a distinction between society and community, reflecting the sociological categories of *gesellschaft* (society) and *gemeinschaft* (community). Society "focuses on patterns of interaction structured by shared norms and rules", while community "focuses on identity and 'we-feeling'".[514] The thin-*umma* seems far more concerned with identity and so is more applicable to 'community' rather than 'society'. However, the relationship between society and community is complicated and contested. Even among the English School, two prominent theorists of this paradigm disagree on whether community comes before the development of international

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[509] Hoffmann, Stanley: "International Society", in Vincent, John and Miller, John, (eds.): *Order and Violence: Hedley Bull and International Relations,* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pg. 22
[510] Linklater, Andrew: "The English School", in Burchill, Scott, et al., (eds.): *Theories of International Relations,* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009, 4th), pg. 109
[511] Buzan, Barry: *From International to World Society?*, pg. 91
[512] Rengger, Nicholas: "A City Which Sustains All Things? Communitarianism and International Society", (*Millennium: A Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 2, 1992), pg. 360
[513] Hoffmann, Stanley, "International Society", pg. 2
[514] Buzan, Barry: *From International to World Society?*, pg. 110

society (the position of Wight), or if society is necessary to develop a sense of community (the position of John Vincent). [515] This thesis therefore adopts Buzan's approach of abandoning the *gesellschaft/gemeinschaft* distinction, viewing them as ideal types, intertwined in some way, though ambiguous as to the nature of their relationship.[516] Such an ambiguity allows the chapter to talk of thin-*umma* constructions, even ones that are concerned more with identity than procedure, as regional societies or regional communities interchangeably. Regardless, the regional society of the thin-*umma* is insufficient in giving the *umma* agency, as highlighted above with regards to the geographical limitations of the state compromising the sense of solidarity with individual Muslims. So, can world society help develop a thick conception of the *umma,* a conception that allows for this solidarity between persons?

Hedley Bull saw some potential in the world society concept, in so far as it could be more inclusive than international society. While society is defined by states, those who are outside the state system would never be granted equal treatment. If the move were made to a society of *peoples* then a more inclusive order might be achievable. [517] Using the term society of peoples seems to overlap quite nicely with the concept of the *umma*. There is however a prominent disconnect between the two concepts: The world society is universal, linked to the universal liberal aspirations outlined earlier in the chapter, while an *umma* is demarcated by differing belief systems. However, if Islam-the-faith is believed to one day encompass the entire globe and all peoples, then the universalism thus far criticised is applicable to both world society and *umma* concepts. Furthering the similarity, it is observed that universal or no, both world society and *umma* would begin with an otherwise particular society. It would seem then that world society has much to offer in giving credence to a thick-*umma.* Unlike the thin-*umma*, the world society model would revolve around people, not states, and so encompass Muslim minorities in whatever country they may live. Broadly put, while the thin-*umma*, centred on the English School concept of international society, appears more congruent with the prevailing structure of IR but less congruent with traditional articulations of the *umma*, then

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[515] *Ibid.*, pg. 114-115
[516] *Ibid.*, pg. 116
[517] Bull, Hedley: "The Emergence of a Universal International Society", in Bull, Headly and Watson, Adam, (eds.): *The Expansion of International SOciety,* (Oxford: Oxford Univeristy Press, 1984), pg. 126

the thick-*umma,* centred on the concept of world society, is the opposite; the thick-*umma* is more consistent with the *umma* but less so with the way in which IR is predominately articulated.

Articulating the *umma* in this way, as has been mentioned briefly already, relies on settling questions of values and justice between a diverse range of peoples. Such a move bears more than a passing resemblance with the liberal universalism critiqued earlier in the chapter, especially if the way universal human rights are used in IR is approximated to the way the thick-*umma* would operate. In this way, the world society concept in the English School is shown to be based on liberal thought; Hobson explains about the English School as a whole, that "it rests on fundamental liberal foundations comprising Lockean or Grotian liberalism (as the 'pluralist' wing) and cosmopolitan liberalism (as in the 'solidarist' wing)". [518] The implication of comparing the English School and liberalism is to note the connection that the abstracted notion of rationality has with what passes for 'civilisation' in IR theory and history, as is presently explored.

Taking the example of liberal universalism as implying a consensus of values derived abstractly, one can glimpse at the way in which this assumption is problematic in IR. David Boucher states that "when natural law and its derivative rights are deemed to be universal, their application is often oppressive". [519] The idea of oppression will be dealt with in the following paragraph; presently a link between natural law and liberal universalism is made, to make Boucher's criticism relevant to the present discussion. While liberal universalism does not always rest on the concept of natural laws, abstracting values and applying them to all peoples regardless of their societal circumstances can take the place of natural law in Boucher's criticism; both concepts, natural law or abstractly derived values, imply a pre-political consensus which in actuality cannot be taken for granted. Indeed, the notion of universality implied by liberalism has changed with time, highlighting the inconsistency in claiming it is a pre-political, abstractly defined value system. When relating the changing goal posts of an ostensibly universal liberalism to IR, the thesis equates the 'standard of civilisation' to liberal values. Indicative of

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[518] Hobson, John: *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics*, pg. 222
[519] Boucher, David: *The Limits of Ethics in International Relations: Natural Law, Natural Rights, and Human Rights in Transition,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pg. 11

Hobson's non reductive Orientalism, the 'standard of civilisation' is a measure of defining 'self' (civilisation) and 'other' (barbarism),[520] and the thesis argues that liberalism is a prominent marker of that civilisation in IR. Having made this conceptual move, the chapter can lean on Edward Keene's analysis of the changes in this 'standard of civilisation' as it has been applied in IR, to highlight its oppressive role in the history of colonialism.

For Keene the 'standard of civilisation' changes during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century from "a certain level of economic, political and judicial advancement", to the idea that "every nation has a right to self-determination".[521] The former served to separate the international order along racial lines, justifying the imperial attitude of Europe abroad while protecting its liberal character at home. The latter became far more inclusive, "the concept of civilization increasingly began to separate Europeans from each other, and came to be seen in terms of an ideological divide rather than a racial one".[522] This example of the changing standard of civilisation, and the oppression that can derive from universality, serves to demonstrate the dangers of abstracted universal values, liberal values or otherwise. Rather, the liberal values claimed to be 'universal' both during the colonial era and afterwards are in fact tied to societal circumstances, which accounts for their change over time. The divergence between the universal aspirations of liberalism in IR and the non-universality of its creation and perpetuation presents an explanation for the incoherency of human rights in IR, as Boucher summarises:

> Universal rights always were, and remain, conditional and all sorts of pretexts may be invoked to suspend their application, from the promotion of better trading relations, which made world leaders quickly forget Tiananmen Square, to the desire for order over justice, in which justice is traded for truth.[523]

MacIntyre would relate this incongruence, that is, the divergent ends of pursuing order and justice at the same time, to the 'Enlightenment project', as noted

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[520] Hobson, John: *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics*, pg. 4
[521] Keene, Edward: *Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism and Order in World Politics,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pg. 9
[522] *Ibid.*, pg. 121
[523] Boucher, David: *The Limits of Ethics in International Relations*, pg. 358

earlier in the chapter. For MacIntyre it has not been shown that an impersonal or abstract notion of morality exists,[524] so returning the thesis once more to societally derived values in the place of this abstraction. The implications of socially derived values in IR will be examined more thoroughly in the next chapter, *Pluralism Not Polarisation* while presently the current chapter will relate the discussion of the 'liberal-neutral' foundation of world society to an articulation of a thick-*umma*.

The thick-*umma*, in relying on a pre-political consensus similar to that required by liberal universalism, shares the same problems outlined above. Piscatori argues that any search for 'proper' Islamic values, upon which a thick-*umma* would be based, "is bound to fail, even as the general idea proves to be durably attractive".[525] Indeed, "[t]o talk of Islamic authority in the abstract would be to reify something that is largely contingent on social relations of culture, power, and history across a wide variety of contexts".[526] The argument that Islam-as-faith does not provide enough guidance on its own to inform Islam-as-politics necessarily implies that Normative Political Islam, or indeed any articulation of political Islam, cannot rely on a pre-political consensus on values to be the basis of the world society articulation of *umma*.

The thesis dubbed its variant of political Islam as *Normative* Political Islam, but the norms necessary for its articulation in a thick-*umma* are not coherent with the framework employed to give agency to the concept. To create space for Normative Political Islam in IR a poststructural critique of IR was employed which broke down various dominant claims around the discipline, like secularism and the centrality of the state; currently, however, if one were to embrace a thick-*umma* in the mould of world society, one would need to create a series of value claims that are just as susceptible to that original poststructural critique. If the norms of Normative Political Islam are to apply to the world over, then the geographical and cultural specificity necessary to construct these norms in the first place will have to be removed. In essence this would create a paradox, similar to the problem outlined in the discussion of communitarianism and liberalism earlier in the chapter, regarding a simultaneous embrace of both

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[524] MacIntyre, Alisdair: *After Virtue*, pg. 24
[525] Piscatori, James: "Islam and the International Order", in Bull, Hedley and Watson, Adam, (eds.): *The Expansion of International Society,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), pg. 311
[526] Mandaville, Peter: *Global Political Islam*, pg. 303

universalism and particularism in the development of Islamic sovereignty. Abdullahi An-Na'im alludes to a similar problem in his work *Islam and the Secular State*. An-Na'im states, in much the way done in this chapter, that to use *shari'a* as a *universal* normative basis for Islam-as-politics is problematic. He states that:

> [T]he so-called basic objectives of Shari'a are expressed at such a high level of abstraction [to be applicable to all Muslims] that they are neither distinctly Islamic nor sufficiently specific for the purposes of public policy and legislation.[527]

To create norms applicable to Muslims is to embrace societal and cultural specificity, but to create norms applicable to *all* Muslims in a world society is to deny the specificity required to give these norms any purchase in the first place. In this way, both liberal universalism and the thick-*umma* are shown as flawed when used to create a world society. Embracing the specificity required by Normative Political Islam, while at the same time giving credence to the idea of solidarity with co-religionists, otherwise put, to resolve the paradox outlined here, is what will be explored in depth in the final chapter.

Conclusions

Having augmented the religious (theological) guidance on Islamic politics in the previous chapter with Islamic exotericism, developing a theory of Islamic sovereignty in the process, this chapter has attempted to apply those ideas to the international sphere. Focusing on the articulation of the *umma* in IR, the chapter argued that the foundations of dominant IR interpretations upon the liberal universal legacy of the European Enlightenment prove a severe impediment to any articulation of the *umma*. Engaging with the debate between liberalism and communitarianism, it was argued that liberal universalism derives its values from an individual abstracted from their societal circumstances. Accepting the abstracted values of liberalism would undermine the distinction between Islam-as-faith and Islam-as-politics. An abstracted value system would fold the two together, so that the principles that are capable of being

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[527] An-Naim, Abdullahi Ahmed: *Islam and the Secular State: Negotiating the Future of Shari'a,* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), pg. 35

universalised, Islam-as-faith, would override the principles derived from societal circumstance, Islam-as-politics. Alternatively, principles derived from within a specific society might retroactively be given universal appeal, resulting in one notion of Islam-as-politics overriding competing conceptions, trying to veil itself as Islam-as-faith. If a move accepting universal values in the mould of the Enlightenment project were made by Normative Political Islam, it would create a zero-sum discourse *within* ('our Islamism is the *only* Islamism') and *without* (liberalism vs. Islamism) the Muslim world.

Communitarianism, on the other hand, was argued to be capable of giving agency to various forms of Islam-as-politics, Normative Political Islam included. Embracing the societal basis of value systems allows one to accept the liberalism of the Enlightenment as linked to the community it was derived from, resisting the urge to apply it globally. The *umma* then, is indicative of whatever the Muslims that constitute it will it to be. However, relating these conclusions to the dual contract method used in the previous chapter to develop a notion of sovereignty for Normative Political Islam, revealed an incoherency around the simultaneous embrace of universalism and particularism. The first contract between the Muslim and God involves a commitment to the transcendental and universal aspects of Islam-as-faith, while the second contract between Muslims and temporal authority embraces the particularism of the society the Muslim might find themselves in. Asking Muslim contractors to embrace both particularism and universalism, and to neatly demarcate the two in their minds as they go about deriving their version of Islam-as-politics, is a problematic expectation. The incoherence of a position embracing both universalism and particularism was also explored when moving the debate between liberalism and communitarianism to the realm of IR.

Giving agency to the *umma* in IR, the chapter examined two extremes on a spectrum, the thin and thick-*umma*. The former was argued to represent a form of solidarity vested in states, articulated by an international organisation similar to the EU. However, what was demonstrated was that investing in the state system compromises much of what makes the *umma* desirable in the first place, specifically, solidarity with *individual* coreligionists. Moving to a thick-*umma* that would be located in individuals, the chapter examined the problem in assuming too much agreement between and amongst Muslims. In essence, a

thick-*umma* has to make abstracted and universal claims about the nature of the connection between individuals, much in the way liberalism does. In doing so, it begins to deny the constitutive element of Normative Political Islam being vested in society, and instead places that constitutive element in those abstract and universal values, presumably vested in theological guidance (though it is entirely possible these values might be based in rationalism, much as the liberal tradition is). How to resolve this problem of at once respecting the truth associated with divine revelation, however thin that truth might be, while simultaneously arguing that cultural specificity is the best method to derive Islam-as-politics, is the problem that the following chapter takes up.

This chapter has demonstrated that the IR of the *umma* would entail multiple and competing notions of Islam-as-politics, Normative Political Islam representing only one approach amongst many. If Islam-as-politics is indeed embedded within societal practice then an attempt to abstractly dictate a singular paradigm for the articulation of that politics is futile. Abandoning the idea that a singular conception of Islam-as-politics is achievable leads the thesis to a discussion of how and to what extent can IR embrace pluralism, or, does pluralism inevitably lead to conflict between competing value systems? This is the question that guides us into the final substantive chapter of the thesis, *Pluralism or Polarisation*.

Chapter 5: Pluralism Not Polarisation

This chapter will continue to explore the notion of communitarian IR. While the previous chapter attempted to apply the principle of the *umma* in IR using a communitarian perspective, with varying degrees of success from thick to thin conceptions of Muslim solidarity, this chapter investigates the implications of Normative Political Islam embracing that communitarian perspective, with a specific focus on interaction with other states or communities in the international sphere. Such a discussion is linked to the secondary research question: *What challenges does the concept of the* umma*, as an alternative to the state, pose to the discipline of international relations?* The chapter will begin by noting the similarity of the argument of the thesis thus far with Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilisations*. Specifically, the chapter will compare the way in which both the *Clash of Civilisations* and the arguments of this thesis rest upon the basis of incommensurable differences in the values of different peoples.

While the chapter will show that there is indeed some similarity between this thesis and Huntington's ideas, in the way in which conflicting values are accepted as unavoidable in IR, the chapter will demonstrate the considerable difference between the argument of the thesis and Huntington's to lie in the way in which both invoke pluralism in IR. The chapter argues that Huntington's use of pluralism is incoherent as he embraces a multi-polar and pluralistic international order, while at the same time maintaining that different 'civilisations' are engaged in a zero-sum contest that cannot be mediated. The issue is not the zero-sum nature of conflict, as indeed this thesis embraces the idea that values cannot be rationally reconciled but may be inherently at odds with each other. The issue with Huntington is the use of pluralism in his argument. For him, as will be seen in this chapter, pluralism is an empirical statement about diverse locations of power in the international sphere. If it is possible for values to never be reconciled, as Huntington himself argues, then the notion of pluralism is an *embrace* of this competition in humanity's relations with one another, not, as Huntington would see it, evidence that one set values must triumph over the others as a matter of survival.

The chapter moves on to unpack an understanding of pluralism distinct from Huntington's. Specifically, the chapter asserts the connection between

poststructuralism and pluralism. This connection is made as the poststructural position on ontology removes the possibility of universal truths, including universal norms or values, to manage the international sphere (like liberalism, for example), and pluralism is an attempt to manage the competing values that result, in this instance, from a poststructural position on ontology. After demonstrating the synthesis between the two concepts the chapter will proceed in attempting to answer two questions: 1) To what extent can one conceive of a pluralistic IR? And 2) Relating the argument thus far to Normative Political Islam, can one be a postmodern Muslim? The second question was foreshadowed in the previous chapter with regards to an embrace of the universalism of Islam-as-faith at the same time as accepting the particularism of Islam-as-politics, relating this question to the secondary research question: *To what degree is there a synthesis in poststructural and Islamic critiques of IR?*

To answer the first question the chapter will further frame the discussion of pluralism in IR by looking at poststructural studies in IR as well as area studies, in an attempt to highlight the Enlightenment rationality embedded in dominant IR paradigms that insist on a singular conception of 'the good life'. The chapter will then provide a working definition of pluralism and point to *modus vivendi*, agreeing to disagree, as the way in which conflict that cannot be resolved between competing values might be managed. In applying *modus vivendi* to IR, the chapter will identify English School and Realist paradigms as potentially indicative of value pluralism in IR, but will note that the concept of pluralism is under theorised in the field.

To answer the second question regarding the poststructural Muslim, the chapter seeks to resolve the inherent problem associated with a Muslim believing in absolute truth (God) and poststructuralism's rejection of meta-narrative simultaneously. To do this, the chapter will argue for a notion of bounded poststructuralism and bounded Islam (as-politics). As demonstrated in chapter 3, Islam's exoteric tradition places boundaries on Islam-as-politics, preventing it from becoming universally applicable. This chapter will attempt to make a similar argument with regards to poststructuralism. Following this, the chapter will turn once more to value pluralism as the method to 'resolve' the question of the postmodern Muslim, arguing that the two positions of poststructuralism and belief in God are rationally unresolvable. This being so,

value pluralism and the management of inevitable friction is the method forwarded to 'resolve' the problem of the poststructural Muslim.

Communitarianism and the Clash of Civilisations

Before continuing, it is worth summarising the constitutive elements of the argument thus far presented in the thesis, that is, the later chapters which were concerned with what forms Islamic IR might take, rather than the earlier chapters which discussed the deficiencies, such as they are, in 'traditional' IR theory *vis-a-vis* Islam. During this summary similarities will be recognised with a different conception of IR. Unfortunately it is a conception of IR that, if the association is accurate, spells some dire conclusions for Normative Political Islam. The conception referred to, as mentioned in the introduction to the chapter, is Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilisations*,[528] and this section will explore the similarities, and their consequences for the thesis.

Chapter 3, *Sovereignty and Normative Political Islam*, argued that Normative Political Islam builds upon the distinction between Islam-as-faith, that is the elements of faith which concern an individual's relationship to God, and Islam-as-politics, which refers to an individual's relationship with other people. The former is transcendental, the latter is far more mundane. In explaining the virtues of detaching Islamic discussion of politics from "the burden of history", Rashid al-Ghannoushi describes a situation which is equally applicable to the distinction between Islam-as-faith and Islam-as-politics; al-Ghannoushi explains that "Islam is a space and not a point. You can move within this space, it is not a prison, contrary to the dominant perception among Muslims".[529]

The boundary between Islam-as-faith and Islam-as-politics is not a solid one, and many of the ways in which a Muslim might interact with others might be argued to derive from God's commandments, as interpreted from Islamic source texts. Likewise, one might argue that the way in which government power is exercised might help bolster citizens' relationship with God. Despite the imperfection of the distinction, the thesis saw that one of the implications of

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[528] Huntington, Samuel: *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order,* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996)
[529] Al-Ghannoushi, Rashid, in: Esposito, John: "Summary of the Open Debate", in El-Affendi, Abdelwahab, (ed.): *Rethinking Islam and Modernity: Essays in Honour of Fathi Osman,* (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 2001), pg. 174

making the split between Islam-as-politics and Islam-as-faith is the recognition that Islamic guidance on politics, specifically in the form of political affiliation and IR, is not explicit in the Islamic source texts. This is the 'space' that al-Ghannoushi described, within which it becomes possible for Muslims to articulate any variety of theories about the state or the international sphere. These possible articulations, like Normative Political Islam, are *Islamic* in the way in which they derive from and respect key tenants of Islam-as-faith, but cannot claim to be *Islam*, as these theories do not constitute part of the faith's dogma.

The thesis noted how it is possible to derive a notion of Islamic sovereignty from the exoteric and rational (as distinct from spiritual or legal),[530] aspect of the Islamic message. Such a notion of sovereignty was respectful of the doctrinal stipulations laid out in Islamic source texts regarding the sovereignty of God, as was explored in more depth in chapter 3. What was also seen was that such a notion of sovereignty, in escaping the need to derive theories from an immutable source text, was also able to create communally sensitive conceptions of IR. The idea of communitarian articulations of IR leads inevitably to the idea that there can exist *multiple* notions of IR, each sensitive to and derived from different communities.

Chapter 4, *Islamic Community and International Relations*, explored the implications of communitarian IR. The discipline of IR discipline was argued to inherit much of its ontological and epistemological foundations from the legacy of the European Enlightenment. One such inheritance, especially with regards to political liberalism, is the notion of the abstracted individual and resulting abstract values, as distinct from communitarian values. The abstracted individual allows for some level of universalism, while communitarianism implies some limits to the applicability of values in any given society. Furthermore, the concept of the *umma* presents one of the more pressing challenges to the way in which IR is conceived by the dominant paradigms of the discipline, as the *umma* is a distinct and different unit of analysis from the state. It was argued that while it is possible to consider a thin conception of the *umma*, such a

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[530] The intention is not to draw comparison to irrationality, but rather to the 3 elements of Islamic epistemology, *al-Shari'ah*, *al-Tariqah*, and *al-Haqiqah*. For more on this distinction see: Nasr, Hossein: *Islamic Philosophy from its Origin to the Present*, pg. 31

conception would truncate the meaning of community in such a way that it may not be acceptable to the Muslims who would seek to give meaning to the *umma* in the contemporary world. Rather, thick conceptions of the *umma* might be far more desirable for the Muslims who would constitute it, but it would truncate the importance of the state in IR. Regardless of which conception of the *umma* is more acceptable for Normative Political Islam, an important point to consider is that *both* thick and thin *ummas* find a place for religious observance and expression in IR, be it through a religious solidarity through an EU type structure, or through a Muslim 'world society' in the context of the definitions found in the English School. With this summary in mind, the chapter can move on to the comparison with the *Clash of Civilisations*. Acknowledging Ken Booth's description of Huntington's work as "the worst book on world politics I have read for a long time",[531] the thesis has nothing to add to the many thorough critiques of the *Clash of Civilisations* offered in the years since its publication.[532] Rather, this section identifies those aspects of Normative Political Islam's rendering of IR that resonate with the *Clash of Civilisations,* and examine the implications thereof.

Where the language of multiple communities has been used in this thesis to derive different conceptions of IR (IR as a specific component of 'the good life'), Huntington used the language of 'civilisations' to talk about *competing* notions of the good life. It is interesting to note that difference, for Huntington, is equated to (violent) competition, while the thesis has thus far used difference to point to pluralism as a political virtue, not a threat. Writing in 1993, Huntington stated that it is "symbols of cultural identity" that will shape post-Cold War IR, symbols "including crosses, crescents, and even head coverings, because culture counts, and cultural identity is what is most meaningful to most people".[533] Here Huntington, like many IR scholars identified in the literature

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[531] Booth, Ken: "Huntington's Home Spun Grandeur", (*The Political Quarterly*, Vol. 68, No. 4, 1997), pg. 425
[532] For example, see: Halliday, Fred: *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation*, Esposito, John: *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), Cox, Michaelene, Oneal, John, and Russett, Bruce: "Clash of Civilizations, or Realism and Liberalism Déjà Vu? Some Evidence", (*Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 37, No. 5, 2000), Marranci, Gabriele: "Multiculturalism, Islam and the clash of civilisations theory: rethinking Islamophobia", (*Culture and Religion: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2004) and Appadurai, Arjun: *A Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay on the Geography of Anger,* (London: Duke University Press, 2006)
[533] Huntington, Samuel: *The Clash of Civilizations*, pg. 20

review, equates religion with culture in such a way as to fit religion more easily into pre-existing analytical categories. Huntington states that "religion, however, is the principal defining characteristic of civilizations"; the conflation of culture and religion into the term 'civilisation' is problematic for the reasons outlined earlier in the thesis, namely the way in which it rejects the ways believers themselves may see their faith. Nevertheless, the idea of Huntington's civilisations being religiously delineated furthers the comparison with Normative Political Islam.

Giving space to religion, even through the back door of 'civilisation', echoes the discussion of religious values permeating the erstwhile secular discipline of IR. It is not, as Huntington would have it, that with the great battle between competing secular ideologies over, religion returns to the fore. Rather, as Mona Kanwal Sheikh notes, a preoccupation with Cold War competition and secular ideologies betrays "biased narratives representing the rejection of religion as the conditions for peace, order and even the state-system".[534] In other words, religion was always present in the lives and narratives of the actors in IR, it never went away and so is nothing 'new' to contend with. Despite the differences in explaining the high visibility of religion in IR, what is key is that that Huntington, like us, sees religion as an important factor in understanding contemporary IR.

The thesis argued that the values derived from within the Islamic tradition do not represent Islam in totality but represent one of many interpretations of Islamic source texts. Huntington, conversely, is fixated on broad civilizational categories which rely on singular interpretations of a cultural/religious tradition. Booth refers to this as a caricatured depiction of actors in world politics; he writes that: "On the one hand he [Huntington] makes them ('Western', 'African', 'Islamic', 'Sinic', 'Orthodox', etc) more distinct and conflictual that they have been and are; on the other hand he exaggerates the degree of intra-civilisational cohesion."[535] Huntington tries to acknowledge the disparate voices within the Islamic 'civilisation', but claims this is due to no single, strong 'core' state to steer the global Muslim population to a singular goal. At once he is

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[534] Sheikh, Mona Kawal: "How does religion matter? Pathways to religion in International Relations", (*Review of International Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 2, 2012), pg. 267
[535] Booth, Ken: "Huntington's Home Spun Grandeur", pg. 425

finding a place for religion in IR, a very prominent place, but also essentialising and abstracting the meaning of religion from those who identify with faith. Because Libyan Shi'as are Muslim they must naturally defer to the rising 'core' state of Wahhabi Saudi Arabia, after all they are both 'Muslim'. Likewise, do Argentine Christians defer to the dictums of the Christian European or American 'core' of that 'civilisation'?

Having found a place for religion in IR, however problematically by folding religion in with the label 'culture', Huntington uncritically accepts the classification of religion being irrational. He claims that:

> Differences in secular ideology between Marxist-Leninism and liberal democracy can at least be debated if not resolved. Differences in material interest can be negotiated and often settled by compromise in a way cultural issues cannot… Cultural questions… involved a yes or no, zero-sum choice.[536]

Here too the argument of Normative Political Islam is differentiated from the *Clash of Civilisations*. Huntington here is a representation of the secular bias in IR. While describing reactions to political Islam specifically, Elizabeth Hurd's comments on this secular bias apply to religion in IR more generally, and the point of view propounded by Huntington. In Hurd's description, "Political Islam is interpreted… as a divergence and/or infringement upon neutral secular public space, as a throwback to premodern forms of Muslim political order, or as a combination of all of these features".[537] Huntington is doing exactly that, equating religion to a kind of Enlightenment teleology wherein 'progress' is made only when religion is confined to the private sphere. The idea of an IR which is sensitive to religion is one that, according to Huntington, must also become more sensitive to conflict, as religion leads us to zero-sum relations between 'civilisations'.

Huntington's description of conflict in the IR of 'civilisations' creates a curious predicament: On the one hand, Normative Political Islam has argued for a particular Islamic discourse around IR, but on the other hand, the interaction

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[536] Huntington, Samuel: *The Clash of Civilizations*, pg. 129-130
[537] Hurd, Elizabeth: *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations*, pg. 117

of such a model of IR with other, perhaps religious, perhaps secular conceptions of the international sphere has not been examined. In recognising religious IR or, to be specific, the IR of Normative Political Islam, is it true that different groupings are bound to conflict over the way in which they conceive the international sphere? Such conflict is integral to Huntington's conception of post-Cold War politics, and managing that conflict is the key feature of his theory. However, here is another ostensible similarity, that in fact points to another departure between Normative Political Islam and *Clash of Civilisations*: universalism.

The thesis has used poststructuralism's rejection of meta-narrative and universalism to critique the way in which IR is prone to making such claims over truth. This was tied heavily to the legacy of the European Enlightenment, specifically around the ideas of secularism and liberalism. The use of poststructuralism helped to create a 'space' for alternative theories in the discipline, specifically, religious theory. This is not a novel approach for Muslim theorists. Tamara Sonn points out that "[t]he actual process of questioning texts [of modernity], which is a hallmark of post-modernity, is something that I think contemporary Islamic thinkers have in common".[538] Indeed, Huntington is also critical of universal pretensions: "For the first time in human history global politics is both multipolar and multicivilizational; modernisation is distinct from Westernization and is producing neither a universal civilization in any meaningful sense nor the Westernization of non-Western societies".[539] He continues, curiously, to invoke a type of pluralism when he says "[a]voidance of a global war of civilizations depends on world leaders accepting and cooperating to maintain the multicvilizational character of global politics".[540] Huntington's ontological justification for this pluralism is unclear, and likely derives from empirical data, the way in which much of his argument is derived. There is an incongruence in his method however, for while he advocates the nature of the system as multi-polar and pluralistic, he infers that the discourse between 'civilizations' is a zero-sum competition. Faiths that are engaged in a zero-sum competition are expected to put that competition aside to maintain a multi-polar world, yet how that is to be achieved is not discussed. For Normative

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[538] Sonn, Tamara, in: Esposito, John, "Summary of the Open Debate" 153
[539] Huntington, Samuel: *The Clash of Civilizations*, pg. 20
[540] *Ibid.,* pg. 21

Political Islam and its poststructural critique of Enlightenment universalism, there is ostensibly no zero-sum competition between competing values, as these values are socially constructed and embedded, rather than abstractly conceived and universally applied. However, one is perfectly capable of socially constructing and justifying proselytising values. Take the Islamic concept of *da'wah* (the call to Islam), for example. Additionally, the acceptance of socially constructed values may be problematic for Muslims who would derive their social conduct from transcendental guidance rather than the other way around.

Borrowing the language of Abdulkarim Soroush, Muslims, generally, are *certain* about the central elements of faith (Islam-as-faith), but *sceptical* about the practicalities of Muslim conduct of IR (Islam-as-politics). Normative Political Islam seemingly resolves this combination of certainly and scepticism by delineating the different spheres Islam-as-faith and Islam-as-politics, but whether this is a successful manoeuvre or not has yet to be argued conclusively, something that will be attempted in the remainder of this chapter. Soroush articulates this dilemma when he puts forward the question: "Can we be certain in scepticism"?[541] As this chapter explores the answer to this question, it will also touch upon the remaining and indeed only real comparison between Normative Political Islam and the *Clash of Civilisations*, that is, the inevitability and management of conflict between competing values. To begin, the chapter will explore further the ramifications in synthesising an anti-universalist perspective with the IR of Normative Political Islam. This will be done by looking at a body of work that is somewhat liminal in IR, poststructuralism, and a body of work that falls outside of the disciplinary realm of IR, area studies. Both poststructuralism and area studies make similar claims about the *problem* in uncritically applying IR paradigms to non-Western societies but both, as will be seen, differ from Normative Political Islam in their prescribed *solutions* to this problem. Following this ground work, the chapter will have a critique of IR that is somewhat parallel with the argument put forward by Normative Political Islam. At that point the chapter will be in a position to compare and contrast the assumptions put forward by the poststructural critique of IR, with the assumptions that underline Normative Political Islam. Doing so will hopefully

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[541] Esposito, John, "Summary of the Open Debate", pg. 166

shed light on whether one can be a postmodern Muslim, an individual "certain in scepticism".[542]

The Foundations of the 'Problem' in IR

The 'problem' described previously is the idea that "Enlightenment rationalism and universalism appear as a metaphysically disguised Eurocentrism".[543] This being the case, William Brown, when talking about the application of IR to Africa, describes aptly the symptoms of this problem; "[a]t best, we are told, 'IR theory' misrepresents or misunderstands African reality, at worst it participates in an exercise of neo-colonial theoretical hegemony".[544] With regards to Islam, the thesis has identified other symptoms of the problem, such as the fear of and rejection of religious rationality. Rejecting religion as an analytical category in IR has led to it being subsumed by other, more tangible factors. In this sense IR is also misrepresenting the realities of Muslim peoples, especially those who are sympathetic to a supra state identity (the *umma*). Such sympathies contribute to Raymond Hinnebusch's irredentism in the Middle East, a "dissatisfaction with the incongruity between territorial borders and "imagined communities"".[545]

However, as the thesis is embarked on second order theorising on the questions and assumptions that underpin IR, the chapter will not here dwell on the symptoms of the problem. Rather, the chapter will analyse the foundations of the problem in order to highlight different or alternative paths in IR, not to supplant or replace existing paradigms, but rather to compliment them. Taking Islam, and more broadly religion 'seriously', that is, studying it on its own merits and not subsuming it into pre-existing or convenient analytical categories, would result in greater understanding and avoid Huntington's caricature of "Muslim bellicosity and violence".[546] Douglas Lemke demonstrates a similar perspective when he suggests that small changes in interpretations of existing IR paradigms, specifically neo-Realism, could yield increased understandings of areas of the world suffering from irredentism. In Lemke's Congolese example, he does this

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[542] *Ibid.*

[543] Dews, Peter: "Postmodernism: pathologies of modernity from Nietzche to the post-structuralists", in Ball, Terence and Bellamy, Richard, (eds.): *The Cambridge History of Twentieth Century Political Thought,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pg. 345

[544] Brown, William: "Africa and International Relations: A Comment on IR Theory, Anarchy and Statehood", (*Review of International Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 1, 2006), pg. 119

[545] Hinnebusch, Raymond, "Introduction: The Analytical Framework", pg. 7

[546] Huntington, Samuel: *The Clash of Civilizations*, pg. 258

by shifting focus away from states, which he admits do not have the saliency in Africa that they have other parts of the world, to "autonomous political entities".[547] Such a move shows reflexivity on the part of Lemke, and allows the study of African realities in IR by acknowledging those realities do not fit neatly with the existing boundaries of IR; that Lemke's Congolese examples do not 'fit' within these boundaries does not mean that they are not 'IR material', but rather that IR in this instance needs to adjust to accommodate non-European realities. As the implications of liberal universalism at an abstract level were explored in the previous chapter, this chapter will now examine the implications of that universalism for IR.

Sadik Jalal al-'Azm argues that "[i]n the West, the historical process may be moved by economic interests, class struggles and socio-political forces. But in the East the 'prime mover' of history is Islam".[548] How does this dynamic apply to IR? Turan Kayaoglu 'Westphalian narrative' was discussed previously in the thesis, and it is worth returning to this concept to talk about what he describes as interpretative dualism. For Kayaoglu, the interpretative dualism stemming from the Westphalian narrative leads to the positive behaviour of an in-group (the West) to be attributed to the in-group's character (Protestant work ethic, separation of church and state, etc). Conversely, the positive behaviour of the out-group (the Islamic world) is attributed to external conditions (interaction with and influence of European powers in the Ottoman Empire). The in-group's negative behaviour, however, is attributed to external conditions, while the negative behaviour of the out-group is attributed to their inherent character (Islam). That this dualism exists is not to deny that in-groups and out-groups do not interact and constitute each other, rather, it points out that privileging one aspect of this co-constitution leads to analytical shortcomings in IR theories. Establishing categories of self and other in such a way relates to what Larry Swatuk describes as "the scientific method", which he explains as being responsible for obscuring subtlety, "if it is not 'true' then it must be 'false'".[549] Take as a prime example the problem the English School suffers from in

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[547] Lemke, Douglas: "Intra-national IR in Africa", (*Review of International Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 1, 2011), pg. 69

[548] al-'Azm, Sadik Jalal, "Orientalism and Orientalism in Reverse", pg. 234

[549] Swatuk, Larry: "The Brothers Grim: Modernity and 'International' Relations in Southern Africa", in Dunn, Kevin and Shaw, Timothy, (eds.): *Africa's Challenge to International Relations Theory,* (Baisingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pg. 166

struggling to account for colonialism as a consequence of the 'expansion of international society'; if international society is 'good' then its expansion must also be a 'good' thing. Acknowledging subtlety and abandoning dualisms would help establish the co-constitution of international society and would allow exploration of the darker aspects of European expansion (such as colonialism) which is currently missing, by and large, from English School literature.[550]

Tandeka Nkiwane summarises well the incoherence of liberalism's universalism when she writes, "[i]n the case of liberalism, Eurocentric assertions are too often represented as fact. This assertion as fact is used to dismiss an entire continent [Africa] as irrelevant to a theory that expounds a 'universal' message".[551] Nkiwane explains that if liberalism is forced to acknowledge African realities, it must concede that 'universal' liberalism can in fact lead to imperialism.[552] Liberals of the colonial era used a kind of social Darwinism creating a 'superior' liberal loving society and the 'inferior' colonised peoples, a reference to the racialised 'standard of civilisation' of Hobson's non-reductive Orientalism. At the time, the killing of these peoples was considered regrettable, but justified as necessary to expand the zone of freedom.[553] Such an approach necessitates polarisation. Be it civilisation and barbarism, order and disorder, rational and irrational, poles are established to justify and explain the domination of one group over another. Does the opposite perspective, that of pluralism, prevent this domination and violence?

Pluralism may not create opposing poles, but would imply a diverse range of positions. In is conceivable that of the many positions presented, some would be entirely incompatible. In this sense, pluralism does not solve the problem of disparate and opposing positions. In-groups may still see themselves as 'civilised' and their respective out-groups as 'barbarians'.

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[550] Edward Keene is a notable exception when he comments that "the adoption of a deeper historical perspective inevitably raises some awkward questions about the civilizing mission to which international order is currently dedicated, and it is not a proper response simply to pretend that those questions do not exist because the idea of human rights was only asserted in international relations after 1945, or because the idea of human rights was only asserted in international relations after 1945, or because the division of sovereignty in contemporary international organizations is an unprecedented phenomenon". Keene, Edward: *Beyond the Anarchical Society*, pg. 149
[551] Nkiwane, Tandeka: "The End of History? African Challenges to Liberalism in International Relations", in Dunn, Kevin and Shaw, Timothy, (eds.): *Africa's Challenge to International Relations Theory,* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pg. 111
[552] *Ibid.*, pg. 110
[553] Losurdo, Domenico: *Liberalism: A Couner-History*, pg. 334

However, as pluralism necessarily denies universalism, the impetus to 'civilise' the out-group is removed. 'Progress' in this instance is not an ordering and taming of the unknown world,[554] but rather the ability to co-exist with competing value claims. Because a certain set of values exists and may be considered, by those that possess them, as being superior to different values held by other groups, does not mean that these 'superior' values have any purchase in different social condition and heritages.

Pluralism satisfies the Constructivist stance of this thesis on the source of communal values, specifically those that constitute Islam-as-politics. Abstract universalism cannot suffer competitors, and it cannot be the case, as has been argued, that Islam-as-politics derives from a transcendental universal message, which is the domain of Islam-as-faith. However, Normative Political Islam, as one possible articulation of Islam-as-politics, does derive from and respect certain elements of the transcendental message of Islam-as-faith. To accommodate the religious world view in IR it was necessary to 'make space' by critiquing a different universal discourse, that of secularism in IR, and other assumptions deriving from the European Enlightenment. In doing so, the thesis embraced a poststructural position on ontology about the nature of truth, finding it necessary to be sceptical about foundational claims, instead accepting that such truths are only ever true within specific temporal and geographical limits. Accepting this poststructural position on ontology, the thesis was able to accept that a secular discourse in IR might work for some, but there is no reason it is the only example of how to conduct IR, leaving space for alternatives like Normative Political Islam to develop. In the end what is left is pluralism within Islam-as-politics *and* pluralism in IR. It is becoming clear that pluralism is doing a lot of work for the thesis, and further discussion about the substance of and operation of that pluralism is required. Specifically, the chapter must continue its discussion of the remaining problem from the comparison with the *Clash of Civilisations*; does a position of pluralism which might still create incompatible worldviews, avoid violent resolution of these differences?

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[554] Swatuk, Larry, "The Brothers Grim: Modernity and 'International' Relations in Southern Africa", pg. 167

If the communitarian position argued for in the previous chapter can be defended, it must explored how value pluralism might sustain an international order, and whether that international order would result in 'clash' based politics, as Huntington has argued. The point of departure of this section of the chapter is Huntington's reasoning for the inevitability of conflict, the idea that cultural and religious differences are zero-sum choices.[555]

The idea that zero-sum choices are inevitable when talking about values is in fact one that is entirely reasonable, expected even, when talking about value pluralism; Stuart Hampshire elucidates, "[t]he ideals of the monk and the soldier, of the revolutionary and the poet, of the aesthete and the politician, seem incurably at odds with each other, even as ideal types, and even more so when individuals of these types are inserted into a particular historical setting".[556] For Hampshire, the difference between the virtues of a good soldier or a good monk are incompatible, at some point in an individual's life they must make a choice to become one or the other, or neither. Gray makes a similar point in stating that "[a] life of risk and adventure and a life of tranquillity and contemplation cannot both be lived by one person across an entire lifetime".[557] When Hampshire describes "deep-seated spiritual antagonisms" as the "essence of humanity"[558] there is, as with Normative Political Islam, a similarity with the *Clash of Civilisations* in the inevitability of conflict. How then does pluralism propose to resolve these inevitable conflicts? Spending time developing a more specific definition of pluralism is the first step.

Susan Mendus articulates pluralism "as a doctrine about the sources of value. It holds that those sources are many and not one and, as such, it stands in opposition to monism, or to a Platonic search for unity".[559] Gray proposes that there is a distinction between strong and weak pluralism, both variants accept Mendus' underlying definition, but strong pluralism applies a more stringent criteria. For Gray, strong pluralism makes three claims: 1) an "*anti-reductionism*

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[555] Huntington, Samuel: *The Clash of Civilizations*, pg. 130

[556] Hampshire, Stuart: "Liberalism: The New Twist", (*The New York Review of Books*, Vol. 40, No. 14, 1993), pg. 43

[557] Gray, John: "Where Pluralists and Liberals Part Company", (*International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2010), pg. 22

[558] Hampshire, Stuart: "Liberalism: The New Twist", pg. 43

[559] Mendus, Susan: "Saving One's Soul or Founding a State: Morality and Politics", (*Philosophia*, Vol. 34, No. 3, 2006), pg. 235

about values. The goods of human life are many. They cannot be derived from or reduced to any one value"; 2) a "*non-harmony among values*", the idea that goods may be incompatible; 3) "[t]he diverse types of flourishing of which humans are capable are not only often uncombinable; sometimes they are rationally incomparable. Let us call this *value-incommensurability*".[560] Of note is the final of the three claims, that of *value-incommensurability*. Accepting that competing values might not be rationally resolvable marks strong value pluralism from weaker forms, such as liberalism; liberalism acknowledges non-harmony between values, but insist they can be rationally resolved. How does Normative Political Islam compare with these definitions of pluralism?

There is a lot of resonance between strong value pluralism and the pluralism advocated by Normative Political Islam, as it does not forward any particular conception of the good, but rather represents a framework within which Muslims might construct and articulate communally derived values about IR. Such a position is necessarily pluralistic, rejecting the idea that there is a *unifying* substance to Islamic politics derived from Islamic source texts (the Platonic search for unity). That is not to deny that the substance of Normative Political Islam *is not* derived from the transcendental sources of the Qur'an and Hadith, only that such transcendental guidance is not conclusive and *unifying* for different Muslims who might interpret those sources in different ways. In this manner, Normative Political Islam goes some way towards satisfying Gray's first strong pluralist claim, *anti-reductionism* about values. However, anti-reductionism implies there is no unifying value from which conceptions of the good life derive. Does that mean Muslims can accept that there are other sources for deriving moral values distinct from Islamic source texts, or God in general? Yes, in some sense, in that Christian and Jewish transcendental guidance is perfectly applicable to people of those faiths, affording a group tolerance to those groups (acknowledging that in practice this tolerance waxed and waned through time).[561] Beyond other Abrahamic faiths, one can point to the *ijma' al-fi'l* (consensus of action, understood as historical precedent) of

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[560] Gray, John: "Where Pluralists and Liberals Part Company", pg. 20. Original emphasis
[561] See, for example: Deshen, Shlomo and Zenner, Walter, "Jews Among Muslims in Precolonial Times: An Introductory Survey"

Piscatori's *Islam in a World of Nation States* to see Muslim rulers' capacity for peaceful relations with non-Muslims.[562]

Even by pointing to these examples of toleration, theoretical or doctrinal rivalries or antagonisms have not been resolved. For example, recall the example in the previous chapter of liberal pluralism necessitating Islam and other religions to share the same ontological space as Pastafarianism and the Flying Spaghetti Monster. Such a position assumed a commitment to liberal neutrality which in practice might not be applicable in all Muslim communities. In other words, while Muslim communities living in the United Kingdom, for example, might acknowledge that their religion is granted the same rights and privileges as Paganism, it does not mean they *accept*, respect or value Paganism as a source of the good. As Mendus explains, "insofar as pluralism holds that values are many and not one… it is denied by many moderns, specifically by those of a religious temperament who believe that there is but one source of value – God".[563] Does such a position towards paganism, for example, fall short of the idea, central to pluralism, that conceptions of the good cannot be reduced or derived from one value? Not when considering the second criteria of value pluralism, *non-harmony among values*. The value of submission to God, or more basic still the belief in God, central to a Muslim's conception of the good, is incompatible with, for example, humanistic notions of the good. It is not necessary for Muslims to accept that non-belief might yield a good life for anyone, or for the humanist to conceive of a life believing in God to be in any way fulfilling. In fact, such perspectives would undermine the notion that different values might be entirely conflicting. Despite this, Gray is clear that universal religion cannot integrate with value pluralism. He states:

> Strong pluralism denies that universal values are fully realizable only in one way of
> life. It repudiates the central claim of universalist religions to have identified the right
> or best way of life for all humankind. It rejects the secularization of this claim in the
> universalist moralities of the Enlightenment.[564]

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[562] Piscatori, James: *Islam in a World of Nation States*, pg. 49
[563] Mendus, Susan: "Saving One's Soul", pg. 235
[564] Gray, John: "Where Pluralists and Liberals Part Company", pg. 23

Gray concludes that "[s]trong pluralism is a subversive truth. It cannot coexist with the articles of faith of any universalist creed".[565] It is here that a certain paradox opens up in his argument. If value-pluralism represents a truth for all of humankind in a manner which Enlightenment rationality or religion cannot be, then there must be an addendum to value pluralism along the line that: 'there are innumerable conceptions of the good, except those versions of the good that consider themselves applicable to all mankind'. Rather, the conflict between universal and plural values is necessarily one of the many ways in which different values are incompatible; it does not subvert the 'truth' of value pluralism, rather it affirms it in the most emphatic manner. However, what is to say that different states, operating along different conceptions of the good, say Muslim and Christian values, would not enter into conflict over these competing and, for the sake of argument, incommensurable values? Put another way, how can societally derived values, which are pluralistic in that they are multiple, non-harmonious and incommensurable, avoid conflict?

Isaiah Berlin, in the tradition of value pluralism sketched out above, is clear that such conflict *cannot* be avoided; "[b]ut the collisions, even if they cannot be avoided, can be softened".[566] He argues that "[t]he best that can be done, as a general rule, is to maintain a precarious equilibrium that will prevent the occurrence of desperate situations".[567] Gray, building on the ideas of Stuart Hampshire, refers to this equilibrium as *modus vivendi*, the willingness to 'agree to disagree'.[568] Such a perspective is explicitly considered in IR only very marginally. The reason for this, in broad strokes, is related to the third criteria of Gray's strong value pluralism: *value-incommensurability*. The idea that values cannot be rationally compared runs against the grain of "subject-centred reason that dominates much of 'modernist' [IR] language and forms of social organization and understanding".[569] Richard Ashley and R.B.J. Walker talk of such a perspective representing "disciplinary standards",[570] though this is perhaps an unfair characterisation of IR, which has seen the proliferation of

[565] *Ibid.*, pg. 35
[566] Berlin, Isaiah: *The Crooked Timber of Humanity: Chapters in the History of Ideas*, Hardy, Henry ed. (London: Pimlico, 2003), pg. 17
[567] *Ibid.*, pg. 17-18
[568] Gray, John: "Where Pluralists and Liberals Part Company", pg. 17
[569] Rengger, Nicholas: " Postmodernism and Political Theory", pg. 562
[570] Ashley, Richard and Walker, R.B.J. : "Conclusion: Reading Dissidence/Writing the Discipline: Crisis and the Question of Sovereignty in International Studies", (*International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 3, 1990), pg. 373

much interpretivist scholarship in recent years.[571] Never the less, the focus on rationalism and "the progressive 'ordering', or rendering knowable, of the chaotic, untamed, and previously unknown world"[572] has been a recurring feature of the theories engaged with in this thesis; a focus which MacIntyre suggests stems from the European Enlightenment.[573] While Realism and the English School paradigms in IR inherit elements of that problematic Enlightenment tradition, they might also be exemplars of value pluralism, as will be discussed briefly now, dealing first with the English School.

The English School's distinction between solidarism and pluralism in some senses mirrors the debate between value pluralism and universalism, but is deficient in two regards. Initially there is the problematic way the English School accounts for religious rationality which, as discussed in chapter 2, *Islam in International Relations Scholarship*, is a problem shared with much IR theory. If value pluralism holds true, then the critique of a secular, state based order is not so damning as to seek to change that system in totality. Instead, it is the claims of universal applicability of that system that cannot be defended, particularly in the face of societally based, religious rationale. This much has been well stated in the current and preceding chapters. The second broad deficiency with the English School's pluralist/solidarist divide, despite its apparent similarity with the discussion of value pluralism and universalism, is that it presumes the existence of an international society, perhaps even a global one, and that the units of this society are states. This is very much related to notions of universal applicability mentioned in the first point, but the friction between religious articulation, in the form of the *umma*, and the ways in which such a conception might interact with the state system is a less abstract example of the ways in which competing values or conceptions of the good might collide.

Regarding Realism, it shares with the English School the criticisms briefly highlighted above (indeed the English School draws much of its epistemology from Realism); Realism both does not deal with religion on its own

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[571] Least of which can be seen in the saliancy of the constructivist approach. See, for example: Checkel, Jeffery: "The Constructivist Turn"; Copeland, Dale: "The Constructivist Challenge"; Frost, Mervyn: *Ethics in International Relations*; George, Jim: *Discourses of Global Politics*; Wendt, Alexander: *Social Theory of International Politics*

[572] Swatuk, Larry, "The Brothers Grim: Modernity and 'International' Relations in Southern Africa", pg. 167

[573] MacIntyre, Alisdair: *After Virtue*, pg. 39

merits, and overemphasises the state's actor qualities in the international sphere. However, notions of power are silent on conceptions of the good, so in some way Realism allows any number of socially embedded values to be articulated; a Muslim nation need not accept or respect the values of another nation to coexist and tolerate it using the virtues of *realpolitik.* Crucially however, the idea of *realpolitik* relies on a notion of abstracted rationality, similar in its construction if not content, as the abstract liberal rationality discussed in the previous chapter; it implies a rationality that applies to any people, anywhere, anytime. Such a notion runs counter to the communitarian, Aristotelian perspective which Normative Political Islam leans on to give agency to its particular blend of the divine and the mundane. If the communitarian construction of values does not apply to the power politics of Realism, which are in fact universal, what other universal value competitors might appear and justify themselves by abstract reasoning; one can argue back to premises (justice/Marxism vs. survival/Realism, for example), but cannot make a moral argument about the premises, as "each premise employs some quite different normative or evaluative concept".[574] So Realism, like liberalism, might qualify as weak value pluralism, as neither endorse *value-incommensurability*; for Realism and liberalism value conflicts are rationally resolvable by the yard stick of personal freedom or *realpolitik* respectively.

IR has not engaged sufficiently with value pluralism, though there is great potential in that concept for giving credence to concepts and peoples otherwise marginalised by Enlightenment rationality. If poststructuralism is often caricatured for its ability to deconstruct, and its inability to propose alternatives, this thesis suggests that more work is taken to integrate the value pluralism in IR. Chantal Mouffe has already made inroads into this debate from a poststructural perspective. She diagnoses the contemporary ills of IR when writing that:

> It is the fact that we are now living in a unipolar world where there are no legitimate channels for opposing the hegemony of the United States which is at the origin of the explosion of new antagonisms which, if we are unable to grasp their nature, might indeed lead to the announced 'clash of civilizations'. The way to avoid such a

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[574] *Ibid.*, pg. 8

prospect is to take pluralism seriously instead of trying to impose one single model on the whole world.[575]

Referring to Mouffe's position as agonistic pluralism, Elaine Stratford et al note that such a position "acknowledges the productive potential of conflict",[576] and this thesis argues that more work is done to recognise the necessity and, hopefully, the value of conflict in society and in IR. Value pluralism presents an epistemology that synthesises well with that of poststructuralism, namely, a profound scepticism of universalism. As such, it might represent a method through which poststructuralism might construct alternative understandings of IR, much as Mouffe has demonstrated with agonistic pluralism, rather than focus on critique or fall into relativism. Jim George and David Campbell some 20 years ago referred to postmodernism as representing "the great skepticism (but *not* cynicism) of our time". Without a focus on the constructive elements made possible by the poststructural position on ontology in IR, poststructuralism may well be considered cynical. It is hoped that value pluralism and Normative Political Islam relieve some of that cynicism. But even if it is accepted that poststructuralism is not the great cynicism of our time, it undoubtedly remains sceptical (of universalisms), and scepticism, as highlighted earlier in the chapter, does not sit well with the certainty of Muslim belief in God. It is here that the chapter turns to the final question of the chapter: the conundrum of the postmodern Muslim.

Certain in scepticism? Postmodernism and Islam

Reconciling belief in the transcendental and the use of societally derived values was highlighted as problematic in the previous chapter. It was explained that this problem broadly mapped onto the way in which sovereignty is constructed in Normative Political Islam, namely, the dual contract method. In the first contract explicit deference to God by way of the *shahadda* was required, which was then supplemented by a second contract which built upon the split between the transcendental Islam-as-faith and the societally derived Islam-as-politics.

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[575] Mouffe, Chantal: *On The Political,* (London: Routledge, 2005), pg. 115
[576] Stratford, Elaine, Armstrong, Denbeigh, and Jaskolsji, Martina: "Relational Spaces and the Geopolitics of Community Participation in Two Tasmanian Local Governments: A Case for Agonistic Pluralism?", (*Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, Vol. 28, No. 4, 2003), pg. 469

This second contract was between the Muslim and government, but being distinct from Islam-as-faith, the nature of this government could take numerous forms. Chapter 3 argued that the rational, exoteric tradition, much maligned in Sunni Islam, provided the tools to derive Islam-as-politics from these differing social circumstances in a way the theological guidance of Islam-as-politics was unable to do so. Applying a hierarchy between the two contacts further distinguished Islam-as-politics from Islam-as-faith, but the distinction appears more and more arbitrary when considering what it is that binds individual Muslims in an *umma*. Recalling the 'paradox' offered in the last chapter, it was noted that it is the transcendental fealty towards God and the Prophet that forms the basis of the solidarity between Muslims in the *umma*; at the same time, however, it is the transcendentalism in IR which was criticised in the first place to make space for alternative conceptions of IR, such as that posed by Normative Political Islam. Applying the same poststructuralist and anti-foundational critique to the transcendentalism of the *umma* and belief in an absolute God will in turn negate the argument forwarded thus far. In this final section the chapter will attempt to resolve this problem, and ask if it is possible to be a poststructuralist Muslim?

Framing the question another way it is necessary to quote at length Soroush when he says:

> [A]s far as I can understand and articulate, in the classical period, or in the medieval period, we had an age of the dictatorship of religion, the dictatorship of religious institution. Then in the phase of the Enlightenment, we had the age of the dictatorship of reason. That was the age of modernity, properly speaking the dictatorship of reason. Now in the post-modern era, there is no dictatorship whatsoever; there is no god, according to the post-modern philosophers. Reason has become much more humble. Religion has become much more humble, and now it is time for these two to reconcile, to be recombined, to come to terms with each other. That is the post-modern era, and that is the occasion, the opportunity to try to reconcile again a humbler reason and a humbler religion.[577]

For Soroush, the discussion should revolve around boundaries, acknowledging the limits of both religion and reason. This much has already been achieved in

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[577] Soroush, A in: Esposito, John, "Summary of the Open Debate", pg. 166-167

the attempted fusion of Islamic exotericism and communitarianism. The problem for this thesis is one step removed from Soroush's outline. Where Soroush identifies postmodernism, the notion that in the contemporary world one is unable to make universal claims, as the explanation for reason's 'humbling', this thesis instead based its argument on poststructuralism. Recalling the differentiation between postmodernism and poststructuralism made in chapter 2, the latter is not rooted in a specific time or event, but rather is an ontological statement about the nature of knowledge. Such a position on ontology was used in the first step of the analysis and the critique of dominant IR paradigms and their treatment of religion; so, for this thesis the problem is that poststructuralism does not result in a humbler religion and humbler reason, as Soroush claims postmodernism does. Rather, poststructuralism severely cripples religion's capacity to inform the behaviour of its adherents, leaving reason somewhat intact (in so far as it is reason that is 'doing' the humbling in the first place). As Bryan Turner comments, poststructuralism "threatens to deconstruct all theological accounts of reality into mere fairy tales or mythical grand narratives".[578]

Turner notes a similar problem with regards to competing universal religions when he asks how religions like Christianity and Islam are able to be contained in the same environment.[579] His observation needs amending as this section proceeds; the question is how to contain, within a single global environment, universal religious positions and pluralist positions. It is in fact value pluralism, as summarised earlier in the chapter, that is capable of containing both absolutism and particularism in the same global environment. More than a global environment however, for this thesis the question is how to maintain these two positions of universalism and particularism *within the same tradition*, namely, Normative Political Islam. As the discussion continues first the incompatibility between Islam-as-faith (represented in the first contract of Normative Political Islam's notion of sovereignty) and poststructuralism must be outlined more clearly.

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[578] Turner, Bryan: *Orientalism, Postmodernism and Globalism*, pg. 92. Turner here uses the term postmodernism, which we have replaced with poststructuralism to clear up the conceptual confusion around the two terms, as outlined in Chapter 2.
[579] *Ibid.*, pg. 78

Tibi is emphatic that a rejection of universality cannot be compatible with Islamism; he quips that "[t]he Western cultural relativists overlook the totalitarian face of Islamism and Islamists hide their contempt for these "unbelievers". An alliance of strange bed fellows emerges".[580] Tibi is caricaturing popular conceptions of Islamism or otherwise is grossly essentialising 'Islamism'. The idea that Islamism, what has been referred to in this thesis as Islam-as-politics, is inherently totalitarian is not substantiated given the separation of Islam-as-faith and Islam-as-politics; the latter is not necessarily committed to any particular political persuasion. Islam-as-politics, if societally derived, *might* develop a totalitarian leaning, just as European political traditions emanating from the Enlightenment's 'modernity' *might* do. As Sami Zubaida states in rebuttal to such essentialism, it was not written in Germany's history that Hitler would take control of the state, and similar arguments are offered by Zubaida for the Russian revolution and the Iranian revolution.[581]

Amr Sabet articulates the incompatibility with Islam-as-faith with more clarity when he states that poststructuralism "perpetrates an act of *violence* against Islam, both in its revelatory *and* jurisprudential/thought components".[582] Sabet believes that there can be only a singular Islam, "referring to the universe and cosmology of revelation as uniquely represented by primary texts and scriptures".[583] Such a position, as commented on consistently in previous chapters, neglects the role that human interpretation plays in the understanding of source texts. However, it is also true that heterogeneous interpretations of these same source texts do not take away from the feeling and belief of Muslims in the singular truth of their revelation. Whether a Muslim feels they are correctly interpreting the source texts, or acknowledge that their interpretation is a fallible endeavour (as Sunni orthodoxy acknowledges), the core *belief* is that there *is* a divine truth to be understood somewhere, somehow. To deny this in the analysis of the thesis is perhaps the act of violence that Sabet refers to, equivalent to accusing Muslims of believing in fairy tales and myth.

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[580] Tibi, Bassam: *Islam's Predicament with Modernity*, pg. 60
[581] Zubaida, Sami: *Islam, the People & the State*, pg. 138
[582] Sabet, Amr: *Islam and the Political*, pg. 181
[583] *Ibid.*, pg. 187

Acknowledging the Truth of Islam, or Essentialising a Diverse Tradition?

There needs to be a more nuanced take on the idea of Islam's 'truth' than the current discussion, especially of Islamism, allows for. This thesis is not the first, and indeed will not be the last, to grapple with the truth of Islam's revelation (Islam-as-faith) versus the diverse social construction of Islam's practice (Islam-as-politics). The chapter will therefore be drawing on the positions of many others as it proceeds to its conclusion.

The guiding question here is whether one is capable of accepting the truth of Islam, or if doing so requires us to essentialise diverse readings of the faith. Otherwise put, is essentialism creating a myth of a singular Islam, a type of Orientalist understanding of the other's belief system? Turning to Zubaida once more, his definition of essentialism claims that Islamic societies share some core elements which "determine or limit the possibilities of their social and political development".[584] It can be observed, from the outside in, that there is certainly a 'core' element that Muslims share with each other, a kind of lowest common denominator that gets lower the wider one defines 'Muslim'. For example, the lowest common denominator amongst Sunni Muslims is not as low as the commonality between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims. Additionally it can be understood, from the inside out, that the Muslim's belief in God and the Prophet (at the very least) is a common, perhaps defining feature of Muslims.

As argued previously this 'core', however it is defined or conceived, by the believer or the analyst, is related to the transcendental elements of Islam and *not* to the political possibilities of Muslim societies or Muslim minorities. John Esposito describes positions that would claim that any such limitations exist as romanticism, he states that "[t]he sacrosanct nature of tradition in Islam, based upon a romanticized understanding of Islamic history… serves as an inspirational reality for traditionalists and, at times, as a major obstacle for modern reformers".[585] Rather than any theological or divine community of believers, Zubaida asserts that "diverse Islamic currents tend to converge, at least in sentiment, on one front: anti-imperialism, and specifically antipathy to the US".[586] Such a cynical take on the nature of Islamic unity is capable from the analyst's point of view, from the outside looking in, so to speak. What this

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[584] Zubaida, Sami: *Islam, the People & the State*, pg. 122
[585] Esposito, John: *Islam and Politics*, pg. 315
[586] Zubaida, Sami: "Islam and the Politics of Community and Citizenship", pg. 24

view does not consider is the perspective of the believer, and this is something the chapter will return to shortly. As far as a loosely defined 'core' of Islam relates to politics historically, Piscatori notes that such a core has not prevented ideological, communal, political and territorial divisions among the wider Muslim community.[587] In light of this historical record, one cannot assume that the likes of Tibi and Sabet can be referring to a common truth of Islam that encapsulates or limits social or political development, as per Zubaida's definition of essentialism, as these arguments are so easily refuted. What, then, is the 'truth' that poststructuralism commits violence against Islam?

Ali Hassan Zaidi is emphatic with regards to the question posed above, he states that:

> [E]mpirical diversity does not mean that Islam or modernity simply dissolve into a plurality of local Islams and local modernities. Despite the multiplicity of Islamic discourses and despite their polysemic origins, there remains, not an undifferentiated unity, but a holism to those discourses which, although dismissed by anti-essentialist theorists, remains palpable for believers.[588]

The notion of holism is important, and the chapter continues to use it to talk about what has until now been referred to as an ill-defined unity/truth/core/lowest common denominator of Islam. The holism that Zaidi refers to as palpable for believers, is the one that he argues is incompatible with poststructuralism as it "compels Muslims to deprive the Qur'an of its ontological status as a sacred revelation".[589] If the thesis has arrived at a term that refers to the truth of Islam, that is, holism as experienced by the believer, then this term now needs to be unpacked and the relationship between poststructuralism and holism needs to be examined further to enquire as to whether they are indeed as conflictual as Zaidi argues.

If holism refers explicitly to the transcendental aspect of Islam, as it is experienced by believers, then what exactly is referred to by 'the transcendental'? Previously the thesis has referred to the *shahadda* as

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[587] Piscatori, James: *Islam in a World of Nation States*, pg. 45-46
[588] Zaidi, Ali Hassan: "A Critical Misunderstanding: Islam and Dialogue in the Human Sciences", (*International Sociology*, Vol. 22, No. 4, 2007)
[589] *Ibid.*, pg. 426

representative of the holism experienced by believers, that is, the declaration of belief in God and the Prophet Muhammed. God and prophethood is clearly a commitment to the transcendental, but the interpretation of that commitment is not clear. The chapter posits that the concept that satisfies the idea of the holism, the transcendental and universal, is *moral realism*. David Boucher describes moral realism as a "point of view that maintains that there are objective standards of truth and morality, independent of what we may wish or think".[590] In reference to Islamic holism and the *shahadda*, these objective standards would derive from God and the Prophet. Moreover, however, it is not just the case with Islamic holism that there is an objective standard, but that this standard is universal. Poststructuralism, as already demonstrated, would contest this Islamic holism as the notion of universal objective standards is one that has been criticised throughout this thesis, especially with regards to secularism in IR, for example. As Boucher goes on to conclude:

> [W]hen natural law and its derivative rights are deemed to be universal, their application is often oppressive. They are the expression of the mind of a culture, the articulation of the values, and morality expected of its member. When applied to other cultures, their members are almost invariable likely to fall below those standards in crucial respects.[591]

The problems of oppression elaborated on with regards to universal Enlightenment rationality and its relationship to colonialism are equally applicable to a universal natural law encapsulated in Islamic holism. However, the extent of this universality is questionable, as there is a measure of interpretation needed to derive values from the Islamic source texts. There is certainly not enough in Islam-as-faith to derive Islam-as-politics without needing to turn to human ingenuity and turn away from any such holism. The chapter argues therefore that the distinction between Islam-as-faith and Islam-as-politics remains intact. With this distinction in mind the holism of Islam is encapsulated in Islam-as-faith, leaving Normative Political Islam and other variants of Islam-as-politics to embrace anti-foundational concepts without hesitation. Even with this being so the paradox of the poststructural Muslim has not been escaped, as

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[590] Boucher, David: *The Limits of Ethics in International Relations*, pg. 1
[591] *Ibid.*, pg. 11

the thesis is still relying on the poststructural Muslim to neatly keep their anti-foundational critiques in a separate conceptual 'box', never allowing it to meet the holism of their faith for fear of deconstructing it into fairy tale and myth.

Bounding Expectations: Islamic Rationalism and Poststructuralism

Moral realism, the objective criteria by which one measures their actions is, in the common interpretation of Muslims, dictated by God. However, one of the major breaks made by this thesis with a majority of other analyses of (Sunni) political Islam, is to bring rationalism *back in*. Recalling the exoteric tradition, *al-iman*, of the Islamic revelation (in conjunction with the theology of *al-islam* and the gnosticism of *al-ihsan*), which was discussed at length in chapter 3, one can glimpse at a way out of this poststructural predicament.

The rationalism of Sunni Islam's exoteric tradition is an attempt, perhaps, at taking morality *out* of God's hands and away from the transcendentalism of moral realism. In this way, God's prohibition against killing, for example, is not the reason that killing is frowned upon. Rather, because killing is bad, God forbade it.[592] The implication of this move is that there are *multiple* ways to arrive at the conclusion that killing is bad, one of which could be rationalism, and another could be unquestioning adherence to God's commandments. Therefore, bringing rationalism back in undermines the position of Sabet and others who bemoan poststructuralism's act of violence against monotheistic religions. Such positions are undermined as the thesis is not denying that there is a universal notion of value; indeed, the *shahadda* says there *is* a universal value vested in the belief in God and the Prophet. Rather, by accepting the limits of human beings in *comprehending* this value one can accept plural derivations of this singular belief. As Aziz al-Azmeh states eloquently, "[t]here is no guarantor for the validity of translation and interpretation [of Islamic source texts]".[593] If there is no guarantor for differing interpretations (a position eerily similar to the poststructuralist perspective of morality), does this necessarily mean that there is therefore no transcendental or objective truth? In order to give credence to the believer's sense of holism, the thesis must answer no; not having the capacity to comprehend a truth does not mean that such a truth does not exist. As Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im states:

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[592] Rahman, Fazlur: *Islam*, pg. 104
[593] Al-Azmeh, Aziz: *Islam and Modernities*, pg. 109

> The separation of Islam and the state [comparable to the distinction between Islam-as-faith and Islam-as-politics] does not prevent Muslims from proposing policy or legislation stemming from their religious or other beliefs… Citizens must be able to make counterproposals through public debate without being open to charges about their religious piety.[594]

In making this move towards moral realism the thesis has allowed for the holism of Muslims, but has not quite settled the paradox of the poststructural Muslim; while the Muslim is happy, the poststructuralist may well be frustrated by the concession that an objective truth can exist.

However, the poststructuralist cannot claim emphatically that no objective truth exists. To do so would in itself be a truth claim, abstracted from people's experiences. Rather, truths do exist, but geographically and temporally limited in their applicability. The issue in accepting any notion of moral realism, in this case the Muslim's belief in God, is not the belief per say, but the idea that such belief is applicable to all peoples, universally. In bringing rationalism back into conceptions of Islam-as-politics, the thesis is able to avoid making such grandiose claims about universal applicability; the rationalism explored in chapter 3 demanded an acceptance of societal (and therefore geographical and temporal) limitations in any construction of Islam-as-politics, Normative Political Islam included.

Here a subtle difference can be marked between the philosophical level at which the thesis has been using poststructuralism, and the more empirical level at which the thesis invoked value pluralism to manage conflict between competing values. Belief in God and the anti-foundationalism of poststructuralism are *incommensurable values*, they are rationally unresolvable. The poststructural Muslim paradox centred on the idea that a Muslim wanting to articulate Islam-as-politics in the way done with Normative Political Islam cannot be expected to wield a poststructural critique of IR whilst not using that critique on the transcendental elements of their own faith. *Embracing value pluralism is the solution to this paradox*. Poststructural critique does not mean accepting there is one way to construct value: poststructuralism. When critiquing

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[594] An-Naim, Abdullahi Ahmed: *Islam and the Secular State*, pg. 7-8

Enlightenment philosophy the thesis is not stating that it is worthless, but that the worth it carries has boundaries to its applicability. Likewise, the rationality encapsulated by the Enlightenment, or the holism of Muslim belief, places boundaries on poststructuralism, preventing it from assuming the role of a meta-narrative, or a poststructural ontology. The term ontology does not fit well with poststructuralism, especially arrived at through Foucault. A poststructural ontology would imply a truth claim about the nature of knowledge, when in fact poststructuralism makes no such claim to knowledge, but rather is sceptical of any such claims. Recalling the same argument outlined in chapter 2, where the 'poststructural position on ontology' was employed to avoid confusion over a poststructural ontology, here the chapter purposefully uses the term ontology to describe an unbounded poststructuralism, a poststructural ontology therefore becomes representative of Soroush's "dictatorship of reason".[595]

Accepting difference however, "cannot serve as a blanket concession to the immutability of religious sentiment",[596] doing so would be to return to "the dictatorship of religious institution".[597] Rather, these two positions hold each other in check. The fact one must accept the boundaries between these different traditions is a tacit acceptance that they are not compatible with each other. As per the dictums of value pluralism, they *will* clash, and that does not mean it is unreasonable to ask Normative Political Islam to use poststructuralism to make a space for itself in IR while holding onto a belief in God. Likewise, it is not unreasonable to ask poststructuralism to hold onto an anti-foundational perspective while accepting the holism of Islam-as-faith. Both examples accept the limits of their respective claims on knowledge. That an individual can neatly demarcate between the two in their conception of the world is in fact testament to the competing values individuals hold within themselves at any one time, and by way of conclusion the chapter turns to Stuart Hampshire's explanation of this point:

> The perpetual clash and friction of divisive attachments and of memories and of
> emotions in conflict seems to me to make up the internal life of a person, and the

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[595] Soroush, A in: Esposito, John, "Summary of the Open Debate", pg. 166
[596] Pasha, Mustapha Kamal: "Islam and the Postsecular", (*Review of International Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 5, 2012), pg. 1049
[597] Soroush, A in: Esposito, John, "Summary of the Open Debate", pg. 166

perpetual clash and friction of ethnic loyalties and religious loyalties and cultural loyalties and class loyalties make up the life and development of societies, cities and states.[598]

Conclusions

Building upon the articulation in the previous chapter of communitarian IR and the *umma*, this chapter argued that value pluralism has the capacity to manage competing value claims in the international sphere. Value pluralism escapes the pessimism of *Clash of Civilisations* and instead sees the necessity of, and perhaps virtue of conflict. If Islam-as-politics (as well as other notions of politics) are derived from societal setting, regardless of the pretensions to abstract universalism some political ideologies might have, then it is reasonable to expect some of them to conflict with each other. It is not, however, a reductionist explanation about Islam's 'violent nature' that ensures this conflict. Rather, values within and without different traditions will always conflict with each other.

Resolving this conflict is a false errand, as it is only achieved by the dominance of one set of values at the expense of the other. This chapter instead argued that the management of conflict and the 'softening of blows' is a more appropriate response, both for Normative Political Islam's interaction with other polities and vice versa. Such a position requires the acknowledgement not only that values might conflict, but that they are also irreconcilable by logic or rational argument. This addendum to value pluralism distinguishes it from 'softer' forms such as liberalism, wherein diversity of values are respected unless those views challenge the underlying logic of liberalism (individual autonomy provides examples that often pit the Ottoman *millet* system against modern notions of liberal tolerance).

When translating value pluralism to IR, it was noted that the English School's pluralist/solidarist divide represented a similar schism as that between pluralism and universalism respectively. However, like liberalism, this is a 'soft' version of pluralism, as it relies on the universalism of Enlightenment rationality, relegating religiously derived politics to some 'backward' era, as is endemic in

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[598] Hampshire, Stuart: "Liberalism: The New Twist", pg. 47

IR theories at large. Secondly, the notion of international society which the English School leans on also universalises the institution of the state into a necessary building block of IR. Realism, like the English School, also seems placed to enact value pluralism in IR as the *realpolitik* it propounds appears somewhat 'value neutral'. However, it shares problems much in the same way that the English School does with regards to religious rationality and the primacy of states.

The chapter argued that poststructuralism with its anti-foundational perspective is well placed to overcome the short comings outlined above, but is often caricatured as being overly focused on critique and unable to pose alternatives. Poststructuralism is fertile ground for the enacting of and theorising about value pluralism, and it is in their combination that pluralism in IR can be developed. Chantal Mouffe's concept of agonistic pluralism was argued to encapsulate the opportunity that the synthesis of poststructuralism and value pluralism hold for IR.

With all the above being so, the chapter was left to consider the way in which the hypothetical Muslims of Normative Political Islam could possibly embrace poststructuralism in the critique of IR, while not applying the same critique to meta-narratives in their own tradition, namely, belief in God. Turning once more to value pluralism to 'resolve' this issue, the chapter argued that it is, in fact, unresolvable. As such, the incoherence between poststructuralism and belief in God represents another example of irreconcilable values, and so synthesising the two is not a reasonable proposition. Rather, managing the friction that these conflicting positions represent is a way to keep each of them in check, preventing poststructuralism from accidentally becoming a meta-narrative in its own right, otherwise put: 'there is no truth except the truth of the fact that there is no truth'. Likewise, the conflict between poststructuralism and belief in God stops the latter from overwhelming the sensibilities of believers into forgetting the societal basis that different notions of value derive from. For these hypothetical Muslims, such a position can even affirm the Qur'anic commandment: "Do not exceed the limits of your religion".[599]

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[599] *Qur'an*, 4:171

Conclusion

The thesis has contributed to the debates in IR scholarship that attempt to frame 'religious resurgence' not as the problem of stubborn religions that refuse to accept 'enlightened' values, but as the problem of a discipline that arbitrarily removes religion from the realm of politics. Barak Mendelsohn summarises the above position when he writes that:

> Unlike the international society, which allows for multiple 'truths' to coexist, in a religious order the course of authority is one, and it demands exclusivity, denying the existence of any other truth but its own (although religious doctrines might acknowledge that other faiths hold partial truths).[600]

While Mendelsohn is referring here to radical Islam, it can also be noted that he quite problematically asserts that international society allows for multiple truths to exist, while this thesis has argued that there are certain truths that remain 'beyond' debate. Mendelsohn's example of distinguishing 'self' from 'other' is indicative of claiming that 'civilisation' rests in certain institutions (Westphalia), so delegitimising alternative voices. That is not to say that one cannot, or should not criticise radical Islam but, as this thesis shows, criticising radical Islam on the grounds of exclusivity is somewhat akin to holding double standards, as the Westphalian system also demands exclusivity with regards to secularism and liberal individualism.

The thesis also contributes to the literature on political Islam, filling a gap in regards to how political Islam might operate with regards to IR. Previous work, as noted in chapter 1, deals primarily with defining what political Islam is *not*, rather than what it is *for*. In this respect the thesis has studied the topic using the inverse approach of Piscatori's *Islam in a World of Nation States*; where Piscatori attempted to show what Islam could offer IR by way of compatibility, this thesis has attempted to show what IR can offer Islam, focusing on two primary instances where it falls short: secularism and liberal individualism.

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[600] Mendelsohn, Barak: "God vs. Westphalia: Radical Islamist Movements and the Battle for Organising the World", (*Review of International Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 3, 2012), pg. 596

The introduction to this thesis presented 3 secondary research questions, each moving towards answering the overall thesis question, which will be answered in the final section of this conclusion. Currently, each of the secondary research questions will be summarised and answered, one at a time.

The first secondary research question asked how extensive the guidance offered in Islamic source texts is with regards to IR. Chapter 1 examined the theological guidance offered in this regard and found it to be somewhat lacking. This is not to the detriment of the Islamic source texts, which offer themselves as guides rather than hard and fast rules for behaviour. Instead, as shown in chapter 3, it would be rather unreasonable to find guidance on all aspects of life in only one aspect of revelation (theology). In this respect bringing *al-iman*, exotericism, into the analysis allows one to 'fill the gaps' of theological guidance on politics. So while the guidance in Islamic source texts is somewhat ambiguous, that guidance still finds a place in the form of the first of Khadduri's dual contracts that legitimate Muslim sovereignty. If such theological guidance is interpreted as the lowest common denominator of faith, most likely represented by the *shahadda,* declaration of faith, then this would represent the first contract, between the individual and God. The second contract uses exotericism to derive an agreement between the individual and temporal ruler/institution/constitution.

The second of the secondary research questions asked what challenges the *umma*, as an alternative to the state, poses to IR. Chapter 1 discussed in detail the many IR treatments of the Middle East to discern how they treat religion. Uniformly, these studies did not interpret religion on its own terms, but rather subsumed it into pre-existing categories of analysis. Constructivism, however, displayed an *ability* to interpret religion as the believer might do, and for this reason it was adopted as a method to articulate Normative Political Islam. The primary problem that the politics of the *umma* represents to IR, indicative of political Islam in general, is the fact that it is explicitly religiously derived (to some degree). IR has a secular leaning which, as seen in chapter 1, stems from Enlightenment philosophy and ideas of inexorable progress. In this way, Westphalia created the international system, and all this was the effort of

European character, innate, and spontaneous,[601] categorised as 'pioneering agency' in Hobson's non-reductive Orientalism. So, when bringing alternative concepts of IR to the fore, these alternatives challenge dominant narratives in the discipline, asking that these narratives be re-evaluated. When such re-evaluation is completed the 'immutable' nature of concepts like secularism are removed, allowing for engagement with, in this case, Normative Political Islam.

Chapter 4 gave shape to this engagement in the form of community, and here noted the second primary challenge to IR, liberal individualism. Liberal individualism implies an abstract, universal rationality. Translated to IR, this abstract rationality sees assumptions about the nature of shared values, that is, a shared *normative* world, on the basis of *empirical* findings. For example, the fact that different states affirm and participate in the state system, for the English School, is taken as read that these states share the same values when it comes to IR. In fact states may affirm the system, even the notion of an international society, based on different assumptions, deriving from their societal circumstances; European states may want to encourage the idea of universal values in IR as this obfuscates the fact that many of these values derive from Europe's own history. At the same time, the circumstances at the end of colonialism may have led former colonies to advocate for their independence through the language of states, not because of the universal applicability of that concept, but because the language of states was the most powerful at the time with regards to achieving independence. When universal applicability is challenged, values that derive not abstractly, but from within the societies which individuals live, are put forward as an alternative. Chapter 5 saw that this alternative can lead to competing values that cannot be adjudicated between. That being so, a final challenge to IR is the idea of value pluralism, challenging the purpose of IR to not to be the spread of *one* form of international politics, but the management of various, *competing* value claims. In this sense communitarian, value pluralist IR resembles the pursuit of 'order/pluralism' in the schema of the English School's pluralist/solidarist divide. With all three challenges to IR put forward, secularism, liberal individualism and pluralism, it can be noted that they are not *specific* to Islam. Each challenge represents on going debates in IR and as such Normative Political Islam, and

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[601] Hobson, John: *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics*, pg. 196

Islam-as-politics more generally, is not an anomaly on the fringes of the discipline, but could help explore these debates as they become more central to how IR is perceived.

The final secondary research question asked to what extent there is a synthesis between poststructural and Islamic critiques of IR. Chapter 2 outlined the preoccupation of Islamic critiques on 'modernity', during and after colonialism. Accounting for what Muslim leaders increasingly viewed as the stagnation of the Islamic world, led some to embrace the principles and political models of their former colonial masters, while others critiqued these principles and sought to achieve prosperous societies without embracing the principles that found their origin in the European Enlightenment. Advocating the latter of these approaches, the *umma*'s challenges to IR, secularism, universal rationality and value pluralism, as outlined above, derive from this 'Enlightenment rationality'. In this way, the discussion about political Islam, and the discussion over 'religious resurgence' more generally, stems from the contestation of what constitutes political modernity. These themes are very similar to those of poststructuralism, which also sees the truths that became embedded in society after the Enlightenment as problematic, a "straightjacket"[602] on social science. Poststructuralism uses scepticism of meta-narrative and universal truths to argue that behind the 'universals' of the Enlightenment project lie a reliance on a specific set of values derived from specific historical and cultural traditions. In this way, there is nothing inherently legitimate in the spread of these values into foreign traditions. What the above affirms is that there is significant synthesis in the two approaches of poststructuralism and Islamic critique; the former disregards the 'universal' philosophy of the Enlightenment, allowing the latter to articulate its notion of 'modernity' in its own way. This does not mean that engagement between competing value systems is redundant simply because they are understandably different. In fact, the acknowledgement that there exist different, legitimate value systems is the very reason engagement and dialogue is so important.

Enlightenment philosophy would claim that there is but one way for societies to develop, translating broadly to positivism in IR. Accepting a more interpretivist understanding of the world, as presented in this thesis, there must

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[602] Knutsen, Torbjorn: *A History of International Relations Theory*, pg. 274

be dialogue and an attempt to *understand* the other, rather than seek to *convert* them. In this sense, chapter 5 demonstrated that the synthesis between poststructuralism and Islam comes to an end after the 'common opponent' of Enlightenment philosophy is dealt with, as both have the potential to harbour a missionary zeal with regards to delegitimising the other, based on claims to universal truths (belief in God, and the insidious 'there is no truth but the fact that there is no truth'). At this point value pluralism was sought out once more to make sense of how both positions could be held in the same theory, that is, for Normative Political Islam to use poststructural critique on the structures of the international sphere but not use that same critique on its own universal truth claims. While there is synthesis in the critique of IR, the construction of alternatives leaves poststructuralism and Islam at loggerheads. However, given the fact that there are values that are not rationally resolvable (such as those vested in poststructuralism and Islam respectively), it is no incoherency to embrace the two simultaneously; it is in fact an *affirmation* of value competition, in the abstracted realm of second order theory within which the thesis is located.

To What Extent is an Islamic Notion of International Relations Tenable?

The IR of Normative Political Islam, as rudimentary as it may appear in the pages of this thesis, clearly disturbs the equilibrium of IR more generally; it is derived from communal sources, not abstract reason; it centres on rule over people, not rule over territory; it blurs the boundary between sacred and profane. Moreover, the friction outlined throughout the course of this thesis serves to reinforce the idea that what might otherwise be accepted as value neutral propositions do in fact have a societal heritage, specifically a European/Christian heritage. This thesis has dealt with two such propositions, secularism and liberal individualism, concepts which have been 'universalised', and are expected to find purchase in a diverse range of settings outside of the environment those concepts were created. Secularism and liberal individualism are reflected in the way IR is conceived, and as such, limit the exploration of any alternative conceptions.

One such alternative conception is an Islamic one. To talk of 'Islam' as a political persuasion or ideology is somewhat of a misnomer. There is in fact a

distinction between Islam-as-faith and Islam-as-politics, the latter being the broad umbrella under which Normative Political Islam is oriented. Accepting this distinction, Normative Political Islam was developed not from theological guidance, but by reviving the exoteric tradition of Sunni Islam. This exotericism leads to the articulation of the *umma* through communitarian principles, which found strong resonance with the exoteric tradition discussed. Embracing communitarianism in IR however, proved more difficult than its synthesis with Normative Political Islam. Articulating community, Islamic or otherwise, challenges dominant interpretations of who the actors are in the international sphere. Such a challenge is not new, and it is not uniquely posed by the *umma*; transnationalism and debates over the EU, for example, serve to show a comparable debate about the actors in IR. However, while community can be vested in and across states in an international organisation (such as the EU or the OIC), it is not the only way to conceive of community, and indeed is not the dominant way Muslims conceive of the *umma*.

In pushing back the 'universal' concepts of liberal individualism and secularism in IR, it was demonstrated that there is considerable compatibility between Islamic and poststructuralist critiques. However, this compatibility is limited by the fact that these two perspectives can and will move to critique each other once the universalisms of IR are made more humble. While such competition (between Islam and poststructuralism) might be viewed as zero-sum, in that one must inevitably win out over the other, the thesis has shown that this is not necessarily the case. Inevitable conflict is in fact a normal and expected component of one's existence, and managing these conflicts is more important that resolving them (as some conflicts cannot be resolved).

The IR of Islam-as-politics, therefore, is one that is only achievable given an internal shift in Muslims who might wish to constitute it; the need to revive exotericism is paramount, as it furnishes Muslims with the tools necessary in constructing notions of politics that at once abide by broad theological guidance, but can be sensitive to and take their cue from the societies they wish to represent. As such, it allows Islam-as-politics, and Normative Political Islam specifically, to abide by the "conviction that there is no need for a detour through the labyrinths of Western history, before one can arrive at a vision of

the good life and a just order".[603] Moreover, IR practitioners require a more reflexive understanding of the ideas they use to explain non-Western examples, identifying where the tools they are using are not as value neutral or 'objective' as otherwise assumed. Questioning the limits of one's own tradition helps to better appreciate the traditions of others, finding, in this instance, a more satisfactory place for religion in IR. That is not to say that every instance of religious reasoning need be accepted at face value, but rather it must be understood when religion is playing a more substantial role than simply an articulation of 'culture' or 'socio-economic factors'. Only with this double move, one on the side of political Islamists, and the other on the side of those who try to explain their behaviour, do Islamic, or indeed any number of other alternative notions of IR, have any chance of being conceived. Once conceived though, as Normative Political Islam has been in the pages of this thesis, the case for articulating it is another, separate project. This separation points back to the distinction between first and second order theorising, for while the thesis has made a conceptual space for Normative Political Islam, the empirical space has yet to be explored; such exploration is the task of future, first order theory.

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[603] Sayyid, Bobby: *A Fundamental Fear*, pg. xxii

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