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RE-THINKING WESTERN CONSTRUCTS OF ISLAMISM

PLURALISM, DEMOCRACY AND THE THEORY AND PRAXIS
OF THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT IN THE GAZA STRIP

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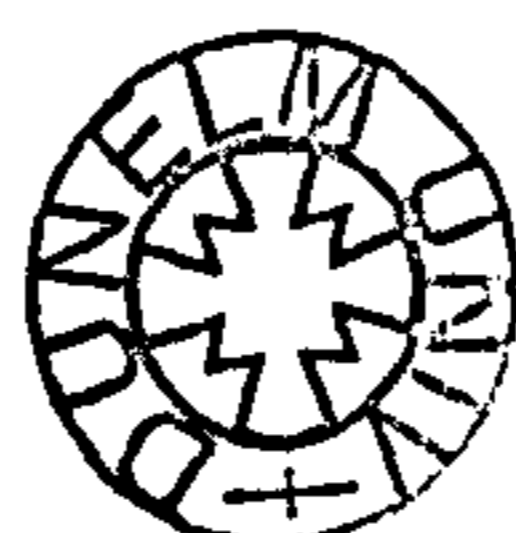
by

Jeroen Gunning

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies
University of Durham
2000



19 JUN 2001

ABSTRACT

Due to an absence of extensive sophisticated political tracts and an assumption that the Islamic Movement (IM) in Palestine¹ is violent, existing scholarship has largely ignored the IM's political theory. Mirroring general Western discourse, it has tended to categorize Islamists² as anti-democratic and anti-pluralistic, dismissing instances of Islamist adoption of internal elections and cooperation with ideological 'others' as Machiavellian. Analysis of Western discourse reveals correlations between perspective, methodology and conclusions. Building on this, I have adopted a perspective which acknowledges the possibility of multiple, in particular non-secular, paths to the ideals enshrined in (among others) Western democracy, and seeks to create a hermeneutical dialectic between different perspectives: Islamist versus non-Islamist narratives, Islamist theory versus comparable Western constructs, ideals versus praxis. Focussing on the Gaza Strip and domestic Palestinian politics, and drawing primarily on interviews, I have analysed the IM's understanding of ideal governance, political process and the body politic.

Following this approach, I have found that, like Locke, the IM in the Gaza Strip views legitimate authority as contractarian within a divine framework. Political authority resides in election. Echoing Buchanan and Tullock, weighted majority rule is regarded as optimal, unanimity as the ideal. Multiple 'right' interpretations of truth are acknowledged to exist. Dissent is deemed essential to truth, harmony and consensus to maintaining political community. The ideal constitution, predetermined only *qua* principles, is to be created through community-wide consultations. Mirroring Giovanni Sartori's observation that, while value consensus is not imperative for a political community to function, procedural consensus is essential, the IM welcomes procedural compromise with other-thinkers but refuses to compromise on its core values, aware that multiple value systems can coexist under procedural consensus. Trends are emerging which argue for equal rights for Christians and communists to public office on the basis of contractarian and rights-based theories. Like Hegel, the IM defines freedom as voluntarily and self-consciously willing the universal/divine – thus rendering coerced freedom meaningless – and sees the state as educator and embodiment of the universal. Significantly, however, and unlike Hegel, it insists on the social contract as the basis for state legitimacy.

The above findings show that democratic-like, pluralistic expressions of Islamism exist, where present research denied they did. Perspective and method seem to have prevented scholars from perceiving these expressions. Conversely, problematisation of the 'secular prejudice' and of Western presumptions about Islamism, incorporation of the Islamist perspective, and the creation of a hermeneutical dialectic between Western and Islamist political thinking, appears to enable a more objective analysis of existing data, leading to the discernment of a relatively coherent, democratic-like Islamist theory.

¹ Comprising the resistance movement Hamas, its student wing, the political off-shoot Hizb al-Khalas and affiliated Islamic charities.

² Those advocating a society and state based on Islamic principles.

...be patient towards all that is unsolved in your heart...
try to love the questions themselves...
Do not now seek answers which cannot be given you
because you would not be able to live them...
Live the questions now.
Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it,
live along some distant day into the answer...

Rainer Maria Rilke
Letters to a Young Poet

To my parents

Karel and Betty

for their example of living with faith and integrity
and their unconditional support

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION		v
COPYRIGHT		vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS		vii
NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION		viii
NOTE ON REFERENCES		ix
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY		x
PART I	APPROACHING ISLAMISM	1
Chapter 1	Problematique: Islamists, Democracy and Western Constructs of Islamism	2
1.1	Western Constructs of Islamism	13
1.2	Conceptual Perspectives	16
	<i>Attitudes towards the Western Model</i>	17
	<i>Attitudes towards Dichotomisation</i>	21
1.3	Methodological Patterns	26
	<i>Attitudes towards Conflation and Generalisation</i>	26
	<i>Attitudes towards Selectivity and Decontextualisation</i>	28
	<i>Attitudes towards Definition and Analysis</i>	32
1.4	Conclusion	34
Chapter 2	Western Constructs of Palestinian Islamism	36
	<i>Brief Contextualisation of the Islamic Movement</i>	38
2.1	Western Constructs of Palestinian Islamism	48
2.2	Conceptual Perspectives	51
	<i>Attitudes towards the Western Model</i>	51
	<i>Attitudes towards Dichotomisation</i>	61
2.3	Methodological Patterns	68
	<i>Attitudes towards Conflation and Generalisation</i>	68
	<i>Attitudes towards Selectivity and Decontextualisation</i>	71
	<i>Attitudes towards Definition and Analysis</i>	76

Chapter 3	Foci, Method and Sources	80
3.1	Research Foci	80
3.2	Conceptual Perspective	82
	<i>Attitude towards Western Model</i>	82
	<i>Attitude towards Dichotomisation</i>	83
3.3	Methodological Strategies	84
	<i>Attitude towards Generalisation and Conflation</i>	84
	<i>Attitude towards Selectivity and Decontextualisation</i>	85
	<i>Attitude towards Definition and Analysis</i>	86
3.4	Sources, Meaning and Interpretation	88
3.5	Written Speech-Acts	92
	<i>Official Party Literature</i>	93
	<i>Conference Papers and Newspaper Articles</i>	96
	<i>Local Media Coverage</i>	98
3.6	Oral Speech-Acts	98
	<i>Personal Interviews</i>	100
	<i>Interviews with Islamic Movement leaders</i>	104
	<i>Interviews with Islamic Movement Members/Supporters</i>	106
	<i>Interviews with Critics, Officials and Non-Partisan Observers</i>	108
PART II	POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT IN GAZA	110
	Prefatory Remarks	111
Chapter 4	Political Violence: The Struggle for the Islamic University in Gaza	113
4.1	The 1983 Incidents in Western Discourse	114
4.2	The 1983 Incidents in a Pro-PLO Narrative	116
4.3	Context and Player Analysis	118
	<i>Background Analysis</i>	119
	<i>The 1983 Strike</i>	127
	<i>The 1983 Clashes</i>	132
4.4	Conclusion	139
Chapter 5	Socio-Political Violence: The ‘<i>Hijāb</i> Campaign’ in Gaza	142
5.1	The ‘ <i>Hijāb</i> Campaign’ in Western Discourse	143
5.2	Context Analysis	145
5.3	Player Analysis	150
	<i>Potential Players</i>	151
	<i>Player Conflation in Hammami’s Article</i>	155
5.4	Hamas’s Narrative	158
	<i>Hamas’s Praxis Narrative</i>	163
5.5	Conclusion	165

PART III	POLITICAL THEORY OF THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT IN GAZA	170
	Prefatory Remarks	171
Chapter 6	Governance: Between Contract and Divine Law	173
6.1	Structure and Ends of Political Authority	173
	<i>Social Contract</i>	176
	<i>Divine Contract</i>	181
6.2	Between Contract and Divine Law: the Islamic Movement and Locke	183
	<i>Conceptions of Freedom</i>	190
6.3	Freedom and State: Hegel and the Islamic Movement	194
	<i>Individual versus Community</i>	197
	<i>Virtuous State through Vanguard or Consent?</i>	200
6.4	Conclusion: Locke, Hegel and the Islamic Movement	202
6.5	Praxis Analysis	206
	6.5.1 Consent versus Divine Law	206
	<i>Political Culture: Servant Leadership</i>	213
	<i>Related Theoretical Stances</i>	217
	6.5.2 Positive versus Negative Freedom	219
Chapter 7	Political Process: Between Consensus and Dissent	226
7.1	<i>Shūrā</i> and <i>Ijmā'</i>	227
	<i>Islamic Origins of Shūrā</i>	228
	<i>Scope of Shūrā and the Issue of Borrowing from non-Islamic Systems</i>	229
	<i>Ijmā' and Ijtihād</i>	235
	<i>One Version of Truth or Many?</i>	240
7.2	Constitutional Decisions	243
	<i>Value Consensus versus Procedural Consensus</i>	245
	<i>Open-Ended Consultation versus Ends-Oriented Consultation</i>	248
7.3	Unanimity and Majority Rule	251
7.4	Praxis Analysis	254
	7.4.1 Decision-Making Procedures	255
	7.4.2 Dissent	259
	7.4.3 Tolerance towards Ideological Others	266
	<i>Case Study of the Islamic University</i>	269
	<i>Shabibah-Kutlah Relations 1997-1998</i>	276
Chapter 8	Body Politic: Between Inclusion and Exclusion – Christians and Communists	282
8.1	Christians in the Islamic State	282
	8.1.1 Trend A: Christians as a Segregated Minority	285
	8.1.2 Trend B: Christians as Members of the Body Politic	290
	8.1.3 Points of Comparison with Western Constructs	294
	8.1.4 Praxis analysis	299

8.2	Communists in the Islamic State	307
8.2.1	Unbelievers and Apostates in Qur'ān and <i>Sunnah</i>	308
8.2.2	Trend A: Exclusion of Communists from the Body Politic	310
8.2.3	Trend B: Communists as Members of the Body Politic	313
8.2.4	The Islamic Movement, J.S. Mill and the Harm Principle	319
8.2.5	Praxis Analysis	324
PART IV	CONCLUSION	334
Chapter 9	Conclusion	335
	<i>Implications and Further Research – Islamism in Palestine</i>	343
	<i>Implications and Further Research – General</i>	346
APPENDIX A	349
BIBLIOGRAPHY	361
	Primary Sources	361
	Texts of the Islamic Movement	361
	Periodicals of the Islamic Movement	362
	Personal Interviews with Islamists	362
	Hamas Leaders: Top Echelon (Full List)	362
	Hamas Leaders: Middle Echelon	363
	Hamas/Khalas Members/Supporters	363
	Islamic Charity Personnel (Male)	363
	al-Jam'iyah al-Shabbat al-Islamat	364
	Hizb al-Khalas al-Watani al-Islami	364
	Al-Kutlah al-Islamiyyah	364
	Non-IM Islamists	365
	(Target) Groups	365
	General Islamist Texts	365
	Non-Islamist Palestinian Primary Sources	366
	Personal Interviews with (Non-Islamist) Critics, Officials and Non-Partisans	367
	Personal Interviews with Islamists, Officials, (Non-Islamist) Critics and Non-Partisans concerning the 1982 Events at al-Najah University, Nablus	368
	Secondary Sources	369
	Concerning Hamas	369
	Concerning Palestine	371
	Periodicals, etc. (Concerning Palestine)	375
	Concerning Islam or Islamism	375
	Concerning Western Political Theory, Western Praxis and Methodology	380

DECLARATION

This thesis results entirely from my own work and has not been previously offered in candidature for any other degree or diploma.

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NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

Arabic names have been transliterated using only the diacritical marks ‘ for ayn (ع) and ’ for hamzah (ء). Where particular forms of transliteration have gained common usage in English, such as Intifada or King Hussein, I have adopted these spellings. Technical terms such as *āyah* (Qur’ānic verse) or *hijāb* (headscarf) have been italicised and transliterated following the system of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (New Edition), except that I have followed the widely used practice of substituting q for k and j for dj and omitted the underlining of double letters (such as dh). Terms commonly used in English, such as Qur’ān and Hadīth, have not been italicised.

NOTE ON REFERENCES

Initial references to published material include the author's name and the title. Where titles consist of two or more parts, only the first part will be given unless the other parts are relevant to the reader. Where years of publication are deemed relevant, they are included in brackets behind the author's name. Full details are in the 'Bibliography'. Subsequent references only mention the author's name and the page number. Where more than one work by the same author is referred to, references also include one identifying word from the title. However, where it concerns one of the selected Western texts which are analysed in depth, it is taken as read that the selected text is referred to, unless otherwise specified. Where a particular text or set of texts is analysed (as in Chapters 1, 2 and 5), and it is clear which texts are referred to, only the page number will be listed. References to newspaper pages are, where mentioned, inserted after a colon (:). References to the Qur'ān, unless specified otherwise, will be to the translation of A. Yusuf Ali.

References to personal interviews specify the surname of the interviewee (or the group name if it concerns a target group), followed, in case of multiple interviews with the same person or group, by a roman number (i.e. Abu Shannab IV). Those interviewees who wished to remain anonymous, are referred to by code names in inverted commas (my examiners have been satisfied that the anonymous interviews were bonafide). Where it is clear from the text which interview is referred to, no further reference will be made. Where references are to a series of interviewees, names are arranged in order of political hierarchy, and in order of Hamas (including Hamas members who are also officials in the affiliated charity al-Mujamma' al-Islami), the women's organisation al-Jam'iyyah al-Shabbat al-Muslimat, the political party Hizb al-Khalas, and the student movement al-Kutlah al-Islamiyyah – each group separated by a semi-colon. Where texts containing primary material are mentioned as part of the list of interviewees, the page number is mentioned after a colon (:), so as to avoid having to add extra commas. References to Communiqués are either to the collection of communiqués from Hizb al-Khalas or to the translated Hamas communiqués in Shaul Mishal & Reuben Aharoni, *Speaking Stones: Communiqués from the Intifada Underground*.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY

(only the principle Arabic terms are included)

<i>ahl al-dhimma</i>	protected people (referring to traditional position of non-Muslim communities under Muslim rule)
<i>ahl al-shūrā</i>	literally: people of consultation, generally meaning Parliament
<i>‘alim</i> (pl. <i>‘ulamā’</i>)	scholar, expert
<i>amānāh</i>	trust
<i>‘aqd ijtimā’ī</i>	social contract
<i>āyah</i> (pl. <i>āyāt</i>)	Qur’ānic verse
<i>dawlah Islamiyyah</i>	Islamic state
DFLP	Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine
<i>dhimmī</i>	protected person (referring to traditional position of non-Muslims under Muslim rule)
<i>fiqh</i>	Islamic jurisprudence
<i>fitnah</i>	disorder, sedition
GCRL	Gaza Centre for Rights and Law
Ḥadīth (pl. <i>ahādīth</i>)	Saying of the Prophet
Hamas	Harakah al-Muqawwamah al-Islamiyyah (Islamic Resistance Movement); acronym meaning: zeal
<i>ḥarām</i>	religiously prohibited
<i>ḥijāb</i>	headscarf
<i>ḥudūd</i>	Qur’ānicly prescribed penalties
<i>‘ibadat</i>	principles regulating worship
<i>ijmā’</i>	consensus
<i>ijtihād</i>	legal deductive reasoning
IM	Islamic Movement
IUG	Islamic University in Gaza
Jabhah	Jabhah al-‘Amal al-Tulabiyyah (PFLP student wing)
<i>jizyah</i>	tax levied on non-Muslims in Muslim state in lieu of military service
<i>kāfir</i> (pl. <i>kuffār</i>)	unbeliever
Khalas	Hizb al-Khalas al-Watani al-Islami (National Islamic Salvation Party)
<i>Khalīfah</i>	Caliph (viceregent)
<i>kufr</i>	unbelief
Kutlah	al-Kutlah al-Islamiyyah (Islamic Bloc; IM student wing)
<i>Majlis</i>	<i>Majlis al-Shūrā</i> (Council of Consultation, equivalent to Parliament)
<i>maṣlahah mursalah</i>	considerations of public interest
Mithaq	Hamas’s 1988 Covenant
MOPIC	Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation
MP	Palestinian Model Parliament – Women and Legislation
<i>mu‘amalat</i>	principles regulating social interaction
Mujamma‘	al-Mujamma‘ al-Islami (Islamic Complex)

<i>mujtahid</i> (pl. <i>mujtahidun</i>)	someone sufficiently qualified to perform <i>ijtihād</i>
PCHR	Palestinian Centre for Human Rights
PFLP	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PLC	Palestinian Legislative Council
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organisation
PNA	Palestinian National Authority
PNC	Palestinian National Council
PRCS	Palestinian Red Crescent Society
<i>qiyās</i>	analogical deduction
<i>riddah</i>	apostasy
SC	Student Council
al-Shabbat	al-Jam‘iyyah al-Shabbat al-Muslimat (Association of Muslim Young Women)
Shabibah	Fatah student wing
<i>Sharī‘ah</i>	God’s law or Islamic law (depending on use)
<i>shūrā</i>	Consultation; used as equivalent to democracy
<i>Sunnah</i>	Traditions of the Prophet
<i>tawāfuq</i>	harmony
<i>ummah</i>	faith-community of Islam; sometimes used (loosely) as equivalent of Western concept of nation
<i>waqf</i> (pl. <i>awqāf</i>)	religious endowment
<i>zakah</i>	legal alms (alms tax)

PART I

APPROACHING ISLAMISM



CHAPTER 1

PROBLEMATIQUE: ISLAMISTS, DEMOCRACY AND WESTERN CONSTRUCTS OF ISLAMISM

The paradigm¹ still largely dominant among Western² scholars of what has variously been called 'Islamic fundamentalism', 'radical Islam' or 'political Islam', but which I will refer to as 'Islamism',³ is problematic. Its depiction of Islamism (the ideology advocating the creation of a society and state based on Islamic principles) as a violent, anti-pluralistic and anti-democratic monolith – a depiction based on the view that Islamists habitually engage in violence against ideological 'others', denounce Western-style democracy, and insist on the absolute sovereignty of God – fails to explain, beyond dismissing them as insincere, such non-violent, pluralistic and democratic-like instances as Islamists conducting elections to select their leaders, cooperating with ideological

¹ 'Paradigm' is here used to denote a set of loosely shared constructs, however arrived at. The discursive field producing these constructs is not monolithic.

² Those operating within a Western social science framework, regardless of geographical origin or domicile.

³ The term 'fundamentalism' is problematic because of its Christian origins, its relative inappropriateness to Islam (which is by definition fundamentalist), its inappropriateness to Islamism (which is not necessarily slavishly traditional) and its derogative connotations (see John Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, pp7-8; Sami Zubaida, *Islam, the People and the State*, ppix-x, 1-3, 32-34; Abdel Salam Sidahmed & Anoushiravan Ehteshami (eds), *Islamic Fundamentalism*, pp2-5; Dale Eickelman & James Piscatori, *Muslim Politics*, pp68-69). 'Radical Islam' has derogative connotations and lacks descriptive precision. 'Political Islam' would be appropriate but for the fact that it does not highlight the social focus of this entity as 'political' carries connotations of 'that which concerns the state' (cf. D.D. Raphael, *Problems of Political Philosophy*). 'Islamism' best characterises this phenomenon as an ideology based on Islam, with both social and political applications.

'others' and advocating contractarian theories of government which grant non-Muslims near-equal political rights to Muslims. The proliferation of data conflicting with this dominant paradigm calls for a paradigm shift,⁴ or at least a different way of thinking about Islamism. A growing number of scholars, encouraged by the debate caused by, among others, Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) and the rise in popularity of post-modernist critiques of metanarratives and modernity,⁵ has begun to challenge the existing model and to try to account for these 'conflicting' data.

This thesis is conceived as part of this revisionist trend. At its most immediate level, it queries whether all forms of Islamism are truly, and inherently, authoritarian, intolerant and violent. At a second level, it explores to what extent they indeed differ from Western democratic notions, and whether one can find a basis for evaluating them as a Westerner while neither positing Western notions as normative, nor rendering the evaluation meaningless by resorting to total relativism. This research is situated within the wider debate, reignited by the global rise of what is generally called 'religious fundamentalism', on the role of religion in politics, on the extent of the universality of values and systems (including the human rights debate), and on the nature of the new world order (and whether the future will be a 'clash of civilizations' or the adoption of capitalist democracy as the pinnacle of history). At a methodological level, it is an exploration of how to reduce the ideological and cultural distortion in a Western study of Islamism so as to be able to incorporate the widest variety of relevant evidence, even if this problematises assumptions regarding Islamism or beliefs concerning progress, modernity, secularism and democracy. It thus touches on the question of whether one

⁴ See Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.

⁵ This is not to claim that these scholars are post-modernist, only that post-modernism helped to create a more pluralistic climate in which non-Western cultures could be studied with less meta-narrative baggage. See also Armando Salvatore, *Islam and the Political Discourse of Modernity*, p145.

can stay true to one's analytical framework while delivering research in which the studied subjects can still recognise themselves.⁶

The focus of this thesis is the political theory and praxis of the Islamic Movement (IM) in the Gaza Strip – a loose network affiliated to the international Muslim Brotherhood, comprising Hamas,⁷ the student movement al-Kutlah al-Islamiyyah, the political party Hizb al-Khalas, and Islamic charities such as al-Mujamma' al-Islami, and al-Jam'iyyah al-Shabbat al-Muslimat.⁸ Through this focus, I will test the validity of the proposed call for a paradigm shift, and experiment with different ways of thinking about Islamism. I have chosen to limit myself to a specific movement in a limited area to be able to root my observations sufficiently in the particular and avoid making unsupported sweeping generalisations (see further for significance of this approach).

The IM is of particular interest vis à vis the debate concerning the nature of Islamist political theory and Islamism's relationship with democracy. Palestine is a vibrant meeting place between 'Islamic' and 'Western' ideas, with its proximity to Israel, its large Diaspora in both 'Islamic' and 'Western' cultures, and its people's high level of education. Eighty years of *de facto* occupation and the glimpse of an independent future offered by the recent Peace Process, have made Palestinians acutely aware of their unique chance to reshape their political system, rendering Palestinian Islamist notions of an Islamic state particularly compelling. Gaza is the main seat of both the embryonic Palestinian proto-state institutions, and of the political wing of the IM (as distinct from the 'military' wing which is highly decentralised, independent and operates mostly from

⁶ John Voll, 'Foreword' in Richard Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, pxix.

⁷ Acronym for Harakah al-Muqawwamah al-Islamiyyah (Islamic Resistance Movement), meaning 'zeal'.

⁸ For reasons of time and space, this thesis will not focus on al-Jam'iyyah al-Islamiyyah or any other of the Islamic charities affiliated to the IM, on the assumption that the charities studied, being the flagship charities of the male and female sections of the IM respectively, will be reasonably representative of the IM's overall charitable culture. For reasons of space and simplicity, this thesis will also not focus on other Islamic groups such as Islamic Jihad, Hizb al-Tahrir or al-Salafiyyun.

the West Bank).⁹ As such, the Gazan IM is specifically interesting to study. To understand – beyond such ideologised and totalistic notions as ‘democratic’ or ‘anti-democratic’ – how it thinks, what it values, and how this is translated into praxis, is significant for the wider study of Islamism, particularly as the IM has a high profile among Islamists due to its operating in what Islamists worldwide regard as one of the most visible struggles against Western hegemony in the shape of Israel. It is equally important with regard to the continuing peace negotiations.

I will limit myself to the political, defined loosely as that which concerns the organisation of power. This broad definition has the advantage of rising above such definitional dichotomies as state versus non-state,¹⁰ high versus low politics, public versus private, religion versus politics, coercion versus negotiated persuasion, or symbols versus structures.¹¹ Organisation of power is found in both state and non-state structures, both the public and the private – an example being the *hijāb* (headscarf), a private decision with very public consequences. Organisation involves structures as well as rules. Consequently, it has both physical and conceptual aspects. This study will focus on both, on the grounds that praxis, as action or structure, is a manifestation of the values underpinning the practitioner’s ideals.

Within the political, I will concentrate on the domestic, that which concerns the organisation of power within what the IM regards as its habitat. This thesis will not discuss the IM’s relationship with Israel, Arab states or the West, nor its views on the Palestinian people, the land or the role of terror-instilling tactics in warfare. While each

⁹ Cf. Ahmad Rashad, *Hamas*, p38; Sara Roy, ‘Beyond Hamas’, *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 2(1), pp30-31; Roger Gaess, ‘Interview with Mousa Abu Marzook’, *Middle East Policy* V(2), pp115-116; personal interviews with Ismail Abu Shannab IV, Ghazi Hammad II, ‘Muhammad’, ‘Ashraf’, ‘Ahmad’.

¹⁰ Cf. Raphael.

¹¹ Cf. also discussion in Eickelman & Piscatori, pp3-21; David Held, ‘A Discipline of Politics?’ in A. Leftwich (ed), *What is Politics?*, p144 (“a phenomenon found in and between all groups, institutions (formal and informal) and societies, cutting across public and private life”).

of these questions is important and one could argue that they cannot be separated from the IM's domestic politics, particularly as a significant part of the IM's *raison d'être* is its rejection of the current Peace Process and its insistence on armed resistance, both in the name of nationalism, I will not discuss these issues because of considerations of space. In Part II, which focuses on intra-Palestinian political violence, I will justify in more detail why I have chosen to exclude political violence against Israel from this study, particularly as the IM – and Hamas in particular – is often defined in the public mind in terms of its use of terrorist tactics against Israel.¹²

Throughout I will use the word 'discourse' to mean a self-consciously constructed set of utterances, which taken together constitute a conceptual approach. Examples are Western 'discourse' on Islamism and Islamist political discourse. I will reserve the term 'narrative' to refer to a less self-consciously constructed, less theoretical set of utterances, pertaining generally to events.

Any attempt at finding new ways of thinking about Islamism must be defined in relation to existing Western discourse on Islamism. Moreover, if a paradigm shift is to be realised, it must be clarified as to what blinds scholars who have sustained the dominant paradigm, to the discrepancies between model and evidence, so as to maximise one's own responsiveness to available evidence. This and the next chapter will focus on these issues.

Developments in both natural and social sciences¹³ have led to the acknowledgement that observations are influenced by the observer's conceptual framework and the process

¹² By 'terrorist' I mean violence perpetrated indiscriminately against a population (without regard for age, gender or civilian/military status) to instill terror. By the same token, some of Israel's actions could be described as 'terrorist'.

¹³ Cf. Theory of Relativity, Quantum Mechanics; psychoanalysis, ideology-critique, Gadamerian hermeneutics.

of measuring itself. 'Reality', or that which exists 'objectively' outside the 'subjective' mind of the observer, is thus understood to be unknowable directly but only through the distortions of mind and measuring. Social 'reality', moreover, has been acknowledged to be fundamentally polysemous because of the meaningfulness of human action, resulting in similar actions carrying different meanings and rendering conclusions extremely vulnerable to perspective and method.¹⁴ Conceptual perspective, methodology and conclusions are thus clearly linked.

Against these developments, 'objectivity' in its traditional sense of reaching conclusions independent of subjective perspective, is no longer achievable – leading some to adopt ontological relativism or subjectivism, and to deny the existence of an independent 'reality' altogether. Yet, even from a *perspectivist* and *fallibilistic*¹⁵ perspective it is possible to uphold the existence of an independent reality, even if not directly known, and maintain what is known of reality as the yardstick by which the validity of theories is judged. Objectivity, then, ceases, with Brian Fay, to be "a property of the results of an inquiry" and becomes "a property of *the process of inquiry itself*".¹⁶ An inquiry is objective in this sense if

its procedures and ... judgments ... be responsive to the evidence as best it can be determined, and ... to other possible interpretations of this evidence. ... [It] must require its practitioners to seek out facts which appear relevant to the case, to follow the lead of these facts even if it goes against accepted preconditions ..., to put their explanations up

¹⁴ Cf. Gilbert Ryle's famous description of the different meanings behind the contracting of an eye-lid – from meaningless twitch, to conspiratorial wink and parody of conspiratorial wink; quoted in Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, pp6-7.

¹⁵ Scientific conclusions are dependent on the observer's perspective; knowledge about the world is never certain or final. Terminology borrowed from Brian Fay, *Contemporary Philosophy of Social Science*, pp208, 72.

¹⁶ Fay, pp212-213, 216-217. Fay's conclusions closely follow Richard Bernstein's in *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*.

against other explanations to show that theirs are superior, and to be willing to revise or abandon their conclusions ...

Objectivity thus becomes “a social process of ongoing criticism”, of problematising assumptions, method and constructs, and compelling oneself to continually evaluate the impact of one’s perspective and methodology on one’s conclusions. This, however, should not degenerate into “a form of biography in which social theorists reveal a great deal about themselves but almost nothing about those they are studying”.¹⁷

To establish which perspectives and methodological strategies increase responsiveness to the available evidence, I will subject the existing genre of Western discourse on Islamism to the process of evaluation just described, in an attempt to discern the influence of perspective and method on conclusions. Others have analysed existing discourse and observed, to varying degrees, correlations between perspective, method and conclusion. Said argues that the essentialist mindset of Western scholars of the Orient, which defined the Orient as the antithesis of the Occident, eternally different, essentially inferior, and frightening, encouraged the adoption of a methodology which privileged “abstractions ... based on texts representing a ‘classical’ Oriental civilization” to “direct evidence from modern Oriental realities”.¹⁸ John Esposito and John Voll list the unproblematised adoption of a secularist perspective as one of the chief factors leading scholars to misunderstand the nature of Islamist movements. Armando Salvatore, Bobby Sayyid and C.A.O van Nieuwenhuijze likewise point to the obscuring

¹⁷ Cf. also Fred Halliday’s criticism of both Said and the Orientalists (see further), that both focus “more on discourse than on the analysis of reality” (“Orientalism’ and its Critics’, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 20(2), p162).

¹⁸ Said, cf. pp1-28, 300-302.

effect of the Eurocentricity of perspectives rooted in modernisation and development theories.¹⁹

Besides these studies concerned with determining the overall perspectival flaws underlying Western research, others have catalogued the different approaches and conclusions *within* the Western genre. Shireen Hunter divides scholars between neo-Orientalists and neo-Third-Worldists, according to whether they attribute Eastern behaviour “to certain cultural traits and peculiarities of Islam”, or follow the Third-Worldist tradition of the 1960s-1970s which saw “the root causes of the West’s problems with the Third World countries ... in the West’s imperial and colonial past”. Ghassan Salamé similarly divides the field into culturalists and non-culturalists, depending on whether they “think that a specific culture and/or religion could in itself be an obstacle to experimentation with democracy”.²⁰

Neither of these types of studies has focussed explicitly and extensively on methodology, the impact perspective has thereon, or the influence method has on conclusions.²¹ Moreover, the cataloguers’ focus on cataloguing has tended to weaken their effort at problematising, while the problematisers’ focus on problematising has generally prevented them from highlighting those areas of Western research which were relatively successful in ‘objectively’ conveying ‘reality’. The latter, consequently, can (inadvertently) resort to essentialisation of the field. Said best exemplifies this. By refusing to distinguish between different types of Western discourse, he blanketly

¹⁹ Esposito, *Threat*; Voll, ‘Foreword’; Salvatore, *Islam*; Bobby Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear*; C.A.O van Nieuwenhuijze, ‘On the Prospects of Intercultural Studies and International Education’ in van Nieuwenhuijze, *Paradise Lost*.

²⁰ Shireen Hunter, ‘The Rise of Islamist Movements and the Western Response: Clash of Civilizations or Clash of Interests’ in Laura Guazzone (ed), *The Islamist Dilemma*, pp320-321; Ghassan Salamé, ‘Introduction: Where are the Democrats?’ in Ghassan Salamé (ed), *Democracy without Democrats?*, p3.

²¹ Cf. Said’s (undeveloped) assertion that only a critical methodological self-consciousness will suffice to free scholars of Orientalism’s hold (pp326-327).

condemns all such as essentialist, and, consequently, implies that cross-cultural research is inherently “corrupt” for its being intertwined in existing power structures.²² Not all Western research is essentialist, nor is all cross-cultural research “corrupt” – distorted though it may be. Without multiple categories, Said is unable to acknowledge this, or discern which research is better than others, and why.²³

To be able to draw up an analytical framework which can sustain a new way of studying Islamism, the two approaches must be combined to arrive at a clearer understanding of which combination of perspective and methodology maximises ‘objectivity’. Salvatore and van Nieuwenhuijze both proffer problematising categorisations, Salvatore from a genealogical perspective, charting the development of Western research on Islamism against historical events. As I am concerned with the state of contemporary research, and employ a more ahistorical conception of perspective and method,²⁴ Salvatore’s classification is only tangentially relevant. Van Nieuwenhuijze has problematised four of the main academic disciplines concerned with the Middle East. Because each has evolved along different perspectival and methodological lines, van Nieuwenhuijze’s analysis offers the beginnings of the type of analysis I propose. However, because he categorises by discipline, rather than individual text, he is in danger of essentialising the fields.

On the basis of my own research, I propose a three-way categorisation based on perspective: those who treat Islamism as the immutable ‘other’, Islam as its defining

²² Cf. Said’s contention that all representations are misrepresentations because embedded in the “culture, institutions, and political ambience of the representer” (pp272-273). See also critiques of Said: Sadik al-‘Azam, ‘Orientalism and Orientalism in Reverse’, *Khamsin* 8; Halliday, “Orientalism”.

²³ Said only hints that “there is scholarship that is not corrupt” at the end of his book and fails to analyse it (pp326-327). Weaknesses notwithstanding, however, *Orientalism* has been one of the inspirations for this thesis.

²⁴ Though I am aware of the historicity of research and its methods, my contemporaneous focus conflates the historical axis, rendering it less relevant than other variables.

essence (*essentialists*); those who approach Islamism from the position that Western modernity, and secular democracy in particular, is the norm (*modernists*); and those who allow for the possibility of plural trajectories to the ideals enshrined in ‘democracy’, and thus approach Islamism as a possibly legitimate alternative (*pluralists*).²⁵ Said’s ‘Orientalists’, Salvatore’s first circle, Hunter’s ‘neo-Orientalists’ and Salamé’s ‘culturalists’ overlap with my definition of *essentialists* (though there are qualitative differences between Orientalists and neo-Orientalists, and ‘my’ *essentialists* are primarily neo-Orientalist).²⁶ Salvatore’s second and third circle correspond to my definition of *modernists* while his fourth circle, Salamé’s ‘non-culturalists’ and Hunter’s ‘neo-Third-Worldists’ incorporate both my categories of *modernists* and *pluralists*.²⁷ It is important, however, to differentiate between *modernist* and *pluralist* because the former’s conclusions closely resemble those of the *essentialists*, despite significant ontological and methodological differences. Moreover, as the *modernist* framework appears to be deeply ingrained in parts of Western social science – whether a minimalist or maximalist definition of modernity is employed²⁸ – it must be located and circumscribed in order to be problematised.

My analysis is based on a sample of twelve texts on the general phenomenon of Islamism (country-specific analyses have been excluded for the purpose of simplicity

²⁵ To distinguish my definition of essentialist, etc., from others, I will italicise mine.

²⁶ Unlike neo-Orientalism, which is more reductionist, traditional Orientalism displayed, despite its dichotomising between self and other, a meticulous “historical-philological respect for the facts” (Van Nieuwenhuijze, p341).

²⁷ Salvatore’s 4th comes closest to my definition of *pluralists*. However, his circle does not problematise modernity to the same extent as my *pluralists* do, leading us to a different interpretation of the same text (Chapters 2 & 6 from Zubaida - see footnote 72).

²⁸ Cf. Habermas’s minimalist conception of modernity as an unfinished project (*Die Moderne – Ein unvollendetes Projekt*, 1992; paraphrased in Salvatore, p172).

and comparability).²⁹ My choice to start with an analysis of general discussions of Islamism is partly aimed at locating my research within the larger arena of general Western research on Islamism, and, by extension, Western research on non-Western phenomena. A second, methodological reason is that Palestinian Islamism is relatively little studied in the West. Its field of scholars is consequently less diverse than the field of scholars studying Islamism in general. For creating an analytical framework with which to discern correlations between construct, perspective and method, a wider field will yield more generally applicable results.

My sample has been selected on the basis of influentiality, in the sense of being quoted by other texts in the genre, or on the basis of providing clear examples of a particular category's characteristics.³⁰ Because of the extent of the genre and the small size of the sample, the selection is subjective. However, the extent of its representativeness is indicated by the fact that the trends it exemplifies are equally found in other general texts on Islamism³¹ and in the texts on Palestinian Islamism to be reviewed in Chapter

²⁹ *Essentialist texts*: Samuel Huntington (1996), *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (Chapters 3-5, 9-10, 12; only sections on Islam included); Martin Kramer (1993b), 'Islam vs. Democracy', *Commentary* 95(1); Kramer (1993c), 'Islam & the West (including Manhattan)', *Commentary* 96(4); Judith Miller (1993), 'The Challenge of Radical Islam', *Foreign Affairs* 72(2); Amir Taheri (1987), *Holy Terror* (Chapters 1&13). *Modernist texts*: Guazzone (1995), 'Islamism and Islamists in the Contemporary Arab World' in Guazzone; Jean Leca (1994), 'Democratization in the Arab World' in Salamé (Leca also displays some *pluralist* aspects); John Waterbury (1994), 'Democracy Without Democrats?' in Salamé; Bassam Tibi (1988), *The Crisis of Modern Islam* (Chapter 1 & Conclusion). *Pluralist texts*: Esposito (1992), *Threat* (Chapter 6); François Burgat (1993), *The Islamic Movement in North Africa* (Chapter: 'God or the People? Islamists between Theocratic Violence and Democracy'); Zubaida (1989), *Islam* (Chapters 2&6).

³⁰ *Essentialist*: Huntington (book or preceding article, 1993) quoted in e.g. Sayyid, Eickelman & Piscatori, Halliday (1996), Guazzone, Salamé; Kramer (1993a) in Eickelman & Piscatori, Guazzone, Miller, Dalacoura; Miller in Eickelman & Piscatori, Guazzone; Taheri (included primarily for typicality of *essentialism*) in Ranstorp. *Modernist*: Guazzone in Dalacoura; Leca & Waterbury (references to Salamé) in Eickelman & Piscatori, Sayyid; Tibi in Halliday (1996), Roy (1995), Sayyid, Salvatore. *Pluralist*: Burgat in Roy (1995), Dalacoura, Jensen; Esposito in Roy, Eickelman & Piscatori, Sidahmed & Ehteshami, Huntington (1996), Ranstorp, Sayyid, Dalacoura; Zubaida in Ayubi, Halliday (1996), Salvatore, Sayyid, Dalacoura.

³¹ Cf. Bernard Lewis, 'The Roots of Muslim Rage', *The Atlantic Monthly*, September 1990 (*essentialist*); Fred Halliday, *Islam & the Myth of Confrontation* (*modernist* veering towards *pluralist*); Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam* (*pluralist* with hints of *modernism*); Eickelman & Piscatori, *Muslim Politics* (*pluralist*).

2.³² Classification is based on the conceptual perspective expressed in the text.³³ An author could thus theoretically be classified in two different categories. However, since most texts written by the same author tend to display the same perspective, I will, for convenience's sake, typify the authors by the category of their text.

1.1 WESTERN CONSTRUCTS OF ISLAMISM

All three fields touch on the interconnected themes of political violence, pluralism and democracy. Each field has its own set of characteristic constructs, despite minor variations and a considerable overlap between *essentialists* and *modernists*. *Essentialist* texts tend to depict Islamists as inherently violent,³⁴ anti-pluralistic³⁵ and anti-democratic.³⁶ Islamism is treated as a monolith, unchangeable and without significant internal distinctions.³⁷ Instances of democratic-like³⁸ behaviour are dismissed as Machiavellian dissimulation aimed at gaining power via the "unpatrolled route" of elections, for the purpose of imposing an (authoritarian) Islamic state once in power.³⁹ Islamism's alleged propensity to violence and incapability of dealing with pluralism are

³² Most 'Palestinian' *modernist* texts display some *essentialist* methodological patterns. Though this may indicate a different sub-category among the *modernists*, it does not fundamentally alter the analytical framework suggested by this chapter.

³³ One cannot rely on authors' self-declarations. Both Miller (p45) and Taheri (p1), for instance, denounce *essentialism* while engaging in it.

³⁴ Cf. Huntington, pp254-265 (Islam's "bloody borders"); Taheri, p217 (Muslims' "traditional penchant for violence"); Kramer, p36 (emphasising violence, ridiculing charitable institutions).

³⁵ Cf. Taheri, p191; Miller, pp45, 51.

³⁶ Cf. Huntington, p114 (Islamist movements versus 'democratic movements'); Miller, p45; Kramer, pp38, 41.

³⁷ Despite protestations (cf. Miller, p45) the picture presented ignores diversity.

³⁸ 'Democratic-like' is used to indicate awareness of democracy's cultural specific roots without sacrificing the potentially universal validity of democratic values.

³⁹ Kramer, p37; Miller, pp47, 52.

attributed to both Islam's essence and origins, and Islamism's refusal to separate religion and politics.⁴⁰ Little attention is given to the structural and cultural context which has given rise to this violence. Islam/Islamism is posited as the antithesis of the West, which is portrayed as essentially rational, pluralistic and democratic. Though some within this field hint at the desirability of bridging these differences,⁴¹ their recourse to 'essences' gives the two entities of West and Islam(ism) an immutable quality, leaving the impression that for differences to be bridged, Islamism must exchange its essence for a Western one.⁴²

Modernist texts likewise tend to portray Islamists as violent, anti-pluralistic and anti-democratic, but qualifiedly so. The violent impulse is partly attributed to the violent context of state repression Islamists find themselves in,⁴³ while anti-pluralistic, anti-democratic attitudes are seen as indices of the lack of economic and conceptual development in the direction of a Western-type modernity.⁴⁴ Though Islamism, and particularly its anti-secularity, is posited as an anti-thetical 'other', it is not depicted as the *eternal* 'other', nor necessarily as a monolith.⁴⁵ With the right type of industrialisation, the extension of democratic-like institutions, and the internalisation of democratic-like value systems, Islamism could become democratic-like. Yet because *modernists* insist this can only occur with the secularisation of Islamism, they in effect demand that Islamism be stripped of one of its core positions, that religion is inseparable from politics. *Modernists* explicitly allow for change – on their terms. Though echoing

⁴⁰ Cf. Huntington, pp254-265; Taheri, pp220-221.

⁴¹ Cf. Huntington, pp320-321.

⁴² Cf. also comments on 1st circle in Salvatore, pp117-125.

⁴³ Cf. Guazzone, pp21, 27; Waterbury, p32.

⁴⁴ Tibi, pp30, 127-148; Waterbury, pp23-33; Guazzone, pp6-7, 9-10, 20.

⁴⁵ Cf. Guazzone, pp12-16. Tibi, Waterbury do not make significant distinctions, Leca only hints at one (p55).

the *essentialist* stance, theirs is more flexible. Modernity being seen as a state of mind and a product of structures, both of which are not deemed culturally specific, Islamism could keep some of its 'essence' while adopting the key characteristics which make for modernity.⁴⁶

Pluralist texts refuse to treat Islamism as a monolith and the Western model as an unproblematic universal norm. Consequently, they refrain from blanketly characterising Islamists as either violent, anti-pluralistic or anti-democratic. They list incidents of violence⁴⁷ – within their structural and cultural context – alongside incidents of pluralistic behaviour.⁴⁸ They chronicle Islamist statements attacking democracy as an alien notion alongside statements defending democracy as Islamic.⁴⁹ They warn that unless Islamists change their core constructs concerning citizenship and political equality – at present favouring Muslims over non-Muslims – Islamist states will be discriminatory and ideologically repressive.⁵⁰ Yet they balance such warnings by criticising Western illiberal praxis towards those challenging the ideological basis of Western states,⁵¹ questioning the extent of the West's secularisation, or even the universal desirability of the concept of democracy.⁵² Fundamentally, *pluralists* are more willing to problematise both their preconceptions of Islamism and the Western political

⁴⁶ Cf. also comments on 2nd and 3rd circles in Salvatore, pp125-129, 171-178 (especially Halpern: modernised Islam would be so "changed" as to no longer be "Islam"; p127).

⁴⁷ Cf. Burgat, p115; Esposito, pp180, 208.

⁴⁸ Burgat, pp132-135; Esposito, pp188-189; Leca, pp54-60 (*modernist with pluralist leanings*).

⁴⁹ Cf. Burgat, pp124-131; Esposito, pp186-189. Zubaida responds by pointing out 'Western' aspects of Islamist thinking (pp59-60, 173-174).

⁵⁰ Cf. Burgat, pp122-135; Esposito, pp187-189.

⁵¹ Cf. Burgat, p131; Esposito, p177.

⁵² Burgat, pp129-130; Leca, p75 (whether democracy is "everywhere and always ... the best and only way to 'solve problems'"). Zubaida is less explicit, yet critiques modernisation theories (p123).

constructs they employ to understand Islamism. Significantly, they refuse to foreclose the possibility of an Islamic form of (non-secular) democracy.⁵³

The *modernist-essentialist* emphasis on violence was partly triggered by the radical violence of the first contemporary Islamist groups coming to the West's notice from the end of the 1970s onwards. Before then, it was commonly believed that Islam was on its inevitable path to marginalisation in the face of modernity.⁵⁴ When 'Islam' burst into Western consciousness again, the audacity of the violence both obscured the (continued) existence of a non-violent Islamism and 'confirmed' the secularist prejudice that religio-politics leads to violence.⁵⁵ Counter pointers were drowned out. Tibi and Taheri, writing during the 1980s, can be partly exonerated for not looking beyond violence (though by the time Taheri wrote, Egyptian Muslim Brothers had run for election and condemned violence).⁵⁶ With the proliferation of Islamist democratic-like actions during the late 1980s and 1990s, none of the others have this excuse.

1.2 CONCEPTUAL PERSPECTIVES

With a view to the level of problematisation allowed by a text, two conceptual commitments stand out specifically: the author's attitude towards the universality of the Western historical trajectory, and the extent to which the author indulges in dichotomisation. I will discuss each in turn.

⁵³ Esposito, p187 (on Islamic democracy); Leca, p75.

⁵⁴ Cf. J. Harris Procter (ed), *Islam and International Relations*, pvii; quoted in Daniel Pipes, *In the Path of God: Islam and Political Power*, p8.

⁵⁵ Cf. Esposito: "The assumption that the mixing of religion and politics necessarily and inevitably leads to fanaticism and extremism has been a major factor in our concluding that Islam and democracy are incompatible" (p208).

⁵⁶ Abdel Aziz Ramadan, 'Fundamentalist Influence in Egypt' in Martin Marty & R. Scott Appleby (eds), *Fundamentalisms and the State*, pp173-178.

Attitudes towards the Western Model

A chief difference between *essentialists* and *modernists* on the one hand, and *pluralists* on the other, is their respective attitudes towards the Western historical trajectory. To the former, the West's ideational and structural development (which most appear to equate with 'modernity')⁵⁷ is the model for the rest of the world.⁵⁸ Emphases differ, with some attributing more importance to the adoption of Western values and ideas, in particular pluralism, human rights and secular democracy.⁵⁹ Others emphasise the importance of structural development, in particular industrialisation, the growth of trade and the middle classes.⁶⁰ For the non-West to adopt the Western model, it must, according to both, shed some of its characteristics, such as the sacralising of politics. To both, modernity is a quality which is external to the non-Western world – to be imported to replace indigenous constructs and structures.⁶¹ *Essentialists*, however, are less optimistic about the non-West's capability to internalise modernity, particularly its ideational side, on the grounds that this is part of the West's essence, and that changing one's essence is nigh impossible.⁶²

⁵⁷ Positions are ambiguous. E.g. Huntington denies it does, yet by robbing modernity of its ideational content, placing this under the category 'Western' (pp68-78, 92-93, 320-321; also n47), he redefines 'Westernization' to mean what others call 'modernization' (cf. discussion in Sayyid, pp84-126). Salvatore observes that *modernists* are often caught between the conflicting notions of universal progress and Islam as an eternally closed system, the latter adopted wholesale from the Orientalists (pp126-127).

⁵⁸ This assumption informs statements in cf. Miller, pp45, 54; Huntington, pp69-72, 114; Taheri, pp14-17; Guazzone, pp6-7, 9-10; Waterbury, pp24, 33. Sayyid argues that conflation of the terms modernity and West is one of the reasons for Western miscomprehension of Islamism, as the latter is both modern and anti-Western (pp84, 126).

⁵⁹ Cf. Miller, Taheri, Guazzone.

⁶⁰ Cf. Waterbury (emphasises ideational aspects too); Tibi.

⁶¹ Cf. Guazzone, pp6-7; Huntington, pp100-101, 320-321; Tibi, p22; Waterbury, p33.

⁶² Cf. Huntington's concern that, despite global (material) modernisation, "a [global] moral reversion [will] occur as Western power declines" (pp68-78, 320-321).

This approach results in Islamism being treated as lacking normative value, measurable only by the 'norm' of (Western) modernity. *Modernist* texts tend to employ theoretical models derived from Western(ising) experiences to determine whether Islamism is democratic, or at least democratising.⁶³ *Essentialists* tend to employ a more emotive approach, simply concluding from the fact that certain Western values, practices or institutions are absent, that Islamism is 'other', enemy and inferior.⁶⁴ In both cases, understanding of Islamism is distorted because little effort is made to understand it from within its own framework. As Esposito rightly observes,

[m]odern, post-Enlightenment secular ... categories of thought distort our understanding ... The modern notion of religion as a system of personal belief makes an Islam that is comprehensive ... with religion integral to politics and society, "abnormal" ... irrational, extremist, threatening (p198).

One result is that the religious element is exaggerated. Huntington thus attributes the non-integration of Chinese Buddhists into predominantly Muslim Asian countries solely to Islam (p264), ignoring other factors such as the wealth differential between Chinese and non-Chinese, the strength of the state, the extent of collusion between Chinese and state elites, or the extent of tribal influences on that country's political culture.

Because of their emphasis on religion, and the connotation the merging of religion and politics has in Western history with violence and intolerance, *essentialists* and *modernists* are prone to view Islamism as violent and anti-pluralistic.⁶⁵ They are likewise prohibited from an in-depth exploration of the potential of an Islamic form of

⁶³ Cf. Guazzone, pp9-10; Waterbury, pp24, 35, 40-41.

⁶⁴ Cf. Kramer, p38; Miller, p54.

⁶⁵ Cf. Taheri: "Every attempt at turning Islam into a doctrine of political power inevitably leads to terrorism" (pp220-221).

democracy because their Western model posits that democracy presupposes secularisation. That this model is an ideologised version of the actual historical trajectory can be gleaned from the fact that democracy as a system of government does not dictate secularism.⁶⁶

Pluralists, meanwhile, remain open to considering alternatives to Western models,⁶⁷ and actively criticise these models, sometimes in terms of their validity,⁶⁸ more often in terms of the West's failure to adhere to them.⁶⁹ However, they refrain from cultural relativism, for they hold certain values – such as respect for difference, freedom of speech, respect for basic human rights (with the proviso that definitions of what constitute these may vary) and leadership accountability to the led – to be universally applicable.⁷⁰ These beliefs are expressed searchingly, not triumphantly, because of the *pluralists'* keen awareness of their knowledge's cultural specificity. But they are still taken as tentative guidelines by which the other system's effectiveness in guaranteeing human dignity is measured. In this sense, they follow the line Sayyid suggests when critiquing Western discourse, to separate modernity from the Western trajectory, and distill a set of values and structures which make an entity modern regardless of cultural differences.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Earlier advocates of (liberal) democracy, such as John Locke, did not insist on secularisation in the sense of separating morality from religion (see Chapter 6).

⁶⁷ Cf. Burgat's observation that divine law is an acceptable legal basis (pp130-132); Esposito's openness to Islamic forms of democracy (p187).

⁶⁸ Cf. Leca acknowledging democracy not always "best ... way to 'solve problems'" and majority rule not morally sound (pp75, 55/79n6); Burgat's observing lack of secularism in much of West, querying practicality of secularism (pp129-130, 132).

⁶⁹ Cf. Burgat on West's suppression of state-challenging ideologies (p131); Esposito on West's failure to acknowledge Western violence against Islam (p171).

⁷⁰ Cf. Halliday's solution to the problem of defining universals, confining the search for transcultural standards to issues "pertaining to the treatment and equality of human beings" (*Myth*, pp153-154).

⁷¹ Enabling the possibility of plural types of actualised modernities (pp84-126).

Pluralists thus attempt to achieve a balance between universalism and relativism, by asserting their values while allowing ‘the other’ to problematise them.⁷² Such an attitude is vital in cross-cultural research. For, as van Nieuwenhuijze has noted, to bridge the cultural chasm between observer and observed, the observer must adopt

the readiness to identify one’s own frame of reference with the intent to hold it in abeyance, during the effort to find one’s way into the other frame of reference ... [O]ne [should thus] abstain, for example, from entering into a given situation with a set of preconceived questions to be administered to a ... sample ... singled out according to equally predetermined categorical criteria.

This involves the transformation of the “subject-object relationship into a subject-subject relationship, intersubjectivity” – or what I call a dialectic between conceptual frameworks.⁷³ Precisely because the *pluralist* field is more willing to problematise both their perception of the other *and* the constructs of their own culture, it enables such a dialectic to occur and leads to a profounder understanding of Islamist positions.

Pluralists are thus able to analyse Islamist ideas and actions without the presuppositions that haunt *essentialists* and *modernists*, and can discern more clearly areas of similarity between Western and Islamist models because they do not presuppose difference, despite differences in form.

However, there is a danger in this approach. By wishing to avoid imposing a ‘Western’ discursive structure on a ‘non-Western reality’ (I use this terminology warily as the distinction between West and non-West is not as dichotomous as these terms suggest),

⁷² Salvatore argues that Zubaida does not problematise modernity, but merely makes it inclusive towards Islamism (pp179-181). I contend that Zubaida does problematise modernity, by problematising key elements such as secularisation, and accepting the validity of a non-secular modernity (cf. pp172-181). Though he employs a *modernist* approach in e.g. using Western state models, he applies these models *pluralistically* by remaining open to alternatives.

⁷³ Van Nieuwenhuijze, pp329, 341-342, 354.

pluralists can end up losing sight of the correlation between factors, their hierarchy in terms of significance and the logic which links them. A structuralist *modernist* has a model which ranks structures above ideas. A *pluralist* may lose sight of the significance of specific data for lack of a hierarchical framework of values. This is reflected in the (relative) lack of definitional depth the *pluralists* of this sample display (see further). Alternatively, a *pluralist* may overemphasise the 'non-Western' framework of values s/he studies, to compensate for his/her 'Westernness', and end up romanticising the 'other', without sufficient critical distance – though none in this sample appear to have done so. In the first instance, the *pluralists'* awareness of difference results in an overemphasis of sameness. In the second, it results in an overemphasis on difference.

Attitudes towards Dichotomisation

Though all three fields indulge in dichotomisation, the *essentialist* and *modernist* texts do so most distortingly.⁷⁴ Dichotomisation is central to the process of defining. With it one is able to differentiate. Yet, following Derrida,⁷⁵ dichotomisation also distorts the object described by suppressing both internal differences in the categories used, and cross-over elements between the categories. In the process of categorisation, language imposes an artificial structure on 'reality', informed largely by its internal logic and the conceptual perspective inspiring the categorisation. What falls outside this structure, is suppressed – by, for example, projecting cross-over elements found in the privileged component of a dichotomy onto the unprivileged element. Consider the pair modernity-tradition. Informed by a *modernist* mindset, the term tradition comes to include all that the *modernist* despises. 'Moderns' are thus defined as, for instance, rational while

⁷⁴ Both Said (pp53-54, 58-59) and Sayyid (p107) hint at this problem.

⁷⁵ Cf. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*; 'Différance' in *Margins of Philosophy*; *Writing and Difference*; H.J. Silverman, *Derrida and Deconstruction*.

'traditionalists' are deemed irrational; yet in actuality both categories exhibit rational and irrational traits. The binary opposites, concludes Derrida, thus remain interconnected, even in definition, because the one is defined as 'not-the-other'.

Essentialists posit Islamism as the antithesis of democracy or the West,⁷⁶ while all that the West is not supposed to be (violent, irrational, regressive, religiously fanatical) becomes the focus of research on Islamism, thus exaggerating it beyond its actual importance. *Essentialist* dichotomisation is accompanied by essentialisation,⁷⁷ also central to definition by distilling an object's characteristics to an indispensable set of qualities without which an object would not be itself.⁷⁸ Yet, an *essentialist* text reduces this set to a few privileged essences, treats them as fixed and immutable, and generalises from an essence found in one instance to other similar manifestations, regardless of temporal or geographical disparity. Thus, an eclectic mixture of manifestations of different Islams is posited as a monolithic essence termed 'Islam' which defines Islamist actions. Historical, economical and social contexts are relegated to the background. Huntington, for example, roots the present tensions between the West and Islamism in fourteen centuries of opposing 'natures'. The possibility of 'the West' and 'Islam' having a relationship constituted of more than one facet (not all oppositionary) with different phases (not all antagonistic), or of Islam not being inherently militaristic because its founder led an army, is not even hinted at.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Cf. Huntington, p114 ('Islamist' versus 'democratic'); Miller, pp45, 54.

⁷⁷ Said makes similar criticism (pp230-234, 300-305).

⁷⁸ According to *The Oxford Reference Dictionary*, 'essential' is "necessary; indispensable"; 'essence' is "all that makes a thing what it is; an indispensable quality or element". For discussion of argument that essentialising lies at foundations of institutionalisation of modern social science, see Salvatore, Ch. 4.

⁷⁹ Huntington, pp209-210, 263. Almost similar argument in Miller, p47; Taheri, pp200, 220-221; Kramer, p35. Even taken on its own terms, this argument is problematic as it does not take ethnic essence into account.

The combination of dichotomisation and essentialisation renders *essentialist* analysis highly emotive. Huntington thus sees the “contest between Islam and the West” as

between two different versions of what is right and what is wrong and, as a consequence, who is right and who is wrong (p212).

“Unless we hate what we are not”, quotes Huntington, “we cannot love what we are” (p20). In this way an unbridgeable chasm is created between the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ – the ‘other’ judged by the values of the ‘self’ but posited eternally outside that ‘self’.

Modernists too overindulge in dichotomisation. Though they tend to use existing dichotomies within their Western-based models, rather than positing Islamism against democracy or the West, the terms they employ still position Islamism as the antithesis of modernity. Because of the universal nature of these dichotomies *modernists* generally avoid cultural essentialisation. But by applying them rigidly they foreclose problematisation. Guazzone describes Islamism as “authoritarian” and “right-wing”, and in the process suppresses democratic-like aspects, despite carefully distinguishing between different forms of Islamism, and even discussing a democratic-like Islamist election statement (pp12-16, 18-19). Leca, who displays both *modernist* and *pluralist* features, compares Islamists to ‘populists’, as opposed to ‘constitutionalists’, and so is unable to acknowledge those Islamists who are deeply concerned about constitutionalism (pp54-60).⁸⁰

Rigid dichotomisation appears to be one of the chief reasons *modernists* and *essentialists* fail to fully understand the complexity and diversity of Islamism – resulting in a selective, decontextualising, generalising methodology (see further), which

⁸⁰ Cf. Salvatore’s comment that *modernists* consolidated traditional-vs-modern dichotomy (p127).

suppresses, or downplays, Islamist instances of democratic-like behaviour. While a certain amount is unavoidable, a less distorting way of dichotomising is needed.

One way of better understanding 'reality' is, returning to Derrida (or at least, my understanding of him), neutralising the either/or approach of the binary oppositions with a both/and perspective which suspends the oppositions.⁸¹ Such an approach consists of analysing phenomena from both angles of a dichotomy, viewing Islamism as, for example, characterised by being both democratic and undemocratic, both religious and non-religious, allowing each term to elicit features which its opposite suppresses. It calls for a flexible approach to definition – dichotomising to highlight differences, yet allowing for the existence of cross-categories. It also calls for problematising existing dichotomies and acknowledging their cultural and temporal specificity.

This is particularly relevant to the religion-politics dichotomy if exaggerating or downplaying the religious element is to be avoided. Talal Asad's critique of Clifford Geertz's influential approach to religion, for instance, questions the universal applicability of his secular, compartmentalised concept of religion, embedded in the modern Western attitude towards religion as a personal belief, separated from reality, from its structures and from 'real' knowledge.⁸² There is no such thing as "an independent religious domain", counters Asad:

Religious symbols ... cannot be understood independently from their historical relations with non-religious symbols or of their articulations in and of social life.

⁸¹ I refrain from proposing Derridean deconstruction as it is too time-consuming for the scope of this thesis.

⁸² Cf. Esposito's critique of secular prejudices.

To appreciate the interplay between religion and politics in an Islamic context, one's Western concept of religion must be problematised by "unpacking the comprehensive concept ... into heterogenous elements according to its historical character", and using these elements analytically without delimiting where they should or should not be found.⁸³

Though none of the *pluralist* texts have explicitly adopted such a Derridean approach, their qualified use of categories points to it. By judging Islamism through tentatively positing 'universal' values while simultaneously rendering these open to problematisation, the texts create a temporary space in which their subject can be both approaching and distancing themselves from Western values, both democratic and non-democratic, both religious and political. The nature of research is to push towards closure of the opening created by problematisation, and the *pluralists* indeed close this space. But by delaying closure, and investigating alternative understandings of Islamism, they limit the distorting effect of dichotomisation, enabling the reader to glimpse Islamism's complexity and diversity. Thus, rather than categorising Islamism as democratic or undemocratic, *pluralists* portray both democratic and undemocratic aspects of Islamism, the tensions between the two and, finally, which aspect they deem stronger.⁸⁴ As with their insistence not to treat Western constructs as the norm, the *pluralists*' reluctance to dichotomise can result in a loss of valuational hierarchy, a blurring of the distinction between significance and triviality, and in a loss of overall theoretical rigour (though this is precisely what helps them be open to understanding the different in the other).

⁸³ Talal Asad, 'Religion as an Anthropological Category' in Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*, pp53-54. See also Derrida criticising Michel Foucault's study of madness (*Madness and Civilization*) for not arguing from an intellectual position prior to the dichotomous separation of madness from reason (B. Flynn, 'Derrida and Foucault: madness and writing' in Silverman, *Derrida*, p203; Jacques Derrida, 'Cogito and the History of Madness' in Derrida, *Writing and Difference*; D. Judovitz, 'Derrida and Descartes: Economizing Thought' in Silverman, p49).

⁸⁴ Esposito, pp209-212; Zubaida, pp172-179. Burgat remains more ambiguous about their relative strengths.

1.3 METHODOLOGICAL PATTERNS

I will discuss each field's methodological patterns. Methodology is informed by perspective. Over-dichotomisation encourages conflation, generalisation, selectivity and decontextualisation, while prohibiting in-depth analysis. Positing the Western model as universal encourages generalisation, selectivity, decontextualisation and shallow definition of non-Western concepts. The following must be read with the previous in mind.

*Attitudes towards Conflation and Generalisation*⁸⁵

Conflating different groups, instances and time spans into one monolithic whole is chiefly an *essentialist* characteristic – in line with the aims of reductionist essentialisation. In this vein, Taheri groups together phenomena as diverse as the Egyptian Sunni Muslim Brotherhood, Khomeini's Shi'i Iranian regime, and the 11th century movement of the 'Assassins' as expressions of 'Holy Terror', while Kramer explicitly condemns those endeavouring to distinguish between 'moderates' and 'extremists' in the case of the bombing of New York's World Trade Centre.⁸⁶ In Kramer's case, conflation leads him to ignore that the prime suspect in the bombing had led one of the more violent of Egypt's Islamist groups, which the largest Egyptian Islamist movement, the Muslim Brotherhood, has repeatedly condemned for their violence.⁸⁷ Kramer's insistence on conflating has prevented him from sifting

⁸⁵ Cf. also Said, pp37-38.

⁸⁶ Taheri, pp220-221; Kramer, 'West', p33.

⁸⁷ Ramadan, pp161, 167-173; Taheri, pp49, 213.

accommodationist from confrontationist and thus finding a basis for constructive dialogue.

Some *modernists* likewise indulge in conflation,⁸⁸ which is somewhat surprising as they tend to employ rigorous theoretical models which shield against crude conflation. A clue can be found in Guazzone who, despite distinguishing elaborately between literalists and pragmatists, radicals and moderates, noting the divergence in Islamist positions on women, and hinting at a similar divergence in Islamist positions on democracy, concludes that all Islamists promote authoritarianism.⁸⁹ The rigour theoretical models inspire is overridden, it seems, by the power of the *modernist* perspective – particularly the ‘secularist prejudice’ which holds that failure to separate religion from politics leads to authoritarianism. Such preconceptions prohibit discernment, and appear to explain why otherwise methodical scholars fail to discern differences in the case of Islamism.

The *pluralists*’ lack of conceptual rigidity makes them more attentive to diversity. They thus report both violent-intolerant and pluralistic-democratic instances of Islamist behaviour, and discuss both democratic-like and anti-democratic statements, differentiating between the different manifestations, rather than conflating them into a monolithic whole.⁹⁰ Consequently, one is able to appreciate the complex diversity of Islamism, and distinguish different, not necessarily converging, trends.

Attitudes towards generalisation are similar to those regarding conflation. While *essentialists* often make sweeping generalisations, unsupported by evidence in the text, *pluralists* generally refrain from this, while *modernists* indulge only in generalising

⁸⁸ Cf. Waterbury, Leca.

⁸⁹ Guazzone, pp14-15, 18-20. Waterbury, Tibi and Leca fail to make any rigorous distinction.

⁹⁰ Esposito, pp189, 202, 206-207; Burgat, pp109-129; Zubaida, pp157-158, 173.

theories. General *pluralist* conclusions tend to be rooted in particular instances.⁹¹ In sharp contrast stand such *essentialist* generalisations as Taheri's who concludes from one nitric acid attack on an unveiled Lebanese girl not only that Islamism is against women's rights, but also that "Radical Islam has declared war on the infidels" – without providing conclusive evidence for these latter statements and ignoring counter-evidence (pp11-13).

Modernists, rather than making sweeping generalisations, tend to meticulously root their observations in social science theories. However, this attitude predisposes them to generalising, explaining the particular through general theories, rather than drawing general conclusions from the particular. Consequently, they occasionally miss important data because their models fail to alert them to these particular details. *Modernist* thus tend to ignore signs of evolution towards a more pluralistic, democratic-like attitude among some Islamists because their secularist prejudice prevents them from sufficiently acknowledging these signs.

Attitudes towards Selectivity and Decontextualisation

Science is about sifting; selecting is therefore inevitable. At issue here is the way important, and readily accessible, evidence is ignored. *Essentialists* display the most conspicuous disregard for evidence which contradicts their thesis, creating a value hierarchy which devalues contradictory data, while overvaluing consistent evidence. This seems to be a logical outcome of the reductionist essentialising approach since this is an attempt to reduce complexity. It is also linked to the 'secular prejudice' equally found among *modernists*. The attitude, that expects fanaticism, irrationality and

⁹¹ Esposito's discussion of Rushdie affair (pp190-193); Zubaida's differentiation between different forms/uses of Islam (pp152-156). Same applies to treatment of West, cf. Burgat's discussion of West's secularity (pp129-130); Zubaida's distinguishing different European trajectories (p129).

violence in so-called 'fundamentalist' movements,⁹² lulls scholars into readily believing corroborating data.

Manifestations of suppressed characteristics, if discussed at all, are generally dismissed as disingenuous dissimulation. In this vein, violent incidents are overemphasised while electoral and charitable actions are ignored or ridiculed.⁹³ The same occurs in the few (cursory) *essentialist* discussions of Islamist theory. Kramer, discussing the Sudanese Islamist leader, Hasan al-Turabi, highlights only Turabi's fears regarding the factionalising influence of the multi-party system, and the corruption-inducing nature of electoral campaigns, to conclude that for Turabi, elections are "to be discarded after successful one-time use" (p38). No mention is made of Turabi's contractarianism (which necessitates regular elections) or his advocacy of popular referenda.⁹⁴

Selectivity is equally applied to sources used. Apart from the occasional (and mostly decontextualised) Islamist quote, *essentialist* texts rely primarily on non-Islamist sources – Western observers, (Westernised) local elites and (Western-inspired) human rights organisations.⁹⁵ This approach drowns the indigenous voice with Western(ised) representations,⁹⁶ preventing Islamists from presenting their 'defence', and forecloses a real encounter between 'Western' and 'Islamist' discourses. It is exacerbated by the

⁹² Cf. Esposito's observation that "[f]or those who subscribe to a liberal secular ... tradition, any intrusion of religion in politics is often viewed as potentially dangerous ... This perception is intensified when our knowledge of religious groups is limited to those who represent a radical minority" (pp202-203).

⁹³ Cf. Kramer, pp36-37; Miller, pp45-52.

⁹⁴ Kramer, p38; Turabi, 'The Islamic State' in John Esposito, *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, pp243-248 (Kramer quotes from same article).

⁹⁵ Beyond quoting election slogan and manifesto (dismissed as Machiavellian), Miller only cites Western academics (pp48, 43-44). Huntington, likewise, quotes primarily Westerners or Western-educated Muslims (e.g. Chapters 4.3, 5.2, 9.2, 10).

⁹⁶ Cf. Said's criticism of Orientalism (p21).

absence of personal interviews⁹⁷ – thus overemphasising the role of Islamic tradition because, following Salamé, “it is more familiar and in many ways more accessible to us than the actual evolution of Muslim societies” (pp4-5).

Modernists are similarly selective discussing Islamist characteristics. Waterbury and Tibi fail to mention the existence of democratic-like Islamist statements or actions altogether, while Guazzone only mentions one such instance in passing, without seriously engaging it. *Modernists* are likewise selective in the sources they use, drawing little on Islamists directly,⁹⁸ instead discussing (Western) modernisation theories at length, leaving no space for in-depth engagement with Islamist thinking, or indeed for considering evidence which falls outside the scope of these models. This, again, appears to be the logical outcome of the *modernist* perspective which is readily sidetracked by its interest in applying models, from trying to understand its object from within the object’s own framework. *Modernists* are far less selective when discussing opposing Western theories.⁹⁹

Pluralists include the widest variety of evidence. They include both pro- and anti-democracy statements, Western(ised) and Islamist sources.¹⁰⁰ Burgat in particular, Esposito to a lesser extent, partially counters Said’s concern about the suppression of the indigenous voice by including lengthy Islamist quotes. *Pluralists* are also non-selective in being ready to apply ethical standards to Islamists and the West alike. The *pluralist* perspective is the least encumbered by theoretical structures and rigid expectations. It is accordingly more willing to include conflicting evidence and problematise. As

⁹⁷ My criticism is based on the texts, not the authors. Miller, for instance, interviewed Turabi and Hizballah’s Fadlallah for another article (1994), ‘Faces of Fundamentalism: Hassan al-Turabi and Muhammed Fadlallah’, *Foreign Affairs* 73(6).

⁹⁸ Tibi is the exception, drawing on Muslim, even occasionally Islamist, sources (cf. Qaradawi; pp27-28).

⁹⁹ Cf. Waterbury, p34; Tibi, pp22-31.

¹⁰⁰ Zubaida’s Chapter 6 is the exception.

mentioned above, the *pluralist* readiness to problematise can lead to a loss of value hierarchy. The *pluralists* of this sample guard themselves against this by tentatively positing certain values (pluralism, human rights) as universal, and judging both Westerners and Islamists by them. However, it is less clear by what standard they judge the relative significance of violent versus pluralistic, democratic-like actions. This is problematic as one of the most prominent disagreements between *pluralists* and the other two concerns the place of violence in Islamist thinking and practice.

Decontextualisation, another form of selectivity, is practised in a similar way.

Essentialists are the worst offenders, *pluralists* the best contextualisers.¹⁰¹ *Modernists* find themselves in between, contextualising where their models demand it, practising decontextualisation primarily insofar as their models are specific to a culture which is not their subject's culture. An illustration of decontextualisation is the *essentialist* depiction of violence as inherent, rather than circumstantial. Taheri thus makes no acknowledgement of the acid attack he describes on an unveiled girl happening amidst a civil war, amidst a struggle with political opponents probably employing similar tactics. Instead, it is portrayed as an unprovoked, unique, typical Islamist event – preventing the reader from understanding motive and context, widening the chasm between reader and Islamist. The *pluralists*, conversely, situate Islamist violence within its cultural and structural context. Burgat thus argues that it is both “a defence against the preventative repression of states” and heavily influenced by the social universe of the perpetrators, rather than by their being Islamists *per se*.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Interestingly, Kramer's country-specific texts on Lebanese Islamism display a greater respect for contextualisation than his general overviews. Focussing on a limited subject area thus appears to inspire the kind of contextual discipline found among the *pluralists*. Cf. Kramer, 'Hizbullah: The Calculus of Jihad' in Marty & Appleby (eds), *Fundamentalisms*.

¹⁰² Burgat, pp113-118.

For *essentialists*, decontextualisation appears to be central to the activity of essentialisation. Only by stripping an activity of context is it possible to arrive at an essence which will manifest itself regardless. *Modernists* have a similar approach, for to arrive at a universally applicable theoretical model, trends must be stripped of context. Context is only deemed helpful when the theory has explicitly incorporated it. *Pluralists*, on the other hand, are forced to study context because they are not armed with universal meta-theories, and must utilise whatever information their subject yields, including context. Moreover, they tend to be interested in the 'other' as 'other', rather than as 'not-the-self'.

Attitudes towards Definition and Analysis

Essentialist texts are generally weak on definition, and consequently, on analysis. Taheri illustrates this by never succinctly defining the term 'Holy Terror'. Even Huntington, though otherwise the most rigorous among the *essentialists*, displays a similar weakness in his use of the epithet 'anti-democratic' (pp92-93, 98-101). It is clear that those described are anti-Western, anti-secular, non-Western movements calling for the re-adoption of indigenous, generally religious, values. But Huntington fails to discuss what specific aspects of democracy these movements repudiate, and with which they agree. Lack of definition prevents one from engaging in any depth with these movements' thinking.

Though *modernists* define their Western concepts and theories with some care, they display a laxity towards the definition of Islamist concepts. Waterbury takes great care to explain Western democratisation models, yet fails to define or elaborate on Islamist concepts. Guazzone, while including some Arabic-Islamic concepts in her text, fails to elaborate on these and the theory in which they are embedded. Detailed definition of

Western models provides profound insights into Islamism. Weak definition of Islamist concepts, however, renders them one-sided. Leca's analysis of 'Islamist democrats' through the prism of 'populism' and 'constitutionalism' thus falls short of its potential (pp54-60). Had he sufficiently engaged with Islamist thinking, he would have realised his categorisation of Islamists as populists is reductionist, and explored how Islamist constitutionalism compares to Western constitutionalism.

Pluralists, though failing to reach the *modernists'* level of definitional precision with regard to Western theories, generally define both Western and Islamist concepts sufficiently adequately to grapple with differences and similarities. Burgat (followed closely by Zubaida) is the most thorough, defining Western and Islamist concepts to a similar depth, and allowing each to shed light on the other.¹⁰³ Burgat's deconstructing Islamist attitudes towards Islamic law in components that closely resemble Western secular attitudes to law is one example (pp129-132). Predictably, the level of analysis rises with the level of definition. Moreover, definition and its concomitant level of analysis impose a value hierarchy by which the subject can be evaluated, thus countering the *pluralist* temptation to blur the distinction between significant and trivial.

Differences between the fields can again be explained with recourse to the different perspectives. *Essentialists* are primarily interested in the 'other' as 'not-the-self'. Consequently, they have little to gain by meticulously defining the 'other'. Furthermore, detailed definition is likely to highlight inconsistencies in their carefully balanced set of essences. *Modernists* are so immersed in *modernist* theories, that they have little time for properly defining Islamist concepts. Their primary aim seems to be to apply these theories to the case of the Islamists – not necessarily to understand the Islamists as they understand themselves (which helps to complement an 'external'

¹⁰³ Cf. Zubaida's treatment of Iranian Constitution (pp172-179). Zubaida, however, elaborates more on Western than on Islamist theories/concepts.

understanding based on *modernist* theories). *Pluralists*, finally, are both interested in the 'other' as 'other', and are forced to define the 'other' because they are armed with only a minimum of theory. Their lack of theory enables them to see their subject more clearly. *Pluralist* definitions tend therefore to be informed rather by the information the subject yields than by the dictates of a preconceived theory (although no one is free from the bias of preconceptions). The problematisation of established understanding, moreover, further forces *pluralists* to probe and elaborate.

1.4 CONCLUSION

The above analysis has detailed the influence of conceptual perspectives and methodological strategies on conclusions. It has shown how the *essentialist* and *modernist* perspectives inhibit seeing the 'other' as 'other', by imposing either a reductionist framework which decontextualises and generalises to arrive at immutable essences, or *modernist* theories based on premises which fail to sufficiently take into account local particularities. It has also shown that a *pluralist* perspective is a powerful instrument for shielding one from over-generalising, decontextualising and ignoring or downplaying conflicting evidence, because it encourages the willingness to problematise one's own conceptual framework, and one's understanding of the 'other'.

A temptation for the *pluralists* is to overemphasise the particular, without relating it to the general. This is exacerbated by the lack of an overarching theoretical framework and the concomitant eclecticism and lack of value hierarchies. Though these attitudes are simultaneously the source of their strength, it may be advantageous to borrow from *modernist* methodology its theoretical depth, coherence and rigour (applied with a sufficiently *pluralist* alertness to cultural specificity and over-dichotomisation), and

from *essentialist* methodology its awareness of difference¹⁰⁴ (balanced with a *pluralist* willingness to problematise the difference and seek sameness).

Though adopting a *pluralist* approach, I will use Western political theory to illuminate Islamist thinking, by positing the former, not as normative, but as a comparable set of constructs to create a hermeneutical dialectic which throws light by offering a perspectival shift – mirroring Waterbury's application of Dankwart Rustow's theory of democratisation, though the latter fails to maintain a sufficiently *pluralist* perspective (pp34-37). This way, I will be forced to define both to sufficient depth to allow a dialectic of equals to take place. This by itself will impose a discursive value hierarchy. But comparison with a Western political model with which I, as a Westerner trained in Western political science, am deeply familiar, will further force me to search for value hierarchies in Islamist thinking, in order to be able to establish difference or sameness (as a *pluralist*, I will strive to remain open to either). Though there is a danger that this method will impose a Western discursive hierarchy on Islamist political theory, the benefits of an increased definitional rigour, a more coherent theoretical framework, and an improved value hierarchy appear to outweigh this danger – particularly as I am well aware thereof and intent on minimising it.

Concerning the issue of violence, I will take particular care to contextualise it, both ideationally and structurally; to incorporate Islamist explanations of incidents; and to question the veracity of non-Islamist sources which overly deny any own involvement in violence and blame all brutality on the IM.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. van Nieuwenhuijze, p340.

CHAPTER 2

WESTERN CONSTRUCTS OF PALESTINIAN ISLAMISM

Having developed an analytical framework with which to chart correlations between conceptual commitments, methodological approaches and conclusions constructed, I will now apply this to Western discourse on Palestinian Islamism. I will focus primarily on 'influential' texts (see p12). Of texts published too recently or distributed too locally to have been in a position to be quoted regularly, I will include those providing sufficiently original information to be judged potentially influential. Books and (publicly available) occasional papers focussing on the IM are thus automatically included in this survey¹ (though two of these have in addition been regularly quoted).² Of those articles and chapters concentrating on the IM and dealing with its overall

¹ Ahmad Rashad (1993), Ziad Abu-Amr (1994), Hisham Ahmad (1994), Beverley Milton-Edwards (1996), Andrea Nüsse (1998). Meir Litvak (1996) will not be included because of its exclusive focus on nationalism, which falls outside the scope of this thesis. Shaul Mishal & Avraham Sela (2000) was published too late to be included. For details, see 'Bibliography' or footnotes 7&8.

² Those quoted four times or more: Abu-Amr in Ahmad, Jensen, Litvak, Milton-Edwards (1996), Nüsse (1998), Roy (1995), Sayigh, Usher (1995a&b) (Arabic original of Abu-Amr's book quoted in Milton-Edwards (1996), Nüsse (1993&1998), Rashad, Shadid); Ahmad in Budeiri, Klein, Litvak, Nüsse (1998), Sayigh. Milton-Edwards, quoted in Jensen, Nüsse (1998), Rashad (reference to original doctoral thesis), was only published in 1996, Nüsse (not quoted, though 1993 article quoted in Klein, Rashad) in 1998. Rashad, quoted in Roy (1995), Nüsse (1998), was published in 1993 but appears not to be widely available (Durham Library could not purchase it).

ideology, development and organisation,³ five have been quoted regularly.⁴ Four more will be included for their original information.⁵ Articles dealing with but one aspect of the IM, with aspects of 'foreign policy', or those discussing the IM tangentially only, will be excluded.⁶

Of the fourteen texts analysed, ten reflect a *modernist* perspective,⁷ four a *pluralist* one.⁸

Some *modernist* texts veer towards *essentialism*,⁹ others towards the *pluralists*.¹⁰ One

³ Cf. Mohammed Shadid (1988); Emile Sahliyah (1988); Lisa Taraki (1989a&1989b); Ze'ev Schiff & Ehud Ya'ari (1990); Jean-François Legrain (1990); Rema Hammami (1990); Muhammed Jaradat (1992); Islah Jad & Rema Hammami (1992); Michel Jubran & Laura Drake (1993); Ziad Abu-Amr (1993&1995); Sara Roy (1995); Graham Usher (1995a&1995b); Iyad Barghouti (1995&1996); Maria Holt (1997); Michael Jensen (1998).

⁴ Those quoted four times or more: Shadid in Abu-Amr (1994), Ahmad, Holt, Israeli, Jubran, Nüsse (1993&1998), Rashad, Roy (1995), (Yezid) Sayigh; Legrain (1990) in Litvak, Rashad, Roy (1995), Strum, Usher (1995b); Schiff/Ya'ari in Abu-Amr (1993&1994), Hammami, Jubran, Legrain (1991), Milton-Edwards (1996), Mishal, Nüsse (1993 & 1998), Sayigh, Usher (1995b); Hammami in Augustin, Litvak, Milton-Edwards (1996), Tamari, Usher (1992&1995a&1995b); Abu-Amr (1993) in Ahmad, Milton-Edwards (1996), Nüsse (1998), Rashad, Roy (1995).

⁵ Roy (1995), Usher (1995a), Holt (1997), Jensen (1998). Usher's book (1995b) contains roughly the same material on the IM as his article (on which I will focus).

⁶ Limited or 'foreign policy' focus: cf. Raphael Israeli (1990); Jean-François Legrain (1991); Beverley Milton-Edwards (1992); Andrea Nüsse (1993); 'Ali Jarbawi & Roger Heacock (1993); Shaul Mishal & Reuben Aharoni (1994); Ali al-Jarbawi (1994); Suha Taji-Farouki (1994). Tangential focus: cf. Ann Lesch & Mark Tessler (1987); Mohammed Shadid & Rick Seltzer (1988); Kitty Warnock (1990); Philippa Strum (1992); Graham Usher (1992); Salim Tamari (1992); Rita Giacaman & Penny Johnson (1994); Amal Kawar (1996); Harold Cubert (1997); Yezid Sayigh (1997).

⁷ Shadid (1988), 'The Muslim Brotherhood Movement in the West Bank and Gaza', *Third World Quarterly* 10(2); Legrain (1990), 'The Islamic Movement and the Intifada' in Jamal Nassar & Roger Heacock (eds), *Intifada: Palestine at the Crossroads*; Schiff & Ya'ari (1990), *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising - Israel's Third Front*; Hammami (1990), 'Women, the Hijab and the Intifada', *Middle East Report* 20(3-4); Abu-Amr (1993), ' Hamas: A Historical and Political Background', *Journal of Palestine Studies* XXII(4); Abu-Amr (1994), *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza: Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic Jihad*; Ahmad (1994), *Hamas - From Religious Salvation to Political Transformation: The Rise of Hamas in Palestinian Society*; Usher (1995), 'What kind of nation? The rise of Hamas in the occupied territories', *Race & Class* 37(2); Milton-Edwards (1996), *Islamic Politics in Palestine*; Nüsse (1998), *Muslim Palestine: The Ideology of Hamas*.

⁸ Rashad (1993), *Hamas: Palestinian Politics with an Islamic Hue*; Roy (1995), 'Beyond Hamas: Islamic Activism in the Gaza Strip', *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 2(1); Holt (1997), 'Palestinian Women and the Contemporary Islamist Movement', *Encounters* 3(1); Jensen (1998), 'Islamism and Civil Society in the Gaza Strip' in Ahmad Moussalli, *Islamic Fundamentalism: Myths & Realities*.

⁹ Cf. Shadid.

¹⁰ Cf. Legrain.

pluralist text strays into *modernism* while another comes close to *modernism-in-reverse* by privileging Islamism.¹¹ Nevertheless, all texts are sufficiently rooted in one perspective to be classified thus. Intriguingly, while the texts displaying a *pluralist* perspective have also adopted a *pluralist* methodology, all *modernist* texts exhibit certain methodological characteristics found among the *essentialists* of the general sample. However, because these texts' conceptual perspective is *modernist*, and those methodological approaches which are *essentialist* in character appear to have (paradoxically) been inspired by a *modernist* perspective, I have classed them as *modernist*. None of the texts have adopted a purely *essentialist* perspective – possibly because none of the authors come from a traditional Orientalist-philological background, while the fact that the majority is either Palestinian or appears to identify closely with the (secularist) Palestinians, further precludes the adoption of an *essentialist* dichotomisation.¹²

Brief Contextualisation of the IM

Before embarking on an analysis of the fourteen texts, I will briefly discuss the IM's historical, ideological and organisational development. The Egyptian Brotherhood, founded in 1928 by Hasan al-Banna, began establishing branches in Palestine in 1946, including one in Gaza.¹³ During the early 1950s, this branch was amongst the most active local parties, organising charitable services for the refugees of the 1948 Israeli war of independence, orchestrating demonstrations against Nasser's policy of containment towards resistance activities, and providing military training for the

¹¹ Roy and Rashad respectively.

¹² Even Israelis Schiff & Ya'ari write sympathetically about the Palestinian struggle. There are some *essentialists* among the larger canon, cf. R. Israeli.

¹³ Cf. Milton-Edwards, p40.

resistance through its contacts with Brotherhood officers in the Egyptian army.¹⁴ When, in 1954, Nasser clamped down on the Egyptian Brotherhood, after one of its members tried to assassinate him (apparently without authorisation) in revenge for his imprisoning the Brotherhood leadership,¹⁵ the Gazan Brotherhood suffered the same fate. Many were imprisoned, others took refuge in the Gulf. The movement kept operating, albeit on a much reduced level, until 1958, after which it was effectively silenced.¹⁶ Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip, following the 1967 war, freed the Brotherhood of Nasser's grip, thus ironically allowing it to regroup.

In 1973, Shaykh Ahmad Yassin, a school teacher, and, among others, Ibrahim Yazuri, a pharmacist, established a charitable and educational organisation, al-Mujamma' al-Islami, followed in 1976 by the founding of al-Jam'iyyah al-Islamiyyah by Ahmad Bahr, an *'alim*, and, among others, Ismail Abu Shannab, a civil engineer. Many of those involved in these charities, though not all, had Brotherhood connections. In 1981, women associated with the IM's charities founded, in conjunction with IM leaders, the Jam'iyyah al-Shabbat al-Muslimat (Society of Young Muslim Women).

These charities, providing anything from healthcare to courses in accounting to football clubs, roughly adhered to the principles elaborated by al-Banna and the early Egyptian Brotherhood, emphasising Islamic education and social justice. Incorporating the logic espoused by later Islamist writers such as the Indian-Pakistani Abul A'la Mawdudi and the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb, they sought to lay the basis for an Islamic state by first gradually re-Islamising society, thus creating a generation of people who would be

¹⁴ Milton-Edwards, pp38-53; Hart, pp75-76, 97-105; Sayigh, pp60-65; Abu-Amr, *Fundamentalism*, pp6-9.

¹⁵ Cf. Richard Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, pp105-162.

¹⁶ Cf. Milton-Edwards, pp46-55.

'pure' enough to create an Islamic state.¹⁷ Meanwhile, and particularly following the Iranian revolution in 1978-1979, the IM's ideological message had found resonance with those sections of the burgeoning student population¹⁸ who did not identify with the PLO's more secular elements. These students generally called themselves al-Kutlah al-Islamiyyah (Islamic Bloc) in electoral contests. Though they had close links with the Muslim Brotherhood and its charities, they seem to have had a certain amount of autonomy.

Until the Intifada broke out in 1987, the Brotherhood refrained from resistance activities, instead criticising, and even fighting, those who did resort to armed resistance, on the grounds that the Palestinians were (at the time) no match for the Israeli army, and that the best form of 'resistance' was to fortify the Palestinian nation through Islamic education, in preparation for an eventual battle for liberation. When the Intifada erupted, the Brotherhood leadership chose to join the resistance, partly because it believed the time and the mood to be right, partly because it feared it would lose all popular support if it did not (PLO supporters had already repeatedly accused the Brothers of collaboration with the Israelis for actively opposing their policy of resistance, while younger Brotherhood supporters could no longer be contained and might well have left the movement to join the PLO).¹⁹

To safeguard their social and charitable network in case the Intifada failed, the leadership established a separate organisation, dedicated entirely to resistance, al-Harakah al-Muqawwamah al-Islamiyyah (The Islamic Resistance Movement), acronym

¹⁷ See Mawdudi, *The Process of Islamic Revolution*; Qutb, *Milestones*, pp37-77.

¹⁸ The 1970s saw the establishment of numerous universities, including al-Najah (Nablus), Bir Zeit (near Ramallah) and the Islamic University (Gaza).

¹⁹ This paragraph is based on Milton-Edwards, Usher and interviews with IM leaders Ahmad Yassin, 'Abd al-Fattah Dukhan, and Ismail Abu Shannab.

HaMaS,²⁰ meaning 'zeal'. Most of the Brothers seemed to have joined Hamas (with the exception of those who still held that Islamisation was more urgent than resistance), but many more joined who had not been full-fledged Brotherhood members, and thus lacked the ideological formation the former had had.²¹

Though much of Hamas's energy was spent on fighting the Intifada and maintaining its position *vis à vis* the other Palestinian factions, and though the Brotherhood's transformation into a resistance movement led to the inclusion of less ideologically formed members, the IM's ideological development did not stagnate. Some members brought back fresh insights from their studies abroad, be they from Sudan and Hasan al-Turabi's Islamic Front,²² from Russia²³ or from the United States.²⁴ Interaction with the Lebanese Hizballah and other foreign visitors provided a fertile climate for new ways of thinking among the 415 Islamist expellees who had been evacuated to Marj al-Zuhur in Lebanon in 1992.²⁵ The proliferation of satellite television, and particularly the ready availability of such critical Arabic-language channels as *Al-Jazirah*, also revolutionised the IM's access to trends in world thinking. Consequently, one can find traces of the ideas of a wide variety of thinkers in the IM's discourse, ranging from Marx and Darwin to Islamists Rashid al-Ghannouchi and Yusuf al-Qaradawi.

²⁰ The 's' being the first consonant of 'Islami'.

²¹ Cf. interviews with IM leaders Abu Shannab, Mahmud Zahhar, and former cadre leader 'Muhammad'.

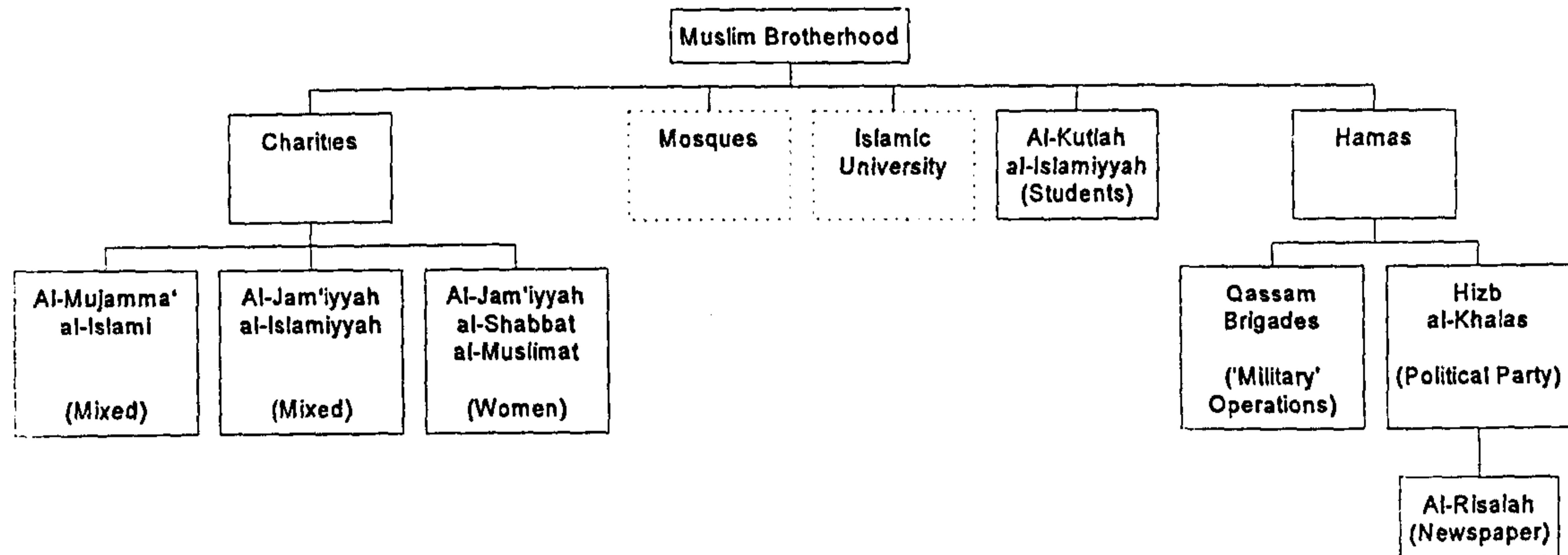
²² Cf. Ghazi Hammad, 'Iyad', 'Kamal' (though not an IM member, as an Islamist staff member at the IUG he would certainly have had influence on his colleagues).

²³ E.g. Yahya Musa studied in Russia during the 1980s.

²⁴ Among others, Ismail Abu Shannab and Mahmud Zahhar studied in the United States during the 1980s.

²⁵ Among them were Hamas leaders 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Rantisi, 'Abd al-Fattah al-Dukhan and Abu 'Ayman Taha, as well as Kutlah leader 'Ayman Taha, who became President of the IUG's Student Council in 1998.

In institutional terms, the Gazan branch of the IM can be depicted as follows:²⁶



Lines in this diagram do not necessarily indicate organisational or hierarchical links.²⁷

In some cases, the connection is limited to an overlap in personnel. This is particularly so in the case of the mosques and the Islamic University which, though receiving financial assistance through the IM and having many IM affiliates among their staff, are not necessarily wholly controlled by the IM. Many of the Islamic University's lecturers and staff, for example, are affiliated to the IM. Yet, at the same time, a good number of Deans, Department Heads and Board Members are unaffiliated or even PLO supporters.²⁸ Similarly, the relationship between the mosques and the IM is not always straightforward, and, though much of what is said from the pulpit does reflect views present within the IM (bearing in mind that the IM is not monolithic), one cannot simply take a mosque's message as authorised by the IM's leadership. The IM's control over

²⁶ This diagram does not include the institutional network in the West Bank, nor the institutional links between the Gazan and West Bank networks, and the Hamas leadership abroad, notably in Jordan.

²⁷ See also Jensen, pp200-205.

²⁸ Cf. interviews with Deans Nabil Abu Ali, Muhammad Nairab and Atallah Abu Sibah.

the mosques, moreover, has diminished significantly since the newly-established Palestinian Authority wrested control away from it in the mid-1990s.²⁹

It is difficult to ascertain exactly how large the IM in Gaza is. In terms of Hamas, opinion polls regularly set popular support at 10-15%,³⁰ though more in-depth surveys give a figure closer to 20-30%.³¹ Given the proliferation and high popularity of Islamic charities affiliated with the IM, and given the strength of electoral support in the universities and various professional unions over the years,³² the latter figure appears more accurate. Opinion polls, moreover, are likely to be affected by the reluctance of IM supporters to disclose their political affiliation to strangers through the answers they give.³³

In terms of actual membership, it is even harder to establish facts. Hamas and the Qassam Brigades being underground organisations, it is not publicly known how many members they have. Nor have I been able to ascertain how many of the 70-80% of the Islamic University's student population who annually vote for the Kutlah are Kutlah members (though a rough estimate would be around 15-25% of the 7,500-strong student body). Staff statistics of the various charities affiliated with the IM tell equally little. Staff are complemented by a fluid body of volunteers, and neither all staff nor all volunteers are IM supporters, let alone members. As for Hizb al-Khalas, spokesperson

²⁹ In the early 1990s, the Brotherhood and Hamas were thought to control some 40% of the Gaza Strip's mosques (Abu-Amr, *Fundamentalism*, p16).

³⁰ Cf. *Jerusalem Media & Communication Centre's Public Opinion Polls*, Nos. 1-20.

³¹ Cf. Theodor Hanf & Bernard Sabella, *A Date with Democracy*, p70.

³² In the past decade, pro-Hamas student parties across the territories have regularly gained the majority or a significant minority of student votes. The same can be said of a number of different professional unions (e.g. the Engineers' and Medical Unions in Gaza, the Chamber of Commerce in Ramallah).

³³ A number of Islamist interviewees underlined this argument as the reason for the discrepancy between opinion poll results and their own reading of Islamist support (which they, optimistically, tend to put around 40% or higher).

Salah Badawil claimed that, in 1998, Khalas, active only in the Gaza Strip, had 5,000 members but many more supporters – as manifested by the large turn-out (40,000 according to Badawil though I've been unable to confirm this figure) to a rally on the future of Jerusalem.³⁴

Each of the various organisations that make up the IM has a well-defined internal hierarchy. Hizb al-Khalas, al-Kutlah al-Islamiyyah and the various charities have legally registered lines of authority, with executive councils, boards of administrators (in the case of the charities) or general assemblies (in the case of Khalas and the Kutlah), and these structures are replicated on a smaller scale at a district level, thus forming a pyramidal hierarchy. Hamas, though not legally registered, has a similar structure, with each geographical region forming its own general assembly, and delegating some of its members to a central assembly, out of which the executive leadership is chosen.³⁵

It is less clear how the different parts of the IM's network relate to each other hierarchically. The charities, the Islamic University and Hizb al-Khalas appear to operate independently from Hamas and the Brotherhood, although the overlap in personnel clearly makes for a certain level of cooperation and mutual support. Khalas's *al-Risalah* newspaper, for example, regularly defends Hamas, while Hamas leaders sometimes posit Khalas as a model 'Islamic democratic' party.³⁶ The Kutlah, though theoretically independent, seems in practice to be in close cooperation with the Hamas leadership – which does, however, not preclude it from acting independently. Those mosques which are still close to Hamas (in terms of both a predominantly pro-Hamas congregation and pro-Hamas prayer leaders and preachers), appear to stand in much the

³⁴ Interview with Badawil.

³⁵ I did not analyse the Qassam Brigades as they are less directly related to the IM's domestic political vision, and, being 'military' units, rather fall within the realm of international relations and war studies. See also p111.

³⁶ Cf. Ismail Abu Shannab, *The Islamic Approach and the Subject of Democracy*.

same relationship to the latter as the Kutlah: functional independence coupled to close cooperation.³⁷

As for the relationship between Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood, it is difficult to say anything conclusively.³⁸ From what I have heard, though, it seems that the two organisations have more or less merged, effectively forming three sub-groups: one consisting of those Brothers who are uncomfortable with the direction Hamas has taken (who may well have turned their backs on the new Hamas-Brotherhood organisation and sought refuge in the charities and mosques), one consisting of those Hamas activists/supporters whose ideological commitment is considered too shallow for positions of ideological authority, and one consisting of those Brothers-turned-Hamas-activists and those Hamas-activists-turned-Brothers whose ideological commitment is beyond doubt. From now on, I will thus use the term Hamas to refer to both these organisations.

Though the Qassam Brigades did not form part of my research, as they only indirectly relate to the IM's domestic political vision, concerned as they are with warfare against Israel (see p111 for a justification for this exclusion), it is worthwhile mentioning that their organisational link with Hamas in Gaza appears to be increasingly tenuous. Most operations are prepared in the West Bank while much of the finances seems to come through the Hamas office in Jordan. Over the past half decade, the leadership in Gaza and that in Amman have repeatedly clashed over fundamental policy issues, such as whether or not to participate in the Palestinian elections of 1996 and to what extent

³⁷ Jensen paints a similar picture of loose institutional linkage between the various parts of the IM.

³⁸ Some of my interviewees insisted the Brotherhood had ceased to exist as an organisation (only to remain as a way of life); others insisted that to be in a position of leadership in Hamas, one must have become a Brother; yet others were shocked that their colleagues had mentioned the existence of the Brotherhood, saying that they thought its existence was secret (which has intensified my belief that the middle group spoke most truthfully).

suicide operations were still justified towards the end of the 1990s.³⁹ The Gazan leadership has displayed ever more discomfort over the suicide operations, and, while they still tend to publicly support them, they appear to be searching for alternatives. One indication that it had lost control over the various semi-independent cells which make up the Brigades is the appeal Mahmud Zahhar, one of its spokesmen, made at a life press conference to those responsible for the spate of suicide bombings following the assassination of Yahya Ayyash in 1996, to stop the campaign. Mishal and Sela, drawing on Israeli security records, similarly describe numerous violent incidents which did not appear to have been authorised by the IM's political leadership.⁴⁰

The socio-economic profile of the IM's members and supporters, as far as this is known, is varied – though very few of the country's elite appear to be among its ranks. It attracts students, professionals and merchants, it attracts supporters from both refugee camps and city areas, from among the poor as well as the middle-classes, from among the labourers as well as the highly educated. Interestingly, though it has a number of supporters among the 'religious intelligentsia', and though its more conservative members are often allied to the religious establishment on issues such as women's rights (see Chapter 7), there appear to be few religious functionaries or scholars among the IM's highest echelons. As for geographical distribution, both the charitable network and the political movement have branches in all the Strip's major towns and refugee camps. In either case, however, the centre of power appears to be in Gaza City.

As for its place in the larger political arena, the political branches of the IM (Hamas, Khalas and the Kutlah) operate independently from both the PLO and the other Islamist groups, most significantly Islamic Jihad as the other groups have either withered, viz. Hizb al-Tahrir, or are politically quietist, viz. al-Salafiyyun. The IM does not recognise

³⁹ See also Chapter 7.

⁴⁰ Shaul Mishal & Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas*, pp49-82.

the PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinians, as it does not believe that the PLO represents the entire Palestinian people. It particularly disagrees with the latter's approach to the Peace Process, with its style of leadership and with what it believes to be its secular stance (see p55 for discussion of problematicity of labelling the PLO secular).⁴¹

The IM's non-acceptance of the PLO as the sole representative is partly ideology-based (specifically so in the case of the leftist PLO parties, such as the Popular and Democratic Fronts for the Liberation of Palestine, the PFLP and the DFLP), partly a matter of rivalry (particularly in the case of Fatah).⁴² In a similar vein, its relationship with Islamic Jihad is complicated by both ideological differences and rivalry, as both covet the same constituency. In both cases, relationships are further complicated by the fact that the IM believes Fatah and Islamic Jihad to be derivative of the Brotherhood. Islamic Jihad was founded in the early 1980s by Muslim Brothers who disagreed with the IM's refusal to join the resistance, while many of Fatah's founders had had close ties with the Muslim Brotherhood of the 1950s (see p56). However, rivalry and ideological differences notwithstanding, the IM does enter into alliances when political pragmatism dictates this.⁴³

⁴¹ Cf. Hamas's *Mithaq*; Abu Shannab, *The Islamic Approach*; *Khalas Conference Papers 1-3*; Rashad; Usher; Abu-Amr, *Fundamentalism*.

⁴² Hamas has made no secret of its desire to equal or outdo Fatah in influence. Moreover, since a significant number of Fatah supporters veer towards Islamism in outlook, the constituencies of Fatah and the IM overlap. Paradoxically, rivalry also exists between Hamas and the leftist PFLP and DFLP over those who reject the current Peace Process and criticise the Fatah-dominated Palestinian Authority.

⁴³ Cf. the alliance of all small opposition parties at al-Azhar University against Fatah, demanding a change in the university's electoral rules (Spring 1998). See also the numerous jointly signed communiqués in Khalas's *Special Information File concerning the Communiqués of Hizb al-Khalas*.

2.1 WESTERN CONSTRUCTS OF PALESTINIAN ISLAMISM

Following the general sample, the *modernist* texts portray the IM as violent,⁴⁴ anti-pluralistic⁴⁵ and anti-democratic.⁴⁶ Yet, unlike their general counterparts, they tend to accredit these attributes more to the IM being Islamist than to its context (such as violent political climate or lack of structural development needed to underpin democratisation). This position not only resembles that of the general *essentialists*, it is also directly related to the adoption of *essentialist* methodological characteristics (see further). It seems to be rooted in the *modernists*' almost unquestioning acceptance of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and thus of its hegemonic aspirations. This acceptance appears itself to be informed by a host of interconnected reasons inspired by *modernist*-related positions – ranging from affinity with the secular, 'progressive' outlook of the PLO's Left, or the assumption that the PLO is the most likely force for modernity in Palestine, to the conviction that to question the PLO's legitimacy is to undermine the Palestinian cause, as the majority of Palestinians are believed to accept the PLO as their representative. Conversely, and a further indication that a *modernist* perspective underlies this bias towards the PLO, the IM is seen as incapable of dealing adequately with the demands of modernity.⁴⁷

Acceptance of the PLO's hegemonic aspirations seems to underlie the *modernist* texts' ready adoption of the PLO's version of events, leading them to conclude, for instance, that the IM is the chief perpetrator of violence in the clashes between it and the PLO,

⁴⁴ Cf. Shadid, pp679-680; Milton-Edwards, pp106-116, 132-138. Exceptions: Ahmad, Nüsse.

⁴⁵ Cf. Abu-Amr, ' Hamas', p18; Shadid, pp677-680; Ahmad, pp56-57.

⁴⁶ Cf. Usher, p78; Ahmad, pp56-57; Abu-Amr, ' Hamas', p18 (Hamas condemns democracy as Western, preferable to dictatorship until "establishment of Islamic rule").

⁴⁷ Cf. Usher, p78; Milton-Edwards, pp197-198. Implied by cf. Shadid, Abu-Amr. Nüsse diverges somewhat.

without questioning the latter's role in these events.⁴⁸ Shadid even goes so far as to claim that "the majority [of the nationalists] insist on withdrawing and avoiding violence" rather than "fight[ing] the violence of the Brotherhood" – a claim which even a cursory investigation of the most notorious clashes calls into question.⁴⁹ Once it is accepted that the IM is the chief perpetrator, it is impossible to attribute outbursts of violence to context alone (as the general *modernists* would have done) because such an explanation would implicate both the IM and the PLO, as they operate within the same context. A non-contextual explanation must thus be found, and 'Islamist nature' comes readily to hand – especially as many of the more vocal PLO leaders portray themselves as secular and progressive, while tending to depict the IM as overly Islamic and backward.⁵⁰ Not only does this explanation fit the Western prejudice that traditional Islam has a penchant for violence (which even Westernised Arab Muslims seem to have been influenced by),⁵¹ it also suits the *modernist* position that mixing politics and religion leads to violence.

Similarly, acceptance of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians seems to have led the *modernist* texts to see the IM as derivative (caused solely by the PLO's failures, and the PLO's traditional enemies, Israel and Jordan; see further) and

⁴⁸ Cf. Shadid, pp679-680; Milton-Edwards, pp106-116, 132-138; Schiff & Ya'ari, pp225-227; Abu-Amr, *Fundamentalism*, pp43-46 (though Abu-Amr tries to render a balanced account by including statements from both sides, he overemphasises Islamist violence without counterbalancing it with a discussion of PLO violence); Usher, pp68-69 (singling Hamas out for "internecine 'collaborator' killings" where all parties were involved); Hammami, pp24-28 (allegations of violent imposition of headscarf on PLO activists; see Chapter 5). Nüsse ignores inter-Palestinian violence as it is outside the focus of her research.

⁴⁹ Cf. 1982 clashes at Nablus' al-Najah University and 1983 clashes at the Islamic University of Gaza. For discussion of Gaza events, see Chapter 4. Regarding al-Najah, the student leader of Fatah at the time of the clashes acknowledged that the violence was partly triggered by Fatah's refusal to recognise the victory of the Islamists in the Student Council elections, while both neutral and Islamist eye witnesses insisted this refusal was expressed in a violently enforced disruption of university life, and that, after the clashes, PLO supporters visited the houses of Islamist students to rough them up (see Chapter 4, footnote 68).

⁵⁰ Cf. personal interviews with Freh Abu-Middin (Minister of Justice); Top MOPIC Official.

⁵¹ Cf. Shadid, Abu-Amr.

anti-nationalistic.⁵² As such, the IM's rise to power is characterised as illegitimate, the IM depicted as a usurper of the PLO's rightful role.⁵³ Hamas's calling for separate strikes during the Intifada is painted as proof of its betrayal of the Palestinian cause,⁵⁴ while its championing of Islamic dress is condemned as undermining Palestinian culture in order to weaken national unity (despite the fact that those primarily adopting Islamic dress are women who would otherwise often wear Western clothes).⁵⁵

Like the general sample, the *modernists* allow for the possibility that the IM may change – but on their terms. In this vein, Hamas is urged by Abu-Amr to adopt “acceptable positions” on pluralism and democracy and to embrace secularism.⁵⁶ Usher likewise singles out “Hamas's rejection of secularism” as one of the three principal threats to the Palestinians' fight against Zionism (p78). Unless Hamas “absorb Western liberal traditions and rearticulate them”, insists Milton-Edwards, it will not survive in the “Palestinian political climate” (p209).

The *pluralist* texts, in contrast, do not stress the IM's alleged violent and intolerant attitude,⁵⁷ rather concentrating on its charitable institutions, the way these provide services to anyone regardless of ideology or creed, and even at times include Christians

⁵² Shadid, pp674-676; Abu-Amr, 'Hamas', pp7-8, 17-18; Usher, pp66, 69, 78; Milton-Edwards, pp109-110.

⁵³ Cf. depiction of struggle for Islamic University; Chapter 4.

⁵⁴ Schiff & Ya'ari, pp235-236; Jubran, pp9-10.

⁵⁵ Cf. Shadid, p671. Hammami infers the same, though less explicitly so (p25).

⁵⁶ Abu-Amr, 'Hamas', p18; *Fundamentalism*, pp131-132 (insisting that Hamas joins the “secular” PLO on the PLO's conditions).

⁵⁷ Rashad mentions Hamas-PLO violence in passing (ppii, 31-32), as well as its efforts to curb it (pp1, 30-34, 40-42). Roy dichotomises somewhat facetiously between Hamas (radical, violent) and Islamic-based social services (moderate, constructive). Holt only makes oblique reference to clashes between Islamists and 'nationalists' (pp64-65). Jensen mentions Islamist violence only in connection with Israeli and Palestinian Authority attempts to gain Western support by painting a strong Islamist opposition (pp204-205).

in their executive boards.⁵⁸ Typically, they do not treat the IM as monolithic, instead highlighting internal debates, and conflicting motives in 'consumers' of IM charities.⁵⁹ As these texts are more sociologically than politically oriented, they tend not to discuss issues of democracy directly.⁶⁰ When they do, they faintly echo the *modernist* approach by observing that the IM has no clear democratic position; yet they do so without insisting that it cannot develop such a position while keeping its non-secularist principles.⁶¹ Holt alone explicitly questions the universal applicability of Western (secularist) solutions (pp73-74). At the same time, none of the other texts dogmatically insists on Western solutions, instead allowing for alternatives.

2.2 CONCEPTUAL PERSPECTIVES

Following the issues raised in the previous chapter, I will discuss the attitudes of the *modernists* and *pluralists* of this sample to the question of the universal applicability of the Western historical trajectory and the extent to which they indulge in dichotomisation.

Attitudes towards the Western Model

The *modernist* texts posit the Western historical trajectory as the universal model. This position can be gleaned from the way the PLO is treated as the harbinger of modernity,

⁵⁸ Cf. Roy, pp17-30 (p22 re Christian partner in charity); Jensen, p210 (describing sample of consumers of Islamist-run computer course); Rashad, pp8-9, 13.

⁵⁹ Cf. Holt, pp69-73; Roy, pp9, 17-30; Jensen, pp197-198, 207-215; Rashad, pp11-12.

⁶⁰ Rashad is the exception, concentrating on politics; yet, he too only indirectly addresses issues of democracy (cf. discussion of Hamas's involvement in elections, pp15-16).

⁶¹ Cf. Roy, pp26-27.

the IM as an obstacle which, on the basis of its “primitive and prohibitive interpretation of Islam” cannot begin to meet the exigencies of modernity, instead leading Palestine to a medieval-style autocracy, without democracy and respect for human rights – unless it adopts secularism and Western liberal traditions.⁶² Such conclusions appear to be rooted in the conviction that Palestinian society is inevitably progressing towards a secular, democratic modernity and that anything detracting it from its course is a temporary anomaly.⁶³ Consequently, the rise in the IM’s popularity is explained as primarily a function of the PLO’s failures, of King Hussein’s strategic favours and initial covert Israeli support towards the IM (both as strategies to undermine the PLO).⁶⁴ These factors played a part. Israeli lenience did help the IM – though it also had its share of forced closures and imprisonments.⁶⁵ Good relations with the King similarly helped. But it is, at best, simplistic to credit its growth entirely to external factors. Rather, such explanations seem to be motivated by a reluctance to admit that the IM might have grown also by the force of its ideology and praxis (given its reputation for financial integrity and social responsibility) – an admission which might contradict the assumption that the Palestinians are secular-minded.

⁶² Cf. Usher, p78. Milton-Edwards, Ahmad and Abu-Amr hint at the same (cf. Abu-Amr, *Fundamentalism*, pp128-130), though Milton-Edwards is the least identified with the PLO. Schiff & Ya’ari imply it by referring to the IM’s cultural programme as a “return to the ways of the ancients” (p226); cf. also Shadid, pp670-674; Hammami, p25 (“reactionary”). Again, Nüsse is the exception. Legrain remains neutral.

⁶³ Cf. Abu-Amr: “Palestinian society has a strong secular tradition” (*Fundamentalism*, pp128-132); Shadid hinting education and urbanisation will result in secularisation (pp662-664; for more explicit expression of Shadid’s attitude towards education and secularisation, see Shadid & Seltzer, ‘Political Attitudes of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip’, *Middle East Journal* 42(1), pp24-25).

⁶⁴ Cf. Shadid, pp674-676; Abu-Amr, ‘ Hamas’, pp7-8, 17-18; *Fundamentalism*, p131; Usher, pp66-69 (Hamas a “barometer of discontent”), 78; Milton-Edwards, pp8, 109-110.

⁶⁵ The Israelis shut down al-Mujamma’ and its offshoots a number of times, refused it a permit for much of the 1970s, and imprisoned its leader Ahmad Yassin and various others during the 1970s and 1980s (cf. personal interviews with Yassin III; Ibrahim Yazuri, Director of al-Mujamma’; Muhammad Shamma’, Deputy Director).

The assumption that "Palestinian society has a strong secular tradition", which underlies the call for Hamas to adopt secularism,⁶⁶ is in need of problematisation. A survey conducted by Shadid and Seltzer (*sic*) in the mid-1980s demonstrates that some 60% of respondents favoured a state based, in some way, on Islam, against 11% favouring an explicitly secular state.⁶⁷ My survey at Gaza's pro-Fatah al-Azhar University indicates that over 80% of Fatah supporters and nearly 60% of (leftist) PFLP supporters champion an Islamic or mixed Islamic-secular state.⁶⁸ Likewise, a majority of Palestinians still appear to view Islamic law as the legitimate source for any future legal framework.⁶⁹ Moreover, though regular opinion polls set popular support for overtly Islamist organisations such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad at 10-15%,⁷⁰ more in-depth surveys set it at 20-30%.⁷¹

Models for marrying religion and politics are myriad in recent Palestinian history. Some of the most influential political figures during the British Mandate period (1920-1947) were religious leaders, just as some of the main political institutions were religious.⁷²

⁶⁶ Cf. Abu-Amr, *Fundamentalism*, pp128-132.

⁶⁷ 28.1% favoured a "state based on Islamic Law", 31.3% a "state based on Arab nationalism and Islam", 22.5% a "Democratic-Palestinian" state, 11.1% a "Democratic-secular" state (Shadid & Seltzer, p24).

⁶⁸ Of 398 Azhar students who stated they nationally supported Fatah, 53% said they hoped to see an Islamic state in Palestine, 28.4% a mixed Islamic-secular state (this term, familiar to students, indicates that Islam should have some official role in state structures). Of the 14 who put their trust in the (leftist) PFLP, the figures are 57.1%, 7.1%, 21.4%! Overall, 74.5% of 526 Azhar students answering the question 'To what extent should religion have influence over politics?' replied 70% or over (35% stating 100%).

⁶⁹ Cf. at the final convention in April 1998 of the Gazan branch of the Model Parliament – Women and Legislation, an umbrella organisation of Palestinian institutions concerned with women's rights with close links to the Palestinian Left, only a few participants advocated abolishing Islamic law as the basis for law in Palestine.

⁷⁰ Cf. *Jerusalem Media & Communication Centre's Public Opinion Polls*, Nos. 1-20.

⁷¹ Cf. Theodor Hanf & Bernard Sabella, *A Date with Democracy*, p70.

⁷² Opposition to the British was led by Hajj Amin al-Hussayni, Mufti of Jerusalem, and the Supreme Muslim Council (cf. Nels Johnson, *Islam and the Politics of Meaning in Palestinian Nationalism*, pp17-18; Michael Dumper, *Islam and Israel – Muslim Religious Endowments and the Jewish State*, pp18-24).

Much of the political language of the 1920s drew on religious images,⁷³ while most of the major clashes between Palestinians and Zionists occurred around religious feasts or symbols.⁷⁴ One of the first guerilla groups to fight the British and trigger the Arab Revolt (1936-1939), was led by a religious cleric, Shaykh Izz al-Din al-Qassam, whose ideas were sufficiently close to the Muslim Brotherhood to have been adopted by Hamas as one of their military-ideological icons.⁷⁵

During the first Arab-Israeli war of 1948, when Gaza's population was tripled by the influx of refugees from what is now Israel,⁷⁶ and Palestinians felt betrayed by the Arab leaders and officers leading the offensive for their lack of commitment to Palestine,⁷⁷ the Egyptian Muslim Brothers were among the few providing volunteer units, while the Palestinian Brotherhood branches, established by visiting Egyptian Brothers in 1946, were the most prominent, and effective, in providing assistance to the refugees afterwards and in organising guerilla attacks against Israel.⁷⁸ Having come under Egyptian rule after the 1948 war, the Gazan Brotherhood, initially one of the largest movements, was gradually suppressed in Nasser's general clampdown on the Brotherhood from 1954 onwards.⁷⁹ In the Jordanian-ruled West Bank, the Brothers

⁷³ Cf. reminding Muslims worldwide of the religious nature of the struggle for Jerusalem, and condemning land sales to Jews arguing that land was sacred, carrying the corpses of "friends of the prophet and the early [Muslim] warriors"; Johnson, pp22-23, 24. See also Dumper, p21(n135).

⁷⁴ Cf. 1920-1921 clashes around feast of Nabi Musa, 1928-1929 clashes around rival claims to Wailing Wall.

⁷⁵ Cf. Johnson, pp38-47; Yehoshua Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement*, p136; Milton-Edwards, pp11-23.

⁷⁶ Cf. Roy, *The Gaza Strip: The Political Economy of De-development*, p15.

⁷⁷ Alan Hart, *Arafat*, pp77-80.

⁷⁸ Gazan Brotherhood branch primarily engaged in resistance, not so West Bank branches. Cf. Milton-Edwards, pp38-53; Hart, pp75-76, 97-105; Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, pp60-65; Abu-Amr, *Fundamentalism*, pp6-9.

⁷⁹ In 1954, membership was over a thousand, with Abu-Amr describing it as "one of the largest organizations" in Gaza. Cf. Abu-Amr, *Fundamentalism*, pp7-10; Milton-Edwards, pp46-55. For Egyptian events, see Mitchell, pp105-162.

were the only political party allowed to operate freely, almost without interruption, until the Israelis occupied the West Bank in 1967.⁸⁰

Even during the supposedly secular decades of the 1960s and 1970s, when first Nasserism, then Palestinian nationalism were at their uncontested height, religion was never far from politics, as Nasser's and Arafat's regular (rhetorical) references to Islam suggest. The 1970s actually saw an increase in general religious fervour. In 1978 alone, three Islamic Shari'ah colleges were established,⁸¹ while between 1967 and 1987 the number of mosques doubled in the West Bank, and tripled in Gaza.⁸² A 1982 survey of Muslim students revealed that all respondents observed Islamic practices strictly, while 78% of the women said they chose to wear the *hijāb* (headscarf) without family pressure.⁸³ Though the IM played a role in this process, it was but one among many factors, as exemplified by the fact that many of those establishing the Islamic colleges in 1978 had no affiliation with the Brotherhood.⁸⁴ In short, proposing to practise an Islamicly inspired form of politics is not an anomaly to Palestinian society.

The claim that the PLO is secular, which likewise undergirds the *modernist* call for Hamas to adopt secularism,⁸⁵ is equally problematic. The PLO is an umbrella organisation containing different Palestinian resistance movements. Though a number of the smaller movements, such as the leftist Popular and Democratic Fronts for the

⁸⁰ Cf. Lawrence Tal, 'Dealing with Radical Islam: The Case of Jordan', *Survival* 37(3), pp140-141; Milton-Edwards, pp55-64; Amnon Cohen, *Political Parties in the West Bank under the Jordanian Regime, 1949-1967*, Ch. 4.

⁸¹ Hebron, Gaza and Jerusalem; cf. Emile Sahliyah, *In Search of Leadership*, p144.

⁸² Gaza: from 200 to 600 mosques; West Bank: 400 to 750 (Abu-Amr, *Fundamentalism*, p15).

⁸³ Sahliyah, pp143-144.

⁸⁴ See Chapter 4 regarding Islamic University of Gaza. For discussion of other factors fuelling religiosity, cf. Jensen, pp203-204; Milton-Edwards, pp4-9.

⁸⁵ Cf. Abu-Amr, *Fundamentalism*, pp128-132.

Liberation of Palestine (PFLP and DFLP, founded in 1967 and 1969 respectively), are explicitly secular, the largest and most powerful group, Arafat's Fatah, is ambiguous about secularism. In the late 1960s, when Fatah formulated its state vision, it pointedly refrained from calling it secular, instead defining it as: "A democratic, progressive, non-sectarian state in which Jews, Christians and Muslims would live together in peace and enjoy the same rights".⁸⁶ Arafat underlined that "[w]e did not issue the slogan calling for the establishment of a secular state ... this is a distortion of the expression of democracy we proclaim". Rather, Arafat continued, "[w]e do not debate the structure of the new state in detail because what we need now is the greatest possible national cohesion".⁸⁷ This intentional ambiguity enabled Fatah to absorb adherents from widely differing ideologies. However, if the results of my 1998 survey at Gaza's al-Azhar University are representative of a general trend in Fatah, a majority of Fatah supporters prefer Islamicly oriented ideologies over secular ones.⁸⁸

Within Fatah, models of religio-politics abound. A number of its founders had close links with the Muslim Brothers, ranging from membership and enrolment in the latter's military training programmes, to electoral alliances and mounting attacks on Israel under their umbrella, before founding Fatah in 1957.⁸⁹ Though involvement with the Brothers may have been motivated by the fact that the Brothers were, at the time, one of the few movements actively agitating for the liberation of Palestine, the close cooperation also indicates a certain amount of affinity in purpose and worldview. That this affinity went deeper than mere temporal opportunism seems to be suggested by the fact that in the late 1960s a number of Brothers joined the PLO's guerilla forces in Jordan, first as Islamic

⁸⁶ Conclusion of third Fatah Congress, quoted in Alain Gresh, *The PLO*, p32.

⁸⁷ Interview cited by *Middle East Report* 1969-1970, p335; quoted in Gresh, p50.

⁸⁸ See footnote 68.

⁸⁹ Cf. Arafat, Salah Khalaf (Abu Iyad), Khalil Wazir (Abu Jihad) and Khaled al-Hassan, all members of Fatah's Central Committee (see Hart, pp75-76, 100-101, 84-88, 146; Sayigh, pp294, 884, 890).

Fatah, then acquiring the name of Qawa'id (Kata'ib) al-Shuyukh, the shaykhs' bases (battalions), and that Brothers continued to enlist with Fatah into the 1980s.⁹⁰

To say that the Palestinians are a secularly-oriented people and that only a secularly-oriented organisation such as the PLO can legitimately represent them, is thus false on two counts, since neither the Palestinians as a whole nor the PLO are wholly secular. Moreover, by labelling the PLO secular, and the IM anti-secular, the *modernist* texts fall into the trap of dichotomisation, foreclosing the possibility of cross-over elements (see further).

Positing the West as model precludes the *modernists*, as in the general sample, from an in-depth engagement with Islamist concepts. Because it is assumed that Islamism will eventually give way to secularism, its political ideas are not taken sufficiently seriously to be thoroughly analysed. The conviction that the IM is naturally violent further erodes interest in the IM's democratic-like proclamations. Issues concerning democracy are mentioned only in passing, admonishing the IM to adopt them, but without any serious analysis of which aspects of democracy the IM embraces and which it rejects. Only Nüsse, and to a lesser extent Legrain,⁹¹ engage to some depth with Islamist concepts. Nüsse consciously chooses to study the IM's publications in, paradoxically, an Orientalist manner:

Orientalist criticism seems to have led, unfortunately, to a neglect of the study of texts. But if the writings are not mistaken for reality and the research is not guided by the wish to provide any ahistorical proof of some "essence of Islam" ... then this

⁹⁰ Sayigh, p226. Personal interview with Hamas leader Ismail Abu Shannab (II). Abu-Amr suggests that the 1960s cooperation was due more to the PLO's refusal (partly under pressure from Egyptian President Nasser) to allow the Brothers to organise themselves militarily than to affinity (*Fundamentalism*, p41). Nevertheless, there must have been sufficient affinity for both sides to agree to this public arrangement.

⁹¹ Legrain, too, places great emphasis on the study of Hamas communiqués. See also Legrain & Chenard, *Les voix du soulèvement palestinien* (collection of Intifada communiqués).

“Orientalist” type of work can be an important supplement, ... a solid basis for any more contextual research.⁹²

Though this path leads Nüsse to take Islamist concepts seriously, her *modernist* preconceptions prevent her from engaging in a two-way dialectic because they prevent her from exploring Islamist concepts from within. Examples are her discussion of the IM’s adoption of the term ‘democracy’ (see ‘Dichotomisation’) and its attitude towards Christians (see ‘Definition’).

Unlike *modernists*, *pluralists* are more willing to problematise the Western model and do not presume *a priori* that Islam or Islamism *per se* is incompatible with modernity or democracy. Holt illustrates this when she states, concluding a discussion of the IM’s attitude towards women, that “Islam does not preclude democracy any more than a state based on Islamic law precludes women’s rights” (p74). Holt refrains from relativism by maintaining democracy as her standard of evaluation. Her *pluralism* lies in her acknowledging that democracy may take different forms. In a similar vein, Roy observes that:

The key question in Gaza, as elsewhere in the Arab world, is not whether Arab society will be religious or secular, but whether people will eat, develop, and progress. In all these respects, Islamic institutions have a critical role to play, especially now (p34).

Islamism, in the eyes of these authors, is not necessarily an anomaly nor does it have to adopt secular or liberal attitudes to be valid. The rise of Islamist influence is thus not exclusively explained in terms of the failure of secularism or the PLO, or on account of being a pawn in the hands of Israelis or Jordanians. Similarly, no particular value judgement is expressed about the increase in religious fervour in Palestine because there

⁹² Nüsse, p3. See also Chapter 1, footnote 26.

is no need to explain it away as an aberration. Such an approach enables Jensen, for instance, to acknowledge without alarmism or condemnation that “[t]he main contenders for defining the political landscape of tomorrow, apart from the present-day rulers, is the Islamist opposition” (p197).

Concomitant with this attitude is greater openness to each movement’s benefits and which one should legitimately represent the Palestinians. The *pluralists* do not interpret IM actions as anti-nationalistic, or as an unforgivable threat to the PLO. Resultantly, they do not depict an absolutist-like dichotomy between PLO and IM, or between IM and secular modernity. Roy agrees with the others that “Islamic institutions have a critical role to play” and is considerably scathing in her critique of Arafat and his PNA.⁹³ Moreover, “[t]he West”, she insists, “in demonizing Hamas, and by extension, all parts of the Islamic movement in Gaza, is committing a potentially fatal error”. Rather, it should differentiate between radical and moderate Islamists and support the moderate wing for the vital role it plays in stabilising the economy and moderating the effects of occupation, such as alienation and dislocation (p33). Without such dichotomies, the *pluralists* are able to abandon any fixation with violence, and display a certain amount of sympathy and respect for the Islamist contribution to society. Following Roy,

A particular strength of Islamic institutions ... comes from the clarity and consistency of their message. Arafat’s message is fluctuating and contradictory, and hardly relevant to the difficulties of everyday life; the Islamic message is clear, unchanging, and attainable: a moral and ordered life can be created and sustained through Islam. The importance of this fact should not be underestimated in a social and economic order as fractured as Gaza’s (p25).

⁹³ Roy, pp28, 34; 13-17.

Rashad goes furthest in this respect, at times almost completely identifying himself with the IM. An illustration is his description of the negotiations about Hamas joining the PLO, particularly when compared to some *modernist* descriptions. In Rashad's version, Hamas was the willing partner, while Arafat's refusal to accept its legitimate conditions scuppered the deal. "Despite the tensions", Rashad contends, "the Islamists continued to hold meetings with PLO officials in an attempt to ... avoid inter-Palestinian conflict". Hamas's condition of demanding 40% of the seats on the PLO's governing body is described as reasonable, reflecting an estimation of popular support in the territories. *Modernists* such as Abu-Amr, on the other hand, insist that Hamas "refused to work with the PLO because of irreconcilable ideological and political differences". In this view, the discussions were initiated by the PLO, while Hamas's "precondition that it be given 40 to 50 percent of the seats in the Palestine National Council", was unacceptable because it would enable Hamas to "take over the PLO from within", and was thus clearly intended "to make it extremely difficult for the PLO to accept them".⁹⁴ Both views probably carry some truth. But Rashad's over-identification with the IM, like Abu-Amr's over-identification with the PLO, calls into question whether he has been able to remain sufficiently critical.

Finally, in contrast to the *modernists*, the *pluralists* do not tend to assume that Palestinian society is secular. The exception is Roy who insists on the factually dubious assumption (see above) that Palestinians do not want a religious but a "secular national state" (p28).

⁹⁴ Abu-Amr, *Fundamentalism*, pp131-132.

PAGE

NUMBERING

AS ORIGINAL

a backward-looking religious movement whose main enemies are Western culture and Western political systems”, and highlighting those Islamist arguments which have adopted Western reasoning, ends up warning that “[t]he fixed principles of traditional Islamic thought could be eroded by the absorption of too many “alien” concepts, increasing the inner contradictions of the Islamists’ ideology” (pp1, 180). Western notions are thus depicted almost as poison to the Islamic framework, rendering hybrid Islamic-Western thinking practically inconceivable.

An interesting example is Nüsse’s suggestion that the Islamists’ adoption of the terms ‘democracy’ and ‘will of the people’ is tactical, rather than principled, adopted in the expectation that free elections will give them power. Nüsse bases this conclusion on the observation that as recently as the 1950s the Egyptian Brotherhood ideologue Sayyid Qutb condemned the idea of popular sovereignty as antithetical to Islam, in which God alone has sovereign power, and on the “absence of discussion” within the movement surrounding “this major innovation” of adopting the concepts of ‘democracy’ and ‘popular will’ (pp76-77).

Adoption of these terms may well have a tactical component. But what if they are adopted to determine power-sharing internally? Islamist standards are indeed at present incompatible with Western values (divine versus popular sovereignty being one example). But what of those notions that do overlap? Before Qutb, the influential Indian Islamist thinker Abul Ala Mawdudi had already developed his theory of “theodemocracy” which justified elections and political representation on the basis of God having given humanity viceregal sovereignty, leading to a theory closely resembling Western contractarianism (see Chapter 6). Contemporary Islamist thinkers such as the Tunisian Rashid al-Ghannouchi and the Sudanese Hasan al-Turabi, have further developed these ideas. The IM, acknowledging its debt to these men, has been influenced by these ideas. And moreover, it has taken inspiration from democratic

praxis as observed in Israel, and, to a lesser extent, other Western democracies. While clues to these developments may not have been obvious in the 1990-1992 publications of the British-based, Hamas-affiliated magazine *Filastin al-Muslima* (Nüsse's main source of information), as the Intifada was still raging at that time, those clues that were present are likely to have been obscured by Nüsse's dichotomising attitude which sets Islamist and Western thought apart.

Because of the absence of a rigorous theoretical framework (see 'Definition') in the fashion of the general *modernist* sample, the dichotomisation in these *modernist* texts borders at times on essentialisation, with opposites being defined in a reductionist manner. One manifestation of such essentialisation is the way in which the IM's actions are characterised as determined by Islam, while the PLO's actions are characterised as determined by secularism. Attitudes to Christians tend to be discussed in this way. The IM's reliance on Islam is blamed for preventing it from seeing Christians as fully equal citizens (despite some tentative indications to the contrary).⁹⁷ The PLO's secularist position is regarded as enabling it to wholly integrate Christians (despite a tendency in Fatah, bitterly fought by some Christians, to allot political quotas to Christians on a sectarian basis).⁹⁸ This elevation of Islam to the primary factor determining the IM's nature is equally evident in the way some *modernist* texts highlight the IM's use of mosques, ignoring Fatah's similar recourse to them (see 'Decontextualisation'). In a similar vein, essentialist dichotomisation is practised in the way the IM's actions are characterised as bad, while the PLO's actions are portrayed as justified, or at least excusable. A case in point is the way the IM's attempts to gain influence in Palestine's universities are depicted as Machiavellian and anti-nationalistic, as opposed to the

⁹⁷ Cf. Nüsse, pp101-103.

⁹⁸ Cf. Abu-Amr, *Fundamentalism*, pp128-129; *Jerusalem Times*, 01.12.1995 (Jessica Berry, 'Controversy over Christian Quota'; Hanna Samara, 'Christians in the Election Law').

'legitimate' attempts by Fatah to create or maintain a hegemonic position (see Chapter 4).

Such essentialising is encouraged by Palestinian popular culture which, like most, veers towards essentialism, and influences rumours, the views of some politicians, and the news coverage of some newspapers. Rumours are one of the main carriers of this essentialism, because they naturally encourage reductionism. Reductionist symbols, such as wearing a beard, become indubitable signifiers of a larger phenomenon, such as being a Hamas member. Vague suspicions based on flimsy information rapidly become unshakeable facts in the telling. Gazan society is particularly rife with rumours – thanks to the isolation Israel's 'collective incarceration' imposes on the Gaza Strip (over half the population has never been allowed by the Israeli authorities to leave the Strip) and to years of occupation which have broken down more official channels of communication and bred a secretive environment. 'Facts', particularly concerning political events, thus often have dubious foundations in rumour. Yet, encouraged by the cultural tendency in Gaza not to admit to not knowing something for sure, such ambiguous conclusions are passed on with great conviction, leaving the next person in the chain of rumour no reason to not believe the statement. I was assured on numerous occasions that particular people were Hamas members, especially if they preached, had a beard, or were connected to a mosque – only to find out later that they were from Fatah or the religious establishment.

In contrast, the *pluralist* texts tend to be more willing to neutralise dichotomisation and essentialisation by problematising labels and embracing contradictory data. Jensen, for example, lists the different reasons his interviewees quote for joining their sports club, despite a certain amount of internal contradiction. The same person is thus quoted as saying he joined the club "mainly for religious reasons", while later acknowledging he plays there because it was "close to my home". Rather than dismissing the religious

reasons as insincere, the result of indoctrination, or elevating them to the essence of these men's life, Jensen takes both reasons seriously, refusing to reduce life's complexity.⁹⁹ The weakness in this approach is a loss of value hierarchy, leaving it unspecified which motivation weighs more heavily.

Holt, likewise, juxtaposes the view many Palestinian women hold that “[b]y wearing Islamic dress, they are protected from unwelcome male attention and may, therefore, move more freely in the public arena”, and that the Islamist movement has encouraged them to fight for their Islamicly-approved rights, with the observation that the Islamist movement has failed to sufficiently challenge the patriarchal nature of Palestinian society, and eradicate women-degrading practices.¹⁰⁰ The two sets of statements stand in tension to each other, yet Holt refrains from, in the words of Salvatore, settling into a solution and thus precluding “new paths of problematization”.¹⁰¹ She is thus able to reveal a side of Islamist women's narrative that is generally not found in *modernist* discourse because, on the surface, it contradicts the perception of Islamism as a force against women's rights – a perception not shared by Islamist women.¹⁰² However, here, too, the danger is to abstain from according relative weight to each of these arguments.

The *pluralists* tend to refuse to juxtapose Western and Islamist notions as incompatible, a position which enables them to engage more fully with Islamist discourse (see ‘Definition’). Despite this, the West remains a normative reference point. Jensen, for instance, defines moderate, with Moussalli, as “open to dialogue, compromise and more importantly, to universal rights, freedom, pluralism and civil society”, versus ‘radical’, or “resistant to dialogue and cooperation with the Arab regimes and the West in

⁹⁹ Jensen, pp208-210, 215-216.

¹⁰⁰ Holt, pp69; 71, 65; 72-74.

¹⁰¹ Salvatore, pxvi.

¹⁰² Cf. also Roy, pp22-23.

general” (p197).¹⁰³ Moderate and radical are defined with respect to the West and its understanding of universally applicable values (though no particular model is posited, as with the *modernists*). Moreover, there is an underlying assumption that, through dialogue, the ‘moderate’ Islamists will eventually accept those Western values held to be universally applicable. That this acceptance is expected to be more on Western than Islamist terms is suggested by the fact that, though all texts criticise the way Westerners view Islamism, none are explicitly (self-)critical of the West, and the supposed universality of its values. Holt displays an implicit understanding of the need for such (self-)criticism by observing that what Westerners see as ‘universal’, Islamists tend to define as ‘Western’ and thus not directly applicable to them (p73). Beyond this, there is little critical reflection on Western values and praxis, comparable to that found among the *pluralists* of the general sample.

The *pluralists* likewise refrain from dichotomising between a secular, (potentially) progressive PLO, and an Islamist, regressive IM. This is partly because three of the four texts focus more on sociological than political issues, concentrating on clients of the IM’s institutions and ideas rather than its leaders’ contentions with the PLO. Where the texts do discuss PLO-IM relations, they do so without excessive labelling, judging both by equal standards, allowing actions to speak for themselves.¹⁰⁴ Resultantly, *pluralists* are less fixated with the religious and violent aspects of the IM, looking behind the sometimes fiery rhetoric for meaning¹⁰⁵ and placing religious explanations within their context.¹⁰⁶ While this perspective provides new insights, it fails to sufficiently answer

¹⁰³ Quote from Moussalli, ‘Modern Islamic Fundamentalist Discourse on Civil Society: Pluralism and Democracy’ in A. Richard Norton (ed), *Civil Society in the Middle East*, pp88-116.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Roy, p34; Holt, p74. Rashad tends to be more critical of the PLO than of Hamas.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Rashad, pp8-9, 11-12.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Jensen, pp203, 207-209.

modernist allegations that the IM is violent because the issue of political violence is largely ignored, thus undermining these texts' revisionist goals.

Another result of this perspective is that Islamist charitable institutions are taken seriously – not as cynical fronts for luring society into Islamism, a perspective popular among *modernists*.¹⁰⁷ With the *pluralists*, this thesis assumes that charity praxis is one manifestation of the core ideals of the ideology behind it. If charities are opportunistic fronts, the testimonies from charity staff would hardly be convincing. Roy challenges the notion that the Islamic charities are mere Machiavellian “vehicles of propaganda and recruitment” (p23).¹⁰⁸ Doubtless, such institutions serve as vehicles for the dissemination of ideas and as advertisements for their sponsor movement. But perhaps because she regards Islamism as a genuine force, a legitimate part of modernity (rather than an impostor), she does not ignore that the charities were founded to meet society's needs. Countering the claim that the charities recruit terrorists, Roy argues

it is extremely unlikely that the Qassem Brigades [Hamas's highly independent military wing] use social-service institutions for recruitment, since militants are few, highly decentralized, secretive, and traditionally recruit from within (i.e., relatives from the clans of existing members). [...] The Islamic social movement in Gaza long preceded its political counterpart and will, in all likelihood, long outlive it. [...] Its doctrine is one of service ... [It is] oriented towards life not death (pp30-32).

Jensen observes that the members of the Islamic football club he interviewed did not receive any “schooling or indoctrination” to “embrace an Islamist orientation”, and that, besides playing at the club, none of the interviewees “participated in other organized Islamic activities” (p214). This is not to say religio-political reasons did not play a part

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Shadid, pp666-667; Abu-Amr, ‘Hamas’, pp8, 14; Schiff/Ya’ari, pp224-226.

¹⁰⁸ For *modernist* expressions of the ‘front’ view, cf. Shadid, pp665-667; Abu-Amr, ‘Hamas’, pp8, 14; Legrain, ‘A Defining Moment’, p72; Milton-Edwards, p105.

in the players' choice of club too. Unlike many Fatah-affiliated clubs, this club could not provide extra perks, such as "better training facilities ..., better job opportunities or better housing conditions". Had such practical considerations been their main motivation, all interviewees acknowledged, they would have joined a Fatah-affiliated club (p210). Combining these two observations, the club can hardly be characterised as a front. Rather, it appears to offer a particular service – creating the opportunity to play football in an atmosphere of religious brotherhood.

2.3 METHODOLOGICAL PATTERNS

Attitudes towards Conflation and Generalisation

The *modernist* texts tend to conflate internal differences within the IM. The starkest example is in Schiff and Ya'ari who treat the Salafiyyun as part of the IM (pp226-227), even though the Salafiyyun are institutionally unconnected to the Brotherhood and their ideologies differ markedly (see footnote 30, p151 of this thesis). Some, like Usher (pp72-77) and Legrain (pp181-182), acknowledge the existence of internal debates within the IM. Others, like Ahmad, even quote democratic-like Islamist statements (p69). But, like the general sample, they end by denouncing Islamists monolithically as anti-democratic. Ahmad's 'evidence' that Hamas seeks a cleritocracy is a nebulous passage from Hamas's Charter asserting that Hamas "judges all its actions according to Islam" (p56). It appears that the assumption that Islamists cannot be democratic because they are not secular is too strong to allow for alternative readings, or for problematisation of presumptions – even if evidence appears to contradict them. It is

further encouraged by the suspicion that much of Islamist theoretical discourse is opportunistic,¹⁰⁹ and by the dichotomising between IM and modernity.

Unlike the general sample, these *modernists* display a greater tendency to generalise from particular incidents, in a manner reminiscent of the general *essentialists*. Shadid, for example, depicts the 1982 clashes at al-Najah University as typical of the IM's behaviour (pp679-680).¹¹⁰ In fact, they were unique in Najah's history, though smaller skirmishes did happen more regularly. Major clashes at other Palestinian universities were equally few and far between. One of the chief reasons for this discrepancy between the general *modernist* sample and this sample is the absence of theoretical models in the latter, since models encourage the meticulous rooting of generalisations in the particular. I have already discussed one reason for the absence of such models (see p49). Another may be a difference in approach. Where the general *modernists* generally display a developmentalist attitude with its heavy reliance on developmental theories, in this sample they appear more inclined towards historical narrative. Their *modernism* thus resides more in outlook than in methodological approach.

Pluralists conflate less, and are less prone to generalising from the particular. Roy maintains a clear conceptual distinction between 'military', 'political' and 'social' Islam, and refrains from generalising from actions done or attitudes held by one of these to the whole, or treating Islamism as a monolith. Though she reiterates, without qualification, the *modernist* view that Hamas members "spent a great deal of time during the early years of the Intifada trying to impose Islamic moral codes on a less than receptive population", Roy does not infuse her descriptions of Islamic charities with a

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Shadid, pp665-667; Abu-Amr: Hamas's Islamic doctrine "lends itself to more than one interpretation to justify shifts in attitudes" (*Fundamentalism*, p133).

¹¹⁰ Cf. also acid attack described by Milton-Edwards (pp113-114).

similar moralistic, authoritarian flavour, instead praising “the clarity and consistency of their message”, and the topicality of their charitable work (pp9, 17-30).¹¹¹

One of the reasons for this lack of generalisation lies in the *pluralists* taking a more anthropological approach. Describing his approach, Jensen quotes Norton observing

“Scholarship on the Islamists has ... been overly textual, too inclined to report words of the ideologues ..., and insufficiently sociological, in terms of failing to look at the motives of those who lend their support to the Islamist movement” (p199).¹¹²

Such an approach starts self-consciously from the particular, daring only tentatively to generalise. In the words of anthropologist Clifford Geertz:

The bulk of what I have eventually seen (or thought I have seen) in the broad sweep of social history I have seen ... first in the narrow confines of ... peasant villages. [...] Like all scientific propositions, anthropological interpretations must be tested ... either by confining oneself to one’s chosen stage and letting others make of one’s descriptions what they will (in which case the generalization of them is likely to be even more ... uncontrolled), or one can take up ... the task of demonstrating that ... less minutely focused problems can be made to yield to the same kinds of analysis practiced on the narrow scene. [...] ... without [this kind of approach] we are prey, on the one hand, to the pallid mindlessness of radical relativism and, on the other, to the shabby tyranny of historical determinism.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Jensen likewise stresses non-heterogeneity of Islamist institutions (pp197-198). Roy bases her views of Hamas on, among others, Abu-Amr, Legrain, Rashad, Shadid.

¹¹² Quote from Augustus Richard Norton, *Political Reform in the Middle East*, paper presented at “State, Individual and Civil Society in the Middle East”, Magleås, Denmark, 13-14.11.1995, p8.

¹¹³ Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed*, ppvi-viii.

Jensen, an anthropologist by training, starts from the particular of an Islamist football club. Holt and Roy likewise focus on particular case studies or testimonies from 'consumers' of Islamic charities. Rashad does not and, interestingly, also generalises more, without sufficient support of evidence.¹¹⁴ Rooting macro-observations in the micro-level seems to help prevent sweeping generalisations.¹¹⁵

Attitudes towards Selectivity and Decontextualisation

The *modernist* texts are somewhat selective in their choice of topic, source and evidence. They tend to focus on violence and intolerance, structural organisation, or tactical decisions regarding the Peace Process or the Intifada. Where ideas are addressed, they are generally discussed with reference only to Hamas's Charter, and topics are confined to Islam, nationalism, resistance/*jihad* and the Jews. With the partial exception of Nüsse, all texts avoid an in-depth discussion of the IM's attitude towards democracy, or any of its constituent themes, such as governance, the political process or the body politic.

Most *modernist* texts tend to include some Islamist quotes – Ahmad, Milton-Edwards and Nüsse being the most generous – but the bulk of these stem from written publications and published interviews. Personal interviews with IM members are few. Five texts list none, the remaining ones generally include a limited number only, and then mostly with the leadership. Those personally interviewed in the ensemble of texts (incorporating only the parts concerning the IM from the most relevant chapters from

¹¹⁴ Cf. Rashad's sweeping characterisation of "Arafat loyalists" as out to "discredit the Islamists" and obliterate them while depicting Hamas as "careful to avoid an inter-Palestinian conflict" (pp40-41); or his sweeping condemnation of the attitudes of "European states and America" towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (p43). Both statements contain elements of truth, but are facile in their broadness.

¹¹⁵ See also remark on Kramer (Chapter 1, footnote 101).

Milton-Edwards and Abu-Amr)¹¹⁶ include nine leaders from Gaza, the West Bank and Jordan, and only a few ordinary members/supporters (whose views are rarely asked concerning political issues). At the same time, *modernist* texts draw readily on the IM's political rivals. In Milton-Edwards' chapter on the second decade of the occupation, none of the 43 footnotes concerning the IM refer to a personal interview with a Palestinian IM member or even to IM publications, while 16 refer to personal interviews with nationalist, leftist and non-partisan Palestinians, and five cite the pro-Fatah *al-Fajr* newspaper (pp232-235).¹¹⁷ Her chapter on IM ideology is less imbalanced, with 8 of the 50 footnotes referring to personal interviews with IM leaders, 18 to Hamas's Covenant or leaflets. However, the 8 interview references refer to only three different interviews – a small sample indeed.

Few *modernists* discuss the credibility of their sources. Legrain is the exception when he notes how a number of 'Hamas' communiqués distributed during the Intifada were produced by the Israelis to sow discord, and how "the attempted burning of the Gaza blood bank (a PLO stronghold)" in the name of Hamas was likewise an Israeli provocation.¹¹⁸ None of the texts acknowledge the fact that many of the Palestinian sources used are predisposed towards the PLO's point of view. 'Official' Palestinian pronouncements on events tend to come from PLO ranks. The majority of Palestinian newspapers for the past 30 years have been in the hands of pro-PLO editors.¹¹⁹ Scholars naturally rely on them as they are the most readily accessible – but do not sufficiently reflect on the source's credibility. The same can be said of scholars' reliance on each

¹¹⁶ Chapters 4&6, 2&3 respectively.

¹¹⁷ There are two references to personal interviews with prominent Jordanian Muslim Brothers; however, this does not make up for the lack of interviews with Palestinian Brothers.

¹¹⁸ Legrain, p183.

¹¹⁹ Cf. *Al-Fajr* which both Milton-Edwards and Abu-Amr quote from. See p98.

other's works. Shadid, being one of the first texts to focus on the IM, is oft quoted. Yet no one questions his quite clearly pro-PLO, *modernist* perspective.

The combination of *essentialist* methodology and a *modernist* perspective leads the *modernists* to over-emphasise, decontextualise, at times even essentialise, the violent and religious aspects of the IM. Schiff and Ya'ari, for instance, stress that Hamas activists are using mosques to store weapons and conceal fugitives (p222). Yet they fail to highlight that Fatah and even the Marxist PFLP similarly used mosques.¹²⁰ They depict the Israeli debate about whether or not to clamp down on Hamas as being chiefly about how to arrest "clerical figures" and curb the institutions of the *waqf* (religious endowments) without inviting "charges of violating the Palestinians' freedom of worship" (p237) – thus painting a picture of a battalion of imams waging war on Israel. In fact, the majority of Hamas's leadership are professionals, 'clerical' only in the way, following Islamic custom, they take their share in preaching,¹²¹ while Fatah likewise uses mosque sermons to spread its message.

In sharp contrast to the general sample, acts of violence are often decontextualised. Milton-Edwards elaborates on a nitric acid attack by Islamist activists on a PFLP student leader,¹²² but fails to situate the attack in the ongoing struggle for political influence over Gaza's Islamic University in which both sides engaged in atrocities amidst an increasingly violent occupation (see Chapter 4).¹²³

¹²⁰ Cf. personal interview with Intifada Cell II. The issue here is not whether Hamas used mosques more than Fatah, but that mosque-use is singled out as an aspect of Hamas's praxis.

¹²¹ See Chapters 6.3 & 7.4.

¹²² Milton-Edwards, pp113-114.

¹²³ Cf. also Usher's discussion of Hamas's involvement in collaborator killing, without mentioning that all factions were involved, and situating the atrocities against the Intifada's climate of all-out war and the danger collaborators posed (p69). See also Chapter 8.2.5.

The *pluralists* are generally careful to contextualise – largely because, as with the general sample, they are forced to by the relative absence of metanarratives in their approach, and by their reliance on a more anthropological approach, which encourages close observation or even participant observation.¹²⁴ Roy, for instance, contextualises the violence displayed by suicide bombings, observing this is largely a result of the “economic decline and social fracture” Gaza has experienced over decades of what Roy terms ‘de-development’ (p14).¹²⁵ Holt similarly places her discussion of Islamism and women’s rights in its local context, indicating in particular that Western-inspired solutions might not work (pp71-73).

Likewise, the *pluralist* texts tend to include a wider variety of evidence than the *modernists* do, discussing both violent and charitable, tolerant and intolerant aspects. Only Rashad focuses primarily on the political, and then largely in relation to practical (as opposed to conceptual) issues such as relations with Israel and the PNA. Yet in all texts pointers can be found towards the possible emergence of a democratic-like Islamism. The *pluralist* temptation is to lose a sense of value hierarchy. Roy guards herself best against this (perhaps as a result of her *modernist* inclinations), squarely evaluating the violent relative to the charitable. The others are less successful.

Pluralists are also less selective in their sources, more willing to seek out Islamists personally, so that they can present their own version. Though only 3 of Jensen’s 45 footnotes refer to personal interviews with IM members, 8 of the 20 pages are wholly dedicated to the views of 4 members of an Islamist football club, with 16 direct quotes

¹²⁴ Cf. Roy lived in the Gaza Strip during the Intifada, Jensen lived there and worked with Islamists, Holt worked with women’s organisations from Jerusalem. Subsequent to writing his article, Jensen spent six more months in Gaza, enrolling in an English course at the Islamic University and joining an Islamist football club.

¹²⁵ See also Roy, *The Gaza Strip*.

and several paraphrases.¹²⁶ In Roy's case, though only 6 of the 70 footnotes refer to personal interviews with Islamists, she has based much of her conclusions regarding Islamic charities on an analysis of a sample of "five Islamic business establishments", and interviews with members of, and site visits to, four major and "several other smaller [Islamic] organizations".¹²⁷ Significantly, both Roy and Jensen have aimed their research at the IM's institutions and their 'consumers' on the assumption that these can reveal a different, less overtly political, side of the IM.

In contrast, the other two texts do not include references to personal interviews with IM members. Consequently, Rashad's text is weak on providing a window into the thinking of Hamas members – particularly poignant as he criticises Hamas's *Mithaq* for not containing any "real specifics on any issue" (p11). But Holt's text still shows a different approach than observed in the *modernist* texts, by including significant quotes from published interviews with the IM's 'consumers', rather than focussing on public explanations of the leadership.

Despite their greater inclusiveness of Islamist sources, the *pluralist* texts resemble the *modernists* in not reflecting sufficiently self-consciously on their sources' credibility, particularly when it concerns other texts belonging to the Western canon. Roy, for instance, has unquestioningly adopted the *modernist* perspective found in the majority of her source texts towards Hamas.¹²⁸ To reconcile the contradiction between this *modernist* reading of Hamas, and her own *pluralist* understanding of the Islamist charities (which she has observed directly, without a *modernist* interface), and to safeguard the purpose of her text to persuade the West to refrain from demonising all

¹²⁶ Jensen also interviewed five participants on an Islamic charity's computer course. See pp207-214, 218-219 (n27, n31, n34).

¹²⁷ Roy, pp17, 38 (n51, n54).

¹²⁸ Roy does question the credibility of Israeli and American views (cf. p11).

Islamists and support moderate Islamists, she is forced to dichotomise between a radical Hamas and moderate charities, to 'save' the charities from 'contamination' with the negative picture painted by the *modernist* texts of Hamas. However, as Jensen, Rashad and my research indicate, such dichotomisation is not meaningful as both are manifestations of Islamism, sharing personnel and a religio-political vision, and neither are sufficiently monolithic to be capturable under a 'radical' or 'moderate' label.¹²⁹

Jensen discusses the problematicity of certain Western approaches to Islamism (pp199-200) but fails to extend this discussion to the Western canon on the IM. Rashad goes so far as to note that "Israeli military sources, Arafat loyalists, and some other nationalists" are likely to provide "prejudicial information" and warns that, in order to consolidate their own power base, "Arafat loyalists ... will attempt to discredit the Islamists as fanatics and question their loyalty to Palestinian unity". Yet, he too fails to scrutinise the *modernist* texts he draws on. However, he, like Jensen and Holt, does seem to implicitly filter the information contained in these texts by refraining from repeating what appears tainted by prejudice, such as exaggerated claims of Hamas's anti-nationalistic and violent attitude (pp34-39).¹³⁰

Attitudes towards Definition and Analysis

In sharp contrast to the *modernists* of the general sample, those of this sample lack the rigour of a theoretical framework, and consequently definitional depth.¹³¹ A number of *modernists* self-consciously employ theoretical models to explain why Islamism has

¹²⁹ Many of the more moderate Hamas leaders are pillars of charitable institutions – the organisational links between the two wings remain, however, generally tenuous.

¹³⁰ Like Roy, Rashad questions the credibility of pro-Israeli US Congressmen and journalists.

¹³¹ There are exceptions, though not in the primary sample. Sayigh, for instance, is a *modernist* who employs a rigorous definitional framework.

grown in influence over the past decades. In all texts, *modernist* models underlie the conclusions – but generally in an un-selfconscious manner. Most significantly, however, they default on defining terms such as ‘anti-democratic’ or ‘*ulamā*’. This appears to be caused by these texts’ inclination towards historical narrative, rather than theoretical, or developmentalist, analysis.

As a result of their positing the West as model, adopting a dichotomous attitude, and regarding Islamist thinking as lacking in depth,¹³² the *modernists* do not sufficiently engage with Islamist thinking. Abu-Amr wrote in 1994 that “[i]ssues of democracy and pluralism have not so far been a matter of concern for the Islamic movement in the Occupied Territories”. At the same time, he claimed that Hamas sought to prevent “political parties that do not take Islam as a frame of reference” from operating in an Islamic state, thus implying that ‘issues of democracy and pluralism’ had already been dismissed.¹³³ Though the IM’s Intifada publications did not reserve much space for theoretical discussions on democracy (largely because their focus was everyday activism, their audience uneducated people), numerous statements appeared which were reflections of an ongoing debate about the nature of right government, from comments on the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, to criticisms of the PLO’s undemocratic nature.¹³⁴ To say that these issues had not been “of concern” is thus, at best, an excuse for not having probed the IM’s thinking further – as even the existence of the above-mentioned anti-pluralistic stance indicates. That stance, moreover, is held by one faction only within the IM.¹³⁵ It is certainly not the only opinion – as many statements and the IM’s actual

¹³² Paradoxically, the *modernist* notion that the IM is opportunistic is held in conjunction with the contradictory notion that the IM’s fundamental principles are fixed, stifling and puritanical (cf. Usher, p78; Abu-Amr, ‘Hamas’, p18; to lesser extent: Nüsse, p180; Milton-Edwards, pp165-166, 198).

¹³³ Abu-Amr, *Fundamentalism*, p130.

¹³⁴ Cf. Legrain, *Fundamentalism*, p78; Ahmad, p69.

¹³⁵ Abu-Amr references his statement to Mahmud Zahhar, a Hamas spokesman whose views are not always considered by other leaders and the rank and file to be wholly representative of the movement’s thinking.

participation in elected institutions appear to indicate. Even if it were, however, Abu-Amr should have tried to understand why it has been adopted and what values its adoption reveals. It is this kind of dialectic probing that is missing in the *modernist* texts.¹³⁶

Among the *modernists*, Nüsse engages most fully with Islamist notions. Yet because she has not problematised her *modernist* assumptions, she forecloses the possibility of a two-way dialectic interaction. Besides Nüsse's failing to probe the IM's understanding of the concept of 'democracy' (see 'Dichotomisation'), Nüsse's treatment of Hamas's attitude towards Christians in an Islamic state is illustrative (pp102-103). While correctly identifying some of the tensions that could result from the attempt to marry the concept of citizenship based on domicile to that based on ideological identification, she overlooks the evolution in the IM's understanding, assuming it still adheres to the classical Islamic concept of *dhimmī* (protected person) by which Christians would be protected but not fully-fledged citizens (see Chapter 8).¹³⁷

The *pluralist* texts lack definitional rigour, particularly with regard to Islamist concepts.¹³⁸ Thus, despite their willingness to engage with Islamist thinking from within its own conceptual framework,¹³⁹ their lack of definitional rigour prevents them from creating an in-depth dialectic between their Western conceptual framework and that of

¹³⁶ Cf. also Milton-Edwards' treatment of IM's reliance on "broad models based on the past" (p198).

¹³⁷ Litvak takes a similar approach (pp18-19).

¹³⁸ Though, like the *modernists*, some employ (*modernist*) models to explain Islamism's rapid (re)growth, or define to some depth main terms such as 'Islamist' or 'moderate'. Cf. Jensen, pp203-204; Holt, pp65-69.

¹³⁹ Cf. Jensen unravelling the different motives compelling his interviewees to support Islamism (pp205-214); Holt attempting to move beyond *modernist* assumption that the IM is "reactionary, anti-intellectual and dismissive of women's rights", seeking to understand why the IM "is regarded by many Palestinian women as their best hope for liberation" (pp65, 69-74). Curiously, Rashad who displays the most openly sympathetic approach to the IM, is also the *pluralist* engaging in the least depth with the IM's ideas, being content with observing that the *Mithaq* lacks "real specifics on any issue" without much further probing as to political and social ideas (p11).

their Islamist subjects. In this, they fail to match their general counterparts and the conceptual depth these latter attain. One reason for this discrepancy may be the more self-consciously anthropological approach of this sample (enhanced by their area focus), which can encourage an overemphasis on the local to the neglect of situating it within a more general social science framework.¹⁴⁰

¹⁴⁰ See also quote from Geertz (p70).

CHAPTER 3

FOCI, METHOD AND SOURCES

3.1 RESEARCH FOCI

Much of Western discourse on Palestinian Islamism focusses on violent and intolerant behaviour and uses evidence thereof to support its argument that Islamists are unlikely democrats. This 'evidence' tends to be distorted by decontextualisation, generalising conflation, too heavy a reliance on pro-PLO narratives, and, in a circular manner, the sheer weight of 'evidence' of other violence. The emphasis on violence, moreover, discourages scholars from further exploring Islamist political theory, as the evidence of violence appears to make a mockery of any expression of democratic-like ideals. If, however, this evidence can be shown to be distorted, the study of Islamist political theory may be rendered meaningful again. A re-evaluation of allegations of violence is thus essential.

Part II will focus on two violent episodes which have shaped the *modernist* reading of Palestinian Islamism as anti-pluralistic and anti-democratic. Using a *pluralist* methodology, I will re-examine available evidence. Both episodes – the struggle for the Islamic University (Chapter 4) and the '*hijāb* (headscarf) campaign' (Chapter 5) – are generally interpreted as proof of the IM's intolerance towards other-thinkers, and its readiness to resort to violence. The struggle for the Islamic University is, allegedly, an illustration of political intolerance towards political rivals, the '*hijāb* campaign' an

example of socio-political intolerance. Both are portrayed as examples of the IM's strategy to undermine the PLO and establish a political counter-hegemony, proof of the IM's anti-nationalistic nature and its betrayal of Palestinianness.

Part III will focus on the political theory of the IM in Gaza. The IM's principal ideal is the establishment of an Islamic state on the basis of Islamic law. For reasons of time and space, I will limit my focus to three key aspects of this proposed Islamic state: governance (Chapter 6), political process (Chapter 7), and body politic (Chapter 8). In Chapter 6, I will focus on the IM's understanding of leadership and authority, looking specifically for contractual constructs, checks on malpractice, and private-public dichotomies. In Chapter 7, I will examine decision-making in policy-design and legislation, evaluating the roles of rationality and revelation, expertise and representativeness, and studying how dissent and opposition are handled. Chapter 8 will analyse the IM's attitude towards the political role of Christians and communists in an Islamic state.

The choice of these topics is inspired not only by their centrality to any theory of government but also by their being pivotal to challenging *modernist* claims that the IM is authoritarian and anti-pluralistic. The type of leadership advocated by, and practised in, a movement reveals a great deal about the extent to which that movement is authoritarian or democratic. The same is true of the kind of decision-making procedures being advocated (and practised) – in particular the way dissent is handled. An analysis of the IM's attitude towards Christians and communists – each of whom are generally considered by Western discourse to have a problematic relationship with Islamism – will help establish to what extent the IM is indeed anti-pluralistic towards the ideological 'other'.

3.2 CONCEPTUAL PERSPECTIVE

Attitude towards Western Model

Following a *pluralist* perspective, I have problematised the universality of the Western model, using it instead as a source for comparison with Islamist concepts, providing contrasting angles at similar problematics, thus enabling me to probe the latter in a dialectical 'hermeneutical circle'.¹ Western concepts have been treated not as universally privileged but as comparable entities, with as much claim to 'truth' as Islamist concepts, privileged only in the way they form the foundations of my conceptual framework, and provide me with a map with which to interpret other conceptual systems. To offset this latter privileging, I have immersed myself as much as possible in Islamist thinking, trying to engage with Islamists and Islamist concepts from within their own framework, delaying the 'translation' of an Islamist term into a Western equivalent until the former has been sufficiently probed, remaining willing to further problematise such 'translations' and drawing, where possible (and given the fact that my Arabic reading skills are limited), on Islamist theoretical texts as well as the two primary authoritative sources for Muslims, the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* (Traditions of the Prophet).

At the same time, I have tried to refrain from establishing too sharp a dichotomy between 'Western' and 'Islamist', acknowledging the existence of innumerable cross-over elements. I have attempted to balance relativism with universalism, tentatively positing certain positions, such as respect for difference, antipathy to violence, leadership accountability, condemnation of corruption and dishonesty, as universally

¹ This resembles what Hans-Georg Gadamer called a "fusion of horizons" where meaning is 'created' through a dialectic between the original meaning of a term as meant by its user and the interpretation given to it by the observer; the horizons never fuse completely, tension remains between the two perspectives, and the interpretive process never ends (*Truth and Method*, cf. pp267-274).

applicable, while remaining open to their potential problematisation by cultural 'others'. These positions, though intertwined in my conceptual framework with specific Western political models and value systems, are self-consciously posited as potentially independent of them (a value may be realised by different systems).

The attitude I have adopted towards the Western model has allowed me to de-ideologise the issue of whether Palestine should adopt a Western style of modernity, and thus whether the Palestinians as a whole are a secular-minded people, whether the PLO is secular and a modernising force, and whether the IM is anti-secular and an obstacle to modernisation. My views on which party operates more effectively, which more accurately represents ordinary Palestinians, what type of development is best suited for Palestine, can similarly be acknowledged to have cultural specificity. Labels such as 'secular' or 'modern' can be problematised, and used descriptively rather than ideologically. Consequently, I do not have to treat the IM as an anomaly, or the PLO as an ideological 'ally'.

Attitude towards Dichotomisation

I have avoided excessive dichotomisation by actively searching for cross-over elements from the antithesis of a phenomenon's label, riding contradictions without prematurely solving them, and challenging existing dichotomising labels. I have accordingly tried to search for non-violent, secular, pluralistic and democratic instances in the IM, juxtaposed them to violent, anti-secular, etc. instances, settling on a conclusion of the contradictions only when both sides of the opposite terms have been allowed to speak. Alternatively, I have compared those Islamist ideas which harbour seemingly contradictory inclinations (such as liberal and communitarian) to two representative sets of Western ideas revolving around these inclinations (for example Locke and Hegel),

and allowing each to bring out different aspects of the IM's thinking (acknowledging that neither is wholly defined by the one inclination).

A particularly important dichotomy to neutralise is that between religion and politics. The secular prejudice appears to be one of the overriding factors operative in distorting Western understanding of Islamist thinking. I have treated the IM as a political movement with a religiously inspired outlook, in which both components are legitimate. I have avoided either overemphasising or ignoring the religious element, instead treating it as an integral part of the IM's ideology.

3.3 METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGIES

Attitude towards Generalisation and Conflation

Following the *pluralists*, I have tried to root my observations and conclusions in particular instances, wherever possible providing proof of incidents which back the generalisations I propose. I have taken care not to treat the IM, Islamism, or Western political theory as monoliths. A certain level of generalising is unavoidable. In the process of delineating factions within a movement (cf. Chapter 8), nuances within factions are suppressed, differences between factions exaggerated. Nevertheless, I have delineated factions to highlight the diversity within the IM.

The IM is a non-monolithic, loosely-knit movement. Its conviction that the precise form of the ultimate Islamic state is to be left flexible until representatives of the people and experts have had a chance to discuss it in detail, precludes it from too dogmatic an adherence to one set of institutions (see Chapter 7). It is exacerbated by the circumstances in which the IM evolved, favouring secrecy, not open debate. It is also

influenced by regional differences, such as the marked increase in conservatism the further south one goes within the Gaza Strip.

Attitude towards Selectivity and Decontextualisation

One has to guard against being overly (or unwittingly) selective towards topics and sources. Within the political focus and limits of this thesis, I have included extremes ranging from violence to democratic behaviour, intolerance to pluralism. I have sought out Islamists and Islamist critics, insiders and outsiders, leaders and led, the politically calculating and the politically guileless. The first two pairs have been particularly important for analysing the involvement of the IM in violent incidents, and its attitude towards Christians and communists; the third and fourth for testing to what extent advocated political ideals are practised within the movement.

The issue of selectivity is at the root of the problematic of truthful representation. The discourse of this thesis imposes a discursive order on 'reality', distorting it. Said referred to the distortion of the indigenous voice.² To minimise this, I have included significant verbatim quotes from the IM. I have relied heavily on personal interviews – where possible multiple interviews with the same person – to be able to understand IM members well enough to represent their thinking adequately truthfully. I have also tried to minimise the structure of the interview, so as to better allow the interviewee to express his/her logic. The indigenous voice, whether the IM's or its critics, is likewise a distortion of 'reality'. Where the focus is on what the IM wishes one to think, this representation is the object of one's study; the fact that it is a representation is irrelevant. In all other cases, it is, and one has to attempt to neutralise its distorting impact by

² Said, p21.

critically analysing it, just as one should with one's own representations (further details in 'Sources').

The discipline of contextualisation provides some guarantee against misrepresentation. I have taken particular care to contextualise incidents, participants and their narratives in the analysis of violent episodes. In the analysis of ideas, contextualisation is more problematic. I have contextualised the praxis which serves as a critical counterpoint to the ideas advocated by the IM. But ideas, particularly utopian ideas, try, by their nature, to escape contemporary context and create new discursive contexts. Moreover, there is no unidirectional link between context and idea – one context may inspire widely differing ideas in one person, let alone different persons. Where relevant, I have tried to set ideas within the context those expressing them inhabit. Where possible, I have provided the ideational context for ideas, sketching the Islamist, Islamic and other ideational sources from which they might, or were acknowledged to, have come. But this is speculative in the absence of positive acknowledgements or adequate tests for the veracity of such acknowledgements.

Attitude towards Definition and Analysis

Taking a *pluralist-cum-modernist* approach, I have attempted to sufficiently probe both Western and Islamist concepts, allowing each to dialectically engage with the other in an ever deepening 'hermeneutical circle'. I have tried to ensure that I understood the way Islamists were using their concepts from within their own conceptual framework by studying the (translated) works of Islamist thinkers they acknowledged to be influenced by, notably Abul Ala Mawdudi, Sayid Qutb, Hasan al-Turabi and Rashid al-Ghannouchi; by analysing the way they structured their answers to my questions; and by

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In front of the court, the plurivocity common to texts and to actions is exhibited in the form of a conflict of interpretations, and the final interpretation appears as a verdict to which it is possible to make appeal. Like legal utterances, all interpretations in the field of literary criticism and in the social sciences may be challenged ... Only in the tribunal is there a moment where the procedures of appeal are exhausted. ... Neither in literary criticism, nor in the social sciences, is there such a last word.⁷

In this spirit I have analysed the IM, letting Islamists, Islamist critics and Western concepts take on, variously, the role of prosecutor, defendant and witness, knowing that the 'verdict' of this thesis is subject to further questioning.

3.4 SOURCES, MEANING AND INTERPRETATION

The subject of this thesis is ideas. As ideas are not directly observable, potential evidence is anything, discursive or non-discursive, which objectifies ideas.⁸ Discursive evidence, or 'speech-acts', can be either written or oral, where the distinction is not in its having been transcribed (interview transcripts are here considered oral), but in the nature of its production (written expressions tend to be more carefully wrought because they can be endlessly rewritten) and its intended audience (a written expression is generally intended for a wider audience).⁹ To illustrate this distinction, personal interviews have been 'created' by the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. Consequently, transcripts of them contain, to the interviewer, more than

⁷ Ricoeur, p215.

⁸ This step is premised on the belief that agents generally act 'rationally', in the sense that their actions are intended to achieve a particular goal; 'rational' here does not imply a value judgement regarding whether the intention or action is 'rational' by the observer's standards (cf. Fay, p104). This approach is not to be confused with Rational Choice Theory (cf. Bohman, *New Philosophy*, pp67-76, 197ff; 18-30).

⁹ The distinction is not rigid; improvised speeches at rallies are intended for a large audience, even partly created by the interaction between speaker and audience, while diaries are not intended for publication.

just the transcribed text, notably the interviewer's ideas and emotions during the interview, and observations of non-discursive signifiers emitted by the interviewee. This layer of information is absent from written evidence. I will thus treat these two categories separately.

Non-discursive evidence ('action-events')¹⁰ is equally important, particularly because it conveys meaning differently from discursive evidence. The study of action-events can be modelled on the study of a text. According to Ricoeur,¹¹ this analogue is justified by the fact that both speech-act and action-event have an inscribable 'sense-content'. Just as writing fixes the 'said', so action-events leave their mark, reflecting the intentionality and meaning of the agent. Like discourse, action-events have a locutionary and an illocutionary side.¹² Like text, the effects of action-events are detached from their author, addressed to anyone who can 'read' them. This analogous situation enables one to study action-events using the same type of methodologies used to analyse texts.

The inclusion of action-events and oral speech-acts as evidence counters Said's criticism that Orientalism, reflecting its origin as a study of ancient texts, focusses overly on written texts when studying contemporary events.¹³ Since Islamist movements tend to be action-oriented rather than philosophical, and since the IM in particular has written nothing extensive about its concrete political ideals (partly because the political situation discourages free political expression, partly because the Peace Process and the relationship with Israel have overshadowed written deliberations over a future Palestinian state), a focus on written texts would, and has, resulted, in a distorted understanding of the IM, ignoring its two most important forms of expression – oral and

¹⁰ I will reserve the term 'action' to describe both speech-acts and action-events.

¹¹ Ricoeur, pp197-209.

¹² See also John Searle, *Speech Acts*.

¹³ Cf. Said, p300. Also Norton quote (p70).

non-discursive. That little has been written does not imply that little has been thought – certainly in an oral culture like Gaza's.

Evidence contained in speech-acts and action-events is multi-layered. At the locutionary level is what is said or done. At the illocutionary level lies what is said or done *in* saying or doing something. At the perlocutionary level is what is said or done *by* saying or doing something.¹⁴ At the first two levels, both of which are intentional, signifiers of meaning range from content, apparent intention, and apparent audience, to inconsistencies, contradictions and omissions. Further signifiers are excessive emphasis and excessive dichotomising, indicating something being suppressed. The third level, which is not intentional but consequential, is only important insofar as it establishes a distinction between intentional (illocutionary) and unintentional (perlocutionary) consequences, where political opponents of the IM wish to equate the two and provide motives, usually sinister, for the perlocutionary as if it were illocutionary (particularly relevant for the study of violent incidents).

Having established that non-discursive action-events can be 'made' discursive through interpretation, the distinction important to this thesis is not between discursive and non-discursive but between theory and praxis, where praxis is seen as a manifestation of the values underpinning the theoretical ideals, at times more truthful than the expressed ideals. While the former is exclusively discursive, the latter is both discursive and non-discursive – as in the way a Hamas member talks to and treats a Christian. As praxis is used in contrast to theory, the discursive element is not important for its discursive content, only for the underlying values it conveys. Praxis can be a reflection of the practitioner's values, or it can be a front, hiding those values. Though impossible to conclusively establish whether praxis is genuine, one is generally able to hazard an

¹⁴ See J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*.

educated guess. Praxis surrounding internal leadership elections is likely to reflect fairly truthfully the IM's understanding of the nature of leadership. The way IM charities treat Christian and communist clients is likewise likely to be representative of existing attitudes within the IM towards Christians and communists.

Sources for establishing the type of praxis practised are accounts of practitioners, those being practised on, and third-party observers (see 'Oral Speech-Acts'). A further possible source is participant observation. Hamas's underground status renders participant observation in anything but public rallies impossible. Participating in charity work or enrolling at a course at the Islamic University would have been a possibility. As I was primarily interested in canvassing the political views of a wide variety of leaders and members, and the observation of praxis was but part of my research, I decided merely to engage in a limited version of participant observation – in the form of living for nine months in Gaza City within a stone's throw of the Islamic University, attending public rallies and election contests, and participating in Gaza's social life, both in the city and in refugee camps. This approach – particularly the fact that my wife and I had voluntarily chosen to live and participate in Gaza, without weekly escaping to the comforts of Israel or Jerusalem, as many foreign residents of Gaza do – helped raise my level of insider knowledge and, inadvertently, the level of trust I received in my interviews.

With Palestinian Islamists, where secretiveness has been instilled by thirty years of Israeli occupation, and half a dozen years of increasingly coercive self-rule, it is important to be able to probe beyond what the interviewee wishes one to hear.¹⁵ Moreover, since much of my research revolves around ideals which can be costly to

¹⁵ Cf. James C. Scott, *Domination and the Art of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*.

admit not to be adhering to, it is crucial to probe beyond the consciously understood to the actual.¹⁶

To critically analyse apparent discursive meaning for hidden and latent meaning,¹⁷ I have juxtaposed statements (the discursive content of speech-acts) from people belonging to either side of the set of binary opposites of Islamist versus critic, leader versus led, and politically calculating versus politically guileless. A second critical moment lies in the testing of IM statements against the observed praxis of IM institutions. Since IM praxis is perpetrated by a movement in opposition, with only limited power, and IM ideals revolve around a (utopian) Islamic state in which the IM's leaders hope to play a leading part, not all ideals can be tested in praxis. However, a number of them are equally applicable to the movement's present organisation – just as the way any political party runs its internal affairs reflects its vision of the nature of leadership at state level, particularly if it self-consciously views its praxis as an embodiment of its ideals (as the IM does).

3.5 WRITTEN SPEECH-ACTS

In the Gazan context, written material is of only limited value to an analysis of the IM's ideals. Israeli occupation, and at present the PNA's increasingly coercive stance, has nurtured a secretive political culture. It is difficult to assess whether a communiqué has been officially sanctioned by the leadership, whether it expresses a movement-wide

¹⁶ Some of the methods of ideology critique are helpful here (cf. David Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory*). I have opted against using a full-scale ideology critique approach as its main focus is to critique the veracity of ideologies, not to use critical methods to uncover and map out the ideology in question. But the following is inspired by critical theory.

¹⁷ Though hermeneutical and critical approaches have traditionally been critical of each other, they are not irreconcilable. Cf. Ricoeur's attempt at synthesis on which I have modelled mine ('Hermeneutics and the Critique of Ideology' in Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics*).

consensus, or even whether it is an Israeli attempt at sowing disunity. Gazan Islamists are also action-oriented and not given to lengthy written theorising, an attitude which has been reinforced by the need for secretiveness.¹⁸ Finally, Gazan popular culture is predominantly oral – a characteristic which has been enhanced by its long experience of occupation.¹⁹ I encountered few, apart from the intellectual elite, who read newspapers thoroughly, or who read for pleasure. Whenever I announced I wished to withdraw from social banter and read, I invariably received queries after my health. Gazans seem to gather and disseminate information orally, during endless social visits. A number of Hamas members confessed they had merely skimmed the books they were assigned to have read to pass their introductory ‘Hamas courses’, and had never fully read Hamas’s *Mithaq* (constitution).²⁰

Official Party Literature

Official party literature comprises Hamas’s 1988 Constitution (*al-Mithaq*), communiqués distributed in the form of leaflets to convey the movement’s position on a topical issue, and official press statements. The *Mithaq*, though officially written and sanctioned by the leadership at the time, has lost much of its relevance. It was written during and for the Intifada, addressing themes prominent then but no longer wholly relevant, in a general, theoretical rather than practical way. It was heavily influenced by the older guard which is beginning to be surpassed by a younger leadership with a different outlook. It was, moreover, written before some of the most important debates concerning practical political structures took place, in the wake of the Oslo Agreement.

¹⁸ Cf. Rashad’s comment on *Mithaq* (p11).

¹⁹ Cf. Scott: “Oral traditions, due simply to their means of transmission, offer a kind of seclusion, control, and even anonymity that make them ideal vehicles for cultural resistance” (p160). See also footnote 35, p102 of this thesis.

²⁰ Cf. Intifada Cell II.

Indicative of its problematicity is that discussions have surfaced about rewriting it.²¹ Moreover, many of those I interviewed, including the leadership, never referred to it and a few admitted to never having read it.²² The tone of most interviews confirms the view that the *Mithaq* is outdated as a representation of Hamas' position, even though it has not been officially rewritten or repudiated. Its text, though, is still relevant as a historical document of the kind of positions prevalent among at least some of the leadership in 1988.

Communiqués are generally of equally little relevance. They are responses to particular events, addressed to the general populace, and as such, tend to be immediate, off-the-cuff responses of a populist nature. They are written in the style of public oratory in Gaza, which tends to transform moderate opinions into inflammatory rhetoric. Since such rhetorical utterances seldom become reality and seem to be intended largely for the purpose of impact and aesthetics, they cannot be taken too literally. This is corroborated by the fact that the audience tends to receive the oratory in a way totally incommensurate with the passion of the statement.²³ When an orator calls for the destruction of Israel the audience do not actually imagine this to be possible (this does not absolve the orator from the consequences of his/her rhetoric). What is conveyed, is the emotion of anger at having been evicted from one's place of birth, locked up in Gaza and frustrated in one's dreams by the state of Israel. The extremity of the situation²⁴

²¹ Cf. Rashad, pp11-12; *al-Hayat*, quoted in *Mideast Mirror*, 07.04.1993, p25 (quoted in Abu-Amr, 'Hamas', p12; also quoted denial of existence of discussions by Hamas leader 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Rantisi in *Sawt al-Haq wa al-Huriyya*).

²² Those who did were primarily of the older generation (Yassin, 'Abd al-Fattah Dukhan).

²³ Cf. the various Hamas rallies I attended in Gaza.

²⁴ In 1993, the population density in the Gaza Strip was 2,290 per km², compared to 210 for Israel and 5,700 for Hong Kong (Roy, *Gaza*, pp175-181). Taking into account the Israeli settlements to which Palestinians are denied access (42% of the Strip in 1996, including security areas around them; *A Comprehensive Survey of Israeli Settlements in the Gaza Strip*, p99), the figure becomes 3,725. In the camps (in 1993, 70% of Gazans were refugees or descendants thereof, over half still resided in camps; Roy, *Gaza*, p15), the population density was 76,120 per km², nearly ten times that of non-camp residents (7,910) and 700

renders it difficult to publicly express moderate opinions, even if they are held in private. Moreover, public passion is used as an outlet for privately held frustration. Consequently, a dualistic culture has emerged in which private and public statements often do not correspond, while both are held with equal conviction by the speaker.²⁵

Primarily used during the Intifada and at university campuses, the communiqués serve as communication links between the various political movements and the general populace, informing them of strike days, urging them to keep courage, issuing guidelines of behaviour towards the Israelis. A number of these have been collected and translated, and where available, I have drawn on them.²⁶ At the time I was conducting my fieldwork (May 1997, December 1997–July 1998, March 1999), most communiqués were authored by the student movement, the Kutlah al-Islamiyyah, since Hamas's actions were severely circumscribed by the PNA's policy towards it. Written from a largely local perspective, by youth for a youthful audience, the content tended to be either highly rhetorical or say little about long-term positions. I have thus hardly used them in this research.

²⁴ (...continued)

that of Israeli settlers (110). In 1999, an estimated 1,113,000 Gazans (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics quoted in *Palestine Business Report*, V.1) lived on some 60% of the Strip's 363 km², the rest taken up by some 5000 settlers (*Survey of Israeli Settlements*, p102). In 1998, 33% of Palestinian families "lived below the poverty line" (PCBS quoted in *PBR*, V.4). In 1999, unemployment hovered between 15-17.5% (PCBS, *PBR*, V.3), having been around 40% in 1996-1997 ('adjusted unemployment rate', *UNSCO Report on Economic and Social Conditions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip*, Spring 1998, pp.ii-iii). Gaza's water supplies are rapidly being depleted, water being reportedly intercepted by Israel before it flows into Gaza's aquifer, while five wells, installed by the Israeli government inside the Strip, tap water for Jewish use only (Roy, *Gaza*, p165). At an economical level, Gaza has, according to Roy, been de-developed by Israel, starved of investments, infrastructural improvements and educational opportunities (Roy, *Gaza*, p117-319). At a psychological level, according to research by Iyad al-Sarraj, director of the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme, one in seven Gazan adults has been tortured, one in five has witnessed a violent death at the hands of Israeli soldiers ('Honeymoon...!!', *al-Quds*, 18/03/1998).

²⁵ Cf. a Hamas supporter in the West Bank telling me, when alone, of a friendly encounter with an Israeli soldier in which he conveyed his wish for peaceful coexistence, yet arguing for a violent solution in the company of Hamas friends – in both instances seemingly genuine.

²⁶ Shaul Mishal & Reuben Aharoni, *Speaking Stones: Communiqués from the Intifada Underground*; Legrain & Chenard. These collections cover roughly the first year of the Intifada. A collection of leaflets covering the entire Intifada is said to be available at Bir Zeit University. When I tried to access it, it was unavailable.

Oral public speeches have too much in common with the style of the *Mithaq* and the communiqués to be classified differently. As they tend to be equally generalistic, populist and full of rhetoric, I have not used this source, although a thorough study of numerous speeches would probably yield interesting indirect insights into the IM's thinking.

Press statements, like communiqués, generally refer to immediate events, such as positions taken on the Peace Process. Though they are less plagued by rhetoric, their relevance to this thesis is as limited as that of the communiqués.

Conference Papers and Newspaper Articles

Conference papers and (reflective) newspaper articles by IM leaders are a more useful source since they tend to be addressed to an intellectually sophisticated audience, and as such are less populist and more thoughtful than communiqués. Not only do they convey the ideas of the movement's leaders, they also illustrate how the movement perceives itself, justifies itself and interprets the situation. Conference papers are somewhat rare because Gazan Islamists are generally unable to leave Gaza without being arrested by the Israeli authorities, and the number of conferences inside the Strip is limited. I have been able to retrieve four conference papers, one given to me by Hamas leader Ismail Abu Shannab, the other three by the public information office of Hizb al-Khalas.

Before the Intifada, the IM had little access to the media, as most newspapers were controlled by the dominant PLO. I thus cannot draw on this source concerning the violent incidents of the 1980s to be discussed in Part II. A certain amount of material on political ideals has become available since the production of newspapers by the IM – *al-Watan*, and after closure by the PNA, *al-Risalah*, officially the organ of Hizb al-Khalas,

in practice written by both Hamas and Khalas members. Since back issues of *al-Watan* are hard to come by, and its material pre-dates the important internal debates following the Oslo Agreement, the PNA's arrival and the creation of the PLC which rendered questions concerning the type of future state more urgent, I have relied exclusively on the back issues provided by *al-Risalah*.

Had I been able to read Arabic more fluently, I would have relied more on *al-Risalah*. Instead, I have asked translators to skim the issues for headlines relating to my research foci. This would have been a greater weakness in my research, were it not for Gaza's primarily oral culture, and the fact that the bulk of *al-Risalah*'s content does not discuss long-term political ideals. Those articles I have drawn on, I have found to merely duplicate what I had already heard in interviews. Their primary function has thus been to confirm whether ideals expressed privately would be held sufficiently deeply to also be expressed publicly.

Another source, popular among Western scholars of the IM, is the British-based magazine, *Filastin al-Muslimah*. Though edited and published in Britain, it is believed to faithfully reflect the IM's positions.²⁷ Though this may well be correct, I have not actively included it among my sources, firstly, because its editors are on record as denying they are Hamas's mouthpiece, and second, because it has an extremely small circulation within the Gaza Strip. Because it hardly contributes to the debate in Palestine, and because the local leadership has no control over its contents, it seemed inappropriate to attribute its views to the IM's leadership. What I have included, comes from the work done by others, most notably Nüsse.

²⁷ E.g. during the Intifada it reprinted Hamas's communiqués (Nüsse, pp4-5).

Local Media Coverage

Since most of the Palestinian newspapers are pro-Fatah and part of the political establishment (which Hamas leaders generally are not), they are a useful source for establishing what the view of the establishment was on a particular event in which the IM was involved. Their reports must, however, be taken as partisan, unless proven otherwise. I have drawn on the English-language *al-Fajr* to portray a sample of the establishment's view of the violent incidents discussed in Part II. As the politically well-established Hanna Siniora was its editor during the 1980s, and it has been described as "the PLO's proxy voice",²⁸ its view can be regarded as indicative of the 1980s establishment. Moreover, it has also been used by various *modernists* and has shaped their understanding of the IM.

3.6 ORAL SPEECH-ACTS

The oral speech-act of the interview has been the most extensively used source in this thesis. I have already elaborated on the oral nature of Gazan popular culture, and on the absence of written material on the IM's political theory – the reasons for choosing this form of evidence. Before discussing methodological issues surrounding the interview, I will briefly detail the other two forms of oral speech-act I have used, the survey and the informal conversation. Though strictly speaking written, the survey is essentially a standardised interview, and has thus been classed 'oral'. It is useful where one has a rough notion of the various answers to one's question present in the IM, and is merely interested in how the answers are spread across it – granted one has a means of selecting a sufficiently representative and random sample. It is useless if one is interested in the

²⁸ Janet Wallach & John Wallach, *Arafat*, p321.

nature of the answers, or if one does not have a sufficient grasp on the types of answer which exist within the studied phenomenon.

I have conducted two surveys during Student Council elections, one in December 1997 at Gaza's Islamic University, the other in April 1998 at the neighbouring Al-Azhar University. I took a sample of 4.8% and 13.4% of the IUG's male and female student bodies respectively,²⁹ and roughly 10% of al-Azhar's male and female student bodies.³⁰ Only those emerging from the voting booth were given a questionnaire, thus preventing irregularities. In both instances, the percentage of votes for each party recorded by my survey corresponded to well within a 5% margin of the official election results, indicating that the composition of my respondents is a relatively representative sample.³¹ Participants were told to answer the questionnaire on their own, and assured that their entries would be anonymous. Questions were formulated so as not to suggest a particular answer (copies of the questionnaires can be found in Appendix A). Answers were formulated to provide everyone with acceptable options. Judging by the response of those handing in their questionnaires, these formulations were much appreciated, and appear not to have forced respondents into answers other than their own. I was not able to prevent students from consulting or pressuring each other.

Another possible source is the informal conversation. Its advantage is its informality. Though I have been able to have a few such conversations with IM members of the IUG's Student Council and with alumni who classified themselves as ex-Hamas

²⁹ Against 3081 female students registered in 1997-1998, I received 412 filled-in questionnaires; this figure was 224 for the 4628 male students (see <http://www.iugaza.edu>). I aimed at 10% in both cases – 50% of the questionnaires distributed among the men were not returned.

³⁰ I do not have the exact gender breakdown for 1997-1998. Judging by later figures, the ratio of men is 55%-60% (see <http://www.alazhar-gaza.edu>). In 1997-1998, 5500 students were registered (of which only 1811 voted; see *Al-Ayyam* 19.04.1998). I surveyed 311 men (roughly 10% of male student body, 30% of voters), and 265 women (roughly 11% of female student body, 34% of voters).

³¹ For al-Azhar, official results and my findings were: Kutlah al-Quds (Shabibah) 83% (82.6%), Kutlah al-Islamiyah 6.5% (6.2%), Nizam al-Islami 1.0% (1.2%).

members, as an outsider to the movement I have not been able to have informal conversations with other members. I have, however, with other people, ranging from businessmen to high-ranking members of the PNA's Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC), the Palestinian equivalent of a Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Personal Interviews

Personal interviews are particularly useful for this thesis as they provide some control over the direction of the conversation. One can engage at a complex level with the interviewee's thinking, and cross-check ambiguous statements. Face to face, one has the opportunity to obtain a measure of the character of the interviewee, enabling one to better judge whether a statement or alleged previous behaviour is in character.³² Though this measure is unlikely to be conclusive, it is better than relying on previously published interviews.³³ Where possible, I aimed for multiple interviews to build trust and rapport, and gain some insight into the IM's 'hidden transcript'.³⁴ I concentrated on the IM's political and humanitarian wings which, though organisationally separate, share a considerable number of personnel, besides espousing the same ideology (see further). I did not interview any members of the IM's 'military' branch. Not only is this

³² Cf. Esposito's plea that researchers engage in "[d]irect observation, interaction, and study" in order to place what is written and said "within the context of what [the Islamists] actually do" (p204).

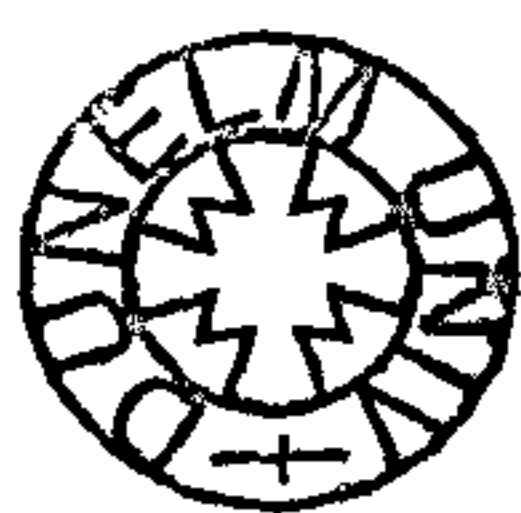
³³ Most published interviews are of little use to this thesis because they either focus on immediate events, such as a particular stage in the Peace Process, or are content with vague, general statements about the IM's political theory.

³⁴ See Scott. Cf. also Said's observation of the need for "determining friendships" between Orientalist and Oriental (p275). Multiple interviews (indicated in text with Roman numbers) – **Hamas top leadership:** Yassin 3x, Abu Shannab 5x, Zahhar 3x, Haniyyah 2x; **Hamas middle leadership:** Hammad 2x; **Khalas leadership:** Musa 4x; **Hamas members:** Intifada Cell 3x; **IM Critics/Non-Partisan:** 'Abd al-Shafi 2x, Bakr 2x, Jarro' 2x, Qassim 2x, Sourani 2x, Shahadah 2x.

separate in both organisation and personnel, it is also less likely to be the seat of sophisticated political thinking.

Important is whether a person's views are representative of the movement as a whole. As the IM is not monolithic, the criterion for establishing whether a person's views can be considered representative is not whether they are shared by all, but whether they fit the movement's overarching principles. Those views that appeared to contradict these principles have been viewed with suspicion; if they occurred in one interview only, they have been discarded as atypical. This has only been the case in one or two interviews with younger members whose general education had suffered from the Intifada and who seemed to have had little instruction in the ideals of the movement.

My interview questions revolved around two sets of issues: general political theory and praxis, and accounts of specific violent episodes. Regarding the first, it is noteworthy that Islamist interviewees were generally not reluctant to express views they knew to be contrary to Western ideals. At the same time, many of their views were remarkably similar to Western ones. Rather than insisting on an absolute dichotomy between Western and Islamist, I have adopted the view that, unless proven otherwise by any of my critical analyses, what was expressed, was expressed genuinely. Because I tried to allow the interviews to shape my questions rather than arrive with a pre-fixed set of questions (in response to van Nieuwenhuijze's observation; see thesis p20); because I tried to minimise the structure of my interviews to offer interviewees as much freedom as possible to express their views within their own logical and conceptual framework (in response to Said's criticism; see p29); and because time was limited, I have not always been able to cross-check whether views expressed by the top leadership were held by all members, or even all the leadership. This does not apply to the more central positions I have discussed. Where I have not been able to cross-check, I have only portrayed



particular views as general if they were clearly implied by related statements in the majority of interviews.

Regarding accounts of specific violent episodes, the interview's purpose is to canvass memories. People's perception of history is, besides being subject to memory loss, constantly evolving. New experiences change one's perspective on a remembered event. Particularly influential, especially in Gaza's highly communal culture, is the collective memory of the group(s) to which the interviewee belongs which comes to overlay the original memories. These collective memories are often riddled with unfounded rumours which are heavily influenced by the teller's worldview.³⁵ A sign that the collective rather than the personal memory is operative is when eye witnesses give bird's eye accounts rather than their personal, limited, experience. Unless there is proof the interviewees draw on their personal memory or on different collective memories, they are likely to have been influenced by the same shared collective memory, and thus the proliferation of one version adds little to the weight of evidence.

Because the IM's reputation is at stake in the incidents in question – it is noteworthy in itself that the IM did not wish to be seen to be violent or intolerant – accounts were likely to be distorted. Evasions, contradictions, inconsistencies or forceful denials were thus particularly significant. I generally tried to let interviewees tell their version of events uninterrupted, without leading from me, so as to augment the value of their accounts as independent eye witness statements. If controversial details were glossed over, I informed the interviewees of allegations made by critics, offering them an opportunity to 'defend' themselves (following Ricoeur's judicial analogy). When the point under discussion was insulting to the interviewees, I explained that, as a

³⁵ Cf. Scott: "Rumour thrives most ... in situations in which events of vital importance to people's interests are occurring and in which no reliable information – or only ambiguous information – is available. ... Life-threatening events such as war, epidemic, famine, and riots are thus among the most fertile social sites for the generation of rumors. [...] [In the retelling, rumor takes on the] hopes, fears, and worldview of those who hear it and retell it" (pp144-145).

researcher, I had to probe controversial issues, if only to record their negation of allegations. At the same time, I explained I could not take their word at face value but had, to safeguard my integrity as a researcher, to corroborate their version with accounts of critics.

The majority of interviewees were inexperienced in interviews. Many, including some leaders such as Abu Shannab,³⁶ had never, or hardly ever, been interviewed before. Consequently, they were not used to the practice of spinning. A further factor facilitating interviews was that honesty and integrity are virtues held high by the IM – to which its reputation of incorruptibility testifies. Though the world has known many corrupt people professing incorruptibility, indicative of the extent to which these virtues are held dear is the way in which many IM members were openly self-critical. Illustrative of this attitude was the extent to which the members of a former Intifada cell I interviewed three times encouraged debate and self-criticism. Evasiveness or refusal to take responsibility for past wrongs was condemned and controversial details were acknowledged for honesty's sake even though their reluctance to do so was palpable.³⁷

Trust is indispensable if interviewees are to reveal anything beyond clichés. An obvious issue is confidentiality – particularly poignant in an environment where belonging to an Islamist group spells imprisonment. Those who insisted on anonymity, were granted it, their names have been changed,³⁸ and identity clues in their accounts have been omitted. I only recorded with consent and explained consent could be withdrawn at any moment during the interview. Beyond confidentiality, however, I felt it important to begin the interview by laying my cards on the table and so reciprocate the vulnerability I expected

³⁶ When I arrived in Gaza, Abu Shannab had only recently been released from a 7-year jail sentence.

³⁷ E.g. discussion of clashes with local Fatah branch when latter ignored Hamas strike called in protest against Madrid Peace Process. They openly recounted their and their party's involvement. But their reluctance and shame showed when one finally said: "we want to skip from this point" (Intifada Cell I).

³⁸ Names between inverted commas are imaginary names to cover anonymous sources.

from my interviewees. In each interview – bar one when I forgot to do this, and paid the price in never really establishing a relationship of trust – I began by explaining the purpose of my research, by acknowledging the general arrogance of the West towards Islam, Islamism, and the Arab world, the existence of moral and political crises in the West, and the need to learn. By doing this, one invites criticism, and I certainly received that. But one also gains the right to criticise, thus enabling a dialogue to take place – rather than creating a confrontational atmosphere in which the interviewee is constantly on the defensive (as some Western interviewers seem to like to do).³⁹

Gaza being a small, encased society, rumours spread rapidly about the few foreigners who live inside the Strip. If a foreigner is seen to (socially) frequent only one section of Palestinian society, s/he easily loses trust with the others – particularly as levels of suspicion have been enhanced by the occupation. It is therefore imperative to have contacts with as many sections of society as possible – and certainly not just the Palestinian elite and the expatriot community.

Interviews with Islamic Movement leaders

The most readily recognisable leaders were those in official positions of legally registered institutions – Hizb al-Khalas, al-Kutlah al-Islamiyyah, and the various affiliated charities. In the latter case, the link between the charity or the interviewee and the IM was not always straightforward. A few months before I moved to Gaza, the PNA closed Al-Jam‘iyyah al-Salah al-Islamiyyah in Deir al-Balah among twenty other

³⁹ Cf. Daniel Pipes' interview, 'Ahmad Yusuf: " Hamas Is a Charitable Organization"', *Middle East Quarterly* 5(1). Compare the responses with those in Gaess' more *pluralist* interviews with Abu Shannab and Abu Marzook.

charities which Israel considered to have organisational links with Hamas.⁴⁰ Multiple sources have since confirmed it is not part of the IM, despite repeated attempts by the latter to absorb it.⁴¹ There are two types of Islamic charity. One shares the IM's ideology and has some staff who politically support Hamas. Beyond that, they are not part of the IM. The other type – such as al-Mujamma' al-Islami, founded by Yassin and Yazuri, two of Hamas's founders, and its female equivalent al-Jam'iyyah al-Shabbat al-Muslimat, many of whose leaders were previously involved in the female branch of the student party al-Kutlah al-Islamiyyah – is part of the informal network of the IM, even though it is organisationally independent and may have staff and Board members who do not support the IM. The latter type can be expected to reflect the IM's general political theory. In either case, though, I have only included those who personally confirmed their affiliation to the IM (for overview, see 'Bibliography').

The leadership of Hamas is less easily identifiable because of the organisation's underground nature. Unfounded rumours make it difficult to rely on popular perception. To identify Hamas leaders, I asked Abu Shannab, a person imprisoned in 1989 for heading Hamas, and widely recognised as one of its current three most influential leaders, to name the ten most important leaders.⁴² I asked the same question of the members of a Hamas cell formerly operative during the Intifada,⁴³ and amalgamated the two lists.

Except for Dukhan, those I interviewed lived in Gaza City. The majority of those I did not interview lived in the middle or southern part of the Strip. This is significant, as the

⁴⁰ See Palestinian Centre for Human Rights Press Release, 'Palestinian Civil Society Threatened by PNA Closure of Legitimate Charitable Institutions in Gaza', 28.09.1997.

⁴¹ Personal interview with Ahmad Al-Kurd (Director); 'Muhammad'; Jensen, pp201-202.

⁴² Abu Shannab II.

⁴³ Intifada Cell II.

southern parts are generally more conservative than Gaza City. My findings thus primarily concern the Hamas of Gaza City – although Gaza City having the highest number of influential Hamas leaders, the largest constituency of followers, and the most influential Hamas-affiliated institutions (the headquarters of al-Mujamma‘, al-Jam‘iyyah al-Islamiyya, al-Jam‘iyyah al-Shabbat and, more indirectly affiliated, the Islamic University), this section of Hamas is also the most influential.

The identity of Hamas’s middle leaders tends to be clouded in secret. Unlike the top leaders, who are well-known and have the (dubious) protection of fame, they have something to lose if their identity is disclosed – more so than the rank and file who do not bear the same burden of leadership, and will thus be treated less harshly if imprisoned. Accordingly, middle leaders were almost impossible to identify. I have, however, been able to identify two middle leaders.

Interviews with Islamic Movement Members/Supporters

IM members are important sources for assessing leadership claims about internally applied ideals. Comparison between political theories as viewed from ‘above’ and ‘below’ is likewise instructive in establishing how much of the leadership’s thinking is actually reflected in the members’ views.⁴⁴ Ordinary Hamas members are generally reluctant to confirm their membership. At the same time, Gazans are liberal in labelling others ‘Hamas’ on the basis of such insubstantial evidence as hear-say, regular mosque attendance or wearing a type of beard popularly associated with Islamists.⁴⁵ A number of students stated categorically that a certain mosque’s imam was a confirmed Hamas

⁴⁴ Cf. Norton’s call for more sociologically oriented research which looks “at the motives of those who lend their support to the Islamist movement” (p70).

⁴⁵ Interestingly, among the student population, many of the Islamists did not wear beards, while a number of Fatah members did.

member – even though the mosque in question was PNA-controlled and known to be a mouthpiece of PNA policy. Similarly, Milton-Edwards appears to have been told that a key player in the history of the Islamic University, Shaykh Muhammad Awwad, was a supporter of the Mujamma'⁴⁶ – while Awwad in fact opposed the creation of the Mujamma', advising the Israeli authorities against granting it a permit, and only enlisted its help to safeguard the Islamicity of the University.⁴⁷ One can thus be sure neither of the veracity of the label bestowed on a person, nor of the person's self-chosen label.

However, people were willing to disclose whether they had been members during the Intifada. The Intifada has long since finished, and people believe that, as Fatah and Hamas fought on the same side, the Fatah-led PNA will not imprison erstwhile Hamas members retrospectively. Those who had since become Khalas members were likewise relatively willing to disclose their membership as Khalas is an officially registered party. However, during my fieldwork the PNA adopted an increasingly harsh attitude towards Khalas members, treating them as if they were Hamas members. Consequently, Khalas members became more reluctant.

To complement interviewees' own testimonies of their membership, I sought the advice of a network of trusted friends which I had formed during the first three months of fieldwork, whose insights had been found to be reliable. I had taken particular care that this network comprised friends from different political and social backgrounds, so as to increase the scope of their combined knowledge and neutralise any bias from their backgrounds. When approaching new people, I ran their names by this network. Similarly, I asked their advice on whom they thought I should see next.

⁴⁶ Milton-Edwards, p107.

⁴⁷ Yassin III.

I interviewed a number of members in target groups, sometimes assembled around a topic (women's issues), mostly assembled as a group of friends or colleagues. Besides being able to obtain multiple responses to similar questions, these target groups enabled me to observe how the members of the group reacted to each other, which provided clues as to how they understood, for instance, the nature of leadership and dissent (for overview see 'Bibliography').

Interviews with Critics, Officials and Non-Partisan Observers

IM opponents and outsiders are useful sources for establishing a critical account of IM behaviour during the violent episodes to be discussed in Part II, and IM praxis concerning the theoretical constructs discussed in Part III. Apart from ascertaining a person's party membership, non-partisanship, or official position, of particular importance is whether an interviewee's account is based on hearsay, or on personal participation or experience, and whether the interviewee was in a position of leadership, and thus had access to privileged information. The fact that some of the events under scrutiny happened 15-20 years ago made it difficult to find eye witnesses.

Aware of the factionalism engendered by years of occupation, and the effect this has on the spin of interviewees' narratives, I actively searched for interviewees who were able to rise above partisan loyalty. Some interviewees proved their ability to do this by absolving the rival movement of some of the blame for an incident and accepting some for their own party. If this was the case, I have given their 'testimony' special weight. In other cases, certain people were recommended for their impartiality.⁴⁸ A useful category of non-partisan sources was that of internationals working with Islamic

⁴⁸ This procedure holds similarly for IM leaders. I have given extra weight to Abu Shannab's testimonies as he is recognised, across Gaza's political spectrum, to be even-handed and trustworthy.

institutions. In this vein, I approached two international charities who regularly dealt with Islamic charities, as well as Michael Jensen and Norwegian researcher Turid Smith-Polfus (for overview, see 'Bibliography').

The two Gazan human rights centres I visited each appear to have a preponderance of personnel with affiliations to one particular party – PFLP in the case of the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR), Fatah for the Gaza Centre for Rights and Law (GCRL). The PCHR appeared to be generally reliable, though at times its party affiliation showed.⁴⁹ The GCRL's director and one particular Board Member (a PLC member for Fatah) displayed considerable bias towards Fatah, against Hamas.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Its director, Sourani, gave a particularly partisan account of the burning of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (see p168).

⁵⁰ Cf. they blamed Hamas for 95% of the collaborator killings, without concrete proof. When pointed out that their affiliation with Fatah might prejudice them against Hamas, the director revised the figure to a 'mere' 67% (Shahadah I).

PART II

POLITICAL VIOLENCE

AND

THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT IN GAZA

PREFATORY REMARKS

Having outlined the problematic surrounding Western discourse on Islamism and its emphasis on Islamist violence, I will focus on two violent episodes which helped shape the Western *modernist* view that Palestinian Islamism is anti-democratic and anti-pluralistic: the struggle for the Islamic University in Gaza (Chapter 5) and the so-called '*hijāb* campaign' (Chapter 6). As both are used to illustrate the IM's intolerance towards ideological and political others and its ready recourse to violence, a re-analysis of the veracity of the *modernist* interpretations of these episodes is imperative if a study of the IM's political ideals (Part III) is to be taken seriously – particularly if these ideals include concepts such as consultation and social contract.

I have investigated two further violent episodes: the 1980 burning of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) in Gaza and the 1981-1982 clashes at Nablus' al-Najah University. Since conclusions drawn were similar and space is limited, I will only refer to them to underline the general applicability of my findings.

As discussed in Chapter 1, I have chosen to limit this thesis to a study of domestic politics. Consequently, I will not address Hamas's use of guerilla and terrorist tactics against Israel.⁵¹ Though a study of the latter is a welcome complement to the present study, there are two reasons in particular why I think it justified not to include these issues. Violence against an external enemy is qualitatively different from violence against an internal one, for the simple reason that the latter will always be restrained by the knowledge that one has to live, indefinitely and in close proximity, with the family

⁵¹ By 'terrorist' I mean violence perpetrated indiscriminately against a population, regardless of age, gender or civilian/military status, to instill terror. By the same token, some of Israel's actions can be described as 'terrorist'.

of one's victims. However much there may be a linkage between a movement's attitude towards 'foreigners' and its attitude towards fellow citizens, one cannot directly apply conclusions from the study of the former to the latter. Moreover, the former is more concerned with issues of war and international relations than with issues of governance, political process and body politic.

Secondly, though the IM uses the term *jihad* (from the verb *jahada*, to strive) to mean both social and military striving, thus encouraging scholars to treat its (socio-)political and military aspects as one single whole, there is a clear institutional separation between the IM's political and military wings. There are also indications that the latter enjoys a large degree of independence from the former (see also p45). Mishal and Sela, drawing on Israeli security records, describe various violent attacks against Israeli citizens which did not appear to have been authorised by the IM's political leadership, and which, moreover, seemed to cause the latter considerable embarrassment.⁵² From my own research, it seems that much of the military efforts in the past half decade have been orchestrated either by the Hamas leadership in Amman, or by maverick individual cells within Hamas's military wing inside the occupied territories (and then often from the West Bank, rather than Gaza). Such attacks do therefore not necessarily reflect the political leadership's views in Gaza.

Using a *pluralist* methodology, I will re-examine available evidence, paying particular attention to the IM's narrative (largely ignored by the *modernist* canon), and juxtaposing this against the narrative of non-Islamists with first-hand knowledge of the incidents.

An exhaustive analysis is not possible here.

⁵² Shaul Mishal & Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas*, pp49-82.

CHAPTER 4

POLITICAL VIOLENCE: THE STRUGGLE FOR THE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY IN GAZA

Those of the Western canon who describe the struggle for the IUG, generally portray it as illustrating the extent to which the IM, or the Mujamma' as it is often called after the IM's main charity, al-Mujamma' al-Islami, is violent and anti-pluralistic, and thus inherently undemocratic. Schiff and Ya'ari talk about "Yassin's ... take-over" of the IUG, of the IM "[p]urging the school of PLO partisans", and turning "the faculty and student body of 700 men into a reserve of disciplined "soldiers"."¹ Abu-Amr refers to "clashes" taking place "between 1982 and 1986"² while Milton-Edwards describes how

Leftists, liberals or progressives expressing a view that was in any respect contrary to that of the Mujama were dealt with severely. The story of one particular student, who was beaten, publicly ridiculed and ostracised illustrates the bitter lengths to which Mujama members were prepared to go to in order [to] ensure a compliant student population. [...]

... strenuous efforts were made to prevent [the nationalists] from organising their own political activities. The secular democratic forces in the university were not given the

¹ Schiff & Ya'ari, p225. Jubran & Drake similarly describe this episode (p5) but since their version follows the above almost verbatim, I assume they have copied it, without recourse to independent new evidence.

² Abu-Amr, *Fundamentalism*, p45.

same freedom as the Mujama by either the pro-Islamic administration or the Israeli authorities. Nationalist students were often barred from the university. ... It was also common knowledge that the Mujama began to keep a cache of weapons such as axes and knives on campus to be used against secular democratic elements.³

Since the Mujamma's opponents were mostly PLO activists, the struggle for the IUG is implicitly presented as proof of the Mujamma's anti-nationalist credentials. The struggle between secularists and Islamists is portrayed as if the IUG was, by right, a secularist institution and that its Islamicity was an aberration. A secular institution, in this view, is all-embracing, an Islamic one exclusive (towards secularists and non-Muslims) – just as the PLO is portrayed as an all-embracing body, serving all Palestinians, while the Brotherhood is depicted as a narrow faction, interested only in expanding its own influence.⁴

4.1 THE 1983 INCIDENTS IN WESTERN DISCOURSE

I will focus on the strike and clashes of 1983 as a paradigmatic example of the overall struggle and draw some general conclusions about the depiction of the IM's actions (and by inference, ideology) in Western discourse and the PLO narrative. Milton-Edwards describes the 1983 strike, saying:

The doormen [Mujama members or supporters] soon developed a reputation for violence, with newspapers reporting in 1983 that they aided armed gangs who attacked striking teachers and students on the campus: 'University gatekeepers and student

³ Milton-Edwards, pp111-112.

⁴ This juxtaposition is implied in e.g. Abu-Amr's statement: "The PLO supporters wanted the [IUG] to be a secular nationalist educational institution for all social, political, and religious groups of the Palestinian people. The Brotherhood wanted to maintain the university as an Islamic university" (*Fundamentalism*, p 43).

supporters of the Islamic bloc broke the strike line and injured fifteen striking students and teachers.'

Concerning the 1983 clashes, she writes:

[...] In 1983 attacks by Mujama supporters on students reached an unprecedented level when seventeen nationalists were badly beaten in clashes on the campus and ordered to halt their political activities.⁵

Abu-Amr refers only to the clashes:

On June 4, 1983, a violent clash took place between the Brotherhood and the nationalists on the campus of the university. More than two hundred students were injured in this clash. This incident coincided with another similarly violent clash at Birzeit University in which a number of students were injured. Both the PLO nationalists and the Brotherhood supporters accused one another of triggering the clashes and held one another responsible...⁶

The other Western texts under review do not detail these events, largely because most write about events after the creation of Hamas in 1987/88. Schiff and Ya'ari focus on a similar series of violent incidents at the IUG in 1986,⁷ while Shadid primarily highlights

⁵ Milton-Edwards, pp110-111. The quote is from *al-Fajr*, 03.06.1983. The clash reference is based on an article in *al-Fajr*, 10.06.1983.

⁶ Abu-Amr, *Fundamentalism*, p43. Note the difference in number of casualties between Milton-Edwards and Abu-Amr.

⁷ Cf. Schiff & Ya'ari: "The contest for al-Azhar [IUG] was practically a mini-civil war between the Islamic Congress [Mujamma'] and its adversaries of the left ... The violence peaked in April 1986 in a series of stabbings and acid attacks..." (p225). Again, since Jubran & Drake describe this episode in almost the same words (p5), I assume they have copied it, without recourse to independent evidence.

clashes in the West Bank, with only one reference to a clash at the IUG between the IM and Islamic Jihad in 1987.⁸

4.2 THE 1983 INCIDENTS IN A PRO-PLO NARRATIVE

Milton-Edwards has based her account on two articles from the pro-Fatah *al-Fajr* newspaper. Its approach well illustrates the nature of the PLO narrative. The first reports that

tensions surrounding the two-week-old employees strike at the Islamic University in Gaza escalated sharply, May 31, after university gatekeepers and student supporters of the Islamic bloc broke the strike line and injured 15 striking students and teachers.⁹

The university's employees, it is explained, had created and elected a new employees' union on May 10, against the wishes of both the Administration (according to *al-Fajr* "drawn from members of the Strip-wide Islamic bloc") and the student's Islamic bloc. The Administration's refusal to recognise the union had led to the strike which, according to the newspaper, included 80 lecturers, 20 employees and several hundred students,¹⁰ and centred on a dispute between the employees and the administration about the way salaries were determined.

From the start, *al-Fajr* continued, the strikers' opponents played foul. Quoting a student, the article stated:

⁸ Shadid, pp678-680.

⁹ *Al-Fajr*, 03.06.1983.

¹⁰ At the time, there were 121 teaching staff and 1514 male students at the IUG (the tensions appear to have occurred primarily in the male section); *Educational Statistical Bulletin for the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Pre-1967 Occupied Palestine*, No. 3 (1983), pp130, 127.

“everyday from the morning to noon when the strikers go home, dozens of men, armed with clubs, chains, knives, and metal bars surround the campus, in an attempt to provoke the employees and students.”

Moreover,

a gang of 20 men, armed with clubs and chains first arrived on campus, the union source said shortly after the strike began. Then, students protected the teachers. The same gang turned up at the university again, May 23. Eyewitnesses say that with the aid of the gatekeepers they “pushed” two teachers ... to the ground, but were prevented from beating them by students who intervened.

Describing the May 31 incident,

the strike breakers used “sharp objects” against the teachers, injuring six. The attackers also caused extensive damage to physics and chemistry laboratories.

The second article in *al-Fajr* describes the subsequent clashes:

Anti-national Muslim fanatic students with outside supporters launched attacks, June 4, on students at Bir Zeit University, ... and the Islamic University of Gaza, injuring more than 70 students¹¹ and causing extensive property damage. [...]

Fights began at the Islamic University at around 8:00 am when groups belonging to the Islamic bloc in Gaza infiltrated through the forest area and onto the campus. A car full of Muslim Brothers was driven tank-like into the cafeteria ... They then ... attacked other students with rods, clubs, shovels and knives. The campus and surrounding streets were transformed into a battle ground with hundreds of students participating.

¹¹ Note that though *al-Fajr* put the number of injured at 70, Abu-Amr cites the 200 injured claimed in a student leaflet (Leaflet No. 3 of the Central Leadership of the United Palestinian National Front, Gaza, 08.06.1983). Since Abu-Amr quotes extensively from *al-Fajr*, it is intriguing that he chose to use a number which is more likely to have been inflated.

[...] A mobile medical unit belonging to the Islamic Institute accompanied the attackers
[...]

At Bir Zeit, three hours after the fighting in Gaza had quietened, two busloads of Islamic bloc supporters arrived from Gaza ... Eye-witnesses estimated 100 young men and women tried to enter the old campus ..., claiming they wanted to march on campus on the occasion of the 16th anniversary of the start of the occupation. The doorkeeper and students tried to stop them entering but were beaten and pushed aside. [...]

[...] [S]cores of local students climbed onto roofs and sent down a shower of stones, forcing the group to disperse. ... the rest fled back to the mosque and started chanting slogans against “infidels”, “communists” [...]

The organised Islamic students involved in the clashes at both universities are known in the occupied territories as Akhwan Muslimin [Muslim Brothers] ... The Akhwan have taken an increasingly active political role, frankly anti-nationalist, in recent years leading Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza to consider them collaborators with the Israeli authorities.¹²

4.3 CONTEXT AND PLAYER ANALYSIS

Western and *al-Fajr* descriptions are both misleading by omission. As well as being about wages and recognition, the strike was a protest against the recent appointment as President of the IUG of Muhammad Saqr, a Muslim Brother from Jordan, and, to the strikers, the embodiment of the university’s Islamic direction. The conflict, moreover, as well as being between ‘nationalists’ and Islamists, was between local PLO activists and Arafat and the PLO leadership abroad, who publicly supported the IUG’s Islamic nature and had sanctioned,¹³ some say even decreed,¹⁴ Saqr’s appointment. It goes

¹² *Al-Fajr*, 10.06.1983.

¹³ Salah al-Saqa (then IUG Board member), Nabil Abu ‘Ali (former Dean of Students, currently Dean of Scientific Research), Ismail Haniyyah II (1980s Kutlah leader, presently Head of Academic Affairs Office),
(continued...)

wholly unmentioned that, on the day of the clashes, the strikers were reinforced by busloads of PLO supporters from the universities of Bir Zeit, Najah and Bethlehem,¹⁵ and that they marched *en masse* on the university when the clashes erupted.¹⁶ Nor is it mentioned that the strikers themselves were reportedly aggressive to staff members opposing their policy, and that the strike culminated in a storming of the President's office to undo Saqr's appointment. Finally, nowhere are we given a glimpse of the Islamist narrative.

Background Analysis

Far from having been a secular university which had been hijacked by the Islamists – as implied by Milton-Edwards's contention that there were “disputes over the segregation of the sexes in the university, over the basic curriculum” and that “[a]ny expression of a secularist viewpoint ... was stifled and the university became more ‘Islamic’ than ever”¹⁷ – the IUG had been envisaged as an Islamically inclined university from the start. Though proposals to establish a secular university, championed by leftists such as Haydar ‘Abd al-Shafi, director of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, had been circulating among

¹³ (...continued)

Zakariyyah Thalmas (1980s Shabibah leader) all stated this was the decision of the Committee of Founders in Jordan, which included both PLO members and Muslim Brothers.

¹⁴ Ahmad Shawwa (then IUG Board Member).

¹⁵ Ismail Abu Shannab (I), Haniyyah (I&II), Atallah Abu Sibah (then Kutlah leader, now Dean of Student Affairs) and Abu ‘Ali mentioned that student activists were brought in from the West Bank, most notably Bir Zeit; Ahmad Yassin (spiritual leader of Hamas) estimated the total number of PLO activists at 400 (Yassin III), Yahya Musa (1980s Kutlah leader) set the number of visitors at 300 (Musa III); non-Islamists confirmed buses had come from the West Bank - Thalmas mentioned students from the West Bank in general, Isam Yunis (then Jabhah al-‘Amal al-Tulabiyyah, PFLP student wing, activist; currently at Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, PCHR) mentioned Bir Zeit, ‘Ziad’ & ‘Husam’ (then Jabhah activists) Bethlehem, Yunis al-Jarro’ (lawyer with PFLP affiliation, Board Member of PRCS) Bir Zeit and Bethlehem (Jarro’ I).

¹⁶ Cf. PFLP: ‘Adli Yazuri (1980s Jabhah leader), Jarro’ I, Yunis, ‘Ziad’ & ‘Husam’. Fatah: Thalmas. IM: Yassin III, Abu Shannab I, Haniyyah I&II, Musa III.

¹⁷ Milton-Edwards, p110.

secularist intellectuals,¹⁸ these had floundered because of a lack of access to suitable land to build a university on.¹⁹ Another group, centred around Shaykh Muhammad Awwad, President of the Board of the already existing al-Azhar College (a secondary school affiliated to Cairo's al-Azhar University), called for the establishment of an Islamicly oriented university, with an initial focus on religion, law and Arabic. As this group had access to a large tract of unused land around al-Azhar College and an existing educational institution, and as, due to its Islamic emphasis, it was attractive to the Fatah leaders in exile (who were engaged in a power struggle with the Palestinian Left)²⁰ and the administrators of large funds in the Gulf States, their plan succeeded.

On November 6, 1978, while the secularists were still debating, the latter group founded the Islamic University with the approval of Arafat, and with the help of Arab funds, channelled largely through Fatah.²¹ While the idea of establishing a secular university with an emphasis on the sciences kept circulating among the Left until the establishment of al-Azhar University in 1991, the secularist leaders I interviewed insisted they wholeheartedly accepted the establishment of the Islamic University, after having been

¹⁸ 'Abd al-Shafi II, Jarro' I&II.

¹⁹ Cf. Sayid Bakr I&II (then Vice President of the IUG Board), Saqa, Ahmad Shawwa & Hilmeh Hammad (then IUG Board Members). See also Milton-Edwards, *The Rise of the Islamic Movement in the West Bank and Gaza Strip since 1967* (PhD), p174-175.

²⁰ Towards the end of the 1970s, the Left was engaged in an offensive to gain overall control of the Palestinian struggle, and outflank Fatah. In 1979, the various leftist groups had gained the backing of the USSR, the Soviet-bloc countries, Syria and Libya, while the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the end to imperialism in Indochina and Africa had boosted their general morale. Over the following half decade, Arafat tended to cooperate with the Islamists (cf. Sayigh, p486-487; Abu-Amr, p47-49). In 1979, Fatah's Abu Jihad launched a concerted push in the territories for influence and control (Sayigh, p479-481).

²¹ Sayigh claims that Abu Jihad secured the funds as well as the academic accreditation for this university from al-Azhar in Cairo (p480); Sayid Bakr, Vice President of the IUG's Board at the time, claims that Arafat cleared the funds himself, after meeting with Bakr (whom Arafat knew from his student days in Cairo), Awwad and other Board members in Beirut (Bakr I). Awwad maintains that he himself raised the funds from the Gulf.

assured that it would not discriminate against Christians and would expand to include scientific studies.²²

The IUG's initial subjects were religiously oriented – *uṣūl al-dīn* (religious studies), *Sharī'ah/qānūn* (law), and Arabic (for the purpose of Qur'ānic studies).²³ The local Board of Founding Trustees was made up of members of the Gazan elite with traditional religious leanings,²⁴ while the Committee of Founders in Jordan which was established with the approval of Arafat and Abu Jihad to raise funds internationally, attracted a number of both non-Islamist religious personalities – such as the late Shaykh 'Abdul Hamid Sayigh, erstwhile speaker of the PNC – and Muslim Brothers, who had a particular commitment to education and a good rapport with the rich Gulf states (where funds were most readily found after the economic boom following the 1973 oil crisis).²⁵

That the Gazan founders of the IUG indeed envisaged an Islamicly oriented university is clear from documents of the late 1970s, which stated that the IUG aims to educate “a good generation of youth, able enough to propagate the Islamic *da'wah* [call] and to

²² 'Abd al-Shafi II, Bakr I, Saqa, Hammad. Jarro' (I&II) confirmed this synopsis.

²³ Awwad, Abu Sibah, Muhammad Nairab (former faculty Dean). According to the *Five-Year Plan for the Establishment of the Islamic University in Gaza* (Muharram 1399/1979), the plan was to expand these first three colleges with colleges for economics and the sciences in 1979, agriculture in 1980, engineering in 1981 and medicine in 1982 (p3).

²⁴ Awwad; Sulayman al-Astal, Mayor of Khan Yunis; prominent businessmen Ahmad Hassan al-Shawwa, Raghīb Murtaja, Sulayman as-Shanti and Tawfiq Yazji. It was soon extended to include the General Director of Education, Muhammad al-Jiddi, two leading doctors from al-Shiffa' Hospital, Dr Sayid Bakr and Dr Ghalib Dhimmu, Dr Yusuf al-Hindi, Merhat Ghazi Amassi, engineer Salah as-Saqa, Hilmeh Hammad, and Hamid Jaradi. Sources: Awwad, Abu Sibah, Bakr I, 'Resolutions of the meeting of the executive committee on 28.09.1979' (Private Document).

²⁵ Beside Sayigh, it included Islamicly oriented Palestinian National Council members Dr 'Abdallah Abu-'Azza, 'Abd al-Rahman Hurani and Dr Salim Amin al-Agha, as well as Muslim Brothers Khayri al-Agha, a rich Palestinian who had worked with universities in Saudi Arabia, and Ishaq al-Farhan, a Palestinian living in Jordan. Dr Salim al-Agha also had Brotherhood connections as, by the time Hamas had been created, he was considered to be reflecting Hamas's views in the PNC (sources: Saqa, Hammad, Abu 'Ali; Abu-Amr, *Fundamentalism*, p145(n85)). Awwad, Bakr I, Saqa, Jarro' I confirmed that the IUG had been established in cooperation with, and with considerable financial help from, Arafat and the PLO (see also Sayigh, pp480, 629). Shawwa & Hammad, Abu 'Ali, Haniyyah II confirmed that the Committee was made up of different political persuasions.

preserve its precious Islamic heritage”, to raise people sufficiently qualified to “resist the waves of moral disintegration and atheism with the weapons of education and faith”, and to assist “religious and scientific research which would serve the Islamic creed and the language of the Qur’ān”. For,

In the midst of our adversarial conditions nothing could help us except the faithful ‘*ālim* [scholar] in addition to the faithful medical doctor, engineer and writer. Thus [has come] the idea of establishing a university with faith as its crown, and thus it is that this institution has come to hold the name ‘the Islamic University’.²⁶

Similarly, they stipulate that “female students will have their own departments belonging to them”.²⁷ In short, the fact that much of the curriculum was Islamically-orientated and that women and men were taught in separate sections was the vision of the original founders in 1978 (and a reflection of Gazan culture, it seems)²⁸ – not that of the Mujamma’ which, then, was still battling with the Israeli authorities for a permit (against which the IUG’s Awwad had been advising the Israeli authorities),²⁹ and which did not gain influence in the IUG until the early 1980s.³⁰

²⁶ *Five-Year Plan for the Establishment of the Islamic University in Gaza*, pp1-2.

²⁷ *Five-Year Plan*, p3.

²⁸ Abu Sibah. I have no conclusive evidence on Gazan culture in 1978. But presently, this is the view of women studying at the IUG (IUG’s Women Section).

²⁹ According to Yassin (III), Awwad had told him that, as Head of the High Court of Appeal, he had counselled the Israeli authorities against granting the Mujamma’ a permit, on the grounds that religious education, which the Mujamma’ aimed to give, should be kept in the hands of the religious authorities. Muhammad Shamma’ (Deputy Director of al-Mujamma’) and Raji Sourani (PCHR) confirmed that Awwad had opposed the Mujamma’.

³⁰ Nairab (secularist by persuasion) set the beginning of the IM’s attempts to gain influence at around March 1983. Musa (II) confirmed that “[t]he Islamic Movement did not actually have power in the Islamic University until 1982 or 1983”.

By 1983, tensions had increased over the nature and direction of the IUG. A majority of the staff appears to have been secularly oriented at the time,³¹ while the doormen were pro-Islamist.³² The Administration, mirroring the Gazan Board and the Jordanian Committee, seems to have been Islamically inclined.³³ While a majority of the student body was pro-Islamist (not surprisingly given the IUG's curriculum),³⁴ it included a significant number of highly motivated, and well organised, secularist PLO activists. Some of these had received their 'training' in prison.³⁵ A high proportion were supporters of the PFLP's student wing, *Jabhah al-'Amal al-Tulabiyyah*.³⁶

In 1983, the Committee, the Board and Arafat decided to appoint Muhammad Saqr, a Muslim Brother from Jordan with a Harvard doctorate, as President. The outgoing 'President' had been acting President only, as he had not been sufficiently qualified. At the time, sufficiently qualified academics were rare in Gaza.³⁷ According to Dean Abu Sibah, this had led to the 'importing' of 32 lecturers with doctorates from Jordan,³⁸

³¹ Judging by the outcome of the elections for the Employees' Union. This is confirmed by Abu Sibah, Musa IV, Thalmas, Jarro', 'Ziad' & 'Husam'. Nairab observed the majority of staff were interested in education, not factionalism.

³² Musa II&III, Jarro', 'Ziad' & 'Husam'. See also Milton-Edwards, p110.

³³ Jarro', Thalmas, 'Ziad' & 'Husam'. See also *al-Fajr*, 03.06.1983. Abu 'Ali said the Administration was appointed by the Committee in Jordan, with the approval of both Abu Jihad (PLO) and the Muslim Brothers.

³⁴ Even then, *al-Kutlah al-Islamiyyah* won student elections decisively. Cf. Saqa, Shawwa & Hammad, Musa III, 'Ziad' & 'Husam'; Milton-Edwards, p112.

³⁵ Cf. Sayigh, p478; Sahliyeh, pp115-136; Hillel Frisch, 'The Palestinian Movement in the Occupied Territories: The Middle Command', *Middle Eastern Studies* 29(2), pp258-262.

³⁶ 'Ziad' & 'Husam', Jarro' I, Thalmas, Yunis. This is partly due to the fact that, unlike Fatah, which had concentrated its efforts largely outside the territories, and the IM, which had been preoccupied rebuilding itself, the PFLP had had a high profile in Gaza in the first years after the 1967 war (cf. Sayigh, p210), resulting in a high profile among the prison population.

³⁷ The first Dean of *Sharī'ah* only had a Bachelor's degree (Abu Sibah). In its first year, the IUG had one lecturer with a Doctorate, five with a Master's, six with a Bachelor's (*Statistical Bulletin for the West Bank and Gaza Strip*, Vol. 1).

³⁸ Abu Sibah. According to the *Statistical Bulletin for the West Bank and Gaza Strip* (Vols. 1-3) and the *Educational Statistical Bulletin for the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Pre-1967 Occupied Palestine* (Nos. 2-3), there was an increase of 22 staff with Doctorates, 17 with Masters, 27 with Bachelors between 1979/80 and

which had given rise to the pay differential between local and foreign lecturers that had a part in triggering the strike. Some PLO activists contended that the 30, and Saqr, were brought in to boost the number of Islamicly inclined staff and so secure the IUG's Islamic nature.³⁹ Given the Islamic emphasis of the Committee in Jordan and the conservative nature of the Board in Gaza, it is quite likely that a number of these lecturers had links with the Jordanian Brotherhood.⁴⁰ This may well have intensified the tensions between the secularist and Islamicly inclined camps at the IUG. Equally, the IUG genuinely needed qualified personnel to boost the quality of its teaching.

These tensions were complicated by strains between the PLO's international leadership and local activists. After his defeat in Beirut in 1982 and the launch of the Reagan Plan (proposing a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation), Arafat had begun exploring more intensely whether Jordan could represent the Palestinians in US-sponsored talks with the Israelis. A number of PLO factions, including the PFLP and many Fatah activists in the territories, were vehemently opposed to such negotiations.⁴¹ Rumour had it, moreover, that the King was meddling in Gazan affairs through the IUG, in the same way as he was alleged to be using the *awqāf* in the West Bank to increase his power at the cost of the PLO.⁴² Since the IM was believed to be pro-Hussein (just as its sister organisation

³⁸ (...continued)

1980/81, an increase of, depending on the source, either 4 (SBWBGs; no qualification details) or nothing (ESWBGs) in 1981/82, and an increase of 4 with Doctorates, 9 with Masters, 19 with Bachelors in 1982/83. It thus seems that Abu Sibah was referring to 1980/81.

³⁹ Cf. Thalmas. *Haniyyah* (II) recounted articles denouncing the Jordanian lecturers in Fatah underground publications – according to him with the aim of depleting the IUG of expertise.

⁴⁰ I have not been able to establish this conclusively.

⁴¹ The Spring 1983 rebellion by Fatah leaders in Lebanon was partly triggered by Arafat's cooperation with Hussein, and his willingness to explore the Reagan Plan (cf. Hart, p461).

⁴² Thalmas. Regarding West Bank, cf. Shadid, p675.

the Jordanian Muslim Brothers were considered to be close to the King)⁴³ and Saqr was a Jordanian Muslim Brother, the internal PLO tensions were readily projected onto the struggle with the IM.⁴⁴ As a consequence of Arafat's rapprochement with King Hussein and his deteriorating relationship with Syria, following Syria's role in helping to oust him from Lebanon, the IM had come closer to Arafat.⁴⁵ Furthermore, local activists resented the fact that Arafat and Abu Jihad cooperated with the Muslim Brothers, and with politically conservative individuals such as Awwad⁴⁶ – a policy partly inspired by Arafat's struggle with the PLO's Left⁴⁷ – because they saw Arafat's cooperative attitude strengthening the local Brotherhood and undermining their own efforts at gaining control over local institutions for the PLO, in line with Abu Jihad's strategy.⁴⁸

The PFLP activists among the students, in conjunction with the secularists among the staff, appear to have been determined to undo Saqr's appointment and reinstate the outgoing acting President, Riad al-Agha.⁴⁹ Though having initially agreed to it, Agha was unwilling to accept his demotion, and while, by some accounts, not ideologically

⁴³ Cf. Lawrence Tal's reference to "their informal pact with the state" ('Dealing with Radical Islam: The Case of Jordan', *Survival* 37(3), p146). See also Amnon Cohen, *Political Parties in the West Bank under the Jordanian Regime, 1949-1967*, Chapter 4.

⁴⁴ Abu Sibah recounted that heated discussions took place as a result of the Palestinian-Jordanian agreement, and that, given that Gazans were "Easterners, whose blood is hot" it took little to ignite an explosion.

⁴⁵ Cf. Barghouti, 'The Islamists in Jordan and the Palestinian Occupied Territories' in Guazzone, p147.

⁴⁶ Cf. Thalmas, Jarro' I.

⁴⁷ Cf. Sayigh, p558ff. Also, as discussed in Chapter 3, a significant section of the Fatah leadership had had close connections with the Muslim Brotherhood during the 1950s. Not surprisingly, Arafat did not seem to ideologically object to the idea of an Islamic University. According to Abu Sibah, he is said to have remarked at its inception that if the Vatican has a Christian University, why should Gaza not have an Islamic University. However, despite Islamic elements among Gazan Fatah supporters, the Shabibah at the time seem to have been pushed into a wholly secularist position by their alliance with the Left and the fact that the Islamists were identified with the notion of an Islamic University. Arafat may also have played a double game, officially supporting the Islamists to gain their international support, unofficially encouraging local Fatah supporters to weaken the Islamist hold over the IUG.

⁴⁸ See footnote 20.

⁴⁹ Yazuri, Nairab. According to Haniyyah II, the strikers distributed leaflets likening Saqr derogatively to a General and calling for his dismissal.

wed to either camp, he was ready to throw his lot in with the secularists if they kept him in office⁵⁰ – with some Islamists claiming he was deliberately appointing secularists to the IUG's Administration.⁵¹ As none of my interviewees stressed the issue of salaries or the Administration's refusal to recognise the employees' union, it seems that, however pertinent those issues might have been at the time, the real issue was the future direction of the IUG and the Presidency of Saqr.⁵²

There was a fundamental difference in opinion between the PLO and the IM regarding the priority of resistance. While the PLO believed in resistance over education on the grounds that without freedom education meant nothing, the IM (then) believed in education over resistance on the grounds that the resistance forces were no match for the Israeli army, whereas education would prepare the population for the eventual battle for liberation.⁵³ The Islamists appear to have been backed in condemning activities that could lead to suspension of education by the non-aligned academically-minded staff and the (non-IM) Board members.⁵⁴ Their position was indirectly supported by the argument of the Palestinian branch of the Jordanian Communist Party who had from 1974 eschewed military action on the grounds that "90% of the clandestine members of

⁵⁰ While he is said to have cultivated a relationship with Yassin for pragmatic reasons (Hilmeh Hammad, Musa III), most of my interviewees agreed he favoured PLO supporters in appointments (Bakr II, Nairab, Musa III, 'Ziad' & 'Husam') or at least favoured the PLO in general (Saqa, Haniyyah II). I did not have the chance to interview Agha myself.

⁵¹ According to Musa (II), "Riad al-Agha ... was implanting secularists and communists as much as he could with what seemed to be a pre-planned strategy to control the overall direction of the university".

⁵² Haniyyah II, Abu Sibah, Jarro' I, Yazuri, 'Ziad' & 'Husam', Nairab. Haniyyah (II) insisted that the 1983 events could not have been about the employees' union, as, according to him, the first employees' elections were held in 1984. Abu 'Ali held that employee elections had occurred since 1978, while Musa III recounted that employee elections had taken place, but illegally so, which was why the Islamists had refused to participate. These discrepancies may be the result of a problem of definition – i.e. Abu 'Ali may be talking about electing employee representatives, Haniyyah about elections for an officially recognised union (in which case, it is possible that, not having been recognised by the IUG in 1983, a union was finally established in 1984). Without access to the IUG's archives, it is impossible to conclude the issue decisively.

⁵³ Even during the Intifada, Hamas kept urging teachers to teach and students to study, if need be privately (cf. frequency of these calls in leaflets; see Chapter 7, footnote 86). Nairab, 'Ziad' & 'Husam' confirmed this was the IM's attitude during the 1980s.

⁵⁴ Nairab, Abu 'Ali.

the guerilla groups were arrested even before carrying out military attacks".⁵⁵ The Brotherhood, unlike the PLO, had experienced repression to the point of near-extinction, both under Nasser and under the brief spell of Israeli rule in 1956.⁵⁶ They therefore feared premature resistance. Whatever the merits of each side's argument, both believed the other to be betraying the national cause.

The 1983 Strike

The incident which triggered the first *Fajr* article, the breaking of the strike line and the injuring of "15 striking students and teachers" by the "university gatekeepers and student supporters of the Islamic bloc", appears to have coincided with the strikers' attempt to occupy the President's office.⁵⁷ Four interviewees recounted that the incident ended in a minor clash between Agha's pro-PLO supporters and Saqr's Islamist supporters,⁵⁸ with Musa, one of the Kutlah leaders, detailing that the university's doormen, whose job it was to protect the university, were involved. Though only Musa dated the incident with any precision to "a couple of days before the bringing in of the buses [June 4]", all linked the incident to Agha's dismissal. Since *al-Fajr's* description of "university gatekeepers and student supporters" fits the description of those defending the President's office and Musa's memory places the office incident around May 31, it seems that the violence ending the strike, described in *al-Fajr* (though denied

⁵⁵ Sayigh paraphrasing Bashir Barghuti's position (p477).

⁵⁶ Cf. Milton-Edwards, p46-55.

⁵⁷ Saqa, Nairab, Haniyyah II, Musa III, Abu Sibah. Saqa likened Agha's pro-PLO supporters to a bodyguard. Abu 'Ali denied that violence happened surrounding the dismissal of Agha. Since he has a stake in portraying the IUG's history as harmonious, I am more inclined to believe the first four. Yazuri, finally, insisted the PLO supporters had been too weak a force to occupy the President's office.

⁵⁸ Saqa, Nairab, Musa, Abu Sibah. Abu Sibah insisted the conflict was between Agha supporters and Agha detractors, not necessarily along PLO-Islamist lines. As Dean, he is likely to wish to tone down factional conflicts.

by Haniyyah),⁵⁹ was a response to the invasion of the President's office – and not merely an unprovoked reaction to a peaceful strike.

There are other reports that the strikers were not entirely peaceful, that they intimidated staff members opposing the strike. The strike happened towards the end of the academic year, exams pending. Some lecturers wished not to disrupt the exams for educational reasons. Others believed the strike was political in nature, aimed at weakening the IUG so that an eventual take-over by the PLO would become easier⁶⁰ – just as the strikers interpreted a refusal to strike as a betrayal of the 'national' cause, and a declaration of support for the Islamists. According to Haniyyah,

[the strikers] even threatened some of the University professors who wished to continue with the exams, regardless of the strike ... many of them were seriously hurt. Nabil Abu 'Ali was one of the professors who was threatened ...⁶¹

Abu 'Ali in fact denied he was threatened.⁶² But his denial may be motivated by the present political situation in which some of those who helped to orchestrate the strike head two of the most notorious security forces and by his stake in portraying the history of the IUG as harmonious. Equally, Haniyyah might be exaggerating. Shabibah and Jabhah leaders denied that the strikers engaged in violence, and insisted that their bid for control of the IUG was "not by fighting but by democratic ways".⁶³ The Jabhah leader,

⁵⁹ Haniyyah denies that violence was used against the strikers. But, as in the case of the PLO supporters denying violence, it seems more likely than not that some form of intimidation was used, given the violent and antagonistic climate engendered by political rivalries and occupation.

⁶⁰ Cf. Haniyyah I&II.

⁶¹ Haniyyah II. Musa (IV) also recounted the strikers were violent.

⁶² Abu 'Ali.

⁶³ Thalmas. Cf. also Yazuri. Thalmas could not give any further details as he was in prison during the clashes. He dated the clashes to June 1984 but since all other sources give 1983 and fail to mention any significant clashes in 1984, I am treating this inconsistency as due to 'memory confusion'.

'Adli Yazuri, claimed that the PLO supporters could not engage in violence as they were banned from the university compound during the strike. According to him, the subsequent clashes were actually caused by the strikers trying to force entry into the university, having missed the exams and been failed by the Administration.⁶⁴ His account is contradicted by that of two former Jabhah student activists who, while insisting they did not engage in violence ("we were weaker than them; if we had been stronger, we would have probably started the violence, because we were not nice"), described a sit-in on campus⁶⁵ – echoing *al-Fajr*'s reference to a two-week strike on campus.

Within the larger context of a struggle for power between the various movements, and a violent political climate caused by occupation and the Palestinian response thereto, directed at both Israelis and fellow Palestinians (who were safer substitutes for the outlet of anger the occupation caused)⁶⁶ – a case in point is *al-Fajr*'s report that on June 1 "unidentified assailants hurled a hand grenade at the home of ... Dr Mohammed Saqr, shattering windows, but causing no injuries"⁶⁷ – it seems more likely than not that the

⁶⁴ Yazuri.

⁶⁵ 'Ziad' & 'Husam'.

⁶⁶ Israeli forces tended to respond harshly to discourage further resistance – e.g. displacement of over 15,000 refugees from Gaza's refugee camps in 1970-1971 in response to resistance activities (Lesch, pp41-45; Roy, p105); town quarter demolitions in response to killing of Israeli soldiers or settlers (cf. G. Aronson, *Israel, Palestinians and the Intifada*, pp199-200; Dick Doughty & Mohammed El Aydi, *Gaza: Legacy of Occupation*, pp58-64); the military order to break the bones of those caught throwing stones (Sahliyah, pp81-84; Aronson, pp214-221). During the 1980s, the Israeli army initiated a series of 'Iron Fist' policies which meant a radicalisation of the punishment of resistance activities (Sahliyah, pp81-84; Adam Keller, *Terrible Days*, p121). With the Intifada, both the Israeli response to Palestinian violence and intra-Palestinian violence intensified, cf. the increase in the number and atrocious nature of collaborator killings (cf. Yizhar Be'er & Saleh 'Abdel-Jawad, *Collaborators in the Occupied Territories*). Another outlet for occupation-inspired frustration were assassination attempts on political dissenters. In 1967, Hamdi al-Taji al-Farouki's house was shelled for (prematurely) advocating a two-state solution while, between 1967 and 1973, the Mayors of Hebron and Gaza were attacked for similar reasons (Issa Shuaibi, 'The Development of Palestinian Entity-Consciousness, Part II', *Journal of Palestine Studies* IX(1), pp60, 63). Hashim al-Khaznadar from Gaza was killed in 1979 for supporting Egyptian proposals for Palestinian autonomy (Harold Cubert, *The PFLP's Changing Role in the Middle East*, p141).

⁶⁷ *Al-Fajr*, 03.10.1983. Following the attack, the IUG, according to *al-Fajr*, took out front page ads calling the incident "part of a "low conspiracy" aimed at crippling the "progress of the university"". Even if the

(continued...)

strikers would have engaged in some form of intimidation, just as the doormen and Islamist students are likely to have done. Too many different sources refer to a strike on campus and to some sort of violence. This reading is (tentatively) supported by the fact that a year earlier, in a similar type of stand-off, PLO activists at Nablus's Najah University violently imposed a strike on the university in protest against the Islamists winning the student elections, harassing those who wished to continue with classes – a strike which equally culminated in a violent battle for the university, and was similarly reported in the pro-PLO press as chiefly the fault of the Islamists.⁶⁸

Going back to *al-Fajr*'s references to an "off-campus gang" and "dozens of men, armed with clubs, chains, knives and metal bars" harassing the strikers, it is unclear whether they were sanctioned by the Islamist leadership – and, indeed, how much damage they did. For, despite the reference to chains and knives, the article does not actually mention any worse crime than trying to provoke the strikers and pushing some lecturers to the ground. If this 'gang' was sanctioned by the leadership – Haniyyah insists no violence was used against the strikers⁶⁹ – its existence seems to have been motivated by the violent climate of occupation and resistance which had inspired the various PLO movements to establish, by all accounts ruthless, strike squads. As no reports of such

⁶⁷ (...continued)

incident was unconnected to the strikers, its occurrence was one more factor creating a violent climate. Intriguingly, the *al-Fajr* report on the clashes insinuates this attack was perpetrated by the IM.

⁶⁸ Cf. *Al-Fajr*, 15-21.01.1982, 22-28.01.1982, 19-25.02.1982. According to my interviews with 'Abd al-Rahman Turk (1982 Shabibah leader), Nasr Sha'r (1982 Kutlah leader), anonymous 1982 Kutlah leader, Yusuf 'Abd al-Haq (PFLP-affiliated lecturer), Islamist Najah alumnus and a non-aligned Najah alumnus, the activists disrupted university life for 40 days, using loudspeakers in the central court, throwing parties, physically pulling lecturers and students from their classrooms, sneering at Islamist students, in some cases pulling off *hijābs*. Some are said to have stormed into a Board of Trustees meeting, jumping on the table and shouting derogatory slogans at the President, Hikmat Masri. Others rounded on a (student) relative of Masri and beat him into hospital. Though the Islamists were certainly engaged in violence during the battle, and are said to have scared a leftist lecturer into jumping from a second-floor window (he survived and still teaches at Najah), I have heard no reports of Islamist violence during the strike (though this may well have happened).

⁶⁹ Haniyyah I.

gangs have been made since the coming of the PNA,⁷⁰ its existence in the 1980s cannot be taken to 'prove' an essentially violent bend in the IM's leadership. Also, given the proliferation of such squads among all Palestinian movements during the occupation, one can hardly single out the IM for having one. Moreover, just as *al-Fajr* seems to have glossed over the more aggressive aspects of the strikers, it is possible that similar armed groups were involved on the strikers' side.

Another option would be that this strike force was organised by some of the more violently inclined among the Brothers, but not sanctioned by the entire leadership. In this case one has to ask why the leadership did nothing to stop them. One possible answer is that they turned a blind eye because they welcomed the results.

A third option is that this strike force was connected to the Israeli collaborator network. Though I hesitate to proffer this option without further proof, it cannot simply be discarded. As I will discuss later, it seems that collaborators spread inflammatory leaflets on campus to antagonise the rival movements, just as they did during the Intifada. Furthermore, it is well documented that by 1988 Israeli undercover units, disguised as Palestinians, were operating in the territories, in the words of Israeli human rights organisation B'Tselem, "for all intents and purposes as liquidation squads".⁷¹ Likewise, it is known that armed Palestinian collaborators arrested Palestinian activists during the Intifada.⁷² Collaborators were also found to attack bare-headed (leftist) women activists during the Intifada, while posing as Hamas supporters (see Chapter 5), while one leader of a more notorious Brotherhood strike force (involved in beating up

⁷⁰ 'Khalid' IV, PFLP Supporter II.

⁷¹ Na'ama Yashuvi (B'Tselem), *Activity of the Undercover Units in the Occupied Territories*, p8. Though the military has repeatedly denied the existence of such units, and B'Tselem has granted that perhaps "there is no official policy that permits such killing", the latter's extensive research has led it to conclude that "in practice the phenomenon exists".

⁷² Cf. photos at IUG photo exhibition in memory of 50th anniversary of 1948 war, May 1998.

PFLP leaders in 1986) was later found to have been a collaborator.⁷³ It is thus not unthinkable that collaborators operated a strike force, ostensibly in the name of the Brotherhood, but actually intended to cause havoc – though this still implicates the Brotherhood leadership if it was aware of this force (as it presumably was, though I have no confirmation of this besides *al-Fajr*).

The 1983 Clashes

Turning now to the clashes, I have already alluded to the fact, ignored by *al-Fajr*, that some 300 PLO supporters had been bussed in from the West Bank. Though the former PLO activists I interviewed acknowledged that these buses did indeed arrive, they generally insisted their purpose was peaceful. Some Jabhah activists maintained that the visit was a coincidence. The students, they insisted, had come for a commemoration of the first anniversary of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, and that it was usual for students to participate from all over Palestine (mirroring *al-Fajr*'s description of the Gazan Islamists arriving at Bir Zeit for the 16th anniversary of the start of the occupation).⁷⁴ This explanation begs several questions. Why would a commemoration be scheduled for 8.00 am, more or less forcing the visitors to arrive on the eve of the event – staying over in Beit Hanun, according to the Islamist narrative?⁷⁵ Why come all the way from the West Bank instead of joining in their own universities' commemorations?⁷⁶ Why did the *Fajr* article not mention the planned demonstration in

⁷³ Walid Hamdiyyah is presently in prison on suspicion of collaboration. He was also allegedly involved in turning in Hamas Intifada leader 'Emad 'Aql. Cf. Jarro' I, Yazuri, Thalmas.

⁷⁴ Yunis; 'Ziad' & 'Husam'.

⁷⁵ Abu Shannab I, Haniyyah I.

⁷⁶ Since Yassin (III) insisted that the Kutlah had a permit to demonstrate in Bir Zeit, it is conceivable that pro-PLO students wished to demonstrate unencumbered elsewhere. The choice of IUG where the PLO was a minority, suggests however that a confrontation was sought.

Gaza and the existence of placards among the PLO supporters – as it did regarding the Islamist demonstrators at Bir Zeit?⁷⁷

That more than a demonstration was intended was hinted at by Thalmas, who said:

One of the ways of defending ourselves was sometimes to collect people from everywhere, ... to give the impression that we are very strong people.

But, he added, though he was in prison at the time,

I am sure that no one even threw a stone towards anyone from the Islamic movement.⁷⁸

Yazuri equally resolutely denied that his followers were engaged in violence. Yazuri's account of events is that the Administration had retaliated against their support for the employees' strike by failing them for their missed exams and suspending them; and that, subsequently, the pro-PLO students had assembled in front of the IUG to force entry in order to be able to continue their studies and sit the exams they had missed. But, Yazuri insists, because they had not expected "thousands" of Islamist supporters, "hidden inside the classrooms with big sticks, chains and knives and in the area surrounding the university", the pro-PLO students had come unarmed and were, consequently, severely beaten by the Islamists. Yazuri was taken to hospital unconscious, his ribs broken.⁷⁹

There is an unresolved contradiction here. For, if the intention was to show force – something both Yazuri and Thalmas acknowledge – why, given the previous tense

⁷⁷ *Al-Fajr* quotes the Bir Zeit Student Council's report that "unfamiliar people [were] leaving the mosque carrying placards bearing slogans condemning the PLO".

⁷⁸ Thalmas.

⁷⁹ Yazuri. His wife confirmed this.

weeks, would the PLO supporters have come unarmed? Another Jabhah activist, Isam Yunis, originally from Gaza and one of the Bir Zeit students in Gaza at the time of the fights, recounted that there was a coalition of different political movements against the Mujamma' planning to challenge the latter's bid for hegemony (again, an implicit recognition of the potentially violent nature of the visit):

The National Movement [PLO], even Islamic Jihad, ... was asking for action [against the Mujamma']. The Mujamma' saw the IUG as their kingdom and they refused any power-sharing.⁸⁰

Kutlah leader Haniyyah similarly mentioned that "there was an agreement in 1983 between all the different student blocs ... to stage a coup d'état against ... Muhammad Saqr" and that, just prior to the clashes, a meeting had taken place in Jabalyah Camp with "all the leaders of the different political blocs, Fatah, the PFLP, including 'Abd al-'Aziz 'Odeh who is a leader of Islamic Jihad" with the purpose "to plan to take over the University on [the coming] Saturday".⁸¹

Given the general violent climate, the fact that there was a pre-planned coalition against the Mujamma', that there had been a clash in the President's office a few days prior, that bus-loads had arrived from the West Bank and that PLO supporters there are known to have engaged in violence prior to these clashes as at al-Najah University, an unarmed challenge to the IM seems unlikely. One PFLP representative, Yunis al-Jarro', a well-respected lawyer capable of rising above political partisanship, agreed that the bringing in of students from the West Bank probably indicated a physical challenge was intended

⁸⁰ Yunis.

⁸¹ Haniyyah II.

with the purpose of establishing a PLO hegemony at the IUG.⁸² This reading is further corroborated by the fact that, according to Haniyyah, not only were the ‘demonstrators’ armed,⁸³ but

One of the people who was considered to be an Islamic Jihad activist at the time, Hijaz Burbar, had given a Friday sermon at the Khatibah mosque [down the road from the IUG] saying, literally, that all hospitals and ambulances should be ready tomorrow - which was to be Black Saturday - to take the injured from the Islamic University ...⁸⁴

The Islamist narrative indeed paints a picture of an armed attack by PLO supporters to take control of the university.⁸⁵ In Abu Shannab’s words,

The Islamic University announced that it wanted to bring in a new professor to be the President ... [T]he Fatah people and the communist parties said [to each other]: we reject this professor and plan to attack ..., remove this person, and control the university. This plan was decided in Bir Zeit University. And from Bir Zeit came students, from Fatah and the communist parties. They gathered at Beit Hanun [north of Gaza City], that night, and the Mujamma’ party noticed ... people coming from outside were gathering in Beit Hanun to attack the university. So what do you expect their reaction will be? To defend the university. So they urged their supporters to gather around the university, to defend it against any attack – if it comes. In the morning, those who had planned the attack, came directly to the university, expecting everything to be open ... because they did not know that the Mujamma’ had noticed their movement. So all of a sudden clashes erupted. In any clash, you use whatever you

⁸² Jarro’ I.

⁸³ Cf. also Yassin III, Abu Shannab III, Sami Abu Dhughri (1980s Kutlah activist, President IUG Student Council 1997).

⁸⁴ Haniyyah II. *Al-Fajr* similarly uses its reference to the presence of the Islamic Institute’s “mobile medical unit” to imply that the Islamists’ attack was pre-meditated.

⁸⁵ Yassin III, Abu Shannab I, Haniyyah I&II, Musa III, Abu Dhughri.

have. We didn't have guns, and thank God we didn't have guns at that time. So with stones, sticks, whatever they could find as hand tools, they defended. ... From that moment, they [Fatah and the communists] began to say: they attacked us, they did this and that. Yes, we did. It's not shameful to do so because you are coming to attack the university. So we defended the university.⁸⁶

Comparing, it is interesting that the Islamists have no compunction in acknowledging that they used violence 'defensively', while references to PLO violence, even defensive, were entirely absent from the PLO narrative, even after my prompting them on this issue. Similarly interesting is that the Islamists readily took responsibility for wishing to defend the IUG and its Islamicity, while most of the PLO supporters refrained from acknowledging that there might have been an underlying intention to take control over the university and make it secular.⁸⁷

Whoever initiated the violence, and whether or not the PLO supporters were armed, it seems clear from the above accounts that the Islamists truly believed the university to be under attack. Though possible theirs is a fabricated narrative to justify violence, it is too detailed, and too plausible, to be simply dismissed. Given the rumours spread by Awwad in 1980 concerning a communist bid to take over the IUG;⁸⁸ given the infamous January 1982 clashes in Najah University following an Islamist electoral victory; given finally the storming of the President's office in the recent strike, the grenade which had exploded in Saqr's house, and the rumour that hundreds of PLO supporters had been bussed in from the West Bank, it is not surprising that the Islamists believed the university to be threatened. From their point of view, the PLO strike had been illegitimate, and deliberately aimed at weakening the university. Not only were they

⁸⁶ Abu Shannab II.

⁸⁷ Only Jarro' did. Yunis merely acknowledged that there was an intention to challenge the Mujamma's hegemony which he portrayed as illegitimate.

⁸⁸ See p168.

protesting an appointment made by the appropriate authorities that had (initially) been accepted by Agha, they had also disrupted the exam period and organised 'illegitimate' employee elections.

Both sides possessed an ideational framework which could readily justify violence against the other. In each narrative, the other was a collaborating force, betraying the Palestinian cause – a view fuelled by the heated debate regarding the merits of resistance.⁸⁹ Moreover, for some 15 years people had not had recourse to a trusted guarantor of the rule of law. Instead, they were daily confronted with a humiliating occupation force, the frustration of which experience could easily spill over into intra-Palestinian relations. They had grown used to taking the law into their own hands.

Given the rivalry between a PLO with hegemonic ambitions and a nascent Islamist movement which refused to accept the PLO's representativeness, the PLO challenge, whether armed or not, readily provoked a violent response. In Musa's words,

These dynamics were happening in an environment that could be characterised as a society without an ability to communicate, lacking democratic behaviour, in addition to occupation ... and a Palestine Liberation Organisation that was trying to marginalise the establishment of any new Islamic organisation. ... [Then you have] the [Islamic] movement which started to feel that it had the right, more than others, to express itself because it was the one with... righteousness. To be self-critical ..., both the Islamic and the secular mentality were backward. Both had a mentality that depended on the logic of power [and conflict], not debate.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Cf. *al-Fajr*'s description of the IM as collaborators in its report on the clashes. Former Jabhah activists 'Ziad' & 'Husam' recounted Islamists telling them in prison that they had been told the Jabhah were collaborators; see p327.

⁹⁰ Musa II.

In this climate, and in the absence of legitimate arbitration structures, the clashes seemed relatively inevitable – particularly if it is taken into account that it is more than likely that collaborators were involved in exacerbating the tensions. Abu ‘Ali, then Dean of Student Affairs, recounted that much of his time was spent reconciling the opposing factions after inflammatory leaflets had been distributed, in his opinion by collaborators.⁹¹ According to Abu ‘Ali,

The occupation was playing on contradictions [between the two parties] ... [A] small group of agents [published] a leaflet on this or that. ... [S]itting in my office ... one [of the two parties] would say: there was a leaflet against us. The other would say: we didn’t sign it. This happened on many occasions. They praised me as a reconciler; I didn’t reconcile, I only clarified that neither was responsible for the conflict.⁹²

During the clashes, moreover, Israeli soldiers surrounding the university are said to have sent escaping students back into the fighting,⁹³ while some interviewees insisted they had seen senior members of the Israeli Administration in Gaza hand out weapons.⁹⁴ Whether or not these accounts are correct, the Israeli army was indeed present and did not stop the fighting.

One thing the Islamist narrative does not sufficiently address is the accusation of PLO activists that an underlying reason for the clashes was the Islamists’ suppression of

⁹¹ This was similarly one of the Israeli military’s tactics during the Intifada (cf. Legrain & Chenard; Shahadah I&II for the Gaza Centre for Rights and Law).

⁹² Abu Sibah similarly singled out inflammatory leaflets. Abu Shannab (I), after discussions with PFLP leaders in prison, had come to the conclusion that in most major clashes between the PFLP and the Islamists someone who later had become suspected, or ‘convicted’ by the Intifada’s activist ‘courts’, of collaboration had been central to the action at the time, inciting activists against each other, spreading exaggerated and false rumours.

⁹³ ‘Ziad’ & ‘Husam’. Abu Sibah said merely that the Israeli army had surrounded the IUG and did not interfere.

⁹⁴ Abu ‘Ali mentioned Dahan (Interior Office), Yazuri singled out Abu Sabri (Gaza Governor).

opposition.⁹⁵ Though some Islamist interviewees openly regretted the violent clashes of the 1980s,⁹⁶ they denied that they suppressed opposition. As Chapter 7 details, it must be granted that, regardless of the complaints, there are sufficiently numerous accounts of PLO activities at the IUG to conclude that they were able to operate to some degree. However, given that, by their own admission, the Kutlah activists felt that the PLO was unwilling to tolerate an independent political newcomer such as the Islamists, that they resisted the PLO's bid for hegemony, and that they believed they were some sort of righteous vanguard, it is likely within the violent, lawless context of the 1980s that the IUG's Kutlah reacted forcefully, at times violently, to those activities of PLO activists which it interpreted as having underlying hegemonic ambitions – particularly resistance activities which threatened the IUG with closure.

4.4 CONCLUSION

I hope to have shown that the case the Islamists make regarding the clashes – that they were planned by the PLO to take control of the university – is not implausible (regardless of whether it is true), and that, given that and the structural and ideational framework of the 1980s, the occurrence of these incidents does not prove the IM to be violent by nature. Neither side acted 'democratically' during the clashes, both engaged in violence, and both appear to have been used to engage in violence (Schiff and Ya'ari's singling out the Islamists for turning the IUG "into a reserve of disciplined "soldiers"" is thus somewhat misleading). The evidence is inconclusive regarding who initiated it. However, it seems to have been contextually inspired, rather than an inescapable result of the core beliefs each party held. Moreover, despite the pain

⁹⁵ See also Chapter 7.

⁹⁶ Haniyyah II, Musa II. Abu Shannab (I) inferred this.

inflicted, the extent of the violence was, particularly against the backdrop of occupation, relatively limited, with no fatalities and, if *al-Fajr* is correct, only 70 injured (out of, by all accounts, between 600-900 people fighting). Given its contextual nature and its limited extent, given also that the Kutlah's leaders express regret at the violence of the 1980s and that both the ideational and structural frameworks have changed, resulting in a more cooperative climate, improved cross-party communication and the beginnings of a rule of law,⁹⁷ the 1983 clashes cannot be said to be representative of the IM's present political culture. All they say is that under certain circumstances the IM did, and so could again, resort to violence.

Contrary to assumptions in PLO and Western discourse, the Islamists were continuing the tradition of the University's founders while the PLO supporters were attempting to change this direction. Whether the secular or Islamist vision was more suitable to Gaza's culture is debatable. But claiming that the IM had imposed Islam on an otherwise secularly inclined university is rewriting history. Such rewriting appears to be part of the dichotomisation process that both PLO and Western authors are tempted to engage in, justifying secularist actions against Islamists by depicting the latter as usurpers and outsiders.

Al-Fajr thus ignores violence on the part of the Gazan PLO activists; highlights the arrival of Islamist buses in Bir Zeit while suppressing the arrival of PLO buses in Gaza; justifies PLO activists throwing stones at the Islamist demonstrators in Bir Zeit as defending the fatherland, while condemning violence by Islamist activists in Gaza (who equally believed they were defending their university), and depicting it as "anti-nationalist" and indicative of collaboration "with the Israeli authorities". In the

⁹⁷ See Chapter 8 regarding improved leftist-Islamist relations. While legislation, the judiciary and the police forces in the Gaza Strip are now in Palestinian hands, enjoying more legitimacy than the occupation forces, there are still instances of lawlessness (cf. the recent spate of intimidatory attacks by members of the security forces on members of the Legislature and even Ministers; Khaled Abu Toameh, 'State of Chaos?', *Jerusalem Report*, 22.05.2000, pp36-37).

dichotomisation, the intentions of the other are inflated to totalitarian proportions, leading the United Students National Committee to call on students to “defend their university so that it will remain an independent Palestinian institution” (as if the Islamists were a foreign state invading Gaza).⁹⁸ Milton-Edwards and Abu-Amr likewise portray the occasional eruptions of violence as if the 1980s were one prolonged violent battle – although major ‘battles’ at the IUG only occurred in 1983 and 1986.

The same dichotomisation process is at work in the depiction of the conflict, by both *al-Fajr* and Milton-Edwards and Abu-Amr, as one between “nationalists” and “Brotherhood/Mujama supporters” – despite the fact that significant numbers of the ‘nationalists’ were Islamically inclined (though the 1983 conflict and the alliance between Fatah and the PFLP had pushed them into the secularist camp),⁹⁹ while the “Brotherhood supporters” supported the decision of the leadership of the ‘nationalists’ (Arafat) to appoint Saqr.

The same process of dichotomisation and distortion seems to have been operative in Western descriptions of the 1981-1982 clashes at al-Najah University.¹⁰⁰ PLO aggression prior and after the clashes goes unreported. The Islamists are depicted as anti-nationalist and anti-democratic. Yet, by admission of the 1982 Shabibah leader and other non-partisan eye-witnesses, the initial tensions were caused by the pro-PLO forces refusing to accept the landslide victory of the Islamists in the Student Council elections, and staging a 40-day strike, completely, at times violently, disrupting university life.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ *Al-Fajr*, 10.06.1983. Rumours of close IM-Jordanian cooperation may have informed this statement.

⁹⁹ E.g. Abu Sibah’s insistence that Fatah and Mujamma’ supporters could be found on either side of the conflict regarding Agha.

¹⁰⁰ Milton-Edwards, pp133-135; Abu-Amr, *Fundamentalism*, p45; Shadid, pp679-680. See also *al-Fajr*, 15-21.01.1982, 22-28.01.1982, 19-25.02.1982.

¹⁰¹ See footnote 68.

CHAPTER 5

SOCIO-POLITICAL VIOLENCE: THE 'HIJĀB CAMPAIGN' IN GAZA

The *hijāb* (headscarf)¹ has many different meanings, social, political as well as religious. For some women, it is an assertion of peasant roots, for others a statement of identity. During the Intifada it became a statement of nationalism, and of respect for the martyrs. For many, it is simply an expression of faith, of their obedience to the Qur'ānic verse "Prophet, enjoin your wives, your daughters, and the wives of true believers to draw their veils around them [when abroad]" (33:59)² and the (non-verbal) Hadith which has the Prophet indicating to his daughter Fatima to cover herself when in public.³ Some, though not many in Gaza, hold these religious injunctions to have been temporary commands only, relevant to the context of their day, but not a religious imperative.⁴ Others see the *hijāb* as a means to buttress male authority, subdue women, and usher in a male-dominated Islamic state. The *hijāb* is thus more than a scarf, or the personal choice of a woman to wear it, revolving as it does around issues of freedom, tolerance and competing value systems. This chapter will analyse allegations that Hamas orchestrated a campaign to intimidate women into wearing the *hijāb*. If true, they

¹ Some in Gaza used '*hijāb*' to mean the full face cover. I use it to mean the hair-scarf usually intended in Western discourse.

² I use the Penguin translation because it better conveys the meaning of veiling.

³ Cf. 'Khalid' I.

⁴ Cf. Fatima Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite*.

suggest that Hamas has authoritarian tendencies which disrespect personal choice. If not, these allegations will reveal something about the way Hamas actions and motives are distorted in Western discourse.

5.1 THE 'HIJĀB CAMPAIGN' IN WESTERN DISCOURSE

Numerous Western texts refer to a campaign to impose the *hijāb*. One article in particular, by Rema Hammami,⁵ has become the basis of claims in other texts, for its being the most comprehensive and authoritative.⁶ I will concentrate on this article.

The gist of Hammami's article is summarised in the following quote:

[T]he intifada has been the context for a vicious campaign in Gaza to impose the *hijab* (headscarf) on all women. The campaign included the threat and use of violence and developed into a comprehensive social offensive. Social acquiescence, political inaction, family pressure and a concurrent ideological transformation created a situation in which only a few committed women in Gaza, one year into the intifada, continued not to wear a headscarf. These women were affiliated with the three leftist factions and, although acting individually, were all asserting within the context of the intifada the fundamental linkage between gender liberation and the possibility of a

⁵ Hammami, 'Women, the Hijab and the Intifada', *Middle East Report* 20(3-4), pp24-28.

⁶ Cf. Milton-Edwards, p185(n4) (due to print mistake, n5); Usher, p67; Salim Tamari, 'Left in Limbo', *Middle East Report* 22(6), p17(n7); Ebba Augustin, 'Developments in the Palestinian Women's Movement during the Intifada' in Augustin, *Palestinian Women*, p37(n64); Strum, Philippa, *The Women are Marching*, p217 (reference to Hammami, 'Women's Political Participation in the Intifada: A Critical Overview' in Women's Studies Committee, *The Intifada and Some Women's Social Issues*, 14.12.1990, p80). Most other texts referring to the 'campaign' without reference to Hammami are generalistic and without much detail (cf. Sayigh, p630; Abu-Amr, *Fundamentalism*, p19; Schiff & Ya'ari, p226), except for Amal Kawar who discusses it in some depth as it relates to the leftist women's movement (*Daughters of Palestine*, pp114-123). Others refer to similar 'campaigns' to forcefully impose the *hijāb* or a sexual code (i.e. gender-segregated weddings), prior to the Intifada (Shadid, p674; Milton-Edwards, pp111, 116).

progressive and democratic future. Their struggle, then, was not against the *hijab* itself but about what the intifada would lead to (p24).

While never squarely putting the blame on Hamas, Hammami clearly implies Hamas orchestrated the campaign by prefacing her discussion of the incidents with a detailed description of the growth of the Mujamma' Islami (p25), and by ending with a postscript detailing various related incidents for which Hamas activists are blamed (p28). None of the five specific *hijāb* incidents she describes are directly attributed to Hamas. She even acknowledges that “multiple forces worked simultaneously (though not necessarily jointly)” to impose the *hijāb* (p26), including religious elements in Fatah, and collaborators working for the occupation forces to sow discord (p28). Yet by explicitly linking the *hijāb* to the creation of an Islamic state and “a reactionary ideology about women’s role in society” (p25), by accusing the secular forces of deliberate inaction for not wishing to alienate the “religious groups” (p28),⁷ and by concluding that the “‘intifada *hijab*’ was not about modesty, respect, nationalism or the imperatives of activism but about the power of religious groups to impose themselves” (p26), Hammami leaves no doubt as to whom she blames for the campaign. Other texts who quote her, corroborate this reading by representing her article as unequivocally holding Hamas responsible for the ‘*hijāb* campaign’ – though this conclusion may also be partly informed by these scholars’ own perspectival prejudices.⁸

Hammami’s article raises important issues regarding gender relations, the role of women in a future Palestinian society and present contradictions between personal freedom and religious culture. But her argument is undermined by her conflating

⁷ That Hammami principally referred to Hamas is clear from her explanatory footnote, referring to the coalition between “Fatah and the Islamic groups” (of which Hamas was the largest) in the 1981 Najah and Hebron student elections (p71n7).

⁸ Cf. Milton-Edwards: “Hamas has promoted the imposition of the *hijab* on women in Gaza” (p185). Usher: “... in Gaza ... women were forced to wear the headscarf” (p67). In neither case is others’ involvement mentioned.

evidence, inflating Hamas's role in the events, and reducing the *hijāb* to an oppressive instrument in a "reactionary" campaign towards an Islamic state, with no acknowledgement of the possibility that not all perceive the *hijāb* as oppressive or as a path to an Islamic state. She fails to establish whether the "*hijab* campaign" was in fact a planned campaign or a series of incidents brought on by a general atmosphere,⁹ and to sufficiently analyse the perpetrators. She also ignores the Hamas narrative concerning both *hijāb* and *hijāb* campaign.

5.2 CONTEXT ANALYSIS

Hammami attributes the rapid growth of the Mujamma' during the 1970s and 1980s to the increasing 'migration' of Palestinian day-workers to Israel, with its alienating effects of increased drug and alcohol abuse and feeling compromised by working for the occupier. The Mujamma', she contends, offered not only a fortifying moral code but also "the possibility of participating in a political community that claims to confront the occupation [ideologically] without ... exposing its members to danger [by abstaining from direct resistance] – as in the nationalist factions." There is no reference to the general process of Islamisation which had been taking place in the territories from the late 1970s onwards, when the Mujamma' was still only a minor player (see Chapter 2.2). This omission enables Hammami to portray Palestine as a nation on its way to a "progressive and democratic future", and 'blame' the massive turn to, and support for, the *hijāb* primarily on the Mujamma'.

Besides religious significance, the *hijāb* has a number of 'secular' meanings. As Hammami correctly observes, for women from the refugee camps, it could be an

⁹ For this reason, I put '*hijāb* campaign' between inverted commas.

expression of loyalty to one's family's original village. For others, it was a statement of authenticity against the impact of Westernisation.¹⁰ In a publication produced by the women's Kutlah al-Islamiyyah in 1998, girls are thus told that

The European coloniser said: "The situation of the Orient won't be straightened unless the veil is removed from the woman's face and covers the Qur'ān".¹¹

The Intifada added further dimensions. The *hijāb* thus also became an expression of solidarity with the martyrs, and of Palestinian-ness (particularly as a distancing from Israeli secular culture). It similarly became thought of as a protection against Israeli soldiers and against being targeted as a collaborator. The *hijāb* had non-ideological meanings too. For some, it was a means to gain anonymity and evade the stares of the public arena;¹² for others, to avoid confrontation by conforming to society's pressures.

Hammami fails to mention that many women chose the *hijāb* of their own volition – sometimes against their husband's will¹³ – and that, to many, the *hijāb* is not "an instrument of oppression, a direct disciplining of women's bodies for political ends" (p25), but an instrument of pride and control.¹⁴ Maria Holt observes in this vein

By wearing Islamic dress, [women] are protected from unwelcome male attention and may, therefore, move more freely in the public arena.¹⁵

¹⁰ Cf. Islamist Women: "For a Muslim activist, being uncovered is being part of the colonising process that the West is engaged in".

¹¹ Kutlah al-Islamiyyah, *The Way to Survive*, p9.

¹² Cf. Deir al-Balah Camp Resident.

¹³ Cf. Deir al-Balah Camp Resident, member of Gazan (secular) elite. Various other informal discussions.

¹⁴ This was the sentiment of my fourteen female Islamist interviewees and those I informally spoke with at the IUG (IUG's Women Section).

¹⁵ Holt, p69.

One could counter that men should learn to curb their “unwelcome attention”. But in Gaza’s cultural context it is understandable that women choose to don the *hijāb* to be able to operate more freely. Moreover, a number of Islamist women told me that the *hijāb* and the IM had encouraged them to go out and claim their place in the universities and the workforce.¹⁶ From this perspective, the proliferation of the *hijāb* is not necessarily a sinister plot for totalitarian control.

Many women with no links with Islamism appear to wear the *hijāb* for religious, but non-Islamist reasons – rendering the equation between wearing the *hijāb* and the imminent creation of an Islamic state rather speculative.¹⁷ During the Intifada this trend was strengthened by the intense climate of mourning, which rendered bare-headedness, with its associations with Westernisation, feminism and, to some, frivolity, highly tasteless. Hammami acknowledges this but fails to convey the impact of this climate on the attire of women, far beyond the impact any one movement could have had, tapping into religio-cultural roots much older than the advent of Hamas or Islamism.

The trend towards the *hijāb* was strengthened by the belief that it would protect one from soldiers and collaborators. Hammami rightly condemns this notion as false – *hijābed* women were not spared by soldiers or collaborator-hunters. Yet she is wrong in dismissing it so lightly as a motive. In my interviews, it was one of the most quoted reasons for wearing the *hijāb* during the Intifada. Rumours were rife, fuelled by books,

¹⁶ Discussions with students in the IUG’s women’s section; ‘Iman’, Head of Mujamma’ Women’s Training Centre; Women’s Kutlah 1, Women’s Kutla 2.

¹⁷ Judging by the high percentage of *hijābed* women one observes in Gaza (roughly 75%), five years after the end of the Intifada (and its lawless climate enabling intimidation), and the, compared to this number, relatively low percentage of Hamas supporters (somewhere between 10-30%; p43, 53), a high percentage of *hijābed* women must be non-Islamist. Of the 575 Azhar students (69.4% of which support Fatah) who answered my survey question whether all women in their family wore the *hijāb*, 45% said they did, 25.2% that some of them did, 25% that none of them did. Of the 572 who answered whether they believed women should wear the *hijāb*, 22.4% responded they should at all times, 56.8% they should only outside the house, 15.9% that they should never wear it (in comparison, for the 631 IUG students answering the first question, the figures are 75%, 15.2% and 7%; for the second question, 39.8%, 53.7% and 2.1%).

leaflets and (alleged) confessions by interrogated collaborators,¹⁸ that the Israelis recruited collaborators by luring them into sexual encounters with other collaborators, and subsequently using compromising photographs to blackmail them. A PFLP document distributed and read widely during the 1980s detailed the different methods, collectively known as *isqāt* (literally: toppling) by which Israelis allegedly compromised Palestinians.¹⁹ It was believed that bare-headed women would make more likely targets for *isqāt*, their presence and beauty being considered more noticeable. This notion was reinforced by rumours of the sexual activities of Gaza-based Western NGO personnel and by the promiscuous characters in popular television soaps like "The Bold and the Beautiful". Both helped bare-headedness become equated with sexual promiscuity.²⁰

If the possibility is taken into account that a majority of *hijāb* wearers voluntarily chose to wear it, a reading which is vindicated by the fact that the majority of Gazan women still wear the *hijāb* five years after the end of the Intifada and its lawless climate, the incidents Hammami recounts, however deplorable, can no longer be seen as expressions of a totalitarian strategy by one group to impose its views on society, particularly as that group does not command the loyalty of more than between 15-30% (depending on the political affiliation of one's source) of the population. Indeed, it seems to be precisely Hammami's ignoring the general increase in religiosity and the perceived benefits of the *hijāb* among much of the population, that allows Hammami to blame Hamas as an oppressing force.

¹⁸ E.g. the book *The Victim Confesses* about the "alleged exploits" of a collaborator; a list, obtained after interrogation of suspected collaborators in Nablus prison, "of more than one hundred young men and women from the West Bank who were also involved in *isqat* [moral corruption] ... which later turned out to be false" (Be'er & Saleh, *Collaborators*, pp40-41).

¹⁹ A number of Hamas members told me of having read this document, and insisted that *isqāt* had been widespread; cf. Intifada Cell II, 'Nasr', 'Khalid' II. Israeli Human Rights Centre B'Tselem found that, though fear of *isqāt* was widespread, no conclusive evidence existed that *isqāt* was practised extensively (Be'er & Saleh, pp39-42).

²⁰ I heard many such rumours about the behaviour of Western expatriates at the UN's Beach Club in Gaza.

Finally, two aspects to the *hijāb* which indicate that many of the *hijāb* incidents may not have been wholly about religion, are only marginally highlighted by Hammami. First, there is a class angle.²¹ Bare-headedness was more frequent among the educated and the Westernised, both of which groups tended to have a high percentage of the (upper) middle classes. With the lower classes feeling they bore the brunt of the Intifada's casualties, while believing that the upper classes were not suffering to the same extent,²² the *hijāb* issue seems to have been one of the means by which the lower classes tried to force the elite to express solidarity with them and their suffering. The disruption of ostentatious sea-side weddings during the Intifada by the less well-off from neighbouring Shati' (Beach) Camp,²³ and the raid by, in Hammami's words, "lumpen elements" (p26) on the well-off, middle class Ahmad Shawqi school in Gaza City are but two illustrations.

Second, the *hijāb* also became a symbol of the struggle between leftists and Islamists. The right of female PFLP activists not to wear the *hijāb* on campus appears to have been one of the foci in which the 1986 tensions at the IUG expressed themselves.²⁴ Though there were non-aligned women who did not wear the *hijāb*, bare-headedness seemed (among students) to have become an expression of loyalty to the Left. The reverse notion appears to underlie Hammami's portrayal of the *hijāb* as commitment to an Islamic state. Factional tensions between secularist and Islamist groups, fuelled in the

²¹ Hammami hints at this by listing those "not wearing any form of headcovering" as "mainly educated, urban and petit bourgeois women" (p25).

²² A telling joke still circulating in 1998 had it that activist youths from the rich Rimal area threw chocolates at the Israelis during the Intifada, instead of stones. However, it is not true that the richer families did not suffer; I have come across a number of casualties among the teenagers of upper middle class families.

²³ While these disruptions are often associated with Hamas (Shadid, p674; Abu-Amr, *Fundamentalism*, p19; Milton-Edwards, p116), particularly as the camp closest to where Gaza City's rich used to celebrate their weddings, has a strong Hamas presence, it is dubious whether Hamas was behind these disruptions. Both Marwa Qassim (former PFLP student activist, now director of the Gazan branch of the Palestinian Model Parliament – Women and Legislation) and Turid Smith-Polfus (Norwegian researcher) ascribed these disruptions primarily to class-tensions (Qassim I, Smith-Polfus).

²⁴ Qassim I; Yahya Musa III (former Kutlah activist).

first years of the Intifada by the struggle for influence over and ownership of the Intifada, thus may have played a role if the perpetrators in *hijāb* incidents were people of student age (rather than the lawless youths who appear to have been largely responsible for the incidents)²⁵ – particularly as bare-headed women would, during the Intifada, have readily been identified as leftist activists since they alone would ideologically object to wearing the *hijāb*.²⁶ Moreover, as for this latter reason most of the *hijāb* incidents concern leftist activists, the notion of a '*hijāb* campaign' is consequently most pronounced in the leftist's historical narrative.²⁷

5.3 PLAYER ANALYSIS

Given the observation above that Hamas's influence is exaggerated by Hammami, it is important to establish which other groups in Gaza would favour the *hijāb*. This is particularly so as in Gazan narratives the distinction between Hamas and other groups or individuals with religious connotations is often blurred. In interviews and informal talks, I often found my interlocutor using the terms 'Hamas' and 'Mujamma'' loosely to describe people believed to be religious and conservative on the basis of their appearance (beards, jalabas), their opposition to leftists, or simply rumour. In this vein, the term 'Mujamma'' was used generically to mean '*mutadayyin*' (religious people) rather than the institution itself.²⁸ Some secularists and leftists used it as an insult. In a

²⁵ See 'Player Analysis'.

²⁶ I have not found concrete evidence of such encounters, beyond shouting matches between activists.

²⁷ Many of the Islamicly oriented and non-partisan interviewees were unaware of the extent of *hijāb* incidents.

²⁸ Cf. when discussing the burning of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (which Western discourse blames on the Mujamma', but seems to have been the responsibility of Fatah), some secularists who stated they believed the Mujamma' leadership to have been innocent, simultaneously described the crowd that stormed the PRCS as "from the Mujamma'" (cf. Salah al-Saqa, secularist IUG Board Member and close friend of Haydar 'Abd al-Shafi, Director of the PRCS).

rumour-ridden society such as Gaza's (p64) such misnomers spread fast and quickly gain a factuality they do not deserve.

Potential Players

There are roughly four, sometimes overlapping, organised groups in Gaza who supported the *hijāb*: the religious establishment, represented in the *awqāf* and the official religious leadership; the religiously inclined wing of Fatah; religio-political parties such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad; and the ultra-conservative movements such as the Salafiyyun of which the charity al-Qur'an wa'l-Sunnah in Khan Yunis is an example. Most members of these different groups advocate the wearing of the *hijāb* as a religious command.

There are indications that some of them were involved in imposing the *hijāb*. Schiff and Ya'ari mention "the crusade of the Salafiun groups in Khan Yunis" against "movie-theaters, ... cafés selling alcoholic drinks, ... Western-style music, jewelry, and other non-traditional pursuits". While Schiff and Ya'ari do not specify the *hijāb*, it is improbable these groups would abstain from enforcing the *hijāb* if they had no compunction in "beating up people who ate with their left hand".²⁹ I have no further proof the Salafiyyun were indeed engaged in such violence. But, whether or not they were, Schiff and Ya'ari describe this alleged "crusade" tellingly conflatingly as "the most prominent example" of "harassment from members of the Brotherhood", even though the Salafiyyun are institutionally unconnected to the Brotherhood and their ideologies differ.³⁰ Secondly, the Palestinian educational authorities, over which both

²⁹ Schiff & Ya'ari, pp226-227.

³⁰ The (Salafiyyite) Qur'an wa'l-Sunnah in Khan Yunis denounced elections and legislation as un-Islamic, and proposed a Caliphate in which an unelected Caliph would nominate a non-legislating, advisory Parliament
(continued...)

Fatah and the religious authorities wield influence, ordered schools at the beginning of the Intifada to institute the *hijāb* as school uniform.³¹ Thirdly, even the nominally secular al-Azhar University in Gaza which is controlled by Fatah, orders its female students, to this day, to wear the *hijāb* on campus.³²

While there is a clear difference between the latter two examples and the alleged Salafiyyite “crusade”, it is clear that both Fatah and the religious authorities have been involved in imposing the *hijāb*. Hammami does indeed mention that Fatah is believed to have produced graffiti encouraging Islamic dress (p28), and that “religious youths” (p25) were responsible for one incident, just as she puts the blame for another on “lumpen elements ... used by the military authorities as agents provocateurs” (p26) and acknowledges that “young boys (between 8 and 12)” (p26) were also involved. But all these are portrayed as marginal players, more or less piping to the tunes of Hamas.

As hinted at in Hammami’s reference to “lumpen elements” and “young boys”, beyond the organised groups, there was the general population. The general climate favoured the wearing of the *hijāb*, especially during the Intifada. That this climate had been fostered by Hamas through sermons and leaflets is beyond doubt. The *hijāb*, as part of the general themes of fortitude, steadfastness and religiosity as weapons in the struggle against the Israelis, seems to have been popular in sermons given by Hamas supporters during the early years of the Intifada (as well as before and after).³³ But, not only did members of the other groups appear to have done likewise, but preaching a religious

³⁰ (...continued)
(Qur’an wa’l-Sunnah). See Chapters 6&7 for IM’s position.

³¹ PFLP activist of Women’s Affairs Centre (WAC), during interview with Islamist Women. The incident at the Shawqi school (Hammami, pp25-26) seems to have been connected to this order and the failure to impose it on the more affluent, urban schools.

³² Discussions with Azhar students, including female Shabibah leader.

³³ Cf. Islamist Women, ‘Ahmad’, ‘Ashraf’, ‘Khalid’ II (non-partisan, Islamicly-inclined).

point of view is also not the same as imposing that view violently. No one interviewed, regardless of political persuasion, had heard their preachers advocate violence to spread the *hijāb*. While, conversely, none remembered their preacher specifically condemning the violence, this may be partly explained by the fact that these *hijāb* incidents seem to have been relatively marginal in the consciousness of many Gazans.³⁴

Given the general climate, anybody could have participated in the intimidations. In this way, members of the general public who were also Hamas members, may well have been involved in incidents. One junior member admitted that he had spat on the ground to display his disapproval of an un-*hijāb*ed woman, though he recoiled from the idea of being accused of throwing eggs or stones.³⁵ If a Hamas member was involved as a general member of the public, this cannot be taken as proof of Hamas orchestrating a 'campaign'.

Underlining the impact of the general climate, two (female) leftist interviewees observed that even male leftist activists had pressured female activists to wear the *hijāb*.³⁶ They explained this behaviour as an expression of both prudence, wishing not to alienate the religiously inclined forces (including those among Fatah) and protect 'their' women, and cultural conditioning, blinding them to the wider issues involved.

Numerous interviewees agreed that the prime culprits in imposing the *hijāb* were youngsters.³⁷ According to Hammami,

³⁴ See footnote 27.

³⁵ 'Ahmad'.

³⁶ Qassim I; Leftist WAC Activist.

³⁷ Cf. Shadia Sarraj-Matar, Director Gaza Community Mental Health Programme – Women's Empowerment Project; Islamist Women; Leftist WAC activist; Islamist WAC activist; Raji Sourani I (Director Palestinian Centre for Human Rights); Intifada Cell II; 'Ashraf'; 'Nasr'.

young boys (between 8 and 12) who were empowered by the intifada joined the campaign. If there were no soldiers to throw stones at, women without headscarves made good targets. Politically unaffiliated *shabab* [activist youths] who felt left out found harassing these women a safe way to express nationalist sentiment (p26).

In my own experience, the only time I felt somewhat threatened in Gaza was when confronted with a dozen small kids in a refugee camp who were idling their time away practising sling shooting and I was a handy 'substitute Israeli'. The idea that Israelis were the enemy, like the Intifada notion that bare-headed women were collaborators, would have been picked up from adult conversation. But these boys' actions cannot be blamed on any one movement.

Nevertheless, some interviewees implied, echoing Hammami, that these Intifada youths were Hamas's proxy force, Hamas itself being too astute to be seen engaging in intimidation.³⁸ That this notion is far-fetched is underlined, not only by the observation made in the previous paragraph, but also by the statement of one Islamically oriented woman that many of these boys did not even regularly frequent the mosques through which Hamas spread its message.³⁹ The underhand 'proxy force' idea does not fit with the attitude Hamas members generally displayed of publicly owning up to their ideological positions, regardless of whether others approved.⁴⁰ Moreover, if Hamas wanted to show its muscle, it could, and did, do this more effectively, and less

³⁸ Cf. Sarraj-Matar, Leftist WAC Activist. Sourani blamed Hamas for purposefully indoctrinating, rather than orchestrating, the youth. The notion that Hamas was using the *hijāb* to show its muscle is more explicitly expressed in Kawar's *Daughters* than by Hammami.

³⁹ Islamist Women.

⁴⁰ Based on my observation of Hamas members and the reputation they enjoy among Gazans (including non-Islamists).

controversially, by calling for strike days (their success being a measure of each movement's political influence).⁴¹

Player Conflation in Hammami's Article

In Gaza's rumour-ridden society incidents with religious overtones are readily blamed on Hamas, without concrete proof. Particularly concerning such ideologically charged and difficult to research acts as *hijāb* incidents, it is all too easy, when one is ideologically motivated, as Hammami is, not to sufficiently deconstruct the evidence when it confirms one's expectation that Hamas is behind it all. I will highlight a few examples.

In one of the incidents implicitly ascribed to Hamas by linkage to the notion that wearing the *hijāb* prepares the way for an Islamic state, the perpetrators are, in the victim's words, "boys from the [bourgeois] Rimal neighborhood [in Gaza City]" (p26). Rimal is one of the areas in which Hamas had, and has, the smallest of followings.⁴² It is relatively rich, incorporates most of the international organisations, and houses a high number of secularist oriented families. Because of Hamas's lack of following in Rimal, it is highly unlikely (though of course not impossible) that these boys were Hamas supporters. That a woman was harassed by Rimali boys appears to be more an indication of the extent to which Gaza was permeated with *hijāb* frenzy, than proof of Hamas's involvement in orchestrating intimidation.

⁴¹ Cf. Legrain, p183-185; Rashad, p27-28; Usher, p68.

⁴² During my stay in Gaza, I lived in Rimal and knew many Rimalis. Rimalis, Hamas leaders and activists, non-partisan interviewees and the Director of the Gaza Centre for Rights and Law confirmed that Hamas had little influence in Rimal.

In another incident two activist women were accused by *shabāb* [activist youths] of insufficiently covering their hair (pp26-27). When the women responded defiantly, the *shabāb* told the surrounding crowd that the women were collaborators, after which the crowd hounded them into a shop from where they were eventually allowed to leave when it was established they were not collaborators. Two points I made earlier are corroborated by this incident: bare-headedness and collaboration were clearly both topical and intertwined in the popular mind, not just in Hamas's narrative.

Hammami mentions that PLO activists eventually 'tried' the offending *shabāb*, but not that, according to one of the victims, the ring leader who, at the time, was believed to be a Hamas member, was shortly after executed by Hamas for collaboration with the Israelis.⁴³ While the verdict may have been wrong, the fact that the man was executed by Hamas does at least indicate that the movement did not think highly of him. His actions can thus not be taken as representative of the Hamas leadership's plans. As for his fellow *shabāb*, it is unclear from the article whether they were confirmed to be Hamas. If they were, one must take into account that they did so in the violent climate of the Intifada, believing the *hijāb* to be vital to the national struggle, and that the attack might have had political overtones, as these women were known leftist activists.

Hammami may not have known that the leader was later executed.⁴⁴ She did, however, know of the possibility of collaborator involvement since two leaflets she mentions warn of Israeli meddling through collaborators (pp26, 27) and she briefly discusses the argument that collaborators were responsible. Revealing of the mindset of Hammami, and of most of those who quote her, is that no one explicitly draws the conclusion that the possibility of collaborator involvement in the '*hijāb* campaign' seriously undermines

⁴³ Qassim I.

⁴⁴ Given that the article appeared a year after the incident happened in the *Middle East Report* (which operates a relatively short process of reviewing copy), it is likely this knowledge had been available, particularly as Hammami seems to have personally known the victim (Qassim).

allegations against Hamas. Another text also discusses that PFLP activists found perpetrators in a specific *hijāb* incident in Hebron to be collaborators, rather than Hamas activists as expected.⁴⁵ Yet, this text also fails to draw any serious conclusions and continues to treat Hamas as the orchestrator of a *hijāb* campaign.⁴⁶

The two incidents Hammami explicitly blames on Hamas (p28) are not part of the '*hijāb* campaign' but are apparently intended to prove Hamas's disregard of women's rights. One concerns Hamas activists pronouncing from a village mosque "that women should not be allowed to go out without a male member of the family". Scepticism is called for when a call from a mosque, and a village mosque at that, is equated with official Hamas policy. In fact, the statement contradicts the positions of both male and female IM members on the political position of women in an Islamic state, the majority of which stated that women would be entitled to be elected to the legislature and become Ministers of State in an Islamic state, as long as the Head of State is a male.⁴⁷ It also contradicts the views of Islamist women regarding male Islamist attitudes (see further). Hammami fails to explore this discourse, instead condemning it wholesale as "reactionary". On its own, this statement is insufficient to prove, as Hammami appears to wish to do, that Hamas champions restricting women's freedom of movement at all times.

⁴⁵ The likely veracity of this conclusion lies in the fact that the interrogators were from the PFLP.

⁴⁶ Kavar, p117. Having related the Hebron incident, Kavar continues: "The PLO leadership in the diaspora did not publicly take issue with Hamas's enforcement of the veil in the Gaza Strip".

⁴⁷ Against thirty-two interviewees championing this view (including the majority of the leadership), six held women should not be part of government while three claimed ignorance, referring the matter to the '*ulamā*'. The IM's general supporters (as opposed to active members) seem somewhat more 'reactionary', in Hammami's terms. Thus, 67.1% of the 632 IUG students answering my survey question 'Should women have equal opportunities in the professional sector?' responded 'No', against 29.6% saying 'Yes' (these figures were 67% and 29.1% for Hamas supporters, 64.2% and 35.8% for Fatah supporters). These figures seem, however, more a reflection of the general conservative climate in Gaza than of the IM's doctrines.

The other incident concerns Hamas activists “storm[ing] a women’s committee production project” in Rafah. One of the leftist women present confirmed she thought the invaders were Hamas supporters.⁴⁸ Leaving aside that this witness does not live in Rafah and consequently is likely to have come to her conclusion based on hearsay rather than positive knowledge,⁴⁹ it must be noted that this incident, if Hamas supporters were indeed involved, could similarly have been motivated by political rivalry rather than by women’s issues *per se*.

Further conflation is found in Hammami’s linking acts of intimidation to slogans written on the wall. This argument is problematic on two levels. Authenticating slogans is difficult, even more so than authenticating leaflets since fabricated leaflets generally elicit counter-leaflets denying authorship.⁵⁰ Signed or unsigned, anybody could have written them – authorised Hamas members, ill-informed sympathisers acting on their own, Palestinians hostile to Hamas or collaborators. Furthermore, though the proliferation of pro-*hijāb* slogans no doubt contributed to creating a climate in which women felt pressured, daubing slogans does not prove one’s involvement in orchestrating violent intimidation. The view that women should wear the *hijāb* is a legitimate one, as long as it is not forcefully imposed.

5.4 HAMAS’S NARRATIVE

The first reaction of most Islamist interviewees, male and female, to the notion that Hamas might have imposed the *hijāb* violently was incredulity. In ‘Ashraf’’s words:

⁴⁸ Qassim I.

⁴⁹ Leaving open the possibility that, given the distortions of rumour, the invaders were identified with Hamas without acting on orders from the Hamas leadership.

⁵⁰ Cf. Legrain & Chenard; Shahadah I&II.

[Do you think] the leaders of Hamas [did this]? The members of Hamas? Of course not. For me, I was a member of Hamas, I've never done something like this ... and I will never do it.

'Iman', the head (*mas'ūlah*) of one of the Mujamma's Women's Training Centres, and a member of al-Jam'iyyah al-Shabbat al-Muslimat, commented:

The idea has been conveyed wrongly. I don't think a member [of Hamas or the Mujamma'] would attack women violently. He would talk and try to persuade them but not by force. Proof of this is that the Intifada is over, yet most women are still wearing the *hijāb*. There could have been some things said to women displaying themselves in a lavish way, admonishing them to be more harmonious with the pain society was going through, and to show more respect for the martyrs ... But I never heard of any harassment [by Islamists]. If there were any attacks, they could have been wrongly labelled as Islamic whereas in truth they would have been done by collaborators.

Muhammad Shamma', Deputy Director of the Mujamma', condemned the harassments, saying

it is not our way, violence and coercion is not a way to change; discussion, on the contrary, and objective opinions are the way to change.

Ahmad Yassin similarly denied that Hamas was responsible. As to what to do if an individual member had engaged in violent intimidation, he replied:

this person should be guided not to behave in such an inappropriate way in the future and be made to understand that this does not comply with the rules of Islam and that

Islam does not call for any ... individual to take the law by his own hand. ... this will bring huge corruption in the society as a whole.⁵¹

Members of a Hamas activist cell which had operated during the Intifada in one of the refugee camps – the kind of *shabāb* that could have engaged in violent intimidation – said in response to the accusations levelled at Hamas by Hammami:

Member 2: “These things used to happen a lot. Little children would do it but they weren’t told by anyone to do it. When we used to see young children throw stones, we used to stop them.”

Member 3: “Once two girls were walking without *hijāb* and some boys threw stones. Then one Hamas person hit their legs with a stick in order to stop the boys. [...] Hassan Hudaybi [the second Supreme Guide of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers] said: “we are ‘callers’ to the faith, not judges of others”.”⁵²

‘Muhammad’, a former Hamas cadre leader who has since left Hamas disillusioned, and whose testimony on this matter is thus all the more trustworthy, observed that

apart from maybe one or two [incidents] in [my camp], none from the Hamas branch of [my camp] did like this, for there was a hard restriction from the leadership - ‘don’t do like this’. Throwing eggs is not our method.

All of my Islamist interviewees firmly believed that the Qur’ān commands Muslim women to wear the *hijāb*, as a symbol of their commitment to Islam and the modesty it

⁵¹ Yassin II.

⁵² Intifada Cell II (the credibility of these statements lies in the fact that these interviewees, who I saw on four occasions, proved to be honest and forthright on other issues, including issues which they thought to be unacceptable to the West).

preaches, and, in Yassin's words, as "a means of avoiding corruption and mischief ... for us [men] and for women as well"⁵³. Abu Shannab likewise explained:

Islam says women have to cover their body, if they are to work in society without giving a bad impression. Look how the West is using women. Look at advertising. ... Psychologically, they are using the body of the woman. God knows that the body of the woman is kind of inciting and this incitement should be kept within limits. ... you have to marry [to enjoy such incitement]. Beyond that, society does not need more incitement. ... If, for example, a very nice woman wearing new fashion clothes walks in front of some boys, they will stare at her and they might concentrate on the beauty of her body. What psychological effects might this have on this guy, if he's not married? He will think of sex. But how can he get it, if he is not married? So he is [frustrated]. To keep society from this kind of incitement, the woman should protect her body from being open to the public – [with] any kind of dress [...] Yes, it is a restriction, but it is ... a restriction from God [...] [I]f I am asking her to cover, ... I am asking her just to obey God.⁵⁴

This quote suggests Hamas leaders do not acknowledge the ambiguity of the Qur'ānic verses regarding the *hijāb* which has spurned debates elsewhere in the Muslim world.⁵⁵ They seem, however, to be reflecting the Gaza's general atmosphere, as expressed, for example, by some women from secularly oriented families who told me that though they did not wear the *hijāb*, they believed it to be a religious command.⁵⁶ However, its insistence on the finality of its interpretation regarding the *hijāb* cannot be taken as proof that it is against women's empowerment, or unwilling to enter a dialogue on the role of women in society and politics. In fact, though it posits detailed views on this matter and

⁵³ Yassin II.

⁵⁴ Abu Shannab IV. Yassin, Musa, Zahhar expressed similar views.

⁵⁵ Cf. Mernissi.

⁵⁶ Discussion with women from a secular family.

though not all are willing to enter dialogue, some IM leaders did engage in dialogue with the leftist Model Parliament on women's rights (see Chapter 7.4.3).

Hamas leader Mahmud Zahhar links the high incidence of divorce, sexual promiscuity and teenage pregnancies in the West to a lack of moral discipline which includes the way women dress.⁵⁷ This view is widely shared by Gazans, well beyond Hamas circles.⁵⁸ Devout Gazan Muslims view whether or not to wear the *hijāb* as both a personal and a communal issue. At a personal level, it is about obeying God and gaining favour with Him. At a communal level, it is about preventing societal corruption and chaos. Given Hamas's emphasis on balancing the rights of the individual and the needs of the community (p199), it would have been conceivable that Hamas would sanction some form of enforced imposition of the *hijāb*, for the sake of communal welfare. Instead, most of my interviewees categorically rejected the path of forced imposition. Not only, they argued, did the Qur'an forbid imposing religion,⁵⁹ but it would also be pointless since religion is concerned with what is in the heart. If someone was pressured into wearing the *hijāb* without believing in its religious meaning, it would mean nothing to God (see also Chapter 6).

The IM may demand of its members to wear the *hijāb*.⁶⁰ Similarly, it wholeheartedly supports the imposition of the *hijāb* as a uniform on the IUG campus. But regarding society in general, it professes to believe in free choice. According to Shamma', "it is not anyone's business to force ... any woman to wear the *hijāb*". Another member, director of a charity, emphasised: "Islamic civilisation doesn't go with hitting and forcing people". Women, Zahhar insisted, "are not obliged to cover their ... faces or

⁵⁷ Zahhar II.

⁵⁸ Cf. 'Khalid' I and other informal conversations.

⁵⁹ Cf. "Let there be no compulsion in religion" (2:256).

⁶⁰ Yassin II.

their hands. If they are willing, this is a private thing. But nobody is obliging them to do that.”⁶¹ In the view of a female Kutlah supporter, “the *hijāb* is about personal freedom”.⁶²

Hamas's Praxis Narrative

It has been difficult to establish to what extent the IM practised its ideals. Apart from the statements of the Intifada cell and the former cadre leader, quoted above, that they had opposed the campaign, and the observations of many that none of their preachers advocated violence, I have not been able to find any concrete evidence that Hamas actively opposed the harassments – beyond Hammami's own reference, in passing and downplayed, that Hamas issued a leaflet disassociating itself from the attack on the bareheaded girls at the Ahmad Shawqi school (p26), and *Risalah* journalist and Khalas member Salah al-Na'ami's comment that “as I remember, [prominent people in Hamas] condemned the violent acts against women”.

Circumstantial evidence can be found, however, in the fact that the IM has a large number of women supporters, many of whom joined because they believe it accords women more respect than its secular counterparts. Leaders of the women's Kutlah insisted that

women in other student movements have not as many rights as we have – we are independent [from our male counterparts], can have our own opinions. Sometimes, in the Shabibah and Islamic Jihad, the women take their decisions from the male section.

⁶¹ Zahhar II.

⁶² Islamist Women.

But we take our decisions for ourselves, without having to check it with the male section.⁶³

Though this may be biased, it is significant for being given as a reason for joining al-Kutlah. As mentioned earlier, numerous Islamist and Muslim young women said the IM had encouraged them to, and persuaded their families to let them, go to university and develop themselves⁶⁴ – contradicting the view raised by Hammami's article that the IM tries to keep women underdeveloped. Though all of them wear the *hijāb*, they are far from submissive. In the words of one female Kutlah leader

if they [the male members of the IM] do not support us, we will support ourselves, for we are stronger. But I think they do their best.

Or, following another,

As a female, I can take my right on my own – no need for an advocate. I will change things myself for Islam gives me rights.⁶⁵

While critics may argue that it is these women's Islamic upbringing, rather than its record on women's issues, that attracts them to Islamism, and that their upbringing prevents them from perceiving their 'true' interests (in the tradition of 'false consciousness' theories), the above quotes indicate that the IM is attractive to some highly motivated and ambitious women. In the words of the head of the Mujamma's Women's Training Centre,

⁶³ Women's Kutlah 1. Cf. also 'Iman', IUG's Women's Section.

⁶⁴ See footnote 16.

⁶⁵ Women's Kutlah 1.

If I had been harassed or pressured in the wrong way, I would not be working for the Mujamma'.⁶⁶

In recent times, moreover, the IM's *al-Risalah* newspaper raised the sensitive issue of honour killings and spoke out against it. Though some of the secularist and leftist women's organisations in Gaza have organised workshops and spoken out against it publicly for some time, they, by their own admission, find it hard to do so as they lack the 'Islamic legitimacy' that the IM carries in the eyes of the population, and are thus vulnerable to the criticism that they are introducing Western values.⁶⁷

Leaving aside issues of 'false consciousness', it seems unlikely that a movement which is attractive to the above ambitious women, and sufficiently concerned to publicly condemn honour killings, degrades women by violently forcing them to wear the *hijāb*. One would expect the attitude informing violent intimidation to spill over into the work environment and deter women from working for the Mujamma'.

5.5 CONCLUSION

Having analysed the context, the potential players, the influence of unfounded rumours on the popular understanding of the episode, and Hamas's own understanding of the *hijāb* and the '*hijāb* campaign', it has become clear that the argument that Hamas orchestrated the campaign, or indeed that there was a campaign at all, is rather speculative. I have not been able to find concrete evidence that Hamas did orchestrate a campaign, nor have Hammami or Hamas's Gazan leftist critics offered anything wholly

⁶⁶ 'Iman'.

⁶⁷ Cf. Sarraj-Matar, Qassim I&II. Qassim said: "No one has the courage to confront [honour killings], not even the left-wing".

conclusive. I have pointed out that it is unlikely that Hamas used youths as a 'proxy force'. I have also argued how each of the incidents Hammami details is inconclusive or negative in terms of proving Hamas to be behind them. Given that a number of interviewees appeared to have been wholly unaware of the existence of a campaign, a likely scenario is that no centrally orchestrated campaign took place, and that leftist activists interpreted the separate attacks levelled at them by lawless youths responding to a general climate and collaborator-led incidents as a full-blown campaign. When I put to a target group of Islamist women which included one PFLP activist, the notion that the '*hijāb* campaign' might be explained as the spinning out of control of religious and ideological ideas spread by a variety of movements, taken up and exaggerated by the Intifada's youth, high on the power the Intifada had given them, they all agreed.⁶⁸

The Islamist narrative is that Hamas was not responsible and that violent intimidation is condemnable. While sceptics might argue that this is a cover up, I am inclined to take it seriously because on other issues Hamas members readily owned up to acts or ideals they believe in – even when they knew these would alienate a Western interviewer.⁶⁹

The fact that no Hamas member has taken responsibility for the '*hijāb* campaign' seems to indicate, at best, that Hamas was not responsible, at worst, that Hamas is ashamed of this aspect of its past. The fact that youths, 'lumpen elements' and collaborators all seem to have played a confirmed part, and that, according to the leftist activist who was harassed by *shabāb* and hounded by a crowd, "[i]t is not typically Hamas [to engage in violence against women]",⁷⁰ seems to indicate that Hamas was not directly responsible

⁶⁸ Islamist Women.

⁶⁹ Cf. Yassin's acknowledging his belief (not shared by many other IM leaders) that Christians should have no part in the legislative body of an Islamic state (Chapter 8.1), the insistence of most Hamas leaders that women should not be allowed to become President, and the acknowledgement by all, whether or not they agreed with the policy, that Hamas was responsible for killing suspected collaborators, and that mistakes were made in this process (Chapter 8.2.5).

⁷⁰ Qassim I. The fact she was a victim of the '*hijāb* campaign', and had been involved in the 1985-1986 clashes between leftists and Islamists at the IUG, increases the weight of this statement.

for the violence – although it certainly helped to create an atmosphere which put pressure on women to wear the *hijāb*.

That the incidents are called a 'campaign' and that Hamas is blamed for orchestrating it, is an example of the Derridean nature of the Palestinian secularist narrative Hammami's article reflects. In this narrative, Hamas is the repository of Palestinian society's more religious aspects, particularly those considered inimical to 'progress' and 'democracy' – enabling the narrators to evade the reality of their society's continuing religiosity and the aversion many feel towards the type of 'progressive' society the narrators champion. If Hamas is the chief culprit for the increase in religiosity, all that is needed, from this perspective, to herald in a "progressive and democratic future" is to marginalise (or indeed eliminate) Hamas.

To be able to successfully project religiosity onto one movement, the secularist narrative must exaggerate the influence of Hamas, attribute totalitarian aspirations to it, and create a clear distance between it and the 'real' Palestinian psyche. Rumours categorising any behaviour with 'religious' overtones as 'Hamas' fuel this process, as the momentum of the narrative encourages its narrators to accept these rumours without much analysis.

To exaggerate Hamas's influence, the *hijāb* incidents are elevated into a strategically planned campaign, the involvement of other groups portrayed as secondary to Hamas's.

To separate it from the rest of Palestine, the *hijāb* is linked to an Islamic state (which the secularists cannot believe is the aspiration of many Palestinians), the benefits many

Palestinian women perceive in wearing the *hijāb* are ignored (thus portraying Hamas as incongruous), and Hamas's national credentials are undermined (by emphasising the

alleged difference in national heroism between Hamas and the PLO,⁷¹ and the un-Palestinianness of the *Sharī'ah* dress popular among Islamists).⁷²

Again, the *hijāb* episode is not unique in being misreported in Western discourse. The burning of the (leftist-led) Palestinian Red Crescent Society in 1980 by a mob is similarly blamed on the IM.⁷³ Yet a closer inspection reveals that, though Islamist students were part of the mob, and a well-known IM student leader (Hijaz al-Burbar) was seen leading it, the actual mastermind behind the burning appears, in the opinion of those closest to the Red Crescent leadership, to have been Fatah, while Shaykh Awwad, the President of the IUG's Board (and not, as Milton-Edwards has it, a Mujamma' supporter; see p122), helped to create a climate of antagonism between Islamically inclined and leftist Gazans, which the mob organisers exploited.⁷⁴

Burbar, the student leader, was expelled from the IM, partly because of his part in the burning.⁷⁵ The IM students appear to have planned only to demonstrate on the IUG

⁷¹ Cf. confronting occupation without "exposing its members to danger – as in the nationalist factions" (p25).

⁷² "... plain, tailored overcoats, known as *shari'a* dress, which have no real precedents in indigenous Palestinian dress" (Hammami, p25). Another example is Shadid's criticism of *Sharī'ah* dress as replacing "the beautifully embroidered native Palestinian dress which also meets Islamic standards ... a Palestinian national folklore symbol" (Shadid, p671). While I likewise lament the decline of the Palestinian dress, Shadid's criticism does not take into account other considerations, such as the influence price difference (cf. personal interview with Iyad Barghouti) and the different dresses' connotations (Palestinian dress seems to connote the countryside, *Sharī'ah* dress urbanisation) may have on a woman's dress choice. Moreover, the leftist factions' preference for Western dress in everyday life seems to equally promote the decline of Palestinian dress.

⁷³ Milton-Edwards, pp106-108; Abu-Amr, *Fundamentalism*, pp45, 49 (Abu-Amr blames the IM for two mob attacks on the PRCS, 07.01.1980 and 21.01.1982; the second incident, however, according to *al-Fajr* 29.01-04.02.1982 and 05-11.02.1982, involved "unidentified persons" breaking in on the night of 26.01.1982, while Islamists were among the volunteers helping to clean up); Sayigh, p483.

⁷⁴ Those non-Islamists who blamed Fatah requested anonymity. Their first-hand knowledge of the incident and their secularist/leftist loyalties rendered their accounts trustworthy as they had no ulterior incentive to counter the popular argument that the IM was responsible. Because of the anonymity request, I will not disclose any non-Islamist names – though all were victims and in positions of leadership. Concerning the Islamists, I interviewed Yassin (then Director al-Mujamma'), Abu Shannab, Ibrahim Yazuri (then Deputy Director al-Mujamma'), Shamma', Muhammad Muslih (Managing Director al-Mujamma').

⁷⁵ For sources, see previous footnote.

campus, with some insisting that when the demonstration turned ugly they tried to prevent the violence. The mob itself seems to have been largely made up of, what Hammami calls, 'lumpen elements', called up by Awwad having spread the rumour through the mosques that 'the communists' were going to take over the IUG. Attacks on restaurants selling liquor on the way to the PRCS, for which the IM is also blamed, thus seem to have been more the fruit of mob rule and class antagonism (restaurants selling alcohol in Gaza are invariably for the rich), rather than IM strategy.

As with the '*hijāb* campaign', the cause for misrepresentation of the events appears to be a mixture of prejudice (Islamists are deemed violent and anti-communist), strategic manipulation of the facts (Fatah needed a smokescreen to hide its involvement), and over-reliance on the PLO narrative and local rumour (see the discussion on the generic use of the term 'Mujamma'', even by those believing the IM to have been innocent; p150).

PART III

POLITICAL THEORY OF THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT IN GAZA

PREFATORY REMARKS

Following the conclusions of Part II, violence does not appear to be as central to the IM's political culture as assumed by the *modernists*. Theoretical positions taken by the IM on issues such as personal freedom, rule of law and elections can thus be taken sufficiently seriously to warrant analysis – particularly if 'tested' against praxis and the narratives of those affected thereby.

Chapter 2 has shown that the sampled *modernist* texts do not seriously engage with Islamist discourse. Instead, on the basis of the type of distorted 'evidence' discussed in Part II and a few random IM statements, they declare the IM anti-pluralistic and anti-democratic – with claims varying from statements that the IM advocates a cleritocracy¹ to charges that it dismisses the term 'democracy' as "a Western concept with no place in Muslim society", acceptable only temporarily because it is to be "preferred to dictatorship as more hospitable to the flourishing of Islam".² Some highlight the existence of internal debates.³ Others acknowledge that Hamas is seen by "most Palestinians ... as representing the aspirations of many Palestinians".⁴ Nüsse alone tentatively surmises that the IM supports free elections as an expression of the "will of the people" – but concludes that it views this "will" as monolithic, prohibiting any possibility of dissent.⁵

¹ Ahmad, p56.

² Abu-Amr, 'Hamas', p18.

³ Cf. Usher, pp72-77.

⁴ Milton-Edwards, pp183.

⁵ Nüsse, p78.

The *pluralist* texts are more optimistic about the IM's democratic potential, emphasising the IM's heterogeneity and championing of 'people's causes'. Yet, they do not directly discuss issues of democracy, beyond broadly stating that "Islam does not preclude democracy any more than a state based on Islamic law precludes women's rights".⁶

Moving beyond imprecise labels such as '(anti-)democratic',⁷ and refusing to take rhetoric that democracy is an un-Islamic concept at face value – rhetoric little used by the IM, despite Abu-Amr highlighting one such expression⁸ – the next three chapters will concentrate on the IM's understanding of an Islamic state's governance, its political process and the nature of its body politic.

Because of the paucity of written material (see Chapters 2&3), I have drawn primarily on personal interviews with leaders, led, insiders and outsiders. Regarding sophisticated theory sources tend to be leaders only.⁹ Where texts by Islamist theorists who have been identified by IM members as sources of authority, state a point more clearly than the interviewees, I have drawn on these.

⁶ Holt, p74.

⁷ Such terms are too totalistic, implying full compliance or total rejection while ignoring the proliferation of widely differing types of democracies, and too ideologised to be of descriptive/analytical use. Cf. also Giovanni Sartori's observation that the term 'democracy' has "undergone verbal stretching and has become the loosest label of its kind" ('Democracy', *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, 4(1968), p112); also Bhikhu Parekh, 'The Cultural Particularity of Liberal Democracy' and Alan Ware, 'Liberal Democracy: One Form or Many?', both in David Held (ed), *Prospects for Democracy*.

⁸ Rather, it highlights the similarity between its system and democracy, though stressing that the former limits the popular will to its 'proper' boundaries, as revealed in Qur'an and *Sunnah* (Abu Shannab I, Haniyyah I, Ghazi Hammad I, Muhammad Muslih, Intifada Cell I&II, Hamas Supporters Gaza; Musa II, Salah Badawil, Yusrah Hamdan, Salah al-Na'ami). See also p231ff.

⁹ The rank and file's understanding of Islamist theory is at times basic, partly because their education was interrupted by the Intifada, partly because the underground nature of Hamas has inhibited open discussion and the proper induction of members. IM leaders are acutely aware of this problem (cf. Abu Shannab V; Musa IV).

CHAPTER 6

GOVERNANCE: BETWEEN CONTRACT AND DIVINE LAW

A key aspect of governance is what constitutes legitimate political authority. Equally important is the nature of the limits of such authority, and thus, the amount of freedom it leaves the governed. The answer to these questions determines largely the extent to which the political theory in question is authoritarian. This chapter will detail the IM's understanding of authority and freedom.

6.1 STRUCTURE AND ENDS OF POLITICAL AUTHORITY

The IM's understanding of authority is rooted in its view of humanity's purpose. Following Yassin,

God has created the human being and has provided him with a brain, increasing his value above that of other creatures, ... so that he can be viceregent of God on earth. God has made the human being a *waqil* [authorised agent] who does the work for God – just as a merchant makes someone his trustee over his business in a different country.¹

¹ Yassin I. Though only Yassin, Hamas Supporters Gaza and an article in *al-Risalah* (12.02.1998, p16) on Egyptian Islamist Fahmi Huwaydi (whose thinking on this issue closely resembles the IM's) mention the term viceregent explicitly, all interviewees implied it in their thinking.

The viceregency notion has two fundamental consequences. First, it delimits human power and determines the end and scope of authority. As viceregent, one's chief purpose is to fulfill God's will. Because the IM believes this to be laid down in the Qur'ān and *Sunnah*, at a literal level this means the protection of Islam (thus introducing the potential for tension with non-Muslims and those with a different understanding of Islam; Chapter 8). The IM interprets this task as establishing, and maintaining, freedom, justice, and equality – the three primary principles underpinning an Islamic state (which, because they are shared by many non-Islamic ideologies, offer a potential justification for cooperation with non-Muslims; Chapter 8).² Of these, freedom is the most fundamental, with justice and equality serving to preserve freedom.³ In Yassin's words:

The human being is born free ... [R]evelation and religion have come to preserve this freedom and to protect [him] against the enslavement of human-made systems. When a human being becomes a Muslim, he protects his freedom by subjugating himself only to God ...⁴

Second, though observance of divine boundaries is the minimal requirement to legitimise the wielding of viceregal authority in God's eyes, it is not sufficient. Since all human beings are viceregents and have equal status as free agents of God, only if authority is voluntarily granted to a ruler, on the condition that it be returned to the ruled if the ruler infringes the former's rights, do those who have transferred their viceregal

² Abu Shannab I&II&III, Dukhan, Shamma', Hammad I, Intifada Cell I, Hamas Supporters Gaza, 'Nasr'; Ahmad Bahr, Musa II, Hamdan, al-Na'ami, Khalas Conference Paper 3; Ayman Taha, Sami Abu Dhughri. Those stipulating the triplet *shūrā* (consultation), justice and equality seemed to infer freedom, as *shūrā* is frequently equated with freedom of expression (Chapter 7). See also El-Awa's list of Islamic state principles (*On the Political System of the Islamic State*, p85).

³ Though PNA oppression and the continuing Israeli occupation of Palestinian land clearly influence the IM's emphasis on freedom, and a reversal of these circumstances may result in a lessening of its commitment thereto, freedom has long been pivotal in Islamism (cf. Mitchell, pp224-227; Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam*, pp30-44; *Milestones*, pp109-110; Ghannouchi, *The Right to Nationality Status of Non-Muslim Citizens in a Muslim Nation*, pp39-40).

⁴ Yassin I.

prerogative remain 'free'. To prevent consent being forcefully elicited or arbitrarily withdrawn, authority must be circumscribed by a contract between ruler and ruled.⁵

This line of argument owes much to Mawdudi who argued on the basis of *āyah* 24:55, "Allah has promised those of you who believe and do good works to grant them viceregency in the land..."⁶ that all believers are God's viceregents who, for administrative purposes, can "delegate their caliphate (viceregency)" to a ruler, making him "answerable to God on the one hand and on the other to his fellow 'caliphs'".⁷ Mawdudi supports his interpretation by *ahādīth* such as "everyone of you is a ruler" and "no one is superior to another except in point of faith and piety". As the first of these *ahādīth* continues "and everyone is answerable for his subjects", indicating that the Prophet was addressing his chiefs, not the people, Mawdudi's interpretation is not incontestable. Significantly, some in the IM have broadened the definition of "those of you who believe and do good works" to include Christians and, in some instances, communists (Chapter 8).

To the IM, authority is dually circumscribed, by a contract between God and the ruler as viceregent, and by one between ruler and ruled, a transfer of power which the founder of

⁵ Yassin II, Abu Shannab I&II&III, Shamma', Zahhar II, Haniyyah I, Hammad I&II, Muslih, 'Muhammad', 'Ibrahim', Intifada Cell III, Hamas Supporters Gaza, 'Iyad', 'Nasr', 'Ashraf', Special Communiqué (10.11.1988), Communiqué 49 (27.10.1989); Board Members Shabbat, 'Iman'; Bahr, Badawil, Musa I&II&IV, Hamdan, Na'ami, *al-Risalah* 12.02.1998:10 (Musa), Khalas Political Programme (pp24-25), Khalas Conference Papers 2&3; Masri, Taha, Abu Dhughri, 'Yusuf', Women's Kutlah 1, half of Women's Kutlah 2. Cf. Qutb: authority comes from "the will of the governed" (*Maarakat al-Islam wa-al Rasmaliyyah*, pp73-74; quoted in Yvonne Haddad, 'Sayyid Qutb' in John Esposito (ed), *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, p92); Ghannouchi: "Political power belongs to the community (*ummah*)" ('The Participation of Islamists in a Non-Islamic Government', p55); Turabi: "save for the express provision of the *shariah*, the consensus (*ijma*) of the community is paramount" ('The Islamic State' in Esposito, *Voices*, p243).

⁶ I use Khurshid Ahmad's translation (Mawdudi, *Political Theory of Islam*, p29) rather than Yusuf Ali's because Ahmad's better expresses the notion of being granted viceregency implied by the Qur'ānic term *iastakhlifannahum*.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp29-32. See also *āyah* 2:30: "I will create a *khalīfah* on earth".

the Egyptian Brothers described as a 'social contract' (*'aqd ijtimā'ī*).⁸ I will discuss each in turn.

Social Contract

The institutions embodying this contract are the office of Head of State, a Cabinet, a legislative body, generally called the *Majlis al-Shūrā* (council of consultation),⁹ and a judiciary, with a military and a police force to underwrite their authority. A majority of interviewees advocated elections to guarantee the contractarian nature of authority.¹⁰ Elections, some argued, enable ordinary people to stand or elect their preferred representative, creating a body which represents the nation, in composition as well as consensually. In this vein, Abu Shannab insisted the *Majlis* should

come from and be elected by the base of the nation ... [so that] this Parliament can be considered as representative of the whole nation.¹¹

Elections, others asserted, ensure that the transfer of viceregal power is temporary – that ultimate power remains with the community of viceregents. Elections guarantee “the

⁸ Hasan al-Banna; quoted in Mitchell, p247. Cf. Qutb, *Justice*, p93.

⁹ Also *ahl al-shūrā*. Some took *majlis al-shūrā* to mean the Cabinet (Leader Kutlah-Azhar), others reserved it for the historical *shūrā* councils (Abu Dhughri).

¹⁰ See footnote 5. Three differed, against 39 for. One of Women's Kutlah 2 and Leader Kutlah-Azhar argued that ordinary people were insufficiently knowledgeable to elect, suggesting instead elections be held among the educated elite (one of Women's Kutlah 2 remained silent; 'Ahmad' initially supported elections, then advocated elite rule, finally returned to his initial position). Among leaders, only Dukhan did not explicitly endorse the mechanism of elections, simply saying that the *Majlis* be made up of the heads of parties, institutions and tribes, and elect the Head of State.

¹¹ Abu Shannab III. Also Haniyyah I, Shamma', Musa II.

freedom to choose, ... the right of every individual to say their opinion”, and enable people “to watch over the performance of their representatives”.¹²

Underlining the centrality of contract to the IM’s theory, Yassin stated that in case of serious abuse of power

the *ummah* (the people) has the right to remove this Head of State from power, to revolt against him, even if this means war or fighting. This means that the ruler in Islam must act within certain boundaries, and if he trespasses, it should be his end [as a leader].¹³

Elections are the preferred option. But the notion that power rests with the people is so important that some are prepared to sanction revolt¹⁴ – thus unequivocally breaking with the tradition epitomised by medieval jurist Ghazali (d. 1111) warning that “[t]he tyranny of a sultan for a hundred years causes less damage than one year’s tyranny exerted by the subjects against each other”, which has been taken by many *essentialists* to characterise Islam as a politically submissive religion.¹⁵

To prevent power from corrupting those who exercise it – to be “expected”, according to Yassin – the IM advocates a separation of powers.¹⁶ The executive, legislative and judiciary powers each have a duty to guarantee that the others honour their contractual

¹² Taha, Musa II. Also Abu Shannab V, Badawil. Cf. Mitchell (pp246-247) quoting early Egyptian Brothers: “the nation alone is the source of power; bowing to its will is a religious obligation” (‘Awda) and “[t]he ruler has no legal existence ... except as ‘he reflects the spirit of the society and is in harmony with its goals’” (Ghazali).

¹³ Yassin II. Also Abu Shannab III, Musa IV, Abu Dhughri.

¹⁴ All saw armed revolt as the last resort. Abu Shannab III and Abu Dhughri condemned Sudan’s military coup as un-Islamic, but said it could be justified if proven to result in replacing an authoritarian dictatorship with a free and just regime.

¹⁵ Ghazali quote and examples of *essentialist* position in Yahya Sadowski, ‘The New Orientalism and the Democracy Debate’, *Middle East Report* 23(4), p16.

¹⁶ Cf. Yassin II, Abu Shannab III&IV, Musa II, Khalas Political Programme (pp24-25), Khalas Conference Paper 2.

duties towards God and the people. If the *Majlis* finds the Head of State overstepping either his popular mandate or the state's constitutional principles (derived from Islam by consensus of the *Majlis*), and the latter "refuses to listen", then, following Yassin, "the *Shūrā* Council has the right to impeach".¹⁷ In this respect, the proposed Islamist system is similar, according to Abu Shannab, to the American Presidential one where a Constitution defines the boundaries outside of which a President risks impeachment by the legislative bodies.¹⁸

Essentialists generally deem the advice of the early *shūrā* councils to have been non-binding and therefore hold that Islamists cannot conceive of a system in which the advice of the people's representatives is binding.¹⁹ In fact, a number of IM leaders asserted they believed the early councils' advice to have been binding and obligatory, and drew from this the principle that the Head of State and the *Majlis* are accountable to each other and the electorate.²⁰

Ultimate legislative power lies with the *Majlis al-Shūrā*. Following Yassin,

the *Majlis al-Shūrā* has the decision-making power because it is the highest level that makes the laws. ... no other body has the right to contradict their *ijtihād* (independent interpretation).²¹

¹⁷ Cf. the early Egyptian Brethren's belief that the *Majlis* embodies the "real power in the state" and "commands the obedience of both ruler and ruled" (Mitchell paraphrasing the Brothers, p248).

¹⁸ Abu Shannab III.

¹⁹ Cf. Kramer: "... the dominant interpretation of Islam has historically sanctioned authoritarian rule [...] The ideal of Islamic government most often evoked by the fundamentalists harks back to the notion of a just commander, ruling in consultation with experts in the law." ('Democracy', p38).

²⁰ Cf. Abu Shannab III, Musa II, Shamma', Muslih.

²¹ Yassin II.

There is some ambiguity, however, about the role of the Head of State. Though most see it as executive, only participating in legislation through the *Majlis*, some still see it primarily as that of the successor (*Khalīfah*) to the Prophet Muhammad. In this vein, Yassin once referred to the Head of State as the *mujtahid mutlaq*, the supreme interpreter of law, and insisted that

On certain important issues, the Head of State, or *Khalīfah*, should decide, after consulting with the people of *Ahl al-Shūrā*. For, ... [being the *mujtahid mutlaq*], when this *Khalīfah* decides on a certain issue ... he should not be following the others, he should search for the best option after listening to others. After all, he is the decision-maker. The same applies to a professor, who is knowledgeable on a certain matter; he cannot listen to others who tell him that the matter is not like that.²²

Yassin addressing the Head of State as *mujtahid mutlaq* and comparing him to a professor suggests that, besides being the supreme executive, the Head of State is also the supreme legislator, authorised to overrule the *Majlis*' legislative decisions – undermining the notion of separation of powers, and that which sees *shūrā* as binding. Yassin's use of *mujtahid mutlaq* is somewhat confusing as, technically, one earns the position of *mujtahid mutlaq* through ability and erudition, not elections. It is a jurisprudential term and implies an extremely high degree of erudition, authorising one to make binding legal interpretations independent of any other authority. In the context of a relatively small population like Palestine's, not every generation may produce someone with that level of wisdom and erudition. Such a person may, moreover, not be the most effective Head of State.

An explanation for this confusion may be that Yassin is here referring to a utopian ideal, moulded on the model of the Prophet – an ideal which may still be cherished by

²² Yassin I.

Islamists, but has, despite having been advocated as realistic by earlier Islamists,²³ been increasingly tempered with the pragmatic recognition that leaders of such stature are not all that common, and that, consequently, inadequacy and even corruption must, in Yassin's own words, "be expected" in leaders and provided for by separating the various powers and making *shūrā* binding. That this ideal is not considered suitably pragmatic by the IM can be gleaned from the fact that none of the other leaders referred to the Head of State as *mujtahid mutlaq*. Only a few painted leaders in a future Islamic state as not needing institutional checks since their Islamicity was believed sufficient.²⁴ Generally, interviewees, including Yassin, emphasised the need for a separation of powers. Whether, once the present 'corrupt' (non-Islamic) leadership is eclipsed by a 'truly' Islamic leadership, this utopian ideal will re-surface and influence the way the IM envisages an Islamic state be run, is impossible to say. However, judging by the IM's present pragmatism, and the lessons it is drawing from the less than perfect 'Islamic' regimes in Sudan and Iran,²⁵ it is unlikely that the IM will lose its pragmatic view of the corrupting influence of power and the limitations of human leadership in the foreseeable future.

The judiciary – about which opinions are divided as to whether they should be appointed or elected²⁶ – is envisaged as sufficiently independent to be able to impeach members of the executive and legislative bodies. The notion that rulers are not above the law is fundamental to the IM's political theory, embodying the principle that all are God's

²³ Cf. the early Mawdudi (*Theory*, pp34-37). Later, he rejected it (*Principles*, pp29-33).

²⁴ Dukhan, Zahhar. Hints of this view were also found in Women's Kutlah 2 and Leader Kutlah-Azhar.

²⁵ For IM critiques, see p188 and Chapter 7, footnotes 56&77.

²⁶ According to JMCC Public Opinion Poll No. 6 (May 1995), 54.4% of Islamists (nation-wide) hold judges should be elected, 23.6% that they be appointed by Parliament, 12.6% by the President. I did not discuss this issue with interviewees.

viceregents, equally accountable, regardless of worldly status.²⁷ While it remains questionable whether an explicit institutional separation of powers existed in Islam's early days, the IM's advocacy thereof is justified through historical reference. In Musa's words,

Looking [at] the issue of the separation of powers, ... you wouldn't find any other system as distinct as the Islamic one, where throughout history the judicial power was always above the ruler. People living in the Islamic State could thus take even the ruler himself to court who would stand on an equal basis with any humble member of society and would be judged equally.²⁸

Divine Contract

The contract between God and the ruler as viceregent stipulates that the ruler scrutinises himself in the light of what is known of God's law. Although distinguishing between *'ibadat* (that which concerns a Muslim's relationship with God) and *mu'amalat* (that which concerns all other aspects of life) and bringing only the latter under the jurisdiction of the state (see p193), the IM expects rulers to be personally pious and upright, if only to ensure financial integrity and professional honesty (see 'Praxis Analysis'). Following Yassin,

[T]he fear of God [is another 'security valve', ensuring that a leader remain incorrupt].
A pious leader should understand that he will be held accountable to God and that, if he

²⁷ Cf. Yassin II, Abu Shannab IV, Haniyyah II, Musa II, Khalas Conference Papers 2&3.

²⁸ Musa II. Cf. Mawdudi, *Principles*, p28.

deviates from the just and right path, his destiny will be hell-fire. That fate should be rejected by any sane person.²⁹

This has three implications, noted Abu Shannab:

First, you devote yourself to your cause for the sake of God. This means that you don't want any reward from anybody. Second, you know that God is watching you, so you have to be straight. Third, you are wishing for a reward from God, so you expend maximum effort in order that God can reward you heavily.³⁰

The importance of the contract between leaders and God is twofold. First, it admonishes them to set an example to society by internalising the ethics and ideals of the Islamic state and by practising them meticulously. Only if leaders are seen to do this, argues Head of Hizb al-Khalas Ahmad Bahr, can one expect criminals to come forward "to ask for justice to be applied to them", as they reportedly did at the time of the Prophet.³¹ Second, it weakens a leader's dependency on the electorate by rooting half his authority in following God's rule, enabling him to lead from conscience as well as follow the electorate's will.³² This freedom, however, remains circumscribed both by the leader's contract with the electorate, and by the rules of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) which are to ensure that personal interpretation of God's word conforms to an 'objective' standard.³³

²⁹ Yassin II.

³⁰ Abu Shannab IV.

³¹ Cf. also Zahhar's (III) view that the Islamic command of *zakah* (alms tax) should be internalised to the point that all citizens feel themselves to be ministers of finance.

³² Cf. Yassin I, Hammad II.

³³ Cf. Yassin II, Abu Shannab IV, Musa II.

6.2 BETWEEN CONTRACT AND DIVINE LAW: THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT AND LOCKE

In the IM's contractarianism, political authority has two sources: the observance of divine boundaries and the consent of the ruled. To explore the relationship between these two sources, I will juxtapose the IM's contractarianism with that of John Locke, one of the chief exponents of Western contract theory, who similarly roots political authority in both natural and consensual right. Not unlike the IM, Locke believes that "God hath given the World to Men in common" (§II.26:1) and that, accordingly, human beings are equal and, *ab initio*, accountable to God only. Similarly, he holds that humanity's intended state of being is the "State of perfect Freedom ... [and] also of Equality" (§II.4.3-7), and that for this to be realised God's law, the Law of Nature, must be upheld. Without "Political Government", Locke continues, this law would be powerless as there would be no "Power to Execute that Law [of Nature]" (§II.4-7, §II.123-131).³⁴ Without a civil law (encoded by humans, as distinct from natural law) and a sovereign state to enforce it, the "Enjoyment" of liberty would be "very uncertain, and constantly exposed to the Invasion of others" (§II.123:7-8). In other words, "where there is no Law there is no freedom" (§II.57:19).

However, where there is law (and a state to enforce it), there is not necessarily freedom. Only if the individual is "under no other Legislative Power, but that established, by consent" (§II.22:4-6), is the "Liberty of Man, in Society" vouchsafed. "Voluntary Agreement", concludes Locke, "gives ... Political Power to Governours for the Benefit of their Subjects" (§II.173:6-7). Correspondingly, if the people "find the Legislative act contrary to the trust reposed in them", the Legislative's power becomes "forfeited, and ... devolve[s] into the hands of those that gave it", giving the latter the right "to remove

³⁴ References in text to John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (indicating treatise, paragraph, line).

or alter the Legislative". "Supream Power" thus always remains "in the People" (§II.149:6-12).

Mirroring the IM's logic, Locke argues that an ordered political structure is necessary to implement God's principles on earth, and that it must be based on a contract if individual freedom and equality is to be preserved. Like the IM, Locke suggests two sources for political authority, one divine and one contractual. Echoing *modernist* and *essentialist* criticisms' of Islamism, some scholars argue that Locke's commitment to contractarianism is weak and that, as an "exponent of the sovereignty of natural law", he solves the potential tension between the two by wholly subordinating consent to natural law.³⁵ The key to understanding the paradox of Locke and the IM lies in Patrick Riley's observation that

the social contract, for Locke, is necessitated by natural law's inability to be literally "sovereign" on earth ... Natural law and contractarianism, far from being simply antithetical in Locke, necessarily involve each other, at least given human imperfection and corruption.³⁶

To understand Locke's attempt at an "equilibrium between the naturally and the consensually right",³⁷ and in turn shed light on the IM's theory, one must examine Locke's definition of the law of nature as "the ordering of the divine will"³⁸ – the divine order of right and wrong³⁹ within which humanity must operate to be in harmony with

³⁵ Ernest Barker, *The Social Contract*, pxviii; quoted in Patrick Riley, *Will and Political Legitimacy*, p64.

³⁶ Riley, p69. Locke placed less emphasis on consent in his later works.

³⁷ Riley, p72.

³⁸ Locke, *Essays on the Law of Nature*, p110; quoted (and 'translated') by Johnson, *Locke*, p26. Cf. also A. John Simmons, *The Lockean Theory of Rights*, p105.

³⁹ Cf. Locke, *Essay*, II.21.50; quoted in Simmons, p33.

God's purpose. This law is not 'natural' in the sense of reflecting human nature as observed, but 'natural' as divinely ordained – thus introducing a distinction between a 'fallen' human nature, controlled by desire and leading to "misery and slavery"; and a 'redeemed' nature, controlled by reason, leading to "infinite perfection and happiness", which is the "end" of freedom as God designed it.⁴⁰

Locke's 'natural law' is in fact the 'divine law'. Though at times he equates natural law with reason (cf. §II.6:7), Locke denies the rationalist position that natural law equals reason:

reason does not so much establish ... this law of nature as search for ... it as decreed by a superior power ... Nor is reason the author of that law, but the interpreter. ... Nor indeed can reason give us laws when it is only a capacity of the mind and a part of us [and not of the supreme legislator, i.e. God].⁴¹

The confusion arises because Locke uses the term 'natural law' to refer to both the original 'divine law', and that part of 'divine law' which has become known through reason – as opposed to 'positive law' which is 'divine law' disclosed through revelation.⁴²

In Locke's scheme, natural law is insufficient to command political obligation, lacking a political mechanism to administer and enforce it. It also lacks specificity. It is posited

⁴⁰ Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, II.21:38-50; quoted in James Tully, 'Locke on Liberty' in Z. Pelczynski & J. Gray (eds), *Conceptions of Liberty in Political Philosophy*, pp69-70.

⁴¹ Locke, *Law*, p110; quoted in Johnson, p23. I am here following the interpretation given by Riley (pp83-91), Johnson (pp23-45) and Simmons (pp14-67) that Locke sees reason as a tool to discover natural law, not its origin (which is the will of God).

⁴² Locke, *Two Tracts on Government*, p222; quoted in Simmons, p17(n7).

in general principles, only partially understood,⁴³ too vague for most mortals to consider it relevant to their particular case. For the transformation from general to particular, the mechanism of consent is needed. Consent transforms both the general principle of rulership into the specific authority of a particular ruler (§I.81:24-27), and the general natural law into a specific civil law while preserving the freedom and equality of the community's members. Without "Sanction from that Legislative, which the publick has chosen and appointed", Locke insists, no "Edict ... by what Power soever backed, [can] have the force and obligation of a Law" (§II.134:11-16). In Riley's words, consent is the mechanism needed to make natural law "sovereign" on earth.

Consent, however, does not have the authority to contradict natural law. "[T]he Municipal Laws of Countries", Locke argues, "are only so far right, as they are founded on the Law of Nature, by which they are to be regulated and interpreted" (§II.12:16-19). Consent, notes Riley, thus "operates within a context [of natural law]".⁴⁴

Locke's balancing natural/divine and consensual right parallels that of the IM. The IM similarly distinguishes between *Sharī'ah* as a divine system of laws, and the actual law derived from revelation through *fiqh* (some interviewees confusingly used the term *Sharī'ah* to describe both).⁴⁵ The Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, though believed to contain all knowledge needed to implement the divine system on earth, are held to provide general

⁴³ Through divine revelation, reason and the study of nature and human society (Simmons, pp18-21).

⁴⁴ Riley, p72.

⁴⁵ Yassin I&II, Abu Shannab III&V, Shamma', Zahhar II, Hammad II, Muslih, Hamas Supporters Gaza, 'Ashraf', 'Nasr'; Musa II, Na'ami; Masri, Abu Dhughri, Women's Kutlah 1. The notion that Islamism parallels natural law tradition is not new; cf. Malcolm Kerr on 'Abduh (*Islamic Reform*, pp103-144).

principles only.⁴⁶ Using reason, analogy and the study of nature and human society,⁴⁷ these principles need to be transformed into a legal system. As the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* are relatively more detailed regarding practical matters than Locke's source of revelation, the Bible, the IM tends more towards prescriptiveness than Locke, who refrains from defining the precise content of natural law beyond stating that the details must be "suited to the interest and welfare" of each particular society.⁴⁸ Regarding specifically constitutional matters, the generality of the Qur'ān and the multiplicity of examples in the *Sunnah* have led the IM to adopt a similarly flexible approach to Locke's, arguing that the fact that God did not reveal one specific political system, is a revelation in itself, enabling people to adopt systems along God's general guidelines which are best suited to their particular situation.⁴⁹ Like Locke, it proposes the mechanism of consent (through an elected legislative) to transform these general principles into a particular constitutional code,⁵⁰ while insisting that consent operates within the context of the *Sharī'ah*.

It differs from Locke in the fact that the Qur'ān contains the elements of a penal code, the *hudūd*. Thus, it is stipulated that a thief's hand be cut off, and an adulterer be flogged a hundred times.⁵¹ Since it is revealed in specificity, the IM aims to inscribe it

⁴⁶ Despite containing references to specific incidents, the *Sunnah* is held to illustrate general principles, not demand literal imitation (see Chapter 7). The main exception are the Qur'ān's *h. udūd* (see further), believed to provide legal specifics.

⁴⁷ What 'Abduh called *Sunnah Allah* (traditions of God or God's 'laws') governing human success (Kerr, pp121-122, 129-13). On importance of reason to complement revelation: Yassin I, Abu Shannab III&IV, Zahhar II, Shamma', Hammad, 'Ibrahim'; 'Iman'; Musa II, *al-Risalah* 04.06.1998:5 (Hammad); Masri.

⁴⁸ Locke, *Toleration*, p183; quoted in Simmons, p106.

⁴⁹ Musa II. Also Abu Shannab III&V, Zahhar II. See also Chapter 7.

⁵⁰ Cf. Yassin II, Abu Shannab I&III, Zahhar III, Hammad II, 'Nasr'; Badawil. As this position underpins the championing of elections, all in footnote 10 also imply this. The argument that Muslims should adopt situation-specific civil codes (previous footnote) is similarly based on a distinction between the actual legal code and divine law.

⁵¹ *Āyāt* 5:41-42; 24:1-10.

into law without alteration – seemingly ruling out any role for consent. But even here the IM remains committed to some form of contractarian acceptance. For, recognising the potential for dissent on the grounds that these laws might seem draconian to a modern public, it insists that these laws can only be enforced if they have been agreed upon by the elected *Majlis*, after a long campaign of education in which the population has learned to understand why these laws are right, and what their implications are, and after eliminating the social inequalities which encourage crime. Consent, here, does not mean a licence to alter the *hudūd*. It is merely a mechanism to make them acceptable, and thus willed by the people, rather than being imposed on them.

In this vein, Hammad criticised Sudan's Nimeiri for implementing the *hudūd* in the 1980s without first educating the Sudanese and ensuring that there was no need to steal.⁵² Shamma' used the same arguments to condemn Saudi Arabia's experiments with the *Sharī'ah*.⁵³ "Islam doesn't want somebody's hand to be cut", Hammad argued, citing the non-implementation of these laws in Islam's early days when people were still learning. It may "take three years, six years, ten years" to educate people into accepting these laws, and, importantly, to "prepar[e] an alternative" (see also Chapter 7). Regarding *al-hudūd*, unlike issues which have been left unspecified or ambiguous and thus need consent to invest them with (legal) sovereignty on earth, divine law is sovereign over consent. But it cannot wholly do without it.

The similarity with Locke also highlights what the IM does not believe. If, for instance, the IM held, as Kramer argues for Islamism in general, that the *Sharī'ah* is perfectly known and thus completed as an actual civil law,⁵⁴ it would have no need for insisting on the mechanism of consent in the making of laws, let alone call the *Majlis* the highest

⁵² Hammad II.

⁵³ Cf. also Gaess' interview with US-based Hamas leader Abu Marzook, p126.

⁵⁴ Kramer, 'Democracy', p38.

legislative authority. Similarly, if the IM held either that schooling in Islamic law or the *de facto* possession of power were sufficient legitimisation for wielding authority – leading either to cleritocracy or autocracy – there would be no need to insist on consent to render authority legitimate.

The most significant difference between the IM and Locke is their differing visions of political community. Where Locke advocates political community primarily to vouchsafe individual rights and implement a divinely inspired order, the IM views the divinely inspired political community, and in particular the process of creating that community, as essential to both protecting individual rights and individuals learning to apprehend the purpose of life (see also Chapter 7).⁵⁵ Hence the notion that one cannot be a whole Muslim unless one lives in an Islamic state.⁵⁶ Hence also the notion that the leaders in an Islamic state are educators, and as such should be pious and rule by example. Though Locke implicitly acknowledges this aspect of creating political community by stating that without it people remain largely ignorant of divine law (§II.124:9-11), he does not place the same emphasis on the political community's potential for transforming people.

Seeing the state as educator, the IM has a clear notion of the 'curriculum' the state should be teaching. This raises the question of the extent to which the IM would leave people free to decide for themselves, and at what point it envisages the state interfering when people 'abuse' their freedom?

⁵⁵ Cf. Hammad I.

⁵⁶ Cf. Women's Kutlah 2.

Conceptions of Freedom

To probe the IM's conception of freedom it is helpful to employ Isaiah Berlin's distinction between 'negative freedom' (freedom from) and 'positive freedom' (freedom to).⁵⁷ In its negative form, freedom is protection from interference by others. In its positive form, it is primarily concerned with protecting one's higher nature from the corrupting influence of one's 'unredeemed' or lower nature. Negative liberty is generally associated with liberalism, positive liberty with authoritarianism and totalitarianism because, as Berlin observes, it is ends-orientated, encouraging interference if a person employs freedom to further the 'wrong' ends, on the grounds that the embracing of 'wrong' ends stems from unfreedom.⁵⁸ Moreover, because of its teleological nature, Berlin notes, positive freedom has a tendency to emphasise communal over individual needs.⁵⁹

Though Locke is generally regarded as one of the founders of the liberal tradition,⁶⁰ and can thus be expected to champion a negative concept of freedom, he also displays a positive conception,⁶¹ asserting that freedom is not "[a] Liberty for every Man to do what he lists" (§II.57:22), and that "the end and use of our liberty" is to learn to choose the "greater good" by way of our reason.⁶² "Without understanding", Locke asserts, "liberty ... would signify nothing".⁶³ For liberty does not operate in a moral vacuum:

⁵⁷ Isaiah Berlin, 'Two Concepts of Liberty' in Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, pp118-172.

⁵⁸ Berlin, pp131-134.

⁵⁹ Berlin, pp145-154.

⁶⁰ Cf. Tully, pp70-71.

⁶¹ Cf. Berlin, p147; Tully, pp70-71.

⁶² Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, II.21:35, 48; quoted in Tully, p70.

⁶³ Locke, *Essay*, §69, p361; quoted in Riley, p80.

Morality ... cannot but determine the choice in any one that will but consider ... The rewards and punishments of another life, which the Almighty has established, as the enforcements of his law, are of weight enough to determine the choice, against whatever pleasure or pain this life can show, when the eternal state is considered ...⁶⁴

A true law, Locke maintains, betraying his teleological bend, should direct the individual “to his proper interest” (§57:10-12). A Commonwealth, moreover, should only be created for the purpose of “comfortable, safe, and peaceable living amongst one another, in a secure enjoyment of their Properties...” (§II.95:7)⁶⁵ – not for establishing a property-free commune, for instance.

However, Locke never implies that people should, for their own good, be forced to be free, as other contractarians like Rousseau did.⁶⁶ Nor does he deny people an area of liberty in which they are answerable only to themselves and to God, giving humanity “a great latitude” wherein “we have our liberty”⁶⁷ – “[w]hat doth not lie under the obligation of any law is ... indifferent”.⁶⁸ Restraint should only be imposed when harm is done to others. Then, and only then, for the sake of the “preservation of the whole”, is it allowable to “[cut] off those Parts, and those only, which are so corrupt, that they threaten the sound and healthy” (§II.171:21-23).⁶⁹

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p364; quoted in Riley, p81.

⁶⁵ Indebted to Riley, p72.

⁶⁶ Rousseau: “whoever refuses to obey the general will shall be compelled to do so .. he will be forced to be free” (*Social Contract*, Ch. I.7, p195).

⁶⁷ H.R. Fox Bourne, *The Life of John Locke*, 1:393, 395; quoted in Simmons, p53(n96).

⁶⁸ Locke, *First Tract*, p124; quoted in Simmons, p53(n95).

⁶⁹ Cf. Locke’s “first and fundamental natural Law”: “the preservation of the Society, and (as far as will consist with the publick good) of every person in it” (§II.134:5-8). See also §II.6:7-10.

Despite the difference in attitude towards the formative role of the community, the IM's conception of freedom closely resembles Locke's. It has a similarly ends-oriented approach to freedom, suggesting that its (God-given) purpose is to learn about right and wrong and to choose to submit to God – equivalent to Locke's choice of 'good' in the context of the 'rewards and punishments of another life'. Yassin maintains:

Freedom means that the human being should be left to do what he wishes to. But [he] should know that his behaviour will be followed by reward (*thawāb*) or punishment (*'iqāb*) .. from God, and from society. ... Freedom is thus circumscribed by the law of reward and punishment.⁷⁰

The IM too holds that law should direct people to their 'proper interest', the divine order; that a state should serve the sole purpose of furthering God's design for humanity – to establish a free, just and equitable society.

Mirroring Locke, it advocates restraint from forcing people to be free, on the basis of such *āyāt* as 2:256, "Let there be no compulsion in religion", and the belief that, unless harm is done to others, the welfare of an individual's soul is a matter between that individual and God.⁷¹ The IM agrees with Ghannouchi that

Where coercion has taken place responsibility is absent and morality in fact has been violated. ...the moral requires freedom of the agent...⁷²

⁷⁰ Yassin II. Others putting moral limits on use of liberty, mostly regarding actions harming society (such as excessive wealth acquisition and preaching atheism; see also Chapter 8): Abu Shannab I&IV, Dukhan, Hammad I, Hamas Supporters Gaza, 'Ashraf', 'Nasr'; Bahr, Musa II, Na'ami.

⁷¹ Yassin I&II, Abu Shannab I&II&III, Dukhan, Hamad I, 'Muhammad', Hamas Supporters Gaza, 'Ashraf', 'Nasr'; 'Iman', Islamist Women; Bahr, Musa II; 'Yusuf'.

⁷² Ghannouchi, *Right*, pp38-40; Yassin I, Abu Shannab I&III, Hammad I, Muslih, 'Muhammad', 'Ibrahim', Hamas Supporters Gaza, 'Iyad', 'Ashraf', 'Nasr', Communiqué 22; 'Iman', Board Members al-Shabbat, Islamist Women; Bahr, Musa II; 'Yusuf'. Leftist Marwa Qassim (I) confirmed that coercion was not the IM's way. Cf. also Khalid al-Hrub, *Hamas* [Arabic], pp233-234, 257-258.

Accordingly, it champions a sphere of personal autonomy over which the state has no jurisdiction,⁷³ on the grounds that, in Turabi's words, there is a distinction between "religious and juridical obligations", where only the latter are "enforceable through formal, objective sanctions" since the former are "subjective or private and outside of the domain of law as applied by governments".⁷⁴ Only when the individual's private actions harm others, does the IM advocate restraint.⁷⁵ This argument is based on the Islamic distinction between divine injunctions regarding *'ibadat* (pertaining to worship) and *mu'amalat* (pertaining to social relations), the former immutable, the latter changeable according to context (within the bounds of Islam).⁷⁶ Since worship has a predominantly private meaning, social relations a largely public one, this distinction can be loosely described as a private-public dichotomy (even though prayer has a heavy communal emphasis in Islam).

Although establishing that the IM champions a sphere of personal autonomy, comparison between its and Locke's conceptions of freedom fails to clarify the extent to which the IM's positive understanding of freedom and the role of the state differ qualitatively from Locke's and how these effect the sphere of personal autonomy. The answer may lie in the fact that the IM, unlike Locke, establishes an intrinsic connection between freedom and state, beyond the extrinsic effect of establishing a power and civil law which can impose justice and vouchsafe freedom. I will therefore juxtapose the IM's position with that of one of the most famous Western exponents of such a linkage,

⁷³ Yassin I&II, Abu Shannab I&II&III, Dukhan, Hammad I, 'Muhammad', 'Ibrahim', Hamas Supporters Gaza, 'Ashraf', 'Nasr'; 'Iman', Islamist Women; Bahr, Musa II; 'Yusuf'.

⁷⁴ Turabi, 245; Dukhan, Shamma', Haniyyah I, Hammad, Intifada Cell III, Hamas Supporters Gaza; Bahr, Musa II, Na'ami.

⁷⁵ Yassin I&II, Abu Shannab I&IV, Dukhan, Hammad I, Hamas Supporters Gaza, 'Nasr'; Bahr, Musa II; Taha, Abu Dhughri.

⁷⁶ Shamma', Hammad I, Intifada Cell III, Hamas Supporters Gaza; Musa II, Na'ami.

Georg Hegel. As Hegel is a critic of contractarianism,⁷⁷ this will simultaneously highlight any anti-contractarian strands in the IM's thinking.

6.3 FREEDOM AND STATE: HEGEL AND THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT

For Hegel, true freedom is unattainable outside the framework of the (rationally constructed) state.⁷⁸ Like Locke and the IM, Hegel distinguishes, without formulating it so, between 'fallen' and 'redeemed' human nature, between freedom as "arbitrariness", to do "what we please" (§15), and freedom as "self-determining universality" (§21), to "recognize [the rational] as law and follow it as the substance of our own being"⁷⁹ and so end our state of alienation. The former, Hegel argues, is not true freedom, for it is the expression of a will "wholly determined by natural impulses" (§15), a mere obeying of 'capricious' desires, not reason. The latter is the "absolutely free will, ... right, ethical life" (§15) because it is "self-consciousness which apprehends itself through thinking as essentially human, and thereby frees itself from the contingent and the false" (§21). To attain "absolutely free will" one must not only be self-determined, even rationally self-determined, but rationally self-determined according to universal reason.⁸⁰ The individual must learn to think objectively and universally, for only in the universal lies the individual's true essence, only in the union between "the good with the subjective will" can the "Ethical Life" be born (§141).

⁷⁷ Cf. David Boucher & Paul Kelly, 'The social contract and its critics' in Boucher & Kelly (eds), *The Social Contract from Hobbes to Rawls*, p23.

⁷⁸ The following analysis is indebted to Richard Schacht, 'Hegel on Freedom' in Alasdair MacIntyre (ed), *Hegel: A Collection of Critical Essays*, pp289-328; Riley (Chapter 6); Peter Singer, *Hegel*. References in text to Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*.

⁷⁹ Hegel, *Reason in History*, p53; quoted in Schacht, p303.

⁸⁰ And not swayed by the subjective rationality of others (such as advertising companies who manipulate while leaving the impression of free choice). See Singer, pp26-27.

For individuals to come into “possession of their own essence or their own inner universality” (§153), they need an ordered community. As long as individuals decide, however rationally, on the basis of “their own ends alone” (§260), their wills remain subjective and fail to become universal. In Schacht’s words,

The individual can escape the condition of non-self-determined particularity only if he can find an objective basis for the determination of his actions that is not subject to the influence of his particular ... inclinations. Such [a] ... basis ... cannot be determined subjectively, on one’s own ... [O]nly one thing [has] this character: the ethical order, with its objectively existing laws and institutions.⁸¹

This “ethical order” is nothing less than that state which is the “actuality of the ethical Idea” (§257, 155), “the divine Idea as it exists on earth”.⁸² Only in such a state can individuals find “objectivity, genuine individuality, and an ethical life”, and fulfill their destiny, “the living of a universal life” (§258, 156), because they have attained “concrete freedom” (§260). In such a state alone can

personal individuality ... know and will the universal ... recogniz[ing] it as their own substantive mind; [...] and individuals ... do not live as private persons for their own ends alone, but in the very act of willing these they will the universal ... and their activity is consciously aimed at none but the universal end (§260).

Like Hegel, the IM links freedom to finding one’s true essence, purified from ‘the contingent and the false’. This essence is contained in God’s universal laws. With Qutb, it says:

⁸¹ Schacht, p325.

⁸² Hegel, *Reason*; quoted in Schacht, p302.

He Who has created the universe ... has also proscribed a Shari'ah for [man's] voluntary actions. If man follows this law, then his life is in harmony with his own nature. [...] the Shari'ah which God has given to man ... is also a universal law, as it is related to the general law of the universe and is harmonious with it. [...] Only [through obedience to the Shari'ah] does man's personality, internal and external, become integrated.⁸³

Qutb's integration parallels Hegel's end to alienation and is likewise only found in submission to the 'ethical order' of the *Sharī'ah*, which creates the state which is God's will actualised on earth. Only then will there be harmony between the particular and the universal, for, since the *Sharī'ah* is "operative within man himself and in the rest of the universe",⁸⁴ submission to it is harmonising actual human nature with ordained human nature and transforming particular wills into universal wills, balancing out individual and communal needs.⁸⁵ Hence the IM's insistence on an Islamic state and the implementation of Islamic law – not just to actualise and enforce natural law but to come into possession of one's own 'inner universality'.⁸⁶

If, in Hegel's, or the IM's view, freedom is to rationally, voluntarily, and self-consciously will the universal will (the *Sharī'ah*), is there any room for personal autonomy? Given that a universal will is posited, what implications does this have for those who either do not grasp the universal, or claim the existence of a different type of universal will? Such queries have led many to categorise Hegel as totalitarian. Karl Popper saw Hegel as pivotal to the development of totalitarianism while Ernst Cassirer

⁸³ Qutb, *Milestones*, pp164-165. This view underpinned statements expressed in e.g. Yassin II, Abu Shannab I&IV; Bahr, Musa I&II.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p171. Cf. Abu Shannab I&IV, Bahr.

⁸⁵ Cf. Abu Shannab I, Hammad I; Bahr.

⁸⁶ Cf. Mawdudi's argument that only after Muhammad had established a state which people could see and experience, did they *en masse* understand that in his message lay "the salvation of mankind" (*Process*, pp67-68).

declared that in Hegel is “the clearest and most ruthless program of fascism that has ever been propounded by any political or philosophic writer”.⁸⁷ What is Hegel’s response, and what can this reveal about the IM’s theory?

Individual versus Community

Despite his insistence on the universal, Hegel is equally unambiguous about the importance of safeguarding the individual’s rights.⁸⁸ In Hegel’s view, a state is the “actuality of the ethical Idea” only when the subjective is protected:

[T]he universal must be furthered, but subjectivity on the other hand must attain its full ... development. It is only when both these moments subsist in their strength that the state can be regarded as articulated and genuinely organized (§260A).⁸⁹

Hegel’s argument operates at several levels. On one, he insists that the universal contains the particular and is in harmony with it. Schacht explains this, saying:

In the properly organized state, ... [the laws and institutions] are nothing other than laws of reason itself ...; and as such they are not something alien to the individual’s own nature at all. ... they embody objectively the very rational structure in terms of which the individual’s essential rational nature is to be conceived.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*; quoted in Singer, p41. Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State*, p267; quoted in Riley, p261(n89).

⁸⁸ Cf. Schacht, pp312-327; Singer, pp41-44.

⁸⁹ Cf. Singer, p43.

⁹⁰ Schacht, pp325-326.

On a second level, Hegel draws a clear distinction between the private and the public, arguing that the former is outside the domain of law (and thus the state), unless it has a bearing on the latter:

Morality and moral commands concern the will on its most private, subjective, and particular side, and so cannot be a matter for positive legislation (§213).

Similarly, Hegel asserts that

since the content of a man's faith depends on his private ideas, the state cannot interfere with it (§270).

At a third level, Hegel renders meaningless the notion that one can force others to be rational or free. To be free one must, in Hegel's view, self-consciously and rationally will and identify with the universal. Without consciousness of the universal, the decision to adopt it is not self-conscious. Without understanding, it is not rational. Without identification, it remains alien to one's consciousness and one fails to come into possession of one's essence. If people recognise the universal, they will accept it voluntarily because it reverberates in their essence. But if people are forced to adopt the universal, without recognising it, there is no consciousness of, nor identification with, the universal, and the result will be neither freedom nor an end to alienation. Thus, however much Hegel condemns any form of self-determination not rooted in the universal, he refrains from Rousseauian statements that people must be forced to be free. He may conclude, on the basis of his analysis, that someone is unfree. But, beyond putting forth the reasons for his conclusion, Hegel is powerless to free that person in the sense in which he has defined freedom.

With regard to the individual, the IM resembles Hegel in insisting that the *Sharī'ah* provides a framework in which the rights and duties of the individual (the subjective) and the community (the universal) are in perfect balance on the grounds that it embodies God's harmonious designs.⁹¹ It argues with Turabi that the *Sharī'ah* is the perfect "arbiter between social order and individual freedom";⁹² with Mawdudi, that in an Islamic system

The relations between the individual and the society have been regulated in such a manner that neither the personality of the individual suffers any diminution, ... nor is the individual allowed to exceed his bounds to such an extent as to become harmful to the community ...⁹³

Like Hegel, the IM distinguishes between public and private, and champions a sphere of personal autonomy. Regarding the freedom of atheists in an Islamic state, for instance, a large faction argues that, as long as atheists do not actively undermine the Islamic nature of the state they are free to disbelieve (see Chapter 8).

Similarly, like Hegel, it renders coerced liberation meaningless. It too insists on freedom being dependent on self-conscious understanding of and identification with truth (the universal). This position transpires in the IM's belief that "the moral requires freedom of the agent",⁹⁴ and that the creation of an Islamic state is only possible when the people voluntarily choose it.⁹⁵ It is underpinned by the Qur'ānic injunction that

⁹¹ See footnote 83.

⁹² Turabi, pp245-247.

⁹³ Mawdudi, *Theory*, pp33

⁹⁴ See footnote 72.

⁹⁵ Hrub:234-245 (quoting Yassin, Zahhar and Rantisi), Abu Shannab II, Dukhan, Haniyyah I, Hammad I, Muslih, Intifada Cell III, 'Nasr'; Badawil; Masri, Abu Dhughri, 'Yusuf', Leader Kutlah-Azhar. Cf. al-Banna's conviction that Islam could only have "supervision over all matters of life, ...as long as the nation wants to be

“there be no compulsion in religion” and the reluctance displayed by IM members to judge whether someone is a ‘true’ Muslim or not.⁹⁶ It is expressed in the notion that a perfect society will come about, not through legislation but through the voluntary and enthusiastic internalisation of the morality that informs the laws.⁹⁷ Hence the emphasis on a period of preparation before the implementation of the *hudūd*, so that cutting off hands is no longer necessary because people have absorbed the principles.⁹⁸

Neither Hegel nor the IM can meaningfully force people to be free. But though this position discourages individual coercion, it does not necessarily stop either from according the unenlightened second rank citizenship, and forcing them to live in a state which is ethical by the standards of the enlightened elite. To clarify Hegel’s and the IM’s respective positions on this point, one must analyse the role accorded to consent in the establishment of the state.

Virtuous State through Vanguard or Consent?

In Hegel’s view, the virtuous state precedes the creation of a virtuous community. For it is the ethical state and the power of the actualised universal will which will gradually teach citizens to will the universal. Hegel has a bleak view of people’s capacity to “know best what is in their best interest”, observing that

⁹⁵ (...continued)
truly Muslim” (*Min Khutab Hasan al-Banna*, p11 quoted in Husaini, p63; emphasis mine).

⁹⁶ Abu Shannab III, Shamma’, Hamad I, Intifada Cell II&III, one member of Hamas Supporters Gaza, ‘Iyad’, ‘Nasr’; Abu Dhughri, Taha. Full discussion in Chapter 8.

⁹⁷ Yassin I&II, Abu Shannab I, Zahhar II, Hamad I; Bahr. See also *Mithaq* §20-21. Cf. Qutb, *Justice*, pp69-85.

⁹⁸ Shamma’, Hammad II.

To know what one wills, and still more to know what the absolute will, Reason, wills, is the fruit of profound apprehension and insight, precisely the things which are not popular (§301).

In the IM's view, though it shares some of Hegel's doubts about ordinary people's capacity for knowledge, the virtuous community precedes the creation of the virtuous state.⁹⁹ This position is expressed in the IM's emphasis on education, on living by example and in its emphasis on consensus-building as the precondition for the establishment of an Islamic state (see Chapter 7) – the latter highlighting the importance the notions of consent and contract are accorded. It is here that Hegel and the IM most significantly diverge (as do the IM and Mawdudi, who closely follows Hegel's view of the masses and of the necessity of a virtuous state in creating a virtuous community).¹⁰⁰

For Hegel the notion of contract debases the divine nature of the state by rooting the state in the arbitrary consent of individual wills which are unlikely to be as yet universalised. The "union of individuals in the state" is then based on "capriciously given ... consent" (and self-interest), not the universal will (§258).¹⁰¹ While Hegel agrees that the state can only come into existence through willing, by more than one person and thus involving consent, his rejection of the contract notion seems to indicate that he favours the consent of the enlightened few over that of the unenlightened many, giving rise to some form of philosophers' rule.¹⁰² For Hegel, the rule of the few seems

⁹⁹ This position underlies statements made by Abu Shannab I, Shamma', Hammad II, Hamas Supporters Gaza; Bahr, Badawil.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. "[I]t has been established by experience that the great mass of the common people are incapable of perceiving their own true interests. ... [Man] is [usually] swayed by emotions and desires to such an extent that rarely, if ever, can he judge important matters with the impartiality and objectivity of scientific reason" (Mawdudi, *Theory*, pp21-22). For Mawdudi's views on necessity of state, see footnote 86.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Hegel's criticism that contractarianism has "transferred the characteristics of private property [meaning self-interested deals] into a sphere of a ... higher nature." (§75).

¹⁰² Cf. Riley: "Though the idea of the universal class does not involve the actual rule of philosophy or philosophers, it does involve the predominance of knowledge" (p196). Hegel indeed suggests a form of rule

(continued...)

to be justified by his belief that their enlightened wisdom is beneficial to the masses. Hegel's faith in the power of universal reason – a power that will make “dispassionate, upright, and polite demeanour ... customary [in civil servants]” (§296) – prevents him from suggesting further counterbalances, or setting more store by contract theories, causing critics like Popper to call him totalitarian.¹⁰³

The IM, despite a belief in something akin to universal will, a positive attitude towards freedom and a didactic state vision, does not embrace Hegel's anti-contractarian position but insists on the mechanism of consent as the basis for legitimising legislation and power. At times, the IM displays a Hegelian-like faith in the power of Islam to create ideal people.¹⁰⁴ Such faith can both fuel one's ambition to create an ideal world and blind one to the need for political checks and balances. As with Hegel, the presence of this faith appears to cause critics to denounce the IM as totalitarian. However, the IM seems presently sufficiently aware of the potential for corruption not to lose itself in utopian dreams, but circumscribe rulers with a contract.

6.4 CONCLUSION: LOCKE, HEGEL AND THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT

Though the IM's moral framework approaches that of Hegel, its political framework remains close to Locke's. It differs from Locke primarily by positing the virtuous state as essential to attaining true freedom and explicitly according a formative role to the state. Accordingly, it is likely to be more prone than Locke to subordinating individual

¹⁰² (...continued)

in which a “universal class, ... the class of civil servants” which has “the universal as the end of its essential activity” (§303) is in power, even though it is appointed by an executive monarch and must heed the advice of an elected “Estates” which represents the private (i.e. particular) concerns of the citizens (§§275-320).

¹⁰³ See footnote 87.

¹⁰⁴ See footnote 24.

rights to communal needs. Yet, unlike Hegel, the IM upholds its contractarian stance by insisting on consensual agreement as the moral basis of legislation and power. All three employ both negative and positive conceptions of freedom. The IM is more detailed in its teleological prescriptions than Locke, and to a lesser extent Hegel, but as it still insists on rendering revealed laws acceptable to consensual agreement, this is mostly a difference in degree, not kind. Moreover, despite its prescriptive attitude, the IM has, like Hegel, rendered the Rousseauian notion of forcing people to be free meaningless within its own conceptual framework. That, combined with its distinction between private and public, and its exclusion of the former from the legal realm, should at least in theory guarantee against both totalitarianism and authoritarianism.

Given that Locke, regardless of his adoption of a positive conception to freedom, is regarded as one of the fathers of liberalism, it is not unthinkable that the type of Islamism the IM advocates could produce a liberal form of government. The IM's emphasis on state and community, however, coupled to its insistence on social justice as a condition for the fulfilment of universal freedom, may equally lead it closer either to those Hegel-inspired paternalistic ideologies that have characterised some of Western Europe's 20th century socialist governments, or to the more totalitarian Hegel-inspired ideologies that have characterised the erstwhile Soviet Bloc. Much depends on the type of leadership the IM's leaders will give, and on the evolution of the intellectual climate in which they operate. Needless to say, neither continued occupation, nor the development of an oppressive police state would provide a fruitful climate for the strengthening of a more liberal strand – although it might inspire one by bringing home the costs of oppression.

Given the above, the IM's thinking is not as alien to Western theories as some of the *essentialists* and *modernists* portray. The counterfoils chosen might not be considered properly reflective of modern Western political theory, as neither is secular in the sense

of excluding God from the political arena (a position I term philosophical secularism) – though both frown on clergy participating in politics (a position I call institutional secularism). The above juxtapositions are indeed relatively straightforward because Locke and Hegel predate the divine-political dichotomy established by philosophical secularism.¹⁰⁵ Locke's central concept of political obligation would collapse without the rewards and punishments of the Afterlife.¹⁰⁶

The gulf separating Locke, Hegel and the IM from modern secularist theories is not as wide as one would expect. Despite their non-secularism, Locke's and Hegel's are still profoundly influential. Modern Western thinkers are often defined in relation to them.¹⁰⁷ Leaving Hegel aside and focussing on contractarianism only, one must distinguish, with Boucher and Kelly, between moral, civil and constitutional contractarianism.¹⁰⁸ Locke and the IM fall within the second category, which employ the contract notion to explain moral, legal and political obligations in society and state. A number of modern contractarians fall similarly within this category¹⁰⁹ and though they have abandoned the relationship between natural law and God, their approach is still similar to Locke's in postulating the existence of an elusive, yet objective, moral order. As such, there is still a high level of philosophical commensurability between these modern Western theories and Locke's and the IM's.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Locke: "the taking away of God ... dissolves all" (*A Letter Concerning Toleration* in *The Works of Locke*, 6:47; quoted in Riley, p73; see also Tully, p78). Cf. Hegel: God is "the unrestricted principle and cause on which everything hangs" (§270).

¹⁰⁶ Locke, *Essays on the Law of Nature*, p119; quoted in Riley, p73 (see also Riley's comments).

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Boucher & Kelly's typification of Nozick in relation to Locke, p5.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp2-13. The closest modern corollary of constitutional contractarianism, widespread in medieval times, is constitutionalism, though civil contractarians, including the IM, echo some of its positions.

¹⁰⁹ E.g. John Rawls, Robert Nozick (*Ibid.*, pp4-10).

Moral contractarianism, conversely, assumes that moral rules are subjective, and thus to be arrived at, not through a search for an 'objective truth' but through contractual bargaining between the various parties concerned.¹¹⁰ At a philosophical level, moral contractarianism is incompatible with Islamist thinking as the latter asserts the existence of an objective set of moral rules. Yet, even this difference should not be overemphasised. Though the IM regards rules concerning faith as fixed, it argues, like Locke, that rules concerning human relations, which comprise the bulk of morality, are consensually adjustable, according to the needs and interests of era and location.¹¹¹ The traditional judicial principle of *ijmā'* by which jurists reached legal consensus, and which the IM has adopted as the basis for political decision-making (Chapter 7) is essentially a bargaining process, the limits to which are equally determined by the consensus between the different contemporary interpretations pertaining to revelation.

Let me conclude with a word on the envisaged role of religion in politics. Intriguingly, the IM's political theory does not significantly diverge from either Locke or Hegel on the issue of separating 'church' and state. Though it posits religion and politics as inseparable, it distinguishes between private and public and refrains from demanding that politicians be religious functionaries (see Chapter 7). Confusion arises from misunderstandings concerning the IM's insistence that religion and politics are indivisible. Sunni Islam does not have an institution similar to that of the Catholic Church. No qualification is needed to officiate at religious services, nor does any institution have a monopoly on teaching the knowledge required to make pronouncements on Islamic law. The administration of *'awqāf* (religious endowments) provides some form of hierarchical structure but it does not have the authority to pronounce on religious issues.

¹¹⁰ E.g. John Harsanyi, John Mackie, David Gauthier (*Ibid.*, p3).

¹¹¹ See footnotes 49&76.

When the IM insists that religion and politics are indivisible, it does not advocate a cleritocracy. Instead, it argues that politics be conducted within the realm of morality and religious purpose, while religion should be practised with a view to affecting political and social conduct. Here, it echoes Hegel who argued that neither should religion “be looked upon as commanding downright indifference to earthly interests” nor should politics be viewed as “wholly a matter of caprice and indifference ... of passion and lawless force”. Separating the two will prevent the ethical state from emerging because “all higher forms of intellectual life” will remain outside the realm of politics, thus precluding the development of “determinate thought” which “knows” that which religion holds as “given”. To insist that religion and politics be inseparable is thus not unlike Hegel’s call “to exalt the interest and business of state into the fundamental and serious aim in life” (§270).

6.5 PRAXIS ANALYSIS

Having explored the IM’s theoretical approach to solving the tensions between consent and divine law, and negative freedom (personal autonomy) and positive freedom (teleological formation), I will attempt to deduce to what extent the theoretical constructs are practised, and, if not, whether non-implementation is willed, or circumstantial.

6.5.1 CONSENT VERSUS DIVINE LAW

That the notion of consent is central to the IM’s praxis can be gleaned from the importance it accords elections. Hamas (before 1988 the Muslim Brotherhood), al-Kutlah al-Islamiyya and Hizb al-Khalas all actively participate in municipal and

institutional elections, regularly winning significant numbers or even a majority of seats, as in the Engineers' Union in Gaza (presently headed by Abu Shannab) and the Chamber of Commerce in Ramallah.¹¹² At a student level, the Kutlah al-Islamiyya has participated in Student Council elections, and cooperated with other movements in coalition councils, by and large playing by the rules of the electoral game. Islamist electoral participation, and the fact that non-Islamists, most notably Christians, have repeatedly voted for the IM,¹¹³ seems to indicate a certain level of commitment to the democratic-electoral process – as does the couching of criticisms of the PNA and the Peace Process in democratic terms.¹¹⁴

Sceptics argue that the IM's commitment to elections is pragmatic only and will vanish when it has gained control,¹¹⁵ implying that current praxis says nothing about Islamist ideals. Though the IM's largely faithful observance of electoral rules somewhat weakens this argument, nothing conclusive can be gained from studying Islamist participation in municipal and institutional elections. If, however, it can be shown that the IM has voluntarily adopted elections for internal leadership selection, and that these elections are not meaningless show-cases, a stronger case can be made for the argument that consent is central to the IM's understanding of political authority. In this vein, it is significant that Hanf and Sabella's survey of political attitudes found that 59% of Islamists supported 'democratic' solutions outright, while "a great majority favour the separation of powers and freedom of the press".¹¹⁶

¹¹² For discussion of why Hamas did not participate in 1996 national elections, see Chapter 7.4.

¹¹³ Cf. Ramallah's largely Christian Chamber of Commerce.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Intifada Cell I, 'Ashraf', Special Communiqué (10.11.1988), Communiqué 49 (27.10.1989); Na'ami; Masri.

¹¹⁵ Cf. *modernists* (Chapter 2); Freh Abu Middin (Minister of Justice); Top MOPIC Official.

¹¹⁶ Hanf & Sabella, pp121-126. That 41% chose 'undemocratic' positions is somewhat misleading, as all 'undemocratic' options revolved around a dominant party model. Among ordinary Islamists, the fear of multi-partyism and its supposedly divisive effects is still strong (though less so among leaders; see p241).

All institutions affiliated with the IM operate internal elections. Hamas is constituted of regional *shūrā* councils whose members are voted for regularly (apparently annually) by the region's established members.¹¹⁷ Each of the regional councils elects representatives to the central *Shūrā* Council, which then elects the Executive Committee from its members.¹¹⁸ Some of the younger Hamas leaders, such as Ismail Haniyyah, Yahya Musa (now with Khalas) and Khalid al-Hindi, first rose to prominence in al-Kutlah al-Islamiyyah and the IUG's Student Council (SC). Others, such as Ghazi Hammad, chief editor of *al-Risalah*, became prominent during the Intifada, both through their activities and through elections among the Islamists in prison.¹¹⁹

Hamas leaders and members alike proved reluctant to reveal much about the internal elections. It took three meetings before the members of the Intifada Cell admitted they had participated in annual elections. Yassin refused to answer further questions after he had divulged that Hamas has internal *shūrā* councils, while Abu Shannab only revealed the electoral system in our fourth meeting, and asked me not to specify any dates or details. Reasons for this reluctance seem twofold. On one level, nobody wished to

¹¹⁶ (...continued)

Consequently, the answers, rather than indicating support for 'democracy' conceived as government held accountable through elections, reveal the level of support for a 'multi-party democracy' and say little about support for accountability. That Islamists do insist on accountability, is clear from the 79% support for 'accountable government' as opposed to "[a] government which strikes deals and decides what is best for the population, irrespective of the position of the elected council".

¹¹⁷ Yassin I&II, Abu Shannab I&IV, Shamma', Haniyyah I, Hammad II, 'Muhammad', Intifada Cell III, 'Ashraf'; Musa II, Na'ami. During the Intifada (when the membership expanded rapidly), new recruits were not entitled to vote until they had passed certain exams (in Brotherhood terms, they had to have reached the level of *naqīb*, captain) and had displayed their commitment in action, to curb infiltration by collaborators (cf. 'Muhammad', Intifada Cell III, 'Ashraf').

¹¹⁸ Yassin I, Abu Shannab IV, Haniyyah I, Hammad II. 'Elections' during the 1970s when the IM was still small, amounted to nominations by the leadership which then needed ratification by the membership (Abu Shannab IV).

¹¹⁹ In prison, all those who had elected to be 'quartered' with Hamas's prison section (each party had its own section and each new arrival had to choose between quarters; cf. Abu Shannab I) seem to have been entitled to vote, regardless of their membership status (suspected collaborators excluded). Cf. Hammad II, 'Ashraf'; Abu Dhughri. Abu Shannab I and 'Khalid' II indicated that leaders in prison were chosen according to how prominent they had been 'outside', and how much respect they were accorded by the inmates, rather than elections. This may reflect different practices in different prisons.

reveal information they had not parted with when interrogated by the Israelis.¹²⁰ On another, it was feared that the more that is known about Hamas's internal elections, the easier it would be for foreign intelligence services – in particular the Israelis and Americans – to infiltrate their ranks and so influence the vote, and uncover their leaders' identity.¹²¹ The following is based on what little I have been able to elicit.

Three elections seem to have taken place before the Intifada.¹²² During the Intifada most elections appear to have taken place in prisons.¹²³ After the Intifada there seem to have been annual elections.¹²⁴ In the pre-Intifada elections, one third of the central *Shūrā* Council members and the Executive Committee would typically be replaced with newly elected members. Significantly, Yassin was once not elected to the leading position.¹²⁵ A further indication of the genuine nature of these elections are examples from the Intifada of young men being elected over the heads of others, more senior in reputation. In one case, Ghazi Hammad was elected by the Hamas prison inmates to head their prison *majlis* while only in his twenties. In Hammad's words,

there are some leaders who are not accepted by the people because of their mentality, their style and behaviour – how they deal with problems, how they respect different opinions. ... so some famous leaders were excluded.¹²⁶

¹²⁰ Abu Shannab IV.

¹²¹ Intifada Cell I.

¹²² Abu Shannab IV.

¹²³ Abu Shannab IV, Hammad II, 'Ashraf'; Abu Dhughri.

¹²⁴ Intifada Cell I&III. 'Muhammad' recalled only one election in 1994 before he left the IM.

¹²⁵ Abu Shannab IV.

¹²⁶ Hamad II.

Another illustration is the rapid rise of 'Emad 'Aql, one of Hamas's military wing's most famous Intifada leaders, to a leadership position at a young age. According to the Intifada Cell, his achievements as a resistance fighter and his capacity for organisation propelled him forward.¹²⁷

Some members acknowledged the electoral process has been flawed – for the reason that Hamas has had to operate clandestinely and cope with regular imprisonment of its members, both under the Israelis and the PNA. The need for secrecy has tended to override the candidates' need for transparency to make themselves and their 'platforms' known to their 'electorate', thus discouraging accountability, and encouraging leadership nominations, with its potential for nepotism (although only 'Muhammad' complained of that). A number of Khalas members quoted the lack of openness as being the prime reason for creating/joining Khalas with its official permit to operate and conduct elections.¹²⁸

'Muhammad', the former cadre leader who has since left the IM disillusioned, complained that in Hamas elections (he insisted on calling it the Brotherhood) those members entitled to vote were instructed how to vote:

... from [the leaders'] instructions it was clear who they wanted to win. For example, three persons were to be elected for one cantonat. Then they said: "We prefer it if they are over 40" – with only 5 or 6 answering to that description. I believe anybody has the right to use their right to vote in the way they want.

¹²⁷ Intifada Cell III. Also 'Khalid' III. I have been unable to verify whether 'Aql was indeed elected, or appointed by the leadership. 'Khalid' (IV) insisted that 'Aql could only have assumed leadership with consent from the rank and file.

¹²⁸ Musa I, Badawil, Na'ami. 'Ex'-Hamas member 'Ashraf' admired this quality in Khalas.

The fact that he still had a choice of five seems to weaken his accusation.¹²⁹ In other locations, moreover, people under 40 appear to have been elected, while no other interviewees corroborated his views. It is thus unclear how representative this complaint is.

The situation in Hizb al-Khalas is more straightforward because of its official status. Like Hamas, it is made up of regional councils, whose members are voted for bi-annually by the region's party members (amounting to roughly 5000 for the whole of Gaza in 1998). Each of the regional *shūrā* councils then elects representatives to the party's 250-strong General Assembly who, in turn, elect the *Majlis* (51 members) out of which the Political Bureau is chosen (14 members).¹³⁰ Since its creation in 1996, the party has held three elections, the latest of which took place in the beginning of 1999. Because in each one a number of representatives seem to have been replaced with others, elections appear to be a genuine expression of the contractual relationship between leaders and members.

The charities affiliated to the IM also run internal elections – circumstances allowing. This is significant, as the law under which they are registered does not stipulate how Boards are to be selected.¹³¹ According to its current Director, Ibrahim Yazuri, the Mujamma' Islami has

an executive Board that gets elected every four years. This Board takes care of the management of the Mujamma' according to the aims and objectives written down in the by-laws ... [T]hose who are documented members of the Mujamma' are entitled to elect the Executive Board.

¹²⁹ Intifada Cell III specified they had a choice of four.

¹³⁰ Musa II, Badawil, Hamdan.

¹³¹ See Chapter 7, footnote 107.

But no elections have been held since 1987. During the Intifada, Yazuri explained, holding elections was impossible (besides the fact that people's attentions were otherwise engaged) while the post-Oslo years, with their string of harassments, imprisonments and closures by the PNA, have been equally difficult. In September 1997, the charity's management office was closed by the PNA,¹³² and has remained closed, on and off, until the time of writing, severely hampering its effectiveness in administering elections. People with Islamist connections constantly run the risk of imprisonment, generally without charge. Since elected Board members may be imprisoned at any moment, elections are deemed ineffective. Yazuri nevertheless remained hopeful:

we are reorganising the Mujamma' and we will run elections when the situation is more favourable.

Some 20 other Islamist institutions were likewise shut down by the PNA in September 1997, and were only allowed to operate at a reduced level. The Jam'iyyah al-Shabbat was one of these, although it seems that they have been able to continue organising some form of internal elections for their seven-strong Board.¹³³ The fact that they are women reduces the risk of imprisonment, thus rendering elections more meaningful.

The same kind of problems are encountered by the IUG's male Kutlah leadership. In theory, the entire membership elects the Kutlah's *Shūrā* Council (20 members) which then elects an administrative council (7 members). The *Shūrā* Council then appoints an electoral committee which, in consultation with the Kutlah's regional councils, nominates candidates for the Student Council elections, a selection which must be

¹³² In response to Israeli and US pressure to dismantle Hamas's 'terrorist' infrastructure (PCHR Press Release, 'PNA Closure', 28.09.1997).

¹³³ Board Members al-Shabbat.

ratified by the administrative council.¹³⁴ In practice, elections for the male Kutlah are often replaced by an informal canvassing by the outgoing council, since harassment by the PNA often makes formal elections impossible.¹³⁵ The Kutlah's central office for the whole of Gaza, recently established to introduce more transparency than had been possible under occupation, had been closed down by the PNA.¹³⁶ The Kutlah leadership, moreover, regularly spend spells in prison – as for instance after the assassination of Hamas leader Muhyia Sharif in Ramallah in April 1998. Because many members are unwilling to risk publicising their membership for fear of imprisonment, the administration of elections is also hindered.¹³⁷ Mirroring the difference between al-Mujamma' and al-Jam'iyyah al-Shabbat, the female Kutlah appear to be better able to organise formal elections, as its leaders run less risk of imprisonment.¹³⁸

Political Culture: Servant Leadership

Critics might argue that the Kutlah's and the charities' leadership prefers to by-pass elections because they do not believe in them, and that the present predicament is merely a handy excuse for not holding proper elections.¹³⁹ The inclusive, transparent

¹³⁴ Masri. Confirmed by Taha, Abu Dhughri, 'Yusuf' (Haniyyah and Musa confirmed this for the 1980s).

¹³⁵ Masri (SC-1996) says there were informal elections, while Abu Dhughri (SC-1997) and Taha (SC-1998) stated the outgoing Council nominated people or asked people to nominate themselves, after canvassing general opinion. Abu Dhughri emphasised asking students to nominate themselves was necessary because Kutlah students had been "educated not to ask for these things" (see 'Political Culture').

¹³⁶ Masri, Taha.

¹³⁷ Masri, Abu Dhughri, Taha.

¹³⁸ Women's Kutlah 1, Women's Kutlah 2.

¹³⁹ The Islamists' predicament is not unique. Non-Islamist charities have likewise been forced by the continuous crisis situation to forego elections. The Red Crescent Society, for instance, whose director, Haydar Abd al-Shafi, is passionately pro-democracy, has not held elections since its building was burnt down by a mob in the wake of its 1979 elections. The Palestinian Blood Bank in Gaza has likewise only recently held its first elections since before the Intifada.

and egalitarian political culture I observed in the Kutlah-run male Student Council (SC) of the Islamic University appears to contradict this view. The elected Council members seem to be trusted by Kutlah members. At the same time, they do not insist on status and seem to encourage debate and questioning. When I interviewed the SC's President, other SC members and ordinary students present felt free to occasionally interrupt, add or even contradict. A similar atmosphere of egalitarian camaraderie and mutual trust prevailed during my three interviews with the Intifada Cell and my meeting with Hamas Supporters Gaza, despite the fact that in each case there was, in hierarchical terms, a senior member present. Illustrative of responsibilities being shared out is the way ordinary Kutlah members stepped in when almost the entire SC was imprisoned in April 1998.

A poster on the walls of the Student Council Office depicted *āyah* 33:72: "We did indeed offer the Trust (*āmānah*) to the Heavens and the Earth and the Mountains but they refused to undertake it, being afraid thereof: but man undertook it; he was indeed unjust and foolish". This verse, explained one Kutlah student, served as a reminder that "a position is not something to be proud of, but a burden; leadership is like a trust".¹⁴⁰ Viewing leadership as a trust and a burden – conceptually resembling what Robert Greenleaf termed 'servant leadership'¹⁴¹ – means a position of leadership must be constantly re-earned by acting in the interests of the community and on the basis of justice and equality – a clear expression of the contractual nature of the IM's leadership culture. Islamist charities self-consciously illustrate it in ensuring their financial transparency, through rigid institutional checks and the constant ideological reinforcing

¹⁴⁰ Kutlah Members.

¹⁴¹ Robert Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*.

of the duty to be honest.¹⁴² It is symbolised by the non-opulence of the IM leadership.¹⁴³ It is illustrated by a leader of Hamas prisoners distributing by lot four new coats among a batch provided by the guards to ensure non-favouritism.¹⁴⁴ IM members illustrate it in their insistence on leaders earning their trust,¹⁴⁵ and in their critical stance when appointed, or self-appointed, would-be leaders have not earned it.¹⁴⁶ The absence of internal political assassinations within Hamas similarly demonstrates it.¹⁴⁷

Compare this praxis with the patronage culture of Fatah in which family connection and status are deemed important,¹⁴⁸ and where followers are often courted by the provision of hard-to-obtain benefits.¹⁴⁹ Based on my observations of Fatah's student wing, al-Shabibah¹⁵⁰ (confirmed by popular perception), Fatah leaders seem more status-oriented

¹⁴² Muslih, 'Ibrahim'.

¹⁴³ The reception room of Yassin's home is austere, Dukhan's house in Nuseirat Camp is frugal, as is Hamas's unofficial office next to Beach camp. Zahhar's clinic is likewise humble.

¹⁴⁴ 'Khalid' II.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Intifada Cell Camp III: "A leader becomes a leader in Hamas when he is trusted by the people AND the leaders, AND because of his skills and activities – all three of these are needed."

¹⁴⁶ Hamas Supporters Gaza: "Sometimes [Islamic leaders] have put a person in a position of power without elections because he is an expert (*'ālim*) but this is not clear in the eyes of the people because he is not famous. If the leaders choose such a person [while the people do not trust him], this is not OK, now." Intifada Cell III, on whether unpopularity of two Islamist break-away parties, established by dissident Hamas leaders (see p263), was caused by loss of trust by membership or by dispute between break-away leaders and Hamas establishment: "If the base loses trust in a leader, they don't wait for the leadership to say that is right."

¹⁴⁷ E.g. Raji Sourani (PCHR and former PFLP activist) to Turid Smith-Polfus (Norwegian researcher), 'Khalid' III, 'Umar' (Shabibah sympathiser), Hrub:236(n11) (Yassin). Popular rumour, interestingly, confirms this – unlike popular rumour concerning Fatah which has it that a number of Fatah leaders have been assassinated by fellow Fatah members, 'bringing Beirut to Gaza' ('Umar'), e.g. Asad Saftawi (source: 'Khalid' IV; Usher, *Palestine*, p18), Muhammad Abu Shanaab (source: "Umar"), Maher Khail (source: "Umar"). Ali al-Jarbawi confirms these rumours ('The Position of Palestinian Islamists on the Palestine-Israel Accord', *Muslim World* LXXXIV(1-2), p147).

¹⁴⁸ E.g. advancement of relatives of Arafat's circle of friends without necessary qualifications at Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (Top MOPIC Official; Former MOPIC Employee).

¹⁴⁹ E.g. experience of political discrimination in receiving benefits from *anqāf* (Intifada Cell I); the financial and social benefits available to members of Fatah football clubs (Jensen, p210).

¹⁵⁰ Observations based on interview with Gaza Strip Shabibah President in Shabibah Central Office (with others present), interviews with the Shabibah's IUG leadership, and observation of 1998 elections at al-Azhar

than their Kutlah counterparts while members appear to be more in awe of their leadership. When the IUG's Shabibah President came to the cafeteria table where I was interviewing other members of the IUG's Shabibah leadership, his peers, they displayed a subservient attitude. When I interviewed al-Azhar's Shabibah leaders, hierarchy influenced who said what. A non-partisan lecturer at al-Azhar University (and IUG alumnus) observed that the effectiveness of the Azhar Shabibah leadership was at times undermined by disputes over who should be accorded more status. He also noted that Al-Azhar's Shabibah-run SC was more partisan than the IUG Student Council, blatantly favouring those loyal to it.¹⁵¹

A number of leading Fatah politicians have built 'palaces' (by Gazan standards) and drive expensive American cars – allegedly with international donor money earmarked for rebuilding Palestine.¹⁵² While many of Fatah's local leaders are undoubtedly frugal and selfless, they are overshadowed in the public eye by Fatah's more opulent leaders. The IM's contrasting frugality is particularly striking as relatively large charitable donations from both Gazans and Muslims abroad pass through its hands – indicating that the difference between the IM and Fatah is more than circumstantial, as its critics would have it, but rather ideological. Where the IM has an ideology which glorifies discipline and curbs individual excesses, Fatah's only clear ideology seems to be the ideology of power. Those within Fatah who are incorruptible, tend to be so because of their personal values – not because of their movement's ideology. Not all IM leaders practise their movement's ideology. But it is noteworthy how many appear to have

¹⁵⁰ (...continued)
University.

¹⁵¹ 'Yahya'.

¹⁵² Reports by the Palestinian Legislative Council's Monitoring Committee and the General Control Office "exposed corruption and abuse of funds in several ministries" (*Jerusalem Times*, 07.08.1998) in an attempt to verify "allegations of embezzlement and the squandering of hundreds of millions of dollars of public funds" (*Jerusalem Times*, 19.06.98).

internalised it, and the extent to which ordinary people trust the IM's integrity in charitable matters.¹⁵³

Related Theoretical Stances

I will end this section by briefly listing examples of IM stances illustrating how it values contract versus divine law. One example is the position taken by a faction within the IM to honour current cooperation with the Palestinian Left as a contract for pluralism should an Islamic state be ushered in – despite a tradition in Islam which calls for the death penalty for apostasy (under which category Marxists and communists raised as Muslims would fall; see Chapter 8). In another example, a few IM leaders expressed willingness to accept a democratically elected Christian as Head of an Islamic state in the event of its being the popular will – despite their conviction that this post should, for the sake of Islam, be occupied by a Muslim (Chapter 8).

Take also the IM position on obtaining the people's consent before a principle can legitimately become a law, or an institution can legitimately become a seat of power (Chapter 7). Similarly illustrative is that the IM generally values the fact a representative has been elected over whether s/he is sufficiently expert in Islamic law, breaking with an influential tradition which held that legislators should be legal and religious experts (Chapter 7). Thus, though suggesting that the *Shūrā* Council appoint committees of unelected experts to suggest solutions, the IM insists that the final decision remains in the hands of those who have been elected.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ This is reflected in the trust accorded Islamist charities by international aid/donor organisations (cf. Pharmaciens sans Frontières, Save the Children, Mennonite Central Committee) and the relatively high number of Hamas members among UNRWA's accountants (Patrick Barbieri, UNRWA official). Cf. also Hamas accountant in (anonymous) non-Islamist youth organisation.

¹⁵⁴ Yassin II, Abu Shannab III, Zahhar III, Shamma', Haniyyah I; Bahr, Hamdan; Masri.

However, when one of the IM's core values, such as justice, is at stake, the IM is equally determined to put it before any contract, including contracts between them and their colleagues within the IM. It appears that Hijaz al-Burbar was dismissed from the Brotherhood around 1980 when his hot-headed actions (including leading a mob to the leftist Red Crescent Society which was eventually burned down in the event) led him into conflict with the movement's values.¹⁵⁵ In a similar vein, Abu Shannab suggested that, when the time was right, all Palestinian Intifada movements should be open to an investigation of their members' actions, so that both victims and perpetrators of atrocities committed could be openly acknowledged and appropriate retribution administered, so as to draw a line under the deep intra-Palestinian wounds of the past.

The IM thus seems to honour its theory that as long as God's law is not actually contradicted, contract is of paramount importance to legitimise that law on earth. Contract is equally paramount in its understanding of leadership within the IM. Trust is considered pivotal in the relationship between leaders and led, and leadership is viewed as a responsibility rather than a prize. The most practical expression of this is that all of the IM's institutions elect their leaders, and that leaders who have lost the trust of the led are dis-elected. Where elections have not taken place, or were less than transparent, the reason was generally that the circumstances prevented them from taking place, or being transparent. That this reading is correct is suggested by Islamist women (who are less encumbered by oppression, as they are less often imprisoned) have generally held elections regularly. The argument that the IM exploits the situation as an excuse not to implement elections is thus problematic – although one cannot conclusively predict whether the IM will honour its theoretical commitment to elections when the situation is less oppressive.

¹⁵⁵ Chapters 5&7.

6.5.2 POSITIVE VERSUS NEGATIVE FREEDOM

A positive attitude towards freedom is characterised by prescriptive interference, a negative one by restraint. To gain insight into whether the Islamic state the IM advocates is likely to refrain from interfering in its citizens' private lives, and, if so, under what conditions, I will examine the IM's present praxis concerning a sample of moral issues with a significant private component.

Atheism is deemed not only sinful but harmful, as it is thought to destroy the moral fabric of an Islamic society by undermining God's authority.¹⁵⁶ Yet, a majority of the IM members I interviewed, insisted that as long as they do not actively proselytise, atheists are free to disbelieve in God.¹⁵⁷ Most of the interviewees defended the latter's right to participate in politics, and promote political and economic theories rooted in communism, on the grounds that, however sinful their beliefs, they had the right to political participation as long as they stayed within the law. A distinction was made between sin and illegality, between private belief and public action, thus creating a personal sphere of autonomy within which unbelief was tolerated.

In the same vein, though the IM unequivocally condemns drinking alcohol, some argued that, as long as it is drunk in private, it is a matter between God and the drinker, and thus allowable – even if forbidden by the Qur'an. Only when done in public, and thus

¹⁵⁶ This observation is based on the views expressed by cf. Abu Shannab III, Hammad I, 'Nasr'; Bahr, Musa II. All others interviewed on this topic seemed to concur with these views.

¹⁵⁷ Abu Shannab III, Hammad I, Intifada Cell III (5 from 6 members), Hamas member 1 of Hamas Supporters Gaza, 'Nasr'; Musa II; Taha, Abu Dhughri, 'Yusuf'. By inference (see Chapter 8): Yassin I&II, Shamma', Haniyyah I. Those against this view: 'Iyad'; Leader Kutlah-Azhar. Those arguing communism would fade before an Islamic state arises: Dukhan, Khalas activist in Hamas Supporters Gaza. For full discussion, see Chapter 8.

inflicting potential harm on the general population (by setting a bad example or, worse, through drunken destruction) is it deemed punishable.¹⁵⁸

A similar reasoning informs the IM's position towards the *hijāb*. Were it merely a private matter, or were it considered harmless to go bare-headed in public, it would have loomed less large in Islamist discourse. However, since bare-headedness is deemed to have a corrupting influence on society – it is generally equated with Western licentiousness (as seen primarily on television, in soaps and advertisements, rather than in reality) – not wearing the *hijāb* has become a particularly hotly contested issue.¹⁵⁹ This has been exacerbated by its having become a public statement of identity, as a Muslim, and largely also as someone resisting Westernisation. Not wearing it is considered a denial of faith,¹⁶⁰ but also a public betrayal of one's people's struggle for independence from the West's global hegemony.

Significantly, the IM distinguishes sharply between its members and society at large. Where it expects its members to don the *hijāb* without question – with the important exception of Khalas, which, Musa insisted, is open to un-*hijāb*ed women¹⁶¹ – it merely preaches the *hijāb* to the rest of society, refraining, on the whole, from imposing it (see also Chapter 5).¹⁶² The distinction lies in the consent expressed by joining a movement. Because the general populace has not given its consent, IM charities, for instance, do not

¹⁵⁸ 'Muhammad', Bahr (on right of Christians to drink alcohol at home), Khalas Communiqué 12.09.1997 (on right of Christians to drink alcohol full stop). As this issue came up unsolicited, I don't know what stance others in the IM would take, though I suspect that such views are widespread.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Abu Shannab IV, Yassin II; 'Khalid' I.

¹⁶⁰ Some argue that the *hijāb* is not obligatory in Islam, cf. Mernissi.

¹⁶¹ Musa I.

¹⁶² Condemnations of *hijāb* coercion: Yassin II, Abu Shannab IV, Shamma', Zahhar III, 'Muhammad', Intifada Cell II, 'Ahmad'.

demand of their 'customers' or even, apparently, their staff that they wear the *hijāb*.¹⁶³ On the basis of this attitude, one would expect that if an Islamic state were to become reality, the IM would certainly advocate the *hijāb*, but only agree to enforcing it if the *Majlis* had legislated it, and so legitimised it by (indirect) popular consent. Whether the IM would actually champion legislation on this matter depends on whether the view that wearing the *hijāb* is a societal issue would prevail over that which argues that donning the *hijāb* is a religious obligation, and thus a non-legal issue.¹⁶⁴

The same kind of reasoning lies behind the dress code and the gender segregation at the IUG. Because enrolment involves consent, student subjection to the university's rules is not coercion.¹⁶⁵ There are some who wish to extend this type of prescriptiveness to society at large. Zahhar, in this vein, wishes to make it illegal for boys and girls to mix on the beach or in the dunes behind it because he believes it to corrupt their morals.¹⁶⁶ However, he insisted that such a rule could only be legitimately imposed if legislated by the elected *Majlis*. Thus, though such a move would extend the government's power well into the private sphere (Zahhar would probably counter that these private decisions to mingle can have a very public outcome if they result in children born out of wedlock), this power is still circumscribed by popular consent. Furthermore, it seems that Zahhar's legislative zeal concerning such moral, and relatively private, issues is not shared to the same extent by others in the IM leadership.¹⁶⁷

Zahhar's defence of government intrusion into the private sphere is informed by his understanding of harm: it is on the basis that moral laxity and unregulated parenthood is

¹⁶³ Cf. Muslih, 'Ibrahim'.

¹⁶⁴ See p193.

¹⁶⁵ Abu Shannab IV.

¹⁶⁶ Zahhar III. One member of Intifada Cell suggested similar laws.

¹⁶⁷ Though I discussed the same general gender issues with other IM leaders, none suggested such laws.

harmful to society that he proposes sexual segregation for youths. Personal freedom is curbed to protect the community from harm – not to protect the individual from him/herself. The above examples regarding atheism and alcohol corroborate that the IM indeed respects a sphere of personal autonomy in which the individual is tolerated to be as sinful as he/she chooses to be. The IM thus seems to practise a Lockean approach to freedom and harm.

What is regarded as harmful, however, is highly context-dependent, and as such can change when circumstances change (in particular when Gaza's extreme circumstances become more normal). If one is wasteful with food in times of abundance, no great harm is done to anyone within that society (leaving aside the more subtle fact that it may cause moral harm by encouraging wastefulness). If, on the other hand, one is wasteful in times of famine, one causes immediate harm to others. Moral laxity, likewise, is less acceptable when a community needs to be united against, and wholly focussed on, an enemy. The IM has evolved in an extreme situation of oppression, occupation and fear of national annihilation. Harm, in such circumstances, takes on a more radical meaning. Because circumstances have not allowed the formation of a proper national platform for discussion on what constitutes harm, different visions of harm have at times resulted in intra-Palestinian clashes. This, however, does not imply that this will be the pattern for a future state.

Zahhar's views, though not shared by all, are indicative of an approach to politics that is prescriptive and encouraged by the relative wealth in revealed detail (compared to, for example, Christianity) of what is permissible in Islam.¹⁶⁸ However, there is a giant philosophical leap between being prescriptive and being authoritarian or totalitarian. A

¹⁶⁸ Cf. the detailed guidelines in Qaradawi, *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam*.

prescriptive attitude has not prevented the IM from being (relatively) tolerant towards private alcohol consumption, limited atheism and not wearing the *hijāb*.

Two further illustrations of the IM's respect for self-determination are attitudes towards early marriage and self-nomination for a position of leadership. In Gaza, a large number of girls are married without their consent before they are 17 – often before they are physically or psychologically mature enough to endure marriage.¹⁶⁹ Though some women's rights activists blame such Islamically inspired movements as the IM for perpetuating a view which sees women solely as producers of men, the IM has in fact openly condemned both forced early marriage and early marriage *per se*, claiming that Islam gives women the right to say 'no' and advising women to be mature before they marry – even though it simultaneously advises girls to listen to the advice of their parents.¹⁷⁰ A gauge of the depth of its concern is the fact that both the female Kutlah and the Jam'iyyah al-Shabbat have staged talks and debates for women, some in conjunction with the Ministry of Health, discussing their rights and warning them of the dangers of early marriage.¹⁷¹ The Kutlah has also distributed a booklet on the issue.¹⁷² In this case the IM champions the right of women to self-determination – though it also insists that women be sufficiently mature before they are allowed to choose to marry.

Secondly, there is a tradition in Islam which regards self-nomination as suspicious. This is rooted in the Prophet saying that "we do not assign the affairs of our government to

¹⁶⁹ Cf. Shadia Sarraj-Matar (Gaza Mental Health Project - Women's Empowerment Project), Eman Radwan (Women's Affairs Center). According to the Women's Affairs Center study *Early Marriage in the Palestinian Community*, in 41.8% of the marriages they sampled in the Gaza Strip the brides were between 12 and 17 years of age. Of these, 60.5% thought they were too young for marriage, 76.6% would not have consented to their marriage had they known they could have refused, 90.7% were not aware of the age by which the law allows marriage, while 89.7% were not informed of their rights by the *mā'dhūn* (the person representing the *Sharī'ah* court which registers marriages).

¹⁷⁰ Abu Shannab IV, Zahhar III, Hammad II, 'Iyad', 'Nasr'; Women's Kutlah 1, Women's Kutlah 2.

¹⁷¹ Board Members al-Shabbat, Women's Kutlah 1, Women's Kutlah 2.

¹⁷² Women's Kutlah 2.

any one who aspires for it or is greedy in respect of it” because “we consider the seeker after a post (of trust and responsibility) as the most untrustworthy”.¹⁷³ Among Islamist theorists, both Mawdudi and Turabi build on these *ahādīth* to argue that election campaigns are destructive as they aid those with “relative wealth or access to the communications media”¹⁷⁴ and encourage cheating and lying – a view which echoes that of Western elite theorists,¹⁷⁵ and is increasingly relevant with regard to US Presidential elections.¹⁷⁶

However, the majority of Hamas leaders I interviewed considered this tradition impractical in modern society where sheer numbers prevent people from noticing the true leaders.¹⁷⁷ Instead, they argued that it is a duty upon the potential leader to stand forward for election lest others, less able or noble, take the lead – pointing to the example of Prophet Joseph promoting himself to Pharaoh as treasurer, and highlighting another Ḥadīth in which Muhammad welcomed self-nomination. Here again, the IM champions self-determination, carefully balancing the notion that leadership is a burden with the notion that leadership qualities incur a duty on the carrier.

¹⁷³ *Ahādīth* as quoted in Mawdudi, *Principles*, p47.

¹⁷⁴ Turabi, p248; Mawdudi, *Theory*, pp20-22, 36-37.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. Gaetano Mosca, Robert Michels, Vilfredo Pareto (for synopsis and discussion, cf. Plamenatz, pp52-83).

¹⁷⁶ Cf. Ben Macintyre, ‘High stakes leave poorer presidential hopefuls out of the game – The dollar has become the primary battleground in the race to the White House’, *The Times* 27.10.1999.

¹⁷⁷ Yassin II, Abu Shannab III, Zahhar II (initially criticised self-nomination, then justified it with the same Qur’ānic example Yassin used), Muslih, ‘Iyad’; ‘Iman’, Board Members al-Shabbat; Bahr, Badawil; Masri, Abu Dhughri, Taha, ‘Yusuf’. Only ‘Ibrahim’ insisted on disallowing self-nomination, while ‘Nasr’ remained vague, as long as candidates were vetted by leadership (others not mentioned were not asked this specific question). Abu Dhughri believed that the issue would cease to be relevant in an Islamic state as nobody would dare take upon themselves the burden of leadership, unless nominated. Taha, somewhat contradictorily, also suggested that a specific body have the power to vet candidates, as did ‘Nasr’.

In practice, leaders in Hamas,¹⁷⁸ Hizb al-Khalas and the male Kutlah¹⁷⁹ are both nominated (by leaders and led alike) and nominate themselves. The Hizb al-Khalas leadership particularly welcomed self-nomination because of its belief in open competition.¹⁸⁰ In the Mujamma', candidates for the Board must be nominated by other members,¹⁸¹ in the Jam'iyyah al-Shabbat the General Assembly nominates candidates (who are then free to refuse or accept nomination).¹⁸² The women's Kutlah asks all its active members to elect their nine preferred candidates and subsequently amalgamates these lists. During the Intifada, when this proved impossible, it asked those who thought themselves capable to step forward.¹⁸³ If, however, there is strong evidence that a nominee is unsuitable, the outgoing council has the right to veto her.

In short, though the IM takes a relatively prescriptive approach to politics, it does seem to honour a sphere of personal autonomy. Even if actions privately undertaken are *ḥarām* (religiously prohibited), they are condoned as long as no harm is done to others. Direct interference in this personal sphere is circumscribed by a consensual agreement by the legislative (on behalf of the people) that a particular action is harmful to the community. This means that even if religious scholars have decreed something as *ḥarām* (leaving aside the possibility of different interpretations of what constitutes *ḥarām*), it would theoretically remain legally permissible in the IM's Islamic state until the elected legislative has legislated on it. Outside of the bounds of harm and (legally implemented) *ḥarām*, the IM seems to encourage self-determination.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. discussion regarding how Hamas leaders became leaders with Intifada Cell (III). I have not been able to verify this statement.

¹⁷⁹ Masri, Abu Dhughri, Taha, 'Yusuf'. Musa III on 1980s.

¹⁸⁰ Badawil. I have not been able to verify this statement.

¹⁸¹ Shamma'. Muslih, however, said that members could also nominate themselves.

¹⁸² Board Members al-Shabbat.

¹⁸³ Women's Kutlah 1.

CHAPTER 7

POLITICAL PROCESS: BETWEEN CONSENSUS AND DISSENT

In the previous chapter, I have shown how the IM roots political authority in both divine and consensual right, rendering rule legitimate only when it respects both God's boundaries and the popular will. The political process the IM envisages is similarly dually circumscribed. I will focus on the process of decision-making, and the role accorded to dissent. The IM's understanding of decision-making is rooted in the classical Islamic concepts of *shūrā* (consultation) and *ijmā'* (consensus). I will first detail the IM's interpretation of these and how this affects its understanding of the nature of communal decision-making, in terms of the possibility of multiple 'right' outcomes, the role of dissent, and the qualifications needed to participate in decision-making. I will then turn to the specific case of 'constitutional' (as opposed to 'operational')¹ decisions preceding the creation of an Islamic state, with a particular view to the IM's attitude towards ideological others, and conclude with an analysis of the tension between the IM's ideal of consensus and the practicality of majority voting.

As before, I will contrast Islamism with both Western discussions of decision-making and, where applicable, its own praxis. Western 'dialectical partners' have been selected to either indicate the existence of similar constructs in Western thinking, or to further illuminate Islamist positions through a perspectival shift.

¹ J. Buchanan & G. Tullock, *The Calculus of Consent*, pp250-251.

7.1 *SHŪRĀ* AND *IJMĀ'*

Shūrā (consultation), one of the three key principles underpinning an Islamic state, alongside justice and equality,² is seen as the practical embodiment of the contractual nature of political authority, since it consecrates the viceregal status all citizens are deemed to possess by compelling leaders to heed their opinions.³ In interviews, *shūrā* was often used to mean freedom, particularly freedom of speech, because it enshrines the right to be heard, regardless how 'wrong' or heterodox one's argument.⁴ In Yahya Musa's words:

Shūrā is a high ideal ... The main issue here is to avoid a dictatorship, or an authoritarian regime, which would prevent the public from expressing its views. *Shūrā* gives the whole of society the right to express its opinions, to participate [in decision-making]. It imposes upon the ruler the duty to seek, and to respect, the opinions of society.⁵

Shūrā thus circumscribes how leaders are to make decisions while maintaining the contractarian nature of their position.

² Abu Shannab I&II&III, Hamas Supporters Gaza, Intifada Cell I. Others (Hammad I; Bahr, Musa II; Abu Dhughri) used either 'democracy' or 'freedom of expression' to translate this principle into 'Western' jargon (Abu Shannab I&II, Hammad I&II, Hamas Supporters Gaza and Intifada Cell II specifically equated these terms, with the provision that *shūrā* be within Islamic principles). For scholarly discussion of the principles of the Islamic state, see El-Awa, p85ff.

³ For discussion of viceregency argument, see Chapter 6.

⁴ Cf. Abu Shannab IV, Intifada Cell I; Badawil, Musa II; Taha. Those using 'freedom (of expression)' as a substitute for *shūrā* in the triplet *shūrā*, justice, equality also implicitly equated *shūrā* with freedom (Bahr, Musa II; Abu Dhughri).

⁵ Musa II.

Islamic Origins of Shūrā

The IM's insistence on consultation is rooted in the Qur'ān which commands the Prophet to consult His companions (3:159) and praises those "who [conduct] their affairs by mutual Consultation" (42:38).⁶ Though some scholars have argued that the Qur'ānic call to consultation is non-obligatory or that its outcome is non-binding on the ruler, the IM follows the view that *shūrā* is both obligatory and binding.⁷ In this, they distance themselves from such groups as Khan Yunis's al-Qur'an wa'l-Sunnah,⁸ who insist that the Head of an Islamic state will be sufficiently wise to consult of his own volition, and too wise to be bound by the opinions of a *Shūrā* Council possessing less wisdom than him.

To underline their understanding of *shūrā*, a number of interviewees invoked the *Sunnah*.⁹ The Prophet, it is pointed out, had no need to consult as he had access to divine wisdom. Yet, he did so at the Battles of Uhud and Badr and, significantly, accepted decisions "contrary to his own opinion".¹⁰ Following Shamma',

... the Prophet was ordered by God to consult with others. The intention of this order was not for the Prophet to learn from the opinions of those around him – it was meant to teach those around him that they should consult. After all, the Prophet was receiving

⁶ Cf. Abu Shannab, *The Islamic Approach and the Subject of Democracy*, p5.

⁷ Cf. Yassin II (though Yassin also expressed the view that the Head of State can sometimes make independent decisions; see Chapter 6), Abu Shannab I&III, Shamma', 'Iyad'; Musa II; Taha, Abu Dhughri. For an overview of debate, see El-Awa, pp86-97.

⁸ Which Schiff and Ya'ari mistakenly group under the IM (pp226-227).

⁹ Abu Shannab III, Shamma', Hammad II, Muslih, 'Iyad', 'Ahmad'; 'Iman'; Musa II.

¹⁰ Shamma'. Also Abu Shannab III, 'Ahmad'.

revelations from God so he did not really need to consult others. But the Prophet was teaching them that leadership comes through consultation.¹¹

The importance of *shūrā* is similarly believed to be derived from the fact that the successions of each of the first four Caliphs, known as the Rightly-Guided and thus an authoritative source of inspiration for Muslims, were decided (or at least ratified) by wider consultation, and that on issues of great importance, the first Caliphs, particularly ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattab, tended to consult beyond those constituting their everyday government.¹²

Scope of Shūrā and the Issue of Borrowing from non-Islamic Systems

Contrary to claims by Kramer and others who argue that because the *Sharī‘ah* is “not legislated but revealed ... in the eyes of the fundamentalists it has already achieved perfection”,¹³ the IM regards legislation as an unfinished project, in need of constant re-interpretation as circumstances evolve. Its attitude towards the *Sharī‘ah* is like Locke’s to natural law: a divine law, partially known to humanity in the form of general principles through revelation and reason, to be transformed into a legal system through the mechanism of consent.¹⁴

Shūrā itself, the IM argues, has been revealed as a general principle, not as a specific political system. Why otherwise would each of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs have implemented the *shūrā* command so differently? Consequently, the systems these

¹¹ Shamma’.

¹² Abu Shannab III. Regarding successions, Shamma’, Muslih; Musa II.

¹³ Kramer, ‘Democracy’, p38.

¹⁴ See pp174-177.

Caliphs developed must be seen as illustrations of the principle; they are not to be copied literally. With Musa,

Throughout these examples, there wasn't a specific system, of which we could say: this is the system Muslims follow. Because there were different systems, this leaves Muslims a wide range of possibilities for choosing what most suits their circumstances. [...] Islam didn't indulge in details but drew a general picture ... Society and life evolve ... Whatever is beneficial for you today, would not be beneficial for you tomorrow. So the human being should be allowed to be creative to choose what suits best.¹⁵

Shūrā is the IM's proscribed method of decision-making. But it is also an ideal the realisation of which is dependent on the type of institutional mechanisms adopted, which, in turn, are chosen through *shūrā*. The scope of the IM's initial *shūrā* thus includes not only legislative and policy decisions, but also constitutional decisions about the kind of system to be adopted.

The IM's advocacy of an Islamic state is one rooted in principles and values rather than in a dogmatic adherence to institutional specifics. Consequently, it is free to borrow from any political system, Islamic or not. In Abu Shannab's words, one can "select whichever system is better for one's life as long as one is applying and practising 'shūrā democracy' in principle".¹⁶ Thus, returning to Musa,

How to achieve *shūrā* in reality is left to the group that will rule the country. If we decide that democracy achieves the merits of *shūrā* at this time, then we'll adopt democracy. If we find that there is some new methodology that better respects *shūrā* and public opinion, then we will follow that ... we don't really care about [what this

¹⁵ Musa II. Cf. also Abu Shannab III, Shamma', Muslih.

¹⁶ Abu Shannab III.

entity is called], what we care about is how to achieve the main ideals: justice, equality and respecting public opinion and the public interest...¹⁷

IM leaders welcome the adoption of Western political constructs, be they liberal or communist, on the grounds that Islam called Muslims to seek wisdom wherever it is found.¹⁸ However, they warn against wholesale adoption of, say, democracy, as it carries within it flawed, un-Islamic components. One such is the notion of absolute popular sovereignty. This, Abu Shannab argues,

Islam perceives ... as a usurpation of the sovereignty of the law (*shar'ā*) descending from God. For, in unlimited freedom, there is a way out of the Islamic binding rules which God legislated to organise morals, life and relations between people.¹⁹

If the popular will is sovereign, morality becomes subservient to it and loses its status as an 'objective' value system (however contested) to which one can appeal. Given that many are insufficiently mature to make the right decisions, or, in Hegelian terms, know the universal will, a morality theoretically rooted in the popular will is deemed problematic. The IM does not acknowledge that the actual form Islamic morality takes, despite its rootedness in revelation, is in fact heavily dependent on the consensus of contemporary interpretations, and thus already indirectly related to the popular will (Chapter 6.3).

Secondly, in an almost Gramscian critique of Western-style democracy, the IM observes that, though

¹⁷ Musa II. Cf. also Muslih. For scholarly perspective: El-Awa, p36.

¹⁸ Yassin II, Abu Shannab I&IV&V, Dukhan, Zahhar II, Hammad II, 'Iyad'; Bahr, Musa I&II&IV, Na'ami, Khalas Conference Paper 3; Abu Dhughri.

¹⁹ Cf. Abu Shannab, *Democracy*, p5.

in theory, the vote of big landowners, the elite, media moguls, ... is equal to the vote of the unemployed and the cheap labourers who represent the majority ..., in reality this majority follows the direction of the former who use their influence to form public opinion and distort the facts for the public.²⁰

Musa illustrated this, saying

Take the Congress of the United States of America. Not every person can become a Senator, only those with money in the range of \$250 million. The regular man from the street cannot reach that level, .. [and without it he will not have] access to the media or the different power centres. So it becomes the democracy of the strong and the rich, not the democracy of everyone.²¹

This discrepancy between theory and practice is, according to the IM, partly caused by Western democracy having elevated the notion of the popular will above God's sovereignty. Following Musa again,

Under such circumstances, morals become abstract ... and everyone can decide what a moral standard is. ... Whatever is deemed necessary by a group of people, ... they can pronounce it moral. ... So [they] can rule over society in wicked ways.²²

The result, Musa contended, is that values are created "according to cost and ... benefit", subjectively, without respect for 'objective' moral values such as justice.²³ Without the

²⁰ *Ibid*, p3. Also Musa II. Cf. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, pp5-23, 210-276.

²¹ Musa II. Cf. Abu Shannab: "the electoral process is thus controlled by the strong, rather than the people" (*Ibid.*, p4).

²² Musa II.

²³ Musa I.

restraint of God's boundaries, elites will rapidly become ruthless. Hence the distortion of democratic ideals in the West.²⁴

Criticism of Western-style democracy, however, does not amount to a dismissal of the notions of the popular will and regular elections. For, as Abu Shannab insists,

al-Khalīfah [Head of State] in the Islamic system represents the nation, not God. The community does not choose *al-Khalīfah* except to be their representative [*nā'ib*]; so he does not derive his authority except from representing the community which has ... the right to watch him and forbid him from getting beyond the borders of his brief.

Islam, the IM contends, commands contractarian rule. At present, the Western parliamentary system with its recourse to elections is recognised as the best realisation thereof. In Musa's words,

the modern method ... of parliamentary representation and different committees does not exist in Islamic history. This [method] ... can actually achieve a better way of *shūrā*.²⁵

The IM warns against the adoption of philosophical perspectives which contradict the Islamic notion of God's sovereignty. But it readily absorbs those elements of the Western democratic system which it believes conform to Islam. It even goes one step further, insisting these elements are simply modern manifestations of principles already posited by early Islam. Thus Abu Shannab argues

²⁴ This argument is rooted in the faith the IM has in the power of Islam to transform people, and limit their excesses. See also Chapter 6.

²⁵ Musa II.

Islamists don't find it embarrassing to accept democratic facts such as those guaranteeing the right to establish political parties and own public presses, to oppose and select rulers and representatives (*nawāb*) through the ballot and respect the results thereof, or such facts as the acceptance ... of the concept of rotation of authority, and the right to criticise and correct and oppose – because these meanings are included in Islam and the IM calls for more than these rights when the concept of shura is applied as the basis for the political system.²⁶

Partly to justify its advocacy of mechanisms developed in the West, partly to prove that Islam had already established the principles underlying these mechanisms, the IM tends to depict early Islamic history in a way which merges Western and Islamic traditions. The Prophet consulting his Companions is presented as an imperative to consult the entire citizenry. Abu Shannab thus calls the decision of the Prophet at Badr “the people's selection” despite the fact that the record only mentions the opinions of (subsequent Caliphs) Abu Bakr and 'Umar. The council of six 'Umar appointed to choose a new Caliph is interpreted as a precursor of an elected legislative, despite its being an appointed council and including representatives of only one of 'Umar's various constituencies.²⁷ Similarly, 'Umar's dismissing a governor because his subjects had complained about him, despite the former deeming the latter “good and honest”, is taken as illustrating the principle that only popular consent as expressed through elections can legitimise political authority – even though 'Umar had appointed and dismissed the governor without elections.²⁸

²⁶ Abu Shannab, *Democracy*, p7.

²⁷ Abu Shannab III (cf. also 'Iman'). The six appointed were Meccans from the Quraish tribe who had accompanied the Prophet on his flight from Mecca to Medina; the council did not include any Medinans or later converts (cf. Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, p70). Accordingly, Mujamma' Managing Director Muslih saw 'Umar's succession as inspiring Islamists like Mawdudi to call for elite rule. He posited Abu Bakr's succession, decided in conclave by all leaders, as inspiring the notion of national elections.

²⁸ Abu Shannab (III) on the dismissal of Sa'ad Ibn Waqqas.

Ijmā' and Ijtihād

The classical concept of *ijmā'* (consensus) underlies the IM's understanding of the nature of decision-making.²⁹ In line with its teleological approach to freedom (Chapter 6.3), the IM believes in independent standards of right and wrong, rendering some decisions more right than others. Consensus is seen as one means of testing the rightness of a decision (where right is measured against what is known of God's principles), since the Prophet stated that "My community [*ummah*] shall never agree on an error".³⁰ In combination with *ijtihād*, a carefully circumscribed method of jurisprudential interpretation of Qur'ān and *Sunnah* with the aid of such tools as analogical deduction (*qiyās*) and considerations of public interest (*maṣlahah mursalah*), it was classically believed that the conclusions thus reached were objectively right because both the rules of *ijtihād* and the fact that all agreed gave some guarantee that personal preferences and partial perspectives had been neutralised. Moreover, since any residue of doubt was believed to result in disagreement, agreement was regarded as testifying to the truth of the decision.³¹ However, since human interpretation is considered to be fallible, resulting in multiple interpretations concerning speculative (*zannī*), as opposed to definitive (*qat'ī*), revelations, scholars have tended to agree that *ijmā'* is almost impossible to achieve in practice. Consequently, it was never formally institutionalised.³²

The IM's application of the notion of *ijmā'* to the workings and institutions of government has been inspired by such modern Islamic scholars as Muhammad Iqbal who at the start of this century questioned why *ijmā'* had "rarely assumed the form of a

²⁹ Cf. Yassin II, Abu Shannab IV; Board Members al-Shabbat; Masri, Abu Dhughri.

³⁰ This and similar *ahādīth* quoted in Mohammad Kamali, *Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence*, pp178-180.

³¹ Kamali, pp180-182.

³² Cf. Kamali, pp167-172, 182-185, 190-192.

permanent institution”, and argued that transferring the notion of *ijtihad* “from individual representatives of [legal] schools [as has been the practice for most of Islam’s history] to a Muslim legislative assembly ... is the only possible form *ijma*’ can take in modern times”.³³

Through the centuries, scholars have debated whether the above Ḥadīth stipulates unanimity or merely majority rule, and whether the decision-making ‘*ummah*’ should encompass the entire citizenry, or only the *mujtahidun* (those entitled to practise *ijtihad*, and thus likely to be the most knowledgeable). The IM follows the interpretation al-Shafi’i (d. 820) gave to the above Ḥadīth that “the people at large cannot agree on an error” – not just the *mujtahidun*³⁴ – and thus seeks to include, through consultations and referenda, the people at large in the legislative process.³⁵

However, some in the IM doubt the level of wisdom one can expect in ordinary people. Echoing Mawdudi’s conclusion that “the great mass of the common people are incapable of perceiving their own true interests” unless they are taught the “true Islamic mentality”,³⁶ members of *Women’s Kutlah I* summarised the dilemma, arguing:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| President SC: | Normal people cannot just be given the right to decide because they may look at the surface only. |
| Kutlah Member: | Therefore, there must be certain regulations, like not serving just your own desires [...] We cannot ignore people, but we also cannot give them the absolute right to choose. |

³³ Muhammad Iqbal, *Six Lectures on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, pp173, 174. Some interviewees mentioned they had studied Iqbal; the *Mithaq* also quotes Iqbal.

³⁴ Shafi’i, *Risalah* (trans. Khadduri), p285; quoted in Kamali, p181.

³⁵ Cf. Abu Shannab III, Shamma’. Abu Shannab pointed to Turabi who advocates an “intensive procedure of hearings, research, and deliberations” with “anyone who knows anything well enough to relate it to God”, whether “a chemist, an engineer, an economist, or a jurist” (p245). See also footnote 87.

³⁶ Mawdudi, *Theory*, pp21-22; *Process*, pp35-36.

A Hamas supporter similarly observed:

democracy says that people should govern themselves by themselves or by electing others. This is right. But suppose that these people are bad? They would elect bad people like them. So this contradicts with Islam.³⁷

Besides these students, a few leaders expressed concerns about the low level of independent thinking in (some) ordinary party supporters, but largely blamed the occupation and the Intifada for this.³⁸ Though such attitudes have led *modernists* and *essentialists* to conclude that Islamists tend towards authoritarianism, similar reservations about popular opinion have been made by prominent liberals, such as John Stuart Mill.³⁹ Failure to adequately address this issue facilitates the manipulation of votes by authoritarian demagogues.

The IM's solution is not to propose a cleritocracy, as some *modernists* maintain, demanding that *Majlis* candidates be *mujtahidun*, or that their candidacy be vetted by a Council of *Mujtahidun* (resembling the Iranian Council of Guardians),⁴⁰ but to propose a partnership between experts and representatives,⁴¹ in which the latter, have the final

³⁷ 'Ashraf' (member during Intifada).

³⁸ Abu Shannab V and Musa IV on the IM, Hammad II in general.

³⁹ Mill suggested giving multiple votes to those who had enjoyed higher education until the whole population was sufficiently educated (*Considerations on Representative Government*, pp336-341). Cf. also elite theory criticisms, e.g. J.S. Schumpeter's observation that "the typical citizen drops down to a lower level of mental performance as soon as he enters the political field. He argues ... in a way which he would readily recognize as infantile within the sphere of his real interests. He becomes a primitive again" (*Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, p262).

⁴⁰ Yassin II, Abu Shannab III. 'Nasr' and Taha did propose a body which monitored candidates. Given the support for self-nomination (Chapter 6, footnote 176), though, the majority of interviewees appeared to support Yassin and Abu Shannab. Iqbal similarly advocated a modern assembly containing laymen besides *mujtahidun* (Ahmad Hasan, 'Modern Trends in Ijma', *Islamic Studies* XII(2), p135).

⁴¹ Cf. Yassin I&II, Abu Shannab II&III, Zahhar III, Haniyyah I, 'Ibrahim', Intifada Cell I, 'Iyad'; Board Members al-Shabbat; Bahr, Hamdan; Masri.

word because they alone have a popular mandate.⁴² First, despite queries about the electorate's lack of wisdom, the IM expects the electorate to return, in their own interest, candidates with some practical expertise and a working knowledge of Islamic law, and sees the representativeness of the *Majlis* as some guarantee that a sufficient level of scientific and practical expertise covering all areas of life and state will be present.⁴³ The IM describes the legislative process as *ijtihād*,⁴⁴ thus implying the rigour of *ijtihād* be applied to legislative decision-making (even though the representatives need not be *mujtahidun*). But it seems to simultaneously rely on the neutralising effect of representativeness in ironing out personal and factional interests, and so render the final decisions optimally 'objective'.

By not insisting on *mujtahid* status, the IM mirrors early Muslim practice in which leaders were generally not formally schooled in religion and jurisprudence.⁴⁵

Conversely, it also echoes the insights of Western political theorists such as Giovanni Sartori who observed that the "question of rationality in voting behavior" is redundant because

If, in fact, elections decide about who will decide, the implication is that the burden of rationality does not rest ... on electorates: It is shifted on to their representatives ...⁴⁶

⁴² Cf. Yassin I&II, Abu Shannab II&III, Zahhar III.

⁴³ Yassin II, Abu Shannab III, Dukhan (did not insist on elections, only on inclusion of wide variety of experts and leaders), Haniyyah I, 'Ibrahim', Hamas Supporters Gaza, Intifada Cell III, 'Iyad'; Board Members al-Shabbat; Bahr (I did not discuss this with other Khalas members; judging by their *Majlis*' composition, they do not insist on a State *Majlis* being *mujtahidun*); Masri, Abu Dhughri, Women's Kutlah 1. Some suggested *Majlis* candidates need PhDs (Intifada Cell), others a good level of expertise (Dukhan, 'Ibrahim', 'Iyad'; Board Members al-Shabbat; Women's Kutlah 1). All insisted, or implied, that candidates have working knowledge of the *Sharī'ah* and other laws (cf. Abu Shannab, Abu Dhughri). Traditionally, "those who guide the community" were expected to have religious erudition (*tafaqquh*); Kamali, pp372-374. See also El-Awa, pp71-74.

⁴⁴ Cf. Yassin II.

⁴⁵ Cf. El-Awa, pp72-74.

⁴⁶ Giovanni Sartori, *The Theory of Democracy Revisited*, p110.

Second, where further expertise is needed, the IM entitles the *Majlis* to appoint advisory expert committees, the Head of State to appoint a limited number of unelected experts to his government.⁴⁷ To keep legislative power within the *Majlis*, Abu Shannab and Zahhar suggested that experts merely advance a number of sound alternatives, on which the representatives subsequently vote.⁴⁸ This proposition again echoes Sartori's argument that, given the technological and economic advances of the modern world, states need planning,⁴⁹ and thus high expertise and "autonomy of decision". On both counts politicians generally fail: they are not chosen on grounds of expertise ("the democratic system neither presupposes nor requires competency"), and they are under pressure of "sectorial and short-term demands". Enter the experts, and with them a democratic deficiency:

the more we lean on the demos, the less we are likely to achieve rational planning; ...
the more we lean on the expert, the less democratic we are ...⁵⁰

This deficiency can be minimised, Sartori suggests, if one distinguishes between "democracy in input" ("how much the voice of the people counts") and "democracy in output" ("how much the people benefit"), and between means and ends. As long as "democracy in input" can ensure that "democracy in output" remains democratic, and as long as the "government of experts" refrains from determining the electorate's ends and limits itself to concern over means, the democratic process is reasonably safeguarded – though tensions will continue to exist.⁵¹ The IM's emphasis on the precedence of election over expertise resembles Sartori's conclusion that 'democracy in output' be

⁴⁷ Cf. Yassin I&II, Abu Shannab II&III, Zahhar III, Haniyyah I, 'Ibrahim', 'Iyad'; Bahr; Masri.

⁴⁸ Abu Shannab III, Zahhar III.

⁴⁹ Cf. also 'Iyad'; Hamdan; Masri.

⁵⁰ Sartori, p427.

⁵¹ Sartori, pp426-433.

subject to 'democracy in input'. Though differing from Sartori on the appropriateness of proposing ends,⁵² the IM subordinates the definition of communal ends (personal ends are left to the individual) to consensual approval (see Chapter 7.2), thus ensuring the safeguarding of 'democracy in input'.

Finally, the IM envisages that the process of creating, and subsequently living in, an Islamic state will raise the level of wisdom in the general populace (a Hegelian notion). Witnessing leaders meticulously obeying the rules they set and acting for the communal good rather than self- or clan-promotion (see the discussion of the IM's notion of 'servant leadership' in Chapter 6), observing jurists and experts wrestling with issues of equality and justice, and being properly educated in morality, not only through an improved educational system but also through a media which no longer narrowly serves the interests of the elite, people are expected to grow in Islamic awareness.⁵³

One Version of Truth or Many?

The IM's insistence on truth and divine will suggests that it only allows for one view of right, disallowing dissent – thus fuelling the *modernist* conclusion that the IM is authoritarian. There *is* a tradition in Islam which is wary of the divisive effects of discord.⁵⁴ But, for all its prescriptiveness, the IM still allows for multiple interpretations of 'truth'.

⁵² See Chapters 6.2-3 and 7.2. There is an interesting parallel to be explored between the IM and Western contemporary philosophers Charles Taylor (*Sources of the Self*) and Alisdair MacIntyre (*After Virtue*) who both, and for different reasons, conclude that one of the primary reasons for the moral confusion of the modern West is the loss of ends-oriented values.

⁵³ Cf. Abu Shannab I, Zahhar II, Hammad I&II; Bahr. Implied by Yassin II, Abu Shannab, *Democracy*; Musa II, Badawil; Women's Kutlah 2.

⁵⁴ Cf. Ghazali warning against the "tyranny exerted by the subjects against each other" (see p168).

Musa recognised that an Islamic state can be created in multiple ways. Abu Shannab admired classical jurist Imam Malik for chastising the rulers of his day for wishing to prevent others from interpreting his interpretations differently. Zahhar pointed to the existence of fundamental differences between the four main schools of Islamic law, and disagreed with Abu Shannab on whether *zakah* (legally obligatory alms) would be sufficient taxation in an Islamic state. And an Intifada Cell member indicated awareness of the possibility of multiple 'right' interpretations when telling my interpreter: "Don't say we are wrong – that is your point of view; this is ours".⁵⁵ The IM also insists on having a plurality of candidates for Head of State,⁵⁶ demarcating it from movements with a more literalist approach to the Islamic canon such as *al-Salafiyyun* who claim that, in an Islamic state, just as truth is one, one obvious candidate for "Caliph" will appear who will stand out from all others in wisdom.⁵⁷

A public illustration is a 1991 Hamas statement saying that

difference of opinion and a variety of political interpretations and positions is natural and a healthy phenomenon which all nations have, since "having different opinions does not necessarily ruin good relationships" [Arab saying].⁵⁸

Though I did not discuss this issue with all interviewees, most of those asked favoured a multi-party system in an Islamic state (with the proviso that the parties would not

⁵⁵ Musa II, Abu Shannab II, Zahhar II, Intifada Cell II. Others indicating acceptance of 'multiple truths' and dissent: cf. Hammad II, Shamma', Muslih, 'Muhammad', 'Ashraf'; Masri, 'Yusuf'. 'Multiple truths', as long as within Islamic framework: Dukhan; Bahr. Some of Hamas Supporters Gaza and the Intifada Cell were uncomfortable with the idea of 'multiple truths'.

⁵⁶ Abu Shannab (III) criticised Sudan and other Arab countries for presenting the people with one choice only.

⁵⁷ Al-Qur'an wa'l-Sunnah.

⁵⁸ 'Appeal to the righteous and wise in our beloved nation' (06.11.1991) quoted in Hrub, p237. Similar expressions of respect for plurality of views in Hrub, pp233-238; Khalas Conference Papers 1&2&3; Khalas Political Programme, pp4, 24.

undermine the consensually agreed Islamic basis of the state).⁵⁹ The few who did not, argued that Islam is one, while unbelief is multivocal.⁶⁰ Underlying their position, however, seemed to be fear of the divisive nature of multi-partyism, as particularistic party loyalty could conflict with commitment to 'truth' or the universal.⁶¹ Consequently, while support for multi-partyism is an indication of a pluralistic attitude towards 'truth', opposition thereto cannot be automatically taken as proof of a dogmatic approach to the unicity of 'truth' (though it often is).

Abu Shannab justified the view that multiple acceptable interpretations of truth coexist by pointing to *ayāh* 8:67 which revealed that the decision the Prophet had taken in *shūrā* at the battle of Badr had been wrong. This, he argued, was God's way of teaching humanity to value *shūrā* over rightness:

God ... left it, because this is a lesson of *shūrā*. It was not God's will but ... the people's choice.⁶²

Thus it is implied that God values the process of decision-making over getting it right as the former teaches people more about right and wrong than the imposition of a divine decision.⁶³

The IM is here building on the classical notion that *ijmā'* holds within it a deep respect for the dissenting voice as the potential repository of truth – a notion which has meant, according to some at least, that minority opinions among leaders and '*ulamā'*' were

⁵⁹ Cf. Abu Shannab III, Hammad I, Intifada Cell III; Bahr, Musa II, Na'ami.

⁶⁰ 'Nasr'. Implied also by one of Hamas Supporters Gaza.

⁶¹ Zahhar II.

⁶² Abu Shannab III. Cf. Kamali, pp381-382.

⁶³ This corresponds with the IM's Hegelian position that rational freedom cannot be forced (Chapter 6).

respected in early Islam.⁶⁴ This is a logical outcome of the classical conviction that *ijtihād* involves speculation and thus the possibility of error.⁶⁵ Failure to reach *ijmā'* is deemed a possible indication that the 'truth' proposed by the majority may prove a fallacy. Though such a position undermines faith in the veracity of majority rule (see Chapter 7.3), it also throws up a strong defence of the minority view, and can inspire acceptance of the principle to agree to disagree.⁶⁶ This approach is sustained by *āyāt* such as 29:69, which speaks of God guiding "those who strive" in "Our paths", rather than 'path'.⁶⁷ The IM thus strikes what is, at times, an uneasy balance between striving for unanimity and accepting that dissent is essential to arriving at truth – echoing J.S. Mill's defence of the freedom of opinion.⁶⁸

7.2 CONSTITUTIONAL DECISIONS

The IM deems consultation particularly important in the creation of an Islamic constitution, in order to create a consensus on rules and ends. In this, it echoes Lively's critique of contemporary theories of pluralistic society.⁶⁹ There is, Lively contends, an inherent tension in the role of representative government. It should "both represent the divisions within society and resolve those differences", be both impartial and champion partisan demands. Without the notion of consensus, this is impossible. Reviewing two popular pluralistic models of the state as neutral 'arbiter' and the state as neutral 'arena'

⁶⁴ Cf. Hasan, pp264-266; Kamali, pp171-172; Kerr, pp66-102.

⁶⁵ Kamali, p367; Hasan, pp264-266, 269.

⁶⁶ Cf. Khalas Conference Paper 2 calling all parties to "[agree] on what is agreeable and excus[e] each other for what we differ on" concerning Palestine's future.

⁶⁷ Cf. Kamali, p373. This view is implicit in e.g. Abu Shannab's and Hammad's discourse.

⁶⁸ See Chapter 8.2.4.

⁶⁹ Jack Lively, 'Pluralism and Consensus' in Pierre Birnbaum, etc. (eds), *Democracy, Consensus and Social Contract*, pp185-202.

(where the government is one among many constituent groups, differentiated only by the fact its self-interest is to be seen to resolve conflicts), Lively argues that, while neither mentions the need for consensus, both would fail without it – the former because for arbitration to be seen as neutral, it must operate within a set of principles acceptable to all, the latter because the ‘arena’ will only be considered neutral if the initial distribution of resources and access is acceptable to all.

Lively’s argument is a reproach of a dominant strand of pluralist thinking which has elevated the necessary conflict between group interests and the general interest to an indispensable guarantor against authoritarianism, while ignoring the need for a basic consensus to counterbalance these centrifugal forces.⁷⁰ This strand of pluralism is so focussed on the need to protect groups and individuals from the Leviathan of a monist state by diffusing power that it sacrifices the ideal of consensus. The IM’s emphasis on community-wide consensus-building is similarly a critique of those who regard pursuing factional interests as the essence of politics.⁷¹ Consultation, it argues, will foster community-wide *tawāfuq* (harmony) by both including and heeding the whole community, thus promoting a sense of ownership towards the state project.

Yet, as hinted at in the discussion of the IM’s teleological view of freedom and the state (Chapter 6.2-3), there is a potential tension between the IM’s prescriptive understanding of right and the notion of an open-ended consultation. I have already alluded to the fact that the IM recognises that interpretations of ‘truth’ can be multiple, and that its advocacy of an Islamic state is rooted in principles rather than a dogmatic positing of institutional specifics.

⁷⁰ Lively, pp187-190.

⁷¹ Zahhar II, Hammad I; Bahr, Khalas Conference Paper 1; Women’s Kutlah 2. See also Hrub quoting Muhammad Nazzal (West Bank Hamas leader): “we do not prefer divisions and factionalism ... But in the end we respect the interpretations of others...” (p236).

Value Consensus versus Procedural Consensus

To fully understand the IM's approach, it is useful to employ Sartori's distinction between value consensus (concerning the basic values and goals of a community), procedural consensus (concerning the procedures by which decisions are taken) and policy consensus.⁷² The first two concern 'constitutional decisions', the third 'operational decisions'. At a procedural level, the IM is willing to consult. Numerous interviewees underlined Islam's flexibility, insisting that the constitutional make-up of the Islamic state is open to discussion, as long as it is based on Islamic principles.⁷³ It is less willing at a value level, in line with its prescriptive attitude to truth. It confidently posits its value system as right, and presumes that it will prevail while others, such as the communists', will fade.⁷⁴

Though this attitude seems to corroborate the *modernist-essentialist* claim that Islamists are anti-pluralistic, it in fact refutes it. For a democracy to function, Sartori notes, procedural consensus is a "necessary condition". Without it there would be continuous conflict. Value consensus, conversely, is only a "facilitating condition". The IM similarly insists on consultation at a procedural level, knowing that a willing acceptance of procedural rules (which necessarily involves some level of value consensus regarding the ends of the state) enables multiple value systems to live side by side. By the same token, it refuses to compromise on values, in the knowledge that value consensus is non-essential.

⁷² Sartori, pp90-92.

⁷³ Cf. Abu Shannab II&III&IV, Haniyyah I, Hammad I, Muslih; Bahr, Musa II; Women's Kutlah 1, Women's Kutlah 2. While others (cf. Yassin I&II, Zahhar II&III, Shamma'; Taha, Abu Dhughri) gave the impression that the Islamic system was more or less fixed, the fact they simultaneously held that each people and era were free to adapt the Islamic system to their situation, indicates that they too focussed on principles rather than institutional specifics.

⁷⁴ Cf. Abu Shannab III, Dukhan, Hammad I, two of Hamas Supporters Gaza.

Corroborating this reading, the IM indeed displays a willingness to cohabit with different value systems, and compromise on procedures.⁷⁵ Illustrating this, all those asked maintained that, though personally advocating an Islamic state, they would abide by a majority decision regarding the form Palestine's statehood would take – even if this meant accepting a secular democratic state.⁷⁶ Kutlah leader 'Arafa al-Masri expressed this, saying

If a majority voted for a secular state, the minority should respect the majority opinion, and would not continue to work towards an Islamic state.

Similarly, unequivocal abhorrence was expressed at the notion of establishing an Islamic state in Palestine by force.⁷⁷ In line with its Hegelian attitude to freedom, the IM holds coerced consensus to be meaningless.

Certainty concerning one's values enables one to be more tolerant towards other-thinkers. In this vein, Hammad argued in *al-Risalah*,

⁷⁵ In this, the IM closely follows the original Egyptian Brethren's insistence that Islamic rule would only work "as long as the nation wants to be truly Muslim" (see Chapter 6, footnote 95).

⁷⁶ Abu Shannab III, Dukhan, Haniyyah I, Hammad I, Muslih, Intifada Cell, 'Nasr'; Bahr, Badawil; Masri, Abu Dhughri, 'Yusuf', Leader Kutlah-Azhar. Others were not asked this question. See also Hrub quoting Yassin, Zahhar and Rantisi saying that " Hamas would respect the opinion of the Palestinian street [regarding the nature of a future state], even if it was the opposite of its own wish" (pp234-235).

⁷⁷ Abu Shannab III, Haniyyah I, Hammad I, Intifada Cell III; Bahr, Badawil, Na'ami; Masri, Abu Dhughri, 'Yusuf'. Others were not asked this question. Similar view expressed in Hijazi's interview with Zahhar, ' Hamas: Waiting for Secular Nationalism to Self-Destruct', *Journal of Palestine Studies* XXIV(3), p83-84. Regarding the coup which brought the Sudanese Islamists to power, those asked to comment (Abu Shannab III, Na'ami, Abu Dhughri, 'Yusuf') condemned it, some qualifying their condemnation, arguing that all Sudanese governments have ruled on the back of military power and that there was no other way to establish an Islamic state there. Only Haniyyah justified the coup on the grounds that it was bloodless, and in harmony with the wishes of the people.

God gave a mind to both Muslims and unbelievers, and to everyone of them part of wrong and right. The unbeliever can thus speak truth, and it should be accepted, not rejected because he is an unbeliever.⁷⁸

If one is clear about one's goals, one is in a stronger position to adopt eclectically from others and judge how their systems promote or undermine one's goals. One is also buffeted by the belief that one's ideas will prove the stronger, thus facilitating the decision to embark on an open-ended consultation. However, this is only so if one is not fearful of others and their 'corrupting' influence – in which case the projected 'certainty' is really a barrier against debate, a camouflage for uncertainty about whether one's values would stand up against criticism.

Even if the *modernist* texts are only partially right, the IM of the 1980s appears to have been less tolerant than today's IM. Musa II acknowledged that the Islamists then felt

they had the right, more than others ..., to express themselves because they were the ones with... righteousness. To be self-critical ..., both the Islamic and the secular mentality were backward. Both had a mentality that depended on the logic of power, not debate – the logic of reaction, conflict and tit-for-tat.⁷⁹

Whether this mentality was caused mainly by being under occupation (see Chapter 4), or also by fear of corruption by others, and a less robust attitude towards its own value system, is difficult to conclude. However, circumstances have begun to change on both counts. The lawlessness and humiliation of occupation have been replaced with a more lawful Palestinian Authority. Fear of the ideological other has diminished following

⁷⁸ *Al-Risalah* 06.04.1998, p5. Cf. also Abu Shannab III&IV, Hammad II, 'Iyad'; Khalas Conference Paper 3. Zahhar II implied a similar stance.

⁷⁹ Cf. also Hammad II, 'Muhammad'. Abu Shannab I implied this too.

prison encounters between leftists and Islamists during the Intifada,⁸⁰ and the subsequent leftist-Islamist alliance against Fatah and the Peace Process. The IM also appears to be more secure in itself, and its position in society. The prison encounter with the Left did not corrupt the IM's value system but deepened it – as meeting an ideological other often does through the contrast it offers. Abu Shannab's reading of *āyah* 8:67 (p241) is illustrative of this more self-confident attitude, as is Hammad's readiness to learn from communists.

Open-Ended Consultation versus Ends-Oriented Consultation

Attitudes towards the consultation process betray the IM's ideological confidence. It is willing to accept compromise on procedural matters, but it simultaneously expects people to be eventually swayed by its arguments for freedom, justice and equality – particularly once procedures are accepted which reflect their values.⁸¹ This approach is informed by the IM's conviction that the consultative process itself is educational – mirroring the gradual revelation of the Qur'ān which established an Islamic state through incremental, voluntary internalisation of Islamic values.⁸² Hammad illustrated this with the example of alcohol in the Qur'ān, observing its prohibition was not introduced overnight but gradually explained over years to ensure people understood why they should abstain from alcohol.⁸³

⁸⁰ Abu Shannab I, Hammad II, Intifada Cell II, 'Nasr'; Abu Dhughri. PFLP affiliates Yunis al-Jarro' I, 'Adli Yazuri, 'Ziad' & 'Husam' also mentioned this. See also Chapter 8.2.5.

⁸¹ Cf. Hammad II. Abu Shannab III, Haniyyah I; Bahr, Musa II, Badawil implied this too.

⁸² This reading owes much to Mawdudi, *Process*, pp3, 17-19, 31-36, 40-47 (Qutb, *Milestones*, pp42-52 reiterates Mawdudi's argument) – the difference being that Mawdudi is more concerned than the IM seems to be that a process which includes non-Islamic (e.g. nationalist) elements will fatally jeopardise the Islamic end result as he believes that "the nature of a state is wholly determined by the nature of the circumstances which underlie its birth and formation".

⁸³ Hammad I.

An Islamic state cannot arise out of imposed institutions. It can only result from a society which has voluntarily internalised Islamic values, so that *zakah* is given out of moral conviction rather than legal duty, and even thieves (following the example of society's leaders) wish to give themselves up in order to receive the punishment they themselves believe they deserve.⁸⁴ Consequently, the modern Islamic state must evolve slowly, in harmony (*tawāfuq*) with and with the consent and full understanding of society. In Hammad's words:

I think that Islamic law should not be imposed in one moment – there are thousands of issues which need an answer before we can implement them. ... So I think at this point, the IM should not ask to implement Islamic law but first of all prepare society ...⁸⁵

Hence the IM's emphases on education⁸⁶ and on extensive constitutional consultations preceding the establishment of an Islamic state.⁸⁷ And hence also the tension between divine right and consultation. If consultation is truly consultative, its outcome is undetermined. But if it is to educate people to discover and will, in Hegelian terms, the universal within themselves (Chapter 6.3),⁸⁸ predetermination enters.

Here it is instructive to turn to Dankwart Rustow's theory of democratisation. On the basis of empirical case studies, Rustow expects that the tactical adoption of a

⁸⁴ Implied by Yassin II, Abu Shannab I, Dukhan, Zahhar II, Haniyyah II, two of Hamas Supporters Gaza; Bahr. One of the reasons frequently given for why members joined the IM was the observation that its members practise what they preach.

⁸⁵ Hammad II.

⁸⁶ Cf. Yassin II, Abu Shannab I. Of the 22 Communiqués from the Intifada's first year featured in Mishal, 8 emphasise the importance of education.

⁸⁷ Cf. Abu Shannab III, Hammad II; Na'ami. Cf. also calls for an ongoing consultation with all the different factions on the future of Palestine in Khalas Conference Papers 1&2.

⁸⁸ Cf. similarly J.S. Mill's argument that "Among the foremost benefits of free government is that education of the intelligence and of the sentiments, which is carried down to the very lowest ranks of the people when they are called to take a part in acts which directly affect the great interests of their country" (*Representative Government*, p327).

democratic-type pact by all parties, on the basis that it is the most lucrative way forward for all concerned, will eventually lead to the internalisation of democratic rules by the majority of citizens.⁸⁹ Rustow does not demand that, at the outset, any of the players are 'democratic' by conviction, only that the situation is thus that the breaking of the democratic rules will adversely affect the guilty party. Applying Sartori's characterisation of consensus levels to this approach, it seems that Rustow expects that by contractual acceptance of democratic-type procedures, a form of consensus on democratic values will gradually evolve. For this to happen, the initial rules must be consensually determined and agreed upon by all parties so that policy and distributive decisions can be taken without resulting in civil war.

The IM's approach is similar. It too expects that, once procedural consensus has been reached, the community will gradually come to value consensus, particularly if the procedures are sufficiently Islamic/Islamist to be producing justice and social equality.⁹⁰ Like Rustow who presupposes that the end result will be a consensus on democratic values, it presupposes that participation in the *shūrā* process will result in a consensus on Islamist values. And like Rustow, it bases this supposition on the belief that its values promote justice, equality and freedom. Seen from this perspective, the IM's certitude that its values will prevail is as much or as little sinister (depending on one's view), as Rustow's and indeed many of the West's democratisation agencies.

⁸⁹ Dankwart Rustow, 'Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model', *Comparative Politics* 2-3, pp337-63. Discussed in Waterbury, p35.

⁹⁰ Cf. view that communism will fade once Islamically-based freedom, justice and equality are established (see footnote 71). This resembles Mawdudi's argument for the Islamic state (*Process*).

7.3 UNANIMITY AND MAJORITY RULE

The IM's process of decision-making is modelled on the *ijmā'* (consensus) ideal of the first Muslim community. However, it is sufficiently pragmatic to realise that unanimity is an ineffective, and potentially costly, method of decision-making as each participant will have an effective veto and can thus extract unacceptable concessions.

Consequently, the IM considers a majority sufficient on the understanding that unanimity remains the ideal.⁹¹

Following this revised *ijmā'* model, the nearer to unanimity, the more likely a decision is to reflect 'truth'.⁹² The IM therefore generally insists on a weighted majority of around two-thirds regarding constitutional or legislative decisions. If a proposal wins 51%, Zahhar suggested it be referred back to a committee of experts and representatives whose task is to forge a compromise proposal which will carry a larger majority – and so increase the probability that the decision is right.⁹³

This attitude closely mirrors conclusions reached by Buchanan and Tullock. Starting from the premise that individuals have different interests and try to further these by means of political activity, Buchanan and Tullock explore the cost-efficiency of different majority rule decision-making procedures in a large society.⁹⁴ Simple majority rule, they find, results in the largest number of people requiring to accept, and pay for,

⁹¹ Cf. Yassin II, Zahhar III, Shamma', Hammad II, Muslih, 'Ibrahim'; 'Iman', Board Members al-Shabbat; Masri, Taha, Abu Dhughri. Abu Shannab II&III, Dukhan, Haniyyah I, Intifada Cell III, 'Nasr', Badawil, 'Yusuf', Women's Kutlah 1, Leader Kutlah-Azhar implied it. The other interviewees did not discuss this issue.

⁹² Abu Shannab IV: "a group decision is better than an individual decision – even if the individual is right. This encourages democratic behaviour". This follows Muhammad 'Abduh's argument that "the majority is normally less exposed to misjudgment than the individual" (quoted in El-Awa, p97).

⁹³ Zahhar III.

⁹⁴ Cf. Buchanan & Tullock, pp97-116, 131-145. For a synopsis see Norman Barry, *Modern Political Theory*, pp288-289.

public action they themselves had opposed, teaching individuals they will lose out unless they self-centeredly maximise their interests at others's expense. Under unanimity, conversely, one has high bargaining costs, pushed up by minority coalitions in exchange for agreeing to any third-party proposal, and the process is lengthy. According to Buchanan and Tullock's calculations, a weighted majority is the optimal median. However, like the IM, they insist that, though practicality demands majority rule, consensus should remain the ideal:

These [majority] variants [on the unanimity rule] will be rationally chosen, not because they will produce "better" collective decisions (they will not), but rather because, on balance, the sheer weight of the costs involved in reaching decisions unanimously dictates some departure from the "ideal" rule. ... [M]any scholars seem to have overlooked the central place that the unanimity rule must occupy in any normative theory of democratic government. We have witnessed an inversion whereby ... majority rule has been elevated to the status which the unanimity rule should occupy. At best, majority rule should be viewed as one among many practical expedients made necessary by the costs of securing widespread agreement ... when ... interests diverge.⁹⁵

Despite the philosophical distance between the notion of consensus as a means to arriving at truth and the logic of cost-efficiency, both arguments arrive at the same conclusion – indicating that, despite philosophical differences, Western and Islamist theorists are not as far apart in terms of practical solutions as *modernist-essentialist* scholars have generally inferred.

At an operational level, the IM appears to be more willing to lower its ideal of unanimity, being content with a mere simple majority (see 'Praxis Analysis'). Reasons for this are, firstly, that operational decisions must generally be made at a faster rate than

⁹⁵ Buchanan, p96.

constitutional decisions. Secondly, their subject matter does not directly concern God's law, nor are they binding on generations to come as they concern such temporal matters as the allocation of resources. Thirdly, the body most regularly involved in operational decisions, the government, is envisaged to be operating in a spirit of *tawāfuq* (harmony). *Tawāfuq* is closely linked with value consensus. If a high level of consensus exists regarding core values, particularly regarding the ends of government, generally a higher level of trust results, leading to a greater willingness to accept compromises because one feels a sense of ownership towards the collective project, and trusts one's 'detractor' to have the same ends in mind. Within a government, one is more likely to find a higher level of *tawāfuq* than in the *Majlis* or the state at large – even though the IM's proposed consultative process is intended to raise the general level of *tawāfuq* through consensus-building on procedures and communal ends.

A further reason for this difference in attitude towards constitutional and operational decision-making is the fact, expounded by Buchanan and Tullock, that constitutional and operational decisions are generally qualitatively different. Contrary to popular and academic opinion, Buchanan and Tullock argue, political bargaining is not necessarily a zero-sum game (meaning that one side of an agreement loses by the same amount as the winners win). Though operational decisions about, for example, goods distribution tend to be zero-sum decisions – money can only be allocated once – constitutional decisions tend to be non-zero-sum decisions as all those party to the contract may gain from it. A thief, they argue, is likely to support laws protecting property, despite the risk of imprisonment, because they also protect his property. Because of this qualitative difference, operational and constitutional decision-making should be approached differently. Since constitutional decisions both need and are likely to achieve the highest level of consensus to be effective, and because they occur relatively infrequently, unanimity or a weighted majority is an obvious choice. Operational decisions, conversely, occur too frequently to justify the cost of a weighted majority;

moreover, their zero-sum status renders such a majority unlikely. Buchanan and Tullock thus conclude, mirroring the IM:

there is no necessary inconsistency implied in the adoption of, say, simple majority rule for the making of certain everyday decisions for the group with respect to those activities that have been explicitly collectivised, and the insistence on unanimity of consensus on changes in the fundamental organizational rules.⁹⁶

7.4 PRAXIS ANALYSIS

In the following I will analyse IM praxis regarding consensus-building, majority rule, dissent and tolerance of others. But first, I will briefly review the composition of the IM's leadership, with a view to establishing how the IM values expertise in relation to representativeness, and answering the *modernist* charge that the IM champions a cleritocracy. Significantly, none of Hamas's top leadership have had a clerical training – though all appear to have a solid grounding in Islam and Islamic law. Yassin is a school teacher, Abu Shannab an engineer, Rantisi and Zahhar medical doctors, Yazuri a pharmacist, Maqadmah a dentist. Though some, like Yassin, are called 'shaykh', this title merely expresses respect. Hizb al-Khalas is likewise largely made up of professionals while al-Kutlah's leadership includes students from many different disciplines.⁹⁷

That the IM greatly respects expertise, is obvious from the reverence both leaders and led displayed towards the learned. In discussing intricate issues of Islamic law, Abu Shannab referred to the opinions of scholars like Qaradawi and Ghannouchi,

⁹⁶ Buchanan, pp250-251.

⁹⁷ I have not investigated the composition of the Boards of the various charities.

emphasising that, as a non-expert, his own opinion was worth little.⁹⁸ Most ordinary members refrained from expressing opinions on intricate issues concerning the Islamic state, if they felt insufficiently knowledgeable on the matter, instead urging me to turn to the *'ulamā'*.⁹⁹ Yet, the fact that so few *'ulamā'* are actually represented in the top echelons of Hamas or Hizb al-Khalas, despite the existence of close relations, appears to corroborate my reading that the IM does not champion a cleritocracy – although it is possible that the absence of *'ulamā'* is not reflective of the IM's values but of the latter's unwillingness to be publicly associated with the IM.¹⁰⁰

7.4.1 DECISION-MAKING PROCEDURES

All IM institutions researched claim to take operational decisions by majority rule, while aiming at consensus as the ideal.¹⁰¹ Members of the seven-strong Board of the Jam'iyyah al-Shabbat, for instance, operate what amounts to a consensus-oriented weighted majority rule, in which the minority, after arguing its case and failing to

⁹⁸ Abu Shannab III (e.g. when justifying his position that communists be included in the body politic of an Islamic state he said: "If I talk to Muslims as I am talking to you, they might not believe me ... because I'm not a scholar. ... But when you refer to Mr Qaradawi, he is a symbol of scholarship, and can convince them directly"). Cf. also Hammad I.

⁹⁹ Cf. Intifada Cell I, Hamas Supporters Gaza, 'Ashraf'; Women's Kutlah 1, Women's Kutlah 2. Others like 'Nasr' had studied Islamic thinking to a far greater extent, and consequently did not need to defer to the experts.

¹⁰⁰ Some younger ordinary members often referred the more intricate questions to 'the experts'. Though this may have been partly an abdication of the responsibility to acquire knowledge, they may equally have been wary of expressing a 'wrong' opinion which I would subsequently erroneously construe as representative of the IM, or they may simply not have been used to a researcher expressing interest in their opinion. As they expressed their opinions on matters about which they felt knowledgeable confidently, this attitude can also be construed as simple modesty, rooted in an awareness of their limitations.

¹⁰¹ Hamas *Shūrā* Council (Yassin II, Abu Shannab IV); Mujamma' Board (Shamma', Muslih); Board of one of Mujamma's Women Centres ('Iman'); Islamist Charity Board in Khan Yunis ('Ibrahim'); Board al-Jam'iyyah al-Shabbat (Board Members al-Shabbat); IUG's Men's Student Council (Masri), IUG's Women's Student Council (Women's Kutlah 1). I did not obtain verbal confirmation of this practice regarding Khalas.

convince the others, accepts the majority opinion on the basis of *tawāfuq* (harmony).¹⁰² The men's Kutlah-led Student Council at the IUG appears to operate a simple majority rule, in which a decision needs the consent of only four out of seven.¹⁰³ Yet, they too aim at working on the basis of *tawāfuq*.¹⁰⁴ Illustrative of this is, in the words of the 1997 President, the "brotherly" consultation between the outgoing SC, the Kutlah's regional representatives and other active Kutlah members to decide on the Kutlah's SC candidates in lieu of internal elections (rendered impossible by the political situation).¹⁰⁵ Though the possibility of dissent is acknowledged, it is expected that differences of opinion can be discussed in an atmosphere of harmony.

The basis on which most decisions are made, appears in all institutions to be rational reasoning on the principle of *maṣlahah mursalah* (considerations of public interest).¹⁰⁶ Revelation was only so far important as it set the boundaries (the "red line", as some called it) within which decisions could be taken. Qur'ān and *Sunnah* appear to be consulted only when it is unclear whether a decision falls within these boundaries.

Instances of constitutional-type decision-making in an opposition movement like the IM occur only infrequently. Besides foundational discussions concerning rules and by-laws when a charity is founded (which are circumscribed by law and tradition, and thus not

¹⁰² Board Members al-Shabbat. The example they gave was of 5 versus 2. Abu Shannab IV, Shamma'; 'Iman'; Abu Dhughri, Women's Kutlah 1 also directly implied the principle of *tawāfuq*.

¹⁰³ Masri, referring to al-Kutlah's 7-strong Administrative Council rather than the 9-strong Student Council.

¹⁰⁴ Masri.

¹⁰⁵ Abu Dhughri.

¹⁰⁶ Abu Shannab IV (Hamam), Shamma' (Mujamma'), 'Iman' (Mujamma's Women Centre), Musa II (Khalas), Masri (Men's Kutlah), Women's Kutlah 1 (Women's Kutlah).

wholly paradigmatic of the IM),¹⁰⁷ examples of decisions which could be said to be of constitutional quality are the decision by the Brotherhood to create Hamas in 1987/1988, the decision to allow for the creation of a separate political party which would recognise the Oslo framework (under protest) in order to gain official legal status, and the decision not to participate in the first national Palestinian elections of 1996. Though the decision to form Hamas seems to have been the outcome of a (somewhat forced) dialogue between ordinary, younger members unwilling to any longer refrain from resistance activities and the leadership, which could be construed as a form of consultation, the circumstances in which it was taken were too chaotic and unique for it to be paradigmatic for the IM's general behaviour.¹⁰⁸

More representative was the extensive consultation upon which Hamas embarked around 1993 on how to respond to the Oslo Agreement and the subsequent arrival of a Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in Palestine.¹⁰⁹ This ultimately produced the decisions regarding Hizb al-Khalas and the Palestinian elections.¹¹⁰ 'Muhammad', a former cadre leader, described the process, saying

[T]he Ikhwan spread questionnaires about which political line to take, and how to deal with the PNA ... They asked many leaders – in Germany, Jordan, Bahrain, in prison in Israel. And they received many suggestions. One of them was to become a political

¹⁰⁷ The Mujamma', for instance, is registered under Ottoman law. However, this law does not specify, for instance, how a charity's Board is to be selected. The fact that Islamist charities have chosen the mechanism of elections is thus a reflection of Islamist values.

¹⁰⁸ References to existence of internal debate e.g. Abu-Amr, 'Hamas', p11; Ahmad, p18; Barghouti, 'Islamists', p133.

¹⁰⁹ Reference to this consultative process is made in Rashad, p42; Milton-Edwards, pp163-166; Usher, pp72-73, 77; Menachem Klein, 'Competing Brothers: The Web of Hamas-PLO Relations', *Terrorism and Political Violence* 8(2), p122. In 1991, a similarly extensive consultation ("like a questionnaire") seems to have been held to decide whether "to focus on building more popular support, on building more charities, or on engaging in more military action" ('Muhammad').

¹¹⁰ A third element to the consultation was the issue of whether to continue military operations against Israel or to accept some form of cease-fire. Cf. Usher, pp75-77.

organisation, another to change the name of Hamas but continue operating in the same way. A whole group suggested to work in a political organisation, and maintain the military force separately. The result was: we'll make a political organisation – like Khalas – to deal with the PNA and maintain the military arm.

Abu Shannab, in prison at the time, confirmed he and his fellow Hamas prisoners had been consulted on these issues.¹¹¹ The Chairman of Hizb al-Khalas, Ahmad Bahr, likewise corroborated that a consultative process had taken place to decide whether to establish a political party, and that, though some were against it, a majority within Hamas supported it. Hammad, 'Iyad', the Intifada Cell, 'Ashraf' and 'Nasr' all described an internal consultation regarding the creation of Hizb al-Khalas (as well as the issue of the elections), and confirmed that the Hamas *Shūrā* Council decided to support the idea.¹¹² Apart from Hammad, they themselves had not been consulted – at the time they were teenage activists and did not expect to be – but they, like other students I talked with, were fully abreast of the pros and cons, indicating they identified with the process.

Though it has been impossible to ascertain exactly how extensive this consultation was, it included not just the central *Shūrā* Council, but also the various minor *shūrā* councils, both regional and in the prisons. The fact that so many ordinary members knew about it, and knew individual leaders' standpoints,¹¹³ also seems to suggest that local leaders discussed the issues informally with their 'constituencies'. It thus seems that, within its own organisation, Hamas practises what it preaches regarding the need to include a wide

¹¹¹ Abu Shannab I.

¹¹² Hammad II, Intifada Cell I. Only Haniyyah I insisted that the creation of Khalas was not a decision of the movement, but of individuals within Hamas. Yet, he too conceded that a consultation had taken place regarding the creation of a political party. Cf. also Gaess' interview with Abu Marzook who took Haniyyah's line (p122).

¹¹³ Intifada Cell I quoted the names of two prominent members who were against. This was likewise common knowledge among IUG students who had been active during the Intifada (cf. 'Ashraf'; Various Pro-Hamas Students).

section of the 'population' in the consultative process regarding 'constitutional' issues – while the executive role is reserved for the elected leaders. It is unclear, beyond the fact that the central *Shūrā* Council had the final say, whether the local councils had mandated their representatives with their vote, or whether the representatives expressed their own preference after having listened to the local council's advice; from the description of the Intifada Cell, the latter appears to have been the case.

7.4.2 DISSENT

Though there are numerous instances of publicly acknowledged dissenting factions within the IM,¹¹⁴ I will focus on a controversy which arose amidst the general debate regarding Hamas's attitude towards the Oslo Agreement, around the question whether to participate in the first national elections in 1996 for the newly-created Palestinian Legislative Council. Many Islamists considered participation to imply recognition of the Oslo Agreement, as the elections took place within its framework. Deeming the Agreement an unjust, and unworkable, basis for peace, they refused to lend it legitimacy. Non-participation, however, meant losing the opportunity to influence the creation of a Palestinian state from the inside.

Already in November 1993, Yassin stated from his prison that

Islamists are divided between those supporting participation [in elections] and those opposing it.

¹¹⁴ Cf. debate regarding resistance versus education in early 1980s which resulted in the creation of Islamic Jihad; debate on the creation of Hamas; debate on the creation of Khalas.

His own position was that

I consider it better to participate than to abstain, providing that the [autonomy] council be empowered with legislative privileges.¹¹⁵

Hamas's representative in Jordan, Ibrahim Ghosheh, represented the rejectionist camp, stating in January 1994 that Hamas would not participate in "any elections associated with autonomy".¹¹⁶ Much of the money earmarked for Hamas's armed wing, the Qassam Brigades, appears to have come through Hamas's office in Jordan.¹¹⁷ Consequently, the Amman leadership had a considerable amount of influence over the Gazan leadership concerning issues of peace and armed resistance. This regularly seems to have led to tensions – as when Ghosheh and Nazzal tried to wreck the agreement wrought by a reconciliation committee made up of high-ranking Hamas and Fatah leaders, after the November 1994 bloodshed in which 13 Hamas activists died at the hands of the PNA.¹¹⁸ In contrast to the Gazan leaders, the Amman leadership, for lack of a local base, appears to have almost free of contractual obligations towards members. Resultantly, its policies were informed almost solely by geo-strategical concerns, heavily influenced by the interests of the Jordanian Brotherhood, and 'anti-Israeli' regimes such as the Syrian and the Iranian. Little consideration seems to have been given to the impact of these policies on the IM's members inside Palestine.

Initially, some younger Gazan leaders, notably Ismail Haniyyah and Khalid al-Hindi, decided to dissent from the Ghosheh line (which was ultimately endorsed by majority

¹¹⁵ *Al-Wasat*, 01.11.1993, quoted in Usher, p73. Rashad also quotes an article in *al-Hayat* (01.11.1993) stating the same position, based on a letter from Yassin to Hamas supporters, smuggled out of prison (p41).

¹¹⁶ *Al-Nahar*, 10.01.1994, quoted in Usher, p73.

¹¹⁷ Klein, pp124-125. Klein implies, probably rightly so, that ultimate control of the Brigades was in the hands of the Amman leadership.

¹¹⁸ Klein, p132(n45/46). Hammad II, Musa I and 'Muhammad' confirmed the existence of these tensions.

decision),¹¹⁹ and publicly declared their intention to stand for election. Eventually Haniyyah and Hindi withdrew. In Haniyyah's words,

There was an *ijtihad* that I might stand for election. ... But when I saw that that would endanger the unity of the Islamic movement, and also endangered what Hamas had publicised, I preferred to withdraw, and both I and Khalid al-Hindi were happy with this withdrawal.¹²⁰

Haniyyah insists it was voluntary. However, pressure may have been applied. IUG students recalled a leaflet being distributed, attacking Haniyyah and Hindi for standing for election.¹²¹ Some thought this leaflet was the work of the Israelis, others said it was signed by Hamas members, but not the leadership. It is possible the Jordanian leadership had a hand in it. James Zogby, one of the international observers present at the elections, wrote of the Hamas leadership, despite initially deciding "to support the elections and run for the [Legislative] Council", being "eventually forced by their outside leadership to withdraw their candidates" – a reading of events which appears to be corroborated by Klein and Sayigh.¹²²

Interestingly from the point of view of consensus-building, the compromise reached between the two sides was that, though Hamas candidates were asked to withdraw, Hamas members were left free to vote according to conscience. Disclaiming

¹¹⁹ Haniyyah I. Cf. Zahhar's statement at the conclusion of the PNA-Hamas dialogue in Cairo, 18-20.12.1995: "The stand taken by Hamas on elections has not changed. Hamas will not take part in the elections." ('Hamas refuses to join electoral process', *Jerusalem Times*, 29.12.1995, p2). Others specifically referring to this debate: 'Muhammad', 'Ahmad', 'Ashraf'.

¹²⁰ Haniyyah I. 'Ashraf': "[Haniyyah and Hindi] retreated because they knew that if they stood for election they would split the movement. They thought of this carefully and preferred not to stand for the sake of the movement."

¹²¹ 'Ashraf', 'Ahmad', 'Khalid' IV, Various Pro-Hamas Students.

¹²² James Zogby, 'Observing the Palestinian elections', *Jerusalem Times*, 02.02.1996, p5; Klein, p129; Sayigh, pp652-653.

responsibility for a leaflet, distributed throughout the West Bank on December 25, 1995, calling on voters to boycott the elections, Zahhar stated publicly:

It is the opinion of the movement that no individual is to be coerced into anything. We will leave it to each and every individual to express themselves as they see fit.¹²³

The truth of this statement was born out by the fact that both international and Palestinian observers noted the high turnout of Hamas supporters during the elections. Zogby recorded a “90% turnout in some of the Hamas-dominated areas of Gaza”.¹²⁴ Quds Press stated that Hamas “played a larger role than expected [...] urg[ing] its members to vote for those candidates whom Hamas preferred.” Indeed, according to Quds Press, the election planners found Hamas supporters “standing and leading the lines of voters.”¹²⁵

This particular example of dissent during consultation is instructive in numerous ways. First, the final decision went against Yassin’s stated views, who, though in prison at the time, was still the much revered spiritual leader of the movement. His will is thus not necessarily law, corroborating my conclusion that Hamas sees the Head of State as bound by the outcome of consultations (Chapter 6). Second, Yassin’s, Haniyyah’s and Hindi’s stances testify to the existence of a pluralistic climate where both sides felt sufficiently free to express their opinions. Third, Hamas was willing to appear divided in public, thereby undergirding my conclusion that the IM acknowledges there may be more than one right answer, and undermining the *essentialist* claim that Islamists cannot

¹²³ ‘Hamas refuses to join electoral process’, *Jerusalem Times*, 29.12.1995, p2.

¹²⁴ Zogby, p5.

¹²⁵ ‘Hamas – an active factor in the elections’, quoted from Quds Press in *Jerusalem Times*, 26.01.1996, p3. Interestingly, rather than hailing this participation as support for democracy, Quds Press blames Hamas for “interven[ing] in the elections”, creating “a great deal of confusion” and quotes a “source close to Fatah” as saying that “Hamas played a very deceptive game” by first boycotting the elections, then encouraging participation.

be but anti-pluralistic because their predecessors, the medieval jurists, condemned *fitnah* (civil strife, and thus, by implication, dissent).¹²⁶ Even the eventual compromise reached, allowing Hamas voters to vote according to conscience while demanding that Hamas leaders withdraw their candidacies, was a clear sign from the leadership that it recognised that its position was right only insofar as it had been agreed upon by majority vote. Other courses of action might equally be morally right.

Fourth, Haniyyah's and Hindi's withdrawal illustrates their commitment, not only to the consensual unity of the movement (*tawāfuq*), but also to the institution of majority rule. Rather than creating a break-away party, they accepted the majority's decision. Fifth, despite Haniyyah initially opposing the winning side, he is still among the ten most influential Hamas leaders and sits on the prestigious PNA-Hamas liaison committee, together with Abu Shannab and Zahhar.¹²⁷ Though critics might argue that this prominence might have been the price exacted for agreeing to withdraw, it is equally possible that his present prominence indicates that Hamas is not afraid of internal dissent.

There are other instances in which dissenters, or dissenting factions, were either not tolerated or decided to split from the IM. I have already alluded to the split between the Brotherhood and Islamic Jihad (footnote 114), and the ousting of Hijaz Burbar at the time of the Red Crescent incident (Chapter 5). Other instances are the breaking away of two IM leaders in the mid-1990s to create alternative Islamic parties,¹²⁸ and the severing of ties with erstwhile IM leader, Imad Faluji, who since has become the Minister of Information in Arafat's government. In the first case, the split was a result of two

¹²⁶ Cf. Sadowski's explanation of the classical Orientalist (*essentialist*) argument (p16). The notion that Muslim society is monolithic still underlies neo-Orientalist explanations.

¹²⁷ Cf. 'Start of Mediations between the PA and Hamas to Stop the Campaign of Mutual Accusations', *Sawt al-Jami'ah*, 21.12.1998, p1.

¹²⁸ *Hizb al-Ittihad al-Islami* (Khadr Mahjis) and *Hizb al-Nasar al-Islami* (Mahmud Abu Dan).

irreconcilable positions, the one advocating violent resistance, the other commending Islamisation of society and the forbearance of violent resistance until the time was right. If the two factions had remained together, those advocating restraint would have suffered from the inevitable Israeli repercussions which violent resistance evoke, and have been hindered in their own cause of action. The resulting split can thus not be taken as a typical example of intolerance of dissent since tolerance of this particular dissenting view would have led to the curtailment of the movement as a whole.

In the second case, the friction seems to have been caused by Burbar's unauthorised participation in unacceptable violence against fellow Palestinians.¹²⁹ Because the friction appears to have been precipitated by his adhering to a different set of behavioural rules, which undermined the IM's political credibility, his case is likewise not paradigmatic of the IM's attitude towards ideological dissent. The break-away cases similarly seem to say little about ideological intolerance. Since none of the rank and file interviewed appeared to know what these parties stood for, except that it was rumoured that they received funding from the PNA to set up rival parties and so undermine the IM, it seems that theirs was a split based on a mixture of incompatibility of personalities and ambition. One noticeable ideological difference is the latter's apparent acceptance of the Oslo Agreement's political framework. Yet, the fact that relations between Hamas and Hizb al-Khalas, created by ex-Hamas leaders on a similar ideological position, are cordial seems to indicate that the lack of cordiality between Hamas and these break-aways is not ideologically motivated.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ There also appear to have been some moral problems.

¹³⁰ *Al-Risalah*, which is edited in the same building in which Khalas has its headquarters, and is generally seen as the mouthpiece of Khalas, often defends Hamas in its pages. Abu Shannab publicly lauded Khalas as an example of 'shūrā democracy' (*Democracy*, p8) and confirmed the links between it, *al-Risalah* and Hamas in Gaess' interview with him (*Middle East Policy* VI(1), p116-117). Yassin attended a Khalas political rally ('Daoud'). I often saw Haniyyah (Hamas) and Musa (Khalas) talking together at the IUG.

I have not been able to establish exactly why Hamas severed its ties with Faluji, once a prominent Hamas leader and chief editor of the IM's now defunct newspaper, *al-Watan*. *The Jerusalem Times* reported that Faluji was expelled "for exceeding certain limits, including a statement that Hamas would participate in the elections".¹³¹ Judging by Haniyyah's explanation, the severing was the culmination of a sustained set of disagreements. Faluji's refusal to stand down as candidate in the 1996 elections, besides his implicating Hamas, was the final straw.¹³² Faluji was appointed ombudsman by Arafat, even before the elections,¹³³ and became Information Minister at the formation of the Cabinet after. He thus must have been in close contact with Arafat prior to the split. Possibly, the split was engineered, so Arafat could include a Hamas member in his Cabinet without unduly angering the Israelis, or provoked by Faluji, so he could take up his Ministerial post (for which he probably had to stand for election). Consequently, one can deduce few conclusions from this incident regarding the IM's attitude towards dissent.

Finally, it must be underlined that there have been no recorded incidents in which leaders of the IM have resorted to political assassination (see Chapter 6). Nor have I discovered incidents of forceful coercion within the IM – apart from the hardly serious complaint against one particular leader having a forceful personality, capable of silencing weaker ones.¹³⁴

This does not, of course, mean that suppression of dissent does not exist. Taking Steven Lukes' three-dimensional view of power, the emphasis in the IM's political culture on respect for and trust in elders could well suppress dissent before it is formed – whether

¹³¹ *Jerusalem Times*, 15.12.1995, p2.

¹³² Haniyyah I.

¹³³ *Jerusalem Times*, *loc.cit.*

¹³⁴ I will keep these sources anonymous.

by controlling what is permissible to discuss, or by encouraging unquestioning belief that what the elders say is in everyone's best interest.¹³⁵ However, the open debates I witnessed in my target groups, the criticisms voiced against leaders (even if never uttered to the people in question) and the existence of a plurality of views (including on such 'taboos' as the right of Israel to exist),¹³⁶ suggest the IM's political culture to be relatively open. Where dissent *is* circumscribed, it is by religious taboos – although, in the absence of a central religious authority in Sunni Islam, even such taboos can be challenged if one can make a rational case for one's heterodoxy.

7.4.3 TOLERANCE TOWARDS IDEOLOGICAL OTHERS

To shed light on the IM's attitude towards political/ideological others I will analyse two specific instances. One is the case of the IUG where the IM enjoys a relative amount of hegemony, particularly at the student level where the Kutlah has dominated the Student Council since the IUG's beginning. Because it is a near-hegemonic situation,¹³⁷ it provides a model for the IM's behaviour if it were to come to near-hegemonic power in Palestine overnight. Though obviously the IUG is but one particular situation, and thus not an adequate sample for generalisation (though this study's covering the past 20 years somewhat neutralises the influence of particular personalities on the sample), it is also the IM's flagship, as it is the only university in which the IM has had continuous and

¹³⁵ Steven Lukes, *Power: a Radical View*.

¹³⁶ Some (e.g. Yassin, Abu Shannab; see Gaess' interview with latter) argued that Israel has the right to exist for the duration of an indefinite cease-fire if it granted the Palestinians the pre-1967 Palestinian areas. Abu Shannab (I) suggested that such a cease-fire might be transformed by a future generation into a permanent peace if relationships between the two peoples and living conditions among the Palestinians had improved. Dukhan even went so far as to accept to live with the Israelis in one democratic state, if there was true equality. Though cynics may dismiss these arguments as insincere, they are in ideological opposition to the original IM argument that all of Palestine is Islamic *waqf* (religious endowment), and thus belongs eternally to the (Palestinian) Muslims. As such, they are significant and an expression of plurality.

¹³⁷ This is made worse by the system sported by the IUG (and al-Azhar) which grants control of the SC to the party with the most votes, rather than allocating seats according to the percentage of votes won.

significant influence, and this is recognised by others. What happens there, will be considered by other Palestinians as reflective of the IM as a whole. One can thus assume that what happens at the IUG is closely monitored by the IM leadership, and to some extent condoned (although the Kutlah leadership has considerable autonomy from Hamas). Consequently, what happens at the IUG can be considered relatively reflective of the IM's, or at least Hamas's, political culture.

But first, I will discuss the IM's attitude towards the Palestinian Model Parliament – Women and Legislation (MP), a project involving charities concerned with women's issues aiming to formulate legislation to further women's rights. As the MP has strong affiliations with the Left, the relationship is an interesting illustration of how the IM interacts with ideological others. Among those interviewed, there were two trends. One is illustrated by Zahhar's dismissal of the MP as a "foreign body in our culture", sponsored by Western funds, "looking for the destruction of Islam", organised by a group of women who "had had a bad experience in married life".¹³⁸ Zahhar supported the handing out of inflammatory leaflets condemning the MP as anti-Islamic – though the leaflets' authors seem to have been from the Islamic establishment, not the IM – and appeared uninterested in dialogue on the grounds that the MP is a 'foreign body'.¹³⁹

The other trend, though disagreeing with the MP's line of argument, was open to dialogue. Hammad, for instance, addressed one of the MP's sessions, and wrote thoughtful articles in the media.¹⁴⁰ Commenting on the inflammatory leaflets, Hammad said:

¹³⁸ Zahhar III.

¹³⁹ I did not meet any others from this camp. But as there seems to be considerable support among conservative Muslims in general for the inflammatory leaflets and sermons denouncing the MP, it is unlikely that Zahhar is the only Hamas member holding this attitude.

¹⁴⁰ Others in this camp: Abu Shannab IV, Shamma'; Badawil, Musa I, Hamdan; Women's Kutlah 1.

if someone says anything against Islam, ... I should not accuse him using sharp words. [...] I believe this battle between the Islamists and the MP should not take this shape. ... [T]he first mistake of the MP is that ... they didn't begin with preparing the people, [gradually persuading them to adopt their views]. [...] [T]he mistake of the Islamists is that they started to accuse the MP of receiving orders from the West, that they are enemies, aiming to spread prostitution and adultery. I don't believe this. [...] [B]oth sides should understand each other, [without shouting at each other]. I went to the MP, stayed about two hours, and discussed all the issues with them. I found that they misunderstood many facts of Islam.¹⁴¹

Though the MP would probably retort that Hammad similarly misunderstands many facts about women's issues, Hammad not only preached dialogue but practised it. In contrast to Zahhar's attitude, Hammad's approach portrays a deep confidence in his own value system, which allows him to interact with ideological others, without fear.

Though he clearly hoped to persuade the MP of his point of view (mirroring the MP's hope to convert the IM), he appeared likewise willing to listen. Further illustrating this, Khalas's Women's Committee, headed by Yusra Hamdan, agreed to study Fatima Mernissi's *The Veil and the Male Elite*, a critique of the notion that the *hijāb* is ordained by the Qur'ān, and discuss it with members of the MP.¹⁴²

Thus, though a section of the IM still displays the pre-Intifada prejudice against the Left regarding women's issues (in Zahhar's case, this prejudice is considerably less regarding other issues), another section is open to dialogue and tolerates other-thinkers. Since the latter includes some of the younger leaders, and appears to be larger (if my small sample

¹⁴¹ Hammad II.

¹⁴² Hamdan, Marwa Qassim I (director of Gazan branch of MP).

of nine versus one is anything to go by),¹⁴³ it is likely that this second approach is, or will become, the predominant one.

Case Study of the Islamic University

The following is based on eye witness accounts of alumni and staff who were at the IUG during the 1980s, and of students and staff who were at the IUG during the time of my fieldwork (1997-1998). Time restraints and the difficulty of finding suitably knowledgeable alumni without having access to the IUG's archives, have meant that the number of alumni eye witnesses is limited. I have supplemented their accounts with observations of the IUG's history as chronicled in Western discourse.

IUG students can be divided into three categories: Kutlah members, opposition party members, and those who vote for the Kutlah in SC elections but are insufficiently supportive of the IM to become Kutlah members. Though student support for the Kutlah usually amounts to 70-80% during elections, active Kutlah membership is much lower.¹⁴⁴ 'Yahya', an alumnus, recounted that, being a religious person, he joined the Kutlah's election campaign in his first year, but later withdrew because he felt himself drawn into a "vortex, where more commitment is demanded than I want to give". From then on he avoided all parties. This testimony indicates that it was possible to be non-aligned – a reading which is corroborated by testimonies of students who were at the IUG during the 1990s and similarly remained non-aligned.¹⁴⁵ That there is a

¹⁴³ I have not been able to discuss the MP with others.

¹⁴⁴ Hard facts are difficult to come by – but, from observation, at least one third (if not more) of the students appear to be unaffiliated (cf. also 'Khalid' IV).

¹⁴⁵ Cf. 'Mahmud' & brother, 'Khalid' III, 'Hisham'.

constituency of non-aligned Kutlah voters, enhances the contractarian nature of the Kutlah's power since it must annually woo the non-aligned with proper conduct.

Despite the opposition blocs being less in number, they seem to have been as active as the Kutlah. 'Yahya' recalled that canvassing during election time was chaotic with all parties clamouring for one's attention – indicating that the opposition was allowed to operate. Election tensions sometimes erupted into violence.¹⁴⁶ But this seems to have been largely the result of the violence of occupation and the lack of proper communication – resulting in an ideological intolerance that has since loosened up.¹⁴⁷ When I observed the elections of December 1997, all parties were free to organise rallies and distribute pamphlets. Each party was given an area to display posters and organise parties, commensurate with the percentage it had received in the previous election. Significantly, the Kutlah's allocation was less than deserved on the basis of previous percentages while Fatah received more.

At present, opposition parties seem to be able to express their views freely.¹⁴⁸ Each party has its own section on the public notice boards, and can obtain permission to organise an event. All seem to be able to organise their internal affairs without interference. There appears to be regular contact between the various leaderships and the Kutlah-led SC, the latter stressing that it represents the whole university, not just the Kutlah. General Assemblies are held regularly, opposition members appear to be able to address them (see p278ff) – though, at times, they stay away in a bid to invalidate the

¹⁴⁶ 'Yahya' described the 1985-86 elections as an "Intifada inside the university". See p273 for context.

¹⁴⁷ See also Chapter 4.

¹⁴⁸ Following based on interviews with (ex)-SC-members Masri, Taha, Abu Dhughri, 'Yusuf'; then Shabibah leader Sami Shahin; Various Pro-Hamas Students; non-aligned, Islamically inclined alumni 'Khalid', 'Mahmud'; pro-Fatah 'Hisham'; Various Non-aligned Students.

Assembly (as a minimum quota is needed).¹⁴⁹ Besides the annual SC elections, each department organises annual elections for its own educational club. According to a number of interviewees, those elected are often non-aligned, Fatah, Islamic Jihad or PFLP supporters.¹⁵⁰

In the 1980s, two PFLP alumni claim, opposition activists were regularly prevented by the Administration (which was only partly controlled by the IM) and the SC from staging demonstrations. They recounted how they were prohibited from taking leaflets exhorting students to resistance activities onto the IUG's campus:

We were not afraid of Israeli soldiers, bringing pamphlets from the West Bank; but we were afraid of the doormen – it felt like drugs smuggling. [...] This was always the problem: when we wanted to do something against the Israelis, [the administration and the SC] prevented us. Their argument was: Israel will close the university [when you demonstrate] – so, you are collaborators [if you demonstrate] because you clearly want to close the university [by acting against the Israelis].¹⁵¹

Islamists confirmed that such resistance activities were opposed.¹⁵² Yet, this opposition was as much based on the fundamental disagreement regarding resistance between the PLO and the IM, as it was a struggle for hegemony. As detailed in Chapter 4, the IM did not believe the time for resistance was right and saw education as a better

¹⁴⁹ 'Khalid' IV.

¹⁵⁰ Abu Dhughri, 'Khalid' III, Various Pro-Hamas Students, Various Non-Aligned Students. The fact that Shabibah leader Shahin was so upset about not winning his club election (see further) indicates, despite his blaming the Kutlah, that he had expected to win, thus suggesting it is perfectly possible to win without being a Kutlah supporter.

¹⁵¹ 'Ziad' & 'Husam'.

¹⁵² Abu Sibah (then Kutlah leader, now Dean of Student Affairs).

preparation for the eventual battle for liberation.¹⁵³ Activities that could lead to suspension of education, were condemned. Arguably, the Islamists manipulated this logic to curb their rivals' activities. But that their logic was not just Machiavellian, and rooted in genuine conviction, can be gleaned from the fact that non-Islamist staff similarly argued for curbing resistance activities on campus;¹⁵⁴ that the IM had always emphasised education; and that the memory of the Brotherhood's near-extinction under Nasser in the 1950s and 1960s was still sufficiently fresh to justify the IM's fear of extinction following premature resistance.¹⁵⁵

Despite opposition by Islamists, non-aligned staff and Board members to resistance-related activities on campus, the PLO factions did succeed in demonstrating, and by all accounts quite regularly. On one occasion, despite Islamist refusal to commemorate Land Day with a demonstration, PLO supporters managed to organise one, leading, according to a PFLP student leader at the time, to the Israeli army surrounding the IUG, arresting PLO supporters and closing the IUG.¹⁵⁶ The fact that Zakariyyah Thalmas, the IUG's 1980s Fatah student leader, could complain that the Kutlah imitated events initiated by Fatah (such as commemorating Land Day), suggests likewise that Fatah was able to be active.¹⁵⁷ As there are also records of non-resistance-related activities by the opposition – the 1983 strike by pro-PLO students and staff against the IUG's Administration being but one¹⁵⁸ – it seems the opposition had a fair amount of leeway,

¹⁵³ Even during the Intifada, Hamas kept urging teachers to teach and students to study, if need be privately (cf. frequency of these calls in communiqués; see footnote 86). Nairab (secularist, former Dean), 'Ziad' & 'Husam' (PFLP) confirmed this was the IM's attitude during the 1980s.

¹⁵⁴ Nairab, Abu 'Ali (then Dean of Student Affairs).

¹⁵⁵ Cf. Milton-Edwards, pp46-55.

¹⁵⁶ 'Adli Yazuri.

¹⁵⁷ Thalmas.

¹⁵⁸ See Chapter 4.

even at a time when the alleged 'thuggish' behaviour of the IM against opposition was at its height.

This leads me to 'everyday violence' as a means of suppressing opposition and divergent lifestyles. Western discourse, mirroring the local PFLP's narrative, is full of accusations of everyday violence. Milton-Edwards chronicles the case of one PFLP activist who was prevented from standing for the SC (by the Administration, not the IM), and harassed and attacked with nitric acid (allegedly by the Kutlah) until he made an appearance in the mosque.¹⁵⁹ Two former PFLP activists I interviewed likewise told of an incident in which a PFLP student leader was chased across campus and barely escaped being knifed,¹⁶⁰ while another PFLP leader described his own severe beating.¹⁶¹ A former student leader of the women's PFLP, Marwa Qassim, similarly recounted how a fellow activist lost a finger during a demonstration for the right to go bare-headed when the IUG's doormen forcefully closed the gate on her hands.¹⁶²

It is questionable how representative these attacks are of 1980s student life. It is certainly untrue that they were unique to the IM. Most incidents occurred in the context of particular periods of tension in which all parties indulged in violence. Both the latter instances mentioned above happened against the background of the 1985-1986 clashes between the PFLP and the IM, triggered by the mass release of PFLP activists from Israeli prisons.¹⁶³ They were a series of attacks and counter-attacks. For each case blamed on the IM by the PFLP, the IM blames the PFLP for a similar atrocity. The acid attack on Milton-Edwards' 'Bassam' can be 'matched' by the acid attack on Zakariyyah

¹⁵⁹ Milton-Edwards, pp113-114.

¹⁶⁰ 'Ziad' & 'Husam' on Hasa (Hasu) 'Aleyan (later killed by bomb).

¹⁶¹ 'Adli Yazuri.

¹⁶² Qassim II.

¹⁶³ Cf. Jarro' I (PFLP); Schiff & Ya'ari, p225.

Sanwar,¹⁶⁴ the near-knifing of the PFLP activist by the near-fatal knifing of an Islamist activist during the 1983 tensions,¹⁶⁵ the crushing of the female PFLP activist's fingers by the knife wound female Islamist Yusra Hamdan received on her face at the hands of PFLP activists.¹⁶⁶

Despite their prominence in Western discourse, the number of serious incidents seems to be limited. The two (male) former PFLP activists could only recount one incident in which nitric acid was (successfully) used against a PFLP activist while Islamists always refer to Sanwar when discussing acid. Likewise, the case of Yusra Hamdan is famous for its unicity. Moreover, and despite the fighting, close friendships existed across party lines. Thalmas was close to some of the Islamist leaders, particularly Yahya Sanwar, then senior Kutlah leader, whose family came from the same pre-1948 village as Thalmas's. Said Thalmas, "[Sanwar is] my personal friend - till now. I have a very good relationship with him and his family".¹⁶⁷ Another example is that of a PFLP leader's close friendship with Abu Sibah, currently Dean of Student Affairs and one of the Kutlah's student leaders during the early 1980s.¹⁶⁸

Since the Intifada, violence has abated. The violence of the 1980s thus appears to have been more reflective of the occupation, than of Gaza's political culture (however heavy-handed this still can be). It seems to have been exacerbated by Israeli stirring with the help of collaborators.¹⁶⁹ It was intensified by the deep divisions between the IM and the PLO concerning the issue of resistance and the place of Islam in society. But the

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Haniyyah II.

¹⁶⁵ Haniyyah II. Abu Sibah refers to a similar incident.

¹⁶⁶ Haniyyah II, Qassim II.

¹⁶⁷ Thalmas.

¹⁶⁸ 'Muhammad' (relative of PFLP leader).

¹⁶⁹ Cf. Abu Shannab I, Jarro' I (PFLP). See Chapters 4-5.

fighting appears to have been about control of the university, rather than ideas. Where ideas were attacked, as in the case of the PFLP activists refusing to wear the *hijāb*, the ideological clash had become violent because it was played out in the context of an overall struggle for control.

That the Kutlah's general approach is persuasion through reasoning rather than violent intimidation can be gleaned from various testimonies. 'Yahya' maintained that, though Kutlah members used his religiosity to put mental pressure on him to join them, they never used force. 'Khalid' corroborated this for the 1990s.¹⁷⁰ As already mentioned in Chapter 5, Qassim, the female PFLP student activist quoted above, insisted that using violence to impose views was "not typically Hamas" – despite her friend having lost a finger in clashes.¹⁷¹

According to 'Yahya', if one talked positively about Darwin in class, the Kutlah would deal with you, not by silencing you, but by publishing a leaflet, or bringing a book that would contradict your argument.¹⁷² At present, according to both Islamists and non-Islamists, any political or ideological view can be expressed in the classroom.¹⁷³ Some recounted heated discussions between Islamists and leftists in classrooms. Michael Jensen (the anthropologist discussed in Chapter 2) confirmed that in 1998 one student in his class regularly expressed Marxist-inspired views without being ostracised.¹⁷⁴ Importantly, the IUG library contains a sizeable collection of Western books on philosophy, politics, sociology, anthropology.

¹⁷⁰ 'Khalid' IV.

¹⁷¹ Qassim I.

¹⁷² This contrasts sharply with Milton-Edwards' account of PFLP activist 'Bassam', leading one to wonder whether the troubles of 'Bassam' were more to do with his activism than his views.

¹⁷³ Students at Student Affairs, 'Khalid' III, Various Non-Aligned Students (including a self-professed agnostic).

¹⁷⁴ Jensen.

Some of Hamas's Gazan critics argue that the Kutlah's (and the IUG's in general) present respect for opposition parties is not reflective of its deepest views but enforced by the presence of the PNA. This argument is somewhat flawed in that there are myriad ways of harassing the opposition and preventing it from expressing itself without ostensibly breaking the law. Moreover, given the fact that the SC's members are regularly imprisoned for being Hamas supporters, they do not have much to lose in incurring the PNA's wrath. Yet, even if this argument is taken at face value, it must be noted that the Kutlah still wins a three-quarter majority, five years after Arafat returned to Gaza – despite its leaders, members and infrastructure experiencing regular harassment from Arafat's security forces, and the enormous pressure on the IUG's Shabibah to gain more votes. During these past years, the Kutlah could arguably not have engaged in the same kind of violent intimidation that PLO supporters accused it of during the 1980s (Chapter 4). The fact that the Kutlah has maintained its massive electoral lead despite that – the factual veracity of which lead was confirmed for the 1997 elections by my own independent exit poll conducted as part of my survey¹⁷⁵ – does seem to indicate that it inspires genuine confidence among its electorate.

Shabibah-Kutlah Relations 1997-1998

To gain further insight into the Kutlah's attitude towards opposition, I asked the IUG's Shabibah leadership of 1997-1998 for their view of the Kutlah-led SC, a view which I subsequently corroborated with the SC and other students. They complained vociferously about the limitations put on their political activities by the SC but, upon verification, on almost all counts their complaints seem to have been exaggerated or

¹⁷⁵ Of the 636 respondents (intercepted as they left the voting building), 81.9% stated they had voted for the Kutlah.

misleading.¹⁷⁶ Particularly intriguing is that their portrayal of the Kutlah is exactly as one would expect the Kutlah to be from a *modernist* perspective, and that only upon corroboration does one discover the distortion in their claims.

First, the Shabibah claimed they had not been allowed to display political posters or distribute political leaflets. However, both the SC and non-partisan interviewees confirmed that the Shabibah had distributed political material which was highly critical of Hamas. Following the assassination of Hamas leader Muhya Sharif in April 1998, for example, the SC had not prevented the Shabibah from distributing leaflets blaming Hamas for the assassination. On another occasion, the Shabibah had distributed a newspaper (*Falastinuna*) with "very bad leaflets" inside it, accusing imprisoned Hamas leader Musa Abu Marzuk of stealing.¹⁷⁷ Two non-aligned students, sympathetic to, yet critical of the Islamists, told me independently that they had seen a poster explaining Fatah's view on Sharif's death on the public notice board reserved for Fatah publications.¹⁷⁸

Second, the Shabibah leaders declared that the Kutlah had allowed them only one day to put up election posters during the December 1997 student elections, by which time the latter had allegedly taken up most of the Shabibah space for election posters. Again, both the SC and independent observers claim that Fatah had been allocated one side of the main road leading through the university, the other side of the road having been reserved for the Kutlah.¹⁷⁹ Like the other parties, they had had three days to put up their posters. But, according to Kutlah leaders, they did not make use of that opportunity

¹⁷⁶ The Shabibah's point of view was expressed to me by Sami Shahin, senior member of the IUG's Shabibah Administrative Council.

¹⁷⁷ Abu Dhughri. Confirmed by 'Khalid' III.

¹⁷⁸ 'Khalid' III; Non-Aligned IUG Student.

¹⁷⁹ Abu Dhughri, Various Non-Aligned Students.

because of disorganisation.¹⁸⁰ A non-partisan lecturer at al-Azhar university and IUG alumni confirmed that it is not unusual for the Shabibah leadership to waste the time allocated for putting up posters in internal leadership squabbles.¹⁸¹ According to my own observation, all parties standing for election in 1997 were free to distribute election statements, put up election posters and organise election parties.

Third, the Shabibah leaders complained that they were never allowed to use the large, covered 'tent' (a permanent, open metal structure on campus) and were instead relegated to the, equally spacious, cafeteria. According to the SC, the 'tent' is only used on occasions concerning the majority of students, warranting the university coming to a standstill (noise made in the 'tent' penetrates most class-rooms). On all other occasions the cafeteria is used. Students, both Islamist and non-Islamist, confirmed that many smaller events organised by the Kutlah were held in the cafeteria and that, on occasion, the smaller political parties had organised university-wide events in the 'tent'.¹⁸²

Fourth, the Shabibah leaders stated that, though they felt able to criticise the Student Council in the General Assembly,

when I say something they do not like, they shout 'Allahu Akbar' and laugh.

In one incident, Shahin was attacked during a General Assembly meeting in December 1997 for arguing that the elections for the faculty educational clubs had been rigged. According to the victim,

¹⁸⁰ Abu Dhughri.

¹⁸¹ 'Yahya': "Sometimes Fatah people lack the skills as to how to [strategically] manipulate the [time and] place ... they waste time on who is the leader, who will give the speech, etc. Others, like Hamas, do not waste time."

¹⁸² 'Khalid' III&IV, 'Hisham', Various Non-Aligned Students.

They know I will win, so they create some obstacles to make me fail. I tried to prove this. My department has 13 students of which I have 9 on my side. When they read out the results, they said: there are 18 students, 8 voted for me, 10 for the other. I have the papers to prove I was right. After I said this, they got very angry and tried to fight.

The 1997 SC President commented, saying:

It is right that people fought with him, not because of the students' club, but because he was rude to the public. ... He was impolite to the people ... Those who attacked were [from different political backgrounds], not just Kutlah Islamiyyah. [...] If you look at the university's records, you will find that most of the people who won the elections [for the educational clubs] were not from the Kutlah. They are certainly not Islamic and maybe they are Shabibah or PFLP.¹⁸³

Non-partisan students confirmed that many of those elected in the elections for the educational clubs were indeed non-Islamists,¹⁸⁴ though I have been unable to corroborate this with records from the IUG's archives. As to this particular accusation of election rigging, it may be true, though I have not been able to verify it. Whatever the truth, however, the issue is whether such an incident is representative of IUG practice – as Shahin seemed to imply. Judging by the presence of non-aligned staff in the various colleges, and significant numbers of non-Kutlah representatives in the clubs, as well as the fact that Shahin was seriously upset he had not been elected (indicating that he had expected to be), it is unlikely that this practice is widespread.

The shouting and fighting during the General Assembly is more worrying from a *shūrā* point of view as it prevents true consultation. Student culture in Gaza tends towards the

¹⁸³ Abu Dhughri.

¹⁸⁴ See footnote 150.

heavy-handed, regardless of political affiliation – as exemplified by the fact that Shahin commented himself that “there was some good fighting with chairs” (throwing doubt on his own democratic credentials). The 1998 election campaign at al-Azhar, which is dominated by the Shabibah, was marred by an incident in which an excited Shabibah procession, led by the Vice President of the Gaza-wide Shabibah (not a student at al-Azhar), burst into the Hamas corner, tore down a wooden wall with posters, and trampled triumphantly on it.¹⁸⁵ This violent disposition is partly a result of the rough environment the refugee camps provide, partly of 50 years of occupation, with both Egyptian and Israeli rule having been more heavy-handed in Gaza than Jordanian and Israeli rule in the West Bank, and having prevented serious “institutionalized political forms of participation” from developing.¹⁸⁶ However, in contrast to the Azhar elections, the 1997 IUG elections I witnessed appear to have been without disturbances on campus.

Though I have been unable to attend a General Assembly, my observations of everyday student behaviour lead me to believe that there is a fair amount of freedom of expression – which these occasional scuffles do not seem to squash. When I interviewed the Shabibah leaders in the IUG cafeteria, they showed no reserve in loudly expressing their criticisms of the Kutlah-led SC – even in front of an IUG alumnus they did not know (and who, in fact, sympathised with the Kutlah). Those at tables around us could easily have eavesdropped. Similarly, I had frank conversations with an agnostic, anti-Islamist student on the university lawn, within earshot of passers-by, including two lecturers

¹⁸⁵ Though the Dean of Students later denied this incident happened, I have photographs to prove it did. A Shabibah acquaintance who witnessed it too, commented: “Those Hamas posters should all be burned!”. When I asked: “What about human rights?”, he retorted: “They are not humans!”. I also witnessed a female Shabibah leader orchestrating an attack on four Islamist girls silently protesting during the elections with placards; the placards were torn and trampled on, the Islamist girls became agitated but did not respond violently.

¹⁸⁶ See also Sara Roy, *Gaza*, p25.

known to be IM leaders.¹⁸⁷ To contextualise this, the Kutlah leader from al-Azhar was extremely furtive when interviewed at al-Azhar, while a Kutlah leader from the College of Education, just released from prison where he had been imprisoned because of his party winning the Student Council elections, refused to be interviewed at his own College, instead taking me to the IUG.

In short, despite operating in an increasingly oppressive environment,¹⁸⁸ despite the violent legacy of occupation and the occasional outbursts of violence, despite even the allegations of its political foes,¹⁸⁹ the Kutlah-led SC appears to be increasingly comfortable with opposition.

¹⁸⁷ Haniyyah and Musa were talking less than ten metres away.

¹⁸⁸ Cf. recent ban on holding public meetings and marches without prior permission from head of police (PCHR Press Release, 27.03.2000).

¹⁸⁹ Complaining about the dominant party comes naturally to the minority parties. In the same vein, the oppositional Kutlah at al-Azhar vociferously criticised the Shabibah-led Azhar SC – probably, although I have not corroborated this, with a similar amount of distortion.

CHAPTER 8

BODY POLITIC: BETWEEN INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION – CHRISTIANS AND COMMUNISTS

The following chapter will focus on the IM's understanding of the ideal body politic and deal with questions of political inclusion and exclusion. Given that the IM stipulates that an ideal state's law be Islamic, and that it presupposes a basic knowledge of Islamic law in its legislators, what implications does this have for non-Muslims? I will concentrate on the political position of Christians¹ and communists within a Palestinian context.²

8.1 CHRISTIANS IN THE ISLAMIC STATE

Around 40,000 Christians live under Palestinian Authority rule, and another 130,000 under Israeli jurisdiction, of which 10,000 in Jerusalem.³ In the Gaza Strip, some 2000-

¹ Though in Qur'anic terms Jews have the same status as Christians as 'People of the Book', I did not discuss the position of Jews as this issue is presently clouded by the Jewish occupation of Palestinian land. In principle, what applies to Christians applies equally to Jews. Many interviewees used inclusive terms such as 'non-Muslims' or 'minorities' when answering (cf. Abu Shannab II, Shamma'; Bahr; Taha); some added, of their own volition, the category 'Jews' to that of 'Christians', indicating willingness to welcome Jewish citizens to a future Islamic state (Haniyyah I, Hammad I; Musa II; Masri).

² Though the ultimate aim of the IM appears to be a united Islamic ummah, all my interviewees automatically limited their focus to Palestine, when discussing a possible future Islamic State. In this respect, it is noteworthy how often the Palestinian flag (generally with an Islamic inscription on the white middle section) features in Hamas leaflets, stickers and campaign banners.

³ Yossi Klein Halevi, "Squeezed Out", *Jerusalem Report*, 10.07.1997, p14.

3000 Christians make up only 0.3% of Gaza's total population.⁴ A more comprehensive study of IM praxis towards Christians would have included the West Bank, as interactions there are more frequent. Of the respondents to my IUG and Azhar surveys, 83.2% and 65.4% respectively said they had no "close Christian friends".⁵ In Gaza, the status of Christians in an Islamic state is thus not necessarily a topical issue. But since Christians have been influential in both intellectual and leftist political circles, and Muslim-Christian tensions in Israel and the West Bank have caught the headlines in recent years, most Gazan Islamists I interviewed seemed to have given the issue serious thought.

The IM's attitude towards Christians is little debated in Western discourse. When it is, the assumption is usually that the IM will follow the historical example of the *dhimmi* model, in which Christians were protected but excluded from the body politic. Daphne Tsimhoni thus asserts

the majority of Christians have no illusions about their treatment in a Muslim fundamentalist state ... In such a state, they would assume their traditional, marginal, and inferior position as dhimmis ...⁶

Islamists, she contends, identify Palestinian Christians with the so-called Christian West, and vent their anger at Western meddling in Middle Eastern affairs on them. She reports threatening slogans written on Christian churches, singling out the sinister "After

⁴ These figures are based on interviews with Christian leaders. The percentage of those declaring themselves Christians in my IUG survey was similarly 0.3%.

⁵ For the IUG, the figures were 85.3% for Hamas supporters, 76.1% for Fatah supporters. For al-Azhar, 69.8% and 64.2% respectively. The figures for those responding they had "many close Christian friends" were 1.5% and 6.0% for the IUG, 2.3% and 6.3% for al-Azhar. Those saying they had "a few", were 11.2% and 13.4% for the IUG, 23.3% and 25.3% for al-Azhar.

⁶ Daphne Tsimhoni, 'Palestinian Christians and the Peace Process: The Dilemma of a Minority' in Ilan Peleg (ed), *The Middle East Peace: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, p146.

Saturday comes Sunday” – meaning that after the Jews have been dealt with, Christians will be next.⁷ Yet she fails to investigate whether this slogan was authorised by Hamas or indeed reflective of its stance towards Christians.⁸ Litvak similarly unquestioningly portrays incidents in which (alleged) Hamas supporters harassed Christians as reflective of the IM’s general attitude, referring, in *essentialist* fashion, to attacks by Egyptian radical Islamists on Egyptian Christians to underline the typicality of Hamas’s attacks – ignoring that the IM has little affinity with these groups.⁹

While Nüsse devotes a chapter to Hamas’s attitude to Christians, she assumes, without adequate exploration, that Hamas follows the traditional *dhimmī* model. She dismisses passages from Hamas publications which claim that Hamas is a movement of “all Palestinians, Muslims and Christians alike”, as motivated by the need for unity in the face of the Israeli enemy:

The classical Islamic view of protected religious minorities is incompatible with the Western idea of pluralism and equality of individual citizens in a nation-state. Christians and Jews are in fact different citizens than their Muslim fellow-men. ... [separated] from the body politic ...¹⁰

At question, however, is not the compatibility of Hamas’s views with Western ideas, nor the classical Islamic view, or even the views of earlier Islamists such as Mawdudi and Qutb, but the exact substance of the IM’s stance towards Christians in an Islamic state.

⁷ Tsimhoni, p147. Similarly Cubert, p178(n29).

⁸ Anti-Christian actions happen. The question is whether the IM is behind them, or justifies them.

⁹ Litvak, p18.

¹⁰ Nüsse, pp101-103.

I interviewed 36 Islamists regarding this matter. Thirteen advocated exclusion of Christians from the Islamic body politic,¹¹ twenty-three argued for inclusion.¹² I will discuss each argument in turn.

8.1.1 TREND A: CHRISTIANS AS A SEGREGATED MINORITY

The first group viewed Christians as subjects of the Islamic state but with the status of a separate minority community – in the tradition of the *ahl al-dhimmah* (protected people) model developed within the early Islamic polity to incorporate Christian communities under its rule.¹³ Because it is the traditional model, it is possible that in some instances, particularly concerning younger members whose other ideas were less traditional, this was a gut response, concealing that the issue had not been sufficiently pondered by the interviewee. It is noteworthy that a full 34.9% of Fatah-supporting respondents to my Azhar survey also stated that Christians could not be Members of Parliament (against 48% who thought they could).¹⁴

¹¹ Yassin, Dukhan, 'Ibrahim', Hamas Supporters Gaza, 'Ahmad'; Taha, Women's Kutlah 1, Leader Kutlah-Azhar.

¹² Abu Shannab II, Zahhar I, Shamma', Haniyyah I, Hammad I, Intifada Cell III, 'Iyad' (specified number of representatives be proportional to size of Christian minority), 'Nasr'; one Board Member al-Shabbat; Bahr, Musa I&II, Na'ami; Masri, 'Yusuf', Women's Kutlah 2. *Three referred this issue to Shari'ah experts*: 'Ashraf'; one Board Member al-Shabbat; Abu Dhughri. Judging by Abu Dhughri's stance on communists (if they respect the system, they can participate), he would, if the scholars approve, support this group.

¹³ For different interpretations of the *dhimmī* model, see Watt, pp192-249; El-Awa, pp17-19; Y. Courbage & P. Fargues, *Christians and Jews under Islam*, pp2, 6-7; Ye'or, *The Dhimmi*, pp43-77; Ghannouchi, *Right*, pp43, 92-93, 105-107.

¹⁴ The figures for Azhar's Hamas supporters were 58.1% and 30.2% respectively. Unfortunately, this question was not included in my IUG survey. If the opinions of Leader Kutlah-Azhar are representative, al-Azhar's Kutlah is more traditional than the IUG's Kutlah which explains these results' discrepancy with the results of my oral interviews (see also p294).

Yassin, for instance, argued:

In Islam, the system that is applicable is Islamic law. Christians do not believe in such a law, nor do they believe in Islam in its totality. So, how could someone who doesn't believe in Islam apply Islam to life? But, Christians should have their opinions respected, and they should be listened to in things that pertain to their personal matters and their ... belief.¹⁵

In this view, Christians are subject to the general laws when dealing with the state or Muslim citizens, but entitled to their own personal status laws when dealing with each other. Following a semi-contractual logic, in return for consenting to being subject to the general law, Christians will have their rights and well-being protected by the state. This contract is strengthened by the Prophet's command to protect *dhimmi*s,¹⁶ and, must be backed up by some form of representative body which can broker between the Christian community and the state.

Three forms of brokerage were suggested. Echoing Mawdudi, Yassin and two others advocated creating a separate *Shūrā* Council for Christians which could communicate their concerns to the Head of State.¹⁷ Four interviewees suggested Christians be represented in the main *Majlis*, though without legislative powers.¹⁸ Following Taha:

¹⁵ Yassin II.

¹⁶ "He who hurts a *Dhimmi* is my opponent. And he who is my opponent here will be my opponent in the hereafter" (quoted in Ghannouchi, *Right*, p63).

¹⁷ Yassin II, two of Hamas Supporters Gaza. 'Ahmad' advocated this solution, then refuted it for the next suggestion. Mawdudi argued for a "separate representative Assembly for all non-Muslim groups" (*Rights*, pp24-27; *Principles*, pp48-51). See also Ridwan al-Sayyid, 'Islamists and Christians in the Arab World', pp6-7; Wadi Haddad, 'Ahl al-dhimma in an Islamic State', *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 7(2), pp177-178.

¹⁸ 'Ibrahim', 'Ahmad'; Taha, Leader Kutlah-Azhar. Dukhan (see further) may adhere to this view, he would not specify. This view echoes another of Mawdudi's suggestions (though seemingly less preferred) that, as long as *dhimmi*s acknowledge the Islamic nature of the law, they could participate in Parliament because it was "considerably different from the *Shura* in its traditional sense" (*Rights*, pp24-27).

Non-Muslims have the right to be represented in Parliament where they can express their opinions which is what the Prophet made clear when stating that non-Muslims have a choice of Islam, *jizyah* [tax levied on non-Muslims as “commutation for military service”]¹⁹ or war. ... The Christian minority needs to be protected under the Islamic *Khilāfah*.

Taha’s reference to the Prophet’s offer of Islam, *jizyah* or war, and his use of the word ‘*Khilāfah*’, instead of the less traditional ‘*dawlah Islamiyyah*’ (Islamic state) often used by Taha’s student peers, underlines this argument’s rootedness in traditional narrative.

A further six interviewees argued that Christians need no special representation because Islam’s righteousness and a Muslim’s sacred duty to protect *dhimmi*s is sufficient.²⁰

Dukhan thus explained that

The combination of an Islamic Parliament (*ahl al-hall wa'l-'aqd*) and Islamic *Sharī'ah* will be sufficient guarantee that all members of society will be preserved. ... If Muslims are held responsible [by God] for not paving a road for a mule [reference to an incident with Caliph ‘Umar], how much more so will they be held accountable with regard to partners in humanity?

This third sub-group remained vague about whether Christians could participate in the general elections for an all-Muslim council (as a minimal mechanism of accountability).

¹⁹ Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an*, p447(n1281-1282). Contrary to what some scholars contend, *jizyah* does not appear to have been primarily conceived as a humiliating punishment for non-conversion (Ye'or, pp53-54; Nüsse, p101) but as an extension of the pre-Islamic tribal custom in which weak communities paid strong tribes to protect them (Ali, *loc.cit.*; Watt, p246; Mawdudi, *Rights*, pp18-20). Significantly, the majority of Christians in the Levant remained unconverted for two centuries after the Islamic conquest while some Christians occupied important governmental posts (Courbage, pp10-12, 20-25; Haddad, ‘Ahl’, pp175-176). Equally important, contemporary Islamist theoreticians do not portray *jizyah* as a symbol of humiliation (Qaradawi, *Ghayr al-muslimīn fī al-mujtama' al-islāmī*, quoted in Yvonne Haddad, ‘Islamist Depictions of Christianity’, *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 7(1), p85), while some suggest abolishing it because it is outdated (Ghannouchi, *Right*, pp105-107).

²⁰ Dukhan, one of Hamas Supporters Gaza; Women’s Kutlah 1 (who granted that Christian participation in Majlis is acceptable if *Sharī'ah* experts justified it).

They were clear, however, that Christians could not participate in Islamic legislation, because, as one women's Kutlah leader put it, "they will serve their own interests and this would create a weak point in the fort of Islam".²¹

Fear of Christians undermining Islamic law through misunderstanding seems to inform all three sub-sets of this group.²² Current relations between Gaza's Christian leaders and Hamas appear to be good. But two factors readily sow distrust among Islamists regarding the Christian community's potential loyalty towards an Islamic state. First, with the Qur'an repeatedly warning Muslims to not "listen to" (3:100), "take into your intimacy" (3:118) or "take ... as friends and protectors" (5:54) Christians and Jews, because not only "will the Jews or the Christians [never] be satisfied with thee unless thou follow their form of religion" (2:120) but "most of them are perverted transgressors" (3:110),²³ there is ample ammunition against according Christians full citizenship. Qutb, for instance, used some of these verses to argue against Muslims learning about philosophy, theology or sociology from Christians and Jews, as the latter's "good intentions" cannot be trusted.²⁴ Second, many Islamists believe the (Christian) West to be actively striving to eradicate Islam (one of the reasons why more radical Islamists elsewhere decry pluralism as a Western concept aimed at weakening the Islamic *ummah* through division).²⁵ As local Christians share the West's predominant religion, they are readily associated with the latter's presumed offensive –

²¹ Women's Kutlah 1.

²² Cf. Dukhan (only mildly so), 'Ibrahim', Hamas Supporters Gaza; Women's Kutlah 1.

²³ *Āyāt* 3:118, 2:120 quoted in Hamas's *Mithaq*, 5:54 quoted in Hamas Communiqué 31 – in all three cases referring to "the imperialist powers" of the allegedly Christian West, or Jewish Israel (see 'Praxis Analysis'). *Āyah* 3:100 is quoted in Qutb, *Milestones*, p212.

²⁴ Qutb, *Milestones*, pp202-217.

²⁵ Cf. Haddad, 'Christianity', pp87-89.

particularly as there is a long history of Arab Christians enjoying special privileges from Western powers.²⁶

Since Christians must be kept out of legislating, they have no guaranteed means to hold their rulers accountable or influence the laws to which they owe obedience. If their advice to the government goes unheeded, they have no recourse to electoral mechanisms, only to a judiciary which is not accountable to them. They are thus wholly at the mercy of the Islamic government and its sense of obligation towards them. The contract between Islamic rulers and Christian subjects is thus in effect solely between the rulers and God. Because of its faith in the persuasive powers of Islam, and the Afterlife, this group believes Islam to be a sufficient guarantee – particularly, as they pointedly observed, as history suggests that Muslim rulers have generally treated non-Muslims better than, for example, their Christian counterparts.²⁷

Though the first two sub-groups incorporate a more or less Western understanding of the principle of representation, and all three invoke a rights-based argument, asserting that Islam guarantees Christians basic rights,²⁸ these solutions have remained primarily rooted in classical Islamic models. Unlike other instances, such as the classical command to consult, which has been creatively recast as a command to hold rulers accountable through state-wide elections (Chapter 7), the command to protect *dhimmīs* has not been re-interpreted beyond granting that Christians deserve some form of representation – despite the fact that there are *āyāt* which could support a more inclusive

²⁶ Cf. Capitulations under the Ottomans which made France the protector of Christian minorities in the Levant, resulting in Muslim-Christian tensions. Cf. Courbage, p74.

²⁷ Cf. Dukhan, Hamas Supporters Gaza; Women's Kutlah 1. Cf. also *Mithaq*, §31; *Filastin al-Muslima*, September 1990, p11 (quoted in Nüsse, p101). Though there are examples of discrimination and persecution, examples of tolerance and respect for human rights outweigh these, particularly when compared to contemporary societies in Europe. However, political rights, such as participation in government (of which there are many examples; Courbage, pp24-25) were never granted by right.

²⁸ Cf. Yassin II, Dukhan, 'Ibrahim', Hamas Supporters Gaza; Taha, Women's Kutlah 1, Leader Kutlah-Azhar.

approach, such as that adopted by the IM's second trend.²⁹ In this respect, it is interesting, and potentially a sign of changes to come, that Hamas's *Mithaq*, which was heavily influenced by an older, more traditional leadership, including Dukhan, nevertheless quotes one of the *āyāt* used by more 'liberal' Islamists to argue for religious and political pluralism.³⁰

To each among you [Jews, Christians and Muslims] have We prescribed a Law and an Open Way. If God had so willed, He would have made you a single People, but (His Plan is) to test you in what He hath given you: so strive as in a race in all virtues. The goal of you all is to God; it is He that will show you the truth of the matters in which you dispute (5:51).

8.1.2 TREND B: CHRISTIANS AS MEMBERS OF THE BODY POLITIC

The second group (which included most of the leaders)³¹ views Christians as an integral part of the body politic, with the same rights and duties as Muslims, bar two: a Christian cannot become Head of State³² and Christians are entitled, if they so wish, to their own personal status law (allowing them, for instance, to drink alcohol³³ and deal with adultery in a different way than the *Sharī'ah* stipulates). This position is supported by a religious, a contractual and a rights-based argument.

²⁹ *Āyah* 24:55, "Allah has promised those of you who believe and do good works to make them masters in the land..." (Penguin translation), on which the theory of viceregency is built, could readily incorporate (believing) Christians, particularly in the light of verses 2:62, 3:113 and the Ḥ adīth "No one is superior to another except in point of faith and piety. All men are descended from Adam" (quoted in Mawdudi, *Theory*, p30).

³⁰ Cf. Haddad, 'Christianity', p76.

³¹ See footnote 12.

³² Though I did not discuss this, it is likely that this group agrees with Ghannouchi that non-Muslims be excluded from the post of head of the Army (*Right*, p78). Cf. Hamas Supporters Gaza.

³³ Cf. Khalas Communiqué 12.09.1997.

Contractually speaking, since Christians are citizens of the Islamic state, subject to its policies and overall legal system, they have the right to participate in legislation, policy-making and holding rulers accountable. Abu Shannab argues, for example, that

Christians should have their share ... within the main *Majlis*. There is no restriction on this because as far as they are representing the people, they are part of the *Majlis*.³⁴

The key words in this passage are “representing the people” rather than “representing the Christians”. Christian participation in the higher levels of decision-making is here legitimised by the principle of representation – if ‘people’ (note, not just Christians) elect them, they obtain the right to exercise viceregal power on behalf of their constituency (Chapter 6). Says Ahmad Bahr:

How can a Christian be chosen, and then we don’t respect his opinion? That doesn’t make sense. ... We are not enslaving people, we want them to be free. That is Islam.³⁵

Consequently, a Christian representative or Minister is a representative or a Minister first, a Christian only in faith. In principle, Muslims can vote for Christians if they believe the latter are better qualified, and Christians can vote for Muslims.³⁶

A number of interviewees backed up their position with a rights-based argument, arguing that because all citizens are humans they should have equal rights to voting and representation.³⁷ Both this and the contractual argument can be supported by the

³⁴ Cf. also Shamma’, Haniyyah, Hammad, Intifada Cell, ‘Iyad’, ‘Nasr’; Board Member al-Shabbat; Bahr, Musa, Na’ami; Women’s Kutlah 2.

³⁵ Bahr. Cf. also Haniyyah, Musa, Hammad, Na’ami, Masri.

³⁶ Muslih, ‘Yusuf’, ‘Nasr’ specifically made this point.

³⁷ Cf. Shamma’, Hammad, Intifada Cell, ‘Nasr’.

‘viceregal’ *āyah* (24:55). “Those of you who believe and do good works” can be interpreted to mean all who perform these actions, regardless of their religion. The term ‘believe’ can even be stretched to mean those who believe in God’s principles of freedom, equality and justice (see Chapter 8.2). At the same time, both the rights-based and contractual argument are ‘modern’ in nature. And, most significantly, they have come to override the *dhimmī* principle.

However, the fact that Islam underpins the Islamic state means that Christians are distinguished from the rest of the body politic in two ways. I have already alluded to the fact that Christians have the right to exemption from those personal status clauses of the *Sharī‘ah* which contradict their own religious beliefs. The second differentiation is that a Christian cannot become Head of State. In any state, the Head of State is both Chief Executive and the highest embodiment of the state. As the state is an Islamic state, there is thus an argument for him being Muslim as he needs to both embody Islam, and defend the religious interests of the majority of citizens. Beyond this, Christians are entitled to occupy any other political office, as long as they respect the Islamic framework of the state.³⁸

While the religious argument limits Christian citizenship, it has paradoxically also encouraged Islamists to embrace the notion of Christian membership of the (Muslim) body politic. For, as Musa observes,

a Christian or a Jewish person [as opposed to an atheist] can participate in such an [Islamic] system, because they are believers in God.³⁹

³⁸ Haniyyah and Bahr stated this explicitly, Musa hinted at it, the others implied it.

³⁹ Musa II.

It is thus the religious kinship between Christians and Muslims which has enabled the transition from viewing Christians as *dhimmi*s to seeing them as (near-equal) citizens. This clearly has implications for communists (see Chapter 8.2).

Notably, two interviewees placed the contractual above the religious argument, stating that if the majority of the body politic elects a Christian as Head of State, they would accept it as the will of the people and trust he would be able to both embody the Islamic principles of the state and defend the majority's Islamic interests.⁴⁰ Whether these two represent a growing trend within the IM, is impossible to say without further research. It is significant, however, that the contractual argument which in itself has been rooted by the IM in Islamic sources, has come to override the religious argument in their minds.

As with the previous one, the views of this group are rooted in historical precedent and revelation. But, rather than using these examples to prove that Islam is a sufficient guarantor for the protection of Christians in an Islamic state, this group used them to highlight precedents for Christians in high office.⁴¹ Though none mentioned it explicitly, this group's position seems to be inspired by a 'modern' reading of the Medina Constitution as epitomised by Ghannouchi, who argues that

⁴⁰ Shamma' ("Yes, of course – it is majority rule"); Na'ami ("if the people accept this, I think that [the non-Muslim] is entitled to be President"). Others may reason likewise. I did not have time to draw all interviewees out on this point. Hammad I, Hamas Supporters Gaza, Intifada Cell, 'Nasr', Board Members al-Shabbat specifically prohibited this.

⁴¹ Haniyyah ('Umar's appointment of Christians as governors and Ministers), Na'ami ('Abbasid appointments), Hammad ('Abbasid appointments), Shamma' (exemplary history of Muslim treatment of Christians). Masri pointed to Christians in the government of present-day Sudan. Importantly, this group contradicts the argument popularised by Mawdudi that in the early days of Islam there was an "utter absence of even a single instance" of a *dhimmi* being made a member of Parliament, Governor, Judge or even being "allowed to participate in the election of the Caliphs", and that consequently, "were it right to give them a share in the Government, we fail to understand how the Prophet of God (pbuh) could have done injustice to them in the first instance" (*Principles*, pp49-50).

this document [the Medina Constitution] stipulated the religious freedom of non-Muslims *as party of the body politic of the nation, as citizens and nationals* [emphasis mine].⁴²

Where the first group expounds a position close to earlier Islamist theorists such as Mawdudi and Qutb,⁴³ the latter champions a position not unlike later theorists such as Ghannouchi and Fahmi Huwaydi, who argue that all people, regardless of religion, are viceregents of God and should thus be accorded full citizenship (bar the right to become Head of State).⁴⁴ Age may partially explain this predilection. Age may also explain why the second group is more inclined to employ a mixture of traditional and modern concepts. The two elder Hamas leaders I interviewed, Yassin and Dukhan, both belong to the first group while all the middle-aged and younger leaders belong to the second. The student generation does not wholly fit this explanation. Against Taha, Women's Kutlah 1, Leader Kutlah-Azhar, the three interviewees of Hamas Supporters Gaza and 'Ahmad' in the first group, Masri, 'Yusuf', Women's Kutlah 2, the six members of the Intifada Cell, 'Nasr' and possibly Abu Dhughri (see footnote 2) belonged to the second. What is clear is that more student interviewees supported the second group. Beyond this, differences in opinion may be influenced by personal experience, learning and personality.

8.1.3 POINTS OF COMPARISON WITH WESTERN CONSTRUCTS

The position espoused by both IM trends, that Christians are entitled to their own personal status law, but not to occupying the position of Head of State, is not as

⁴² Ghannouchi, *Right*, p43.

⁴³ Qutb did not detail the political position of Christians in an Islamic state, but his overall approach to Christians places him close to Mawdudi. See al-Sayyid, 'Islamists', pp7-8; Haddad, 'Christianity', pp82-83.

⁴⁴ Ghannouchi, *Right*, pp43, 75-85; for Huwaydi's views, epitomised by the title of his book *Muwātinūn lā dhimiyyūn* (Citizens not *dhimmīs*), see Haddad, 'Christianity', pp85-86; Haddad, 'Ahl', pp178.

incompatible with a Western understanding of human rights, as Western conclusions that Islamism views non-Muslims as second-rate citizens would suggest. Though the principles of equality before the law⁴⁵ and "one law for all citizens",⁴⁶ championed so avidly by the West, stand perpendicular to the Islamist notion of multiple laws, the Islamist notion may well prove better at safeguarding the right of a religious, cultural or ethnic minority⁴⁷ to preserve its customs. In this vein, Ghassan Salamé observed that

Those putting shari'a into practice have a reply which it would be wrong to reject immediately, ... an islamic regime ruled by the shari'a easily admits the principle of plural legislations, particularly in the matter of personal status (covering a field wider than in other legal traditions), to the advantage of non-Muslims. We are, of course, faced here with a direct attack on the modern national principle of one law for all citizens. But for many minorities, it seems more acceptable to deny that principle than to relinquish the right to their own law.⁴⁸

The IM's position resembles the Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which grants separate legal rights on the basis of ethnic identity. With the increase in, and awareness of, cultural and ethnic diversity in the West, Western countries have also begun to adopt a more pluralistic legal approach to minorities. In New Zealand, specific clauses apply to those belonging to the indigenous people, the Maoris, regarding fishing rights and land tenure so as to preserve ancient Maori customs

⁴⁵ Cf. The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "All are equal before the law" (Article 7).

⁴⁶ Salamé, 'Introduction' in Salamé, p6; based on principle expressed in French Revolutionary Constitution of August 1795 that "the law is equal for all" (Article 3, quoted in Sartori, p343).

⁴⁷ Constantin Dabbagh (Director Near East Council of Churches, Gaza) and Musa Saba (Director YMCA, Gaza) rejected this term because it stigmatises and prohibits full assimilation. They rejected sectarian differentiation. See footnote 51.

⁴⁸ Salamé, pp5-6.

and Maori welfare.⁴⁹ In Britain, various acts have been passed to exempt members of religious minorities from generally applicable laws on the basis of a difference in belief. In this vein, Jews were exempted from a ban on opening shops on Sundays in the Shops Act 1950, s47, while Sikhs have been exempted from wearing motor-cycle helmets in the Motor-Cycle Crash Helmets (Religious Exemption) Act 1976, s1, on the grounds that devout Sikh practice is to wear a turban in public places – overruling the argument that religious freedom be curtailed when public safety (and the National Health Service) is concerned.⁵⁰

If a minority demands its own personal status law, the IM's position can hardly be faulted from a human rights perspective. However, the minority may not desire special legal status. Constantine Dabbagh, for instance, director of Gaza's Near East Council of Churches (NECC), observed:

if you have a special privilege then you have special duties also. [...] [As to whether we would be safe in a future Islamic state], it depends to some extent on us [the Christians]. ... If we believe in our citizenship ... as part and parcel of this society, then we have to behave in accordance with the law of this society. We cannot have a special law for us. ... If we want to have a special law, we have to get out ... I am against that. If we talk about democracy, then the rule of the majority should apply. ... If they are a great majority (99%), they have to rule and we have to accept the rule of the law.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Cf. John Luxton, *Maori Affairs in New Zealand – Maori Policy*; Douglas Graham, *Treaty Negotiations in New Zealand – The Treaty of Waitangi*; Athanasia Åkermark, *Justifications of Minority Protection in International Law*, p153.

⁵⁰ Sebastian Poulter, *English Law and Ethnic Minority Customs*, pp276-277, 283-284.

⁵¹ Also Saba; George Awwad (priest at Gaza's principal Orthodox Church). Cf. Turabi's remark that "the public law of Islam is one related rationally to justice ... and even a non-Muslim may appreciate its wisdom and fairness. Christians in particular ... should not mind [its] application ... as long as it does not interfere with their religion. It is a moral [law] based on values which are common and more akin to Christian values than any secular law" (p250).

The second trend appears to honour this position. The first group would have more difficulty in accepting it, since it diminishes the difference between Christians and Muslims and creates a pressure to include Christians in the legislative process on the contractual grounds that those subject to the law must have a say in it, thus introducing an un-Islamic element into legislation. This raises a problem. For, if minorities have the right to choose assimilation or segregation, does not the majority have a right to stay segregated (if this is indeed the majority will) – specifically if assimilation could mean ‘un-Islamic’ changes to the law? At present, the small Christian minority is unlikely to affect legal decisions. But if it grew, it could do so by allying itself to dissident Muslim factions, or flexing its muscle in those areas where a high proportion of Christians live.

This latter case is qualitatively not much different from that of, for instance, certain European cities in which communities of Turkish and North-African ‘guest workers’ have become a sizeable minority, or even a local majority (the main difference being that Palestinian Christians are of course indigenous).⁵² As European states have no official differentiation in law, the cultural views of these large minorities have begun to influence elections, and thus, indirectly, legislation – enhancing tensions with autochthonous citizens. Whether the introduction of a differentiated system of law would alleviate cultural and religious tensions, remains to be seen, particularly as it could undermine efforts at combatting racism and ghettoisation.⁵³ A more detailed study of Islamist theories and practical examples of legal differentiation might provide fresh insights. Introducing a sub-set of differentiated legal codes within an overarching legal framework might also be one way of guaranteeing national and minority rights

⁵² Cf. per 31.12.1997, 6.3% (133,193) of the population of 2,120,837 of West Berlin (Germany) was of Turkish origin (*Statistisches Landesamt, Einwohnerregister*).

⁵³ Elçin Kürsat-Ahlers argues for instance for an equal-rights strategy as “Germans have tended to interpret multi-culturalism as a model to facilitate the preservation of their own German culture and shield it from contact with (or contamination by) migrant cultures” while “xenophobic violence” was rising in the early 1990s (‘The Turkish Minority in German Society’ in David Horrocks & Eva Kolinsky (eds), *Turkish Culture in German Society Today*, p115).

within, for instance, the Council of Europe which, by the late 1990s, still had no explicit clause stipulating the rights of national minorities, let alone minorities resulting from immigration policies.⁵⁴

Exclusion of citizens from the office of Head of State on religious grounds stands likewise perpendicular to the principle expressed most eloquently in the French Declaration of Rights of 1789:

All citizens being equal ..., they are equally entitled to all the emoluments and positions of public office in accord with their capabilities and under the sole distinction of their virtue and intelligence.⁵⁵

Yet, even in the wording of this Declaration lies a bridge to the IM's theory of citizenship. For, if it is accepted that the principle of equal access to public office is an equality of opportunity based on capability, not a right to access regardless of capability, the criterion that the Head of an Islamic state be a Muslim takes on a different hue. It could, after all, be argued that only a Muslim is capable of being the embodiment of an Islamic state, if only because the Head of State is generally regarded as the state's chief representative, which, since the very existence of an Islamic state presupposes a majority has consented to its creation, should logically be a Muslim.⁵⁶ The argument that only a Muslim can defend the political interests of the Muslim majority is more dubious, particularly if the view is taken, following Turabi, that religious obligations are outside the realm of the state, and that because the *Sharī'ah* is "related rationally to

⁵⁴ Beyond a reference to discrimination on grounds of national origin or "association with a national minority" in article 14 prohibiting discrimination; Åkermark, pp197-246.

⁵⁵ Article 6, quoted in Sartori, p342. It is reiterated by contemporary theorists like Robert Dahl (cf. 'Procedural Democracy').

⁵⁶ Though opposition to the *status quo* is mounting, at present the case of Britain is similar as, for historical reasons, the Head of State (the Queen) is also the head of the state's established church, the Church of England, and must by law be a Protestant.

PAGE

NUMBERING

AS ORIGINAL

At an institutional level, many partnerships exist. Directors of Christian charities confirmed they enjoyed good relations with charities associated with Hamas.⁵⁸ Certain projects associated with the IM, for instance some related to the IUG, received goods or services from the NECC, while both the NECC's and the YMCA's premises have been used by people affiliated with the IM.⁵⁹ During the Intifada, the Christian-run Ahli Hospital treated many Hamas members.⁶⁰ Conversely, Hamas is said to have defended the interests of Christians against the Israelis,⁶¹ while its charities have a reputation of even-handedness, regardless of religious background.⁶² At the IUG, the Dean of Students, a former Kutlah leader, told me he was just deciding whether to expel "a student who had mistreated Christians".⁶³ At Christian occasions, IM leaders are among the invited while Christian dignitaries are similarly invited to IM events.⁶⁴ Hizb al-Khalas welcomes Christians as members as long as they subscribe to the party's aims.⁶⁵

I have come across a number of friendships between individuals. Saba, YMCA director, knows some Hamas leaders well. Singling out one, Saba commented:

⁵⁸ Dabbagh (NECC), Saba (YMCA), Awwad (Orthodox Church).

⁵⁹ During the Intifada, the YMCA hosted meetings between Hamas and other political parties (Saba), while the NECC provided rooms for the IUG (Dabbagh).

⁶⁰ Maher Ayyad (Christian doctor).

⁶¹ Saba ("Hamas tends to treat the Christians better than they would treat Muslims. ... This is positive discrimination. I don't like it. ... Nationality is for all the people."); Awwad.

⁶² Pharmaciens Sans Frontières. Dabbagh confirmed this was the public perception; he had not personally tested its veracity. Awwad did not know of financial help given by IM-affiliated charities to Christians (according to him, Christians are too independent-minded to ask for money); yet he believed IM-affiliated charities gave moral support to Christians in need.

⁶³ Abu Sibah.

⁶⁴ Dabbagh, Awwad. Abu Sibah specified that e.g. Awwad was invited at every public IUG function.

⁶⁵ Musa I.

PAGE

NUMBERING

AS ORIGINAL

there was nothing to fear. Both Dabbagh and Saba emphasised the Christians' own responsibility for being treated well, condemning demands for a sectarian-based special status and calling on Christians to work for the national good. Dabbagh cited the Christians as provoking a specific bout of Christian-Muslim tensions in Beit Sahur (West Bank) during 1998 by ostentatiously displaying crosses on every house.

Ordinary Christians, however, were not unanimously positive, some fearing discrimination from a Hamas-led government. Though it is possible that the leaders I interviewed put up a positive front for fear of jeopardising relations with the Muslim majority – as two young men in Jerusalem, where Muslim-Christian relations are tenser than in Gaza, suggested to a reporter⁷¹ – the discrepancy between these views appears to stem rather from the fact that many ordinary Christians have no working or friendly relationship with Hamas members, and, consequently, are subject to rumours and Israeli disinformation (see further).⁷² Since Christians are more likely to be affiliated to the Palestinian Left, their perception of Hamas will be coloured by the Left's violent encounters with the Islamists during the 1980s which had little to do with Christianity. Significantly, I did not hear of any Muslim-Christian incidents in Gaza, nor was offered any concrete proof of such by ordinary Christians who feared Hamas rule.

In publications, the IM treats Christians with respect and as fellow citizens. A Hamas text entitled "The movement's policies towards Palestine's Christians", stated:

1. Considers Palestine's Christians an integral part of the Palestinian people, the Arab nation and its civil identity.

⁷¹ "Our leaders are liars: They tell the newspapers that everything is OK. But when Christians go to the market, they're afraid to wear their crosses" (Halevi quoting two shopkeepers; "Squeezed Out", p19).

⁷² Ordinary Christians Gaza.

2. Considers Christians as having the same civil rights and the same duties as those of other Palestinians [...]
6. Re-states the importance of their [Christian] participation in the political life and the resistance of the Palestinian people during the occupation and after liberation; and works towards attracting them to work in national establishments.
7. Works towards starting firm relationships with their political and religious leadership to win their support in public and national situations and to consult their leaders in the country's general affairs. [...]⁷³

Similarly, Hamas condemned an attack by Israeli settlers on an Orthodox Church and its clergy, lamenting it particularly because "this took place during Christian feasts".⁷⁴ Such statements are partly motivated by the wish to challenge Israel on every front.⁷⁵ But the above reference to the Christian feasts indicates that Hamas is sufficiently interested in its Christian fellow citizens to find out when their feasts are.

The IM is similarly keen to respect and protect Christian rights pertaining to their religion. In a statement calling for the absolute prohibition of alcohol in Palestine, the authors underlined

the particularity of the Christians among the children of the Palestinian people to whom Islam made permissible what their religion permits them to do.⁷⁶

⁷³ August 1988, quoted in Khalid al-Hrub, 'Christians in the Occupied Territories', *al-Hayat*, 03.07.1993 (quoted in Hrub, p153).

⁷⁴ Communiqué 13.04.1990, quoted in Hrub, p154. Cf. also joint statement of Hamas, Khalas, Jihad, PFLP, DFLP, Arab Liberation Front on 21.08.1997 (Khalas Collection).

⁷⁵ The next sentence indeed reads: "Hamas, while it condemns such aggression against Christians among our Palestinian people, reminds the world that the state of Israeli occupation is a racist state which is hostile to religious beliefs."

⁷⁶ Khalas Communiqué 12.09.1997, signed 'The Convention of Scholars in Palestine to Fight Against Liquor'.

On another occasion, the leadership, realising that a planned strike would coincide with Christmas Day, immediately cancelled it.⁷⁷ Though planning the strike on Christmas Day seems to reveal ignorance of the Christian calendar, it must be remembered that the majority of Palestinian Christians are Orthodox (particularly so in Gaza) and thus celebrate Christmas later, and that the majority of Christian feast days, like their Islamic counterparts, are determined by the moon, rather than having a fixed date.

However, and somewhat confusingly, the IM also liberally quotes *āyāt* which are highly critical of Christians. If read literally and out of context, it is easy to misinterpret these as expressions of anti-Christian sentiment. But a closer reading reveals that these verses are quoted only in the context of diatribes against Western meddling in the Arab-Israeli conflict – called either ‘imperialism’ or, tellingly, ‘Crusadism’. Article 13 of the *Mithaq*, for instance, quotes “Never will the Jews or the Christians be satisfied with thee unless thou follow their form of religion” (2:120), after denouncing international peace conferences as “nothing but a form of enforcing the rule of the unbelievers in the lands of Muslims”. Article 22 cites “Do not take into your intimacy those outside your ranks [of believers]: they will not fail to corrupt you” (3:118), to underline the pernicious role of “the imperialist powers in the Capitalist West and Communist East” in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.⁷⁸ In each case, the quotations are intended to underline the ‘unbelieving’, infidel nature of the foreign policy of the West and Israel. Read carefully, they do not imply that Christians as such are infidels. Article 22 underlines this by calling the ‘imperialist’ powers “the unbelievers’ powers”.

In the same vein, the *Mithaq*’s claim that “peace and harmony [between Islam, Christianity, and Judaism] is possible only under Islam” and that “[f]ollowers of other

⁷⁷ Communiqué 67 (03.12.1990), quoted in Hrub, p154.

⁷⁸ Cf. also Communiqué 31, quoting *āyah* 5:54 after condemning the Balfour declaration as a Christian-Jewish scheme against Palestine.

religions should stop fighting Islam in ruling this area, because when they rule, there will only be murdering, punishing, and banishing ..." (§31), is clearly directed towards the 'Crusading' states and the 'Zionist entity', not the local Christians.

Vindicating this explanation is the difference between the tone of Hamas's above statements and the *āyāt* quoted in addressing local Christians. A 1988 leaflet thus stated:

[Hamas] asserts that it is the movement of all the Palestinian masses, Muslims and Christians without distinction, as it follows strictly the way of the Qur'an, which states: "And thou wilt find the nearest of them in affection to those who believe [to be] those who say: Lo! We are Christians. ..." [5:85]⁷⁹

Such contradictory usage of *āyāt* may have confused the Hamas rank and file, as well as the general population. In both instances the Qur'ān refers to 'Christians'. Yet, while in the Western case Hamas means the term to denote 'infidel' behaviour, in the Palestinian case it simply means 'Christians'. This may explain why some of those Christians who have no business or social touches with Hamas believe the latter to be anti-Christian, and why some of the less educated Muslims, Hamas supporters or not, daub anti-Christian slogans on churches and Christian-owned houses.⁸⁰ In this, it does not help that Palestinian Christians both share the religious heritage of and have historically enjoyed a privileged relationship with, the West, which is held responsible for much of the suffering in Palestine.

⁷⁹ Communiqué 49.

⁸⁰ Cf. Ordinary Christians Gaza; Ordinary Christians Jerusalem; slogans on churches mentioned in Tsimhoni; slogan on East Jerusalem Christian house reading "Islam is the solution".

Finally, it must be emphasised that the IM is not the only potential perpetrator of Muslim-Christian incidents. Some Muslim establishment members (specifically the *waqf*) appear to have condoned irregularities in Jerusalem,⁸¹ while uneducated, poor Muslims seem to have been involved in incidents in East Jerusalem (for socio-economic rather than religious reasons).⁸² Furthermore, there is the Israeli policy of sowing division. Numerous Christians told me they were singled out and treated better at checkpoints in front of their Muslim fellow-citizens (yet out of sight of Muslims, they received equally humiliating treatment).⁸³ In one incident, the Israeli authorities were linked to a forged ' Hamas' leaflet, commanding the daughters of a Christian family to wear the *hijāb* – something the Hamas leadership is against.⁸⁴ In another incident, Hamas called on people

“[t]o warn against the “planted” leaflets in the name of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, such as the leaflet attacking the heroic inhabitants of Beit Sahur [a village near Bethlehem with a majority of Christians]. Hamas movement asserts that this cheap method is far-removed from the way which is familiar to our masses.”⁸⁵

Given the high stakes for which Israel is playing, and the potential for misunderstanding between the religious communities, it is rather remarkable that Christian-Muslim relations are as good as they are.

⁸¹ Involving seizure of Christian property to expand mosque (Halevi, “Squeezed Out”, p19).

⁸² Incidents in the Beit Hanina area recounted by a Christian inhabitant.

⁸³ Ordinary Christians Gaza; Ordinary Christians Jerusalem. Dabbagh confirmed that Israeli authorities often treat Christians differently from Muslims, to sow division.

⁸⁴ Ibrahim Shahadah I (GCRL).

⁸⁵ Communiqué 49. Of the 22 Communiqués from the Intifada’s first year featured in Mishal, 7 warn against counterfeit leaflets made by the Israelis.

8.2 COMMUNISTS IN THE ISLAMIC STATE

Another 'test case' for the IM's ideal of political equality to ideological others is its attitude towards communists. Western discourse says little beyond accusing the IM, for instance in the context of the IUG, of dealing "severely" with "[l]eftists, liberals or progressives expressing a view that was in any respect contrary to that of the Mujama [Brotherhood]",⁸⁶ and declaring that, if in power, Hamas would not tolerate "political parties whose frame of reference is not Islam".⁸⁷ Similarly, Hamas's involvement in killing collaborators during the Intifada and its alleged orchestration of the *hijāb* campaign are sometimes posited as a preview of its attitudes in an Islamic state.⁸⁸ As there is no detailed analysis of Hamas's political discourse and praxis regarding leftists, conclusions remain highly emotive.

Economically and politically, communism is a rival ideology to Islamism. At a religious level, communism is, in theory, the negation of Islam. Consequently, the IM's overall response is deeply influenced by Islamic traditions regarding unbelief and apostasy (concerning communists raised as Muslims). However, a number of Palestinian communists are still practising Muslims⁸⁹ (or Christians). Moreover, both communism and Islamism fight for justice and equality. At present, the IM is in alliance with the Left (principally the PFLP and DFLP) against what it perceives as the injustices of the PNA and the Peace Process. It is thus inevitable that there will be tensions between

⁸⁶ Milton-Edwards, p111.

⁸⁷ Abu-Amr, 'Hamas', p18.

⁸⁸ Usher, pp68-69. Usher seems to refer to the kind of sentiments expressed to me by Abu Middin (Justice Minister), Top MOPIC Official, Gazan Businessman.

⁸⁹ Cf. PFLP prisoners regularly attended the five daily prayers and Friday prayers organised by Hamas prisoners ('Khalid' IV); a leftist Fatah member, formerly belonging to the Communist Party, reluctantly missed prayer at al-Azhar University on my behalf.

dogma and pragmatic considerations, and, resultantly, inconsistencies in stances taken – particularly as the IM’s attitudes seem to be in the process of transition.

Due to time restraint, the sample of interviewees on which I have drawn (19) is significantly smaller than that of the previous section (35) but is sufficiently representative in containing a random cross-section of leaders and members (six Hamas leaders, four Kutlah leaders, nine members/supporters) and covering an amply broad spectrum. A glaring omission is that the sample includes no women. References to the IM refer therefore exclusively to male views.

8.2.1 UNBELIEVERS AND APOSTATES IN QUR’ĀN AND *SUNNAH*

The Qur’ān leaves no doubt that hell-fire awaits unrepentant unbelievers (*kuffār*),⁹⁰ and that for believers to befriend God’s enemies is to stray “from the Straight Path” (60:1).⁹¹ A few verses go further, ordering that unbelievers be fought “until there is no more tumult or oppression and there prevail ... faith in God ... everywhere” (8:39), and that “those who wage war against God and His apostle, and strive with might and main for mischief throughout the land” be executed, crucified, mutilated or exiled (5:36). As for apostasy (*riddah*), besides the existence of a Ḥadīth stating unequivocally that “Whosoever changes his religion, slay him”,⁹² there are a number of instances in which apostates were killed on the authority of the Prophet or his successors.

⁹⁰ Cf. 2:39; 3:4, 10, 56, 116; 5:11, 36, 39, 40, 44, 89; 8:36.

⁹¹ Cf. 3:28, 118; 5:60, 83; 8:39; 60:2, 9.

⁹² Quoted in S.A. Rahman, *Punishment of Apostasy in Islam*, p59.

Besides a school which, taking the above Ḥadīth literally, advocates execution for simply embracing unbelief (*kufṛ*),⁹³ another school questions whether unbelief is punishable, if unaccompanied by acts of sedition.⁹⁴ This latter approach is based on the view that the *āyāt* stipulating unbelievers be fought or executed, and the executions recorded in the *Sunnah*, all concern unbelievers who had simultaneously either actively waged war against God and His believers or had committed other punishable crimes, such as murder.⁹⁵

Such a reading is bolstered by *āyāt* differentiating between unbelievers who “fight you for [your] Faith” and those who do not, admonishing believers to deal “kindly and justly” with the latter (60:8-9)⁹⁶ – as well as by the Qur’ānic injunction that “there be no compulsion in religion” (2:256). It is similarly rooted in the conviction that it is better to leave both judgement and punishment to God, since fallible humans cannot conclusively judge the extent of apostasy. This conviction is underpinned by *ahādīth* warning that “the reproach of *kufṛ* is equivalent to murder” and that “[i]f a Muslim charges a fellow Muslim with *kufṛ* [unbelief], he is himself a *kāfir* [unbeliever], if the accusation should prove untrue”.⁹⁷

⁹³ Cf. Shafi’i of the four founders of schools of law (see Rahman, p22). In modern times, Muhammad Hamidullah, *The Muslim Conduct of State*, pp171-174; Asaf Fyzee, *Outlines of Muhammadan Law*, p154.

⁹⁴ Cf. Malik, Ibn Hanbal, Abu Hanifah of the school of law founders (see Rahman, p21). In modern times, Rahman; Mohammad Kamali, *Freedom of Expression in Islam*, pp186-187, 250; Muhammad El-Awa, *Punishment in Islamic Law*, pp49-68.

⁹⁵ The apostates of the ‘Ukal and ‘Urayna tribes whom the Prophet had executed, had mutilated and killed fellow herdsmen and stolen their camels (cf. El-Awa, *Punishment*, pp51-52; Mohammad ‘Ali, *The Religion of Islam*, p595). The so-called *Riddah* wars of Abu Bakr revolved around maintaining the tribal alliances and the payment of taxes agreed to under the Prophet, and so upholding Islam’s worldly authority after the death of its Prophet, rather than unbelief *per se* (cf. Rahman, pp63-64; Kamali, *Freedom*, p93; Kennedy, pp50-57).

⁹⁶ Cf. also 8:61.

⁹⁷ Quoted under entry ‘*kāfir*’ in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* IV(1975), p407.

8.2.2 TREND A: EXCLUSION OF COMMUNISTS FROM THE BODY POLITIC

Three of the four groups among my sample of interviewees excluded communists from the body politic. Though each of these consisted of two interviewees only, the fact that two interviewees independently identified a similar position, and that two of these groups included at least one leader while the third is rooted in a well-documented Islamic tradition, suggests that these are identifiable positions, supported by sufficiently significant sections of the IM to be categorised as separate trends. In this vein, 30.2% of Hamas-supporting respondents to my Azhar survey stated agnostics and non-mosque-going Muslims could not be Members of Parliament (against 62.8% who said they could).⁹⁸

The first of these argues that, though communists are free to disbelieve, even to express their beliefs as individuals, they should not be allowed to systematically undermine the basis of the Islamic state by organising themselves in parties and participating in legislation. Following Bahr,

it doesn't make sense in an Islamic State to have a communist party ... We will not prevent people from expressing their points of views, they are free to express what they believe. But there should not be a systematic weakening of the state from within. ... When I say there's no compulsion in Islam, I mean we do not impose Islam on people. An Islamic system allows Christians and Jews to practise their beliefs but that doesn't mean they can drink alcohol, for example, in front of Muslims, because... this negates Islam. They can do it privately. In the same vein, a communist cannot go out and propagate disbelief and impose it on Muslim society.

⁹⁸ The figures for Fatah supporters were 16.3% and 79.2%. Again, with the Hamas sample, it must be taken into account that al-Azhar's Kutlah appears to be more traditional than the IUG's Kutlah.

Musa justified this position, saying:

It's every human being's right to participate in ... legislation ... But when we're talking about an Islamic State, the general movement of the society should be towards a believing life. It's not logical that someone who says that there is no God, should be part of making the laws ... [if] he became a legislator, he would be provoking people to disbelieve in God. ... I am not denying such a person has a personal right to believe whatever he wants to believe, to practise whatever he wants to practise. ... But when it comes to issues of general policy and society's general direction that's where we should make distinctions of who's who in society.⁹⁹

Though this group limits communists' freedom of expression, it does not limit their freedom of belief, or advocate that communists be killed for their unbelief – or, if they were raised as Muslims, their apostasy (if indeed they have adopted atheism). To support its argument for limitation, it does not invoke the Qur'ān or the Ḥadīth, but the harm principle: unbelief harms society by undermining the belief in God's punishments and rewards, upon which the whole fabric of political obligation, legal authority and social morality is believed to rest – resembling Locke who similarly held that without belief in God, the Afterlife and Judgement Day, there would be no incentive to heed promises made, thus spelling the end of the social contract. Locke, however, goes further by suggesting atheists not be tolerated for the good of society, as they were unlikely to make good citizens.¹⁰⁰

The second group takes Locke's solution one step further, calling, with the scholars of the first tradition described in Chapter 8.2.1, for the execution of apostates – provided an official court has verified their apostasy and given them the opportunity to retract

⁹⁹ Musa II. Though I did not discuss communists with him, Yassin's reasoning regarding Christians suggests he falls into this category.

¹⁰⁰ Riley quoting Locke's *Essays on the Law of Nature and Letter Concerning Toleration*, p73.

their beliefs.¹⁰¹ Communists of Christian origin, meanwhile, are free to practise communism, since, as ‘Iyad’ paradoxically pointed out, to them applies the *āyah* ‘let there be no compulsion in religion’. Taking a literal interpretation of the apostasy Ḥadīth, this group argues that apostasy is humanly verifiable and must be fought and punished.¹⁰² No differentiation is made between communists waging war on Muslims, and those who do not. Nor is the execution of apostates justified by recourse to the harm principle, only the Ḥadīth and the Qur’ān are invoked. Paradoxically, though, ‘Iyad’ conceded, despite his rigidity in condemning unbelief, that on account of its current cooperation with the Palestinian Left, Hamas could not possibly execute its erstwhile allies once an Islamic state was achieved and should accept a compromise (echoing the fourth group; see Chapter 8.2.3). In the same vein, he acknowledged that Muslims can learn from communist ideas and solutions.¹⁰³

The third group ducks the issue altogether, insisting that there will be no communists in an Islamic state because Islam will have removed all grounds for communism, such as inequality and injustice.¹⁰⁴ Unable to appreciate that a communist might disbelieve on principle, it declares those who would continue to believe in communism in a just and egalitarian state, clinically insane. In Dukhan’s words,

Under Islam, there will be no justification to believe in communism. Communism promises humanity food and drink; Islam will provide for all humanity’s needs, material and spiritual. While communism sees the human being as an animal merely seeking drink and food, Islam regards the human being as a being with both material and spiritual needs. It is the duty of an Islamic state to supply a person with all his

¹⁰¹ ‘Iyad’; Leader Kutlah-Azhar.

¹⁰² ‘Iyad’: “God ordered us to fight *kuffār* and *munāfiqīn* (hypocrites)”.

¹⁰³ ‘Iyad’.

¹⁰⁴ Dukhan, Khalas member of Hamas Supporters Gaza.

needs. There is thus no need to transgress against the Islamic state – if someone [like a communist] does, doesn't this tell you that he is psychologically sick? The state will treat his illness, ask God for healing – and after that there will be no communists.

This group's views seem to be influenced by the conviction that communism was introduced to Muslims by Europe to undermine the Muslim faith from within.¹⁰⁵ As such, it regards it as alien and destructive to the Arab and Islamic 'nature'. One has to wonder what this group's reaction would be if communism did not disappear in an Islamic state – and whether Dukhan's (good-humoured) proposal of curing them of their 'illness' could become a Soviet-like practice of locking up dissidents in psychiatric hospitals.

8.2.3 TREND B: COMMUNISTS AS MEMBERS OF THE BODY

POLITIC

Thirteen interviewees supported the view that communists have the right to be represented, stand for election and participate in legislation, and be voted for.¹⁰⁶ Apart from barring communists from the office of Head of State on the grounds that they cannot be expected to have the best interests of Islam at heart, they grant the latter the viceregal rights bestowed by God on all those "who believe and do good works" (*āyah* 24:55).

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Dukhan.

¹⁰⁶ Abu Shannab III, Shamma' (by inference; see footnote 112), Hammad I, Intifada Cell II&III (5 out of 6 members), one member of Hamas Supporters Gaza, 'Nasr'; Abu Dhughri, Taha, 'Yusuf'. Though I did not discuss this issue with Haniyyah, his logic concerning Christians suggests he would belong to this group.

Three arguments were advanced to justify this position. The first argument is rooted in the Ḥadīth:

“A government may subsist with impiety, but it cannot last with oppression and tyranny.”¹⁰⁷

This Ḥadīth was developed by medieval jurists such as Ibn Taymiyyah to mean

God supports the just state even if it be non-believing but does not support the unjust state even if it be Muslim.¹⁰⁸

Ibn Qayim al-Jawziyyah similarly argued

when the signs of justice appear ... then that is what is intended by the Shari‘ah and the Din [religion] of Allah. [...] Any way by which justice and equity are secured is part of the Din and not contradictory to it.¹⁰⁹

Ghannouchi developed this theme in modern times, insisting

A just government, even if not Islamic, is considered very close to the Islamic one, because justice is the most important feature of an Islamic government, and it has been said that justice is the law of Allah.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Quoted in Kerr, p122(n44). The following argument is based on Ghannouchi’s interpretation. Though none of my interviewees explicitly used this argument, it was inferred by Abu Shannab III; Abu Dhughri, Taha.

¹⁰⁸ Kerr, p122 (n44).

¹⁰⁹ Ibn Qayim, *Al-Turuq al-Hukmiyah fi al-Siyasat al-Shari‘iyah*, Cairo Edition (1953), pp14-16; quoted in El-Awa, *System*, pp79-80.

¹¹⁰ Ghannouchi, ‘Participation’, p59 (Ghannouchi bases this argument on Ibn Qayim, Ibn ‘Aqil and Ibn Khaldun). ‘Abduh and Rida also championed this view (Kerr, p122 (n44)).

If justice is more important than piety, and if communists are indeed working towards justice or freedom and equality, there is no justification for excluding the latter from the body politic.

Secondly, to harmonise this group's position with the apostasy Ḥadīth and the numerous Qur'ānic injunctions against cooperation and friendship with *kuffār*, and those decreeing war or execution, the distinction between plain unbelief and unbelief coupled with sedition against the state was invoked. As long as communists do not fight the believers, their beliefs are not illegal and punishable. In the words of one Hamas supporter,

[to support communism] is forbidden in the sense that it is a sin – but it is not punishable by law, for the Qur'ān says “there is no compulsion in religion”.¹¹¹

Shamma' even refrained from calling 'deviant opinions' sinful:

It is possible that ... certain individuals ... have deviant opinions [in the *Majlis*], which do not follow the mainstream. This is not a danger to the community, but a phenomenon ... throughout history. There were people like that even at the time of the Prophet.¹¹²

The third type of justification used is the IM's current alliance with the Palestinian Left against what it perceives to be the injustices of the Peace Process and the corrupt,

¹¹¹ 'Nasr'. Though only 'Nasr' articulated it, this view informs the position of the whole trend, as without it, cooperation with communists cannot be squared with Islamic rule.

¹¹² Shamma' commenting on whether someone like Egyptian Professor Nasr Abu Zaid, declared apostate by some Egyptian Islamists for proposing to use Literary Theory methods on the Qur'ān, could be elected to the *Majlis* of an Islamic state. His reasoning here, in conjunction with his justifying women and Christians becoming Heads of an Islamic state if this was the will of the electorate, suggests Shamma' would not object to communists being elected to the *Majlis* (as Shamma' was one of the first to be interviewed, before this question had crystallised, I did not ask him about communists).

authoritarian ways of the PNA. Once one accepts that cooperation with just unbelievers is in God's and the *ummah*'s interests, argued Abu Shannab,

it is unfair that at the end of the path [when we have achieved an Islamic state], we tell them: ... we succeeded, now you must stop operating. ... [I]f you accept working together from the beginning, then pluralism should be the principle.¹¹³

This argument illustrates this trend's commitment to contractarian logic over and above issues of piety.

Most of those adhering to the majority view demand, following contractarian logic, that communists, whether organised in a party or not,¹¹⁴ respect the Islamic framework of the state (as this was the consensus of the majority to which all citizens are bound) – thus balancing the right to freedom of expression against the right of the community to be protected against harm. Like the first exclusionist group, this trend – with the exception of two who insisted that it is up to the individual elector to square voting for a communist with his/her conscience¹¹⁵ – feared that active proselytisation for atheism will “put the society into chaos”.¹¹⁶ Despite this fear, it is prepared to grant communists the right to participate in legislation. Though the persistence of this fear betrays a fundamental tension in this trend's position – which might push some into the first

¹¹³ Abu Shannab III. Cf. Ghannouchi's argument that, if Muslims are unable to establish an Islamic state “Muslims have no option but to participate politically in establishing and administering non-Islamic governments in order to serve the interests of the *ummah* (community) and prevent evils [...] The best option .. is [thus] to enter into alliances with secular democratic groups” (*Participation*, pp59, 61, 57, 60).

¹¹⁴ Besides Abu Dhughri who did not specify whether a communist party was allowable, and Hammad who granted it was, but preferred there not to be one for fear of it causing tensions in society, all members of this trend stipulated communist parties were allowable in an Islamic state – given they did not undermine Islam (i.e. limited themselves to economics and politics).

¹¹⁵ ‘Yusuf’, ‘Nasr’.

¹¹⁶ Abu Shannab III, Hammad I.

exclusionist group if communists grew rapidly in numbers – the concession to allow participation indicates the influence of the representation principle on the IM's thinking.

Some in this group – significantly, none of the leaders – insisted, despite championing communist participation in legislation, that apostates be executed.¹¹⁷ This contradiction appears to be the result of a tension between a rationally informed pragmatism and a rigidly interpreted dogma, and a by-product of the transitional phase in the IM's thinking regarding communists. When discussing dogma, the said members unequivocally argued that execution was divinely ordained. When, however, discussing the Islamicity of PFLP members (and thus the potential for their execution), they argued that these were not *kuffār* but merely lacked “Islamic consciousness”. Illustrating the tension between their dogma and the reality of friendships or kinship with PFLP members, they said:

You can't say whether people are Muslim or non-Muslim. This is a big issue that we don't want to discuss [because it is beyond us]. The only distinction we can make is between people who fear God and those who don't: those who don't might do something bad because they are not afraid of God observing them.¹¹⁸

Importantly, they emphasised:

You cannot say this man is a *kāfir* because his thought is different from Islam.¹¹⁹

Given their reluctance to declare fellow Palestinians *kuffār*, and their ready approval of the notion that communists are part of the Islamic body politic, these members could

¹¹⁷ Intifada Cell II&III.

¹¹⁸ Intifada Cell II.

¹¹⁹ Intifada Cell III.

well embrace the more ‘liberal’ interpretation of Islamic sources detailed in Chapter 8.2.1, which denounces executions on purely religious grounds – if they were properly instructed of its existence, and, equally importantly, its being solidly grounded in Islamic *fiqh* (jurisdiction).¹²⁰ As long as the notion is morally acceptable to some IM members, that a court can put someone to death for plain heresy, some IM leaders might be tempted to exploit it for political ends.

Finally, like the others, this group believes that communism will wither.¹²¹ The issue is whether, as sceptics would argue, it is this conviction that underlies the IM’s conciliatory attitude, rather than a principled adherence to pluralism and the Qur’ānic injunction that “there be no compulsion in religion”. It is impossible to answer this question conclusively, as much depends on the kind of leadership the IM’s leaders will give and on the development of leftist-Islamist relations.

Whatever the depth of the IM’s commitment to pluralism, it must be set in the context of numerous Palestinian movements dishonouring their professed commitment to pluralism (in which they are of course not unique). The prominence of political violence and polarisation in recent Palestinian history, particularly under occupation, has not offered many examples of non-violent acceptance of political defeat. But developments away from this are the beginnings of a rule of law¹²² and increased personal contact between leftists and Islamists, following a rapprochement initiated in Israeli prisons, and consolidated in the Left-Islamist alliance against the Peace Process (see ‘Praxis Analysis’).

¹²⁰ This again highlights the challenge for the Hamas leadership to educate its members.

¹²¹ Cf. Abu Shannab III, Hammad I.

¹²² For details, see Chapter 4, footnote 97.

The fact that the majority of interviewees advocated inclusion of the communists in an Islamic state, indicates that they have clearly contemplated the eventuality of a sustained presence of communists in an Islamic state.

Within this context, the very development of a series of arguments positively justifying, rather than merely condoning, cooperation is an indication that this group's commitment to pluralism is more than Machiavellian. During the 1980s, the official party line was that communism was evil. The subsequent rapprochement could have been ideologically supported by toning down references to communism's supposed evil, emphasising the temporality of the alliance, and justifying it on pragmatic and strategic grounds. Instead, this inclusionist group has embraced arguments which justify long-term cooperation and inclusion in the (Islamic) body politic, on both religious and strategic grounds – despite the possibility of alienating its more conservative supporters. The depth of this commitment to rapprochement is indicated by the fact that Hammad, for instance, wrote in Khalas's official mouthpiece, *al-Risalah*, that “[t]he unbeliever can ... speak truth, and it should be accepted, not rejected because he is an unbeliever”¹²³ – thereby countering all those who literally interpret the *āyāt* and *ahādīth* concerning unbelief and apostasy.

8.2.4 THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT, J.S. MILL AND THE HARM PRINCIPLE

The difference between the inclusionist and exclusionist trends is largely informed by their respective understandings of the harm they believe communists to represent (which in turn is related to each trend's faith in the strength of Islam). To clarify the different

¹²³ *Al-Risalah* 06.04.1998, p5.

positions, I will employ J.S. Mill's detailed explanation of the harm principle, which states that

the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. ... He cannot rightfully be compelled ... because it will make him happier, because, in the opinion of others, to do so would be wise, or even right. These are good reasons for remonstrating with him ..., but not for compelling him ... Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign.¹²⁴

Though beliefs are personal, expression of beliefs affects other people, and is thus subject to the harm principle, particularly when the opinion expressed incites to harm – as when one states that corn-dealers are “starvers of the poor” to “an excited crowd assembled before the house of a corn-dealer”.¹²⁵ Thus,

Whenever ... there is a definite damage, or a definite risk of damage, either to an individual or to the public, the case is taken out of the province of liberty, and placed in that of morality or law.¹²⁶

However, the curbing of freedom of expression can itself be harmful. The silenced opinion may turn out to be true or it may “contain a portion of the truth”. Since the “prevailing opinion ... is rarely or never the whole truth, it is only by the collision of adverse opinions that the remainder of the truth has any chance of being supplied”.¹²⁷ Moreover, “received opinion”, however true, will become a mere “prejudice, with little

¹²⁴ Mill, *On Liberty*, p14.

¹²⁵ Mill, p62.

¹²⁶ Mill, p91.

¹²⁷ Mill, pp59, 52.

comprehension or feeling of its rational grounds”, unless it is “vigorously and earnestly contested”. Without debate, “the meaning of the doctrine itself will be in danger of being lost, ... and deprived of its vital effect on the [person’s] character”. Only by “explaining it to, or defending it against, opponents” is “a mere formal profession” of dogma transformed into an “intelligent and living apprehension of the truth”, which is capable of influencing a person’s conduct.¹²⁸ The harm done by the expression of an opinion must thus be weighed against the harm done by preventing that expression.¹²⁹

The inclusionist trend’s position is close to Mill’s. Communists have the right to vote, stand for election, and express their opinions concerning economics, politics and morality.¹³⁰ They are banned from becoming Head of State and attacking the Islamic basis of the state, God or the central pillars of faith – on the grounds that these actions would harm the community by undermining the religious basis of the political, moral and legal framework of the society. In this, the inclusionist trend differs from Mill who justifies debate on all issues, both sacred and profane¹³¹ – although, because Mill fails to distinguish “incitement to act” from “advocacy and debate about the merit of action”,¹³² his argument could theoretically be stretched to prohibit debate on issues pertaining to state security. This difference between Mill and the IM seems to stem largely from the fact that the IM posits more beliefs as certain than Mill does (which is in turn related to the greater detail contained in Qur’ān and *Sunnah* than in the Bible). However, as Mill’s defence of theological debate revolves solely around moral issues and the fact

¹²⁸ Mill, p59. See also Mill, pp26, 28, 50-57.

¹²⁹ I am here not interested in the ambiguities of the harm principle, such as that its definition is dependent on one’s moral outlook (cf. John Gray, *Mill on Liberty*, pp48-49).

¹³⁰ Abu Shannab III, Hammad I, one member of Hamas Supporters Gaza, Intifada Cell III, ‘Nasr’. Taha and Abu Dhughri implied it.

¹³¹ Mill, p16. Cf. “If Christians would teach infidels to be just to Christianity, they should themselves be just to infidelity. ... [A] large portion of the noblest and most valuable moral teaching has been the work, not only of men who did not know, but of men who knew and rejected, the Christian faith” (p58).

¹³² Gray, p106.

that the New Testament's morality is incomplete, and as he refrains from justifying debate on the veracity of God's existence or faith *per se*, the inclusionist trend's position is not far removed from Mill's.

Beyond these issues concerning God, debate is welcomed on the same grounds as Mill welcomes debate: to advance truth and ensure that half-truths are challenged. Or as Hammad put it in *al-Risalah*, because "the unbeliever can say the truth",

every human being, whatever their [ideological] affiliation, should open their mind [to other-thinkers] so that they can reach the truth. For, to be open-minded, away from subjectivity, is the sound way to prove the truth and discover the untruth.¹³³

Several interviewees highlighted that Muslims did not have a monopoly on truth and much could be learned from non-Muslims, including communists.¹³⁴ This, after all, is the philosophical basis for *ijmā'* which recognises the fallibility of the human mind and the possibility that truth lies in the dissenting voice (Chapter 7). To argue this with regard to communists, this trend separates the individual acts and statements of a communist from that his/her overall belief system, and judges them according to their specific content, not their origin. Such an attitude shows not only pragmatism, but confidence in the robustness of Islam.

The exclusionist trends operate beyond Millian logic. Though the first of these could theoretically allow debate on economic and political issues that do not pertain to legislation or the Islamic foundation of the state, it in fact curbs debate with communists altogether – thus departing from Mill's principle that debate is necessary for truth to be

¹³³ *Al-Risalah* 06.04.1998, p5.

¹³⁴ Abu Shannab III&IV, Hammad II, Zahhar II (with reservations), Intifada Cell II&III, 'Iyad'. Cf. also openness of some IM leaders towards the (leftist) Model Parliament – Women and Legislation (Chapter 7.4.3)

arrived at and dogma to stay alive. Musa justified this stance by arguing that Western democracies would also not tolerate someone “legislat[ing] something against the core of democracy”.¹³⁵ In a similar manner, neither Musa nor Bahr showed any interest in or openness to learning from communism – on the grounds that atheism is indivisible, rendering communist ideas or actions, however good, ‘contaminated’ with their atheistic foundations. This position seems to betray a lack of faith in the strength of Islamism to absorb communist ideas and criticisms.

Though at one level this exclusionist trend’s position could still be described as Millian, in the sense that the curbing of freedom is justified by the harm principle, and that it welcomes not only debate within an Islamic framework, but also debate with the West,¹³⁶ it has at the same time departed from Millian principles by inflating the harm principle, without “definite” proof of “risk of damage”, and limiting debate on the dubious supposition that unbelief is indivisible – a position which the inclusionist trend condemns. This goes beyond Mill’s intended use of the harm principle, to discriminating against a person’s views on the basis of his/her beliefs, rather than on the basis of the content of the particular statement at hand.

The second exclusionist trend differs from the first only by degree, by ending the life of (ex-Muslim and atheist) communists, instead of silencing them for life (to which the first exclusionist trend’s views amount). Though this position is justified through reference to Qur’ān and *Sunnah*, it is equally, though probably subconsciously, inspired by fear of the harm apostasy can do to Islam. Yet, though the argument has a harm element, it goes, like the first exclusionist trend’s, beyond Mill by discriminating on the basis of a person’s beliefs, rather than the statement or action they are actually engaged in. A ‘hopeful’ sign, from a pluralistic perspective, is that neither of the two adherents

¹³⁵ Musa II.

¹³⁶ Bahr, Musa I.

to this group are in high positions of leadership, and that both come from the more conservative southern end of the Gaza Strip.¹³⁷ As such, it is possible that exposure to a more 'inclusionist' religious approach to unbelievers will affect their position. One of the two, 'Iyad', indeed conceded that in the actual case of cooperation with the Left, Hamas could not resort to killing its allies, and that Islamism could learn from communism.

The third exclusionist trend stands somewhat apart, ignoring the issue altogether. However, if communism fails to disappear in their Islamic state, there is a real possibility that, despite their present 'tolerance', they would veer towards the second rather than the first of the exclusionist trends.

8.2.5 PRAXIS ANALYSIS

In the absence of an Islamic state, current praxis can reveal little about the IM's attitude towards the constitutional position of communists. But pointers to the depth of the IM's commitment to pluralism can be found in the extent of present cooperation and friendship, and in the way the IM treated the Palestinian Left during the lawless climate of the Intifada.

Concerning the present, a loose political alliance between leftist PLO factions and Hamas has lasted, on and off, since 1991, when Fatah brought the PLO into negotiations with Israel¹³⁸ – mirroring the cooperation between communists and Brothers which

¹³⁷ 'Iyad' is an ordinary member, Leader Kutlah-Azhar is the leader of a small branch of al-Kutlah at al-Azhar University. For security's sake, I will not disclose their precise domiciles.

¹³⁸ Cubert sets the formation of a "loose coalition, shortly after the 1991 Madrid conference" (p86). Rashad mentions a Hamas communiqué stating so on October 24, 1991 (p30n118). Usher sets Hamas's

existed during the 1950s, before the Brothers were suppressed by Nasser.¹³⁹ The PFLP praised “the positive nature of dealing with the Islamic forces” at its Fifth National Congress in 1993,¹⁴⁰ while a coalition of PFLP, DFLP and Hamas supporters won a historic victory over Fatah at the Bir Zeit University student elections.¹⁴¹ After the expulsion of the 415 alleged Hamas activists to Marj al-Zuhur (Lebanon) in late 1992, the PFLP was one of those providing supplies for the expellees.¹⁴² During the latter half of the 1990s, leftist Human Rights Centres such as the PFLP-dominated Palestinian Centre for Human Rights provided legal defence for the continuous stream of Hamas leaders passing through PNA prisons.¹⁴³ PFLP and DFLP representatives are invited to Hamas functions and vice versa.¹⁴⁴ The existence of an alliance does not, however, prevent the movements from opposing each other. In 1992, the PFLP and DFLP joined Fatah against Hamas candidates in elections for Bir Zeit University’s Student Council while Hamas shunned an alliance with the leftists in the 1993 elections for the Engineers’ Union in Gaza.¹⁴⁵ In 1994, a PFLP leader observed that a “strategic alliance remains problematic because of our differences ... over democracy and social matters”,

¹³⁸ (...continued)

“formal enlistment in the Palestinian Forces Alliance” in January 1994, observing negotiations had been underway since Oslo (*Palestine*, p27). Barghouti (‘Islamist Movements in Historical Palestine’ in Sidahmed & Ehteshami, p168) and Klein (p119) set the start of the alliance after the signing of the Declaration of Principles in 1993.

¹³⁹ In 1954-55, Brothers and communists jointly lead protests against Nasser, the Brothers also lending electoral support to the communists in the Teachers Union (Milton-Edwards, pp49-52). Communist-Islamist cooperation is of course not new, or ideologically impossible; cf. C. van Dijk, ‘Communist Muslims’ in the Dutch East Indies’ in C. van Dijk & A.H. de Groot (eds), *State and Islam*. Cf. also interaction in Egypt (Ramadan, p173).

¹⁴⁰ PFLP, ‘*Al-Taqrir al-Siyasi: al-Juz’ al-Thalith*’, *Al-Hadaf*, No. 1150, 13.06.1993, pp23-38; quoted in Cubert, p86.

¹⁴¹ Usher, *Palestine*, p27.

¹⁴² Ahmad, p67.

¹⁴³ Raji Sourani, Director PCHR. Cf. Press Releases criticising the PNA concerning its refusal to release Hamas leaders Rantisi and Ahmad Nimr Hamdan (26.08.1999), the torture of senior Khalas member Sami Naufal (25.08.1999), and the case of ‘Hamas Detainees on Hunger Strike’ (14.10.1997).

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Hammad II.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Cubert, pp167-168; Usher, *Palestine*, p27.

but added “there are responsible and rational factors in Hamas and, when our interests converge, we will work with them”.¹⁴⁶

At an institutional level, there is some exploratory cooperation, most intriguingly between women’s groups (which have traditionally been ideologically diametrically opposed).¹⁴⁷ Though both sides seem to enter such cooperation in the hope of converting the other to their point of view,¹⁴⁸ the cooperation suggests the beginnings of the end of the demonising that characterised the relationship during the 1980s. Besides this, Islamist charities are said to treat clients even-handedly, regardless of political affiliation.¹⁴⁹ Western charities dealing with the IM corroborate this,¹⁵⁰ indicating that, in charity, the IM does not discriminate.

At an individual level, I have come across a number of friendships. One PFLP leader is befriended with Abu Sibah, Dean of Student Affairs at the IUG and a former Kutlah leader.¹⁵¹ ‘Muhammad’, the former Hamas cadre leader, has close friends among the PFLP, as do some of the members of the Intifada Cell (one of whom used to be a PFLP activist himself). The rapprochement of IM and PFLP leaders in Israeli prisons has been particularly important in neutralising the mutual negative images which had been reinforced by the need for secrecy under occupation (and thus the lack of opportunity to

¹⁴⁶ Interview with Ghazi Abu Jiab (“politically identified with the [PFLP] in Gaza”), *Middle East Report* 24(6).

¹⁴⁷ Cf. between the leftist Model Parliament and Khalas’s Women’s Committee.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Board Members al-Shabbat; Sarraj-Matar, Director Gaza Community Mental Health Programme – Women’s Empowerment Project; Qassim, Director Model Parliament – Women and Legislation.

¹⁴⁹ Muslih, ‘Ibrahim’; ‘Khalid’ I.

¹⁵⁰ Pharmaciens Sans Frontières, Save the Children, Mennonite Central Committee.

¹⁵¹ ‘Muhammad’ (relative of PFLP leader).

PAGE

NUMBERING

AS ORIGINAL

I have already discussed the increasingly conciliatory attitude of some IM leaders. As for the Left, 'Umar Sha'ban, communist candidate for the PLC, acknowledged that Hamas had, in its own way, "worked for our country"¹⁵⁷ – a shift from earlier accusations that Hamas was anti-nationalistic. A PFLP-affiliated lecturer at Nablus's al-Najah University, once acting President of the IUG, observed likewise that the Islamists have become "more elastic in their mentality" and readier to debate.¹⁵⁸ Leftist interviewees generally dismissed the notion expressed by some government officials¹⁵⁹ that Hamas in power would execute those who opposed it. A leftist Azhar lecturer affirmed that "from what they say, they are within democratic practice".¹⁶⁰ Sha'ban held that "they will control me in a certain way, but they won't kill me".¹⁶¹ The former PFLP student activists were less optimistic, maintaining that despite the improvement in relations Hamas would try to "squash" the PFLP (in the same way as they believed it had tried to do during the 1980s), and that Hamas would "destroy the principles of democracy".¹⁶² However, since their description of the 1980s clashes was highly partisan and without much self-criticism, their opinion must be regarded as possibly more biased than that of the other leftist leaders I interviewed. Jarro', finally, was pessimistic about the future of pluralism in Palestine *per se* – not because of Hamas but because of "Arab culture":

See Sudan, the Ba'this in Syria and Iraq, or the leftists who ruined Yemen – there is fundamentalism in all factions.

¹⁵⁷ 'Umar Sha'ban.

¹⁵⁸ Yusuf 'Abd al-Haq.

¹⁵⁹ Top MOPIC Official. Abu Middin (Minister of Justice) did not go as far, though argued that Hamas would never leave power once in power.

¹⁶⁰ 'Daoud'.

¹⁶¹ Sha'ban.

¹⁶² 'Ziad' & 'Husam', Yazuri.

However, and despite believing that the “religious individual” advocates “*shūrā*” (a negative thing in Jarro’s book), and only supports democracy “to get power”, Jarro commented:

Our trip is long. Hopefully we will be able to change their mentality. I myself, I was a [dogmatic] Marxist, I changed into a pragmatic realist. [If I can change, they can.]
There are common denominators with Hamas.¹⁶³

One accusation often heard is that Hamas instituted a reign of terror during the Intifada, killing those whose lifestyles were deemed un-Islamic, using the collaborator issue as pretext.¹⁶⁴ Taken together with allegations that Hamas persecuted leftists during the 1980s,¹⁶⁵ the accusations infer that if Hamas came to power, it would massacre communists, secularists and Westernised Palestinians (even though, inconsistently, it is not accused of killing political opponents during the Intifada).¹⁶⁶

First, the context. To achieve their purpose of undermining the Palestinian resistance to occupation, the Israeli secret services ordered collaborators to infiltrate political movements, supply inside information, exacerbate tensions between the movements, and undermine the general morale of society.¹⁶⁷ To political movements, collaborators posed a considerable threat to the safety of their members, the success of their operations and to society at large. They believed collaborators to be involved in

¹⁶³ Jarro’ II.

¹⁶⁴ This claim is less prominent in Western discourse (cf. Usher, ‘ Hamas’, pp68-69), more so in local elite discourse (Top MOPIC Official; Fatah PLC Member, Gazan Businessman; to lesser degree Shahadah I, Director of Gaza Centre for Rights and Law).

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Milton-Edwards on PFLP leaders ‘Bassam’ and Rabah Muhanna, pp113-116.

¹⁶⁶ The Top MOPIC Official envisaged that Hamas would turn Palestine into a second Algeria, referring to the prolonged spate of killings in the struggle between Islamists and government there.

¹⁶⁷ This paragraph based primarily on Be’er & Saleh (B’Tselem), *Collaborators in the Occupied Territories*.

peddling drugs and alcohol, and encouraging prostitution and adultery. All movements sought to punish collaborators suspected of moral laxity.¹⁶⁸ Each type of collaboration – Hamas differentiated between security, ideological, political, economic and ‘morality’ collaborators – invited a specific form of punishment.¹⁶⁹ According to the prominent Israeli human rights organisation B’Tselem, Hamas did not kill those belonging to the categories of ideological, political or economic collaborator.¹⁷⁰

In a study of Nusseirat Refugee Camp in the Gaza Strip, B’Tselem found that most of the 15 cases of collaborator punishment in which Hamas was involved were related to “intelligence cooperation with security forces”. This is in sharp contrast to the punishments meted out by Fatah and the PFLP, 100 in total during the same period, roughly half of which concerned “social, moral and criminal issues”. Of the total of 31 killings only 9 were attributed to Hamas.¹⁷¹ Though these conclusions apply to Nusseirat Camp only, they suggest, particularly in conjunction with the fact that more interest seems to have been shown in this issue in leftist and Fatah than in Hamas publications,¹⁷² that Hamas was not as, or at least not more, keen on killing those suspected of ‘morality’ collaboration than the other political movements.

Much has been made of the fact that in the last years of the Intifada, Hamas was responsible for the bulk of collaborator-killings, and that the number of ‘morality’

¹⁶⁸ Be’er, pp39-42, 89-99.

¹⁶⁹ Be’er, pp173-176, 123-138.

¹⁷⁰ Be’er, p175. ‘Khalid’ (II) recounted how, following the accidental death (during punishment) of a suspected economic collaborator from Shaja’iyyah, Gaza City, Hamas issued a communiqué apologising to the family, and offering blood money, as is the Islamic custom.

¹⁷¹ Be’er, pp145-147. Time frame: December 1987 (beginning of Intifada) to end September 1993.

¹⁷² Cf. the PFLP’s publication in the 1980s of “Let the Methods of the Enemy’s Security Services be Exposed” (Be’er, pp41-42), subsequently used by Hamas to instruct its members, and the fact that of the 81 “major circulars issued in the first four years of the Intifada by Hamas, only nine made reference to the issue of collaborators”, compared to the constant references to collaborators in the PLO’s circulars of the same years (Be’er, pp176, 164-165).

killings increased.¹⁷³ The Director of the Gaza Centre for Rights and Law claimed, for example, on the basis of those last years, that Hamas was responsible for 95% of all executions during the entire Intifada.¹⁷⁴ Between April 1992 and the end of 1993, Hamas's al-Qassam squads did, according to B'Tselem, kill more than 150 suspected collaborators, while the killings by other movements, notably Fatah and the PFLP, fell sharply (having already killed a similar number between the beginning of the Intifada and the end of 1989 when Hamas killed relatively few, and some having been involved in collaborator killings since the 1970s, thus making Hamas's killings far from unique).¹⁷⁵

By 1992, and even more so 1993, after the expulsion of 415 suspected Islamist leaders to Lebanon, most of Hamas's senior leaders were exiled or in prison, leaving the already young leadership of the Qassam squads without their restraining control. According to B'Tselem, there was a marked increase in the number of collaborator punishments when, following the arrest in May 1989 of a number of erstwhile Brotherhood activists who, during the 1980s, had generally refrained from killing, the young militants of the al-Qassam squads stepped into the void.¹⁷⁶ Any restraining influence those of the older political leadership could wield who had not been arrested by then, was further eroded when the majority of these were imprisoned or exiled in turn. It is thus not surprising that the most ruthless killing occurred in 1993, after the exile of the 415. On this issue, Abu Shannab observed:

¹⁷³ Cf. Shahadah I, Fatah PLC Member, Gazan Businessman; Usher, 'Hamas', pp68-69.

¹⁷⁴ Shahadah I.

¹⁷⁵ Between December 1987–December 1989, some 170 suspects were killed by “groups identified with the PLO or by individuals whose affiliation was unclear” (Be'er, p163). In contrast, between December 1987–May 1989, Hamas is charged with killing 10 suspects (Be'er, p176). In the early 1970s, and early 1980s, the PFLP killed dozens of suspected collaborators, “many of them apparently mistakenly” (Be'er, p160). Sayigh remarks of the 1967-1970 guerilla war from Gaza's refugee camps (in which the PFLP was prominent) that “the campaign against informers was getting dangerously out of hand” (p210).

¹⁷⁶ The 1980s activists were the Majad and Palestinian Mujahidin (Be'er, p176).

there was a common agreement between the top leaders of all the different parties not to kill collaborators. But the young people, who were taking the active part, could not stick to this strategy – whether because of their enthusiasm or because of their short vision. Fatah, at the beginning [of the Intifada], experienced this when the leadership of Fatah asked its members not to kill. [We experienced it] also.¹⁷⁷

Despite the fact that leaders such as Yassin have continued to justify the killing of collaborators¹⁷⁸ and B'Tselem and others have consequently concluded that the Hamas leadership was unequivocally behind the procedure,¹⁷⁹ a significant number of leaders within the movement were against the killings. Abu Shannab condemned the executions, on the grounds that they could not be based on a proper juridical process and that the experience of the 1936 uprising had taught the Palestinians that “killing collaborators was something against the Intifada itself”.¹⁸⁰ Haniyyah and Musa were unequivocal in their condemnation while Bahr expressed great reserve.¹⁸¹ As a result of the stance of leaders such as Abu Shannab and Haniyyah, collaborator killings in the prisons where they were confined, did not occur.¹⁸² Moreover, Abu Shannab suggested that, once a non-partisan political and judicial system was in place in Palestine, the different political movements submit themselves to a national investigation, in a bid to lay the ghosts of the Intifada to rest through attribution and retribution.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁷ Abu Shannab IV.

¹⁷⁸ Yassin III.

¹⁷⁹ Be'er, pp176-180. Shahadah I&II, Fatah PLC Member and Gazan Businessman implied the same.

¹⁸⁰ Abu Shannab I&IV.

¹⁸¹ Haniyyah II, Musa III, Bahr. I did not discuss this issue with other leaders.

¹⁸² I have not been able to corroborate Abu Shannab's and Haniyyah's testimonies. Abu Shannab (IV) recounted one incident in which the suspect accidentally died after interrogation because of an undetected fever, after which he sent word to the family of the deceased, apologising for the death, offering blood money, and clearing the suspect's name of collaboration outside of prison.

¹⁸³ Abu Shannab IV.

As for the accusation that Hamas persecuted leftist leaders, the discussion in Chapters 4 and 7 showed that there was a continuing power struggle between the IM and the PFLP, in which both sides committed atrocities. In the prominent case of PFLP leader Rabah Muhanna, moreover, it appears that the person responsible for instigating the beatings later turned out to have been a collaborator, responsible for betraying Hamas leader 'Emad 'Aql, and presently serving a prison sentence on suspicion of collaboration.¹⁸⁴

While non-collaborating IM activists no doubt participated in the beatings, they did so in a climate of violence and disinformation, little communication between the parties, plenty of disinformation, and a collaborator as commander. That, and the fact that, then and since, no systematic killing has been initiated against political opponents, while subsequent collaborator killings appear to have been both condemned by much of the leadership, and targeted primarily against security collaborators, renders the notion that the IM intends to systematically kill communists in future somewhat speculative – particularly in the light of the above testimonies of leftist leaders, and the present state of cooperation between the IM and leftist movements.

¹⁸⁴ Jarro' I (PFLP), Yazuri (PFLP), Zakariyyah Thalmas (Fatah).

PART IV

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

This thesis aimed to explore the political theory of the Islamic Movement (IM) in the Gaza Strip. It sought to understand the nature of governance, the political process and the body politic in the Islamic state the IM advocates, in the belief that insights into the IM's utopian political constructs will not only suggest how it might act in a future Palestinian state – be this secular democratic, Islamic democratic or authoritarian – but also throw light on the kind of issues Islamism is generally concerned with, however diverse its manifestations.

Existing scholarship has not sought to probe in depth the IM's political ideals – the absence of sophisticated political tracts in the IM and the IM's (assumed) propensity to violence having led scholars to believe the IM's theory to be too rudimentary or Machiavellian to be worth studying. Where theory is discussed, it is generally with regard to 'international' issues, such as the Peace Process, the IM's attitude towards Jewry or nationalism. Little has been said about the IM's 'domestic' political theory, beyond observations, rooted in Western discourse's preoccupation with the IM's role in political violence, that the IM is anti-democratic and anti-pluralistic. Only a few articles with a more sociological focus hint that the IM might have democratic-like, pluralistic and non-violent aspects.

The methodological approach used (derived from an analysis of the correlation between findings, method and perspective in a sample of Western scholarship on Islamism) is

rooted in a perspective which acknowledges the possibility of multiple, in particular non-secular, paths to the ideals enshrined in Western democracy. It seeks to incorporate the voice of both Islamists and their critics, test commitment to expressed ideals against praxis, and juxtapose Islamist theory with comparable Western constructs to create a hermeneutical dialectic while refraining from treating the latter as normative. With this methodology, I found that the IM has a coherent political theory, internally contradictory at times, internally disputed at others, but a discernible body of thought nevertheless. The marked similarity between the responses of the forty-eight Islamist leaders and members I interviewed bore this out, as did, in areas where current praxis can reveal something about utopian theory, the consistency between the IM's theory and praxis.

Given the assumption in existing Western scholarship that the IM readily resorts to violence, and the implications this has for the credibility of democratic-like statements, I deconstructed four violent episodes which have been central in shaping Western conclusions, detailing two in this thesis. In the case of the 1983 clashes at the Islamic University in Gaza, accounts were found to omit important contextual details which showed that Islamists indulged in violence neither more nor less than non-Islamists, that this violence was highly contextual, triggered by a climate of occupation, resistance, infiltration and the absence of a legitimately enforced rule of law, and that its outbreak could be traced to a breakdown in communication and a belief, on both sides, that they were under threat from the other. In the case of the so-called '*hijāb* campaign' of 1988-1989, portrayals were seen to inflate the IM's involvement, following ill-informed rumours and ideological conjecture by the IM's critics that Hamas must have been responsible on account of its religiosity, and its assumed 'reactionary' stance on women (an assumption which can be shown to be problematic) – where, in fact, Hamas seems to have only been responsible, along with others, in helping to create a climate in which bare-headedness came to be seen as offensive, triggering a wave of incidents in which unaffiliated young boys targeted bare-headed women.

Both accounts were found to be coloured by a hegemonising pro-PLO narrative, intent on dichotomising between the PLO and the IM, and depicting the latter as more anti-nationalistic and ruthless than it is. Taking this distortion into account, and given that the ideational and structural context has changed since the 1980s to a more pluralistic, less lawless environment, that IM leaders have expressed regret for the various clashes, and that the IM seems not to have been responsible for a *hijāb* campaign and, moreover, condemns it, these episodes cannot be said to be reflective of the IM's current political culture, or prove that it is inherently violent.

The IM's political theory, as expressed by my interviewees, is dually contractarian, where the contract is between both ruler and ruled, and the ruler and God. Because the IM believes that each human being is God's viceregent on earth, it holds that all are essentially free and equal, and that, consequently, no one can legitimately wield power over another unless the latter has voluntarily consented to this. As God's viceregent, no ruler's authority is legitimate unless s/he rules within the boundaries set by God. All are thus equal before the law. IM institutional praxis bears out these ideals, political power being dependent on personal integrity and members' trust, as expressed in regular elections (circumstances allowing). To institutionalise the contractarian nature of leadership, the IM proposes a separation of the executive, legislative and judiciary powers, the first two, in the form of a Head of State and a legislative assembly (*Majlis al-Shūrā*), elected directly and regularly by the people. The *Majlis* is the highest legislative authority and has the right to impeach the Head of State if the latter reneges on either his contract with the people, or his contract with God, as defined in constitution and law by the *Majlis*.

Existing scholarship has generally portrayed the IM's commitment to the notion of a social contract as expressed in elections as Machiavellian, insisting that it seeks to implement an authoritarian nomo- or cleritocracy. However, a comparison with John

Locke's contractarianism, which also roots political authority in the potentially conflicting sources of divine and consensual right, reveals that, like Locke, the IM relies on the consensual mechanism to transform divine law, known largely in terms of general principles, into a detailed civil law suited to the needs of the community and the era while maintaining each member's liberty. Without consensus, divine law has no earthly sovereignty. Without divine law, consensus has no moral framework.

To ensure the law stays true to God's purpose and draws on available expertise, the IM envisages the elected legislature to appoint committees of experts. Significantly, in the light of charges that the IM proposes a cleritocracy, and of a tradition in Islam which holds that legal decisions are the exclusive realm of religio-legal experts (*mujtahidun*), the IM does not demand that *Majlis* Members be *mujtahidun*, only that they have a working knowledge of the *Sharī'ah* and other legal systems. The professional background of the IM's current leaders – teachers, medical professionals and engineers – seems to bear out this principle. Equally significant, the IM insists that final legislative authority remains with the *Majlis*, not the experts, as the latter lack the popular mandate to legislate. In this, it echoes Giovanni Sartori who resolved the democratic deficit introduced by the increasing reliance of modern states on unelected experts by suggesting that “democracy in output” (decisions which experts have helped shape) remains subject to “democracy in input” (the voice of the people as embodied in the representatives).

Underlining both its contractarian commitment, and its rootedness in Islamic tradition, the IM imposes the duty to consult (commanded by the Qur'ān and exemplified in the *Sunnah*) on the elected representatives in an Islamic state. After consultation, using, for instance, referenda on important issues, constitutional and legal decisions should be decided by a weighted majority vote, with unanimity the ideal. Everyday policy decisions could be decided with a simple majority, as long as they are taken in an

atmosphere of *tawāfuq* (harmony). IM institutional praxis regarding the equivalent of 'constitutional' decisions at an institutional level and everyday policy issues follows these principles. The IM's advocacy of weighted majority rule mirrors that of Western theorists Buchanan and Tullock who arrive at this conclusion through calculating the optimal cost-effectiveness ratio for decision-making varying from simple majority voting to unanimity. Buchanan and Tullock similarly insist on maintaining unanimity as the normative ideal, critiquing Western political theory for adopting the majority principle in its place. The IM's emphasis on *tawāfuq* parallels Jack Lively's critique of Western pluralist theories for elevating the necessary conflict between group interests and the general good to an indispensable guarantor against authoritarianism, while ignoring the need for a basic consensus to counterbalance these centrifugal forces.

Extensive consultation is deemed particularly important in the creation of the constitution. The constitution, the IM believes, should reflect the principles God has revealed through Islam. But, it insists, such a constitution cannot be imposed. It must be resonant with people's beliefs and wholeheartedly embraced. This attitude is rooted in an approach to freedom which closely resembles that of Georg Hegel who similarly posited that to be free one must voluntarily and self-consciously will what he called 'the universal will'. Only then is one in harmony with one's divine purpose. Yet, because one must will the universal both voluntarily and self-consciously, it is impossible to force someone to be free.

Criticism of Hegel as an authoritarian or totalitarian for advancing a highly prescriptive notion of freedom, parallels Western criticism of the IM. Like Hegel, the IM leaves no doubt as to what it believes the end of freedom to be. Yet, however prescriptive, both Hegel and the IM render the notion of forcing people to be free meaningless in the way they define freedom. Both define a personal sphere of autonomy over which the state has no authority and which includes religious choices (though there is some ambiguity

among a minority of those interviewed about whether this includes the choice to leave Islam). Both also insist that a state which fails to safeguard the rights and needs of the individual is not legitimate.

Like Hegel, the IM sees the establishment and development of its Islamic state as an educational process in which people are taught to understand and will the divine/universal will and so become free. This introduces a tension in the consultative process to precede the state. If this is to arrive at a prescribed end-result, is it free? Here the IM diverges from Hegel who criticises the contract notion on the grounds that the general populace is not sufficiently enlightened, so justifying the rule of an enlightened few. Though the IM partially shares Hegel's doubts about the general populace's capability to know what is best, it insists that both political authority and the constitution lose their legitimacy unless consented to. The sincerity of this belief is demonstrated by the extensive consultations the IM embarked upon to decide its policy towards the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), and by the fact that it is concerned to gain popular acceptance, through education, of the penal stipulations revealed in the Qur'ān (*al-hudūd*) before they can be implemented as law.

It is also born out by the IM's insistence that, though God's principles are univocal, there is no one Islamic system. Each of the first four Caliphs, it observes, devised different political systems. In addition, following the classical Islamic notion of *ijmā'* (consensus) which holds that truth may reside in the dissenting voice, it acknowledges that more than one answer may be (morally) right. In praxis, this is exemplified by the existence of multiple views and vigorous debates on constitutional and policy issues, and the championing, by some at least, of multi-partyism. Moreover, following the Islamic injunction to seek wisdom wherever it is found, the IM is willing to accommodate any political system, whether Western or communist in origin, as long as it actualises God's principles, chief of which are freedom, justice and equality.

Employing Sartori's distinction between value and procedural consensus, the IM appears willing to consult and compromise on procedural issues, but not on values. Though this attitude seems to corroborate the claim that the IM is anti-pluralistic, it in fact refutes it. As Sartori observed, while procedural consensus is essential for a democratic system to function, value consensus is merely preferential. The IM similarly welcomes consultation regarding procedural issues, aware that procedural consensus is essential for the Islamic system to function, but refuses to compromise on values, knowing that different value systems can coexist under procedural consensus.

A majority of IM members interviewed thus welcome Christians and communists as members of an Islamic state (though not as Heads of State), as long as they operate within the constitution to which the majority of citizens agreed. Present cooperation with Christian and leftist institutions, the latter facilitated by the prison encounters between Islamists and leftists during the Intifada and the decade-long Islamist-Leftist alliance against the present Peace Process, suggests that the IM is serious about coexistence with other value systems. A majority similarly emphasize it will abide by the outcome of a popular constitutional vote, whether or not this resulted in an Islamic state. These attitudes are partly informed by a commitment to contractarianism, partly by the belief that the IM's proposed system, based on the righteousness of Islam, is the most persuasive. In this it resembles Dankwart Rustow, who argued that pragmatic acceptance of democratic procedures by non-democrats will eventually produce genuine democrats.

Too strong a faith in the power of Islam to transform people could blind the IM to the need for institutional checks and balances. Some members declared an inordinate amount of trust in Islamically-inspired leaders, insisting that their Islamic faith would keep them from error and corruption. However, the majority of those interviewed appear too aware of the corrupting influence of power to do away with institutional checks.

Illustrative of this attitude is the elaborate system employed by Islamist charities to ensure financial integrity, and the holding of regular internal elections.

Finally, the IM's political theory is a creative fusion of classical Islamic and Western principles and traditions, following the example of contemporary Islamist theorists such as Rashid al-Ghannouchi (and, on occasion, breaking with earlier Islamist theorists such as Abul Ala Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb). The reinterpretation of the *Sunnah* as advocating a Western form of electoral contractarianism is an illustration, as is the way the IM's attitude towards Christians and communists has developed.

Though a minority of those interviewed maintain classical attitudes – depicting Christians as protected but segregated non-Muslim communities (*dhimmīs*), and communists (of Muslim origin) as apostates, to be excluded from the body politic or executed – a majority argue, following a rights-based argument, that both should be members of the body politic on the grounds that, being subject to the law, they should have the right to be represented in the legislature. Accordingly, they should be entitled to vote, stand for election and be appointed Ministers. A small minority argue that, if the people will it, a Christian could be Head of an Islamic state. The majority, though, insist that that post be reserved for a Muslim, employing a competency argument which holds that only a Muslim can adequately represent the interests of the Muslim majority.

Christians would, if they desire so, be entitled to have their own personal status law. Though incommensurate with the Western principle of one law for all, and potentially dangerous by stigmatising the minority as a segregated, and possibly marginal, group (a concern shared by some of Gaza's Christian leaders who advocate full integration and, by implication, submission to the Shari'ah), this approach, resembling the Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, is both more sensitive to the need of minorities to protect their heritage, and is beginning to be reflected in the praxis of

Western countries whose populations are becoming increasingly (aware of their being) multi-cultural. As such, the IM's stance is worth studying in more detail to ascertain whether the Islamist approach holds pointers for future Western multicultural solutions.

Implications and Further Research – Islamism in Palestine

At a practical level, the conclusion that the IM has a sophisticated and principled understanding of politics suggests it is a political player worthy of inclusion into the political process. Particularly in the light of the democratic (secular or otherwise) aspirations of the Palestinians, and of Western professed support for the creation of a transparent and accountable political system in Palestine, the IM's declared commitment to freedom of speech, justice and equality, its theory of contractual leadership and its increasing commitment to safeguarding religious freedom, dissent and pluralism in the search for truth, are important contributions. Though the movement has only really begun to embrace pluralism since the experience of sharing prison with ideological others during the Intifada, this type of thinking seems to have resonated with both leadership and members, and resulted in a more cooperative and tolerant attitude than some of the PLO supporters I interviewed, including a Minister of the PNA, give it credit for.

Lingering prejudices among PLO supporters, rooted both in the clashes of the 1980s and in secularist prejudice, might inspire the PLO and the PNA to continue demonising the IM, particularly Hamas, and exclude it from the political process – through closures of its institutions and imprisonment of its members as is current practice – and so stifle pluralistic developments, within both the IM and society in general. Conversely, the more the IM is engaged with politically, the more sophisticated and pluralistic its

political theory is likely to become – given the developments in theory since its prison encounter and subsequent cooperation with ideological others.

The situation is exacerbated by already existing hegemonic tendencies within the PNA and by the pressure exerted on it by the Israeli and US governments to eradicate the IM's structure on the grounds that that would stop Hamas's political violence against Israel. Israeli policy-makers are tempted, more than Westerners, to overlay their understanding of Hamas, not only with secular prejudices based on their own experience with Israeli religious parties, but also with an (understandable) excessive focus on Hamas's 'military' branch's involvement in terrorist acts – thereby losing sight of Hamas's political wing's sophistication and the possibility of negotiating a non-violent settlement (particularly as political leaders have over the past years begun to distance themselves from the 'military' solution).

It is further aggravated by the fact that many Western donor countries involved in the Peace Process seem to harbour similar prejudices against Hamas, in the belief that only a commitment to secular democracy is acceptable to a modern state. This research has demonstrated that non-secular alternatives of the sort which advocate freedom, transparency and accountability, should be acknowledged as valid, and given the liberty to influence the political debate.

Many areas of the IM's theory and praxis remain under-researched. My research into the IM's praxis at the Islamic University in Gaza (IUG) has indicated how little detailed research has been done to date, and how much could be learned about the IM's political attitudes with regard to pluralism and democratic praxis in this, to the IM, near-hegemonic environment. A more thorough study of the IUG's history, from its origins till the present, embracing Committee, Board, staff and student politics, charting the IM's and other groups' influence and their interaction at each of these levels, would yield

insights into the IM's political values and culture. A similar study of interaction at the universities of Najah and Bir Zeit would provide insights into the IM's behaviour in opposition to or in coalition with ideological and political others, and so complement the data from Gaza's near-hegemonic situation.

My analysis of the IM's contractual theory and its attitude towards the ideological others of Christians and communists tangentially touched upon its attitude towards freedom, the private-public and religious-political dichotomies and the limiting of freedom by means of the harm principle. More research is needed to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of the IM's position, probing further both the IM's conceptual framework and its actual attitude in specific instances. Research into the extent to which the IM distinguishes between subjectivity and objectivity will further clarify its approach to 'truth' and freedom of belief. My research into the IM's attitudes towards Christians and communists in Gaza could be duplicated in those areas of the West Bank where the highest concentrations of Christians and communists exist, indicating whether my conclusions are valid for all Palestine.

In the chapter on the '*hijāb* campaign' I briefly alluded to the discrepancy between Western discourse's view of the IM's attitudes regarding women's issues, and the IM's actual, less than 'reactionary' views. As leftist Palestinian women's movements themselves acknowledge, the IM can be more effective in changing popular attitudes towards women's issues than they themselves are, as it can draw on the legitimacy its Islamicity accords it in the eyes of a largely religious population. Moreover, conclusions that the IM is 'reactionary' do not correspond with the reality of large numbers of women becoming IM members, and claiming that the IM has enabled them to become better educated or claim their place in professional life. Blank condemnations of the IM as 'reactionary' are thus not only non-factual, they also prevent an atmosphere of dialogue from developing and thus ultimately harm Palestinian women. A thorough

study of the IM's thinking regarding women, moving beyond assumptions that religiously-inspired movements are necessarily 'reactionary', would be vital in helping to create such an atmosphere.

Implications and Further Research – General

The above research has vindicated my thesis that democratic-like, pluralistic and non-violent expressions of Islamism exist, even where existing research denied they did. In doing so, it has tentatively demonstrated the validity of my argument that perspective and method prevented previous scholars from perceiving these expressions – my discovering a coherent and sophisticated political theory in the IM seems after all to have been the direct result of my having self-consciously problematised my perspectival and methodological positions. Problematising the secular prejudice, and its assumption of violence and intolerance in religio-political movements, and adopting a *pluralist* methodology which seeks to incorporate both the Islamist voice and that of its critics, both violent and non-violent, anti-pluralistic and pluralistic, and anti-democratic and democratic instances of Islamist behaviour, seems to have enabled me to re-evaluate available evidence concerning the IM's involvement in violence, and take the IM's political theory seriously. My use of Western political theory to create a hermeneutical dialectic with Islamist thinking, while refraining from positing the former as normative, has prevented me from succumbing to the *pluralist* temptation to lose definitional depth, and helped me maintain a value hierarchy to evaluate the relative significance and internal logic of the different data. The adoption of a Ricoeurian approach to praxis as text and the juxtaposition of praxis and rhetoric also provided a vital critical moment.

Given the discrepancy between my conclusions and those of most existing Western texts on Islamism in general, this research also suggests, along with other *pluralist* texts, that

similar democratic-like, pluralistic and non-violent instances of Islamism exist where current research has failed to locate them. Besides demonstrating the need for a more self-consciously critical methodological approach, this thesis thus highlights the necessity for Western scholars to problematise the applicability of Western 'norms', in particular the 'secular prejudice', and to move beyond a fascination with Islamist involvement in political violence, through re-evaluation of existing data and inclusion of the Islamist perspective, to an in-depth study of the various manifestations of Islamist political theory. This is important for improving Western understanding of Islamism. But it may also enhance the West's understanding of itself, and generate new insights into persistent problems facing Western political theory, such as how to reconcile multiculturalism with an agreed overall moral framework, or how to create a servant leadership culture to counter corruption and self-aggrandisement.

It is important to differentiate, where possible, between the different manifestations of Islamism, distinguishing, for example, those who readily engage in political violence, from those who do not, and those who approach the Islamic sources literally, without much regard for changing circumstances, from those who display a level of pragmatic responsiveness to the exigencies of the moment. Each of these will have different sets of political constructs and different value hierarchies. Conflating them into a monolithic whole will obscure theoretical differences. Yet it is equally important to not categorise a manifestation before it has been thoroughly studied. Hamas had been categorised as violent; yet it does possess a sophisticated non-violent political theory and praxis.

Finally, I have not been able to satisfactorily resolve the tension between universalism and relativism. Though on the one hand I set out to problematise the assumption that Western political science and its values are the universal norm, and have succeeded to the extent of problematising the secular prejudice, on the other the bottom line of my argument that the IM's theory is an 'acceptable' alternative to secular democracy is

rooted in the contention that much of its theory resembles those elements of Western democratic theories which I (tentatively) hold to be universally desirable. Had the IM been less 'democratic-like' and more prone to violence, I might have found it more difficult to accept its non-secularism. In fact, my reluctance to acknowledge violence as a morally acceptable political tool is in itself a universalisation of my value system – even though the IM showed a somewhat similar reluctance, justifying their recourse to violence with reference to the extremity of their circumstances.

Whether or not I succeeded in achieving methodological 'objectivity', my approach has enabled me to learn from the IM's critique of Western democratic theory and practice, and appreciate the depth of the IM's political theory. The conclusion that there is a high level of similarity between the two political theories does of course not invalidate the fact that I was initially willing to problematise my understanding of what constitute universally acceptable values. In fact, the discovery of similarity when one is ready to find either difference or similarity, seems to vindicate the notion that there *is* a set of universal values, even if we may never know it in full. Perhaps the fact that I had temporarily suspended my assumptions about difference and similarity, and about the universal validity of some 'Western' values, was sufficient to see Islamism and my Western background in a more 'objective' light. Perhaps, too, it was sufficient to acknowledge the potential cultural specificity of those values I refused to suspend, such as the moral unacceptability of political violence. In either case, the above underlines the importance of problematising both one's perspectival and methodological positions, and one's assumptions about Islamism and the universality of Western values.

APPENDIX A

Survey of Student Views at the Islamic University Gaza, December 1997 Center for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies University of Durham, Great Britain

This questionnaire must be anonymous. Please do not put your name on it. Please answer this questionnaire on your own. We want to know what *you* think. Please tick one square per question. If you do not wish to answer a question, leave it blank.

- 1 Which party did you vote for (or if you didn't vote yet, have you decided to vote for)?
 al-Kutlah al-Islamiyyah Shabibah al-Jama'a al-Islamiyyah (Isl. Jihad)
 Lijan al-'Amal al-Taqaddumi (PFLP) Lijan al-'Amal al-Tatawwa'i (DFLP)
- 2 Did you vote this way because of the party or the candidate? party candidate
- 3a If party, why? party's performance national party's perf. religious reasons
 political reasons
- 3b If candidate? candidate's religiosity I agree with their views from good family
 candidate's integrity candidate's patriotism candidate a friend
- 4 Which of the following national factions do you trust most?
 Hamas Fatah Islamic Jihad PFLP Fida
 PPP DFLP Islamic Independents
 Nationalist Independents Other None
- 5 What does 'secularism' mean to you?
 non-religious state Western concept modernity end of religion
 individual freedom immoral state
- 6 What does 'modernity' mean to you?
 end of religion less poverty/illness loss of indigenous culture progress
 better education western standards
- 7 What does 'democracy' mean to you?
 elections rule of the people pluralism majority rule
 immorality indiv. freedom secularism modernity Islamic
consultation
- 8 Do you believe in democracy? a lot a bit not at all
If so, why? it's western democracy is true Islam democracy works best
If not, why? it's not Islamic democracy doesn't exist Palestinians are not
democratic
- 9 Do you think modernity is good for Palestine? very a little not at all

- 10 What kind of state do you hope to see in Palestine? secular Islamic mix
 Why? rel. conviction pol. conviction Islamic=indigenous fear of religious politics
 fear of immoral politics secular=Western
- 11 Which countries in the world would you say have Islamic systems (tick as many as you like)?
 Saudi Arabia Palestine Iran Sudan Malaysia None
- 12 What do you believe is the most important characteristic of a future Palestinian state?
 democratic no poverty just pious protects human rights
- 13 What do you believe is the most important issue confronting Palestine now?
 democracy human rights security economy peace Islamisation
- 14 What do you think is the most important role of political opposition?
 criticize government protect pluralism protect freedoms protect unity
- 15 "Palestine has a free press" true false
 "The National Authority can be criticized without fear" true false
 "Political disunity must sometimes be resolved through violence" true false
- 16 How do you evaluate the performance of democracy in:
 Palestine very good good bad very bad
 Israel very good good bad very bad
 Britain very good good bad very bad
- 17 If Hamas were in power, would there be more democracy? more similar less
 18 If Hamas were in power, would there be less corruption? more similar less
 19 If Hamas were in power, would human rights be protected? more similar less
 20 How much influence should religion have over politics? a lot a little none
- 21 "Access to public office should depend on integrity, regardless of religion" true false
 "Laws should reflect today's needs rather than early Islamic tradition" true false
 "The Legislative Council, not religious scholars, should determine the law" true false
 "Laws must never contradict the Qur'an (e.g. stoning adulterers to death)" true false
- 22 "Schools should teach all children Islam all children about all religions
 Islam to Muslim children, Christianity to Christian children
- 23 Did you ever vote for a female political candidate? yes no
 If yes, why? she was best qualified women's input improves government
 men cannot represent women's needs
 If no, why? none were qualified women are not made to lead
 men can represent women's needs
- 24 Should women have equal opportunities in the professional sector? yes no
 If no, why? women should take care of the family women are not capable enough
 women should not have social contact outside of their family other
- 25 Do you believe Israel has the right to exist? yes no depends
- 26 If Palestinians are given an independent state on roughly the pre-1967 borders, with Jerusalem as a shared capital, does Israel have the right to exist? yes no depends
 If no, do Israelis have the right to live in a future Palestinian state? yes no
- 27 Do you support suicide bombings? yes no depends
 If yes, why? calling attention to Palestinian rights religious conviction revenge
 only means of expressing anger only means to achieve state
 If no, why? they cause sanctions from Israel religious conviction
 does not achieve anything positive they kill innocent civilians
- 28 How old are you? 17-18 19-20 21-22 23-24 over 25
- 29 In what faculty do you study? science faculty arts faculty
- 30 Where do you live? Gaza City other city village refugee camp other
- 31 Your family's financial situation is: good fair difficult poor
- 32 If your family's situation is difficult or poor, is this since:
 before intifada intifada autonomy in Gaza last year's suicide bombings
- 33 Have you lost family members at the hands of Israelis? yes no

- 34 Have family members lived in: the Gulf the West former Soviet Union?
- 35 How many family members have studied at university? most a few only me
- 36 Do you want to study in: a Western country an Islamic country
- 37 Are you a member of a social or sport club? none one two more
- 38 Who or what most influenced your views on the political situation in Palestine?
 newspapers pamphlets radio TV family friends
 religious people political organization youth organization PNA
- 39 What is your religion? Islam Christianity agnostic other
- 40 What does your religion mean to you? identity integrity security family inheritance
 personal faith I don't think about it
- 41 Do you consider yourself religious? yes no don't know
- 42 Do you worry whether others consider you religious? a lot a little not at all
- 43 Does your faith in God have any influence on:
your character? a lot a little not at all
your choice of career? a lot a little not at all

(The rest of the questions concerns Muslims only)

- 44 How often do you pray the early morning prayer? always often rarely never
Why? Religious conviction peer pressure cultural statement political statement
- 45 Do you ever omit prayers because of other business? often rarely never
- 46 Should women wear the *hijab*? always only outside the home never
Why? Religious conviction peer pressure cultural statement political statement
 to protect women from men's looks to facilitate the pursuit of a career
- 47 Is your family religious? all of them some of them none of them
- 48 Does your family wear the *hijab*? all of them some of them none of them
- 49 Does your family accept your choice of religious life? yes no
- 50 Do you have close Christian friends? many a few none

Thank You!

PAGE

NUMBERING

AS ORIGINAL

- ١٣- ما هو باعتقادك القضية الأكثر أهمية التي تواجه فلسطين ؟ الديمقراطية حقوق الانسان الأمن التحول الى الاسلام
- ١٤- ما هو باعتقادك الدور الأكثر أهمية للمعارضة ؟ نقد الحكومة حماية التعددية حماية الحريات حماية الوحدة
- ١٥- " فلسطين تملك حرية الصحافة " حقيقي غير حقيقي
- " السلطة الوطنية يمكن نقلها بدون خوف " حقيقي غير حقيقي
- " الطرق السياسي يجب أن يخل في بعض الأوقات بالخطأ " حقيقي غير حقيقي
- ١٦- كيف تقيم أداء الديمقراطية في كلا من :
- | | | | | |
|------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| فلسطين : | <input type="checkbox"/> جيد جدا | <input type="checkbox"/> جيد | <input type="checkbox"/> سيء | <input type="checkbox"/> سيء جدا |
| اسرائيل : | <input type="checkbox"/> جيد جدا | <input type="checkbox"/> جيد | <input type="checkbox"/> سيء | <input type="checkbox"/> سيء جدا |
| بريطانيا : | <input type="checkbox"/> جيد جدا | <input type="checkbox"/> جيد | <input type="checkbox"/> سيء | <input type="checkbox"/> سيء جدا |
- ١٧- إذا كانت حماس على رأس السلطة هل سيكون هناك مزيدا من الديمقراطية ؟ أكثر نفس الشيء أقل
- ١٨- إذا كانت حماس على رأس السلطة هل سيكون هناك فساد أقل ؟ أكثر نفس الشيء أقل
- ١٩- إذا كانت حماس على رأس السلطة هل ستكون حقوق الانسان محمية ؟ أكثر نفس الشيء أقل
- ٢٠- كم هو تأثير الدين الذي ينبغي أن يكون على السياسة ؟ كثيرا قليلا مطلقا
- ٢١- " العمل الجمهوري ينبغي أن يعتمد على الاستقامة بغض النظر عن الدين " حقيقي غير حقيقي
- " القوانين ينبغي أن تتفاعل مع احتياجات اليوم أكثر من العرف الاسلامي التقليدي " حقيقي غير حقيقي
- " المجلس التشريعي من غير العلماء الدينين ينبغي أن يصنع القوانين " حقيقي غير حقيقي
- " القوانين يجب ألا تتناقض مع أحكام القرآن - مثال: يرحم الزاني حتى الموت " حقيقي غير حقيقي
- ٢٢- المدارس يجب أن تعلم : جميع الأطفال عن الاسلام جميع الأطفال عن جميع الأديان
- الاسلام للمسلمين و المسيحية للمسيحيين
- ٢٣- هل سبق لك أن صوتت لمرشحة سياسية ؟ نعم لا
- إذا كان نعم ، لماذا ؟ لأنها مؤهلة جيدا طاقة المرأة تحسن الحكم لا يمثل الرجال احتياجات المرأة
- إذا كان لا ، لماذا ؟ ليس منهن مؤهلات لم يخلق النساء لأن يقدن يمكن أن يمثل الرجال احتياجات المرأة
- ٢٤- هل النساء يمتلكن فرص متساوية في قطاع المهن ؟ نعم لا
- إذا كان لا فلماذا ؟ لأن النساء عليهم العناية بالأسرة النساء غير مؤهلات كفاية
- النساء ليس لهم الحق الاجتماعي خارج الأسرة أسباب أخرى
- ٢٥- هل تعتقد أن اسرائيل لها الحق في الوجود ؟ نعم لا يعتمد على
- ٢٦- إذا أعطوا الفلسطينيين دولة مستقلة على حدود ما قبل ١٩٦٧ كما فيها القدس كماصمة مشتركة ، هل من حق اسرائيل أن تكون موجودة ؟ نعم لا يعتمد على
- إذا كان لا ، هل من حق الاسرائيليين العيش في دولة فلسطينية في المستقبل ؟ نعم لا لا
- ٢٧- هل تؤيد العمليات الانتحارية ؟ نعم لا يعتمد على
- إذا كان نعم ، لماذا ؟ لجذب الانتباه للحقوق الفلسطينية فتاعة دينية للاستقام فقط للتعبير عن الغضب
- إذا كان لا ، لماذا ؟ يسبب عقوبات فتاعة دينية لا ينجز أي شيء ايجابي قتل ناس أبرياء

- ٢٨- كم عمرك ؟ ١٨-١٧ ١٩-٢٠ ٢١-٢٢ ٢٣-٢٤ أكثر من ٢٥
- ٢٩- ماذا تدرس ؟ في كلية أدبية في كلية علمية
- ٣٠- أين تسكن ؟ مدينة غزة أي مدينة أخرى قرية معسكر لاجئين آخر
- ٣١- وضع الأسرة المالي هو : جيد متوسط صعب فقير
- ٣٢- إذا كان الوضع المالي صعب أو فقير فذلك منذ : قبل الأضحية منذ الأضحية
- الحكم الذاتي منذ عمليات التطهير العام الماضي
- ٣٣- هل فقدت أحد أفراد أسرتك على يد الاسرائيليين ؟ نعم لا
- ٣٤- هل يوجد أفراد من أسرتك في الخارج ؟ الخليج الغرب الاتحاد السوفيتي السابق آخر
- ٣٥- كم فرد من أسرتك درس في الجامعة ؟ الأغلب البعض أنا فقط
- ٣٦- هل تريد أن تدرس في ؟ دولة غربية دولة اسلامية
- ٣٧- هل أنت عضو في نادي رياضي أو اجتماعي ؟ نعم لا اثنان أكثر
- ٣٨- ما هو أكثر تأثيراً على وجهة نظرك بالنسبة للوضع السياسي في فلسطين ؟ الصحف البيانات الراديو
- التلفزيون الأسرة الأصدقاء الناس المدنيين التنظيم السياسي
- المنظمة الشبابية السلطة
- ٣٩- ما هي ديانتك ؟ الاسلام المسيحية الالحاد أخرى
- ٤٠- ماذا يعني الدين بالنسبة لك ؟ الهوية الاستقامة الأمن وراث عائلي
- عقيدة شخصية لم أفكر في ذلك
- ٤١- هل تعتقد أنك متدين ؟ نعم لا لا أعرف
- ٤٢- هل تقلق إذا عرف الآخرين أنك متدين ؟ كثيراً قليلاً مطلقاً
- ٤٣- هل إيمانك بالله له تأثير على شخصيتك ؟ كثيراً قليلاً مطلقاً
- هل إيمانك بالله له تأثير على اختيارك للمهنة ؟ كثيراً قليلاً مطلقاً
- الأسئلة التالية تخص المسلمين فقط**
- ٤٤- هل تصلي صلاة الفجر ؟ دائماً غالباً أحياناً مطلقاً
- لماذا ؟ عرف ديني ضغط المحيط الاجتماعي دلالة ثقافية دلالة سياسية
- ٤٥- هل سبق لك و أن تركت الصلاة من أجل عمل آخر ؟ غالباً نادراً مطلقاً
- ٤٦- ينبغي على المرأة لبس الحجاب ؟ دائماً فقط معارج البيت مطلقاً
- لماذا ؟ عرف ديني ضغط المحيط الاجتماعي دلالة ثقافية دلالة سياسية
- لحماية المرأة من نظرات الرجال للعمل في مهنة مناسبة
- ٤٧- هل أسرتك متدينة ؟ جميعها بعض منها لا أحد
- ٤٨- هل أحد من أسرتك يرتدي الحجاب ؟ جميعهن بعض منهن لا أحد
- ٤٩- هل تفضل أسرتك اعتبارك لحياة متدينة ؟ نعم لا
- ٥٠- هل من أصدقائك صديق مسيحي مقرب لك ؟ العديد البعض لا أحد

وشكروا لحسن تعاونكم معنا |

Survey of Student Views at al-Azhar University Gaza, March 1998

Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies
University of Durham, Great Britain

**This questionnaire must be anonymous. Please do not put your name on it.
Please answer the questions on your own. We want to know what *you* think.
Please tick (✓) ONE square per question, otherwise the answer will be invalidated.
If you do not wish to answer a question, leave it blank.**

- 1a Which party did you vote for?
 Shabibah Kutlah al-Islamiyyah
 Kutlah al-Nizal al-Islami (Islamic Jihad) None
- 1b Why? party's performance national party's performance candidate's religiosity
 candidate's patriotism candidate's integrity religious reasons
 candidate is my friend other.....
- 2 Which of the following national factions do you trust most?
 Fatah Hamas Islamic Jihad
 PFLP DFLP Nationalist Independents
 Islamic Independents PPP Fida Other None
- 3 What does 'secularism' mean to you?
 non-religious state Western concept individual freedom
 end of religion modernity immoral state other
- 4a What does 'modernity' mean to you?
 end of religion less poverty & illness loss of indigenous culture
 progress better education western standards other
- 4b To what extent do you think modernity is good for Palestine? 0%-----100%
- 5 What does 'democracy' mean to you?
 elections rule of the people majority rule
 secularism Islamic consultation pluralism
 modernity individual freedom immorality other
- 6a To what extent do you believe in democracy? 0%-----100%
- 6b Why? democracy is: ..western ..true Islam ..anti-Islam works best
 democracy doesn't exist Palestinians aren't democratic other.....
- 7a What kind of state do you hope to see in Palestine? secular Islamic mix other
- 7b Why? rel. conviction pol. conv. Islamic=indigenous fear of religious politics
 fear of immoral politics secular=Western other
- 8a Can women be members of parliament/majlis as-shura? yes no don't know
- 8b What about Christians? yes no don't know
- 8c And non-mosque-going Muslims, or agnostics? yes no don't know
- 9 How should members of parliament/majlis as-shura be selected?
 free elections appointment don't know other:.....
- 10 Which countries in the world would you say have Islamic systems (tick as many as you like)?
 None Saudi Arabia Palestine Iran Sudan Malaysia
- 11 What do you believe is the most important characteristic of a future Palestinian state?
 democratic no poverty just pious protects human rights
- 12 What do you believe is the most important issue confronting Palestine now?
 democracy human rights economy peace security Islamisation

- 13 What do you think is the most important role of political opposition?
 criticize government protect pluralism protect freedoms protect unity
- 14a "The National Authority can be criticized without fear" true false
- 14b "Political disunity must sometimes be resolved through violence" true false
- 14c "Those who don't agree with the ulema are apostates" true false
- 14d "Apostates should be removed from office" true false
- 15a If Hamas were in power, would there be more democracy? more similar less
- 15b Would there be less corruption? more similar less
- 15c Would human rights be more protected? more similar less
- 16 To what extent should religion have influence over politics? 0%-----100%
- 17a "Access to public office should depend on integrity, regardless of religion" true false
- 17b "The Legislative Council, not religious scholars, should determine the law" true false
- 17c "Laws must never contradict the Qur'an (e.g. stoning adulterers to death)" true false
- 18 Schools should teach: all children Islam all children about all religions
 Islam to Muslim children, Christianity to Christian children other
- 19 Did you ever vote for a female political candidate? yes no
- 19b Why? she was the best qualified candidate no women were qualified enough
 men should represent women's needs women have right to pol. positions
 women's input improves government women are not made to lead
 the Prophet said women should not lead other.....
- 20a Should women have equal opportunities in the professional sector? yes no
- 20b If no, why? their task is the family women are not capable Islam discourages it
 they shouldn't have social contact outside the family other.....
- 21 Do you believe Israel has the right to exist? yes yes, conditionally no
- 22a If an independent state is created inside the pre-1967 borders with Jerusalem as its shared capital, does Israel have the right to exist? yes yes, conditionally no
- 22b If no, do Israelis have the right to live in a future Palestinian state? yes no
- 23a Do you support self-martyrdom operations? yes yes, conditionally no
- 23b If yes, why? to call attention to Palestinian rights religious conviction revenge
 only way to express anger only way to achieve state other
- 23c If no, why? economic sanctions religious conviction nothing positive achieved
 innocent civilians are killed other
- 24 In what faculty do you study? science faculty arts faculty
- 25 Where do you live? Gaza City other city village refugee camp other
- 26a Your family's financial situation is: good fair difficult poor
- 26b This situation has been like this, since: before the intifada during the intifada
 autonomy in Gaza the 1997 closures
- 27 Have close family members died at the hands of Israelis? yes no
- 28 Have family members lived in the: Gulf West frmr Soviet Union other
- 29 How many family members have studied at university? most a few only me
- 30 Do you want to study in: a Western country an Islamic country other
- 31 What is your religion? Islam Christianity agnostic other
- 32 What does religion mean to you? identity integrity security family inheritance
 personal faith I don't think about it other
- 33a To what extent does your faith in God influence your character? 0%-----100%
- 33b And on your choice of career? 0%-----100%
- 34 Do you worry whether others consider you religious? much a little not at all

(The rest of the questions concerns Muslims only)

- 35 How often do you pray the early morning prayer? always often rarely never
- 36 Do you ever omit prayers because of other business? often rarely never

-
- 37a Should women wear the *hijab*? always only outside the home never
- 37b Why? Religious conviction peer pressure the *hijab* is a misrepresentation of Islam
 political expression cultural expression to protect women from men's looks
 to facilitate pursuit of career men should control themselves other.....
- 38 Is your family religious? all some of them none of them
- 39 Does your family wear the *hijab*? all some of them none of them
- 40 Do you have close Christian friends? many a few none

Thank You!

نظرة عامة حول وجهات نظر طلاب جامعة الازهر، غزة - إبريل ١٩٩٨

مركز دراسات الشرق اوسطية والاسلامية

جامعة دورهام - المملكة المتحدة

إختر اجابة واحدة فقط.

أجب عن الاسئلة بنفسك .

لا تكتب اسمك على هذا الاستبيان .

اذا كنت لا ترغب بالاجابة اترك المربع دون اشارة.

- ١-١ ماهي الكتلة الطلابية التي صوت لها؟
 منظمة الشبيبة الفتاوية
 الكتلة الاسلامية
 كتلة النضال الاسلامي
 لا احد
- ١-٢ لماذا؟
 لاداء الكتلة في الجامعة
 مرشح وطني
 كون المرشح صديق شخصي
 لولاء الكتلة لاحزاب انت تؤيدها
 مرشح مستقيم
 او لسبب آخر _____
 مرشح متدين
 اسباب دينية
- ٢- اي من الاحزاب الوطنية التي تثق بها اكثر؟
 الجبهة الشعبية لتحرير فلسطين
 اسلاميون مستقلون
 فتح
 حماس
 الجهاد الاسلامي
 الجبهة الديمقراطية لتحرير فلسطين
 حزب الشعب
 فدا
 اخرون
 لا احد
- ٣- ماذا تعني العلمانية بالنسبة لك؟
 دولة غير دينية
 نهاية الدين
 الحداثة (شيء عصري)
 دولة غير اخلاقية
 شيء آخر _____
 الحرية الشخصية
 فكرة غريبة
- ١-٤ ماذا تعني الحداثة اليك؟
 التقدم
 تعليم افضل
 معايير غريبة
 ضياع الثقافة المحلية
 شيء آخر _____
- ب- الى أي درجة تعتقد ان الحداثة شيء جيد لفلسطين؟ %
 ١٠٠% _____
- ٥- ماذا تعني الديمقراطية اليك؟
 الانتخابات
 حكم الشعب
 العلمانية
 الحداثة
 الحرية شخصية
 الاخلاقية
 شيء آخر _____
 الاغلبية
 التعددية
- ١-٦ الى أي درجة تؤمن بالديموقراطية؟ %
 ١٠٠% _____
- ب- لماذا؟
 لانها غريبة
 لانها هي الاسلام الحقيقي
 لانها غير اسلامية
 الديمقراطية تنجز الافضل
 الديمقراطية شيء غير موجود في الواقع
 لان الفلسطينيين غير ديموقراطيين
 سبب آخر _____
- ١-٧ ما شكل الدولة الذي تأمل ان ترى فلسطين فيه؟
 علماني
 اسلامي
 مختلط
 آخر _____
 لاقناع ديني
 لاقناع سياسي
 لان الاسلام فكرة أصيلة
 الخوف من السياسة الدينية
 الخوف من السياسة الااخلاقية
 العلمانية هي فكرة غريبة
 سبب آخر _____
- ١-٨ هل يستطيع المسيحيون ان يكونوا اعضاء برلمان/مجلس الشورة؟
 نعم
 لا
 لا رأي لي
- ب- هل يستطيع غير المسلمين ان يكونوا اعضاء برلمان/مجلس الشورة؟
 نعم
 لا
 لا رأي لي
- ج- هل تستطيع النساء ان يكن عضوات برلمان/مجلس الشورة؟
 نعم
 لا
 لا رأي لي

- ٩- كيف يجب اختيار أعضاء البرلمان / مجلس الشورى؟
 انتخابات حرة تعيين لا رأي لي آخر _____
- ١٠- ما هي الدولة التي الأكثر تمسكا بالإسلام ، حسب اعتقادك؟ (أشر لما تراه مناسباً لأكثر من واحد)
 لا أحد السعودية فلسطين إيران السودان ماليزيا
- ١١- ما هي السمات الأكثر أهمية لدولة فلسطين المستقبلية؟
 ديمقراطية لا فقر عدالة تقوى حماية حقوق الإنسان
- ١٢- ما هو باعتقادك القضية الأكثر أهمية التي تواجه فلسطين؟
 الاقتصاد السلام الأمن التحول إلى الإسلام الديمقراطية حقوق الإنسان
- ١٣- ما هو باعتقادك الدور الأكثر أهمية للمعارضة؟
 نقد الحكومة حماية التعددية حماية الحريات حماية الوحدة.
- ١٤- ١ " السلطة الوطنية يمكن نفعها بدون خوف" موافق غير موافق
 ب- "الخلافات السياسية يجب أن تحل في بعض الأوقات بالعنف" موافق غير موافق
 ج- "الدين لا يوافقون علماء الدين يجب اعتبارهم مرتدين" موافق غير موافق
 د- "يجب عزل المرتدون عن مناصبهم العامة" موافق غير موافق
- ١٥- ١ إذا كانت حماس على رأس السلطة هل سيكون هناك مزيداً من الديمقراطية؟ أكثر نفس الشيء أقل
 ب- هل سيكون هناك فساد أقل؟ أكثر نفس الشيء أقل
 ج- هل ستحمي حقوق الإنسان أكثر؟ أكثر نفس الشيء أقل
- ١٦- إلى أي درجة ينبغي أن يؤثر الدين على السياسة؟ %٠ _____ %١٠٠ _____
- ١٧- ١ " الوصول إلى مناصب عامة يجب أن يعتمد على الكفاءة والاستقامة، الاستقامة بغض النظر عن الدين" موافق غير موافق
 ب- " المؤهلون لصياغة القانون يجب أن يكونوا الأعضاء المنتخبون سواء كانوا علماء الدين أو غيرهم" موافق غير موافق
 ج- " القوانين يجب ألا تتناقض مع أحكام القرآن - مثال: يرمم الزاني حتى الموت الحرفية" موافق غير موافق
- ١٨- المدارس يجب أن تعلم: جميع الأطفال عن الإسلام جميع الأطفال عن جميع الأديان
 تعليم الإسلام للمسلمين وتعليم المسيحية للمسيحيين شيء آخر _____
- ١٩- هل سبق لك أن صوت لمرشحة سياسية؟ نعم لا
 ب- لماذا؟ لأنها كانت الأكثر كفاءة لم يكن بينهن مؤهلات بصورة كافية
 يجب أن يمثل الرجال احتياجات المرأة النساء لهن الحق في المناصب السياسية
 مساهمة المرأة تحسن عملية الحكم لم تخلق النساء لان يقدن
 "لا خير في قوم ولوا أمرهم امرأة" سبب آخر _____
- ٢٠- هل يجب النساء أن يكن لديهن فرص متساوية في القطاع المهني؟ نعم لا لا رأي لي
 ب- إذا كان لا فلماذا؟ لان النساء عليهن العناية بالأسرة النساء غير مؤهلات كفاية الإسلام لا يشجع
 يجب ألا يتمتعن بصلات الاجتماعية خارج الأسرة أسباب أخرى
- ٢١- هل تعتقد أن لإسرائيل الحق في الوجود؟ نعم نعم، شرطياً لا
- ٢٢- ١ في حالة قيام دولة فلسطينية مستقلة داخل حدود ما قبل ١٩٦٧ ، والقدس كعاصمة مشتركة، ففي هذه الحالة....

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Personal Interviews with Islamists

(names in inverted commas are cover names; some names appear twice, under different categories)

Hamas Leaders: Top Echelon (Full List)

(In alphabetical order. Names of those interviewed underlined. Names of those unavailable for interview because of imprisonment starred. Domicile given to show geographical concentration. Dates in right column refer to date of interview. Roman numbers are used when interviewee was interviewed more than once.)

Abu Musamah*, Sayyid (Rafah)

Abu Shannab, Ismail (Gaza City)

I&II: May, 1998; III: June, 1998; IV: July, 1998; V: March, 1999

<u>al-Dukhan</u> , 'Abd al-Fattah (Nuseirat Camp)	June, 1998
<u>Haniyyah</u> , Ismail (Gaza City, Beach Camp)	I: May, 1998; II: July, 1998
Ja'abari, Ahmad (Gaza City, Beach Camp)	
al-Maqadmah*, Ibrahim (Rafah)	
Nimr, Ahmad (Khan Yunis)	
al-Rantisi*, 'Abd al-'Aziz (Khan Yunis)	
<u>Shamma'</u> , Muhammad (Gaza City)	March, 1998
Taha, Abu Ayman (Burej)	Did not wish to be interviewed
<u>Yassin</u> , Ahmad (Gaza City)	I&II: February, 1998; III: July 1998
<u>al-Yazuri</u> , Ibrahim (Gaza City)	June, 1998
<u>Zahhar</u> , Mahmud (Gaza City)	I: May, 1997; II: March, 1998; III: May, 1998

Hamas Leaders: Middle Echelon

Hammad, Ghazi	Chief Editor <i>al-Risalah</i> ; elected Hamas leader in prison during Intifada; I: May, 1998; II: June, 1998
'Muhammad'	Former Hamas cadre leader and middle leader in Muslim Brotherhood (during Intifada); has since left disillusioned, though still believes in Islamism; May, 1998

Hamas/Khalas Members/Supporters

'Ahmad'	Former Hamas member (during Intifada); presently IUG student; May, 1998
'Ashraf'	Former Hamas member (during Intifada); presently IUG student; May, 1998
Hamas Supporters Gaza	Target group of 2 Hamas members, 1 Khalas regional representative; March, 1999
Intifada Cell	6-Member Hamas cell operative during Intifada in one of the Strip's refugee camps; some acknowledged they were still Hamas members, others professed to be Khalas members; I&II: May, 1998; III: June, 1998
'Iyad'	Hamas member; June, 1998
'Nasr'	Hamas supporter; IUG alumnus; May, 1998
Various Pro-Hamas Students	Informal talks with IUG students who expressed support for Hamas; May-June 1998

Islamic Charity Personnel (Male)

Muslih, Muhammad	Managing Director al-Mujamma' al-Islami; March, 1998
'Ibrahim'	Director Islamic Charity (Southern Gaza Strip); self-declared Hamas member; March, 1998

- Shamma', Muhammad Deputy Director al-Mujamma' al-Islami (also Hamas Leader); March, 1998
- al-Yazuri, Ibrahim Director al-Mujamma' al-Islami (also Hamas Leader and Board Member Palestinian Red Crescent Society); June, 1998

al-Jam'iyyah al-Shabbat al-Islamat

- Board Members al-Shabbat Two members of Administrative Board of al-Jam'iyyah al-Shabbat al-Muslimat; March, 1998
- 'Iman' Member of al-Shabbat; Director of one of al-Mujamma's Women's Training Centres; March, 1998

Hizb al-Khalas al-Watani al-Islami

- Badawil, Salah Member of Political Office; Khalas's spokesperson; April, 1998
- Bahr, Ahmad Head of Hizb al-Khalas; June, 1998
- Hamdan, Yusra Member of Political Office; Head of Khalas's Women's Affairs Committee; May, 1998
- Musa, Yahya President of Khalas's Political Office (Maktab al-Siyasi); I: May, 1998; II&III: July, 1998; IV: March, 1999
- al-Na'ami, Salah Member of Khalas's General Assembly; journalist with *al-Risalah*; May, 1998

Al-Kutlah al-Islamiyyah

- Abu Dhughri, Sami President of IUG's men's SC (1997); June, 1998
- Abu Sibah, Atallah IUG Dean of Students; former IUG Kutlah leader and SC member (1980s); June, 1998
- Hamdan, Yusra Kutlah leader and Member of IUG's women's SC in mid-1980s; currently Member of Khalas's Political Office and Head of its Women's Affairs Committee; May, 1998
- Haniyyah, Ismail Kutlah leader and President of IUG's men's SC in mid-1980s; currently Hamas leader I: May, 1998; II: July, 1998
- IUG's Women's Section Informal talks with students in IUG's women's section, during distribution and collection of my survey; December 1997
- Kutlah Members Informal talk with Kutlah members in SC office; May, 1998
- Leader Kutlah-Azhar May 1998
- al-Masri, 'Arefa Member of IUG's men's Student Council (1996); April, 1998
- Musa, Yahya Kutlah leader and President of IUG's men's SC in mid-1980s; currently President Khalas's Political Office; I: May, 1998; II&III: July, 1998; IV: March, 1999
- Taha, Ayman President of IUG's men's SC (1998); May, 1998

- 'Yusuf' Member of IUG's men's SC (1998); June, 1998
- Women's Kutlah 1 Target group of President and Finance Commissioner of IUG's women's SC (1998) and two members of the women's Kutlah; June, 1998
- Women's Kutlah 2 Target group of 4 members of the IUG's women's Kutlah; July, 1998

Non-IM Islamists

- Islamist WAC Activist Women's Affairs Centre; Jihad affiliation; also part of Islamist Women interview; May 1998
- Islamist Women Target group of 2 female Islamic Jihad supporters, 1 female IM supporter; also present a female PFLP member
- 'Jamil' IUG staff member; May, 1998
- 'Kamal' IUG Lecturer; June, 1998
- 'Khalid' IUG alumnus, non-aligned Kutlah sympathizer; I: February 1998; II: March 1998; III: June 1998; IV: May 2000
- 'Mahmud' IUG Alumnus; May, 1998
- Qur'an wa'l-Sunnah Staff members Qur'an wa'l-Sunnah, Khan Yunis; March, 1998

(Target) Groups

- Hamas Supporters Gaza Target group of 2 Hamas members, 1 Khalas regional representative; March, 1999
- Intifada Cell 6-Member Hamas cell operative during Intifada in one of the Strip's refugee camps; some acknowledged they were still Hamas members, others professed to be Khalas members; I&II: May, 1998; III: June, 1998
- Islamist Women Target group of 2 female Islamic Jihad supporters, 1 female IM supporter; also present a female PFLP member
- Women's Kutlah 1 Target group of President and Finance Commissioner of IUG's women's SC (1998) and two members of the women's Kutlah; June, 1998
- Women's Kutlah 2 Target group of 4 members of the IUG's women's Kutlah; July, 1998

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Abu 'Ali, Nabil
Director Palestinian Red Crescent Society; I: May 1998; II: July 1998
Former IUG Dean of Student Affairs (1980s); presently IUG Dean of Scientific Research; March, 1999
- Abu Middin, Freh
Abu Sibah, Atallah
Minister of Justice, PNA; March, 1999
IUG Dean of Students; former IUG Kutlah leader and SC member (1980s); June, 1998
- Awwad, George
Awwad, Muhammad
Ayyad, Maher
'Aziz'
Bakr, Sayid
Barghouti, Iyad
Priest at main Orthodox Church, Gaza; March, 1999
Former President of IUG Board; June 1998
Doctor at Christian-run al-Ahli Hospital, Gaza; March 1999
Lecturer at al-Azhar University, formerly at IUG; March 1999
Former Vice President of IUG Board; I&II: June 1998
Lecturer at al-Najah University, Nablus; author of various articles on IM; May 1997
- Dabbagh, Constantin
'Daoud'
Deir al-Balah Camp Resident
Fatah PLC delegate
Former MOPIC Employee
Gazan Businessman
Hammad, Hilmeh
Director of Near East Council of Churches, Gaza; July 1998
Lecturer at al-Azhar University; March 1999
Informal talk; May, 1998
Board Member of Gaza Centre for Rights and Law; June 1998
Informal talk; March 1998
Informal talk; February 1998
Former IUG Board Member; July 1998 (interviewed together with Ahmad Shawwa)
- al-Jarro', Yunis
Lawyer; PLFP affiliation; Board Member Palestinian Red Crescent Society; I: June, 1998; II: March, 1999
- Jensen, Michael
Leftist WAC Activist
Danish anthropologist on fieldwork in Gaza; July 1998
Women's Affairs Centre; PFLP affiliation; also part of Islamist Women interview; May 1998
- Linda Wheeler
Nairab, Muhammad
Non-Aligned IUG Student
Patrick Barbieri
PFLP supporter
Pharmacien Sans Frontières
Ordinary Christians Gaza
Ordinary Christians Jerusalem
Qassim, Marwa
Coordinator Mennonite Central Committee, Gaza; May, 1998
Former IUG Faculty Dean; June, 1998
Anonymous; June, 1998
Senior UNRWA Employee
Informal talk; I: March 1999; II: May 2000
Personnel Pharmaciens Sans Frontières, Gaza; February, 1998
Informal talks; November, 1997–July, 1998
Informal talks; May, 1997; November, 1997–July, 1998
Former (female) IUG PFLP student leader (1980s); victim of '*hijāb* campaign'; Director Gazan branch of the Palestinian Model Parliament – Women and Legislation; I: March, 1998; II: May, 1998
- Saba, Musa
Sarraj-Matar, Shadia
Director YMCA, Gaza; March, 1999
Director Gaza Community Mental Health Project – Women's Empowerment Project; May, 1998
- Saqa, Salah
Secular Women
Former IUG Board Member; June, 1998
Informal talks with women from secular family-background; January–July, 1998

- Sha'ban, 'Umar Communist Candidate for 1996 Palestinian Legislative Council elections; July, 1998
- Shabibah President Gaza Strip April, 1998
- Shahadah, Ibrahim Director Gaza Centre for Rights and Law; I&II: June, 1998
- Shahin, Sami Senior member Shabibah Administrative Council at IUG (1998); June, 1998
- Shawwa, Ahmad Former IUG Board Member; July 1998 (interviewed together with Hilmeh Hammad)
- Smith-Polfus, Turid Norwegian researcher on fieldwork in Palestine; April 1998
- Sourani, Raji Director Palestinian Centre for Human Rights; I&II: May, 1998
- Students at Student Affairs Informal talks with students in the IUG's Student Affairs Office (their political affiliation was not discussed or disclosed); May 1998
- Thalmas, Zakariyyah Former President of Fatah's Shabibah at IUG (1980s); President Journalists' Union, Gaza; June, 1998
- Top MOPIC Official Informal talk; March 1998
- 'Umar' Shabibah sympathiser; IUG student; June, 1998
- Various Azhar Students Informal talks with Azhar students, including male and female Shabibah leaders; May, 1997; January–June, 1998
- Various Non-Aligned Students Informal talks with IUG students who stated they were non-aligned; May–June 1998
- 'Yahya' IUG alumnus, lecturer at al-Azhar University; March, 1999
- Yazuri, 'Adli Former President of PFLP student wing at IUG (1980s); March, 1999
- Yunis, 'Isam Former PFLP student activist at Bir Zeit; one of visitors during 1983 IUG clashes; staff of Palestinian Centre for Human Rights; May, 1998
- 'Ziad' & 'Husam' Former PFLP student activists at IUG (1980s); May, 1998

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- 'Abd al-Haq, Yusuf Lecturer al-Najah University, Nablus; PFLP affiliation; May, 1998
- Anonymous 1982 Kutlah Leader Kutlah leader at al-Najah University, Nablus, in 1981-1982
- Barghouti, Iyad Lecturer at al-Najah University, Nablus; author of various articles on IM; May 1997
- Islamist Najah Alumnus Eye witness to 1981-1982 clashes at al-Najah University, Nablus; May, 1998
- Non-Aligned Najah Alumnus Eye witness to 1981-1982 clashes at al-Najah University, Nablus; May, 1998
- Sha'r, Nasr Lecturer al-Najah University, Nablus; Kutlah leader in 1981-1982; May, 1998
- Turk, 'Abd al-Rahman Lecturer al-Najah University, Nablus; Fatah student leader in 1981-1982; May, 1998

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