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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Radical Islam in the Western Academy

Zaheer Kazmi*

The Senator George J. Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice, Queen's University Belfast, United Kingdom
*Corresponding z.kazmi@qub.ac.uk

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Abstract

Scholarly interest in radical Islam is long-standing and crosses multiple disciplines. Yet, while the labelling of Islam and Muslim actors as 'radical' is extensive, this has not been interrogated as a particular scholarly practice. And while studies of non-Western radicalism have grown in recent years, cross-cultural analysis of radicalism as a particular concept in political thought has been neglected. This article aims to begin to address this question, with reference to radical Islam. By treating radicalism as a meta-concept, it identifies radical Islam as a malleable and composite category that is constituted by, and made legible through, conceptual properties associated with four discourses in the study of radicalism with origins in the Western academy: *Euro-radicalism*, identified with the European left and critical theory; *fundamentalism*; *radicalisation*; and *liberalism*. I argue that radical Islam is under-theorised and over-determined as a scholarly category. This can be explained by how concepts originating in the Western academy to address Western contexts and phenomena function as master frameworks, narratives, or pivots against or around which radical Islam is defined. This is the case even when Eurocentrism is contested by critical theorists who tend to reproduce it because they do not abandon Western conceptions of radicalism but rather draw on them. Academic accounts of radical Islam also authenticate Islam by advancing selective, strategic or apologetic descriptions of what constitutes radicalism. In these ways, critical scholarship, including within IR, can also be insufficiently attentive to marginal and heterodox voices that fall outside hegemonic conceptions of Islamic normativity.

Keywords: Radicalism; Islam; IR Theory; Eurocentrism; Liberalism; Fundamentalism; Radicalisation; Postcolonialism

Introduction

It is a measure of the magnitude of scholarly interest in radical Islam that it dominates a whole field of academic inquiry.[1] Yet while the study of 'radicalisation' is the chief site of analysis of radical Islam, describing Islam, Muslim thinkers, and movements as radical has a longer scholarly history.[2] Its disciplinary purview is also wider, evident in studies of Islam in IR, political thought, religion, history, law, area studies, and postcolonial theory.[3] Despite its presence across numerous

[1]Stefan Malthaner, 'Radicalization: The evolution of an analytical paradigm', *European Journal of Sociology*, 58:3 (2017), pp. 369–401.

[2]Leonard Binder, 'Pakistan and modern Islamic-Nationalist theory', *Middle East Journal*, 11:4 (1957), pp. 382–96; Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age: 1798–1939* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983 [orig. pub. 1962]).

[3]For IR theory, see Mustafa Kamal Pasha, *Islam and International Relations: Fractured Worlds* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2017); Deina Abdelkader, Nassef Manabilang Adiong, and Raffaele Mauriello (eds), *Islam and International Relations: Contributions to Theory and Practice* (ebook edn, Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Faiz Sheikh, *Islam and International Relations: Exploring Community and the Limits of Universalism* (London, UK: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016). For other fields, see Kevin Carnahan, 'Which Niebuhr? Whose realism? Reinhold Niebuhr and the struggle against Islamic radicalism', *Political Theology*, 11:4 (2010), pp. 553–76; Maia Ramnath, *Haj to Utopia* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011); Khaled Abou El Fadl, *The Great Theft* (New York, NY: Harper, 2005); Gilles Kepel, *Muslim*

academic fields, an analysis of the meaning of 'radical' Islam has been neglected. Inattention to the political language of radicalism applied to Islam and Muslim actors is also apparent in comparative political thought, suggesting a lack of self-reflexivity about scholarly categories in a field concerned explicitly with the cross-cultural application of concepts.[4]

This article aims to contribute to Anglophone scholarship on radical Islam in IR and cognate fields by engaging two areas of academic inquiry. First, the cross-cultural investigation of 'radicalism'. While studies of non-Western radicalism have grown in recent years – especially in global history – cross-cultural analysis of radicalism as a particular concept in political thought has been neglected.[5] This article aims to draw attention to this question and begin to address it, with reference to radical Islam. Second, through a study of academic accounts of radical Islam, I address how 'Islam' has come to be conceptualised as a non-Western category in the study of political thought in the Western academy.

I argue that radical Islam is under-theorised and over-determined as a scholarly category. This can be explained by how Eurocentric concepts – originating in the Western academy to address Western contexts and phenomena – function as master frameworks, narratives, or pivots against or around which radical Islam is defined. This is the case even when Eurocentrism is contested by critical theorists who tend to reproduce it because they do not abandon Western conceptions of radicalism but rather draw on them. On the one hand, radical Islam remains under-theorised because radicalism is not theorised as a cross-cultural concept; rather, radical Islam is apprehended via an extension of Eurocentric conceptions of radicalism. On the other hand, radical Islam's meaning is over-determined by Eurocentrism because Western concepts are projected onto radical Islam. By interrogating how knowledge production about radical Islam is contingent on Eurocentric concepts, particular modes of comparative theorising are disclosed.

The forms this Eurocentrism takes are malleable and can be identified in four 'discourses' of radical Islam: *Euro-radicalism*; *fundamentalism*; *radicalisation*; and *liberalism*. These discourses convey how specific properties of radical Islam are emphasised by the particular interpretative practices, concepts, and vocabularies associated with conceptions of radicalism attendant to each. When radical Islam is comprehended through the interpretive prisms of Euro-radicalism, which I identify with the European left and critical theory, narratives of *resistance to domination* are foregrounded. When described as fundamentalist, accounts of radical Islam emphasise *religious revivalism*. When defined in terms of radicalisation, they are tied to processes that lead to *terrorism and political violence*. Liberalism reinforces Eurocentrism in conceptions of radical Islam in an unusual way; by defining radical Islam through asserting its *absence* rather than interpreting its presence. While these specific properties are sometimes present in compound ways, I am interested in abstracting the properties of radicalism emphasised by each discourse. Radicalism, understood as a meta-concept in the study of political thought, becomes modulated in its meaning by its interaction with these discourses when deployed, comparatively, in accounts of radical Islam.

These discourses illustrate how accounts of radical Islam can be Eurocentric. However, I also want to draw from them a more nuanced account of what Eurocentrism entails. While Eurocentrism is expressed in the malleability reflected *across* these multiple Western discourses of radicalism, it is also manifested in forms of correspondence *within* each discourse – between the Western concepts being deployed and how Islam is perceived. This correspondence always involves the projection of Western concepts onto Islam but is manifested in different ways. In

Extremism in Egypt (London, UK: Saqi Books, 1985); Emmanuel Sivan, *Radical Islam: Medieval Theology and Modern Politics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985); Hamid Dabashi, *Islamic Liberation Theology* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2008).

[4]Roxanne Euben, *Enemy in the Mirror* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999); Andrew March, *Islam and Liberal Citizenship* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[5]Ramnath, *Haj to Utopia*; Benedict Anderson, *Under Three Flags* (London, UK: Verso, 2005); Nico Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).

the more familiar sense, highlighted by critical and postcolonial critics of orientalism, of *seeing* 'Islam' *through* a Western lens, but also through the apologetic recovery of Islam. This is expressed either by Islam representing a form of legitimate resistance to Western hegemony (where Islam corresponds to radicalism as *resistance* in the discourse of *Euro-radicalism*), or by Islam being distinct from radicalism, through emphasising its affinity to liberalism (where Islam corresponds to the *absence* of radicalism in the discourse of *liberalism*). Each strategy invokes a selective interpretation of Islam and points to underlying ideological factors in defining radical Islam.

I use the term radical Islam to refer to scholarship that attributes radicalism to texts and actors subjectively considered Islamic or Muslim. A comprehensive survey of academic accounts of radical Islam in Anglophone scholarship is beyond this article's purview. Examples have been chosen to illustrate the core arguments I am making about the malleable and composite nature of radical Islam as a scholarly category. I include in my analysis normative and explanatory theories of radical Islam, as well as empirical descriptions, and address academic accounts of radical *thought* as well as *theories* about radical practices and processes.

Sections 1–3 of the article focus on the first three discourses of radical Islam under investigation – *Euro-radicalism*, *fundamentalism*, and *radicalisation*. They illustrate both how Western categories are projected onto Islam and critical theoretical approaches recycle these categories while framing Islam as a form of legitimate resistance to Western hegemony. Given studies of radical Islam are situated chiefly outside the discipline of IR, these sections focus mainly on non-IR theory, although radicalisation can also be considered a subfield of IR. Part four addresses the fourth discourse, *liberalism*, as part of a wider argument focused on apologetic recovery in critical IR scholarship on Islam – a body of literature that has been particularly concerned with distancing Islam from radicalism.

My analysis of radical Islam has at least three broader implications for how scholars in IR and cognate fields approach the study of Islam. First, it is a reminder that critical and post-Western approaches should not themselves be immune from ideological critique. Second, in the tendency to invoke narratives of Islamic legal, historical, and ethical orthodoxy, it is a warning that critical scholarship can be insufficiently attentive to marginal and heterodox voices that fall outside hegemonic conceptions of Islamic normativity. Finally, it signals the dangers of unreflectively importing certain Western concepts, such as radicalism, and genealogies constructed in the Western academy, such as 'political Islam', into the analysis of non-Western traditions, while critiquing others.

Arguing that 'Western' concepts are projected onto 'Islamic' contexts in scholarly accounts of radical Islam may leave me open to the charge of recycling Orientalist epistemological and ontological assumptions that naturalise the binary of East/West, or Islam/West. There is now a wealth of scholarship, mainly beyond IR, in global history, comparative (historical) sociology, world-systems theory, geography, and anthropology, which has done much to disturb the stability of these categories, revealing their deployment in the service of Euro-American hegemony.[6] Some, such as IR scholar John Hobson, have sought to uncover neglected but intimate global entanglements that have shaped Western modernity, or what he terms the 'Oriental West', through its assimilation of ideas and appropriation of resources from Asia and Africa, including the Islamic World.[7] Others point to 'multiple modernities', or hybrid postcolonial identities.[8]

[6]John Hobson, *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilisation* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Jack Goody, *The Theft of History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), J. M. Blaut, *The Colonizer's Model of the World* (New York, NY: Guilford Press, 1993); John Agnew, *Geopolitics* (2nd edn, New York: Routledge, 2003); Janet Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1989); Aziz Al-Azmeh, *Islams and Modernities* (London, UK: Verso, 1993).

[7]Hobson, *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilisation*.

[8]Shmuel Eisenstadt (ed.), *Multiple Modernities* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2017); Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge 1994).

Where, then, does my approach to the categories 'Islam' and the 'West' stand in relation to these important scholarly developments that often point to them as categories forged in transnational, cross-cultural encounters?

I apply the term Eurocentrism to the four discourses of radicalism I have identified that are commonly deployed to understand radical Islam in Anglophone scholarship. They have their roots in the Western academy (Anglophone scholarship emanating from universities and research institutes in Europe, North America, Australia, and New Zealand) where they were originally applied to phenomena in these regions. To this extent, I describe them as being *Western* and their projection onto scholarly understandings of radical Islam as *Eurocentric*. However, this does not mean that Muslim actors described as radical through these academic discourses have necessarily assimilated, wholly or uncritically, to Western concepts or the theories of radical Western thinkers. In my analysis of the discourse of 'Euro-radicalism', while academics may view radical Islam as an extension of, or a mirror onto, the European left, or through the various interpretative prisms of critical theory, this does not preclude the agency of the Muslim actors in question who may also deploy 'Western' ideas creatively and in synthesis with 'indigenous' concepts. For example, this is true of Muslim ideologues associated with the Islamic Revolution in Iran – a pivotal event in the development of scholarship on radical Islam – who have provided fertile resources for recent scholarship on the constitutive nature of such cross-cultural encounters where ideas of authenticity also loom large. However, as I will discuss, the analytical insights of these scholars are still taken largely from Western theorists, as are the genealogies of the ideas they attribute to their subjects, while the content of radicalism, as a discrete term and concept, owes its meaning to the very discourses I identify and is affirmed unreflectively.[9]

The issue of authenticity leads to my final point of clarification with regard to the categories Islam and the West. I am not concerned with discovering an *authentic* radicalism, Islamic or Western, but with how radicalism as a meta-concept is applied to elucidate radical Islam. The discourses of radicalism I identify are Eurocentric in so far as I have described them above – originating in the Western academy to address Western contexts and phenomena but, subsequently, projected onto phenomena labelled radical Islam. While it is important, therefore, to recognise the ways in which 'radical' Muslim actors have created innovative modes of political thought drawing on indigenous intellectual resources forged in the crucible of cross-cultural global engagements, the conceptual content of radicalism remains Eurocentric in scholarly accounts of radical Islam. While this Eurocentrism is subjective and contingent, tied as it is to my conception of what being Western means in the context of Anglophone scholarly production about the meaning of radicalism, it is no less fundamental in determining how radical Islam is apprehended.

1. Radical Islam and resistance

There are no commonly agreed academic criteria that define radicalism, and explicit studies of its conceptual history are rare.[10] Entries on 'radicalism' in encyclopaedias of political thought reflect its complex and shifting definition.[11] This section will focus on 'Euro-radicalism' and its presence in academic accounts of radical Islam. I use the term to identify a tradition or assortment of traditions of Western political thought that have dominated Anglophone definitions of radicalism in political thought. In these fields, radicalism is identified mainly with the European left and

[9]Eskander Sadeghi-Boroujerdi, *Revolution and Its Discontents* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2019); Ali Mirsepassi, *Transnationalism in Iranian Political Thought* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

[10]Paul McLaughlin, *Radicalism: A Philosophical Study* (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave, 2012).

[11]Edward Vallance, 'Radicalism', in Gregory Claeys (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Modern Political Thought: Volume 1* (London, UK: Sage, 2013), pp. 671–2; Remy Cross, 'Radicalism', in David Snow, Donatella Della Porta, Bert Klandermans, and Doug McAdam (eds), *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements* (Chichester, UK: Blackwell, 2013), III, pp. 1050–1.

critical theory. While it has also been read into liberal, conservative, and fascist ideology, this has had less significance in defining radicalism's academic usage. I show how Euro-radicalism shapes accounts of radical Islam as an idiom of resistance to Western hegemony and through the selective recovery of Islam.

1.1. Euro-radicalism

In the history of political thought, Euro-radicalism is tied to resistance against domination and calls for fundamental change to structures of political hegemony by historically marginalised and disenfranchised groups. It is associated with the anti-capitalism of the European left – especially since the French Revolution and in relation to Marxism and the Soviet Union – but can also be interpreted as a longer tradition.[12] Scholarly interest in retrieving this definition was driven by a historiographical turn to 'history from below' among Marxist historians in Britain.[13] In this vein, radicalism was seen as a continuous tradition punctuated by assorted movements, including Levellers, Diggers, socialists, Chartists, Marxists, communists and anarchists, and events, sometimes traced as far back as the Norman Conquest.[14] It has also been linked to utopian thought.[15] Euro-radicalism, on this view, is a political ideology alongside liberalism and conservatism and shares particular affinities with Marxism and socialism with which it is sometimes used synonymously. It can also refer to ideas and movements considered radical *within* the European left, notably antiauthoritarian forms of Marxism and socialism, especially anarchism.[16]

Euro-radicalism is also manifested in various forms of contemporary political theory, particularly critical theories, mostly, though not solely, identified with the European left. These approaches often self-identify as radical. As radical theory is identified mainly with Continental philosophy, with its eclectic range of figures including Nietzsche and Schmitt, it is not limited to the European left. It can also be 'analytic', evident in Analytical Marxism and analytic strands of critical race theory. What brings these various approaches together is a focus on emancipation through recovering the agency of marginalised and dominated constituencies. They are contained in a range of theories, including Marxist, Frankfurt School, poststructuralist, postmodern, postcolonial, decolonial, feminist, anarchist, queer, critical race, and indigenous. Critical IR theories have taken their cues from these approaches.

1.2. Euro-radicalism in radical Islam

Scholars of the history of radicalism often locate early incarnations of Euro-radicalism in religion, especially the Protestant Reformation.[17] While it is perhaps unsurprising radical Islam has not been addressed from within this Eurocentric field of inquiry, it is notable that 'fundamentalism', a term coined for early twentieth-century forms of Protestantism, is used commonly to describe radical Islam, as I shall discuss later. Below, I focus on scholarship in two areas. The first accounts illustrate the explicit influence of the European left on anti-imperial and Cold War Muslim activism. The second accounts focus on interpretations of Muslim politics by critical theorists.

[12]Ariel Hessayon and David Finnigan (eds), *Varieties of Seventeenth- and Early Eighteenth-Century English Radicalism in Context* (Burlington, UK: Ashgate, 2011); Glenn Burgess and Matthew Festenstein (eds), *English Radicalism, 1550–1850* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[13]Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1972); Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution: Europe 1789–1848* (New York, NY: New American Library, 1962); E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London, UK: Gollancz, 1963).

[14]Christopher Hill, *Intellectual Origins of the English Revolution Revisited* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 361–6.

[15]Laurence Davis and Ruth Kinna (eds), *Anarchism and Utopianism* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2009).

[16]Uri Gordon and Ruth Kinna (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Radical Politics* (London, UK: Routledge, 2018), p. 3.

[17]Michael Baylor, *The Radical Reformation* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press 1991).

1.2.1. Radical Islam and the European left

Anti-colonial Muslim actors are connected explicitly to global circuits of radical and revolutionary European left activism by some scholars. These accounts of 'radical Islam' stand alongside global histories of other forms of 'non-Western' radicalism in Asia, Africa, and the Americas, and postcolonial readings of Ireland. Examples include C. L. R. James's reflections on the Haitian Revolution in *The Black Jacobins* (1938) to more recent studies of anarchism beyond the West.[18] Jamal al Din al Afghani (1838–97) is a founding figure of anticolonial pan-Islamism widely considered a harbinger of Islamic modernism and revolution. Aspects of his life remain obscure and his idiosyncratic thought belies easy categorisation. In a brief but revealing comment, Albert Hourani has described Afghani as embodying 'a blend of religious feeling, national feeling, and European radicalism'.[19] Hourani does not elaborate on what he means by European radicalism but, given that he describes Afghani's thought as 'revolutionary' and mentions the adoption by Algerian revolutionaries (1954–62) of ideas of 'European radicalism', one might reasonably infer that it denotes the radicalism of the European left.[20] Other scholars have made the connection more explicitly claiming him as a pioneer of mid-twentieth-century 'Islamic socialism'.[21] Hourani's fleeting mention of this influence on Afghani belies its deeper significance, not only because it evokes the subtle imprint of Euro-radicalism on a key historical Muslim actor, but because it provides a counterpoint to conventional readings of Afghani's radicalism which focus on his exegetical role in the development of modernist Salafism. Locating Afghani's radicalism in other ideational sites can nuance our understanding of the meaning of radicalism when applied to his thought.

If Hourani hints at the Euro-radicalism in Afghani's radical Islam, its presence can be found, more unequivocally, in accounts of a lesser-known anticolonial Muslim of British India; Muhammed Barkatullah (1854–1927) of the Ghadar Party.[22] The Ghadar Party drew on communism and Russian anarchism, in particular, and had links to transnational dissident socialist networks.[23] Founded by Indian revolutionary exiles in California in 1913, its leading figure, Har Dayal, was a member of the Industrial Workers of the World who established the Bakunin Institute in Oakland. Barkatullah, a Muslim, was one of its leading ideologues. A neglected figure in the study of Islamic political thought, the traces of Barkatullah's radical Islam can be discerned in scattered academic accounts, which address his melding of Euro-radicalism with pan-Islamism. After the 1917 revolution in Russia, scholars have pointed to his increasing adoption of communist and anarchist principles. This amenability was made possible through the projection by the Soviet Union of the Muslim world as part of an 'Eastern' resistance against 'Western' colonial exploitation. Citing a propaganda pamphlet by Barkatullah circulated in 1920 and titled *Bolshevism and the Body Politick*, Humayun Ansari argues that 'though a staunch Muslim throughout his life', Barkatullah 'was permanently involved in developing the new relationship with the Bolsheviks' and 'his views on most temporal matters became almost identical with the Bolsheviks'.[24] Elsewhere, Maia Ramnath has located Barkatullah's 'Indian radicalism' at the ideological intersection of the Khilafat movement (1919–24) and the Ghadar Party, from their

[18]C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins* (London, UK: Secker & Warburg, 1938); Maia Ramnath, *Decolonizing Anarchism* (Edinburgh, UK: AK Press, 2012).

[19]Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, p. 108.

[20]Ibid., pp. 108, 369.

[21]Sami Hanna, 'Al-Afghani: A pioneer of Islamic socialism', *The Muslim World*, 57:1 (1969), pp. 24–32.

[22]K. H. Ansari, 'Maulana Barkatullah Bhopali's transnationalism: Pan-Islamism, colonialism, and radical politics', in Gotz Norbruch and Umar Riyad (eds), *Transnational Islam in Interwar Europe: Muslim Activists and Thinkers* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave, 2014), pp. 181–210.

[23]Harish Puri, *Ghadar Movement: Ideology, Organization, and Strategy* (Amritsar, India: Guru Nanak Dev University, 1983); Ramnath, *Haj to Utopia*.

[24]Ansari, 'Pan-Islam and the making of the early Indian Muslim socialists', p. 519.

shared opposition to racist colonisation and liberal capitalism, to their veneration of martyrdom.[25]

While accounts of Afghani and Barkatullah illustrate the presence of Euro-radicalism in the radicalism of Muslim anticolonial activists, Islamic socialism gained scholarly currency in the context of Cold War decolonisation and the rise of 'Third World' revolutionary activism.[26] In Asia and Africa, some nationalists integrated Islam with socialist or Marxist ideas. These ideas were desecularised by identifying them with Islamic principles and qualified in various ways, such as by relocating the locus of resistance from class to religious community or allowing private property with some regulation of wealth distribution. Scholars read these developments through the prism of conceptual frameworks which pointed to the radical nature of socialism or Marxism inhering in these manifestations of Islamic thought and practice. In this regard, Euro-radicalism casts a long shadow over scholarly conceptions of 'Islamism', pointing to the explicit influence of European left thought on key Islamist thinkers, from Leninism on Abul Ala Maududi to Sayyid Qutb's criticisms of capitalism. By the same token, Muslim leaders often regarded as secular left nationalists rather than Islamists, from Gamal Abdel Nasser to Muammar Gaddafi and Saddam Hussein, never jettisoned Islam in their political legitimations. Academic accounts of the thought of Ali Shariati, a correspondent of Frantz Fanon, provide perhaps the clearest illustration of the influence of the radicalism of Marxist theory and that of a variety of leftist movements. Ideas of class struggle and revolution transmuted into 'Red Shi'ism' and shorn of materialist conceptions of humanity in Shariati's thought were seen to have played a pivotal ideological role in shaping the Islamic revolution in Iran.[27] Such cross-cultural pollination reflected forms of intellectual exchange where 'radical' Muslim and European left thinkers interacted. These 'non-Western' radicalisms have been the subject of growing scholarly focus, particularly in global history, although radicalism itself is not addressed as a transcultural concept.[28] Instead, radicalism's 'indigenous' properties tend to be assumed as an extension of Euro-radicalism; authentically recovered, yet presented as mirrors to Marxism, socialism, anarchism, etc.

Recent studies of the Islamic Revolution in Iran illustrate an emerging juxtaposition in the literature on 'global' thinkers. On the one hand, these studies reflect an overdue focus on transnational encounters and creative interplay between Western and indigenous or local traditions of thought. On the other, an unreflective use of 'radicalism' as a Western analytical category alongside the adoption of analytical frameworks and concepts drawn largely from Western thinkers. Eskander Sadeghi-Boroujerdi's study of post-revolutionary reformists in Iran draws for its theoretical insights on Quentin Skinner, Pierre Bordieu, Michel Foucault, and Antonio Gramsci.[29] While focused on reformism rather than radicalism, it also uses the concept of radicalism throughout either in a generalised way, to signal a fringe or extreme faction or strand of thought, or as synonymous with traditions of Euro-radicalism, or radical Islam as militancy, common to the discourse of radicalisation I discuss later.[30] Notably, he uses the term 'Islamic Left', an explicit derivation of the vocabulary of the traditional European left, to describe the constituency he is analysing that represents 'a constellation of political forces within the political elite of the Islamic Republic, which, following the death of Ayatollah Khomeini, increasingly felt itself

[25]Ramnath, *Haj to Utopia*, pp. 168–9.

[26]George Gardner and Sami Hanna, 'Islamic socialism', *The Muslim World*, 56:2 (1966), pp. 71–86.

[27]Ali Shariati, *Marxism and Other Western Fallacies* (Berkeley, CA: Mizan Press, 1980); Assef Bayat, 'Shariati and Marx: A critique of an "Islamic" critique of Marxism', *Alif*, 10 (1990), pp. 19–41; Hamid Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2006); Savish Saffari, *Beyond Shariati* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[28]See fn. 5.

[29]Sadeghi-Boroujerdi, *Revolution and Its Discontents*, p. 13.

[30]For 'radical' Islam as militancy, see, for example, Ibid., pp. 14, 30. For the 'radical' religious 'right', see Ibid., pp. 55, 225, 298, 337.

marginalised and on the outskirts of power.'[31] Elsewhere, Ali Mirsepassi's study of Iranian philosopher, Ahmad Fardid, an influential figure who first coined the term *Gharbzadegi* ('Westoxification') popularised by Jalal Al-e Ahmed, has emphasised the underlying influence of Heideggerian ideas of authenticity on Fardid's anti-Enlightenment critique of Western modernity. At the same time, Mirsepassi deploys various conceptions of radicalism, grounded in Western discourses, in a similar fashion to Sadeghi-Boroujerdi.[32] The result in both cases is an odd assortment of globalising 'radical' non-Western actors largely through the analytical prisms of Western thought, coupled with an absence of reflection on the substance of radicalism as a cross-cultural concept.

1.2.2. Radical Islam and radical theory

Interpretations of Islam and Muslim politics by critical or radical theorists often share an underlying vision of radical Islam as a legitimate form of resistance to Western hegemony. Euro-radicalism is projected onto these accounts both by the adoption of the theories of Western critical theorists and the framing of Islam as an idiom of resistance to Western capitalist hegemony. Michel Foucault's writings on the Islamic Revolution in Iran exemplify this relationship.[33] When critical scholars of Islam have criticised the Eurocentrism of Western critical theorists like Foucault, they have tended to do so with a view to the apologetic recovery of Islam as itself a form of critical theory. In the case of Wael Hallaq, for example, this involves recovering premodern Islam as a means of critiquing Western Enlightenment modernity which, in a kind of methodological circularity, in turn corresponds to Western counter-Enlightenment critiques.[34]

Critical 'post-Western' IR theorists have usefully signalled the poverty of IR scholarship on Islam, both in terms of Eurocentrism and the neglect of Islamic concepts and theories in international thought.[35] In criticising IR's 'othering' of Islam, however, they have tended to rely on Western critical approaches. While Faiz Sheikh points to 'similarities between poststructuralism's and political Islam's critique of IR', Mustapha Kamal Pasha draws on various Western critical theorists, including Gramsci.[36] While taking a Schmittian conception of the political theology of sovereignty as a point of departure, Pasha also seeks to move beyond Western 'secularist mappings' in reappraising the 'radical' thought of Sayyid Qutb.[37] I return to critical IR/Islam scholarship in section 4 of this article. The influence of Euro-radicalism is also reinforced by how axes of Western critical-theoretical debate that have played out in postcolonial theory – notably, between Marxists and postmodernists/poststructuralists – can be refracted in critical-theoretical accounts of Islam.[38] While either Marxism or postmodernism/poststructuralism can dominate these accounts, they often reference a mix of critical-theoretical approaches, including, latterly, decoloniality. The field of decolonial thought has begun to assert a presence

[31]Ibid., pp. 9, 48–9. He also states 'Iran's religious intellectuals have deployed, adapted, and recast the theories and critical methods of various Euro-American philosophies in their efforts to debunk and challenge clerical political supremacy during the second and third decades of the Islamic Republic's existence.' Ibid., p. 11.

[32]For the influence of Heidegger, see Mirsepassi, *Transnationalism in Iranian Political Thought*, pp. 156–65. For 'radical Islam', which he sometimes conflates with 'political Islam', see, Ibid., pp. 7, 10, 37, 42, 45, 261. For radical Islam described as 'modern takfirist', see Ibid., p. 18.

[33]Janet Afary and Kevin Anderson, *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Behrooz Ghamari-Tabrizi, *Foucault in Iran* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2016).

[34]Wael Hallaq, *Restating Orientalism* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2018); Wael Hallaq, *The Impossible State* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2014).

[35]See fn. 3.

[36]Sheikh, *Islam and International Relations*, pp. 187–8; Mustapha Kamal Pasha, 'Islam, "soft" Orientalism and hegemony: A Gramscian rereading', *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 8:4 (2005), pp. 543–58.

[37]Mustapha Kamal Pasha, 'Political theology and sovereignty: Sayyid Qutb in our Times', *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 22:2 (2019), pp. 346–63.

[38]Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (London, UK: Verso, 1992); Vivek Chibber, *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital* (London, UK: Verso, 2013).

in radical accounts of Muslim politics and positioned itself as an insurgent, non-Western approach.[39] However, given its intellectual origins in dependency, worlds systems, and Frankfurt School theories, in particular, it is as much indebted to Euro-radicalism as postcolonial theory.[40]

'Critical Muslim Studies' is an emerging interdisciplinary field with which some scholars working in a critical-theoretical vein now self-identify. Its output is evident in the flagship journal, *ReOrient*, which asserts its 'roots in practices of critical theory'.[41] Its editor, Salman Sayyid, is illustrative of scholars of Islam working self-consciously in a postmodern/poststructuralist and decolonial vein, which shapes their 'radical' conceptions of Islam and Muslim politics. Sayyid's earlier work, *A Fundamental Fear* (1997) encapsulates how such accounts locate politicised forms of Islam, or Islamism, within a wider orbit of global resistance to Western hegemony.[42] He acknowledges the explicit intellectual debts to the Western critical-theoretical concepts he deploys, which lean towards, though are not limited to, poststructuralism.[43]

If Sayyid's work displays antifoundationalist and particularist tendencies in his appropriation of Foucauldian and Derridean concepts and the idea that Islamism is essentially a non-Western discourse of resistance that rejects a repressive Western modernity, radical readings of Muslim politics that privilege more universal and progressive themes grounded in socialist and Marxist thought can be found elsewhere. Not unlike Sadeghi-Boroujerdi's use of the term 'Islamic Left', though deployed to different ends, Sohail Daulatzai and Junaid Rana posit the terms the 'Muslim Left' and the 'Muslim International', which draw consciously on genealogies of the 'Third World Left' as guiding concepts for understanding radical Muslim thought and movements as forms of resistance to the hegemony of liberal capitalism. In fostering 'solidarity politics', they argue that these dual concepts 'reference a radical history of critique and protest that imagines another world in line with struggles for social justice, decolonial liberation, and global solidarity.'[44] In reading radical Islam as a form of leftist resistance to liberal capitalist hegemony, Hamid Dabashi draws on the mix of Marxist and religious ideas embodied in liberation theology to theorise the Islamic Revolution in Iran, in particular, and Islamism more generally as distinct forms of Islamic liberation theology.[45] His wider work, self-described as post-Orientalist, is heavily influenced by Edward Said, his mentor, which itself self-consciously adopted a Nietzschean-Foucauldian approach to the relationship between power and knowledge.[46]

Slicing through Euro-radicalism's critical-theoretical heritage and revealing its fault-lines has the effect of disaggregating what 'radicalism' can mean when applied to Muslim politics. Aziz Al-Azmeh functioned as a foil in Sayyid's early work where he is criticised as a Eurocentric universalist, alongside IR scholar, Fred Halliday.[47] Paradoxically, while Sayyid draws entirely on

[39]Anibal Quijano, 'Coloniality and modernity/rationality', *Cultural Studies*, 21:2–3 (2007), pp. 168–78; Walter Mignolo, 'Delinking: The rhetoric of modernity, the logic of coloniality and the grammar of de-coloniality', *Cultural Studies*, 21:2 (2007), pp. 449–514.

[40]Mignolo begins by framing his inquiry by asking 'How does Horkheimer's "critical theory" project look to us today…?'. Mignolo, 'Delinking', p. 449.

[41]'ReOrient: A forum for Critical Muslim Studies', *ReOrient*, 1:1 (autumn 2015), p. 8.

[42]Bobby Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism* (London, UK: Zed, 2003 [orig. pub. 1997]), p. xii.

[43]In Ibid: governmentality borrowed from Foucault, in n. 16, p. 27; dislocation from Derrida, in n. 83, p. 30; undecidability from Derrida, in n. 78, p. 30.

[44]Sohail Daultazai and Junaid Rana (eds), *With Stones in Our Hands* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2018), p. x.

[45]Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent*; Dabashi, *Islamic Liberation Theology*.

[46]Hamid Dabashi, *Post-Orientalism: Knowledge and Power in a Time of Terror* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2009); Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London, UK: Routledge, 1978). My point is not that Said's work parroted the insights of Foucault and Derrida, as he was also informed by non-Western thinkers, including Arab thinkers and Fanon, but that the overarching analytical thrust of his most influential work was influenced decisively by these insights in comparison to others.

[47]Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear*, pp. 136–44; Al-Azmeh, *Islams and Modernities*; Fred Halliday, *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation* (London, UK: I. B. Tauris, 1996).

Euro-radicalism for his own theoretical insights on Islamism, he criticises these scholars for seeing Islamism as a product of modernity and, therefore, a counterpart to Western forms of radicalism, rather than something essentially non-Western.[48] Al-Azmeh is a Marxist critic of what he sees as obscurantist postmodern accounts of Islam. He argues that culture and religion have overdetermined how Muslims in Europe have been understood because postmodernism/poststructuralism has fetishised difference. Thus, while postmodernists, on Al-Azmeh's view, attempt to extract and essentialise an authentic non-Western Islam in the face of Western modernity's colonisation of it, Al-Azmeh historicises a plurality of 'Islams' and argues that Islam itself as a cultural category used by academics has overdetermined the varieties of Muslim experience.

2. Radical Islam and revival

Fundamentalism represents a different conception of radicalism derivative of Western concepts. In this section, I show how the discourse of fundamentalism, originating in studies of Anglo-American Christianity, has shaped how radical Islam is defined as scripturally absolute, anti-modern, and illiberal. I begin by outlining fundamentalism's usage in relation to American Protestantism and subsequent development as a comparative discourse applied to multiple forms of political religion. I then illustrate how it developed in two related ways when applied to radical Islam, driven by emerging Western security concerns, especially from the late 1970s. First, in the emergence of Islamic fundamentalism as a catch-all term for a range of 'radical' thinkers and movements seen as part of a wider Islamic revival intent on far reaching societal change. Second, in the accentuation of particular properties associated with fundamentalism in its original Western usage in some of these accounts. While using fundamentalism to describe Islam has been criticised extensively, I am interested in how the *content* of radicalism in accounts of Islamic fundamentalism is shaped by *concepts* of fundamentalism.[49]

2.1. Fundamentalism

Fundamentalism was applied originally to forms of early twentieth-century American Protestantism. Its emergence as a term is usually linked to the publication of a series of theological essays between 1910 and 1915 entitled *The Fundamentals: A Testimony To The Truth*, which sought to define the contours of Christian fundamentalism. In a standard work, George Marsden describes fundamentalism as 'a distinct version of evangelical Christianity uniquely shaped by the circumstances of America in the early twentieth century'.[50] As a burgeoning movement, it can be understood contextually in relation to contentions between conservative and liberal Protestants about the nature of Christian doctrine in the post-Enlightenment era. Fundamentalists called for a return to the 'fundamentals' of the Christian faith and a rejection of Biblical criticism. Based on literal adherence to the Bible, rational human interpretation and canonical hermeneutical traditions were seen to pollute the pristine, unmediated word of God. In its desire to return to the original literal teachings of scripture, fundamentalism was marked, equally, by the rejection of the social, political, and intellectual currents associated with secular modernity. While this was expressed in social conservatism and censure towards contemporaneous developments in science, particularly evolutionary theory, it included denunciation of both liberalism and socialism.

[48]For Eurocentrism in accounts of Islam by Western postmodernists, see Ian Almond, *The New Orientalists: Postmodern Representations of Islam from Foucault to Baudrillard* (London, UK: I. B. Tauris, 2007).

[49]Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, pp. 223–4; Riffat Hassan, 'The burgeoning of Islamic fundamentalism: Toward an understanding of the phenomenon', in Norman Cohen (ed.), *The Fundamentalist Phenomenon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), pp. 151–71.

[50]George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelicalism: 1870–1925* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 3.

The conservative impulses of Christian fundamentalism, often linked in political terms to the Christian right, contrast with the Euro-radicalism of the European left, further complicating conceptions of radicalism applied to radical Islam. The genesis of fundamentalism centres on core properties of scriptural absolutism, anti-modernism, and illiberalism. These properties do not define fundamentalism exhaustively but capture its meaning while allowing for nuances in various interpretations. I use them, heuristically, to show how core traits of fundamentalism in its original Western usage are carried over into accounts of Islamic fundamentalism. Fundamentalism has been used as a pejorative label for forms of politics deemed puritanical, intolerant, fanatical, extreme, or violent, but also as a comparative concept. The expansion of the use of fundamentalism as a term to describe forms of religious politics beyond Western Christianity is epitomised in the multi-volume comparative research project led by Martin Marty and R. Scott Appleby.[51] It placed religious fundamentalism within a wider, global understanding of religious responses to secular modernity, or what Bruce Lawrence called a reaction to 'modernist hegemony'.[52]

2.2. Fundamentalism in radical Islam

Interest in comparative fundamentalism formed part of an emerging scholarly drive to understand global religious resurgence in a secular age.[53] It appeared in tandem with Western concerns about the rise of radical Islam which arose in the 1970s, grew in the 1980s, intensified after the Cold War, and has mushroomed since 9/11. Reappraising comparative fundamentalism, a recent volume describes Islam as the 'critical pivot' in its development and devotes the bulk of its chapters to it.[54] The history of Islamic fundamentalism as a scholarly category is marked by a spike in its use from the time of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979. Along with the wider and earlier rise of Islamist politics in Asia and Africa, notably the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the Jamaat-e-Islami in Pakistan, this catalysed popular and academic interest in the concept.[55] Like Islamism, Islamic fundamentalism has older scholarly incarnations that are largely inconsequential to its current usage, with exceptions.[56] The 1980s saw the increasingly explicit use of 'radical' and 'radicalism' to refer to Muslim thinkers and movements often also labelled fundamentalist. Emmanuel Sivan's *Radical Islam: Medieval Theology and Modern Politics* (1985) traces what he calls 'New Radicalism' to the transformation of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's thought in the 1950s and 1960s.[57] In a similar vein, Youssef Choueiri points to the movement's 'radicalisation' in the 1960s as a prelude to the emergence of 'Islamic fundamentalism'.[58] Cementing this terminological link in Western policymaking, in 1985 the United States House of Representatives' Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East published hearings under the title, *Islamic Fundamentalism and Islamic Radicalism*.

[51]Martin Marty and R. Scott Appleby (eds), *Fundamentalisms Observed* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Gabriel Almond, R. Scott Appleby, and Emmanuel Sivan (eds), *Strong Religion: The Rise of Fundamentalisms Around the World* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

[52]Bruce Lawrence, *Defenders of God* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2006 [orig. pub. 1989]), p. 272.

[53]Gilles Kepel, *The Revenge of God* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1994); R. Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000).

[54]Simon Wood and David Harrington Watt (eds), *Fundamentalism: Perspectives on a Contested History* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2014).

[55]William Griffith, 'The revival of Islamic fundamentalism: The case of Iran', *International Security*, 4:1 (1979), pp. 132–8; R. Hrair Dekmejian, 'The anatomy of Islamic revival', *Middle East Journal*, 34:1 (1980), pp. 1–12; John L. Esposito (ed.), *Voices of Resurgent Islam* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1983).

[56]H. A. R. Gibb, *Mohammedanism* (London, UK: Oxford University Press, 1949), pp. 119–23; Leonard Binder, 'Prolegomena to the comparative study of Middle East governments', *American Political Science Review*, 51:3 (1957), pp. 651–6.

[57]Sivan, *Radical Islam*, p. 20.

[58]Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism* (3rd edn, London, UK: Continuum, 2010 [orig. pub. 1990]), p. 63.

Islamic fundamentalism is applied by scholars to a variety of Muslim thinkers and movements and closely associated with revivalism, a term also linked originally to Christianity.[59] In its most capacious sense, it encompasses attempts by Muslims to instigate far-reaching societal change by actively reviving Islam's original message. As a scholarly category, its reception among Muslims has been ambivalent. Arabic terms, such as *tajdid* for renewal, *islah* for reform, and *usuliyya* for roots or fundamentals, have been used as approximate means to positively assimilate fundamentalism to Islam.[60] While fundamentalism has also been criticised for intellectually colonising and imposing alien Western categories on Islam.[61] As shorthand for Islamic revival, Islamic fundamentalism has been of limited utility as an analytical category. As I discuss in section 4, IR scholar Mustafa Kamal Pasha employs an atypical conception of fundamentalism as a means of apologetic recovery of Islam. In relation to Islam as a 'postsecular' manifestation of religion in international relations, he also notes how, 'alongside the "Islamic" prefix', fundamentalism 'fixes heterodox and fluid phenomena into neatly manufactured containers giving scarce justification for further interrogation or analysis'.[62] Nonetheless, two broad forms of activism can be discerned in scholarly accounts of fundamentalism that one might term 'societal (non-violent) activism' and 'political (violent and non-violent) activism'. These are not mutually exclusive definitions and, while some scholars make qualified distinctions between them, fundamentalism is used to describe both tendencies.[63]

'Societal (non-violent) activism' points to a range of contemporary groups that largely recoil from conventional forms of politics, such as Salafi-Wahhabists or the ahle-e-hadith, as well as premodern thinkers and movements. 'Political (violent and non-violent) activism' refers to modern Islamist political thinkers, movements, and parties.[64] This duality also reflects how Islamic fundamentalism as a scholarly category generated an enduring fault-line centred on militancy and violence in the study of radical Islam while transforming the nature of fundamentalism as a concept. It is encapsulated in Sivan's description of it as straddling non-violent conservatism and violent militancy; a disputed link that has resurfaced in debates over 'conveyer belt' theories of radicalisation since 9/11.[65] The conceptual transformation of fundamentalism is not only evident in its veering towards questions of violence. It is apparent in how its core properties (scriptural absolutism, anti-modernism, illiberalism) cut across the duality in accounts of Islamic fundamentalism by adapting and contextualising their meanings. In doing so, the content of radicalism in radical Islam is reconstituted by these properties in ways quite distinct from properties associated with discourses of Euro-radicalism, radicalisation, or liberalism.

[59]Yvonne Y. Haddad, John Obert Voll, and John L. Esposito, *The Contemporary Islamic Revival: A Critical Survey and Bibliography* (Westport, CT: Greenwood 1991), pp. 32–3; Ira Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (2nd edn, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002 [orig. pub. 1988]), p. 823.

[60]Rashid Ghanushi, *Mahawir Islamiyyah* (Cairo, Egypt: Bayt al-Ma'rifah, 1989); Hassan Hanafi, *al-Din wa al-Thawrah fi Masr 1952–1981: al-Usuliyyah al Islamiyyah* (Cairo, Egypt: Maktabah Madbuli, 1989).

[61]Hassan, 'The burgeoning of Islamic fundamentalism'.

[62]Mustapha Kamal Pasha, 'Islam and the postsecular', *Review of International Studies*, 38:5 (2012), p. 1043, fn. 7.

[63]See Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994); Ahmed Moussalli, *Moderate and Radical Islamic Fundamentalism* (Gainesville, FA: University Press of Florida, 2013).

[64]See Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*; Abdel Salam Sidahmed and Anoushiravan Ehteshami (eds), *Islamic Fundamentalism* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996); Bassam Tibi, *The Challenge of Fundamentalism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998); Beverley Milton-Edwards, *Islamic Fundamentalism Since 1945* (London, UK: Routledge, 2005). IR scholar Sheikh adopts Moaddel's and Talatoff's definitions of fundamentalism. Sheikh, *Islam and International Relations*, p. 18; Mansoor Moaddel and Kamran Talatoff, 'Contemporary debates in Islam', in Mansoor Moaddel and Kamran Talatoff (eds), *Modernist and Fundamentalist Debates in Islam* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave 2002), pp. 1–21.

[65]Sivan, *Radical Islam*, p. 137.

2.2.1. Scriptural absolutism

If scriptural absolutism is identified narrowly with inerrancy of the Qur'anic text, the notion of Islamic fundamentalism can be criticised because this is undisputed by Muslims. However, a more expansive understanding of scriptural absolutism distinguishes fundamentalists in accounts of Islamic fundamentalism. In accounts that emphasise 'social (non-violent) activism', it is expressed in advocating transforming society from the bottom-up through the revival of Islamic ethics and rituals in everyday life via strict textual adherence to the Qur'an and Sunna, or Prophetic 'traditions' contained in *hadith* reports. It can also be directed against 'blind' following (*taqlid*) of canonical schools of Islamic law, though some of these movements share close affinities with these schools.[66] Like Islamic philosophy and theology (*kalam*), these schools can be regarded by fundamentalists as products of human hermeneutic practices which detract from the original and authentic Islam of the unadulterated Qur'an and Sunna. This form of scriptural absolutism is relevant also to accounts of Islamic fundamentalism that privilege 'political (violent and non-violent) activism' through enacting the 'letter of the law' or *shari'a* in political practices and institutions. It is captured in Bassam Tibi's assertion that '"fundamentalisms" or, more specifically, "Islamisms", are expressed in an essentialist language in the ideology of an Islamic state based on shari'a and the emphasis on the importance of armed jihad.'[67]

2.2.2. Antimodernism

Antimodernism in accounts of Islamic fundamentalism manifests an underlying anxiety and scepticism towards Western modernity, rather than desire to return to an imagined premodern past. It mirrors the underlying critique of Enlightenment modernity associated with Christian fundamentalism while also contextualising its presence. As an exemplar of Islamic fundamentalism's 'political (violent and non-violent) activism', it is perhaps most commonly depicted in descriptions of Sayyid Qutb's characterisation of modernity as *jahiliyya*, or pre-Islamic ignorance. Roxanne Euben has been explicit in identifying mirroring between Western critiques of 'Western rationalist epistemologies' allied to modernity, notably including 'Christian fundamentalists', and the critique of modernity in Islamic fundamentalism.[68] Fundamentalist antimodernism in accounts of 'social (non-violent) activism' is illustrated by a rejection of the modern nation-state in favour of awaiting re-establishment of the Prophet's Medina or a belief that a truly Islamic polity is not temporally possible. Like Christian fundamentalists, the trappings of modernity – technologies that enable everyday living, from communication to travel – are not rejected entirely. While it would be anachronistic to think of premodern fundamentalists as being anti-modern, accounts that identify Islamic fundamentalism's perennial roots in premodern forms of Islam conceptualise it as existing also beyond modernity.[69]

2.2.3. Illiberalism

Christian fundamentalism was a direct response to post-Enlightenment liberal interpretations of Christianity. It was expressed in anti-liberal social conservatism, which has also become a hallmark of Islamic fundamentalism in the academic literature. In this regard, illiberalism was ideologically driven through selectively invoking from scripture to counter modern liberalism. In a similar way, criticism of liberalism is present in both tendencies I have identified in accounts of Islamic fundamentalism. It stems from selective interpretations of Islamic texts and adherence to values and practices derived from them directed against the liberalism identified with Western modernity. In a duality that echoes that of the two conceptions of Islamic fundamentalism, this illiberalism is illustrated by Olivier Roy's conceptions of 'fundamentalism', allied to conventional

[66]Salafi-Wahhabists emerged from the Hanbali school of law.

[67]Bassam Tibi, 'Political Islam as a forum of religious fundamentalism and the religionisation of politics', *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 10:2 (2009), p. 104.

[68]Euben, *Enemy in the Mirror*, pp. 8–12.

[69]John Voll, *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1982).

Islamist political parties, and 'neofundamentalism', as a novel form of Islamic fundamentalism detached from conventional politics.[70] However, the illiberalism of Islamic fundamentalism also points to an ambivalence and paradox inherent in the notion of Islamic revivalism of which it is commonly described as being a part. This centres on the Islamic concept of *ijtihad*, often translated as independent reasoning. It leads to ambivalence because *ijtihad* enabled Islamic revival in the nineteenth century, which was also associated with 'liberal' interpretations of modernist Salafists, such as Afghani and Muhammad Abduh. It is paradoxical because illiberal Islamic fundamentalism was enabled by the liberalisation of Islamic hermeneutics the revival of *ijtihad* ushered in. It is a paradox captured also by Roy's notion of neofundamentalism, which, despite its anti-liberal tendencies, is a deculturated and deterritorialised form of Islam enabled by neoliberal globalisation.[71]

3. Radical Islam and terror

Unlike Euro-radicalism and fundamentalism, radicalisation is located principally in the social and behavioural sciences, and viewed as a process to be empirically investigated. In theorising radicalism, it privileges the study of behaviour rather than the content of political or religious thought. Since 9/11, in particular, it has evolved mainly to address radical Islam understood as a form of terrorism. In this section, I focus on how radicalisation has influenced the conceptual content of radicalism in scholarly accounts of radical Islam in distinctive ways driven largely by Western counter-terrorism agendas. After outlining the academic field of radicalisation studies, I explore how it has reframed radicalism in three ways. First, by defining its core meaning in terms of a propensity for *violence as a form of political action*; second, by allying this to *psychological factor*s that may or may not be determined by the adoption of 'radical' thought or ideologies; third, by *expanding its analytical focus* from the activities of marginal actors to everyday citizens. Studies of radicalisation share much vocabulary with accounts of Islamic fundamentalism and Euro-radicalism, in descriptions of particular theologies, political ideologies, and grievances against Western domination. However, they also add conceptually to the lexicon of radical Islam through these three properties.

3.1. Radicalisation

Radicalisation can be understood as a field of academic inquiry that focuses mainly on individual, but also group, processes, or behaviours – and their complex interactions with contextual social, political, and cultural factors – that can lead to political violence or terrorism, or support for such actions.[72] While it is often used synonymously with 'radicalism' and has a deeper history in the academic study of violence, radicalisation has come to greater prominence as a field and term in the post-9/11 era. Its intimate relationship to Western counter-terrorism policies has been symbiotic; assimilating into its study emergent policy discourses such as 'violent extremism', 'non-violent extremism', and 'de-radicalisation' and, more recently, an increasing focus on far right groups. This political context has also given radical Islam a new name – *jihadism*, associated particularly with Al-Qaeda and ISIS.

The study of radicalisation builds on a longer history of investigations into the psychology and motivations of radicals.[73] Its origins are associated especially with studies of postwar political

[70]Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*.
[71]Roy, *Globalised Islam*.
[72]See Peter Neumann (ed.), *Radicalization* (London, UK: Routledge, 2015); Malthaner, 'Radicalization'.
[73]Thelma Herman McCormack, 'The motivation of radicals', *American Journal of Sociology*, 56:1 (1950), pp. 17–24; Egon Bittner, 'Radicalism and the organization of radical movements', *American Sociological Review*, 28:6 (1963), pp. 928–40.

violence in Europe and the Middle East.[74] However, today, it is, principally, a subfield of studies of political violence and terrorism that has been focused mainly on radical Islam since 9/11.[75] It centres on the disciplines of psychology, social psychology, criminology, and sociology, particularly the study of social movements and networks, as well as political science. Most studies analyse the place of beliefs or ideologies, on the one hand, and actions or behaviour, on the other, in identifying pathways that can lead to violence, and in relation to what are sometimes termed micro-, meso-, and macro- levels of analysis.[76] They adopt a range of methodologies, from psychological processes to social movement theories.[77] While there is no academic consensus about the nature of radicalisation, I am interested in how approaches to radicalisation present alternative ways of thinking conceptually about radicalism and how this has relevance to interpreting radical Islam.

3.2. Radicalisation in radical Islam

When radicalisation is critiqued, this seldom involves interrogating its conceptual relationship to radicalism. In a rare instance, Mark Sedgwick adopts a rudimentary definition of radicalism as a 'relative' term meaning 'representing or supporting an extreme section of a party' taken from the *Oxford English Dictionary*.[78] Drawing on a small sample of works containing various definitions of radicalism, he conflates radicalism with radicalisation to construct a typology of meanings of 'absolute' definitions of radicalisation.[79] Sedgwick's approach exemplifies the lack of substantive engagement with what I term the meta-concept of radicalism and its multiple modalities in academic usage, even in instances when it is invoked to critically address radicalisation. It also illustrates the blurring of terminological lines between the concepts of radicalism and radicalisation. Below, I describe how radicalisation diverges from conceptions of radicalism in accounts of radical Islam I have addressed in previous sections. These departures centre on emphasising properties of radicalism in terms of violent action, psychological factors, and as an expansive concept.

3.2.1. Violence

The academic discourse of fundamentalism pointed radical Islam towards questions of violence but did not centre, chiefly, on theorising violence. Radicalisation is distinguished by a concern with political violence and terrorism in relation to radical Islam. The centrality of violence as a property of radicalism has had two related implications for accounts of radical Islam in studies of radicalisation. First, it has identified radicalism with violence as a form of political action tied to subversion of the state. Second, it has led to a rise in the academic use of Islamic concepts that are seen to correspond to violent action, or encouragement of it. Accounts of radical Islam in studies of radicalisation emphasise radicalism's relationship to violence as a form of political action linked to totalitarianism, departing from conceptions of radicalism in Euro-radicalism that focus on resistance to domination, violent, or otherwise, and fundamentalism, centred on reviving religious precepts. One way they do this is to draw parallels between radical Islam

[74]Martha Crenshaw, *Revolutionary Terrorism: The FLN in Algeria, 1954–1962* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1978); Donatella Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[75]See, for example, Quintan Wiktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005).

[76]Donatella Della Porta and Gary Lafree, 'Guest Editorial: Processes of radicalization and de-radicalization', *International Journal of Conflict and Violence*, 6:1 (2012), p. 6.

[77]Fathali Moghaddam, 'The staircase to terrorism: A psychological exploration', *American Psychologist*, 60:2 (2005), pp. 161–9; John Horgan, 'From profiles to pathways and roots to routes: Perspectives from psychology on radicalization into terrorism', *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 618:1 (2008), pp. 80–94; Remy Cross and David Snow, 'Radicalism within the context of social movements: Processes and types', *Journal of Strategic Security*, 4:4 (2012), pp. 115–30.

[78]Mark Sedgwick, 'The concept of radicalization as a source of confusion', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 22:4 (2010), p. 481.

[79]Ibid., pp. 481–5.

and Western movements that have advocated subversion of the state. While this has included violence associated with left-wing traditions of anarchist direct action, or 'propaganda by deed', it is also evident in accounts of the Western radicalism of fascism and the far right that depart from the discourse of Euro-radicalism.[80] Association between radical Islam and fascism or the far right did not begin with radicalisation as a field of study but is specific to the centrality of violence as a property of radicalism in studies of radicalisation. Radicalisation is closely aligned to Western counter-terrorism policies, which are concerned, primarily, with radical Islam as a violent threat to the state. While the history of European totalitarianism has cast a long shadow over the field, since the end of the Cold War the threat from communism has receded. Mirroring growing Western domestic security concerns about its resurgent violence, the far right is now also an increasing focus of studies of radicalisation alongside radical Islam.

As with the far right, invoking Islamic concepts related to violence to describe radical Islam is not new but is particular to violence as being definitive to the study of radicalisation. It has led to these concepts becoming more explicit and widespread in their academic usage. The central concept foregrounded is *jihadism*, a Western neologism derivative of the Islamic term, *jihad*, which has had a longer history in studies of Islam.[81] While jihad is a complex, contested theological term, jihadism has become a shorthand for a violent ideology, social phenomenon, and mode of violent action associated with radical Islam.[82] It is often related to theological concepts and traditions, notably *takfir* (excommunication or charges of apostasy) and Salafism. Deep engagement with jihadism's theological dimensions related to Salafism are typified in Quintan Wiktorowicz's 'A Genealogy of Radical Islam' (2005), an early, influential account, and Shiraz Maher's recent study of 'Salafi-jihadism', which details theological concepts.[83] The proliferation of 'jihadist radicalisation' as a category has led to an odd linguistic circumstance whereby radicalism, a Western discourse operating within the Anglophone academy, is increasingly filtered through the vocabulary of non-Western concepts.

3.2.2. Psychology

Studies of radicalisation also tie the propensity for violent action to psychological factors, or cognitive behaviour, which may or may not be determined by the adoption of 'radical' thought or ideologies. Psychology also looms large in some accounts of Euro-radicalism where it is associated with the psychoanalytic theories of key thinkers, including Freud, Horkheimer, Sartre, Lacan, and Fanon. It is evident also in the work of influential postcolonial theorists, notably Ashis Nandy and Homi Bhabha.[84] Psychoanalytic theory has had a more general influence on postcolonialism through Fanon, an important influence on the 'radical Islam' of Ali Shariati.[85] In these ways, while studies of radicalisation do not depart entirely from accounts of radical Islam tied to Euro-radicalism, they foreground psychology as a factor in conceptualising radical Islam.

[80]Ersel Aydinli, 'Before jihadists there were anarchists: A failed case of transnational violence', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 31:10 (2008), pp. 903–23; David Charters, 'Something old, something new…? Al Qaeda, jihadism, and fascism', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 19:1 (2007), pp. 65–93; Joseph-Simon Gorlach, 'Western representations of fascist influences on Islamist thought', in Jörg Feuchter, Friedhelm Hoffmann, and Bee Yun (eds), *Cultural Transfers in Dispute* (New York, NY: Campus Verlag, 2011), pp. 149–65.

[81]David Cook, *Understanding Jihad* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001).

[82]Jarret Brachman, *Global Jihadism: Theory and Practice* (London, UK: Routledge, 2008); Barak Mendelsohn, *Combating Jihadism: American Hegemony and Interstate Cooperation in the War on Terrorism* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 2012); Peter Neumann, *Radicalized: New Jihadists and the Threat to the West* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2016).

[83]Quintan Wiktorowicz, 'A genealogy of radical Islam', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 28:2 (2005), pp. 75–97; Shiraz Maher, *Salafi-Jihadism: The History of an Idea* (London, UK: Hurst, 2016).

[84]Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1983); Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*.

[85]Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York, NY: Grove, 1967 [orig. pub. 1952]); Georg Leube, 'The liberties of a transmitter: Frantz Fanon according to Shariati', in Dustin Byrd and Seyed Javad Miri (eds), *Ali Shariati and the Future of Social Theory* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2018), pp. 157–79.

Radicalisation brings the disciplines and methodologies of social psychology to the study of radical Islam, making psychology a distinct property of radicalism that shapes radical Islam. While they may share with studies of radicalisation a concern with radicalism as a process that involves psychological distortions, critical-theoretical accounts of radical Islam tend to link these factors to a singular cause – the predicament of being an oppressed colonial subject. Studies of radicalisation address a broader constellation of psychological processes and causes. This can be illustrated in three ways. First, in how they address emotion or affective behaviour as a discrete variable.[86] Second, in how they relate radicalism not only to the causal effect of colonialism, but to multiple factors which impinge on individual psychology, including deviance, criminality, and cognitive dissonance.[87] Third, in drawing attention to how the relationship between cognition and ideology is complex, as radical beliefs or ideologies do not necessarily determine psychological states that lead to violence; violence itself can 'be a precondition for engaging with extremist ideology'.[88] In this regard, studies of radicalisation rely less on the textual or scriptural content of political ideologies or religious beliefs than interpretations of radical Islam tied to Islamic fundamentalism or Euro-radicalism.

3.2.3. Ubiquity

Studies of radicalisation expand the concept of radicalism in accounts of radical Islam in two ways; definitional and situational. Together, these factors have extended radicalism's analytical focus from the activities of marginal actors and activities – the main focus in accounts of radical Islam linked to Euro-radicalism and fundamentalism – to everyday citizens. This definitional expansion relates to violence as the centripetal focus of radicalisation and is exemplified in the concept of *extremism*. The discourse of radicalisation has transformed extremism from a term once casually or ambiguously applied to radicalism, to a concept related explicitly to the propensity for violence in radical behaviour. Extremism is subsumed under radicalism expanding its definition to encompass violent and non-violent behaviours. Radicalisation scholarship has centred on mirroring and interrogating Western 'CVE' (countering violent extremism) policies, in this regard, such as the UK government's *Prevent* strategy.[89]

The definitional expansion of radicalism to include extremism connects to its situational expansion – radicalism's pervasive presence in society as a site of study. Following the lead of Western counterterrorism policies, radicalism's location has extended to nearly all sectors of society, including education, healthcare, and prisons. In this way, the linking of extremism to processes of radicalisation has shifted the locus of radicalism, as a concept and site of academic inquiry, from outlying thinkers and groups seen to profess radical ideas or engage in radical actions, to everyday situations and locations where citizens might potentially become radicalised. It is in this respect that the absorption of extremism into an everyday latent conception of radicalisation has also redefined radicalism by making it, at once, an individuated concept that can exist potentially everywhere. Such a conceptual reframing of what one might term the ubiquity of radicalism is tied to justifications for expansive surveillance measures by states and epitomised in the figure of the atomised 'lone wolf' terrorist who operates in a globalised arena characterised by online radicalisation.

[86]Stephane Baele, 'Lone-actor terrorists' emotions and cognition', *Political Psychology*, 38:3 (2016), pp. 449–68; Stephen Rice, 'Emotions and terrorism research', *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 37:3 (2009), pp. 248–55.

[87]Marco Nilsson, 'Motivations for jihad and cognitive dissonance', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, online (18 June 2019); Horgan, 'From profiles to pathways and roots to routes'.

[88]Manni Crone, 'Radicalization revisited', *International Affairs*, 92:3 (2016), p. 592.

[89]David Lowe, 'Prevent strategies: The problems associated in defining extremism: The case of the United Kingdom', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 40:11 (2017), pp. 917–33.

4. Recovery and apologetics: Radical Islam and IR

I have cited some examples above of IR scholarship that reflect the Eurocentrism of radical Islam as a scholarly category. I want to argue in this final section that critical IR scholarship focused on Islam's neglected, but positive, contribution to IR represents a distinct approach to understanding radical Islam. While it follows the critical-theoretic approaches I have discussed, in challenging Eurocentrism even as it draws on Euro-radical concepts, it also departs from them in being both more markedly apologetic, in seeking to recover Islam's positive contribution for IR, and more concerned with 'de-othering', or arguing that Islam is not anathema to Western liberal democratic norms. Both departures are also tied to conceptions of radical Islam in this literature. Critical IR/Islam scholarship is particularly evident in the work of Mustapha Kamal Pasha and Co-IRIS (International Relations and Islamic Studies Cohort). While not exhaustive, they constitute a significant part of IR scholarship in this vein and are my focus in this section.[90] Pasha's work is unparalleled in its sustained exploration of Islam's contribution to IR. Co-IRIS, established in 2013, is active through its conference activity, edited volumes, book series, and academic journal.[91]

Critical IR/Islam scholars describe 'Islam' as having the neglected potential to offer an alternative, or set of alternatives, to dominant Western IR approaches. Such a posture has ambivalent implications. On the one hand, it reflects the overdue recovery of a globally important non-Western tradition that can usefully and legitimately challenge the narrowness and hegemony of Western IR. On the other hand, because it has entered IR in this way, it has often tended to present an 'Islamic' contribution to IR in apologetic terms. This is compounded by the self-image of much critical IR/Islam literature as a response to Islam's demonisation, especially since 9/11.

Navigating the ideological intimacy between *recovery* and *apologetics* is a predicament shared by a range of critical, postcolonial, and post-Western approaches, one that cannot be avoided entirely. Put simply, there is little point in recovering Islam for IR if Islam is not going to provide new and valuable intellectual resources. In this endeavour, critical IR/Islam literature tends to disaggregate Islam to uncover its purportedly obscured reality from mythologies of orientalism. While it highlights the heterogeneity of Islam and the Muslim world – against monolithic, regressive, and violent representations – it also seeks to recover a more pluralistic and non-violent vision of Islam from within this multiplicity, seen as masked by the West's 'othering' of Islam.[92]

The critical recovery of Islam by IR scholars also leads to particular interpretations of Islamic scripture and history. Against an Islam distorted by orientalist assumptions, its actual traditions and practices are seen to offer enriching alternatives for IR.[93] Beyond the Pasha/Co-IRIS IR literature, Faiz Sheikh recovers what he terms 'Normative Political Islam', by distinguishing 'Islam-as-faith' from 'Islam-as-politics' and 'reviving the exoteric tradition of Sunni Islam', a retrieval he carries out via a poststructuralist critique of Enlightenment liberalism.[94] The recognition of Islam's heterogeneity and its recovery through selective exegesis has not been limited to reviving majoritarian Sunni orthodoxy. Scholars have also pointed to the neglect of Shi'i

[90]I focus on Pasha's *Islam and International Relations* and the Co-IRIS volume, Abdelkader, Adiong, and Mauriello (eds), *Islam and International Relations*. For a rare treatment of minority persecution in the wider Co-IRIS literature, see Farhood Badri, 'Struggling for post-secular hegemony', in Nassef Manabilang Adiong, Raffaele Mauriello, and Deina Abdelkader (eds), *Islam in International Relations: Politics and Paradigms* (London, UK: Routledge, 2018), pp. 124–46. See also Sheikh, *Islam and International Relations*; Mohammed Nuruzzaman, 'Western and Islamic international theories: A comparative analysis', *International Studies*, 55:2 (2018), pp. 106–29.

[91]See: {https://coiris.net/co-iris-project/}.

[92]See Ali Akbar Alikhani, 'Fundamentals of Islam in International Relations', in Abdelkader, Adiong, and Maurellio (eds), *Islam and International Relations* (ebook edn).

[93]Arnakim argues the *ummah* underwrites a just and peaceful world order but is ignored by Western IR theorists. Lili Yulyadi Arnakim, 'Islamic norms and values in International Relations and their reinterpretation in AKP-governed Turkey', in Abdelkader, Adiong, and Mauriello (eds), *Islam and International Relations* (ebook edn).

[94]Sheikh, *Islam and International Relations*, p. 109. For Sunni legal orthodoxy as representing an Islam compatible with Rawlsian liberalism, see March, *Islam and Liberal Citizenship*.

perspectives on International Relations in IR, emphasising the distinctive Islamic vision of world order embodied in the official ideology of the Islamic Republic of Iran.[95] In these ways, critical IR/Islam scholarship can also be seen as a form of 'strategic essentialism' where the 'essence' of Islam, variously defined, is naturalised as an instrumental means of challenging Western readings of Islam and providing novel resources for theorising the international.[96] While they usefully expose IR's Eurocentrism, such readings can advocate particular visions of Islam that are left uncontested for the most part because they themselves are vehicles for critique. This has significant implications for how these accounts view radical Islam and can be related to two chief aims, shared by Pasha and Co-IRIS though manifested in different ways. First, to point to the positive contribution of Islamic theories, concepts, and ethics for IR. Second, to distance this contribution from 'orientalist' conceptions of Islam as backward and violent, especially since 9/11. This latter context has meant that critical IR/Islam scholars have also been particularly concerned with marginalising radical Islam, or dismissing it as being beyond Islam.

Pasha's IR scholarship provides a sophisticated critique of the penetration of Islam and Muslim societies by neoliberal globalisation. He sees Western IR as 'an instantiation of Western liberal modernity', which assumes the Westphalian states system as its point of departure and naturalises as universal the ontological primacy of the individual, modern rationality, secularism, and capitalism. Islam, alongside other non-Western traditions, is seen as 'deviant, inferior and illegitimate' representing 'all that liberalism ostensibly negates'.[97] For Pasha, Islam is painted as a 'radical Other' while 'extremist Islamic currents' are foregrounded, obscuring its pluralistic and humane potentialities.[98]

Pasha's approach to radical Islam is apparent in the binary he sets up between an 'open Islam', which suggests 'an ecumenical faith responsive to internal heterogeneity and difference' and a 'closed Islam' that has been 'exacerbated by the dismantling of traditional religious institutions both under colonial and globalised modernity'.[99] Pasha's 'closed Islam' represents 'puritanical variants of religion and its pathologies, including nihilistic violence'.[100] In other words, radical Islam is a form of religious fundamentalism that can be understood largely as an outgrowth of Western modernity. Elsewhere, he elaborates on this notion of fundamentalism, stating, 'While non-fundamentalist strands offer multiple pathways for reconciling the divine with the everyday, lived reality, puritanical variants appropriate the neoliberal quest to unite technical rationality with the regulation of bio-power …'.[101]

Pasha presents Islamic 'fundamentalism' as modern and neoliberal, defined by or through Western concepts where 'Certain forms of fundamentalism present a particular form of neoliberal compromise, despite their rejectionist tonality' and 'neoliberal fundamentalism only fortifies religious fundamentalism'.[102] Rather than representing an authentic and legitimate expression of resistance to Western hegemony, radical Islam as 'fundamentalism' is seen as a pathology of nihilistic violence, which is in the ascendancy because of Western hegemony. As he sees Islamic fundamentalism as both largely an outgrowth of Western modernity and a problematic, narrow description of the potentialities of Islam, Pasha also criticises the term itself and prefers to use Islamic 'resurgence' in a more positive vein as 'a discursive framework and

[95]Amr Sabet, *Islam and the Political: Theory, Governance and International Relations* (London, UK: Pluto Press 2008); Raffaele Mauriello and Seyed Mohammad Marandi, 'Oppressors and oppressed reconsidered', in Abelkader, Adiong, and Mauriello (eds), *Islam and International Relations*, (ebook edn).

[96]The concept of strategic essentialism as a means of mobilising minority identities has its origins in the work of Gayatri Spivak.

[97]Pasha, *Islam and International Relations*, pp. 22, 26.

[98]Ibid., pp. 26–7.

[99]Ibid., p. 63.

[100]Ibid.

[101]Ibid., p. 47.

[102]Ibid., pp. 47–8.

movement to build or rebuild communities abandoned by the neoliberal state'.[103] Pasha presents 'fundamentalism' in two registers; as a form of militant 'nihilism' driven by Western neoliberal hegemony; and in his rejection of the term in favour of 'resurgence', where what is usually labelled Islamic fundamentalism is only one small part of this resurgence. In these ways, Pasha not only interprets radical Islam through a Western gaze by invoking the concept of nihilism to comprehend it, he also sees it as largely a product of Western modernity.

For Pasha, retrieving 'Islam' for IR is a vital counter-hegemonic endeavour because the globalisation of the Western 'liberal modernist imaginary' has 'severely fractured Muslim societies and their alternative cultural principles'.[104] His aim is 'to recover lost fragments of visions, within Islamic (and other) cultural zones' because radical Islam, as a form of militant nihilism epitomised in post-9/11 terrorism, has resulted from the contraction of possibilities for Muslims to recover Islam in more humane form.[105] As he argues, 'few spaces remain outside modernity and its Western global expression', so nihilistic radical Islam arose because of 'the near absence of potential to create alternative political projects'.[106] In searching for an 'Islamic ethics' in this constricted and violent milieu, he also includes 'political Islam' in his binary framework of 'open' and 'closed' Islam. 'The difficult task', he states, 'is to recover the distinctive features of an Islamic alternative that is increasingly subordinated to the aims of political Islam and its representation in public consciousness.'[107] As he laments with regard to this obscured Islamic alternative, 'Receding into the background are deep ethical codes … positive principles of equality and justice … decency and humility.'[108]

Unlike Pasha, Co-IRIS is concerned, more specifically, with bringing 'IR' and 'Islamic Studies' into dialogue, where IR can benefit from scholars versed in Islamic theology and history. One of its three founders, Deina Abdelkader, is also a *shaykha* (Islamic jurisprudent) who sits on the Fiqh Council of North America, which promotes orthodox Sunnism.[109] The Co-IRIS academic literature vacillates between promoting Islam as an alternative to Western liberal modernity and pointing to common ground. Central to the latter is a concern with how the *religion* of Islam is not inimical to secular liberal democratic norms. For example, Abdelkader traces commonalities between Aquinas and Al-Shatibi (d. 1388), reflecting 'ideological ties that are historically shared by the Western liberal and Muslim worlds'.[110]

This vacillation has implications for conceptions of radical Islam in the Co-IRIS literature. On the one hand, when correspondence between Islam and liberal democratic norms is highlighted, 'radical' forms of Islam are marginalised and anathematised. For example, pitting 'classical' Islam against 'radical' Islam while promoting Muhammad Abu Zahra's (d. 1974) modern conception of Islamic International Relations that transcends both, Ahmed Al-Dawoody asserts, 'Muslim radicals and terrorists argue that war is the original and permanent state of relations with the rest of the world …'.[111] In relation to these 'non-state' radicals, he makes explicit the need for an apologetic recovery of Islam: 'Since Islam will continue to be used by non-state actors, then the antidote to their misrepresentation of Islam is Islam itself.'[112] On the other hand, in accounts that seek to distinguish Islam from liberalism, 'radical' forms of Islam provide positive resources to

[103]Ibid., pp. 69, 72.
[104]Ibid., p. xvii.
[105]Ibid., p. xx.
[106]Ibid., p. 36.
[107]Ibid., p. 97.
[108]Ibid.
[109]See: {http://fiqhcouncil.org/about-fcna/}.
[110]Deina Andelkader, 'Democracy and secularism: The binary divide between faith and reason', in Abdelkader, Adiong, and Mauriello, *Islam and International Relations* (ebook edn).
[111]Ahmed Al-Dawoody, 'From tripartite division to universal humanism: Alternative Islamic global International Relations', in Abdelkader, Adiong, and Mauriello, *Islam and International Relations* (ebook edn).
[112]Al-Dawoody, 'From tripartite division to universal humanism' (ebook edn).

understand international relations outside dominant Western IR frameworks. This is exemplified in accounts of the ideology of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which map on to conceptions of radical Islam as *resistance* to Western hegemony, mirroring conceptions of radicalism in the discourse of Euro-radicalism.[113] In a similar manner, while contesting the dominant view in Western scholarship of Sayyid Qutb as 'one of the fathers of radical Islam(ism)', Carimo Mohomed argues for the recovery of Qutb's alternative vision for IR as one of resistance to Western materialism: "'Using Sayyid Qutb's political theory', Mohomed argues, 'it is high time that a new, and different, International Relations practice becomes viable and overtakes an anachronistic world order …'.[114]

4.1. Liberal/radical Islam

Aside from Pasha's distinctive treatment of fundamentalism, the three discourses of radical Islam I have identified are rarely interrogated explicitly by critical IR/Islam scholars. Thus, Abdelkader uses the terms Islamic 'fundamentalism' and 'jihadi terrorism' without contesting their content, while Sheikh invokes 'radical Islam' in a similar fashion.[115] With the qualified exception of the discourse of *Euro-radicalism/resistance*, which holds a more ambivalent position in the critical IR/Islam literature given its self-images as critical theory, these discourses are more commonly used in the critical IR/Islam literature to anathematise radical Islam as being marginal to, or beyond, Islam. In this regard, critical IR/Islam scholars can, paradoxically, betray liberal impulses even as they contest Western liberalism, by seeking identification between Islam and the West. This tendency, increasingly common in the study of Islam since 9/11, reinforces my argument about the Eurocentrism of conceptions of radical Islam in a different way.[116] It is also a tendency that is separate from the desire to reframe radicalism in a positive way that can bring together odd bedfellows; from critical scholars of the left who see it as a form of legitimate resistance to Western hegemony, to Western counter-radicalisation actors who rhetorically redescribe a Muslim perspective on radicalism to fit liberal democracy.[117] Aligning radical Islam with secularism or liberalism may seem curious today but it has not been unusual in scholarly studies, particularly before the discourse of fundamentalism took hold in Anglophone scholarship.[118] Moreover, the origins of radicalism in Western political thought are entwined with those of liberalism, especially in the early nineteenth century when radicalism was first used to describe an emerging reformist movement in British politics.[119]

[113]Mauriello and Marandi argue Iran's revolutionary ideology did not simply adopt Marxist principles; Shi'i Islam's scriptures resonate with Marxism. Either way, Islam is held up as a mirror to Marxism. Mauriello and Marandi, 'Oppressors and oppressed reconsidered'.

[114]Carimo Mohomed, 'The parting of the ways', in Abdelkader, Adiong, and Maurielo (eds), *Islam and International Relations* (ebook edn).

[115]Deina Abdelkader, 'Part II: Diplomacy, justice and negotiation in Islamic thought', in Abdelkader, Adiong, and Mauriello (eds), *Islam and International Relations* (ebook edn). Citing Mendelsohn's use of the term, Sheikh states, 'That is not to say that one cannot or should not criticise radical Islam. Rather criticising radical Islam on the grounds of exclusivity is somewhat akin to holding double standards…'. Sheikh, *Islam and International Relations*, p. 185. Barak Mendelsohn, 'God vs. Westphalia: Radical Islamist movements and the battle for organising the world', *Review of International Studies*, 38:3 (2012), p. 596.

[116]Abou El Fadl, *The Great Theft*; March, *Islam and Liberal Citizenship*; Faisal Devji and Zaheer Kazmi (eds), *Islam After Liberalism* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[117]For a former Hizb ut Tahrir member turned 'radical' democrat, see Maajid Nawaz, *Radical* (London, UK: Random House, 2012). See also the UK government supported CVE programme, 'Radical Middle Way', which deploys the Islamic concept of *al wasatiyya* I discuss below: {http://impacteurope.eu/partners/radical-middle-way/}. Rhetorical redescription is associated with Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics, Vol. 2* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[118]For the secular activism of radical Muslim actors, see Nikki Keddie, 'The origins of the religious-radical alliance in Iran', *Past & Present*, 34:July (1966), pp. 70–80. For 'radical Islam' as secular democracy in Turkey, see Hassan Saab, 'The spirit of reform in Islam', *Islamic Studies*, 2:1 (1963), p. 33.

[119]Elie Halevy, *The Growth of Philosophical Radicalism* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1928).

Apologetic accounts of liberal Islam seek not to reframe but to negate radical Islam altogether. They illustrate how radical Islam shares an intimate relationship to liberalism through defining Islam by its very opposition to radicalism. In this way, 'liberalism' can be described as a fourth discourse of radicalism that defines radical Islam, alongside Euro-radicalism (*resistance*), fundamentalism (*revival*), and radicalisation (*terror*); but one that is unusual because it points to the *absence* of radical properties in Islam rather than their variously defined presence. Radical Islam has also entered into wider theorisations of liberalism, especially since 9/11.[120] Liberal Islam's negation of radical Islam provokes a question not prompted by the other three discourses; can radicalism be *Islamic*? Challenging the hegemony of Western knowledge production has long been an underlying concern of postcolonial theory. More recently, scholars of comparative political thought have addressed dilemmas in reproducing Western categories in cross-cultural inquiry. For some, the solution has been a turn to methodologies of immersion in non-Western interpretative cultures as a way of reframing academic practices.[121] These developments lay bare the enduring parochialisms in the study of politics. However, a strategy of retrieving more authentic or indigenous terms and concepts that denote radicalism in 'Islamic' intellectual history to contest interpretations of radical Islam in 'Western' scholarship comes with limitations. For one, it is hard to avoid using Western conceptions of radicalism as the starting point for such an inquiry, as we have seen with critical-theoretical accounts of radical Islam in section 1 of this article, which seek to decolonise the political language of radical Islam yet draw on Euro-radicalism to do so.

The correspondence of liberal categories with Islamic ones is made possible by the alienation of radicalism; the presence of liberal Islam implies the absence of Islamic radicalism. This absence can be understood in two related ways. First, it arises from conceptions of Islamic normativity and orthodoxy, sometimes linked to the idea of the 'middle way' (*al wasatiyya*) and related to terms used synonymously with liberal Islam, notably moderate and mainstream.[122] On this view, nothing truly Islamic can be radical, by definition; radicalism exists only in heresies beyond Islam signified by an array of disparate Arabic terms such as *shirk* (polytheism), *bid'a* (false innovation), *fitna* (sedition), *ghuluw* (extreme or exaggerated beliefs), and *irhab* (terror). Second, there is no tradition of radical thought in Islamic intellectual history that equates with traditions of radicalism in Western thought. The only such tradition is one recently constructed in prevailing Western scholarly accounts of radical Islam. In conventional accounts, its genealogy reaches back to the historical Kharajites and is punctuated by the austere mediaeval thought of Ibn Taymiyyah and, a few centuries later, Wahhabism. It is then sustained by an ambiguously defined modern Salafism followed by the writings of twentieth-century 'Islamists', especially Qutb and Maududi, and ends with present-day 'jihadists'. Depending on the particular account, Shi'i trends are also subsumed into this radical genealogy, notably the Ismaili 'Assassins' and the revolutionary thought of Khomeini, the latter often placed alongside Qutb and Maududi.[123]

[120]Owen cites the 'irreducible difference between liberalism and radical Islam' and, calling 'radical Islam' a 'movement', names Qutb one of its 'intellectual leaders'. Judd Owen, 'The task of liberal theory after September 11', *Perspectives on Politics*, 2:2 (2004), p. 325.

[121]Leigh Jenco, '"What does heaven ever say?": A methods-centred approach to cross-cultural engagement', *American Political Science Review*, 101:4 (2007), pp. 741–55; Farah Godrej, *Cosmopolitan Political Thought* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[122]For *al wasatiyya* as a liberal counter to radical Islam, see Zaheer Kazmi, 'Islamic democracy by numbers', in Devji and Kazmi (eds), *Islam After Liberalism*, pp. 149–67. For a sympathetic account of *al wasatiyya* in the Co-IRIS literature, see Rodolfo Ragioneri, 'Constructing an Islamic theory of IR: The case of Yusuf Al Qaradawi, Umma, jihad and the world', in Abdelkader, Adiong, and Mauriello (eds), *Islam and International Relations* (ebook edn).

[123]For example, March states, 'It is unmistakeable that Qutb is part of a modern genealogy of radical Islamic thought …'. Andrew March, 'Taking people as they are: Islam as a "realistic Utopia" in the political theory of Sayyid Qutb', *American Political Science Review*, 104:1 (2010), p. 205. See also Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam* (London, UK: I. B. Tauris. 2009); Youssef M. Choueiri, 'Theological paradigms of Islamic movements', *Political Studies*, 41:1 (1993), pp. 108–16.

Moreover, the frequent conflation of radical Islam with 'political Islam', or Islamism, fosters both the neglect of a discrete investigation into 'radicalism' as a cross-cultural category and a significant body of scholarship that moves beyond 'politics'.[124]

Conclusion

This article has argued for the conceptual disaggregation of radical Islam in Anglophone scholarship elucidated by analysing its relationship to the academic discourses of Euro-radicalism, fundamentalism, radicalisation, and liberalism. It has challenged implicit assumptions about the fixed or self-evident nature of radical Islam, addressing the under-theorisation and over-determination of the meaning of radicalism. Such assumptions do not view radicalism as a meta-concept and polysemous term modulated in meaning depending on how radical Islam's conceptual properties are shaped by these different discourses.

Interpretations of radical Islam draw attention to the cross-cultural translation and application of radicalism as a meta-concept. The binding of Islam with radicalism is a fact uncontested in the first three discourses I have discussed. Islam's affinities to radicalism are *assumed* in studies of fundamentalism and radicalisation, and *desired* in critical theories in Euro-radicalism. These accounts of radical Islam are premised on the assumption that radical Islam is either akin to Western forms of radicalism, or that it should be understood as being non-Western by virtue of it being Islamic. The discourse of liberalism is an exception, *rejecting* radicalism's association with Islam as a way of combating negative perceptions of Islam.

Notably, the apologetic recovery of Islam has been especially evident in the discipline of IR itself. Highlighting liberalism's complex and intimate conceptual and historical relationship to radicalism, it suggests liberalism constitutes a kind of master framework or pivot around which conceptions of radicalism orbit. Seen in the light of accounts of liberal Islam that negate Islamic radicalism, it is the absence of radicalism in Islam, rather than its apparent presence, or indeed, prevalence, that has enabled multiple scholarly readings of radical Islam. Like the phantom nature of liberal Islam that is animated through the projection of Western liberal categories, such accounts step into the interpretive gap opened up by this absence. Having no discernible radical tradition of their own, narratives of Islam that depart from dominant conceptions of Islamic normativity require a language of legitimation, which radical Islam, via Western conceptions of radicalism, provides. In doing so, academic accounts of radical Islam also authenticate Islam in some fashion by advancing selective, strategic, or apologetic descriptions of what constitutes radicalism.

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Dr Zaheer Kazmi is a Senior Research Fellow at the Senator George J. Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice, Queen's University Belfast. His publications include *Polite Anarchy in International Relations Theory* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), and, as co-editor, *Islam After Liberalism* (Oxford University Press/Hurst, 2017) and *Contextualizing Jihadi Thought* (Oxford University Press/Hurst, 2012). His articles have also been published in *Modern Intellectual History*, the *Journal of Political Ideologies*, and the *Review of International Studies*.

[124]Faisal Devji, *Landscapes of the Jihad* (London, UK: Hurst 2005). For post-Islamism, see Asef Bayat, 'The coming of a post-Islamist society', *Critique*, 5:9 (1996), pp. 43–52; Roy, *Globalised Islam*.

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