

*Not finished intelligence.*

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## *Jihad, Shariah and Their Implications for Security and Geopolitics*



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**METHODOLOGICAL NOTE:** This research focuses on the Sunni Muslim tradition, which encompasses about 90-95% of the world's Muslims. The idea isn't that alternate narrations of Islam and interpretations of Islamic doctrine (in spiritual or political terms) do not exist or aren't implemented (i.e., Shi'ism<sup>1</sup>, Muslim Brotherhood), but rather that incorrect understanding of normative Islamic beliefs and practices writ large tends to proliferate.

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- *While Islam and Muslims remains the object of intense scrutiny post-9/11, portrayals of the religion and its central concepts by non-Muslims (and Muslims) reflect a lack of nuanced, contextualized understanding, which hampers effective operations involving societies with substantial Muslim populations.*
  - *Particular interpretations of jihad and shariah enjoy traction among fringe, often politically-minded movements (Al-Qaeda, Hezbollah, Hamas, Taliban), but these need to be contextualized as such (marginal), and not conferred on Muslims writ large as a normative doctrinal Islamic understanding.*
  - *Accurately conceptualizing eclectic Muslim polities, i.e., the myriad nuances of practice and doctrine among groups/regions, can promote more effective external engagements.*
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**How much is really known about Islam and Muslims?** Global interest in Islam and Muslims increased markedly post-9/11, as the faith and practice of 1.6 billion humans around the globe<sup>2</sup> became the object of an intense scrutiny. Subsequent interventions in Muslim-majority Iraq and Afghanistan, and the Arab Awakening which has enveloped Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and now Syria, have variably served to maintain this focus.

Despite increased interest in Islam and Muslims in recent years, a greater understanding many outsiders might have of this diverse population, with its multiple ongoing interpretation(s) of texts and traditions, has arguably been complicated by certain antagonisms (Islamophobia<sup>3</sup>); the ascendancy of political Islam; myopic media focus on a limited canon of non-mainstream groups (i.e., Al Qaeda, Taliban, Hamas and Hezbollah<sup>4</sup>); the innate difficulty of succinctly conveying normative meanings amid linguistic and cultural differences; and simple ignorance.<sup>5</sup>

World				Europe			
Rank	Country	# of Muslims	% of Total Population	Rank	Country	# of Muslims	% of Total Population
1.	Indonesia	204,847,000	88.1	1.	Turkey	74,660,000	98.6
2.	Pakistan	178,097,000	96.4	2.	Russia	16,379,000	11.7
3.	India	177,286,000	14.6	3.	Azerbaijan	8,795,000	98.4
4.	Bangladesh	148,607,000	90.4	4.	France	4,704,000	7.5
5.	Egypt	80,024,000	94.7	5.	Germany	4,119,000	5
6.	Nigeria	75,728,000	47.9	6.	United Kingdom	2,869,000	4.6
7.	Iran	74,819,000	99.7	7.	Albania	2,601,000	82.1
8.	Turkey	74,660,000	98.6	8.	Kosovo	2,104,000	91.7
9.	Algeria	34,780,000	98.2	9.	Italy	1,583,000	2.6
10.	Morocco	32,381,000	99.9	10.	Bosnia-Herzegovina	1,564,000	41.6

Tables 1 and 2: Top Ten Countries by Muslim Population Size, World and Europe (2010 Estimates)<sup>6</sup>

**One way of enhancing awareness is to better understand key Muslim concepts as understood and lived by Muslims.** Two terms that proliferate in media (and which sow much confusion), where the rich Arabic/Islamic meanings<sup>7</sup> fail to carry over into the English (common with Semitic languages), are *jihad* and *shariah*. Mainstream media<sup>8</sup> and some “short hand” legal commentary (Figure 1) often impute to *jihad* a purely militaristic quality, paving the way for oft-used referents to radical, fundamentalist, and/or terrorist *jihadi* violence<sup>9</sup>; and *shariah* garners rotund depiction as “Islamic law,” conjuring images of corporal punishment; in both cases, this delimits comprehension away from the normative and in any case more nuanced meanings these comprise (in theory and daily practice) for most Muslims.

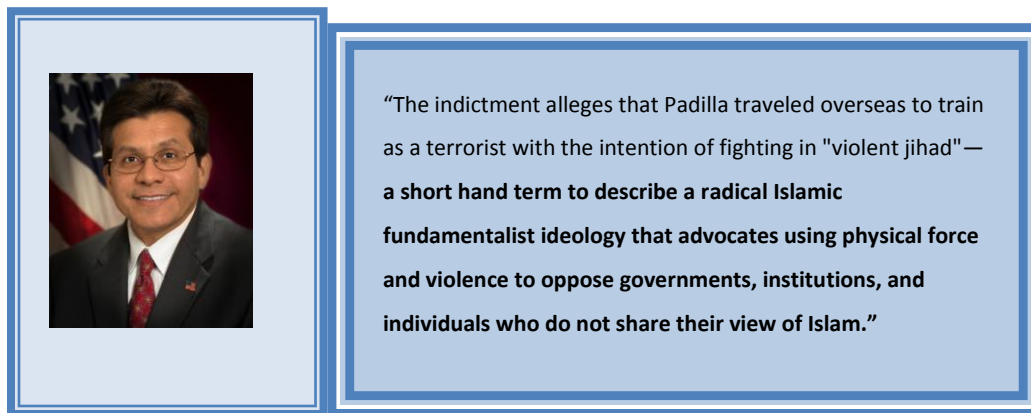


Figure 1: Former U.S. Attorney General, Alberto R. Gonzalez<sup>10</sup>

**What is jihad?** A noun in the Arabic language, *jihad* جهاد, literally translates as “struggle,” or “striving.” Used in the normative Islamic sense, it connotes striving for the sake of Allah—*al-jihad fisabilillah*. One Muslim so striving is referred to as a *mujahid*, and multiple Muslims so inclined are *mujahideen*.<sup>11</sup> Emphasizing the richness of the Arabic lexicon, *juhd* جُهد shares the same tri-letter root (J-H-D), and means “strenuous effort” or “intense work,” but in a non-religious sense: “farming takes so much juhd!” or “raising kids takes so much juhd!”

**Confusion sets in with the variant visions for how the striving, or jihad, manifests in the world.**<sup>12</sup> Muslims have long differentiated between and deliberated over a “lesser” and “greater” *jihad*—in the case of warfare, whether it should be offensive or defensive, and the criteria for what constitutes legitimate *jihad* in these and other cases.<sup>13</sup>

The lesser *jihad*, or *al-jihad al-asghar*, involves the external physical effort or exertion often associated with warfare.<sup>14</sup> The greater jihad, or *al-jihad al-akbar*, manifests as an internal life-long struggle an individual wages against the lower self, or *nafs* (ego, temptation, etc.). The distinction between these is derived from a *Hadith* (Prophetic tradition, or saying) whose authenticity remains a subject of some controversy<sup>15</sup>:

It was narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), said to his companions when they returned from a military campaign, "We have come back from the lesser jihad to the greater jihad." They said, "Is there any greater jihad than jihad against the kuffar (non-believer)?" he said, "Yes, jihad al-nafs (jihad vs. the self).

Influential Egyptian Shaykh, Yusuf al-Qaradawi, argues today for a "middle way" without resort to violence, arguing that solidarity can assume many powerful forms<sup>16</sup> (donations, media, etc.). Yet, a minority of Muslims (and non-Muslims) actively claim the greater, and by extension, normative *jihad* for Muslims, is the violent variety taken up by Al Qaeda, and Nusrat al-Jabha in Syria<sup>17</sup>; and more conspiratorially by many Islamophobes<sup>18</sup>, that Muslims writ large are attuned to this and are indeed actively (and subversively) working towards subjugating all non-Muslims.

**What do ordinary Muslims think?** According to a 2007 Gallup Poll,<sup>19</sup> a majority of Muslims define *jihad* as "duty toward God," "worship of God"; "commitment to hard work"; "achieving one's goals in life"; "struggling to achieve a noble cause"; and "promoting peace, harmony/cooperation, and assisting others." And following Qaradawi, initiatives like the My Jihad ad campaign<sup>20</sup> aim to use media to redress spurious usage and understanding of *jihad*.

**What is shariah?** Like *jihad*, another oft misunderstood and misappropriated Islamic term among non-Muslims (and many Muslims) is *shariah*. Etymologically, *shariah* شريعة is an archaic Arabic word referring to a road, or a path to the water hole. Some translations refer to it as a "spring" of water, pointing to a vitality, sustenance, and perhaps rejuvenation.

**Islam represents an all-encompassing system for Muslims.**<sup>21</sup> The five principles *shariah* is based on include, the preservation of life; preservation and freedom of religion; preservation of mind and intellect, including freedom of conscience and thought; preservation of lineage and family; preservation of ownership. In other words, *shariah* keeps Muslims oriented around the divine laws of God while providing guidance on daily matters—hygiene, diet, marriage, divorce, inheritance, business, and more (Table #3).

It also speaks to legal rulings and the penal code, where the gaze of many observers seems frozen (often confusedly<sup>22</sup>). But focusing solely on capital punishment, and its merits (or not) as divined through secular Western notions of "law," leaves untouched myriad elements of *shariah* as a moral, expansive, living concept, never mind (like *jihad*) how most Muslims grasp and live it.

The Five Pillars	All Elements of the Shariah
<i>Shahadah</i>	The Muslim confession of faith: “There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet.”
<i>Salat</i>	Ritual prayer: Observed 5x/day, directed toward Makkah
<i>Zakat</i>	The purification tax, about 2.5% of one’s wealth, redistributed to the community’s poor and needy
<i>Sawm</i>	Fasting: Observed during the holy month of Ramadan
<i>Hajj</i>	Pilgrimage: Every Muslim able physically and financially must make the Hajj to Makkah in their lifetime

**Table 3: The Five Pillars of Islam & the Elements of Sharia (Sunni)**

**Do Muslims want to implement shariah?** As noted, there are some non-Muslims (and Muslims) who limit their understanding of *shariah* to the *hudud*, or capital punishments. There are fringe groups like AQIM in Mali, the Taliban in Afghanistan, and Al-Shabaab in Somalia<sup>23</sup>, which have vigorously attempted to render their communities according to their own distillations of the *shariah*.<sup>24</sup> Still, capital punishments are routine in Saudi Arabia, Iran and other Muslim-majority nations, though with different substantiation than their Western counterparts.<sup>25</sup>

Yet, mainstream Sunni Muslim *ulema* (scholars) today remain unanimous in declaring that the *hudud* requires specific social conditions for implementation, and at present these do not exist for Muslims in the West. Scholars like Tariq Ramadan have been loudly pushing for a moratorium to discuss such practices.<sup>26</sup> This dovetails with the fact that there remains no precedent or commandment in Islam indicating that *shariah* is binding on non-Muslims.

**The ongoing debate among Muslim scholars on any number of issues is often ignored in the West, but it should be acknowledged.** As Ramadan points out, Muslim scholars in Al-Azhar, Egypt, al-Karouaine, Morocco, Madinah and Makkah, in Saudi Arabia, and in the US, have long been engaged in variable public dialectics concerning how to manage not only the impressive diversity of ideas and traditions in the global Islamic community, but more specifically, how to incorporate these and implement *shariah* in contemporary secular polities.<sup>27</sup>

One longstanding example is multi-confessional India, where Muslims retain the right to opt for Islamic legal prescriptions in marriage, inheritance and related matters through the Muslim Personal Law Application Act of 1937.<sup>28</sup> In the EUCOM AOR, Orthodox Jews and Muslims in the UK are now agitating for similar considerations.<sup>29</sup>

**For many if not all of the world’s 1.6 billion Muslims, orthodox and secular, Islam remains a comprehensive, living system they feel deeply about.** For many of these, a persistent dilemma involves grappling with the more or less unspoken notion that Islam (like Christianity and Judaism) must be made to conform with today’s predominant secular morals and values; and how those parts of it lacking conformity must be abandoned, either by denying their authenticity, relegated as detritus of an age long gone, or reformed through selective application of jurisprudential sciences. Not surprisingly, Muslims have reacted to this through forms of inclusion and exclusion.<sup>30</sup>

**Muslims in Asia, America, Europe, MENA and elsewhere remain faithful to the shariah in their daily lives, coexisting without issue with their neighbors.** These exemplify how a society can define and codify itself as “Islamic” and coexist in peace with non-Muslims. Muslims are a key to enabling greater understanding of their spiritual traditions, and their ability to convey how they interpret and practice

their faith is pivotal in terms of how non-Muslims come to understand them in spiritual, sociocultural, demographic, political, and other terms.

Considering the global distribution and eclectic nature of Muslim communities, many of whom exist today in proximity to many key hotspots,<sup>31</sup> ***more effective engagement demands analysts and policy-makers move toward more accurate renderings of Muslims and how they conceptualize and enact Islam in individual and collective terms across space and time.*** The reliance on “short hand,” one-dimensional caricatures will continue to inhibit more substantive understanding of Muslim polities, as well as the salience and effectiveness of short and long-term activity in these regions, with critical implications for US security and geopolitics in the short and long term.<sup>32</sup>

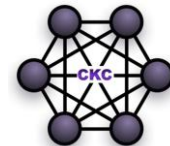
#### IMPLICATIONS

- More accurately conceptualizing eclectic Muslim communities and the nuances of doctrine and practice, amid the deep tensions girding the secular political machinery in nations like Egypt, Iran, Syria and elsewhere, can promote more effective external engagements.
- Paying closer attention to such nuances has enormous strategic implications for U.S. policy throughout the Muslim world; for example, the geopolitical importance of the true doctrinal and political dimensions of the Sunni-Shia cleavage in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon et al.
- Absent a nuanced, contextualized grasp of Islam, US engagement with Islamic communities (and with non-Islamic communities on issues related to Islam) will result in ineffectual and potential damaging Strategic Communications and Information Operations efforts.

#### AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH:

- Type(s) of training U.S. military members receive vis-à-vis Islam and Muslims.
- Normative understanding of Islam/Muslims among U.S. military/government stakeholders.
- U.S. military partnering with Muslim organizations around the world to promote understanding.
- Mainstream Muslim groups which provide normative views on critical concepts.

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Dr. Rexhepi earned his PhD in education (international comparative studies) at UCLA, where his dissertation explores the impacts of local and global forces on higher education in Albania (Rowman, 2013). With a multidisciplinary background and numerous undergrad/graduate courses in Islamic studies, comparative religion, political science, and Eurasian history, Dr. Rexhepi frequently writes and lectures in these disciplines while mentoring students at all levels. He has traveled extensively through Muslim-populated lands in Europe, the Caucasus, and MENA, and maintains an eclectic global network of community leaders, scholars, and practitioners across these realms. A practicing Muslim, Dr. Rexhepi

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**Strategic Foresight Method Statement:** Strategic Foresight: 1) synthesizes new knowledge from the aggregate of relevant existing knowledge by placing it within Command context, 2) disseminates finished products throughout the community, ideally creating further dialogue and leading to new topics for research which are tailored to the customer, 3) selects topics via Command-focused (top-down) and environmentally-driven (bottom-up) approaches, 4) scopes its research plans to ensure relevance and to identify hypotheses to be tested, assumptions, and gaps in knowledge, 5) researches scholarly repositories using customized IT tools.

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<sup>1</sup> The beliefs, practices, and worldviews of the Sunni and Shia are often conflated, or not identified, and generally described as the "two main branches" of Islam. Surprising to many is that Sunnis throughout most of Islamic history up to the present have accounted for more than 90% of total adherents. According to Pew, "Sunni Muslims will continue to make up an overwhelming majority of Muslims in 2030 (87- 90%). The portion of the world's Muslims who are Shia may decline slightly, largely because of relatively low fertility in Iran, where more than a third of the world's Shia Muslims live." See <http://www.pewforum.org/the-future-of-the-global-muslim-population.aspx>. Grasping the divergences between the two is made more critical amid the "sectarian" nature of conflict in Iraq, and most recently, Syria, Bahrain, Yemen and Lebanon. For instance, along with *taqiyya* (see Endnote #4), many post-Islamic practices (i.e., innovations appearing after the time of the Prophet Muhammad) were subsequently incorporated into Shia doctrine by leaders such as Shah Ismail of Iran; Ismail inaugurated the Safavid dynasty (1501-1736), under which he forcefully made Shi'ism Iran's national faith (hitherto Sunni country), and institutionalized belief in the imamate, the hidden twelfth imam (Mahdi), as well as the ritual cursing of the *Sahaba* and self-flagellation during the month of Ashoura. Such doctrinal variances accentuate an often significant gulf or variation between the main body of Sunni Muslims (in realistic terms, the trunk of a metaphorical Islamic tree) and the Shia (a branch of this tree), and this important distinction today is rarely noted. So, while the fatwa of death pronounced on Salman Rushdie by the supreme Shia leader Khomeini (arguably for his own political ends) may have had truck with most Twelver Shia, in reality it had little or no gravity for the majority of Muslims (Sunni) who do not accept the self-declared role of Iran's spiritual leader, i.e., the *wilayat i faqih* or "guardianship of the jurist," nor his authority to issue fatwas. Yet, Muslims writ large and their relations with the West would suffer enormously as a result. An upcoming Strategic Foresight product will offer a sustained treatment of Shi'ism.

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.pewforum.org/The-Future-of-the-Global-Muslim-Population.aspx> 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Milne, S. "This Tide of Anti-Muslim Hatred is a Threat to Us All." *The Guardian* (London), February 25, 2010. Accessed January 13, 2013; Webman, E. "Discourses on Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Arab Media." *European Societies* 14 (2, 2012): 222–239; Schiffer, S.; Wagner, C. "Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia—New Enemies, Old Patterns." *Race & Class* 52 (3, 2011): 77; Halliday, F. "'Islamophobia' Reconsidered." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22 (5, 1999): 892–902.

<sup>4</sup> Grasping nuance among Sunni-Shia doctrine (see endnote #1), as in the practice of *taqiyya*, in the wake of the machinations of self-interested Iraqi exiles like Ahmed Chalabi (a Shia), assumes enormous strategic implications for U.S. policy. *Taqiyya*, which translates as religious "dissimulation," which is to say, concealing or hiding one's faith/intentions, is permitted only under the most extreme cases by Sunnis (the exception not the rule). However, historically it remains a veritable keystone of the Shiat-ul Ali (Sect of Ali), or Shia, in common usage (Bowering et al, 2012, p. 135). According to Abu Ja'far al-Kulayni (for Imami Shi'a, the 5<sup>th</sup> Imam) as recorded in Vol. 2 of the main Shi'a hadith collection, Al-Kafi (translated here from the Arabic edition, 1978), "Taqiyya is from my religion and the religion of my ancestors—whoever doesn't have taqiyya doesn't have faith." Forward to the Iraq war: we now know there was heady push back in the Bush administration against the surge of US forces in 2006, an act many believed would have devastating consequences for Iraqi Sunnis outnumbered by an increasingly authoritarian Shia government (ominously aligned with a neo-Safavid Iran); so with the subsequent civil war and fracturing of Iraq along sectarian



lines, former Secretary of State Condi Rice asked if the Shia were “simply pursuing a hegemonic agenda?” and thus playing America and her allies for a “sucker.” See

[http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/03/18/the\\_secret\\_surge\\_debate\\_iraq\\_bush\\_administration?page=full](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/03/18/the_secret_surge_debate_iraq_bush_administration?page=full). See Gerhard Bowering et al, *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Thought* (2012); John L. Esposito, *Oxford Dictionary of Islam* (2003); Nikki Keddie, *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution* (2003); Etan Kohlberg, “Taqiyya in Shi’i Theology and Concealment,” edited by Hans G. Kippen (1995).

<sup>5</sup> One reason might be the prominence of journalism mediating popular understanding of Islam and Muslims. While perhaps appropriate for reporting sports scores or weather forecasts, sound-bite journalism does not lend itself to conveying inherently complex meanings of concepts like *jihad* and *shariah*, and this is buttressed by little or no formal cross-cultural or religious education opportunities, and a relative disinterest on the part of the population in acquiring more nuanced understandings. Nevertheless, building on incorrect usage of terms, media culture has helped spawn tales of the *jihadi*, or the emergence of *shariah law* in some far-flung locale, typically with little or no contextualization and/or historical background.

<sup>6</sup> See <http://features.pewforum.org/muslim-population/> 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein: “The limits of my language means the limits of my world.” U.S. policymakers learned in Iraq that language remains immensely important for Muslims. During the invasion in 2003, the mission was initially dubbed *Operation Infinite Justice*. It was quickly noted after protests by Muslims that this phrase was highly offensive, i.e., equating earthly or material forces with God (The Infinite); this followed Bush’s comment regarding a US “crusade.” The operation was quickly recast along less theologically offensive lines: *Operation Enduring Freedom*.

<sup>8</sup> Arab-American author Jack Shaheen’s impetus in *Reel Bad Arabs* is the critical consideration of reductive portrayals of Arabs in media culture, and for my purposes, the skewed picture of reality it offers vis-à-vis Muslims and Islam. That is, Hollywood “not only gives Arabs a Muslim identity but all-too-often gives Muslims an Arab identity,” perpetuating a factually incorrect grasp of this global polity. See <http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/jc50.2008/reelBadArabs/text.html>.

<sup>9</sup> See Endnote #25.

<sup>10</sup> <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/texttrans/2005/11/20051122133212mduobba0.609585.html#axzz2Q7DxvCAN>.

<sup>11</sup> A related word sharing the same root, *ijtihad* الاجتهاد, refers to a personal striving (one so inclined is a *mujtahid*) to utilize the Qur’an and Hadith to render legal rulings.

<sup>12</sup> According to the teachings of Said Nursi, a key spiritual influence on Fethullah Gulen, *jihad* was (and should be) espoused through intense educatory activity. See Turner, C. and Horkuc, H. *Said Nursi*. 2009.

<sup>13</sup> See Khalid Yahya Blankinship, *The End of the Jihad State: The Reign of Hisham Ibn 'Abd al-Malik and the Collapse of the Umayyads*. 1994.

<sup>14</sup> The recent local uprisings against dictators like Qaddhafi, Ben Ali, Mubarak or Bashar Assad, might be seen as legitimate forms of lesser *jihad*; in these cases, as defensive wars waged against tyranny. A corollary might be St. Augustine’s notion of a “just war,” a concept arguably taken up by Western countries against Iraq during the Gulf War. See Mohammed Arkoun, *Islam: To Reform or to Subvert?* 2007.

<sup>15</sup> The notion of a lesser and greater *jihad* can be traced to an 11<sup>th</sup> century book, *The History of Baghdad*, by the Islamic scholar *Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi*, by way of *Yahya ibn al 'Ala*. Many have commented on the weak and even fabricated nature of this transmission. Generally speaking, *Hadith* are considered *Sahih*, *Da'if*, or *Mawdu*, which indicates respectively that their *isnad* or chain of narrators (from the verb *sanad*, meaning support) is sound/authentic, weak, or fabricated. There are significant differences among Sunni and Shia with regards to *Hadith*, and the science or methodology of verifying authenticity, and by extension, which collections are to be utilized. For more on Shia Hadith see Moojan Momen, *Introduction to Shi'i Islam* (1985); Jonathan A.C. Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhari & Muslim: The Formation & Function of the Sunni Hadith Canon* (2007).

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.islamismscope.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=467:global-muftithe-phenomenon-of-yusuf-al-qaradawi-book-review&catid=47:en&Itemid=85](http://www.islamismscope.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=467:global-muftithe-phenomenon-of-yusuf-al-qaradawi-book-review&catid=47:en&Itemid=85).

<sup>17</sup> Indeed, groups like the Caucasus Emirate and Al Qaeda substantiate their programs by reversing this polarity, and holding violent *jihad* to be the greater struggle. This remains a fringe view and is not substantiated by the vast majority of Muslim scholars and masses.

<sup>18</sup> See Ali, W. et al. *Fear Inc: The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America*,

<http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/religion/report/2011/08/26/10165/fear-inc/> 2011.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.gallup.com/press/104209/who-speaks-islam-what-billion-muslims-really-think.aspx>.

<sup>20</sup> See [myjihad.org](http://myjihad.org).

<sup>21</sup> See Diane Morgan. *Essential Islam: A Comprehensive Guide to Belief and Practice*. 2010.

<sup>22</sup> According to a commentary on Hathout’s conception of *shariah*, “there is confusion between *shariah*, the path that leads to happiness, justice, and well-being, and *fiqh*, which is the application of *shariah* principles to specific societal circumstances—applications formulated mostly by middle-aged men in the context of a patriarchal society. *fiqh* is man-made and not divinely revealed. Sometimes in the quagmire of details, the essential purpose of the Law is forgotten. A fundamental principle of *sharia* is the law that controls all laws: namely, that no harm or hardship should come from the application of these laws. See <http://www.barakainstitute.org/podcasts/maher-hathout-on-shariah/>.

<sup>23</sup> See <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/09/25/mali-islamist-armed-groups-spread-fear-north>.

<sup>24</sup> A famous example of how shariah (and in this case, the corporal punishments) can be implemented occurred during the rule of Umar Ibn al-Khattab, the second Caliph. Umar imposed a moratorium towards thieves, after suspending the imposition of punishments for theft during a famine. The Qur'an is explicit on the punishments, but the actual societal conditions would have been an unjust literal application, i.e., punishing people left with no choice but to steal in the face of absolute poverty, and probably death. Thus, in the name of justice, Umar took the step of suspending a literal imposition of the text, where doing so (literalism) would have pushed Umar and the Muslims to betray the superior value of Islam, which is justice.

<sup>25</sup> One example is the punishment for apostasy (leaving Islam), under certain circumstances punishable by death. In comparison, a useful corollary might be the punishments secular nations levy for treason and other capital offenses. Again, grappling with these and other issues, for Muslims scholars and the laity, speaks to the ongoing discussion regarding how to be faithful to the message of Islam in the contemporary era.

<sup>26</sup> The influential Swiss-born Islamic scholar, grandson of Muslim Brotherhood founder Hassan al-Banna, and Professor at Oxford, Tariq Ramadan has been outspoken in his desire for a *hudna* (truce, or moratorium) on Islamic punishments; this is part of Ramadan's effort to increase debate among Muslim majority countries on the implementation of Islam in the contemporary world (and in particular, in the West). See <http://www.tariqramadan.com/spip.php?article264&lang=fr>.

<sup>27</sup> Arguably, the difficulty in managing diversity (of opinion) speaks also to the crisis of authority now roiling the world's Muslim communities, in a modern world where technology provides virtually anyone a means to broadcast unilateral (and potentially inflammatory) dictums (often grossly misinterpreting Islamic teachings in the process) that in turn get picked up by the unsuspecting (and unstudied) masses. The Catholic Church via the Pope deliberates on theological matters for a considerable number of Christians to this day, and while a perhaps problematic comparison, in the wake of the abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate (1924), Muslims remain today without their version of a spiritual figurehead (Caliph).

<sup>28</sup> <http://f.hypotheses.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/539/files/2012/06/Muslim-Personal-Law-Shariat-Application-Act-1937.pdf>.

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/9841370/Sharia-divorces-could-be-allowed-after-legal-ruling.html>.

<sup>30</sup> A useful device to understand this cleavage between tradition and modernity (simplifying a bit) is through Arnold J. Toynbee's notion of the Zealot and the Herodian. The former retreats into itself and disavows all external influence, while the latter seeks to mimic the external while maintaining internal beliefs. Toynbee viewed these as minority responses, which is to say, people who would in any case be irrevocably subsumed in the unfolding proletariat mass. See Toynbee, Arnold J. *Civilization on Trial*. 1948. More recently, Benjamin Barber theorizes the struggle between modernity (globalization, transnational corporate control of the body politic) and tradition (nationalist sentiment and religious orthodoxies) in *Jihad vs McWorld* (1995).

<sup>31</sup> See the Pew Research Center Report, *Mapping the Global Muslim Population*. 2009. <http://www.pewforum.org/mapping-the-global-muslim-population.aspx>.

<sup>32</sup> The argument here is not that variant minority interpretations of Islamic doctrine do not exist or aren't implemented, but rather that incorrect understanding of normative Islamic belief and practice does proliferate. This merely helps promote a fundamentally flawed understanding among analysts of Islam, Muslims, their populations and the regions where they predominate and interact, with myriad deleterious consequences for US security and geopolitical interests.