This exceptional book constructs a uniquely comprehensive and dynamic global and historical discourse for defining, interpreting, understanding and appreciating the rich diversity of Islam and Muslims in today’s world. The contributors represent a refreshing range of academic discourses (political science, Islamic and Middle Eastern history, anthropology, religious studies, Latin American and Latino studies, African and Asian studies) which gives the book its illuminating contextual and topical authenticity. In addition to its accessibility for the general reading public, it is an ideal textbook for a wide range of academic courses in the social sciences, humanities and beyond, such as geopolitics and environmental studies.

Frederick Mathewson Denny, University of Colorado at Boulder

“Dynasties, crusades, empires, colonial encounters, state politics, and global commerce blend evenly with topics on Islamic thought, jurisprudence, tradition, ethics, and belief and practice. Readers have long awaited such a judicious treatment in a manageable format. And this book’s coverage of Islam in regions such as Latin America, Africa, and Central Asia alongside its discussions on terrorism and violence, Islamophobia, women and human rights, the media, and the global expanse of Muslim cultures easily make it a major resource for both inside and outside the classrooms.”

Zain Abdullah, Temple University

This engaging introduction to Islam examines its lived reality, its worldwide presence, and the variety of beliefs and practices it encompasses. Richly global in approach, the book explores the similarities within and diversity of Islam across countries and regions in the present day.

A central theme of the book is the deep contrast that exists between the commonly held images of Islam and the reality of how this religion is lived and practiced. Islam is often thought of as a static and monolithic tradition, but it is in fact fluid, dynamic, and characterized by enormous variety. A group of leading regional specialists explore trends across various countries and regions, including Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and Europe, providing an accurate and fascinating account of Islam in the 21st century. The book also addresses the historical context in which Islam emerged and its core elements, but then moves beyond these to include areas less typically covered, including the geographical diversity of the religion, the phenomenon of militancy, Islamophobia, and the teaching of Islam in the West. This combination of global, historical, and interdisciplinary coverage makes this the ideal text for courses focusing on the political, social, and lived reality of Islam today.

Aminah Beverly McCloud is Professor of Islamic Studies in the Department of Religious Studies at DePaul University and Director of the Islamic World Studies Program. She is the author of *African American Islam* (1995), *Questions of Faith* (1999), and *Transnational Muslims in American Society* (2006). A Fulbright Scholar, Dr. McCloud is also a consultant on Muslim affairs for the US court system and the Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Islamic Law and Culture*.

Scott W. Hibbard is an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at DePaul University, where he teaches courses on Middle East politics, international relations, and religion and politics. He is the author of *Religion and Secular States: Egypt, India, and the United States* (2009) and co-author (with David Little) of *Islamic Activism and U.S. Foreign Policy* (1997). He received a Fulbright Fellowship to teach at the American University in Cairo in 2009 and 2010.

Laith Saud is Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at DePaul University, and an expert on Middle East politics. He serves on the editorial board of the *Journal of Islamic Law and Culture*, has authored numerous articles, and is a regular contributor to NPR, recently reporting on interviews he gathered from the Muslim Brotherhood during his visit to Egypt during the 2011 Egyptian Revolution.
An Introduction to Islam in the 21st Century
An Introduction to
ISLAM
IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Edited by
Aminah Beverly McCloud,
Scott W. Hibbard,
and Laith Saud

WILEY-BLACKWELL
A John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., Publication
Brief Contents

Notes on Contributors xv
Acknowledgments xviii

Part I Overview: Islam: Image and Reality 1

1 Introduction 3
   *Aminah Beverly McCloud, Scott W. Hibbard, and Laith Saud*

2 The Historical Context 13
   *Aminah Beverly McCloud, Scott W. Hibbard, and Laith Saud*

3 Religious Structures: *Tawḥīd* 31
   *Laith Saud*

4 Islamic Beliefs: The Development of Islamic Ideas 51
   *Laith Saud*

5 Islamic Political Theology 81
   *Laith Saud*

Part II Islam and the Modern World 109

6 Islam and the State: Part I 111
   *Scott W. Hibbard*

7 Islam and the State: Part II 135
   *Scott W. Hibbard*

8 Muslims as Minorities in the West 157
   *Aminah Beverly McCloud*

Part III Regional Studies 171

9 Islam in Africa 173
   *Babacar Mbengue*

10 Islam in South Asia 203
    *Saeed A. Khan*
11 Islam in Central Asia
   Maria Louw
   217
12 Islam in Indonesia and Malaysia
   Aminah Beverly McCloud
   233
13 Muslim Histories in Latin America and the Caribbean
   John Tofik Karam
   249

Part IV Islam in a Globalized World
   269
14 The Ecology of Teaching about Islam and Muslims in the 21st Century
   Aminah Beverly McCloud
   271
15 Terrorism, Islamophobia, and the Media
   Scott W. Hibbard
   Conclusion: Image and Reality Reconsidered
   Aminah Beverly McCloud, Scott W. Hibbard, and Laith Saud
   285
   309

Index
   315
## Contents

Notes on Contributors  
Acknowledgments  

### Part I Overview: Islam: Image and Reality

1. **Introduction**  
   *Aminah Beverly McCloud, Scott W. Hibbard, and Laith Saud*  
   - Introduction 3  
   - Image and Reality 4  
   - Organization of the Text 7  
   - Discussion Questions 12  
   - Sidebars  
     - 1.1 Sources for population information 5  
     - 1.2 Countries with the largest Muslim populations 5  

2. **The Historical Context**  
   *Aminah Beverly McCloud, Scott W. Hibbard, and Laith Saud*  
   - Introduction 14  
   - Pre-Islamic Arabia: Culture, Commerce, and Contexts 15  
   - The Early Caliphs and the Spread of Islam 17  
     - The Umayyad Dynasty 21  
     - The Abbasid Dynasty 22  
   - The Medieval Empires 23  
     - Iran: The Mongol, Timurid, and Safavid Empires 24  
     - Anatolia: The Seljuk and Ottoman Empires 26  
     - India and South Asia 27  
   - European Colonialism and Its Legacy 28  
   - Discussion Questions 29  
   - Suggested Further Reading 29  
   - Sidebars  
     - 2.1 Ibn Khaldun 15  
     - 2.2 Zoroastrianism 16
2.3 Shanameh 24
2.4 Crusades and Mongols 24
2.5 Spain: Al-Andalus 27

3 Religious Structures: Tawḥīd 31

Laith Saud

Introduction 31
Tawḥīd: The Organizing Principle of Islamic Thought 32
Introducing Basic Islamic Beliefs and Texts 34
Rethinking Islam: The Message, the Messenger, and God 36
The Qur’an: The Recitation 41
Revelation 42
Ethics and Law 45
The Qur’an and the Five Pillars 47
Discussion Questions 50
Suggested Further Reading 50

4 Islamic Beliefs: The Development of Islamic Ideas 51

Laith Saud

Introduction 51
The sunna of the Prophet 52
Malik ibn Anas 53
The Development of Islamic Jurisprudence, Kalam, and Philosophy 54
Imam Abu Hanifa 55
The Islamic Epistemological Spectrum 56
Imam Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafii 58
Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal and the Mihna 59
Politics, Theology, and Mutazilite kalam 61
The Islamic Philosophical Tradition 63
The Asharite Response 70
Averroes, the Return of Aristotle, and the Gnostics 73
Ibn al-ʿArabi and Ibn Khaldun 75
Conclusion 78
Discussion Questions 79
Suggested Further Reading 79

5 Islamic Political Theology 81

Laith Saud

Introduction 82
Islamic Political Theology and the Qur’an 82
The Origins of Islamic Political Theology 85
The Shi’at ʿAli and the Kharjites 87
Modern Traditionalist Sunnism 88
Shi‘ism 90
The Imamate 93
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>ix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muhammad al-Baqir and Jafar as-Sadiq</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branches within Shiʿism</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zaydis</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ismaʿilis</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response to Esoterics: Toward a Consolidation of Sunnism and Shiʿism</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sustainer of the Faith: Nasir al-Din and His Influence</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoining the Good and Forbidding the Wrong:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sultan–Sharia Synthesis of Ibn Taymiyya</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premodern and Modern Developments Built on Classical Legacies</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sayyid Qutb and Jāhaliyya at-Thani</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayatollah R. Khomeini: Revolutionary and Imam</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulla Sadra and Illuminationist Philosophy</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Theology Summarized</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Questions</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggested Further Reading</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidebar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Major distinctions between Sunni and Shiʿi Islam</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part II Islam and the Modern World**

6 Islam and the State: Part I

*Scott W. Hibbard*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>x</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Historical Context</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The End of Empire and the Rise of Nation-States</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion and State-Led Secularization</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cases</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secular Arab Nationalism in Egypt</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secular Nationalism in Iraq, Syria, and North Africa</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secularism in South Asia</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Questions</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggested Further Reading</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidebars</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Westernization or modernization?</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 Kemalism</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3 Arab Cold War: The ideological division between Gulf monarchies and Arab socialist states</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7 Islam and the State: Part II

*Scott W. Hibbard*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>x</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Theoretical and Historical Context</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Traditionalist State 141
The Critique of the Islamist Vision 143
Cases 145
  Saudi Arabia 145
  Iran 147
  Pakistan/Afghanistan 149
Conclusion 154
Discussion Questions 155
Suggested Further Reading 156

Sidebars
  7.1 The Mahdist revolt in the Sudan 138
  7.2 Hasan al-Banna 139
  7.3 Mawlana Mawdudi 140
  7.4 Khomeini and the Velayat e-faqih 148
  7.5 Human rights and minorities in Iran 149
  7.6 Hudud punishments 152
  7.7 The Civil War in Sudan 153

8 Muslims as Minorities in the West 157
  Aminah Beverly McCloud

Introduction 157
The United Kingdom and the United States 159
  Religious Expression 162
  Education 163
  Masajid-Building and Political Participation 164
France and Germany 165
  Education 167
  Masajid-Building and Political Participation 168
Conclusion 169
Discussion Questions 169
Suggested Further Reading 170

Sidebars
  8.1 East and West 159
  8.2 The European Union 160
  8.3 The great powers 161
  8.4 Laïcité 166

Part III Regional Studies 171

9 Islam in Africa 173
  Babacar Mbengue

Introduction 174
Islam in Africa: A Kaleidoscopic Debut 176
Islam in Africa in the Era of the Great Sudano-Sahelian States 178
  Takrur, Ghana, and the Rise of the Almoravids 179
Sidebars
11.1 Naqshbandiyya 225
11.2 Wali 226
11.3 Baraka 226

12 Islam in Indonesia and Malaysia 233
_Aminah Beverly McCloud_

Introduction 233
The Colonial Encounter 235
Indonesia in the 20th Century 237
Politics and Economics 237
Culture 239
Indonesia in the 21st Century 241
Malaysia 242
History 242
Women, Islam, and Transnational Movements 244
Conclusion 246
Discussion Questions 247
Suggested Further Reading 248
Sidebar
12.1 Islam in Indonesia 234

13 Muslim Histories in Latin America and the Caribbean 249
_John Tofik Karam_

Introduction 249
Shadows of al-Andalus in the Spanish Colonial Order 252
African Rebellion and Refuge in a Slavocrat Society 254
From Muharram to Hosay in Caribbean Creolization 257
Institutionalizing Islam in an Emergent Civil Society 259
Conversion (or Reversion) at a Time of Counter-Terrorism 262
Conclusion 264
Discussion Questions 264
Suggested Further Reading 264
Sidebars
13.1 Reconquista 250
13.2 Mudéjar 254

Part IV Islam in a Globalized World 269

14 The Ecology of Teaching about Islam and Muslims in the 21st Century 271
_Aminah Beverly McCloud_

Introduction 271
Who Teaches? An Ecosystem on the Brink 273
Contents

Sentiments since 9/11 275
Debates: How to Describe Islam 277
Debates: Questions of Violence 280
Discussion Questions 283
Suggested Further Reading 284
Sidebars
  14.1 Why explain the Muslim world? 273
  14.2 Standard definitions 277
15  Terrorism, Islamophobia, and the Media 285
Scott W. Hibbard

Introduction 286
Religion and the Question of Violence 287
The Afghan War and the Rise of Transnational Militancy 293
Understanding the War on Terror 297
Terrorism, Islamophobia, and the Media 300
Conclusion 306
Discussion Questions 307
Suggested Further Reading 308
Sidebars
  15.1 Terrorism 288
  15.2 The Algerian Civil War 292
  15.3 Former militants renounce violence 293
  15.4 The Afghan War: The 1980s 295
  15.5 Terrorism 1995–1996 297
  15.6 Bin Laden’s 1998 fatwa 299
  15.7 Socio-economic basis of popular support for the Islamist movement 302
  15.8 Robert Spencer and Pam Geller 303
  15.9 Commentary on 9/11 304

Conclusion: Image and Reality Reconsidered 309
Aminah Beverly McCloud, Scott W. Hibbard, and Laith Saud

Islamic Thought and Practice 310
Islam’s Regional Differences 311
Islam in the 21st Century 313
Suggested Further Reading 314

Index 315
Notes on Contributors

Scott W. Hibbard is an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at DePaul University, Chicago, where he teaches courses on Middle East politics, American foreign policy, and religion and politics. He received his PhD from Johns Hopkins University in 2005 and holds advanced degrees from the London School of Economics and Political Science (MSc Political Theory, 1989), and from Georgetown University (MA Liberal Studies, 1988). Hibbard also taught at the American University in Cairo, as part of a Fulbright Award, during the 2009–10 academic year. Hibbard is the author of Religious Politics and Secular States: Egypt, India and the United States (2010) and co-author (with David Little) of Islamic Activism and US Foreign Policy (1997).

John Tofik Karam teaches in the Latin American and Latino Studies Program at DePaul University, Chicago. He studies Arab cultural practices and social networks as a window to understanding national and hemispheric orders. Revealing how Arabness reflects and shapes the neoliberal turn in Brazil, his first book, Another Arabesque, won awards from the Arab American National Museum (AANM) and the Brazilian Studies Association (BRASA). Karam is now working on his second book, Redrawing US–South American Geopolitics: Arabs, the Tri-Border, and the Rise of Brazil. Focusing on the 50-year history of Muslim Lebanese and Palestinians at a South American trinational border, this book maps how their diaspora has helped define Brazil’s emergence as a hemispheric power in relation to Argentina, Paraguay, and the US, in a novel redrawing US–South American relations.

Saeed A. Khan teaches Islamic and Middle East history, politics and culture in the Department of Classical and Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures at Wayne State University, Detroit, where he is also Fellow at the Center for the Study of Citizenship. His area of research is the identity politics of Muslim diaspora communities in the US, UK, and Europe. Publications include contributions in the volumes Muslim Youth: Challenges, Opportunities and Expectations (edited by Mohammad Seddon and Fauzia Ahmad, 2012); Defining and Re-Defining
Maria Louw is Associate Professor in Anthropology at the Department of Culture and Society, Aarhus University, Denmark. She has done extensive fieldwork in Central Asia – in particular Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan – focusing on everyday religion and secularism, morality and politics in the context of post-Soviet social change.

Babacar Mbengue is Adjunct Professor of Islamic Studies in the Islamic World Studies Program and Religious Studies Department at DePaul University, Chicago. He also teaches international relations and Islam and politics at Loyola University Chicago’s Political Science Department. Dr. Mbengue’s areas of focus are Islam in Africa, West African Muslim communities in the West, and the intersection between premodern Islamic business law and contemporary Islamic finance. As a former Fulbright scholar, Dr. Mbengue is fluent in four languages: Wolof, Arabic, French, and English.

Aminah Beverly McCloud is Director of the Islamic World Studies Program and Professor of Islamic Studies in the Department of Religious Studies at DePaul University, Chicago. Since 2006 she has directed the nation’s only undergraduate baccalaureate program in Islamic World Studies. During her tenure at DePaul University she founded the Islam in America Conference and established the Islam in America Archives and the Journal of Islamic Law and Culture, of which she is the current Editor in Chief. In addition to her work at the university, she is author of African American Islam (1995), Questions of Faith (1999), and Transnational Muslims in American Society (2006). She is currently working on Silks: The Textures of American Muslim Women’s Lives and has also authored over thirty-five articles on topics ranging from Islamic law to Muslim women. Dr. McCloud is a Fulbright Scholar, a consultant on Muslim affairs for the courts, a regular reviewer for The Oxford Journal of Islamic Studies, an advisory board member of the Institute for Social and Policy Understanding, and a participant in the Feminist Sexual Ethics Project at Brandeis University. She has received grants for her work from the Ford Foundation, the Illinois Humanities Council, the Graham Architectural Foundation, and the Lilly Foundation. She has also worked on a number of television projects on Muslims and on task forces for the East West Institute and for the Chicago Council on Foreign Affairs relating to Islam and Muslims.

Laith Saud is Visiting Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at DePaul University, Chicago. A former contributing writer for al-Jazeera, Mr. Saud specializes in Islamic
political thought and in the analysis of the Middle East, particularly the Arab world. He has conducted fieldwork in Egypt, interviewed members of the Muslim Brotherhood, and published articles on Islamic thought and the philosophical underpinnings of the “Arab Spring.” He makes regular appearances on national and international media such as NPR and PBS.
Acknowledgments

We must dedicate this text to husbands, wives, mothers, fathers, and children who, through their support, enabled us to work diligently on it. To Frederick Thaufeer al-Deen (husband of Aminah McCloud) and especially to Tara Magner (wife of Scott Hibbard), who came to the rescue of a chapter in the eleventh hour, we thank you for your love and support of this project. To Sabah and Nasrin Saud (parents of Laith Saud), we thank you for your support and grandchild care. To a wonderful young lady who will now have more time with her dad, Yasmine Saud, thanks for sharing him with us. We must also acknowledge two extremely dedicated students, Trent Carl and Richard Reinhardt, for their tireless work on and dedication to this project. Our thanks to Blackwell editorial people – Isobel Bainton and staff – who worked diligently with us on this project. We are deeply indebted to Manuela Tecusan, our copy-editor, who lost considerable sleep assisting us in bringing this text to light. Your guidance and patience have seen us through. We hope to work with you in the future. Thank all of you.
Part I

Overview

*Islam: Image and Reality*
1
Introduction

Aminah Beverly McCloud, Scott W. Hibbard, and Laith Saud

Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image and Reality</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of the Text</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Questions</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidebars</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Sources for population information</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Countries with the largest Muslim populations</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Introduction

This text provides an introduction to Islam that begins its inquiry with the social and political realities that inform 21st-century Islamic practice. It is consciously global in perspective, and seeks to capture the diversity of Islam as it manifests in different regions and countries. The book also examines the different interpretations and debates that characterize the tradition, both yesterday and today. Like other textbooks, it addresses what are traditionally seen as the historical contexts in which Islam emerged, and the core elements of the tradition. However, the book seeks to move beyond these basic topics, and address issues that are not typically covered, such as the ideas and practices of Islam in different regions and countries, the phenomenon of militancy, Islamophobia, and the teaching of Islam in the West, among other issues.
The central theme of this book is that the image of Islam (particularly in the West) is very different from the lived reality of over a billion adherents around the globe. While Islam is often imagined as a static and monolithic tradition, the reality is quite different. Like other world religions, it is fluid, dynamic, and characterized by enormous diversity. By examining trends in different countries and regions – Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, the United States and Europe – we hope to give a more accurate depiction of Islam as a living religion.

The authors undertook this project because they believed that there is a need for a more contemporary and holistic introduction to Islam, one that captures not simply the past but also the present. Particularly given the misinformed and often misleading characterization of the Islamic tradition that appears in the mass media (and by the ever increasing number of “experts” that have emerged since the events of 9/11), such a textbook will be an important contribution to public understanding and to university-level education. The text begins with an examination of Islamic history, the central elements of the tradition, and long-standing debates. It also highlights key patterns within Islamic history that shed light upon the origins and evolution of current movements and thought. We subsequently move on to more contemporary issues and examine a plethora of countries and thinkers in order to put those issues in context.

An Introduction to Islam in the 21st Century also addresses controversial issues directly. The text examines topics including political violence and “terrorism,” anti-Western sentiments, and Islamophobia. We examine these issues as realities in the contemporary world, and we inquire why they exist and look at the underlying causes that give rise to such phenomena. In doing so, we reject the common tendency to explain such issues as simply matters of culture or tradition. Rather, we look to history, patterns of political economy, and the evolution of particular ideologies to help us understand such trends. We also seek to explore contemporary forms of globalization (economic, cultural, and political), and the nature of trans-Atlantic and trans-Pacific Muslim responses to such trends. The world is changing everywhere, not least the Muslim world. Finally, we are particularly interested in what is different, if anything, in both the understanding and the articulation of Islam in the post-9/11 environment for Muslims and non-Muslims throughout the world.

Image and Reality

The image of Islam in the West is rooted in centuries of misperceptions. The vision that emerges from the early European experience with different Muslim powers is one defined by antagonism and conflict. This is a part of what fueled the Christian Crusades between the 11th and 15th centuries, but was also apparent in later periods of European development, which was similarly informed by the opposition to an external, Turkish, or Muslim “other.” Throughout this early history, the Islamic world was perceived as hostile to the Christian West, and that this political rivalry was rooted in religious differences. The characterization of
Islam by the so-called Orientalist writers of the Colonial period “essentialized” the tradition – that is, identified certain characteristics of the Islamic tradition as embodying the “essence” of the religion. This constructed essence included such things as unquestioned belief, an emphasis upon the community at the expense of the individual, and an innate inclination to oppress women. This essence was perceived to be not only definitive, but unchanging.

Such assumptions are fundamentally incorrect, but, nonetheless, continue to influence popular perceptions of Islam in the modern world. Much of the Islamophobia of the post-9/11 era has seized on these ideas, and portrays Islam (and Muslims) as hostile to Western values. This hostility is seen, moreover, as being rooted in the realm of religion and ideology. The inherent bias in this characterization of Islam is evident in any number of ways, and has frequently had the effect of subjecting Muslim citizens in the West to discrimination and abuse. The portrayal of young Arabs and Muslims in the popular media and the denigration of Islam by Western politicians and public figures all contribute to a public perception of Islam as monolithic, unchanging, and largely hostile to the Enlightenment norms which inform Western civilization.

The lived reality of Islam is quite different from this stereotype, and is as varied as humanity itself. Significant Muslim populations can be found in countries across the planet. 1.54 billion Muslims in the world live on every continent as majorities and minorities. While historically centered in the Middle East and North Africa, today the largest populations are found in Asia (see Map 1.1).

This geographical diversity reflects cultural and theological differentiation as well. The practices and beliefs that are prevalent in Indonesia or Western Africa differ in significant ways from the distinctive practices of Saudi Arabia, for example. Similarly, the internal theological debates of today reflect...
Map 1.1  2010 population estimates from the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life.
long-standing differences within the Islamic tradition over interpretation. These debates have multiplied in the postcolonial period as different communities negotiate modernity and come to grips with a rapidly changing world. These trends have become even more relevant in the post-Cold War era, which has been characterized by a high degree of economic and political globalization. Even if there are certain principles to which all Muslims adhere – such as recognition of the underlying unity of God (in Arabic, *tawhīd*) – interpreting the meaning and implications of these principles, and applying them in a lived reality, remains a source of ongoing discussion and debate. Rather than representing a monolithic unity, then, these different approaches to understanding God’s Will represent a spectrum of thought, one that is characterized by diversity, not homogeneity.

From the Muslim intellectual perspective, there are several key philosophical issues – particularly the relationship between knowledge and authority, and the related matter of defining legitimate authority – that continue to provide the structure of 21st-century conversations. In this text, clarifying these debates and discussions takes precedence over any reiteration of Islamic history which readers can find elsewhere. The following chapters expand upon these ideas.

### Organization of the Text

Part I provides an overview of the basic structures and debates within Islam. It begins with a historical chapter (Chapter 2), which provides an introduction to the context in which Islam first emerged, and how the early political structures developed. This includes a brief overview of the historical eras which formed the early Islamic period; the history of the Prophet Muhammad, the rise of the early caliphates, the expansion of Islam, and subsequent dynasties. This chapter will also examine the “Gunpowder Empires,” and the rise of European colonialism and its legacies.

The three chapters that follow discuss the structures, tenets, debates, and sects of the Islamic tradition with the concept of a “spectrum of belief” organized around a central belief in God. Chapter 3 will introduce the reader to fundamental elements of the Islamic worldview that have structured the discourses within the religious tradition both in the past and in the present. A key organizing belief in the Islamic tradition is *tawhīd*, the underlying unity of God and all creation. Chapter 3 examines this concept, and how it has informed all aspects of Islamic civilization. This chapter also examines the influence of the life of the Prophet Muhammad upon the evolution of the faith, and provides an overview of the basic beliefs and texts of the Islamic tradition, as well as a discussion of the five Pillars of Islam.

An issue that is central to the pedagogy (i.e. educational philosophy) of this text is that the Islamic worldview must be rendered in its full diversity and complexity. This idea is very much reflected in Chapter 4, which focuses on the evolution of Islamic doctrines, beliefs, and practices. This includes the development of Islamic
law, kalam (dialectical theology), philosophy, ethics, and social theory. A central feature of this chapter is its elaboration on the spectrum of thought that has defined the tradition, and the tension between those who rely on tradition to guide their interpretation of the religion and those who rely on human reason to interpret Islam. It is important to remember that these aspects of the religion developed through a process of dialogue and debate; this is a community discourse and not a product of one particular religious hierarchy. These dialogues and debates, moreover, continue to this day.

In Chapter 5 we explore the fundamental features of what are commonly referred to as “Islamic sects.” A number of particular “spiritual types,” to use the words of Seyyed Hossein Nasr, have emerged within the tradition, which include Sunnism, Shi’ism, and the diversity therein. This chapter will examine these types via their theological and philosophical contributions to the Islamic discourse. One of the important contributions of this chapter is that it allows readers to better understand the modern implications of these debates, which are more fully discussed in subsequent chapters.

Part II examines Islam in a modern political context. This includes a discussion of the ongoing debate about the proper relationship between Islam and political authority. Although it is commonly argued that there is no distinction between religion and state in the Islamic tradition, the reality has always been otherwise. While the Prophet Muhammad embodied both religious and political authority, the relationship between the two remained unclear during the reign of the immediate successors to the Prophet. Subsequent trends in Islamic history, moreover, saw the emergence of a separation of function – and even competition – between religious authorities and their political counterparts. At issue in this ongoing competition is, on the one hand, the role of religious authorities in regulating the affairs of state, and, on the other, the danger to Islamic tradition of its overt manipulation by political leaders. An additional issue involves the reassertions of the demands for a caliphate (the single embodiment of both religious and political authority). These debates are not unique to the Islamic tradition, nor are there settled answers within Islam regarding the proper role of religion in government. Rather, in the contemporary period, the reality is defined by ongoing debates about the role of religion in the modern state.

Chapter 6 examines these issues in the context of societies that established secular political structures in the early and mid-20th century. The most influential – and extreme – example of the secular trend is Turkey, whose modern founder, Mustapha Kemal Ataturk, sought to orient a newly recreated Turkey toward Europe, not the Arab Middle East. The secular political structure in Turkey marked a sharp break from the Ottoman past. Turkey was not the only case, however. Pre-revolutionary Iran (1906–1979), Nasser’s Egypt, the Arab nationalist states of Syria and Iraq, among others, were all consciously secular. At the heart of this movement was a twofold belief. On the one hand, the effort to modernize entailed a de-emphasis (or elimination) of religion, or at least its relegation to the margins of public life. These debates also have their origins in the philosophical debates of
Chapter 3, as religious structures were profoundly changed by choices made with regard to the role of religion in government. There was, however, a second feature as well: the diversity within various societies – particularly in Asia – required a greater degree of official neutrality in matters of religion. Hence, Arab Christians, South Asian Hindus, and Chinese Christians living as minorities in places such as Indonesia or India demanded a more religiously neutral political authority. This sets the stage for our later examinations.

Chapter 7 looks at states that took very different approaches to these issues, and linked religious authority to state authority in various ways. Here we review the underlying rationale – the assumption that Islam is both a religion and a state (din wa dawla) – and how this relationship has manifested in practice. The most well-known examples of this close affiliation of religion and state power are in Iran (which has a self-consciously theocratic political structure) and Saudi Arabia (a sharia-inclined state where religious officials do not actually rule). However, there are numerous other examples (and precedents), such as those found in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Sudan (both during the 19th century Mahdist regime and under the current government). We also examine religious opposition groups that have argued for a more central role for religion in government. Sometimes religion is an opposition discourse, and sometimes it is invoked in support of the modern state. Regardless of whether religion is tied to a particular regime or to the political opposition, the arguments for a more overt role of religion in governance are similar: God is the ultimate source of sovereignty, and the Qur’an ought to provide the basis for legislation, law, and public order.

It is important to recognize that the distinction between “Islamic states” (or what we will refer to as “traditionalist states”) and “secular states” is not always sharp or clearly defined. Secular governments regularly invoke religion as a basis of popular support even if they remain largely neutral in theological matters. More to the point, however, is that the debates over the proper interpretation of religion in public life, and the proper relationship between religious and state authority, are never resolved in a permanent manner, in much the same way as the underlying philosophical debates endure. These issues remain a source of continuing debate and periodically recur in the context of modern politics. Our discussion of religious and political authority and their often contentious dynamics leads us to a discussion of political violence as one means of promoting a narrow religious vision by a vocal minority. To these conversations are added the reactions, both within the Islamic community and from outside.

Chapter 8 examines the question of Muslim minorities living in the West. At issue are the various challenges associated with integrating into Western society while retaining one’s cultural and religious heritage. On the one hand, there is an understandable resistance among Muslim minorities to assimilate into a largely secular culture, while on the other, there is an often visceral opposition within majority communities to tolerate in a non-discriminatory manner minority populations in their midst. This is not a new challenge, but is an enduring feature of human history. What makes the issue of Muslim minorities living in the West
so unique in the 21st century is the high level of emigration that has transpired since the end of World War II. The resulting diversity within Western societies has created numerous issues for both the host populations and the migrant communities. This chapter examines these challenges in four countries with the largest Muslim communities – the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany – and the different ways in which each have sought to deal with the minorities in their midst.

Part III focuses on regional examinations. The next four chapters offer a survey of Muslims in different regions and continents. These regions were selected, in large measure, by their significant history and size of Muslim populations. They were also selected to provide a glimpse into the diversity of Islam culture and traditions. Chapter 9 begins this exploration in Africa. It looks at the penetration, expansion, and assimilation of Islam on the African continent, with a particular focus on the regions south of the Sahara desert. This review sheds light on the diversity of the religious experience, the historical context and, ultimately, the emergence of powerful Muslim states. The chapter also looks at the development of important movements of Islamic reform during the colonial and postcolonial eras. This helps to shed light on both the past and present traits of Islam in Africa, often neglected in the study of Islam as a global phenomenon.

Chapter 10 looks at Islam within the countries of South Asia: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. Out of the roughly 1.6 billion who live on the subcontinent, nearly a third are Muslim. This gives the subcontinent one of the largest Muslim populations in the world. Like the other regions in Asia, Islam first arrived via commercial traders in the 8th century, though its influence became most pronounced in later centuries, particularly with the rise of the Mughal Empire in the 16th century. While the Mughals were eclipsed by British colonial rule in the mid-19th century, Islam has nonetheless remained a powerful cultural and political force in the region. It has given rise to a variety of political movements, and various South Asian thinkers have greatly influenced popular understandings of Islam throughout the world. The South Asian experience of Islam has also been characterized by a great deal of diversity. This is due, in part, to the historical circumstances, and the fact that India’s Muslims are a minority population, while across the border, Islam is the official state religion in Pakistan. In short, Islamic thought and practice shape the lives of millions of people throughout the region, though this occurs in a variety of diverse ways.

In Chapter 11 we explore Islam in the much understudied regions of the former Soviet Republics. This area is home to more than 50 million Muslims. Scholars have previously only focused on the non-Muslim peoples, presuming that Islam had been relegated to extinction by decades of policies of eradication. This chapter provides a look at the Islamic revival present in the region.

The focus of Chapter 12 turns our attention to the experience of Islam in Indonesia and Malaysia. Indonesia is, of course, the nation with the largest Muslim population on the planet, and would be of interest for that reason alone. But it is also of interest because of its democratic governing structures, its pluralist vision