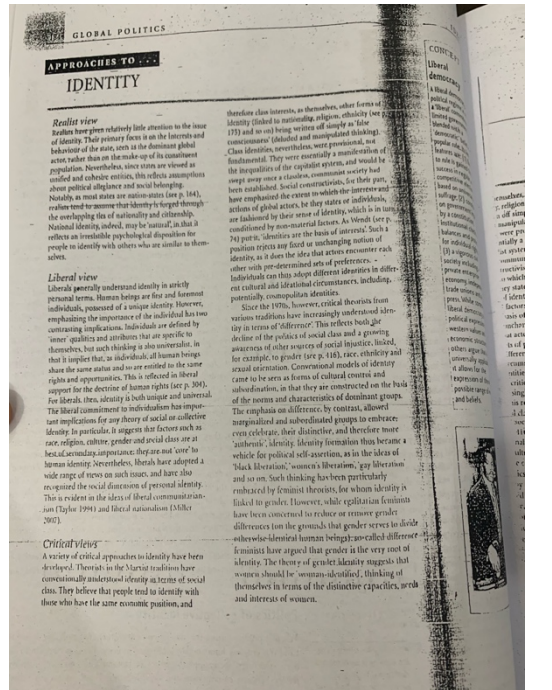
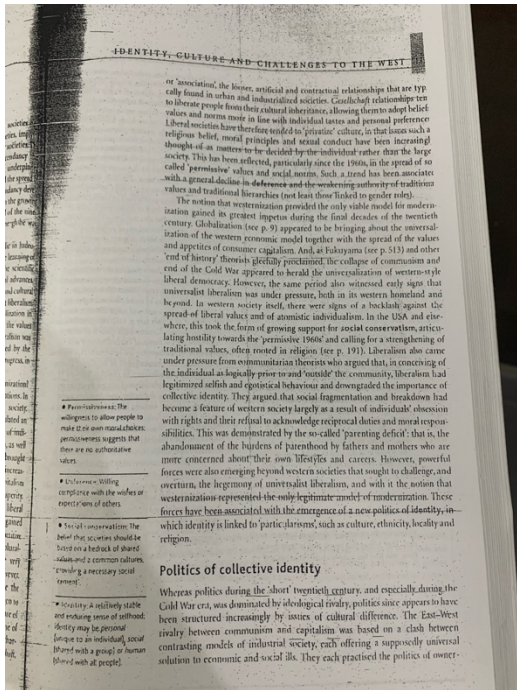
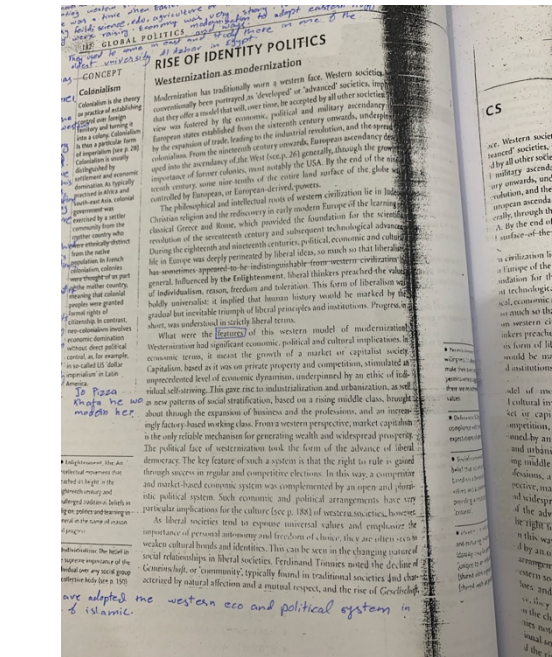
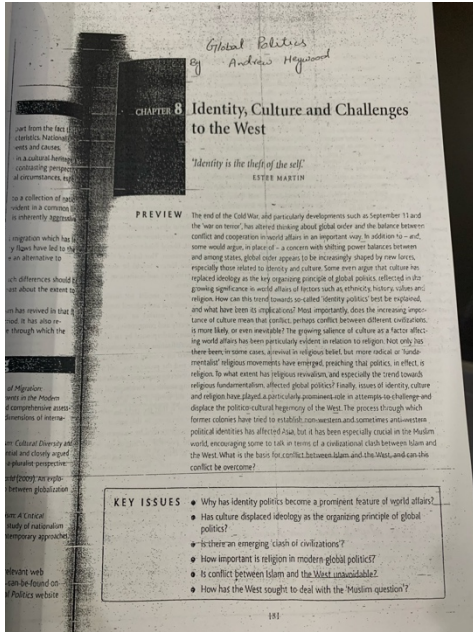


WEEK 12: National Identity and Integration



CONCEPT

Liberal Democracy

Liberal democracy is a political regime in which government is based on universal adult suffrage...

ships, capitalism standing for private property based on market competition, while communism stood for collective ownership based on central planning...

However, identity politics is also a source of liberation and empowerment. It promises that social and political advancement can be achieved through a process of cultural self-assertion aimed at cultivating a 'pure or authentic' sense of identity...

Marcus Garvey (1887-1940)



Jamaican political thinker and activist, and an early advocate of black nationalism. Garvey was the founder, in 1914, of the Universal Negro Improvement Association...

Identity politics: who are we?

Identity politics is an orientation towards social theorizing and political practice, rather than a coherent body of ideas with a settled political character...

Why has there been an upsurge in identity politics since the final decades of the twentieth century? As discussed later in the chapter, the phenomenon is often associated with postcolonialism...

Second, subordination can be challenged by reasserting group identity. This is the sense in which identity politics is a process of political-cultural self-assertion...

However, the failure of developing-world socialist regimes, particularly those with Soviet-style central planning systems, to eradicate poverty and deliver prosperity meant that postcolonial nationalism was increasingly remodelled in local cities...

Why has there been an upsurge in identity politics since the final decades of the twentieth century? As discussed later in the chapter, the phenomenon is often associated with postcolonialism...

CONCEPT

Culture

Culture, in its broadest sense, is the way of life of a people, their beliefs, customs and practices. Sociologists and anthropologists tend to distinguish between 'high' culture and 'low' or 'popular' culture...

added powerfully to such tendencies. Communist rule had merely fossilized ethnic and national loyalties by driving them underground, meaning that ethnic and religious nationalism became the most natural vehicles for expressing anti-communism or anti-Sovietism...

A third factor explaining the growth of identity politics was globalization. In a sense, identity politics can be seen as a form of resistance against the cultural impact of globalization. As discussed in Chapter 6, globalization has been associated with a process of homogenization, through which a relatively narrow common culture has tended to be adopted the world over...

Is cultural conflict inevitable?

The rise of identity politics is often seen as part and parcel of a broader phenomenon: the growing salience of culture as a factor affecting international relations and world affairs. Some, indeed, believe that since the end of the Cold War culture has effectively displaced ideology as the organizing principle of global politics...

Identity politics: who are we?

changing nature of world order as global terrorism was seen as a symptom of the emerging clash between Islam and the West. Nevertheless, the extent to which the emerging clash between Islam and the West has encouraged the rise of identity politics would be exaggerated, as it certainly would be to suggest that a clash of civilizations would be the primary force in global politics...

However, the failure of developing-world socialist regimes, particularly those with Soviet-style central planning systems, to eradicate poverty and deliver prosperity meant that postcolonial nationalism was increasingly remodelled in local cities...

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Second, subordination can be challenged by reasserting group identity. This is the sense in which identity politics is a process of political-cultural self-assertion...

IDENTITY, CULTURE AND CHALLENGES TO THE WEST

However, though partial in its account of the emerging twenty-first century global order, the idea of a 'clash of civilizations' has been effective in drawing attention to important trends in global politics. These include the growing political importance of culture in an apparently de-ideologized world and the power of the backlash against globalization in particular, and against western global hegemony in general. As such, it provides a context that helps to explain the strong importance of religious movements in the post-Cold War world. In addition, Huntington helpfully underlines the capacity of cultural difference to generate political conflict, even though this may not always be perceived as a natural, rather than political, process. Nevertheless, Huntington's theories are often more flexible and sophisticated than his critics allow. He recognized, for example, that a global war involving the 'core' states of the world's major civilizations is highly improbable (that is not possible), and he acknowledged that the prospects of a global inter-civilizational conflict are linked to the shifting balance of power amongst civilizations and their 'core' states, especially the rise of China as the 'biggest player in the history of man'. He also recognized that civilizational conflict can be managed by political intervention. For example, he advocated that the West pursuing democracy promotion (see p. 264) on the grounds that this would merely inflame non-western cultures and encourage them to form anti-western alliances.

RELIGIOUS REVIVALISM

Religion and politics

The most prominent aspect of the growing political importance of culture has undoubtedly been the resurgence of religion and the rise of religious movements. In Huntington's (1998) view, religion is the 'central defining characteristic' of civilizations, in which case the 'clash of civilizations' effectively implies a clash of religions. Such a view is difficult to sustain, however. Not only are there considerable parallels and overlaps amongst the world's religions: for example, Buddhism developed out of Hinduism, and Christianity, Islam and Judaism, the religions of the book, are rooted in a common belief in the Old Testament of the Jews—but the end-orientation in different societies and cultures varies considerably. For instance, although Judeo-Christian beliefs are clearly a component of the Western civilization (one that is nevertheless shared with Hindus and Latin American civilizations), it is not necessarily the defining feature. Greco-Roman influences and the related tradition of Enlightenment rationalism have been equally important. Ideas such as social equality, toleration, critical rationality and democracy are thus key elements in western culture, but none of these can be traced directly to Christianity, indeed, one of the features of western, particularly European societies is their secularism, the USA, where about a quarter of voters define themselves as 'born-again Christians', being an outgrowth of the decline of the so-called 'secularist' tradition. The decline of the advance of secularism, nevertheless, does not necessarily imply the decline of religion. Rather, it is concerned to establish a 'proper' sphere and role for religion, in line with the liberal belief in a so-called public/private divide. It aims to fence religion into a private arena, in which people are free to do as they like, leaving public life to be organized on a strictly secular basis. Freedom of religious

Secularism The belief that religion should not regulate public affairs, usually reflected in the desire to separate church from state.

Secularism The view that the theory that modernization is invariably accompanied by the victory of reason over religion and the displacement of spiritual values by secular ones.

GLOBAL POLITICS

Debating... Is there an emerging 'clash of civilizations'?

The 'clash of civilizations' thesis suggests that twenty-first century global order will be characterized by growing tension and conflict, but that the conflict will be cultural in character, rather than ideological, political or economic. But how compelling is the thesis?

YES

The rise of culture. Culture is destined to be the primary determinant of 21st-century global politics because, as Huntington put it, 'If we civilization, what have the end of the Cold War, ideology has faded in significance and globalization has weakened the state's ability to generate a sense of civic belonging, while there is little evidence of global or cosmopolitan identities becoming a reality in such a context, people and nations are confronted by the most basic of human questions: who are we?' This forces them to define themselves increasingly in terms of ethnicity, religion, language, history, and geography. From this, Huntington argues, will emerge a new world order in which nations will ally to the support of their 'kin countries', and political trends such as secularism and nationalism will give way to 'Islamization', Hinduization, 'Buddhization' and so on.

Cultural conflict. A stronger sense of cultural belonging cannot lead to tension and conflict. This is, in fact, because different cultures and civilizations are homogeneous, they establish quite different sets of values and meanings, in effect, different understandings of the world. However, despite their different understandings, they do, in fact, have much in common. Second, there is an irreconcilable tendency for people to see who they are in the light of those who are not them, or their civilization versus those of others.

Civilizational tensions. Certain trends in which Huntington sees tensions have undoubtedly generated tension, and the world is increasingly polarized in multiple and complex civilizational characters. These include the long-term decline of the West, and, more specifically, the fading of US hegemony; the rise of 'Asian' superpowers, the emergence of a new Asia and especially the rise of China; and the emergence of Islam, driven by a population explosion in a still unstable Islamic world. Tensions between China and the USA, and between Islam and the West thus have a significant civilizational dimension.

Complex and fragmented civilizations. Huntington's notion of culture and civilization can be criticized as simplistic at best. In the 'clash of civilizations' thesis, cultures are portrayed as rigid and hierarchically ordered, giving rise to a narrow association between civilization and a set of traditions, values and seemingly unchanging sets of civilizational understandings. The idea of 'Islamic' conflict between civilizations is based on a homogeneous or 'tectonic' view of civilizations. In practice, civilizations are not homogeneous and unified blocs, but are, rather, complex and often open to external influence. For instance, the notion of an 'Islamic civilization' or a 'western civilization' fail to take account of either the 'western' civilizational and social divisions within each of political, cultural and social divisions within each civilization, or the extent to which Islam and the 'West' have influenced, and continue to influence, one another.

Cultural harmony and peaceful coexistence. The idea that cultural difference always and inevitably leads to conflict is a highly questionable claim. Cultural and political antagonisms in highly complex and unstable states are often the product of internal tensions, not of differences between states from the same, or different, civilizations. Moreover, there is considerable evidence that people from different cultures, religions or ethnic origins have been able to live together in relative peace and harmony, for instance, in the Balkans during the Ottoman era. Finally, when cultures or cultural groups clash this is less a reflection of 'natural' antagonisms or rivalries, and more a manifestation of deeper political and social factors, linked to the distribution of power or wealth.

Trends towards cultural homogenization. The 'clash of civilizations' thesis offers, at best, a one-sided account of contemporary cultural trends. In particular, it ignores the extent to which globalization, and other forces, have already blurred cultural differences in many parts of the world. Although the 'one world' image advanced by global hyper-globalizers and liberal internationalists may be naive, there are nonetheless strong indications towards economic interdependence and integration which at least counter-balance, and perhaps contain, any centrifugal tendencies that civilizational rivalry may generate.

Global politics The study of international relations and the interaction of states and other actors in the international system.

Religion A system of beliefs, practices, and rituals that are based on a sacred or supernatural power or deity.

Secularism The belief that religion should not regulate public affairs, usually reflected in the desire to separate church from state.

IDENTITY, CULTURE AND CHALLENGES TO THE WEST

CONCEPT

Religion

Religion, in its most general sense, is an organized community of people bound together by shared beliefs of belief, assuming some kind of 'supernatural' power, transcending this context may refer to anything from a belief in a deity, to a more 'secular' or 'worldly' experience of personal liberation, or the Buddhist concept of nirvana. There are major differences between monotheistic religions (Christianity, Islam and Judaism), which have a single, or limited number of sacred texts and a clear authority system, and polytheistic, non-theistic and nature religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Daoism and so on), which tend to have no sacred texts, more decentralized and more pluralized structures.

Religion is a belief system that is based on a sacred or supernatural power or deity. It is a system of beliefs, practices, and rituals that are based on a sacred or supernatural power or deity. It is a system of beliefs, practices, and rituals that are based on a sacred or supernatural power or deity.

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GLOBAL POLITICS

Ayatollah Khomeini (1900-89)

Iranian cleric and political leader. The son and grandson of Shi'a clergy, Khomeini was one of the foremost scholars in the major theological centre in Qom until he was expelled from Iran in 1964. His return from exile in 1979 sparked the Islamic Revolution, leading the Ayatollah (literally 'gift of Allah') as the supreme leader of the world's first Islamic state until his death. Breaking decisively with the Shi'a tradition of clerical non-involvement in politics, Khomeini's worldview was rooted in a division between the oppressed, understood largely as the poor and excluded of the developing world, and the oppressors, seen as the twin Satans of the USA and the USSR, capitalism and communism. Islam thus became a theo-political project aimed at regenerating the Islamic world by ridding it of occupation and corruption from outside forces.

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Religion A system of beliefs, practices, and rituals that are based on a sacred or supernatural power or deity.

Secularism The belief that religion should not regulate public affairs, usually reflected in the desire to separate church from state.

IDENTITY, CULTURE AND CHALLENGES TO THE WEST

CONCEPT
Religious fundamentalism
Religious fundamentalism derives from the latter-day fundamentalism training. The core idea of religious fundamentalism is that religion cannot be broken to the pieces (where, but finds its highest and proper expression in the politics of popular mobilization and social regeneration, although often related to religious fundamentalism should not be equated with scriptural literalism, as the fundamentalists are often exercised through a process of 'dynamic' interpretation by a charismatic leader. Religious fundamentalism also differs from ultra-orthodoxy, in that it advances a programme for the moral and political regeneration of society in line with religious principles, as opposed to a retreat from corrupt social society into the purity of faith-based communal living.

tion of scriptural literalism (although this remains a feature of certain forms of fundamentalism). Religious fundamentalism is thus characterized by a rejection of the distinction between religion and politics. Politics, in effect, is religion. This implies that religious principles are not restricted to personal or private life, but are seen as the organizing principles of public existence, including law, social conduct and the economy as well as politics. Although some-what fundamentalist tendencies can be identified in all the world's major religions – Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Protestant Sikhism – others argue that they tend to be confined to Islam and Protestant Christianity, as only these religions traditionally have the capacity to throw up comprehensive programmes of political renewal, albeit with very different characters and ambitions.

It is difficult to generalize about the causes of the fundamentalist upsurge that has occurred since the late twentieth century because, in different parts of the world, it has taken different doctrinal forms and displaying contrasting ideological features. What is clear nevertheless, is that fundamentalism arises in deeply troubled societies, particularly societies afflicted by an actual or perceived crisis of identity. Ruthven (2005) thus emphasized that fundamentalism is driven by a search for meaning in a world of growing doubt and uncertainty. A variety of developments have helped to generate such doubt and uncertainty. Three factors in particular have strengthened the fundamentalist impulse in religion by contributing to such crises: secularization, globalization and postcolonialism. Secularization has contributed to a decline of traditional religion and a weakening of established morality. In that sense, fundamentalism represents a moral protest against decadence and hypocrisy; it seeks to restore 'rightful' order and re-establish the link between the human world and the divine. Fundamentalism can therefore be seen as the antidote to moral relativism.

Religious fundamentalism may also be intrinsically linked to the advance of globalization. As traditional societies are disrupted by increased global flows of people, goods, ideas and images, religious fundamentalism may emerge as a people, goods, ideas and images, religious fundamentalism may emerge as a counter-revolutionary force, a source of resistance to the advance of amorality and corruption. This helps to explain why fundamentalists generally possess a Manichaean world-view, one that emphasizes conflict between 'light' and 'darkness' of good and evil. If we are a chosen people acting according to the will of God, 'they' are not merely people with whom we disagree, but a body actively subverting God's purpose on Earth; they represent nothing less than 'the forces of darkness'. Political conflict, for fundamentalists, is therefore a battle or war, and ultimately either the believers or the infidels must prevail. Finally, the impact of postcolonialism helps to explain why, although fundamentalism can be found across the globe, its most potent and influential manifestations have been found in the developing world in general and the Muslim world in particular. Postcolonial societies inherited a weakened sense of identity, compounded by a debilitating attachment to western values and institutions, particularly among elite groups. In such circumstances, religious fundamentalism has been particularly attractive both because it offers the prospect of a non-western, and often specifically anti-western, political identity, and because, particularly since the decline of revolutionary socialism in the 1970s, it articulates the aspirations of the urban poor and the lower middle classes.

GLOBAL POLITICS

CHALLENGES TO THE WEST

CONCEPT
Postcolonialism
Postcolonialism is a term used to describe the political, literary and cultural conditions characteristic of newly independent states. It is a term used to describe the political, literary and cultural conditions characteristic of newly independent states. It is a term used to describe the political, literary and cultural conditions characteristic of newly independent states.

The structures of western political domination over the rest of the world were challenged many years before its cultural and ideological domination was called into question. Anti-colonialism emerged in the inter-war period, but it reached its high point of influence in the post-1945 period, as the growing strength of other European empires collapsed in the face of the growing strength of independence movements. In a sense, the colonizing Europeans had taken with them the seeds of their own destruction. The doctrine of nationalism that had inspired European nation-building in the nineteenth century, and which had provided the basis for the reconstruction of Europe after WWI, which had inspired the most anti-colonial movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America were attracted to the same principle of national self-determination that had provided the basis for the reconstruction of Europe after WWI. Although liberal and sometimes anti-western political ideas and traditions, postcolonialism nevertheless takes a variety of forms. These range from Gandhi's (1908-1948) attempt to use Indian nationalism with an ethic of non-violence and self-sacrifice, ultimately rooted in Hinduism, to forms of fundamentalism, most significantly Islamic fundamentalism.

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IDENTITY, CULTURE AND CHALLENGES TO THE WEST

CONCEPT
Confucianism
Confucianism is a system of ethics and politics developed by Confucius (551-479 BC) in the state of Lu. It is a system of ethics and politics developed by Confucius (551-479 BC) in the state of Lu. It is a system of ethics and politics developed by Confucius (551-479 BC) in the state of Lu.

Third World (see p. 36) perspective on global political, economic and cultural relations. This 'third-worldist' defined 'third' in contrast to the first world (USA and Western Europe) and second world (USSR and Eastern Europe). It is a more militant form of third world politics nevertheless emerged from the Tricontinental Conference held in Havana in 1966. For the first time, this brought Latin American, Caribbean and African nations together to discuss a common 'tricontinental' perspective on global politics that draws inspiration from indigenous religions, cultures and traditions, postcolonial theory tends to be highly diverse. It has been reflected in Gandhi's political philosophy which was based on non-violence and self-sacrifice that was ultimately rooted in Hinduism. In this view, violence, the doctrine of the sword, is a western imposition upon India. By contrast, the Martinique-born French revolutionary theorist, Frantz Fanon (1925-61), emphasized the link between anti-colonialism and violence. He argued that decolonization, in effect, requires a new species of man to be created, and that this is largely achieved by the psychological burden of colonial subjugation is rejected through the cathartic experience of violence. Edward Said (see p. 197), perhaps the most influential postcolonial theorist, examined how Eurocentric values and theories served to establish western cultural and political hegemony over the rest of the world, especially through the device of Orientalism. However, critics of postcolonialism have argued that in turning its back on the western intellectual tradition it has abandoned progressive politics and been used, too often, as a justification for traditional values and authority structures. This issue has been particularly controversial in relation to the tension between cultural rights and women's rights.

Asian values
The idea that Asian culture and beliefs may constitute an alternative to western ones gained momentum during the 1980s and 1990s, fuelled by the emergence of Japan as an economic superpower and the success of the so-called Asian tiger economies – Hong Kong, South Korea, Thailand and Singapore. This position was outlined most clearly by the Bangkok Declaration of 1993, when Asian state representatives from Iran to Mongolia, meeting in preparation for the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, issued a bold statement in favour of what they called 'Asian values'. While not rejecting the idea of universal human rights, Asian values drew attention to supposed differences between western and Asian value systems in support of an argument in favour of taking cultural difference into account in formulating human rights. Particularly keen advocates of this view included Mahatma Mohamad and Lee Kuan Yew, at that time the prime ministers, respectively, of Malaysia and Singapore. From this perspective, human rights had traditionally been constructed on the basis of culturally-based, western assumptions. Individualism had been emphasized over the interests of the community; rights had been given preference over duties; and civic and political freedoms had been extolled above socio-economic well-being. The political freedoms had been given preference over duties; and civic and political freedoms had been extolled above socio-economic well-being. The political freedoms had been given preference over duties; and civic and political freedoms had been extolled above socio-economic well-being.

Focus on ...

Cultural rights or women's rights?

Are women's rights essentially a western concept? Which identity is most legitimate: culture or gender? Fundamentalists and others often argue that cultural rights in general (linked also, for example, to multiculturalism) and opposition to the West in particular are often invoked to defend or justify violations of a wide range of women's rights, thereby strengthening patriarchal power. This has been particularly evident when attempts have been made to reconfigure culture and politics on the basis of religion. Ruthven (2005), for instance, identified one of the key features of religious fundamentalism as the tendency to control, and limit, the social role of women, and to act as a patriarchal protest movement. The values and norms of Muslim societies have drawn special criticism in this respect, based on practices ranging from female dress codes and polygamy through to so-called 'honour killings'. Not only do such cultural beliefs and practices block the advance of universal human rights, but, by oppressing women, they may hold back social and economic development. Increasingly, women's rights activists are more prone to violence.

However, some postcolonial feminists have argued that women's rights should be understood within a cultural context, recognizing that issues of gender equality cannot be seen as divorced from matters of race, religion and ethnicity. In this view the western idea of gender equality based on supposedly universalist liberalization often fails women because it is based on a model of female identity that abstracts women from the local social and cultural context that gives their lives meaning and purpose. Gender equality both devalues women's traditional roles as home-makers and mothers and exposes them to the same and pressures of the public sphere. In Muslim countries, such as Iran, Pakistan, Sudan and, to some extent, Turkey, forms of 'Islamic feminism' have thus emerged, in which the imposition of Sharia law and a return to traditional moral and religious principles have been portrayed as a means of enhancing the status of women, rather than by the spread of western attitudes and values. From this perspective, the veil and other dress codes, and the exclusion of women from public life, have been viewed by some Muslim women as symbols of liberation.

The idea of Asian values was dealt a damaging blow by the Asian financial crisis of 1997-98. This occurred not only because it cast doubt over the image of 'rising Asia', but also, and more seriously, because so-called Asian values were sometimes held to be responsible for the crisis in the first place. In this view, Asian economies had faltered because of a failure fully to embrace market principles such as entrepreneurialism, competition and 'rugged' individualism, and so on. In this view, the failure had stemmed from aspects of Asian culture, particularly an emphasis on hierarchy, authority, duty and loyalty. Nevertheless, the rise of China and, to a lesser extent, India has revived interest in the idea of Asian values, although in its modern form it tends to be oriented more specifically around the alleged strengths of Chinese civilization and particularly of Confucianism. However, the general notion of Asian values has also attracted criticism. For some, it simply serves as an excuse for the survival of authoritarian rule and absence of liberal democratic reform in many parts of Asia. The key Asian value, from this perspective, is political passivity, an unwillingness to question authority based on a trade-off between economic well-being and political freedom. The notion of an 'Asian civilization' from which a distinctive set of values can be seen

Edward Said (1935-2003)

Jerusalem-born US academic and literary critic, Said was a prominent advocate of the Palestinian cause and a founding figure of postcolonial theory...

...device has also been criticized in line with wider concerns about the 'lectonic' model of civilizations. Not only does Asian culture encompass a wide range of national traditions and a mixture of religions (Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and so on)...

Islam and the West

The rise of political Islam, and particularly 9/11 and the advent of the 'war on terror', created the image of a deep, and perhaps civilizational, clash between Islam and the West...

Nature of political Islam

Islam is the world's second largest religion and its fastest growing. There are between 1.2 and 1.5 billion Muslims in the world today...

Islam is concentrated geographically in Asia and Africa; it is estimated, for example, that over half the population of Africa will soon be Muslim...

Fundamentalism in Islam does not mean a belief in the literal truth of the Koran, for this is accepted by all Muslims, and in that sense all Muslims are fundamentalists. Instead, it means an intense and militant faith in Islamic belief...

Although the revival of Islamic fundamentalism can be traced back to the 1920s, and particularly the founding of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in 1928...

The Taliban, who ruled Afghanistan, 1996-2001, developed out of the Mujahideen groups. Islamists have also seized power, usually temporarily...

Africa: it is estimated that over half the population of Africa will soon be Muslim...

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ISLAMISM

Islamism: religion as politics?

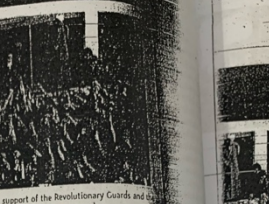
Islam (also called 'political Islam', 'radical Islam' or 'jihad Islam') is a controversial term with a variety of meanings. It is usually used to describe a political ideology as opposed to simply a belief in Islam...

Society should be reconstructed in line with the religious principles and ideals of Islam. Islamism is thus often portrayed as 'political Islam'...

First, the source of Islamist militancy has been traced to within Islam itself. Such a view is in line with the 'clash of civilizations' thesis, in that it implies that there is a basic incompatibility between Islamic values and those of the liberal-democratic West...

Iran's 'Islamic Revolution'

Events: On 1 February 1979, Ayatollah Khomeini returned to Tehran from exile in Paris to be welcomed by a crowd of several million Iranians. This occurred after an escalating series of popular protests had forced the Shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, to flee the country (16 January 1979)...



Significance: Iran's Islamic Revolution has had profound implications, domestically across the Middle East and for wider Islamic-western relations. Khomeini's Shi'a Islamic regime initially focused on a 'jihad' approach to reorganizing and reshaping Iran's domestic and foreign policy priorities...

relies on the support of the Revolutionary Guards and the Basij (paramilitary religious volunteers). The Iranian Revolution has also served to reconfigure the politics of the Middle East and marked a crucial moment in the emergence of militant Islam...

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IDENTITY, CULTURE AND CHALLENGES TO THE WEST

Second, reurgent Islamism has been portrayed as a specific response to particular historical circumstances. Bernard Lewis (2004), for example, argued that the Muslim world is in crisis largely because of the decline and stagnation of the Middle East and the sense of humiliation that has therefore gripped the Islamic and more specifically Arab world. This decline stems from the collapse of the once powerful Ottoman empire and its carve-up by the UK and France after WWI, as well as the sense of powerlessness that has been engendered by the protracted Arab-Israeli conflict. Furthermore, the end of colonialism in the post-1945 period brought little benefit to the Arab world, both because Middle Eastern regimes tended to be inefficient and corrupt, and because formal colonialism was succeeded by neo-colonialism, particularly as US influence in the region expanded. In the final decades of the twentieth century, population growth across the Arab world, combined with economic stagnation, growing foreign interference and the failure of Arab socialisms, meant that Islamic ideas and creeds attracted growing support from amongst the young and the politically committed.

Third, Islamism has been interpreted as a manifestation of a much broader liberal movement that emerged from the apparent failure of liberal society in the aftermath of WWI. The significance of WWI was that it exploded the optimistic belief in progress and the absence of reason, fueling support for darker, anti-liberal movements. In this light, political Islam shares much in common with fascism and communism, in that each of them promises to rid society of corruption and immorality and to make society anew as a 'single blocklike structure, solid and eternal'. Bonura and Magalhães (2004) portrayed Islamism as a form of liberalism. From this perspective, western society is characterised by individualism, secularism and relativism; it is a mechanical civilization organized around greed and materialism. Occidentalism, in contrast, offers the prospect of organic unity, moral certainty and politico-spiritual renewal. Such ideas were first developed in the writings of counter-Enlightenment thinkers in Germany in the early nineteenth century, and they helped to fuel European fascism and Japanese imperialism in the inter-war period. However, in the modern world they are most clearly articulated through the ideas of political Islam.

However, Islamism does not have a single doctrinal or political character. The two most influential forms of political Islam have stemmed from Wahhabism and Shi'a Islam. Wahhabism (or, as some of its supporters prefer, Salafism) is the official religion of Islam in Saudi Arabia; the world's first fundamentalist Islamic state. Its origins date back to the eighteenth century and an alliance between the supporters of a particularly strict and austere form of Islam and early figures in the Saudi dynasty. Wahhabism seeks to restore Islam by purging it of heresies and modern inventions, amongst other things, they ban pictures, photography, musical instruments, singing, yellow and television, and celebrations of Muhammad's birthday. Wahhabi ideas and beliefs had a particular impact on the Muslim Brotherhood, whose influence spread from Egypt to Jordan, Sudan and Syria, being most uncompromisingly expressed by its leading theorist, Sayyid Qutb (see p. 203). The Egyptian writer Muhammad Abd al-Salam Faraj, who was implicated in the assassination of President Anwar Sadat and executed in 1982, developed a 'revolutionary model of 'Quibism', in which jihad, as the 'neglected obligation' or 'forgotten duty', was understood literally as the struggle

Occidentalism: A rejection of the material and political substance of the West, particularly as shaped by the Enlightenment and the engagement, another term for anti-westernism.

KEY EVENTS The Arab-Israeli conflict

- 1880s Jewish immigration into Palestine begins and Zionist ideology emerges.
- 1917 The Balfour Declaration, at the beginning of the British mandate (1917-47), established UK support for the creation of a 'Jewish national home' in Palestine.
- 1947 The UN partition plan proposes the creation of Arab and Jewish states in Palestine, rejected by the Arabs.
- 1948 Declaration of the State of Israel precipitates the 1948 Arab-Israeli war which leads to many Palestinians becoming refugees in surrounding Arab countries.
- 1956 The Suez crisis leads to an Israeli invasion of the Sinai peninsula, although it later withdraws under US and international pressure.
- 1967 Israel defeats Egypt and Syria in the Six Day War, leading to the occupation of the Gaza Strip (from Egypt), the West Bank (from Jordan) and the Golan Heights (from Syria).
- 1973 Israel defeats Egypt and Syria in the Yom Kippur War, after a surprise joint attack on the Jewish day of fasting.
- 1978-79 The Camp David Accords, negotiated by the USA, lead to the 1979 Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty.
- 1982 Israel attacks Lebanon in response to Palestinian terrorist attacks, retreating from most Lebanese territory by 1985.
- 1987-93 The First Intifada (rebellion) witnesses a Palestinian uprising against the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and the Palestinian Declaration of Independence in 1988.
- 1998-91 The Gulf War involves Iraqi missile attacks on Israeli cities and Israel's nuclear facilities.
- 1993-2000 Oslo Accords negotiated between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), preparing the way for the establishment of a self-governing Palestinian authority.
- 2000-05 The Second Intifada marks a resurgence of Palestinian protest and militancy.
- 2006 Clashes between Israel and Hezbollah lead to Israeli attacks on Beirut and much of southern Lebanon and a Hezbollah bombardment of northern Israeli cities.
- 2007-08 Israel launches full-scale invasion of Gaza Strip; after a ceasefire negotiated with Hamas breaks down.

IDENTITY, CULTURE AND CHALLENGES TO THE WEST

Sayyid Qutb (1906-66)

Egyptian writer and religious leader, sometimes seen as the father of modern political Islam. The son of a well-to-do farmer, Qutb was radicalized during a two-year study visit to the USA, which instilled in him a profound distaste for the materialism, immorality and sexual licentiousness he claimed to have encountered there. Qutb's worldview, particularly his rejection of the barbarism and corruption that westernization had inflicted on the world, with a return to strict Islamic practice in all aspects of life offering the only possibility of salvation. Qutb's primary targets were the westernized rulers of Egypt and other Muslim states. Imprisoned under Nasser in 1954-64, he was eventually tried for treason and executed.

for Islam against God's enemies. Such militant ideas influenced Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda, as well as the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and the subsequent Taliban insurgencies in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Shi'a fundamentalism stems from the quite different temper and doctrinal character of the Shi'a sect as opposed to the Sunni sect. Shi'as believe that divine guidance is about to re-emerge into the world with the return of the 'hidden imam', or the arrival of the Mahdi, a leader directly guided by God. Such ideas of revival or imminent salvation have given the Shi'a sect a messianic and emotional quality that is not enjoyed by the traditionally more sober Sunnis. This was evident in the mass demonstrations that accompanied Iran's Islamic Revolution, and it has also been apparent in popular agitation in Iran against the USA and western influence, as well as the campaigns against Israel by Hezbollah and Hamas.

It would nevertheless be a mistake to suggest that all forms of Islamism are militant and revolutionary. By comparison with Christianity, Islam has generally been tolerant of other religions and rival belief systems, a fact that may provide the basis for reconciliation between Islamism and political pluralism. This can most clearly be seen in relation to the political developments in Turkey, where tensions have existed between the military, committed to the strict secularist principles on which the state of Turkey was established, and a growing Islamist movement. The Justice and Development Party (AK) won power in 2003, advancing a constitutional form of Islamism. AK has attempted to balance moderate conservative politics based on Islamic values with an acceptance of Turkey's secular democratic framework. Rather than choosing between East and West, it has tried to establish a Turkish identity that is confident in being part of both. A key aspect of this compromise is continuing attempts by Turkey to gain membership of the EU. What is unclear, however, is whether constitutional Islamism has long-term viability: does an acceptance of human rights and liberal-democratic principles necessarily mean that politics must be decoupled from religion? Other trends towards cross-cultural understanding have included the growing influence of the satellite television network Al Jazeera (see p. 204). Although Al Jazeera gained greatest prominence after September 11 through providing a platform for the statements of Osama bin Laden and other figures within al-Qaeda, it has also done much to ensure more impartial reporting of events in the Middle East and helps to counter the image of western media hegemony.

GLOBAL POLITICS

GLOBAL ACTORS

AL JAZEERA

Type: Satellite television network • ESTABLISHED: 1996 • LOCATION: QATAR

Al Jazeera (meaning 'the peninsula' or 'island' in Arabic) was launched in 1996 as an Arabic-language satellite television network. Its creation stemmed from the shutting down of the BBC World Service's Arabic television station. About 120 of its journalists migrated to a new station being set up in the Gulf Emirate of Qatar. Al Jazeera was launched with a substantial loan from the Emir and has continued to be generously subsidised by the Qatari government. It quickly became the largest and most controversial Arab television network in the Middle East, offering news coverage 24 hours a day from around the world. In the coverage of the 2003 uprising in Iraq that broke out in the Iraqi occupied territories gave it a heightened prominence in the Arab world. However, it was in the aftermath of September 11 that Al Jazeera achieved worldwide recognition, by broadcasting taped communications from Osama bin Laden and an interview with top planners of the 9/11 attacks at a secret address in Karachi in 2002. The growing significance of the network was evident in US attacks on Al Jazeera offices. First in Kabul in November 2001 and then in Baghdad in April 2003, the latter leading to the death of the journalist Lucio Alvarez. In 2006, Al Jazeera launched a new English language channel (Al Jazeera English), receiving provincial journalists from the BBC, CNN, Sky, Reuters and others and broadcasting from centres in Dubai, London, Kuala Lumpur and

Washington. Claiming up to 50 million viewers, the Arabic Al Jazeera channel from the BBC in its reach, with an estimated 100 million households having access in Al Jazeera English.

Significance: The impact of Al Jazeera has to be understood in the context of the wider growth in media power, with the media sources being portrayed as the world's 'secret superpower'. This has happened as technological change (satellite phone and satellite phone, computers and the Internet, and so on) has massively increased access to news, information, images and ideas worldwide. Al Jazeera nevertheless plays a particularly important role in the Middle East and in the wider world. It has, in effect, become the CNN of the Arab world, being the leading source of news and current affairs in the region. Its advantage is that it is widely seen as more reliable and trustworthy than the two alternatives: western media conglomerates such as CNN, Sky News, Fox News, the BBC, and so on, and state-owned Arab television, which tends to be patronised and politically conservative. Al Jazeera may therefore serve as both a force for democracy and an agent of polarisation. It is democratic in that better informed Arab populations are likely to become more politically active and less tolerant of authoritarian rule. Polarisation may occur as events in the Arab world (such as the suffering in the two Iraq wars)

falling in the Iraq War or as a result of Israeli attacks on Lebanon) are brought home with greater force to Arab populations. Al Jazeera, indeed, may be a more effective force for automation than it is for democracy.

Al Jazeera's broader impact, particularly through its English language channel and website, has nevertheless perhaps been to strengthen cross-cultural understanding between Islam and the West. Within the Arab world, it is often more balanced than alternative television networks, being willing to report from Israel and to acknowledge Israeli casualties from armed conflict. For the West, Al Jazeera provides an opportunity to gain an awareness of a specifically Arab and more widely Muslim view of developments in the Middle East and in the wider world. Although formally committed to fairness, balance, independence and credibility, Al Jazeera has been accused of political bias from various directions. These include allegations of pro-Islamist bias in its coverage of Iraq, anti-Western and more specifically anti-US biases that have, it is claimed, allowed Al Jazeera sometimes to act as a mouthpiece for al-Qaeda, and of pro-Israeli and pro-US bias that have been made by radical Islamists. Nevertheless, perhaps the greatest danger confronting Al Jazeera is that, in a search for popularity and a global reach, it will lose its distinctive appeal and become just another mainstream television network.

AL JAZEERA

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The West and the 'Muslim question'

Not only has the Muslim world been troubled and challenged by its encounter with the 'modernised' West, but the West has also, at times, struggled to come to terms with Islam. This is what is sometimes called the 'Muslim question'...

Promoting democracy: for or against?

Do democratic states have a right, even a duty, to interfere in the affairs of other states in order to promote democracy? If 'democracy promotion' is a legitimate foreign policy goal, how should it be pursued?

The policy of democracy promotion has been widely criticised, however. For some, it is based on unproven self-serving reasoning, providing a high-sounding but empty rhetoric...

many Islamists, perhaps because of all western societies the USA, through its Constitution and the Bill of Rights is most clear about the values and principles on which its society is founded.

Nevertheless, Islam is also sometimes portrayed as an 'enemy without' confronting the West from beyond its own shores. This idea has certainly been strengthened by the development of the 'war on terror'...

wedded to authoritarian values that they are incapable of bringing about democratic realisations through their own efforts. This reflects the emphasis that has been placed by US policy-makers since the 1990s on 'democracy promotion' as a strategy for bringing peace to the Middle East...

Wilsonianism: An approach to foreign policy that emphasises the promotion of democracy as a means of securing peace in line with the