

ISLAM AS IDEOLOGY: THE POLITICS OF THE ISLAMIC REVIVAL IN POST-
SOVIET CENTRAL ASIA

by

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A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
The University of Manitoba
in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Political Studies

University of Manitoba

Winnipeg, Manitoba

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ABSTRACT

The Islamic Revival in post-Soviet Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) offers a rich case study concerning the role of Islamism in international politics. The international relations literature on the region has not explored this phenomenon deeply, due in part to the limited account of ideational factors offered by the predominant approaches to international relations theory. Building on the constructivist argument that a causal account of ideational factors can be supplemented with a constitutive account that locates these factors in their social and historical contexts, the thesis explores ideology as a conceptual framework that may be used to link the different manifestations of political Islam in post-Soviet Central Asia, including Islamist movements (Islamic Renaissance Party, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, and Hizb ut-Tahrir), the repression and cooptation of the Islamic revival Central Asian states, and the perception of the Islamic Revival as a threat to regional and international security.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project took longer than it should have, as my research and my professional life took several worthwhile detours. The generous financial support of the J.W. Dafoe Foundation, through the Fellowship in International Relations, and of the Department of National Defence, through the Security and Defence Forum MA Scholarship, allowed me to work while warm and well-fed, and enabled me to accumulate debts of gratitude while limiting debts of a more serious nature.

With the customary caveat that I alone am responsible for the form, substance, and failings of this thesis, I owe thanks to many people: to the members of my thesis committee – my advisor Dr. Lasha Tchantouridze, Dr. James Fergusson, and Dr. Tina Chen – for their challenging and insightful questions and clarifications; to the faculty members, notably Dr. Paul Buteux and Dr. Jesse Vorst, who have shaped my thinking on international politics and social theory, and who led me, directly or indirectly, to undertake this study; to friends and colleagues for hours borrowed and arguments endured; and to my family, natural and acquired, for their support and the wise counsel of experience (“It’s just a thesis, not a bloody book”). Dorothy Brown turned an editorial eye to drafts of this work, and Carson Jerema served as a sounding board for clarifying my arguments.

My last debt, and certainly my largest, is to my partner Nike; without her patience, tolerance, encouragement, and helpful prodding (in that order), mixed always with her good humour and careful assistance, this project could not have been completed.

For Hy.

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION: THE POTENTIAL AND THE PROBLEM OF THE ISLAMIC REVIVAL IN POST-SOVIET CENTRAL ASIA

Despite the potential for analyses of the Islamic Revival in the five post-Soviet Central Asian republics to shed light on several key questions for international relations, studies of the region from an international relations perspective have not considered the political dimensions of the Islamic Revival systematically.¹ This omission reflects the under-theorization of ideational factors in many international relations theories. Building on the argument that a constitutive approach to ideational factors may offer a more fruitful social-theoretical basis for the consideration of political Islam than strictly causal and materialist approaches, the thesis proposes ideology as a conceptual framework for investigating the role that ideas of and about Islamism play in the domestic and international politics of Central Asia. Using this framework, the thesis reviews the emergence of political Islam in post-Soviet Central Asia at three levels – the role that Islam as ideology plays in motivating individuals, in contests over the legitimacy of state institutions, and modulating the support and approbation of other actors in the international system. It is argued that ideology offers a conceptual framework that may be better suited to incorporate the diverse political manifestations of Islam within a common analytical approach.

Thesis Overview

This chapter offers a preliminary sketch of political Islam and related concepts, and reviews the existing international relations literatures on Central Asia and Islam. While the international relations literature has been successful at identifying and describing the emergence of political Islam generally, if not in the Central Asian case, there have been few efforts to integrate these various phenomena into a single, consciously theoretical framework. It is argued that this gap in the international relations literature is related to a gap in international relations theory concerning the role of ideational factors.

This theoretical lacuna is further explored in Chapter 2. As constructivist and “post-positivist” theorists have contended, the dominance of materialist approaches in international relations theory has resulted in the propagation of a shallow account of the role that ideational factors like political Islam can play in international relations.² The focus on material factors to the detriment of ideational factors, in turn, has deeper roots in the scientific-hermeneutic debate in the social sciences, and reflects the fundamental assumptions about social phenomena that many theories of international relations have in common. Consequently, redressing this oversight requires that we do more than “add ideas and stir,” as has been attempted by some structural realist and neo-liberalist international relations theorists. Instead, it is argued that a constitutive orientation to social theory – one that bridges the rationalist and relationist positions in the scientific-hermeneutic debate and recognizes both causal and constitutive theories as part of the social scientific project – is necessary to “unbracket” ideational factors by integrating ideas and identities alongside interests in international relations theory.³

Building on this social-theoretical underpinning, it is argued in Chapter 3 that ideology, developed in the work of Karl Marx and Karl Mannheim, offers an appropriate conceptual framework for considering the various political manifestations of the Central Asian Islamic Revival in an international relations context. Ideology meets several requirements for such a “bridging” framework set out in Chapter 2. First, ideology accommodates the dialectic between the constitutive and instrumental aspects of ideas in social and political relations – allowing the reconciliation of “competing” visions of ideas as subordinate to, and constitutive of, material interests. Second, ideology reconciles the immanency and historicity of ideas, insofar as the potentialities of ideas can be traced to the nexus of their internal logic and the concrete social circumstances and historical narratives in which they are embedded. Third, because ideology draws on social theory, it provides two crucial connections: between theory in international relations and theory in the other social sciences, and between the individual, state, and systemic levels of analysis. In this way, ideology has the potential to better enable comparative work within international relations and connections between like studies across social scientific disciplines.

The thesis considers the Islamic Revival in post-Soviet Central Asia using the account of ideology developed in Chapter 3 in order to demonstrate that this approach offers one means of incorporating ideational factors in international relations analyses. Chapter 4 examines the manifestation of political Islam or Islamic ideology in Central Asia at three levels: first, at the individual level, in the employment of Islam to mobilize groups members during conflicts (Tajik civil war) and for political movements (Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and Hizb ut-Tahrir); second, at the state level, in the use of

Islam in the Central Asian political discourse on state authority (nationalism and legitimacy) and opposition (the deployment of Islam in the Andijan massacre); and third, at level of international politics, in the uses of Islam as a threat to regional and international security, especially since the beginning of the “War on Terror.”

Notwithstanding the apparent Islamic Revival in Central Asia, it is argued that Soviet religious and nationalities policies have reoriented the “economy of meaning” around Islam in Central Asia in ways that have influenced the emergence and direction of the Islamic Revival in the region. The break with Islamic traditionalism and the distinctive Central Asian confrontation with modernity that began with Russian colonisation and continued under Soviet rule simultaneously eroded the traditional institutional structures of Islam and limited the receptiveness of Central Asians to Islamist ideas and movements. At the same time, the emergence of Islamism as a regional security threat and as a global phenomenon have fostered serious efforts by the Central Asian republics to co-opt Islam as a source of legitimacy and to combat “Islamic extremism” internally and in the region.

The concluding chapter summarizes the argument made in the previous chapters, and argues that the application of ideology in the Central Asian context suggests the utility of ideology as a framework for connecting the levels of analysis of international politics and as a means of integrating observations at each level of analysis into a common conceptual framework. The thesis concludes with suggestions for potential applications of ideology as a conceptual framework in international relations.

Islam as Ideology

The return to religious observance and the acceptance of a fundamentalist viewpoint are not identical phenomena, but they do share a similar root. Analysts who speak of the spread of fundamentalism or of Islamism are referring both to social movements and to the adoption of ideas.⁴ Ideologies are not sketched upon blank slates, but contend and interact with existing narratives and ideas about political or social relations. This is especially true of ideologies that explicitly draw upon an existing body of ideas, concepts, and practices, or which claim continuity and identity with traditional knowledge or cultural customs. Logically, ideologies that utilize existing narratives within a group of people will enjoy a better chance of “success” or a greater likelihood of adoption if they resonate with or build upon these extant categories of understanding. At the same time, an ideology built upon a religion, in this case Islamism, is embedded in an existing “economy of meaning” that is the source of its discursive elements and the fount of its claims to legitimacy.⁵

It is fairly common to accept that Islamism refers to the ideologization of Islam – the explicit application of Islamic beliefs, principles, or practices to aspects of the political realm, including political institutions, political order, and political behaviour.⁶ In this view, “Islamism” and “political Islam” are not strictly interchangeable. The latter term conceivably includes both Islamism, which defines the public space in Islamic terms, as well the moderate stance of Muslims who accept the secularity of the public space as necessary or desirable (and the resultant reservation of religion to the private realm) but whose personal political actions and positions are guided by their religious precepts and principles.⁷

It should be noted that the term “Islamic fundamentalism” is eschewed here. This phrase has achieved usage beyond its utility as a descriptive term, not because it is not useful, but because it has been understood simultaneously as an omnibus concept and as a monolithic phenomenon.⁸ “Fundamentalism” was a term originally applied to American Protestants of the early twentieth century who believed in Biblical infallibility due to divine authorship (or at least divinely-inspired authorship) of Christian scriptures, and it was later broadened to include Biblical literalism.⁹ Numerous writers have deemed the term inappropriate on the basis of its Christian patrimony, although most have simultaneously acquiesced in its usage as a matter of convenience.¹⁰ The term has even entered Arabic, as a synonym for “bigot,” and Persian, where it is translated as “backward.”¹¹

The dual connotations of “fundamentalism” do have their uses, however. In the first sense, the return to foundations, the term cleaves closely to the varieties of Islamist thought broadly referred to as *Salafism*, which encourage Muslims to emulate the *Salaf* (the original Muslims, also called “predecessors” or “venerable forefathers”), and “to apply unchangeable religious *principles* to current religious *practice*.”¹² In the second sense, scriptural literalism, the meaning is more ambiguous since, as Reza Aslan observes, “all Muslims believe in the “literal” quality of the Quran – which is, after all, the direct speech of God.”¹³ Notwithstanding the universal acceptance by Muslims of the doctrine that the Quran is divinely revealed (*tanzil*), the literalism invoked by “fundamentalism” can be connected to a distinctive quality of interpretation. This consists in the denial of the allegorical or historical specificity of the text of the Quran, a claim that goes back to the long-standing debate in Muslim theology concerning the ontic

status of the Quran.¹⁴ In this sense, “fundamentalism is not only a political movement but is equally an intellectual one which provides philosophical principles that have evolved into a system of thought worthy of serious study.”¹⁵ Our object of study here is not the intellectual movement, but its political incarnation. In this sense, Islamic fundamentalism does not capture the political specificity of Islamism because fundamentalism is an intellectual current within Islam, while Islamism is an ideology that is connected to, but distinguishable from, that intellectual current. By this token, “Islamic radicalism” and “Islamic extremism” do not add much in the way of meaning, insofar as they are synonyms for one of the above terms. In some cases, they have been used to denote Islamists who condone or encourage violence. However, the adjectives “militant” or “violent” can certainly be used for this purpose.

Many authors have written of the linkages between modernity and Islamism, although the precise definition of modernity and the nature of this linkage are often somewhat murky. Indeed, there is a great deal to suggest that social and economic modernization, with the associated cultural discommodations, has contributed to the “psychological as well as physical displacement” of Muslims in post-traditional societies.¹⁶ The experiences of colonialism, military and political subjugation, economic infiltration, and social and cultural disruption, were deeply traumatic for the *umma*, physically, psychologically, and intellectually, and generated divergent responses among Muslims. Esposito identifies four variants: withdrawal, rejection (*jihad*), secularism and Westernization (imitation), and Islamic modernism (adaptation).¹⁷ These correspond closely to Samuel Huntington’s tripartite taxonomy of the possible responses to modernity: rejectionism (neither modernization nor Westernization), Kemalism (both

modernization and Westernization), and reformism (modernization, but not Westernization).¹⁸

Several rejectionist and revivalist movements bemoaning the “Muslim departure from true Islamic values,” and advocating the purification of Islam, appeared throughout the initial period of Islamic decline and European colonialism, but they achieved only limited and temporary successes.¹⁹ Indeed, under the European ascendancy of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries, rejectionism was never truly viable:

While resistance or confrontation initially proved attractive, emigration proved impractical for large numbers of people and, given the superior military strength of Europe, holy war was doomed to defeat. For many religious leaders, the alternative was simply to refuse to deal with their colonial masters, to shun their company, schools, and institutions.²⁰

By contrast, the “Kemalist” or secular modernist movement response only exacerbated the social and cultural dislocations inflicted by modernity, generally without providing any corresponding political or economic benefits.²¹ Secular modernism at the hands of indigenous rulers, in short, provided precious little to distinguish itself from colonialism. Together with the inability of rejectionism to provide an effective response to decline, modernity, and colonialism, this robbed Islamic modernism of much of its pragmatic appeal.

The marginalization of Islamic modernism and the return to revivalism as an intellectual movement in the twentieth century is related to the diminished prestige of Western social and political models following World War I, and to the transformation of European colonies in the Muslim world into independent states following World War II.²² The traditional influence of Islamic institutions in the political arrangements of these new states had been diminished by the colonial experience. As Antony Black writes, “from now on the political fortunes of Muslim states began to revive,” but “this

was initiated mainly not by religious leaders but by secular politicians.”²³ Within this context, a variety of political ideologies were advanced or adopted in support of the new states in accordance with local conditions and political structures. In the Arab world, the emergence of both pan-Arab and country-specific nationalisms militated against explicitly Islamic or Islamist ideologies that could compete with or undermine the secular authority of the state. At the same time, the intellectual and social currents of Islam remained a potent counterpoint to secular ideologies, particularly when the “failure of secular governments to deliver the promised economic goods” and the concurrent failure of these governments to achieve military success against Israel in the Six-Day War began to diminish the legitimacy of indigenous rulers and the national and other ideologies they professed to support.²⁴

Black points to the growing influence of Islamism in the politics of the Muslim world during the twentieth century through its dual role as a potential source of legitimacy and a potential wellspring of opposition.²⁵ The role of Islamist ideologies as a counterpoint to discredited secular authority may be especially pronounced where Islamist civil society groups or movements have been subject to repression by those authorities. Such repression has been seen to contribute to the radicalization of formerly moderate groups or their division into militant and moderate factions, as was the case with the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt under the Nasserite repression.²⁶ Political exclusion of particular groups or networks may foster greater social activism among Islamist groups, as in Egypt, where “state institutions were complemented or challenged by their Islamically oriented counterparts” in civil society during the rule of President Hosni Mubarak.²⁷ On a parallel track, extensive linkages between clergy and

government via “official” or state-sponsored mosques and *madrassas* can contribute to the delegitimation of official Islam and the shift of Islamic leadership to more vibrant and critical unofficial *ulama* and lay leaders.²⁸ In this context, Islamist groups are often able to exercise a form of hegemony over political discourse and expectations, as evidenced by the adoption of Islamist policies and symbolism by governments as a means of legitimation.²⁹ This strategy by governments is a double-edged sword, however, given the “fundamentalist” or Islamist understanding of Islam and its legal and political accoutrements. Token or half-measures born of political expediency or necessity are rendered unacceptable: to appeal to Islamic legitimacy is to be held to the Islamist ideal of legitimacy.³⁰

In short, modernization and Westernization have played an important role in the thought of many Muslim intellectuals, and global Islamic revivalism – in the form of fraternal, mutual-aid, and charitable organizations – has emerged as one kind of “coping strategy” that offers adherents “a welcome sense of meaning and security.”³¹ This is supported by the mainstream appeal of Islamist civil society groups, which have undertaken to provide social, economic, and educational services in addition to their more strictly religious activities.³² As a result, “a more pronounced Islamic orientation is now to be found among the middle and lower classes, educated and uneducated, professionals and workers, young and old, men, women, and children” in much of the Islamic world, including Egypt, Tunisia, Jordan, and Malaysia.³³ This resurgence of Islamic revivalism in the Muslim world, in terms of intellectual currents, social movements, and political discourse, is part of the global context confronting the newly independent Central Asian states in the post-Soviet period.

The Potential of the Islamic Revival in Central Asia

Once a vibrant part of the Islamic world, more than a century and a quarter of political subordination and cultural suppression under the Russian Tsars and their Bolshevik successors altered many of Central Asia's traditional cultural and religious practices, and forced those active practitioners of Islam who endured into surreptitious worship. In the period since the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the formal independence of the five former-Soviet Central Asian republics (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) in 1991, several observers have identified an Islamic "renaissance," "resurgence," or "revival" in post-Soviet Central Asia, with roots in Soviet times but beginning in earnest with independence.³⁴ The long history of Islam in the region and the historical role that Islam has played there as a wellspring of (or resource for) political resistance provide ample historical precedents for the emergence of Islam as a political phenomenon. Moreover, the proximity of Iran and Afghanistan, and the very different experiments in theocracy undertaken in those countries, has certainly encouraged outside interest in the prospects of fundamentalist Islam.

There have been efforts within the broader fields of Central Asian and religious studies to explore the Islamic revival. The extant literature frames this question in terms of three distinct perspectives, each of which addresses a different facet of the Islamic revival. The first points to the growth and emergence of Islamic fundamentalist movements such as the Islamic Renaissance Party in Tajikistan, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, and the transnational Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami (Party of Islamic Liberation), as evidence that the Islamic revival in Central Asia is developing in parallel with Islamist

movements in the rest of the world.³⁵ The second highlights the historically moderate character of Islam in Central Asia and its amalgamation with indigenous cultural traditions. In this view, Islam has been politically latent, or at least secondary to other “contending forces,” such as statism, ethnic nationalism, and tribalism.³⁶ A third perspective has cast the role of Islam instrumentally, portraying religiosity as a tool of political motivation, used, as communist ideology once was, by political elites in struggles over material and power resources.³⁷

As such, the region has much to suggest it as a case study in the growth and emergence of Islamism, and for key questions related to the role that Islam can play in international relations. Of particular interest are questions related to the use of Islam as a source of legitimacy for state and non-state actors, the role of Islam in motivating individuals for political purposes, the effect of growing Islamic religiosity on domestic political discourse, and the ability of political Islam to foster trans-border networks between Islamist groups.

As outlined above, students of religious and Central Asian studies provide excellent descriptions and analysis of many aspects of the Islamic Revival in Central Asia, and suggest the possible importance of Islam in Central Asian politics. However, while these perspectives parallel the approaches to Islam used in the international relations literature, they do not treat the resurgence of Islam as a unified phenomenon, and they do not typically address the Islamic Revival in Central Asia from a theoretical perspective.³⁸ As is discussed at greater length in Chapter 2, theory is essential if social science is to be differentiated from the collection of facts and the description of historical events. If the goal of social scientific inquiry is to build cumulative knowledge about

human affairs in a way that allows comparison and generalization, theory is important both because it guides the design and execution of inquiries into social phenomena, and because it allows analyses to proceed in a manner conducive to comparison and generalization. Moreover, if international relations as a discipline can offer any added value to the study of Central Asia, it is by approaching the region with a cognizance of broader developments in international affairs and with the capacity to link knowledge of the region with the areas of knowledge that are the concern of the discipline more broadly.

However, the relatively small international relations literature on the region has not explored the Islamic Revival in the region extensively. Broadly speaking, there are two streams in the international relations literature on Central Asia. The first of these takes a *realpolitik* approach to the region. In this context, interest in Central Asia is largely a matter of political geography, actuated by the interventions of global powers and the propinquity of regional powers. Central Asia is treated less as a story in itself than as the backdrop for other stories about the decline of Russian influence in the Near Abroad, the rise of China, the U.S. moment as the sole global “hyperpower,” and the strategic alchemy of energy politics. In consequence, the politics of the region itself have often been addressed only tangentially and at the systemic level, as they relate to the global politics of energy and to the “new Great Game” of geopolitics among Russia, China, the United States, and other actors.³⁹ This focus has been strengthened since 2001 by the role of Central Asia as a staging ground for the “War on Terror” being prosecuted in Afghanistan. The Afghan conflict has kept global attention to the region firmly on that country, with its post-Soviet neighbours implicated only insofar as they help or hinder

logistical efforts of the United States and its partners in the International Security Assistance Force, on the one hand, and of drug and weapons smugglers, on the other.⁴⁰

The second stream adopts a more explicitly theoretical approach to Central Asia.⁴¹ In the early 1990s, there was some interest in Central Asia from the perspective of regionalism.⁴² There have also been efforts to apply security complex theory in the Central Asian context. Islam does come up in these studies, albeit not as a central concern. For example, Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver address Central Asia in their study of regional security complex in the post-Soviet sphere around Russia, and identify the growing “strength and radicalism of Islamist movements” as a security concern at the domestic level for the Central Asian states.⁴³ These developments are “securitized” by Russia as both a threat to regional stability that has fostered “peacekeeping” in the near abroad, and as a possible source of material or moral support for Islamist and secessionist groups within the Russian Federation.⁴⁴ Taking a slightly different emphasis, Green uses security complex theory to examine Islam as one of five competing identities within Central Asia.⁴⁵ Rajan Menon and Hendrik Spruyt explore unit-level dynamics as they affect the application of neo-realist theory to Central Asia, and they discuss the potential for Islamic fundamentalism to arise as a factor in the domestic politics of Central Asian states, as well as the possibility for linkage to Islamic fundamentalist movements in Afghanistan and Xinjiang.⁴⁶ Afghanistan has also been the subject of some theoretically-oriented inquiries that may be of relevance to the Islamic Revival in Central Asia. For example, Seth Jones tests several theories of insurgency in the context of the recent conflict in Afghanistan, including Islamist ideology.⁴⁷

In broad terms, however, even where Islam is considered in international relations studies on Central Asia, students of international relations do not generally go beyond identifying the potential for Islam to affect the political or security dynamics in the region, without offering any theoretical understanding of how or why these linkages could arise or how the different facets of political Islam in the region could relate to one another. This apparent neglect of the Islamic Revival within the international relations literature on Central Asia is puzzling, and must be understood within the context of the broader international relations discourse on Islam.

The Problem of Islam in International Relations Theory

Islamism and political Islam have been topics of interest in the social sciences at least since Iran's Islamic Revolution in 1979.⁴⁸ This has been articulated in an expansive literature on various aspects of Islamic politics and in numerous area and comparative studies on Islamic countries.⁴⁹ Within the discipline of international relations, interest in Islamic politics has been narrower and more explicitly focussed on Islamic fundamentalism as it affects the traditional issues and interests of the field, especially security, conflict, and democratization. The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, as well as bombings in Madrid on March 11, 2004 and London on July 7, 2005, reinvigorated the public discourse on Islamism, and had a similar effect on the academic discourse as well. In the aftermath of the 9/11 attack there was a significant growth in the literature on Islamism and Islamic politics, although initially the larger part of this was written by non-academics, or at least for a non-academic audience.⁵⁰ The existence and growth of significant Muslim minorities in Europe – in 2005, Muslims

were estimated to comprise 20 million of 450 million European citizens – has also made political Islam a domestic concern for several European countries.⁵¹

Few studies have analysed Islam at the systemic level, but two are of particular note. Samuel Huntington, in his article and subsequent book on “the clash of civilizations,” which he believed to be reshaping world politics from a bipolar to a multipolar and multicivilizational world, considers Islam from a systemic standpoint. According to Huntington, civilizational affiliation is replacing ideological affiliation as a structural factor underlying patterns of amity and enmity in the international system, which he sees as increasingly divided along civilizational “fault-lines.”⁵² While Huntington’s thesis ostensibly places culture in a position of primacy, he cleaves closely to materialism:

[T]he sources of conflict between states and groups from different civilizations are, in large measure, those which have always generated conflict between groups: control of people, territory, wealth, resources, and relative power, that is the ability to impose one’s own values, culture, and institutions on another group as compared to that group’s ability to do that to you.”⁵³

Although Huntington states that “conflict between cultural groups ... may also involve cultural issues,” the examples he provides – the competing territorial claims on Kosovo and Jerusalem – do not suggest a distinction with a difference between conflicts over cultural and material interests. Rather, Huntington observes that material interests may be linked to cultural values in order to strengthen the case made by the groups involved in the conflict, since “cultural questions ... involve a yes or no, zero-sum choice.”⁵⁴

Huntington largely takes culture and religion at face value – while “everyone has multiple identities which may compete with or reinforce each other,” culture is not constitutive of interests.⁵⁵ Instead, Huntington treats culture as an *object trouvé*:

[T]he increased salience of cultural identity is in large part... the result of social-economic modernization at the individual level, where dislocation and alienation create the need for more meaningful identities, and at the societal level, where the enhanced capabilities and power of non-Western societies stimulate the revitalization of indigenous identities and culture.⁵⁶

In short, Huntington sees the politicization of culture as a response to system-level pressures. Within that system, interests are defined in material terms; cultural factors are secondary and largely non-adaptive, brought from background to foreground without altering the materialist picture.

Of note, Huntington casts Islamic civilization as particularly prone to conflict, in part because of “the Muslim concept of Islam as a way of life transcending and uniting religion and politics.”⁵⁷ Huntington famously remarked in his initial article on the clash of civilizations thesis that “Islam has bloody borders.”⁵⁸ He repeated this provocative statement in his book, citing additional evidence:

In the early 1990s Muslims were engaged in more intergroup violence than were non-Muslims, and two-thirds to three-quarters of intercivilizational wars were between Muslims and non-Muslims. Islam’s borders *are* bloody, and so are its innards.⁵⁹

Pointing to the comparative work of James Payne on militarism, Huntington further observed that “Muslim states also have had a high propensity to resort to violence in international crises, employing it to resolve 76 crises out of a total of 142 in which they were involved between 1928 and 1979,” a ratio of 53.5 per cent in contrast with 11.5 per cent in the case of the United Kingdom, 17.9 per cent for the United States, and 28.5 per cent for the Soviet Union.⁶⁰ Again, however, there is a disjunction between Huntington’s materialist understanding of the causes of conflict and his thesis that conflicts follow cultural faultlines. Even if the empirical data suggest that one culture is more prone to conflict than another, there is nothing in Huntington’s model to explain why this

correlation exists; if anything, culture is a confounding variable for materialist accounts of conflict.

Francis Fukuyama offers a second systemic assessment of Islam from an “idealist” perspective. Fukuyama identifies Islamic fundamentalism as one of the “authoritarian alternatives” – an “empire of resentment” – that could challenge the ascendancy of the liberal democratic order that has emerged from what he identifies as a Hegelian “Universal History.”⁶¹ He describes the emergence of Islamic fundamentalism as a response to the “failure of Muslim societies generally to maintain their dignity vis-à-vis the non-Muslim West.”⁶²

The Islamic Revival was... the nostalgic re-assertion of an older, purer set of values said to have existed in the distant past, that were neither the discredited “traditional values” of the recent past, nor the Western values that had been so poorly transplanted to the Middle East.⁶³

Fukuyama’s approach is more subtle than Huntington’s, in that he understands the Islamic Revival as a distinctively modern phenomenon. He addresses Islam as an ideational phenomenon, and offers a theoretical mechanism by which it would appeal to individuals – his notion of *thymos*, “the part of the soul that demands recognition.”⁶⁴ Fukuyama also poses a functional argument for the success of liberal democracy at the systemic level as a consequence of scientific and economic modernity, and for the global Islamic Revival as a consequence of the failure of that modernity, comparable to European fascism.⁶⁵ However, it should be noted that while Fukuyama’s measure of the success of modernity is institutional – the adoption of liberal and democratic institutions – Fukuyama locates his explanation of the failure of modernity in Islamic societies in cultural rather than material circumstances, arguing that “most of the Islamic world never assimilated these Western [technological] imports in a convincing way.”⁶⁶ This would

seem to imply that the technological and institutional underdevelopment of the Islamic world is the result of a culture incompatible with modernity and not of the political and institutional factors that affected the diffusion and acceptance of “the techniques and values of the West.”⁶⁷

Islam has also been the subject of empirical work in international relations. A significant part of the international relations discourse on Islam relates to the relative propensity of Muslim societies for internal and external violence.⁶⁸ For example, Monica Toft has identified a correlation between religious civil wars and Islam:

In 42 religious civil wars from 1940 to 2000, incumbent governments and rebels who identified with Islam were involved in 34 (81 percent), far more than those identifying with other religions, such as Christianity (21, or 50 percent) or Hinduism (7, or 16 percent).⁶⁹

Toft uses the theory of religious outbidding, drawn from the work of Jack Snyder, to argue that religion is used instrumentally by political elites to reinforce their legitimacy and reinforce the loyalty of religious domestic or extra-state constituencies.⁷⁰ Toft suggests that the relatively stronger correlation between Islam and religious civil wars may stem from a combination of geographical factors (proximity to Israel and to other Islamic states, petroleum reserves) and ideational factors (“jihad—a structural feature of Islam,” “church and state are much more likely to be fused”)⁷¹

Taking a similar approach, Assaf Moghadam examines the empirical relationship between suicide bombings and groups that adhere to a *salafist* ideology.⁷² Moghadam examines the elements of the *salafist* ideology, and he finds a significant correlation between *salafi* jihadist ideology and suicide attacks.⁷³ However, his analysis does not connect these factors. While Moghadam attributes a role to religious ideology in “help[ing] the suicide bomber justify his or her actions and to disengage morally from his

act and his victims,” the mechanism by which ideology might motivate or disinhibit individuals is deemed to be beyond the scope of the article.⁷⁴

This is not to say that the debate is one-sided. Studying a related phenomenon, albeit with a shorter and more recent sample (1980 to 2000), Indra de Soysa and Ragnhild Nordås conclude that countries with majority Muslim populations actually experience lower levels of political terror than countries with strong Catholic populations.⁷⁵ Some empirical work has also been undertaken, especially in the comparative field, exploring the putative relationship between Islam and democratic or authoritarian forms of government.⁷⁶

There are two principal, and related, objections to the existing international relations literature on Islam. The first is that students of international relations have not taken a sufficiently nuanced approach to the subject matter of Islam. For example, Bryan Turner, responding both to Huntington and to Fukuyama, observes that “western commentaries on fundamentalist Islam typically fail to consider the heterogeneity of contemporary Islamic belief.”⁷⁷ Similarly, many empirical studies adopt an implicit “culturalist” or “cultural essentialist” orientation that takes Islamic culture, and traditional cultures generally, as given, non-adaptive, or monolithic.⁷⁸ Of course, international relations scholarship is often criticized by subject matter experts from other fields for inadequate attention to detail.⁷⁹ This is not universally seen as a failing; for example, Katerina Dalacoura argues that the generalization and methodological rigour of the international relations discourse on Islam is a useful counterpoint to “exceptionalist” understandings of Islam sometimes found among specialists of the subject.⁸⁰ Complaints about selection bias in the questions being examined – related to the propensity of Islamic

societies for violence or authoritarianism, for example – may have more merit. However, insofar as these questions are relevant to the study of international relations, such complaints are, if not baseless, then certainly misplaced. Even if claims of shallowness are correct, they point to lapses of scholarship and/or of detailed knowledge, not to fundamental methodological problems.

The second, and more serious, criticism is that these analyses, while they provide empirical insights and point to likely connections between Islam and outcomes at different levels of analysis, do not offer (and in most cases do not attempt to offer) a theoretical description of these linkages. Put another way, the existing international relations discourse on Islam tells us that Islam is important, but it does not suggest why, and in this sense offers a close parallel to the treatment of the Islamic Revival in Central Asia in the specialist literature on the region. This theoretical lacuna brings into question the capacity of dominant approaches in international relations to address Islam as a unified phenomenon, and has broader implications for the method and objectives of inquiry in international relations. It is argued that this is related to the ongoing “third debate” between scientific and hermeneutic approaches in international relations theory – that is, between approaches that seek to explain political phenomena in causal terms, and those that seek to understand political events and actions in their proper social and historical context. The implications of this debate, and the argument for supplementing causal approaches with constitutive approaches which is used to support the use of ideology from an international relations perspective, will be discussed in the next chapter.

Conclusion

Although there is a growing interest in Islam among students of international relations, the Islamic Revival in Central Asia remains relatively unexplored within the discipline, which has focussed instead on the geopolitics of energy and competition for influence among global and regional powers. In the context of the international relations discourse on Islam, there is clear case to be made for the study of the Islamic Revival in the region. However, as the literature review above suggests, while students of international relations have undertaken valuable empirical analyses of political Islam, in particular by exploring the connections between Islam and various political phenomena, these studies commonly do not offer a satisfying explanation of the correlations they find – that is, the accounts they offer find correlations between certain political outcomes and Islam, but locate their explanations in other factors. Conversely, systemic approaches to Islam do not offer convincing accounts of how the manifestations of political Islam relate to one another. Together, these oversights reflect an under-theorization of political Islam that may be seen to challenge the capacity of the discipline to bring “added value” to the study of the Islamic Revival in post-Soviet Central Asia by supplementing the work of subject matter specialists with a distinctively “international relations” contribution. In order to develop a more comprehensive conceptual approach to the study of political Islam in Central Asia from an international relations perspective, one that can connect empirical observations to the phenomenon they purport to investigate, it is necessary to determine why existing theories do not support such an approach. Based on this analysis, it is possible to sketch the requirements for such frameworks to support a more coherent

contribution to social scientific knowledge of Islamic politics, whether in Central Asia or elsewhere.

Notes

¹ For the purposes of this thesis, “Central Asia” refers only to the five post-Soviet republics: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. While there are clear linkages between this region and adjacent areas – specifically Xinjiang in China, Afghanistan, predominantly Muslim areas of the Russian Federation, and even Iran and Turkey – it is suggested in Chapter 4 that the specific evolution of Islam in the five Central Asian republics is distinctive. Of course, the region can be further subdivided as well – for example, northern and southern Kazakhstan can be distinguished geographically, historically, and socially. It should be noted that the five post-Soviet Central Asian republics are treated as a region in several of the sources used in this thesis. For example: Mehrdad Haghayeghi, *Islam and Politics in Central Asia* (New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press, 1995); Adeb Khalid, *Islam After Communism: Religion and Politics in Central Asia* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007); Ahmed Rashid, *The Resurgence of Central Asia: Islam or Nationalism?* (London, UK: Zed Books, 1994); Oliver Roy, *The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2000).

² Discussed further in Chapter 2. For a general account and a plea for deeper understandings of ideational factors, see: Georg Sørensen, “The Case for Combining Material Forces and Ideas in the Study of IR,” *European Journal of International Relations* 14, no. 1 (2008): 5-32. For “materialist” approaches see: Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1979). For the constructivist counterpoints see: Alexander Wendt, *The Social Theory of International Relations* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Nicholas Onuf, *World of Our Making* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1989).

³ While this is closely related to the “constructivist” school of international relations theory, the latter is taken to encompass substantive theories within international relations, while constitutivism is used to denote an approach to social scientific inquiry that seeks to understand social phenomena within the context of the social whole. See Chapter 2.

⁴ For example, see Robert Bruce Ware, Enver Kisriev, Werner J. Patzelt, and Ute Roericht, “Political Islam in Dagestan,” *Europe-Asia Studies*, 55:2 (2003), 287–302.

⁵ The distinction between Islamism and Islamicism is not made here, though it has been attempted elsewhere. Abdelwahab Meddeb, *The Malady of Islam*, Pierre Joris and Ann Reid, tr. (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2003), 226 n.6.

⁶ Barbara Allen Roberson, “Islamic fundamentalism,” in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics*, ed. Iain McLean, 251-2 (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1996), 251-2. For a comprehensive overview of Islamic political thought, see: Antony Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought: From the Prophet to the Present* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2001).

⁷ Put another way, Islamism “is ordered by a concept and intends to submit reality to its own a priori vision.” Abdelwahab Meddeb, *The Malady of Islam*, Pierre Joris and Ann Reid, tr. (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2003), 197.

⁸ For an alternative view, see John L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality*, 3rd ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999), 5-6.

⁹ David L. Edwards, “Fundamentalism,” in *The Harper Dictionary of Modern Thought (Revised Edition)*, ed. Alan Bullock, Oliver Stallybrass, and Stephen Trombley, (New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988), 338.

¹⁰ Reza Aslan, *No god but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam* (New York, NY: Random House, 2006), 241-2.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 242.

¹² Meddeb, *Malady*, 226 n.6; Mark Huband, *Warriors of the Prophet: The Struggle for Islam* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999), 79-80. Spellings of Arabic words and phrases will be based upon the system used in the *Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, which omits diacritical markings for ease of reading, excepting in direct quotations from source material. In the latter, diacritical markings will be preserved as far as possible.

¹³ Aslan, *No god but God*, 241-2.

¹⁴ A fundamental issue of Islamic theology. In the “Rationalist” view, God’s speech is a reflection of God, and the Quran is therefore His creation, revealed to man at a particular time and in a particular place. This is in sharp contrast to the “Traditionalist” claim that, given the unity of God (*tawhid*), God and his speech must one, and therefore the Quran is not created but is coeternal with God. *Ibid.*, 140-2.

¹⁵ Ahmad S. Moussalli, *Radical Islamic Fundamentalism: The Ideological and Political Discourse of Sayyid Qutb* (Beirut, Lebanon: American University of Beirut, 1992), 9.

¹⁶ Esposito, *Threat*, 14.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 50-1.

¹⁸ Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York, NY: Touchstone, 1997), 72-8. By this view, “withdrawal” is simply passive rejectionism.

¹⁹ For instance, the Mahdi in Sudan, the Sanusi in Libya, and the Wahabis in Arabia all hailed from this period, as did movements in Bengal, India, Indonesia, and Nigeria. Esposito, *Threat*, 47-8.

²⁰ Esposito, *Threat*, 51.

²¹ Tim Luke, “On 9.11.01,” *Telos* 120 (Summer 2001): 129-142, 131.

²² Black, *History of Islamic Political Thought*, 308.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 309.

²⁶ Esposito, *Threat*, 272.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 100.

²⁸ Here again Esposito discusses the Egyptian example: Esposito, *Threat*, 101-5.

²⁹ Fatima Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, tr. Mary Jo Lakeland (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1993), 53-4; Esposito, *Threat*, 10.

³⁰ Nissim Rejwan, *The Many Faces of Islam: Perspectives on a Resurgent Civilization* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2000), 2; Esposito, *Threat*, 94-5.

³¹ Esposito, *Threat*, 13-4.

³² *Ibid.*, 21.

³³ *Ibid.*, 21.

³⁴ For example: Richard B. Dobson, "Islam in Central Asia: Findings from National Surveys," *Central Asia Monitor*, 2 (1994), 17-22; Rashid, *Resurgence*; Haghayeghi, *Islam and Politics*; Dilip Hiro, *Between Marx and Muhammad: The Changing Face of Central Asia* (London, UK: HarperCollinsPublishers, 1995).

³⁵ See for example: Alima Bissenova, "Central Asian Encounters in the Middle East: Nationalism, Islam and Postcoloniality in Al-Azhar," *Religion, State & Society* 33, no. 3 (Sep. 2005): 253-63; Kathleen Collins, "Ideas, Networks, and Islamist Movements: Evidence from Central Asia and the Caucasus," *World Politics* 60 (Oct. 2007): 64-96; Ahmed Rashid, *Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002).

³⁶ Daniyar Ashymov, "The Religious Faith of the Kyrgyz," *Religion, State & Society* 31, no. 2 (2003): 133-8; Adeeb Khalid, "A Secular Islam: Nation, State, and Religion in Uzbekistan," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 35 (2003): 573-98; Haghayeghi, *Islam and Politics in Central Asia*, 207-211.

³⁷ See for example: Shirin Akiner, "The Politicisation of Islam in Postsoviet Central Asia," *Religion, State & Society* 31, no. 2 (2003): 97-122; Iver B. Neumann and Sergei Solodovnik, "The Case of Tajikistan," in *Peacekeeping and the Role of Russia in Eurasia*, ed. Lena Jonson and Clive Archer, 83-101 (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), 86-8; Sébastien Peyrouse, "Islam in Central Asia: National Specificities and Postsoviet Globalization," *Religion, State & Society* 35, no. 3 (Sep. 2007): 245-60; Russell Zanca, "Believing in God at Your Own Risk: Religion and Terrorisms in Uzbekistan," *Religion, State & Society* 33, no. 1 (Mar. 2005): 71-82.

³⁸ There are exceptions: Emmanuel Karagiannis, "Political Islam and Social Movement Theory: The Case of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Kyrgyzstan," *Religion, State & Society* 33, no. 2 (Jun. 2005): 137-49.

³⁹ See for example: Roy Allison, "The Military and Political Security Landscape in Russia and the South," in *Russia, the Caucasus and Central Asia: The 21st Century Security Environment*, ed. Rajan Menon, Yuri E. Fedorov, and Ghia Nodia, 27-60 (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1999); Ruth Deyermond, "Matrioshka Hegemony? Multi-levelled hegemonic competition and security in post-Soviet Central Asia," *Review of International Studies* 35 (2009): 151-173; Rajan Menon, "In the Shadow of the Bear: Security in Post-Soviet Central Asia," *International Security*, 20, no. 1 (Summer 1995): 149-181; The Royal Institute of International Affairs, *The New States of Central Asia and Their Neighbours*, Peter Ferdinand, ed. (New York, NY: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1994); Irina D. Zviagelskaya, "Central Asia and Transcaucasia: New Geopolitics," in *Central Asia and Transcaucasia: Ethnicity and Conflict*, Vitaly V. Naumkin, ed. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994), 127-156.

⁴⁰ Stephen J. Blank "After Two Wars: Reflections on the American Strategic Revolution in Central Asia" (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, July 2005), available online: <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=614>.

⁴¹ While there are clear affinities between the two streams of work on Central Asia in international relations, the second stream is distinguished not by particular topical emphases or conclusions, but by the explicit rather than implicit application of theoretical frameworks.

⁴² Stephen Page, "Central Asia's Future: A Region or Reintegration with Russia?" in *Coming Together or Falling Apart? Regionalism in the Former Soviet Union*, ed. S. Neil MacFarlane, 137-55 (Kingston, ON: Queen's University Centre for International Relations, 1996).

⁴³ See Chapter 13, "The post-Soviet space: a regional security complex around Russia," in Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 403-4.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 409. Buzan and Wæver characterize Central Asia as "a region of both weak states and weak powers" where "interaction capacity is low, and the ability of states to engage in classical state-to-state rivalry is limited." (*idem*, 424.) Nonetheless, security problems in Central Asia are predominantly transnational and the region is "shot through with geopolitical manoeuvring to a degree unseen at the

present stage in any other part of the world.” (idem, 414, 425.) Consequently, the precise dimensions of the “Central Asian security complex” are seen to be fluid given the predominance of Russia and the fluidity of connections between post-Soviet Central Asia and Xinjiang, Afghanistan and Pakistan, the Caucasus and Turkey, as well as the Middle East and Iran. (idem, 423.)

⁴⁵ Andrew Brian Green, “Is There a Central Asian Security Complex? An Application of Security Complex Theory and Securitization to Problems Relating to Identity in Central Asia.” M.A. Thesis (Kingston, ON: Queen’s University, 2000).

⁴⁶ Rajan Menon and Hendrik Spruyt, “The limits of neorealism: understanding security in Central Asia,” *Review of International Studies* 25 (1999): 87-105.

⁴⁷ Among the “theories” tested is Islamist ideology. The “ideology of Jihad” is considered in relationship to insurgent groups that profess a religio-ideological aim and as a factor in mobilizing international support and resources. Seth G. Jones, “The Rise of Afghanistan’s Insurgency: State Failure and Jihad,” *International Security* 32, no. 4 (Spring 2008): 7-40.

⁴⁸ Notably, this included several efforts to explore the influence of Islamist doctrine on the political structures and policies of the post-revolutionary Iran. For example, Khomeini and his supporters instituted their “Islamic government,” with ultimate political power residing in the leading *faqih* (Shia theologian). Abbas Kelidar, “Ayatollah Khomeini’s Concept of Islamic Government,” in *Islam and Power*, ed. Alexander S. Cudsi and Ali E. Hillal Dessouki (London, UK: Croom Helm Ltd., 1981), 75-92, 88.

⁴⁹ For example: Ali R. Abootalebi, “Islam, Islamists, and Democracy,” *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 3 (Mar. 1999); John L. Esposito and John O. Voll, *Islam and Democracy* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1996); Elie Kedourie, *Democracy and Arab Political Culture* (London, UK: Frank Cass, 1994); Daniel Pipes, *In the Path of God: Islam and Political Power* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1983); Ghassan Salamé, ed., *Democracy without Democrats? The Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World* (London, UK: I.B. Tauris, 1994).

⁵⁰ Daniel L. Byman, “Al-Qaeda As An Adversary: Do We Understand Our Enemy?” *World Politics* 56 (October 2003): 139–63, 141. Byman’s article reviews several works on al-Qaida and Islamic fundamentalism generally: Anonymous [Michael F. Scheuer], *Through Our Enemies’ Eyes: Osama Bin Laden, Radical Islam, and the Future of America* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey’s, 2002); Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, *The Age of Sacred Terror* (New York, NY: Random House, 2002); Peter L. Berger, *Holy War, Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Osama Bin Laden* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2002); Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2002); Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*, tr. Anthony F. Roberts (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002). See also: Malise Ruthven, *A Fury for God: The Islamist Attack on America* (London, UK: Granta Books, 2004).

⁵¹ Esther Pan, “Europe: Integrating Islam,” Council on Foreign Relations, July 13, 2005 (available online: <http://www.cfr.org/publication/8252/europe.html>). On the European response to terrorist attacks and the effect this has had on Muslim communities in Europe, see: Frédéric Volpi, “Constructing the ‘Ummah’ in European Security: Between Exit, Voice and Loyalty,” *Government and Opposition* 42, no. 3 (2007): 451-70.

⁵² Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations*, 207-8.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 129-30.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 128.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 129. Fox and Sandler, among others, are critical of Huntington's definition of civilization, which conflates ethnicity, culture, and religion as elements of civilizational identities. They argue that a more nuanced disaggregation of these factors is necessary to create testable propositions, and they offer an empirical study of ethnic conflicts that undermines the accuracy of Huntington's civilizational thesis. Jonathan Fox and Shmuel Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 115-8, 125-33.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 210. For a critical but fair review of Huntington's understanding of Islam see: Glenn E. Perry, "Huntington and His Critics: The West and Islam," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 24, no. 1 (Winter 2002): 31-48.

⁵⁸ Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72 (Summer 1993): 22-49, 33.

⁵⁹ Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations*, 257-8.

⁶⁰ Only China came in higher than the average for Muslim states, using violence in 76.9 per cent of crises. Ibid., 258. Huntington cites James L. Payne, *Why Nations Arm* (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1989).

⁶¹ The other "authoritarian alternative" identified by Fukuyama is a variety of "Asian authoritarianism," elements of which he sees in Japan and Singapore. (Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: The Free Press, 1992), 235, 240-1) It should be noted that Fukuyama refers not to *material* challenges to Western civilization by competitor civilizations as Huntington does, but to *cultural* challenges to the global advance of liberal democracy that has been the outcome of the "march of Universal History." (idem, 233-4.) Like previous challengers – communism and extreme nationalism – these new challengers cannot compete with the success of modernity in advancing "peace and prosperity." (idem, 127-8.) The distinction between the Islamic and Asian authoritarianisms is that the former has emerged as a cultural reaction to persistent economic and political failure while the latter is born from economic success. Fukuyama writes that "until the advent of oil wealth in the 1960s and 70s, no Islamic society was able to challenge the West militarily or economically." (idem, 236.) By contrast, he avers, "if Asians become convinced that their success was due more to their own than to borrowed cultures ... then a systematic illiberal and non-democratic alternative combining technocratic economic rationalism with paternalistic authoritarianism may gain ground in the Far East." (idem, 243.) Insofar as the advance of liberal democracy is correlated with the capacity of modernity to advance peace and prosperity, it is the prospect of a successful Asian authoritarianism that presents the more significant challenge.

⁶² Ibid., 236.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid., xxiii.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 236-7. Fukuyama reinforced this point following the 9/11 terrorist attacks: Francis Fukuyama, "History Is Still Going Our Way : Radical Islam can't beat democracy and capitalism. We're still at the end of history," *The Guardian* (Oct. 11, 2001).

⁶⁶ Fukuyama, *The End of History*, 236.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 237.

⁶⁸ See for example: Assaf Moghadam, "Motives for Martyrdom: Al-Qaida, Salafi Jihad, and the Spread of Suicide Attacks," *International Security* 33, no. 3 (Winter 2008/09): 46-78; Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000); Monica Duffy Toft, "Getting Religion? The Puzzling Case of Islam and Civil War," *International Security* 31, no. 4 (Spring 2007): 97-131.

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- ⁶⁹ Toft, "Getting Religion?" 97.
- ⁷⁰ Ibid., 128-9.
- ⁷¹ Ibid., 97, 128-9.
- ⁷² Moghadam, "Motives for Martyrdom."
- ⁷³ Ibid., 59-62, 70.
- ⁷⁴ Ibid., 76.
- ⁷⁵ De Soysa and Nordås find that "Catholic dominance predicts higher levels of repression, a result that is statistically highly significant. Muslim dominance had no discernible effect on higher repression relative to Catholics and others." Significantly, the authors find that "oil export dependence, one of the key control variables, predicts higher levels of repression, consistent with various theories of the 'resource curse.'" Indra de Soysa and Ragnhild Nordås, "Islam's Bloody Innards? Religion and Political Terror, 1980-2000," *International Studies Quarterly* 51 (2007): 927-943, 936. See also: Fares al-Braizat, "Muslims and Democracy: An Empirical Critique of Fukuyama's Culturalist Approach," *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 43 (2002): 269-99.
- ⁷⁶ M. Steven Fish, "Islam and Authoritarianism," *World Politics* 55 (Oct. 2002): 4-37; Manus I. Midlarsky, "Democracy and Islam: Implications for Civilizational Conflict and the Democratic Peace," *International Studies Quarterly* 42 (1998): 485-511.
- ⁷⁷ Bryan S. Turner, "Sovereignty and Emergency: Political Theology, Islam and American Conservatism," *Theory, Culture & Society* 19, no. 4 (2002): 103-19, 112.
- ⁷⁸ Al-Braizat, "Muslims and Democracy," 270.
- ⁷⁹ Teti notes that this may be related to divergent views of the scientific-hermeneutic debate. Andrea Teti, "Bridging the Gap: IR, Middle East Studies and the Disciplinary Politics of the Area Studies Controversy," *European Journal of International Relations* 13, no. 1 (2007): 117-45, 119-20.
- ⁸⁰ Katerina Dalacoura, "Unexceptional Politics? The Impact of Islam on International Relations," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 29, no. 3 (2000): 879-87, 886-7.

CHAPTER 2:
IDEATIONAL APPROACHES
IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY

Men are constantly engaged in an, on the whole highly successful, effort to adjust their ideas to circumstances and also in an effort, very much less successful, to adjust circumstances to their ideas.

H.C. Allen, *Sixteenth-Century Political Thought*¹

Introduction

While the importance of political Islam has been recognized in the international relations discourse, this recognition has not generally been articulated in a theoretically rigorous fashion. In the previous chapter, it was argued that the limitations of the international relations discourse on political Islam are related to difficulties with the theoretical approaches used. In order to develop a theoretical approach that addresses the manifestations of political Islam as a unified phenomenon, this chapter reviews three possible reasons for the under-theorization Islam in the international relations discourse: marginalization of the Islamic world from global politics, the secular affinities of international relations as a discipline, and the treatment of ideational factors in international relations theory. Although each factor has contributed to the under-theorization of Islam (and the latter two to the under-investigation of religion), inadequate integration of ideational factors in major international relations theories is the most significant of the three concerns. The debate on ideational factors is located, in turn, in the “third debate” that has emerged in international relations between positivist

and post-positivist theorists. Although this debate has been framed in terms of divergent epistemological assumptions, this is based on a contestable dichotomy between “explaining” and “understanding” as objectives of social inquiry. It is argued that the problem of political Islam, insofar as it is a question of the connection between ideational and social factors, may be more conducive to constitutive, rather than strictly causal, approaches.

Three Accounts of the Under-theorization of Islam in International Relations

To address the implications of Islam in post-Soviet Central Asia, we need to understand the reasons for the under-theorization of Islam in international relations. Three accounts of this omission are discussed here, with each suggesting a slightly different *problematique* and response. The first account identifies the problem as one of empirical focus, arguing that the Islamic world, for a variety of reasons, has not been high on the research agenda in international relations, and that there has been correspondingly little demand for theories that address Islam in the discipline. The second account sees the problem as one of selection bias among students of international relations, and argues that religious phenomenon have received little attention due to the strong secular tendency within international relations and other social scientific disciplines. The third account locates the problem in theoretical approaches to international relations that do not offer a sufficient account of ideational factors. While each of these has likely contributed to the under-theorization of Islam in international relations, the third account subsumes elements of the other two accounts, and also suggests an opening for the treatment of ideologies in international relations theory in the context of the present study.

1) *Empirical Oversight*

The Islamic world has, over time and for various reasons, found itself outside of the conventional research programme for international relations. The origins and methods of international relations have conspired to exclude the Islamic world from consideration for much of the history of the discipline. Both the precursors to international relations as a discipline – international law, and Western history and political philosophy – and the “Westphalian” state system originated in Europe and in the Eurocentric world order. As much as the Islamic world intruded upon the European order through the centuries-long conflict between Christendom and Islam, it was not traditionally considered a part of that order.² Hedley Bull refers to the existence of an “external schism of Western international society and Islam,” a sense of separateness that was mutual, as exemplified by the Islamic division of the world into *Dar-Al-Islam* and *Dar-Al-Harb*.³ Martin Wight suggests the reason for this mutual incomprehension is rooted in competing worldviews of Europe and the Islamic world: “Christendom or Western civilization was the only civilization, except for Islam, to formulate these universalist claims and then attempt to give them political expression.”⁴

The exteriority of the Islamic world has continued, in a different sense, in modern international relations. Although the state system has been extended to encompass the whole of the populated globe, there has been a strong focus on states generally, and on major powers specifically, within international relations as a discipline. From the end of World War I through the end of World War II, almost the whole of the Muslim world was under European administration in one form or another, with only a few places like Afghanistan and Arabia – “difficult of access and offering no attraction” – remaining

under independent Muslim rule.⁵ Even as decolonization proceeded and the number of independent “Muslim” states grew, this assignation of secondary importance did not change. Islamic societies were not at the centre of the bipolar conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union that preoccupied many international relations specialists, especially in the geopolitical and strategic studies subfields, during the period beginning in the 1960s when “theory” became a serious consideration for the discipline. When Muslim states were implicated, it was generally as a regional theatre in a global conflict.⁶ In short, until recently, countries in the Muslim world did not have a great effect on global politics.

This is not to say that *parts* of the Islamic world have not received significant attention within the international relations discourse. The importance of oil as a global commodity and the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict have both contributed to an interest in the Middle East among students and practitioners of international relations alike. However, much of this work could and did unfold within the statist and materialist paradigms of international relations.⁷ From another perspective, post-colonial Muslim states were certainly addressed in the context of dependency and world systems theory beginning in the 1970s.⁸ Again however, these are theories of political economy, and have not generally concerned themselves with the political implications of religion or other ideational factors. More subtly, both dependency and world-systems theories concern themselves with developments at the systemic level, and in this they share much with neo-realists, in that, whatever their other differences, analysts of both schools locate their explanations in the structures of the international system and “bracket” other factors that would have greater influence at the individual or state levels.⁹ There are some

examples of inquiries into ideational forces in parts of the Islamic world; however, these are focussed on the Middle East and Arab nationalism and touch on Islam only tangentially.¹⁰ In short, the international relations discipline has concerned itself with states in the Muslim world, but it has not devoted much attention to Muslim states *qua* Islam.

2) *Secular Selection Bias*

Some analysts have suggested that “secularism” among students of international relations is a factor in structuring the research agenda in the discipline. By this account, the “secular” worldview that undergirds international relations and the social sciences more broadly militates against the consideration of religion within the dominant approaches to the field. There is some support for the view that the social sciences come from a secular tradition. Eva Bellin observes that early social scientific work was characterized by a “[belief] that religion was a premodern relic, destined to fade with the advance of industrialization, urbanization, bureaucratization, and rationalization.”¹¹ Consequently, the expectation that secularization is concomitant with modernity has diminished the attention paid to religion in the social sciences. Similarly, Daniel Philpott calls international relations “secularized,” and writes that “a survey of articles in four leading international relations journals over the period 1980–99 finds that only six or so out of a total of about sixteen hundred featured religion as an important influence.”¹²

There has been some recent work on religion in international politics, in part due to the perception that religious factors are of increasing salience in international relations. For example, Scott Thomas argues that “international society” in its modern, post-

Westphalian conception, has been deliberately secular and pluralist, at least within the dominant account of international society in international relations:

Through the principles of the Westphalian settlement, state sovereignty, ‘*cujus regio, ejus religio*’, and the balance of power, the ability to accommodate religious and cultural pluralism was built into the very framework of international society.¹³

Due to the “global resurgence of religion” however, “international society is becoming a genuinely multicultural international society for the very first time.”¹⁴ This has been reflected in a growing number of studies that address religion in an international relations context.¹⁵ For example, Carsten Laustsen and Ole Wæver examine the interaction of religion and securitization, and find that “faith (religion) is a particularly strong referent object and therefore easily securitized, because it is *already existential*.”¹⁶ Taking a broader approach, Andreas Hasenclever and Volker Rittberger examine three theories of religion – primordialism, instrumentalism, and constructivism – in the context of political conflict, and attempt to translate the insights of these positions into strategies for conflict de-escalation.¹⁷

Jonathan Fox and Shmuel Sandler offer perhaps the most thoroughgoing attempt to consider religion from an international relations perspective. Fox and Sandler provide a comprehensive review of the available literature on religion and politics as it relates to international relations, and examine the relationship between religion and legitimacy, local religious conflicts, and transnational religious phenomena. Based on this work, they build a strong case for the importance of religion in international politics. Fox and Sandler also provide an excellent framework for considering the implications of religion in international relations and argue for the integration of religion into existing international relations theories.¹⁸ While they do not venture their own theory of religion

in international relations, their intent is to make the case for the importance of religion for international relations and to encourage others to take religion into account in their empirical and theoretical work.

Apart from these bright points, there is a decidedly secular tendency in the field of international relations, and this has contributed to the relative obscurity of religion in the international relations discourse. This inattentiveness may be related to the focus on the state noted above. There are few avowedly theocratic states, and religion, by and large, is seen as a sub-national phenomenon, operating at the unit or individual levels of analysis. While this may be seen as justifying the focus on secular factors, religion is not alone as an under-studied phenomenon; as Fox and Sandler observe, “until recently nationalism and ethnicity were, also like religion, ignored by international relations theory.”¹⁹ This suggests that roots of the neglect of religion are deeper than secular bias, and may reflect a more fundamental difficulty in addressing ideational factors.

3) Ideational Deficit in International Relations Theory

The third factor in the under-theorization of Islam in international relations (and the factor most relevant to the approach of this thesis) is that the dominant theoretical approaches to international relations have not generally incorporated ideational factors in a fashion that could offer a greater understanding of the role of Islam and other religions in international relations. The problem is not so much that ideas are not considered. Ideational factors do appear in some form in all of the major approaches to international relations. However, ideas are generally comprehended as being beyond the ambit of scientific approaches to social inquiry. Many social scientists have sought to emulate the

causal theories believed to be the hallmark of the natural sciences, and for this reason have sought to embed their explanations in “objective” and “observable” facts.

This is a crucial point if we are to bring religious factors like Islam into the study of international relations. For instance, in order for religious belief to be used instrumentally or as a source of “motivational power,” the targeted person or group must be “motivated” by their beliefs. This, in turn, requires an account of the role religion plays in structuring and stimulating individual understandings of their social environment. Similarly, an account that points to Islam as a means of “legitimizing” a political act or actor must provide some account of why Islam can serve this purpose, just as theories of “religious outbidding” must offer an assessment of how intersubjective, ideational factors can change the dynamic of a social conflict. In order to define these challenges, it is important to understand why ideas have been left out of the theoretical picture.

Approaches to Ideas in International Relations Theory

The marginalization of ideational factors in international relations theory occurred progressively with the development of the discipline through the first two of its so-called “great debates.”²⁰ Legalistic and moralistic approaches, focussing on diplomatic history and international law, dominated inquiry into international relations prior to the twentieth century.²¹ The commitment to “realism,” understood in its broadest sense as the effort to see international relations as they really are and not as we would like them to be, was the legacy of the first debate, between realists and “utopians” or idealists during the inter-war period. Although this account has been characterized as being more myth than history,

the dominant realist orientation of the discipline has limited the influence of juridico-normative approaches to international relations.²²

This shift away from normative approaches did not entail a strictly “materialist” understanding of international relations, but rather the reconception of the way in which ideational factors affect international relations. Classical realists did not claim that ideas were unimportant to the understanding of international relations, but rather argued that certain ideas corresponded more closely with the reality of the international system than others. Hans Morgenthau cautions students of international relations to “avoid the... popular fallacy of equating the foreign policies of a statesman with his philosophic or political sympathies, and of deducing the former from the latter.”²³ At the same time, he offers a dualistic assessment of the “ideological element in international politics,” deploying a Marxian understanding of ideology as deception, and even self-deception, through justification and rationalization concerning the nature of politics, while acknowledging the role that ideas play in motivating political actors.²⁴

[W]hile all politics is necessarily pursuit of power, ideologies render involvement in that contest for power psychologically and morally acceptable to the actors and their audience. These legal and ethical principles and biological necessities fulfill a dual function in the sphere of international politics. They are either the ultimate goals of political action... – that is, those ultimate objectives for the realization of which political power is sought – or they are pretexts and false fronts behind which the element of power inherent in all politics, is concealed. These principles and necessities may fulfill one or the other function, or they may fulfill them both at the same time.²⁵

More importantly, Morgenthau’s key methodological assumption, “that statesmen think and act in terms of interest defined as power,” is expressed in ideational terms.²⁶ Ideas matter in international relations because “bad” ideas, which is to say, ideas of the “good,” produce bad results. The measure of politics is performative rather than moral, since “good motives give assurance against deliberately bad policies [but] they do not

guarantee the moral goodness and political success of the policies they inspire.”²⁷ In short, the line that classical realism straddles, between description and prescription, is defined ideationally, because it is assumed that ideas affect the processes and outcomes of foreign policies.

Ideas also remained important in international society approaches, associated with the “English School” and exemplified by the work of Martin Wight and Hedley Bull. While not rejecting the insights of realism concerning the importance of power and self-help in an anarchical system (the “English School” is best characterized as a holistic approach to international relations) international society approaches focus on the traditional concerns of the field in respect of international law and problems of order.²⁸ In particular, these approaches explore the “society of states,” and the role of legal principles, shared norms, and values in constructing the framework, expectations, and interactions that define this society.²⁹

This traditionalist approach to the study of foreign policy and international relations, and the importance of ideas in the study of these phenomena, was challenged in the “second debate.”³⁰ The social scientific approach, sometimes referred to as the “behaviouralist” approach, sought to replace the humanistic and historical methodology that was shared by classical liberals or “utopians” and realists alike with a more rigorous or “scientific” methodology.³¹ The social scientific movement had a decisive effect on the treatment of ideational factors in subsequent international relations theory, and this has been reflected in both the methods and research agenda of the discipline.³²

This is seen first in a shift of perspective and purpose, away from interiority or empathetic approaches – clear in the work of classical theorists such as Morgenthau and

the English School – and toward exteriority through the assessment of political behaviour and modelling approaches.³³ In contrast with methods that seek insight into specific instances of history and the actions of statesmen, the social scientific approach is concerned with the study of political behaviour, that is, with the external, observable activities, and not with their meanings. The use of quantitative methods is preferred on the grounds that these offer greater precision and improved capacity for comparability, and therefore greater possibilities for identifying and testing regularities or laws.³⁴ Insofar as ideational factors are part of the inner state of the subject, they cannot be observed, and consequently they cannot be feasibly or fruitfully studied. As Krebs and Jackson suggest, it is wise, in the social sciences, to “avoid centering causal accounts on unanswerable questions about actors’ true motives.”³⁵ Second, the search for laws and generalizations influenced the research agenda of international relations by moving the focus away from the study of foreign policy and diplomacy, and the substantive interactions of real states, and toward more abstract approaches.

As part of this shift the international arena, in which real states pursued their policies, was reconceived in as an abstract structure, while “the state” was transformed from a real institution into an abstract unit within the international system.³⁶ This tendency is most closely identified with Kenneth Waltz’s neorealism. Waltz was critical of reductionist approaches, and instead offered a structuralist-functionalist theory of international relations. In Waltz’s theory, the international system comprises “a unique structure and interacting units,” wherein structures are “defined by the formal arrangement and position of their units,” specifically, the absence of central authority and the distribution of capabilities.³⁷ The structure in turn defines the “role expectations” or

“functional requirements” of the units within the system, which encourage functional behaviour through incentives and disincentives, thereby sustaining the system and producing the varieties of international order.³⁸

The growing abstraction of international relations theory further diminished the importance of ideas in the field, insofar as states and structures are not thinking agents but theoretical constructs that are understood in relation to one another and not in relation to real, concrete states.³⁹ Moreover, the socialization of units – the process by which units “learn” the functional requirements of the system – is mechanistic rather than cultural, since self-help is an existential rather than a normative behaviour.⁴⁰

The structural realist conceptualization of the international system is an analytical device, not an ontological assertion.⁴¹ In this sense, the distinction that emerged between the study of foreign policy and the study of international relations reflected more than the different subject matter ascribed to each field. Rather, it speaks to a fundamental distinction in the intent of the analysis:

Foreign policy, in structural-functionalist terms, is concrete action, or the real doings of real states — it is multifaceted, and irreducible to a single system. In formulating a systems theory of international politics, Waltz maintains that the international system is merely one source of ‘shaping and shoving’ foreign policy; relevant domestic systems and subsystems also provide analytically discrete inputs into the actual policies of states.⁴²

In respect of both method and research agenda, foreign policy studies remained more closely connected with classical and humanistic approaches. The ongoing concern in that field with interiority, in particular with the effect of ideas on perceptions, cognition, and outcomes, is manifest in the literature on “decision-making.” Moreover, “unit-level” factors were not abstracted or bracketed to the degree apparent in systemic theories of international relations.⁴³ Consequently, while the social scientific delimitation of

ideational factors was also evident in foreign policy studies, ideational factors remained important in that sub-field.⁴⁴

Ideational factors also found more prominent expression in various articulations of liberalism. Although many “neoliberals” accepted the structural realist account of the international system, they have sought to expand this framework to encompass cooperative behaviour and the non-security dimensions of international relations. One of the principal areas of disagreement between neoliberalism and structural realism concerns the perception of interests in terms of absolute gains versus relative gains, and the attention given by states to non-military interests.⁴⁵ Neoliberals have also sought to bring domestic and ideational factors into consideration, moving their systemic theory closer to foreign policy studies, while some have argued for the consideration of non-state actors as well as states.⁴⁶

To some extent, this has entailed a different agenda than realism, with a stronger focus on international political economy. Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye offered “complex interdependence” as a counterpoint to realist theory as part of an effort to explain international phenomena that fell outside of the traditional realist agenda.⁴⁷ James Rosenau reprised this concept as “cascading interdependence,” which he associates with the emergence of new economic and technological structures that alter patterns of authority and bring diverse non-state actors into interactions with states and with each other.⁴⁸ This in turn produces new patterns of conflict and cooperation.⁴⁹ Rosenau seeks to integrate both micro and macro factors within this framework by using “roles” as the “common denominator” across diverse systems in which individuals participate.⁵⁰ Norms and values are integrated into this framework through the roles of

individuals, and Rosenau writes that “a major component of the expectations that comprise any role are the informal principles, norms, rules, and procedures that others require of its occupants and that the occupants require of themselves.”⁵¹ In this way, “the idiosyncratic tendencies and belief systems of policy-makers are seen as reflective of role phenomena,” while the state is reconceived as “the actions of those who are expected – and who expect of themselves – to act on behalf of the polity.”⁵² These expectations are embedded in “role scenarios” or “action scripts” that structure the expectations of individuals about both their own actions and the actions of others in a given system.⁵³ However, while Rosenau reintegrates the individual level of analysis, ideational factors are seen through the prism of behavioural or performative expectations.

International regimes have also been an important area of theoretical and empirical research for liberalism. International regimes have been defined differently by different analysts, but Stephen Krasner, who has been closely associated with the development of regime theory, defines regimes “as sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors’ expectations converge in a given area of international relations.”⁵⁴ Regimes have been closely associated with technical cooperation among states, for example, with respect to civil aviation and telecommunication. However, the concept has also been used to explore “traditional” international relations phenomena, including nuclear proliferation and ballistic missiles, as well as more prosaic regimes associated with particular products or commodities.⁵⁵ Although regimes are concerned with ideational phenomena – principles, norms, and rules – some accounts of regimes have specified the involvement of a dominant or hegemonic actor as key to the establishment and effectiveness of particular

regimes.⁵⁶ Moreover, Krasner and others have identified regimes as intervening variables between the structure of the international system and state behaviour, which thereby modify but do not fundamentally alter the structural realist account of interests and power as the crucial factors in international relations.⁵⁷

Both neoliberal and neorealist approaches to international relations have been treated critically by post-positivist and constructivist thinkers in the “third debate.”⁵⁸ Unlike the two previous debates, which concerned substantive and methodological issues, respectively, the third debate has focussed on meta-theoretical and epistemological questions, and on the role of ideational factors or discourses in constructing the “objects” of international relations inquiry. Within this “post-positivist” discourse, both neo-realism and neo-liberalism are viewed as variants of positivism, sharing between them the “elements of the positivist ‘logic of investigation’ – (1) the correspondence theory of truth; (2) the methodological unity of the sciences (natural and social); and (3) the quest for value-freedom.”⁵⁹ By collapsing the distinctions between liberal and realist approaches, post-positivists offer a more fundamental challenge to the project of social scientific inquiry:

Even if one abandons the traditional realist assumptions – even if one begins to think in terms, say, of interdependence, a plurality of actors, and cooperation as well as competition – if one reconstitutes one’s approach to the study of world politics on the basis of instrumental reason’s positivist ‘logic of investigation’, the resulting analysis will be plagued by many, if not all, of the limitations identifiable in realist scholarship.⁶⁰

What unites the post-positivists in international relations theory is their challenge to the positivist paradigm of social scientific inquiry, and this has opened new avenues of research. As Miles Kahler writes, “[alternative theories] based on culture and norms

opened questions that many rationalist models had mistakenly believed to be answered.”⁶¹

However, post-positivist proposals to remediate the shortcomings of international relations theory are diverse, and the result has been a move away from positivist methodological monism toward methodological pluralism, encompassing neo-Marxist, critical, feminist, and normative approaches, among others.⁶² Ken Booth describes this development:

Postmodernists began asking questions about language, contextuality, the foundations of knowledge, the structure of authority, and the relationship between power and the agenda (professional and political)... Critical theorists started to ask questions about the ideological basis of knowledge, the self-interested nature of theory, the importance of ethics, the open-endedness of politics and the role of intellectuals... And feminist writers started to ask questions about identity, the nature of the ‘political’ and gender bias in theory and practice.⁶³

There is a clear post-modernist and post-structuralist influence behind the post-positivist movement. Some students of international relations have undertaken to “deconstruct” the disciplinary practices of international relations.⁶⁴ Ostensibly, these projects “in one way or another involve freeing us from our conceptual gaols.”⁶⁵ Richard Ashley explores the manner in which the “the anarchy *problematique*,” generally understood as a condition of international politics by practitioners of international relations, is discursively (re)constructed at a theoretical level by scholars of international relations, thereby identifying international anarchy “not as a necessary condition that the ‘realistic’ conduct of politics must take to be beyond question, but as an arbitrary political construction that is always in the process of being imposed.”⁶⁶ Understood in these terms, anarchy is not conceived as a “material” fact of international relations but “as a kind of ‘deep structure’, an autonomous code, a fixed generative principle,” which is interpreted and reinterpreted “in answer to specific anomalies or conflicts of interpretation perceptible from the

standpoint of the state-as-sovereign-presence” in order to conceptualize non-state actors or cooperative behaviour among states.⁶⁷

Such approaches offer a much more thoroughgoing conception of the role of ideational factors in international relations practice and theory. However, many critics of post-modernism have pointed out that discursive inquiries that eschew any attempt to relate that discourse to “reality” – that is, a strictly relationalist study of ideas or discourses – runs the risk of irrelevance vis-à-vis the phenomena of international relations.⁶⁸ John Vasquez has noted:

The spectre of relativism stemming from the postmodernist critique and from constructivism, in general, questions the legitimacy of the modernist conception of knowledge. Theory and science are not embodiments of truth from this view, but constructions of reality which are imposed arbitrarily by acts of power.⁶⁹

By this understanding, the logic of post-modernist dismissals of the “real” as representation leads to an epistemological dismissal of the material.⁷⁰ Moreover, the absence of cogent methods or programs of research has contributed to a sense that “there is no there there” in post-modernist approaches to international relations, and that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to engage with post-modern perspectives and retain a commitment to knowledge and inquiry.⁷¹ The suspicion among the remaining “positivists” of the field, as Mark Neufeld has observed, is that “postmodernism is better suited to undermining the role of reason *in toto* than to expanding the notion of reason beyond the confines of positivist *episteme* in a way consistent with reflexivity.”⁷²

The most significant effort to reconcile “reflexivist” or post-modernist insights with positivist social science is constructivism.⁷³ Constructivists, like other post-positivists, have challenged the treatment of ideas as exogenous or secondary.⁷⁴ However, constructivists do not reject the role of “power, interests, or institutions” in

international politics, but seek to describe them in ideational terms as “socially constituted” or “socially constructed.”⁷⁵ As Jeffrey Checkel observes, constructivists consider the meanings of material objects to be extrinsic rather than intrinsic; these objects “are given meaning only by the social context through which they are interpreted.”⁷⁶ Similarly, the activities and interests of actors are understood as forms of social practice.⁷⁷ National interests are not the “objective and self-evident” findings of a “rational” assessment of material factors – the distribution of power and military capabilities, for instance. Rather, they are social constructions, what Andrew Latham describes as “the [products] of inherently social *interpretive* processes ... that produce specific and meaningful understandings of what constitutes the national interest and threats to the national interest.”⁷⁸

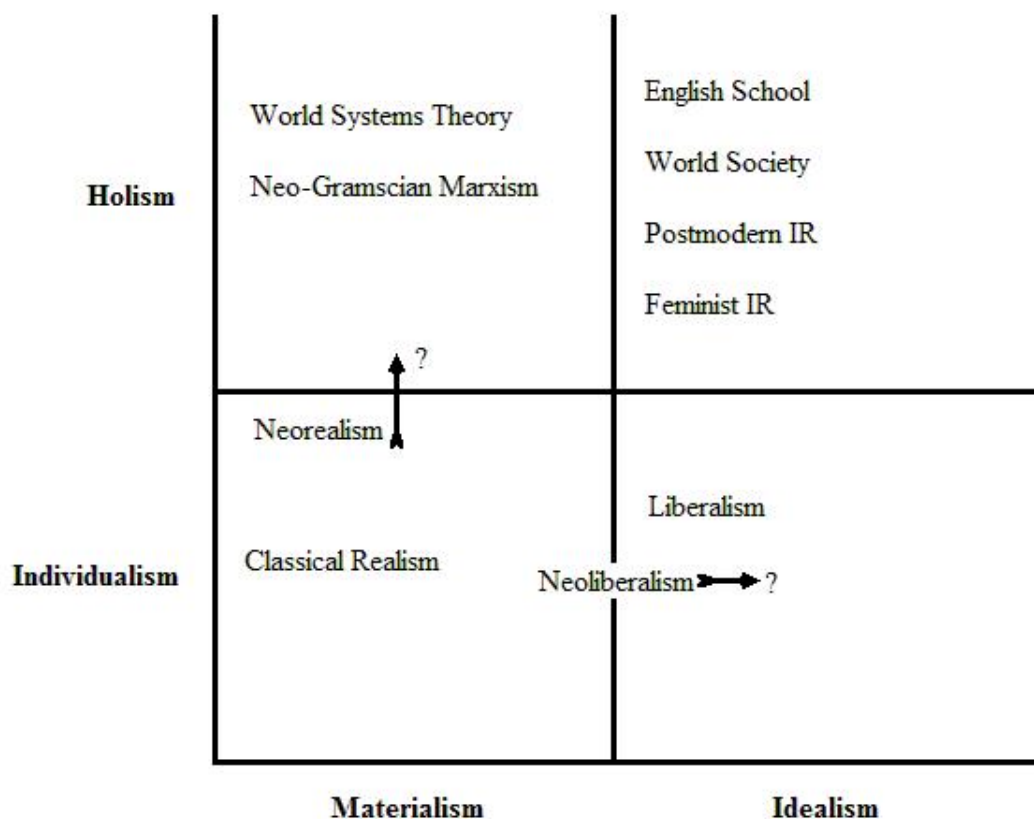
This does not represent a rejection of the rational choice model. Rationality is defined as the avoidance of cognitive dissonance or more simply as “having *consistent* desires and beliefs” and “their enactment in behaviour that maximizes expected utility.”⁷⁹ What constructivists suggest is a reconsideration of the criteria by which rationality is judged, congruent with the conception of interests as socially constructed aspects of identity. In this way, the “logic of consequences” is directed by “logics of appropriateness.”⁸⁰ In other words, an actor’s behaviour may be guided by means-ends calculations (rational choices). However, these calculations are mediated by that actor’s understanding of the *social* world and what sorts of behaviour are appropriate; ends (interests) and means (actions) are socially constructed.⁸¹ By this view, interests are not objective artefacts of economic and material circumstances, but socially constituted artefacts of the way that actors perceive and interpret these circumstances.

From this overview, it is apparent that the importance assigned to ideational factors in international relations theory has varied in rough proportion with the attention given to material factors in the construction of those theories. This division between materialist and idealist approaches can be used to organize the various approaches to international relations theory, and from this standpoint international relations theory has been predominantly “materialist” in its orientation, as Wendt describes:

What makes a theory materialist is that it accounts for the effects of power, interests, or institutions by reference to “brute” material forces – things which exist and have certain causal powers independent of ideas, like human nature, the physical environment, and, perhaps, technological artifacts.⁸²

By this measure, several approaches grouped together under the rubric “neo-Marxist” – dependency theory, world systems theory, and some critical theory – fall into the materialist camp, as do other difficult-to-classify theorists, notably Susan Strange, who was deeply critical of neo-realism, and her work on structural power in the international political economy.⁸³

Understood in the context of international relations theory, the three accounts of the undertheorization of Islam and of religious factors can be seen as part of a broader shift away from humanistic approaches and toward social scientific approaches. The increasing abstraction of theory placed more attention on the state as a unit of analysis rather than a concrete actor, diminishing the importance of “domestic” factors, including culture and religion. There is also a significant connection between the secular bias noted above and this marginalization of ideational factors, in that both are seen as unobservable and unfalsifiable, and therefore outside the realm of direct scientific inquiry.



*Figure 1: Wendt's "Four Sociologies" of International Relations*⁸⁴

However, as was noted above, the “problem” with international relations theory was never the absence of ideational factors, which were generally incorporated in some fashion, but the role that ideational factors played within those theories. Ideational factors are treated as epiphenomenal, as in the case of Waltzian neorealism, or as an explanatory supplement to material factors, while post-positivist approaches see ideas as playing a far more fundamental role in the constitution of the material factors. Even a “middle-of-the-road” constructivist account involves a significant reconceptualization of the materialist ontology:

[The international system is] a social rather than material phenomenon. And since the basis of sociality is shared knowledge, this leads to an idealist view of structure as a “distribution of knowledge” or “ideas all the way down’ (or almost anyway)... [T]he character of international life is determined by the beliefs and expectations that states have about each other, and these are constituted largely by social rather than material structures. This does not mean that material power and interests are unimportant, but rather that their meaning and effects depend on the social structure of the system.⁸⁵

Understood in these terms, the constructivist and post-positivist effort to “bring ideas back in” offers a different, and possibly incommensurable, account of the role of ideas. In short, materialist theories assume the opposition of ideas to interests, while post-positivist theories assume that interests are constituted by ideas.⁸⁶ This suggests that there is a deeper theoretical cleavage at work. In the context of the third debate on international relations theory, the key disjunction does not concern the relative importance of material and ideational factors, but rather the underlying conceptualization of both factors. This, in turn, is related to key differences in the project assumed by the various theoretical contenders – that is, in the understanding of what theory is and what the ends of theory should be.

The Scientific-Hermeneutic Debate in International Relations

Theory is a term used to denote a range of activities within the field of international relations. Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff offer a broad understanding of theory as “systematic reflection on phenomena, designed to explain them and to show how they are related to each other in a meaningful, intelligent pattern.”⁸⁷ John Garnett advances this definition: “international theory may be understood as ‘that body of *general* propositions that may be advanced about political relations between states, or more generally about world politics.’”⁸⁸ The imprecision of these definitions speaks to the

intractable debate within the field between the adherents of different understandings of the purpose and possibilities of theory in the social sciences.

This may be related to the inability of theories to adapt to significant changes in the international system. It has been widely observed that the end of the Cold War presented a particular challenge to the theories of international relations then extant.⁸⁹ Fred Halliday has written that the end of the Cold War in fact raised a more important question for the discipline, that of “the relationship between international relations as a theoretical and academic discipline and events in the outside, so-called ‘real’ world.”⁹⁰ It may also be related to the diversity of phenomena that fall within the ambit of international relations inquiry. As Alan Lamborn has written:

The preoccupation with issue-specific puzzles has often led analysts to conflate questions about political process with questions about the substance of politics. As a result, debates about the nature of politics have traditionally submerged issues of process in controversies about what actors and issues to think of as political.⁹¹

More importantly, these two citations hint at two kinds or levels of theory that are actively contested within the discipline of international relations, substantive theory and social theory, which correspond to “first-order” questions of international politics and “second-order” questions in social inquiry, respectively.⁹² First-order questions are “domain-specific,” and serve as a guide to empirical inquiry within a chosen social system; this is an apt characterization of the problem that Halliday identifies.⁹³ By contrast, “second-order questions are questions of social theory... concerned with the fundamental assumptions of social inquiry,” in particular ontology, epistemology, and method.⁹⁴ Second-order questions are germane to all fields of social inquiry, not just to international relations, and in this sense are theories that must be shared by, and mutually comprehensible to, multiple disciplines within the social sciences. This echoes

Lamborn's concern to integrate international relations with broader political science approaches.⁹⁵

This distinction between first-order questions and second-order questions, and consequently between substantive theory and social theory, is important. As Wendt writes, "substantive theory is based on social theory but cannot be "read-off" of it." Substantive theories are built, explicitly or implicitly, on assumptions about ontology and epistemology – that is, they assume answers to second-order questions. The dearth of attention paid to Islamic factors in the international relations literature on Central Asia is related to an emphasis on material factors in international relations theory. However, considered in the first- and second-order framework this actually concerns two theoretical dimensions. While the politics of the Islamic revival in Central Asia is a first-order question, in that it concerns phenomena and actors within a specific social domain, underlying this first-order question is a second-order question concerning the significance of ideational factors in social life. Moreover, it corresponds to the fundamental theoretical cleavage that has emerged in the third debate on international relations theory between positivist and post-positivist approaches.

There are several schemes for classifying historical and contemporary approaches to international relations theory. Steve Smith identifies ten "self-image of theory," or "ways in which international theorists have tended to talk about the field," arrayed along various theoretical faultlines.⁹⁶ Wendt proposes "four sociologies" of international relations – individualism, holism, materialism, and idealism – as the cardinal points of the theoretical divisions related to structures and ideas (see Figure 1), and the "three debates" model has already been used herein as a means of organizing the historical development

of ways of thinking about international relations. While there are difficulties with all of these typologies – a problem that may stem from an insufficiently rigorous approach to the history of the discipline among its adherents⁹⁷ – a common typology, and the one that highlights the first-order/second-order theoretical divide, is offered by Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff:

Social science theories can usually be categorized as historical-descriptive, which seek factual generalizations about past and present reality; scientific-predictive, which employ mathematical correlations and point to probable futures; and speculative-normative, which deal deductively with how things might be or should be improved.⁹⁸

In this understanding, the scientific (or behaviouralist, or positivist) and historical-descriptive (or interpretive, or hermeneutic) approaches are distinctive ways of interpreting observed phenomena and occurrences, and of guiding further inquiry into those phenomena and occurrences.⁹⁹ Most importantly, these different methods are generally taken to entail the pursuit of different objects: the scientific approach seeks to explain, while the hermeneutic approach seeks to understand.

The scientific approach came into fashion as part of the behaviouralist or positivist movement that swept through the social sciences in the 1950s and 1960s.¹⁰⁰ The scientific approach stems from an effort to make international relations theory more rigorous by utilizing, as far as possible, approaches common to the “hard” or natural sciences. Often, this is taken to include surveys, simulations, model building, statistical correlations, and other quantitative methods.¹⁰¹ However, whatever the method of inquiry adopted, the adherents of the scientific approach to international relations share a common assumption that the scientific method can be applied, with some degree of success, to international relations, and a common object in explanation. In consequence,

a wide variety of theoretical orientations fall under this rubric, including neo-realism, neo-liberalism, regime theory, and neo-Marxist structuralist approaches.¹⁰²

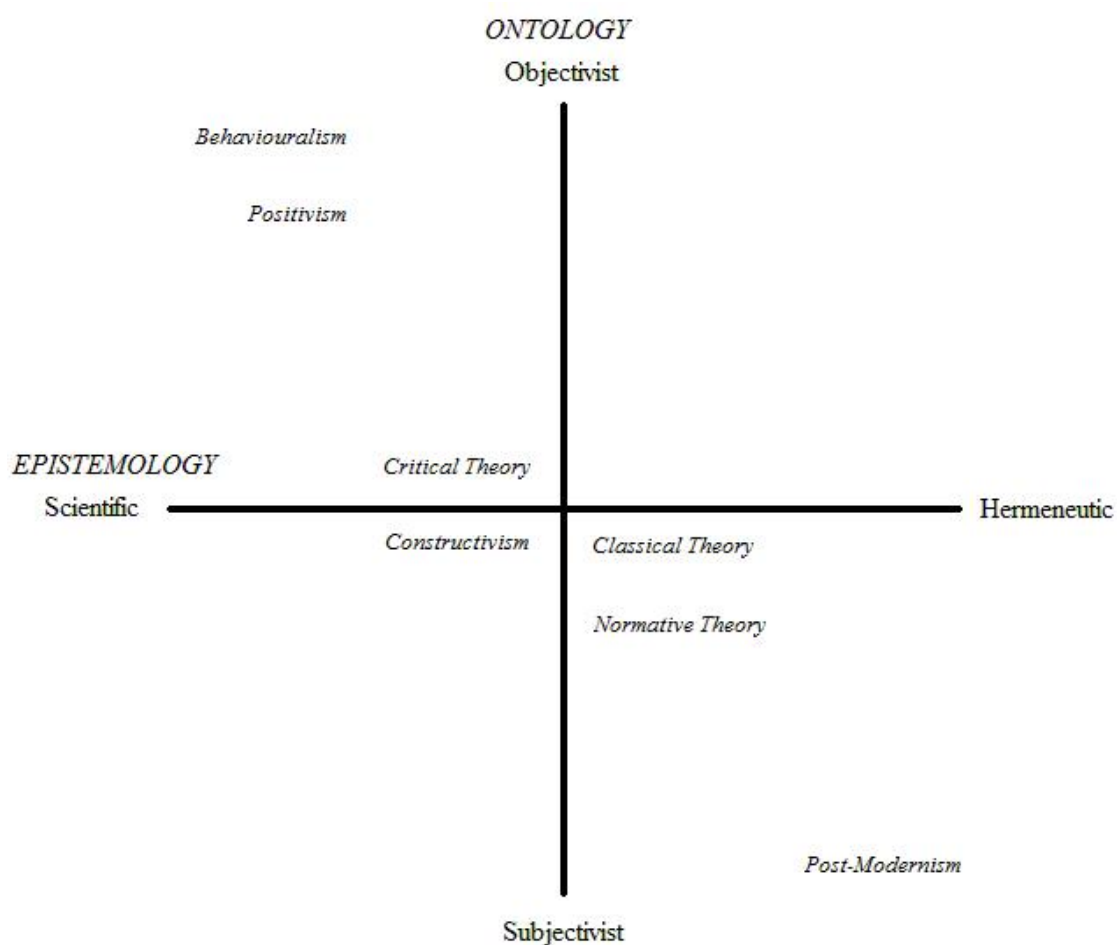
The most striking articulation of this view comes from the neorealist school associated with Kenneth Waltz. For Waltz, we ascertain the value of a theory by testing it, and he offers seven steps for doing so:

- 1 State the theory being tested.
- 2 Infer hypotheses from it.
- 3 Subject the hypotheses to experimental or observational tests.
- 4 In taking steps two and three, use the definitions of terms found in the theory being tested.
- 5 Eliminate or control perturbing variables not included in the theory under test.
- 6 Devise a number of distinct and demanding tests.
- 7 If a test is not passed, ask whether the theory flunks completely, needs repair and restatement, or requires a narrowing of the scope of its explanatory claims.¹⁰³

This systematic methodology is accompanied by a more rigorous definition of what constitutes empirical evidence in social inquiry, which limits itself to observable phenomena and dispenses, as far as possible, with discussions of metaphysics and meaning.¹⁰⁴ It is worth noting that Waltz is careful to distinguish theory from method, noting that even quantitative method is a form of description, not of explanation – as he wrote, “no matter how securely we nail a description down with numbers, we still have not explained what we have described.”¹⁰⁵

By contrast, the hermeneutic approach takes as its goal understanding, not explanation. What is definitive of hermeneutic approaches is the effort to interrogate and understand the meaning of social acts and relations.¹⁰⁶ This umbrella term captures a wide swath of political theory, notably the classical or traditionalist approaches to international relations, as well as constructivism, critical theorists, and, arguably, post-modern or post-structuralist approaches.¹⁰⁷ The approach is often characterized by qualitative and historical analysis, with an emphasis on “judgment, intuition, and insight

as essential in arriving at their conclusions.”¹⁰⁸ What distinguishes the classical and post-positivist approaches is not method, but the self-consciously theoretical approach adopted by post-positivists, which is a legacy of the positivist turn in international relations.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, Jean Bethke Elshtain has written that “not all international relations theorists are of this type... but the aspirations and claims of those who are haunt all other projects.”¹¹⁰ Traditionalists and post-positivists may also share a tendency to see international relations less as a distinct sphere of knowledge and more as an extension of political or social practices that exist in other domains.¹¹¹



*Figure 2: Methodological Debate in International Relations*¹¹²

Positivists have criticized the hermeneutic approach as insufficiently rigorous and overly reliant on anecdotes and intuition, unable to derive “meaningful generalizations and therefore ill-suited to building cumulative knowledge.”¹¹³ As William Aydelotte wrote, “if the citation of occasional instances were accepted as proof, it would be possible to prove almost anything.”¹¹⁴ Positivists have also emphasized the need for conscious theory. Waltz writes:

The construction of theory is a primary task. One must decide which things to concentrate on in order to have a good chance of devising some explanations of the international patterns and events that interest us. To believe that we can proceed otherwise is to take a profoundly unscientific view that everything that varies is a variable.¹¹⁵

In the absence of deliberate theorizing, studies are subject to any unarticulated or unexamined theoretical assumptions made by their authors, a situation that is unsatisfactory if the objective of specific social inquiry is to support fruitful comparison and generalization, and thereby contribute to cumulative knowledge of the subject.

Hermeneutic theorists respond that the humanistic nature of international politics necessitates “interior-oriented” approaches, and many have expressed doubts about the possibility of constructing rigorous theories with predictive abilities to explain something contingent upon human action and particular human conditions.¹¹⁶ Adherents of the hermeneutic approach have criticized the “shallowness” of scientific theories of international relations, on the grounds that such approaches are ill equipped to manage the complexity of relations between already complex societies. Writing about Raymond Aron, Elshtain offers a summary of the humanistic view of explanatory theories:

Political systems and political and social events can never be defined exhaustively and (so to speak) *from the outside*, from a position removed from any concern for historically specific and contingent features, for politics is both experienced and enacted by human actors and agents themselves... Any persuasive study of international relations must be ‘concrete’ – it must be both ‘sociological’ and

‘historical’. In the absence of a nuanced attunement to different countries and their stories ... all attempts at theorizing must needs be shallow.¹¹⁷

From a post-positivist standpoint, positivist approaches have been criticized for adopting a too-narrow understanding of causation, and therefore of explanation.¹¹⁸ Similarly, post-positivists have criticized scientific or positivist approaches generally as unduly focussed on material or “objective” phenomena, although the diverse approaches subsumed by “post-positivism” have done so for different reasons, and not all have done so to the same degree. This post-positivist dismissal of the scientific approach is the defining characteristic of the “third-debate” on international relations theory.

Above all, adherents of hermeneutic approaches point to the epistemological barriers to the strict application of the scientific method to social inquiry. First, social scientists, because they study human societies, are more prone to emotional attachment or bias, making it more difficult to pursue objective conclusions.¹¹⁹ Second, social scientists are limited in their capacity to conduct controlled real-world experiments; the efforts of students of international relations are largely limited to historical analysis (quantitative or qualitative) or to uncontrolled “experiments” in the form of policy advice offered to practitioners.¹²⁰ Third, every term and assumption is open to debate in international relations (as in most social sciences) because of the reliance on qualitative, rather than quantitative symbols.¹²¹ Taken together, these factors are held to militate against a strictly explanatory project, and in favour of interpretivist approaches.

Between Explanation and Understanding

Despite these methodological and epistemological differences, the scientific and hermeneutic approaches both attempt to “set forth a systematic view of phenomena by

presenting a series of propositions or hypotheses that specify relations among variables,” part of the philosophy of science definition of theory.¹²² A theory is “a symbolic construction, a series of interrelated hypotheses, together with definitions, laws, theorems, and axioms.”¹²³ Both scientific and hermeneutic theories are abstractions and representations of reality – as Waltz describes it, “a picture, mentally formed, of a bounded realm or domain of activity” – which must be justified by heuristic success with respect to the relationships they purport to represent.¹²⁴ That both approaches are concerned with general phenomena allows us to differentiate theoretical propositions from “both simple factual propositions and purely historical analysis.”¹²⁵ A theoretical statement is one which claims to transcend the individual case, whether through quantification or through qualitative comparison, and theory is distinct from “mere fact-grubbing or ‘rootless empiricism.’”¹²⁶ Facts are descriptive, as is pure historical analysis, “which emphasizes the uniqueness of events and traces relationships through time,” and neither can be identified as theory in and of themselves, although both play an important role in the constitution and application of theory.¹²⁷ Moreover, both scientific and hermeneutic methods of inquiry can support rigorous research within the discipline of international relations. Adherents of both schools of thought generally endeavour to treat the subject matter of international relations in a non-normative or a value-free manner.¹²⁸ Although the hermeneutic approach avoids scientific affectation, as Garnett argues, “it has to be said that the unscientific literature of international politics reveals as much accuracy and careful attention to detail as anything in the field of science.”¹²⁹

Despite this common project, scientific and hermeneutic approaches are generally characterized by distinctive objects – explanation and understanding, respectively –

which is held to account for the divergent methods and concerns of each approach.¹³⁰

The goal of explanation is “to find causal mechanisms and social laws.”¹³¹ Explanation is associated with the identification of regularities in order to allow for prediction, and is therefore not concerned with “essences” or unobservable internal states.¹³² The goal of understanding, on the other hand, is “to recover the individual and shared meanings that motivated actors to do what they did.”¹³³ Understanding is premised on the recognition of “differences between natural events and social actions,” insofar as the latter involve “various kinds of meaning in the facts of experience, language, action, and self-consciousness.”¹³⁴

Explaining and understanding are generally cast as different and incommensurable objects, not necessarily based on the methodologies employed, but rather based on the epistemic approaches they employ. Insofar as explanation is understood in terms of causation, it is affiliated with an epistemic approach that relies as far as possible on objective or observable facts; that is, the perspective of explanation is “an outsider’s told in the manner of a natural scientist seeking to explain the workings of nature and treating the human realm as part of nature.”¹³⁵ The perspective of understanding, by contrast, is “an insider’s, told so as to make us understand what the events mean, in a sense distinct from any meaning found in unearthing the laws of nature.”¹³⁶ From a “scientific” or positivistic perspective, not only are the inner states of actors not directly observable, insofar as “the actors’ desires, beliefs, and resulting reasons for action may be generated in turn by external factors,” explanation may be seen to “trump” understanding in causal terms as well.¹³⁷ This, in turn, is closely associated

with the emphasis on material factors in explanatory approaches and the “relegation” of ideational factors to the realm of understanding.

However, it has been argued that this supposed correspondence of science / explanation / materialism, on the one hand, and non-science / interpretation / idealism, on the other hand, represents both a false image of science and a false choice between explanation and interpretation. As Wendt writes:

The seeds of conflict lie in [the] assumption, shared with many positivists and post-positivists alike, that natural science is characterized by the outsider’s focus on causal explanation, and does *not* include the kind of intellectual activity associated with the insider’s focus on actors’ understandings. Since the natural sciences constitute our model for ‘science’, this assumption suggests that the choice facing social scientists is not between two ways of knowing, both seen as part of the scientific enterprise, but between science (as outsider story) and non-science.¹³⁸

Wendt argues instead that explanation and understanding are distinguished not by their epistemic assumptions but “by the kinds of questions that they are asking.”¹³⁹

Explanation and causal theories are closely associated with “why?” and “how?” while understanding or “constitutive” theories concern “how-possible?” and “what?”¹⁴⁰ In contrast with causal theories, constitutive theories “show how the properties of a system are constituted,” and focus on situating the elements of a system within the broader context.¹⁴¹ This also entails a different measure of truth or correspondence to the observed evidence:

Adequate answers to how-possible and what-questions must satisfy different truth conditions than answers to causal questions. As with the latter, the answers to constitutive questions must support a counterfactual claim of necessity, namely that in the absence of the structures to which we are appealing the properties in question would not exist. But the kind of necessity required here is conceptual or logical, not causal or natural.¹⁴²

Constitutive theories or “explanation-by-concept” are common to the social sciences, and offer the ability to “explain” dispositions or properties of the subject that a strictly causal

description and explanation would not capture by classifying observations and unifying them within a single conceptual framework.¹⁴³ Wendt writes “simply that answering what-questions should be recognized as a valuable and distinct kind of theorizing in its own right, and that, properly understood, it can have explanatory as well as descriptive pay-off.”¹⁴⁴

Constitutive theories are not limited to the social sciences, and play an important role in the natural sciences as well.

It is wrong to think that material conditions imply causal theorizing and ideas imply constitutive theorizing. Both kinds of stuff have both causal and constitutive effects. Ideas have constitutive effects insofar as they make social kinds possible; masters and slaves do not exist apart from the shared understandings that constitute their identities as such. But those shared understandings also have causal effects on masters and slaves, functioning as independently existing and temporally prior mechanisms motivating and generating their behaviour. The same dual role is found in the case of physical substances... [S]ome of the most important theories in the natural sciences are constitutive rather than causal: the double-helix model of DNA, the kinetic theory of heat, and so on.¹⁴⁵

At the same time, constitutive theories are of particular interest in social inquiry. Social kinds are made, in some measure, of ideas – that is to say, constituted by the ideas that actors have collectively about how they work and what they mean. The notion of constitution is crucial to differentiating acts – behaviour divorced from meaning – from actions – acts which have “meaning and purpose from the viewpoint of the agent (or those interacting with him).”¹⁴⁶ Acts can be “explained” in terms of proximate causes, but within a social structure, the possibility of action must be understood constitutively, and this in turn underlies any effort to account for regularities of action.¹⁴⁷

There are objections to the view that causal and constitutive theories can be unified. Steve Smith is sceptical that constitutive and explanatory theories can be reconciled, since they are premised on completely different understandings of the nature

of the social world – fashioned by human agency in the former case, and as part of the “natural world” in the latter.¹⁴⁸ Similarly, Mayer challenges what he calls the “pluralism-of-scientific-methods position,” arguing that it “robs the concept of scientific method of any meaning or coherence, and the position that one cannot use scientific epistemology to explain social and political events stems from an important misunderstanding of that epistemology.”¹⁴⁹ For Mayer, the distinction between the social and natural sciences is not in the method of inquiry used, but in the effectiveness with which a common method may be applied in either context.

Explanations in the social or behavioural sciences differ from those in the natural sciences with respect to their completeness and to the accuracy of the predictions they generate. However, the structure of scientific explanation remains the same regardless of the subject matter. The standards of what does or does not constitute a scientifically adequate explanation does [*sic*] not vary with the subject matter.¹⁵⁰

However, as was discussed above, constitutive theories are important in the natural sciences, and the observational dilemmas facing social scientists are universal – that is, they affect social inquiry whether the object of that inquiry is causal or constitutive. Further, theory in both the social and natural sciences shares the requirement for the observer to make inferences and interpretations to explain the observed phenomenon.¹⁵¹ In other words, the commonalities of the natural and social sciences cut both ways, and both causal and constitutive theories can be useful in either field. Even if they cannot be reconciled, these two approaches are complementary.

The adoption of a constitutive approach has several effects on the form and function of theory. First, it diminishes the intuitive connection between hermeneutic approaches and the individual case. An example from Przeworski and Teune, cited in Mayer, offers a good example of this.¹⁵² In the example, a young factory worker has

voted Communist; to explain this behaviour, reference is made to the broader voting tendencies of the worker's age-occupational cohort which provides a probabilistic prediction of the worker's behaviour.¹⁵³ However, voting is both an act and an action, and can be comprehended in both causal and constitutive terms. To *explain* the behaviour, additional factors must be considered, including religious background, familial and social relationships, and other individual experiences.¹⁵⁴ In short, theory that aims at explanation in social sciences may tend toward the micro-level, because human individuation means that general rules, where they exist, are followed in a contingent fashion. However, to *understand* the behaviour, we need to have some comprehension of the French electoral and political systems, of the political party system; questions of religious background, and familial and social relationships can be comprehended in constitutive terms according to family and social relations generally. In this example, at least, constitutive inquiries are better suited to exploring the general case than the individual case, and this enables the exploration of ideational factors as more than "individual belief systems" and in the broader social context.

Second, recognizing both causal and constitutive dimensions of theories opens the possibility of considering the dual role of ideas posited by different theories of international relations.¹⁵⁵ Supplementing causal theories with constitutive approaches to theories could allow for the consideration of both neoliberal theories of norms and constructivist claims about the ideational constitution of interests. This does not mean that causal effects subsume constitutive effects, or vice versa, but it does imply that both are important if we want to investigate social phenomena, insofar as social actors are both intentional and bound by their perceptions of structures and other actors in the system or

systems of which they are a part. Moreover, it places the claims of each theory in the proper context by aligning the claims of theorists with the objects of their theorization – in other words, a conscious distinction between causal and constitutive theories can help with the problem of “talking past one another.”

Third, insofar as constitutive approaches work to unify observations within a single unifying conceptual framework, they may be seen to offer access to a new conceptual space for considering ideational factors that does not entail abandoning the important insights offered by other approaches. Dalacoura argues that religion needs to be added to existing approaches in a way that does not compromise the insights of international relations theory:

[T]he contribution of Islam to politics is not ‘independent’ ... A helpful understanding of the role of religion is one that takes into account the social, economic, and political concerns that lie behind the religious terminology or imagery. Mundane and universal issues such as social injustice, political legitimization, and the defence of the homeland reveal themselves behind the surface of Islamic politics. This is not to claim that religious discourse is reducible to material concerns or simply a facade. Spiritual and moral issues are often really at stake in religious politics. But the interpretation of religion as such is a fluid one. It evolves in constant interaction with specific historical conditions.¹⁵⁶

This brings us closer to the “problem” identified in the first chapter – specifically, that international relations analyses of Islam offer empirical insights and point to connections between Islam and outcomes at different levels of analysis without connecting these observations in a broader, more unified theoretical description. It is suggested that the constitutive approach may offer another way of organizing and unifying the various findings and claims about political Islam within the international relations discourse.

Conclusion

Taking a theoretically-guided approach to the study of the Islamic Revival is crucial if students of international relations are to make a distinctive contribution to the study of Central Asia and Islamic politics. However, it has been argued that the under-theorization of Islam in international relations is related to a general tendency to focus on material rather than ideational factors in international relations theory. This tendency, which is shared broadly by competing schools of thought in international relations, is related to a broader debate about the role and place of ideational factors in social inquiry, and in particular to the debate between scientific and hermeneutic, or explanatory and understanding, approaches to the social sciences. Theories of international relations are situated, explicitly or implicitly, in these broader social scientific frameworks, and it is important to identify the social theoretical assumptions underlying inquiries into international relations.

These “second-order” positions have been the central issue of the “third debate” on international relations theory, between positivist and post-positivist thinkers. On the face of it, these positions are fundamentally irreconcilable, and Yosef Lapid has suggested that the third debate could become a choice between MAB and MAD – “mutually assured boredom,” and “mutually assured deconstruction.”¹⁵⁷ Put another way, the positivist criticism of traditionalism might be summed up as “if you’re not part of our solution, you’re part of the problem.” Post-positivists, having disposed of solutions, may hold a position closer to “if you’re not part of the problem, you’re part of the *problematique*.” This deadlock is unproductive, however, and despite a penchant in international relations to assume the incompatibility of different theoretical positions, it is

suggested that a broad understanding of theory that includes constitutive explanations may allow for a more fruitful deployment of existing knowledge and a more integrated approach to future research on political Islam in Central Asia. This second-order theoretical space, in turn, provides an opportunity for a more robust treatment of ideational factors that does not compromise the real insights offered by materialist approaches to international relations. The next chapter proposes ideology as a concept for exploring these potentialities.

Notes

¹ Cited in John Lukacs, *The Hitler of History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), 73.

² On the interactions between Europe and the Ottoman Empire see: Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong? The Clash Between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East* (New York, NY: Perennial/HarperCollins, 2003).

³ Hedley Bull, "Martin Wight and the theory of international relations," *British Journal of International Studies* 2 (1976): 101-16, reprinted in: Martin Wight, *International Theory: The Three Traditions*, ed. Gabriele Wight and Brian Porter, ix-xxiii (London, UK: Leicester University Press, 1996), xvi. *Dar-Al-Islam* is translated as "abode of Islam," *Dar-Al-Harb* as "abode of war." (Wight, *International Theory*, 223.)

⁴ Wight, *International Theory*, 84. There is a correspondence between this view and that of Benedict Anderson, who writes that the non-kin-based religious communities that predate the advent of modern nationalism are theoretically unlimited and potentially universal because their truths, and their sacred languages and ideographs, are potentially universal. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised ed. (London, UK: Verso, 1991), 12-3.

⁵ Lewis, *What Went Wrong?* 60-61.

⁶ For example, the only significant discussion of the Islamic world in Henry Kissinger's massive *Diplomacy* – a comprehensive though conventional review of "diplomatic history" in the Euro-American tradition – concerns the 1956 Suez crisis (522-49). Although the book was published in 1994, it does not offer an account of the Gulf War. Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1994).

⁷ Andrea Teti, "Bridging the Gap: IR, Middle East Studies and the Disciplinary Politics of the Area Studies Controversy," *European Journal of International Relations* 13, no. 1 (2007): 117-45, 121.

⁸ Deniz Kondiyoti, "Post-Colonialism Compared: Potentials and Limitations in the Middle East and Central Asia," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 34 (2002): 279-297, 284.

⁹ Alexander Wendt, *The Social Theory of International Relations* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 30-1. It should be noted that these theories connected with Marxian thought offer, at least, an implicit account of identity and ideational factors through the concept of ideology, which may suggest a theoretical justification for "bracketing" these factors. On dependency theory see: André Gunder Frank, *Dependent Accumulation and Underdevelopment* (New York, NY: Monthly Review Press, 1978); James Caporaso "Dependence, Dependency, and Power in the Global System: A Structural and Behavioral Analysis," *International Organization* 32, no. 1 (Winter 1978): 13-43. On world systems theory see: Immanuel Wallerstein, "The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalist System," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 16, no. 4 (Sep. 1974): 387-415. See also Johan Galtung's work on the structure of imperialism: Johan Galtung, "A structural theory of imperialism," *Journal of Peace Research* 8 (1971): 81-94.

¹⁰ Bruce Maddy-Weitzman examines the emergence of a distinctive "Arab state system" in the early post-colonial period, highlighting the emphasis these states placed on relationships with one another and on issues of ideological importance in the context of Arab nationalism. Bruce Maddy-Weitzman, *The Crystallization of the Arab State System, 1945-1954* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1993). Writing of the same region in a later time, Michael Barnett argues that the conflict between the expectations engendered by state sovereignty, on the one hand, and Arab nationalism, on the other, has been resolved over time in favour of the former, as decision-makers in these states were socialized to "the development of relatively stable expectations and shared norms for organizing regional life." Michael Barnett, "Sovereignty, nationalism, and regional order in the Arab states system," in *State Sovereignty as*

Social Construct, ed. Thomas J. Biersteker and Cynthia Weber (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 148-189, 174.

¹¹ Eva Bellin, "Faith in Politics: New Trends in the Study of Religion and Politics," *World Politics* 60 (Jan. 2008): 315-47, 317.

¹² Daniel Philpott, "The Challenge of September 11 to Secularism in International Relations," *World Politics* 55 (Oct. 2002): 66-95, 69.

¹³ Scott M. Thomas, "Taking Religious and Cultural Pluralism Seriously: The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Society," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 29, no. 3 (2000): 815-41, 820.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 815.

¹⁵ For example: Peter L. Berger, *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics* (Washington, D.C.: Eerdmans/Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1999); Susanne Rudolph and James Piscatori, *Transnational Religion and Fading States* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997).

¹⁶ Emphasis in original. Carsten Bagge Laustsen and Ole Wæver, "In Defence of Religion: Sacred Referent Objects for Securitization," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 29, no. 3 (2000): 705-39, 737.

¹⁷ Andreas Hasenclever and Volker Rittberger, "Does Religion Make a Difference? Theoretical Approaches to the Impact of Faith on Political Conflict," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 29, no. 3 (2000): 641-74. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the approaches that Hasenclever and Rittberger identify correspond closely to the three paradigms of nationalism.

¹⁸ Fox and Sandler adopt a 'theory-neutral' approach, arguing principally for the inclusion of religion as a factor in all international relations theories. However, they are critical of the materialist assumptions made by realists and Marxists, while they are evidently sympathetic to the constructivist position. Fox and Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 166-72. See also: Jonathan Fox, "Religion as an Overlooked Element of International Relations," *International Studies Review* 3, no. 3 (Fall 2001): 53-73.

¹⁹ Fox and Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 170-1.

²⁰ The 'debates' debate is discussed in: Steve Smith, "The Self-Images of a Discipline: A Genealogy of International Relations Theory," in *International Relations Theory Today*, ed. Ken Booth and Steve Smith, 1-37 (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995).

²¹ James E. Dougherty, and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr., *Contending Theories of International Relations: A Comprehensive Survey*, 5th ed. (New York, NY: Addison Wesley Longman, 2001), 12-3.

²² Ole Wæver, "The Sociology of a Not So International Discipline: American and European Developments in International Relations," *International Organization* 52, No. 4 (Autumn 1998): 687-727, 692. See also: Brian C. Schmidt, "Lessons from the Past: Reassessing the Interwar Disciplinary History of International Relations," *International Studies Quarterly* 42 (Sep. 1998): 433-59.

²³ Hans J. Morgenthau, and Kenneth W. Thompson, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 6th ed. (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 6.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 102.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 102-3. Morgenthau classified ideologies as "status quo" or "imperialist" according to the policies that they protected or represented. The separation of "actors" and "audience" also suggests the bracketing of domestic factors that begins in earnest with the realist school.

²⁶ Ibid., 5.

²⁷ Ibid., 6.

²⁸ On Hedley Bull's "many affinities with realism" see: Andrew Hurrell, "Foreword to the Third Edition: *The Anarchical Society 25 Years On*," in Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*, 3rd ed., vii-xxiii (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2002), vii-ix.

²⁹ Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories*, 119.

³⁰ While realism was influential in both European and North American approaches to international relations, the behaviouralist influence was predominantly American; on the nationalization of the international relations discourse, see: Wæver, "Sociology of a Not So International Discipline."

³¹ Steve Smith, "Paradigm Dominance in International Relations: The Development of International Relations as a Social Science," *Millennium* 16, no. 2 (1987): 189-206, 195-6. Behaviouralism in the social sciences is sometimes differentiated from behaviourism, which is a school of thought in psychology, although Mayer describes the Skinnerian position tellingly: "Theory thus compromises the epistemological criteria of crude positivism which hold that we know only that which is directly observable. B.F. Skinner, for instance, advocates the eschewal of all inner-man or personality constructs as a reversion to metaphysics. It is enough to know that certain behaviors do recur when reinforced by certain stimuli, he claims; the inference of causation is unnecessary." Lawrence C. Mayer, *Redefining Comparative Politics: Promise Versus Performance*, Sage Library of Social Research, Vol. 173 (Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications, 1989), 30.

³² A 1984 study found that "the bulk of work is undertaken within the Behavioural tradition – about 70 per cent of reading list citations, with only 20 per cent of citations being material in the Traditional paradigm and 10 per cent from the Dialectical tradition." Cited in Smith, "Paradigm Dominance," 200; original source: Hayward Alker and Thomas Biersteker, "The Dialectics of World Order: Notes for a Future Archeologist of International Savoir Faire," *International Studies Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (1984): 121-142, 129.

³³ It is not always clear whether this related to an epistemological point on inner states, or to an ontological position on the nature of the mind. In respect of the latter, and the distinction between "internalism" and "externalism," see Wendt, *Social Theory*, 172-4.

³⁴ Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories*, 36. On the limitations of these methods in the social sciences, see Mayer, *Redefining Comparative Politics*, 38-42.

³⁵ Ronald R. Krebs and Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, "Twisting Tongues and Twisting Arms: The Power of Political Rhetoric," *European Journal of International Relations* 13, no. 1 (2007): 35-66, 36.

³⁶ Stacie E. Goddard and Daniel H. Nexon, "Paradigm Lost? Reassessing *Theory of International Politics*," *European Journal of International Relations* 11, no. 1 (2005): 9-61, 25-6.

³⁷ Ibid., 25.

³⁸ Ibid., 26. For Waltz's account of the cognition of structural incentives, see: Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1979), 92-3.

³⁹ Goddard and Nexon, "Paradigm Lost," 26.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 38.

⁴¹ Ibid., 25.

⁴² Ibid., 24.

⁴³ Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories*, 554. For a discussion of decision-making and norms in international relations theory, see “Chapter 9: Games, Rules, and Norms in International Politics,” in: Michael P. Sullivan, *Theories of International Relations: Transition vs. Persistence* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 199-225.

⁴⁴ For example: Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane, eds., *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993).

⁴⁵ Robert Powell, “Absolute and Relative Gains in International Relations Theory,” *American Political Science Review* 85, no. 4 (Dec. 1991): 1303-20;

⁴⁶ Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories*, 85-6; Susan Strange, “Political Economy and International Relations,” in *International Relations Theory Today*, ed. Ken Booth and Steve Smith, 154-74 (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 157.

⁴⁷ Sullivan, *Theories of International Relations*, 151-2; Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1977).

⁴⁸ James N. Rosenau, “A Pre-Theory Revisited: World Politics in an Era of Cascading Interdependence,” *International Studies Quarterly* 28, no. 3 (Sep. 1984): 245-305.

⁴⁹ Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories*, 111-2.

⁵⁰ Rosenau, “Pre-Theory Revisited,” 269.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 270.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 269, 270.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 271. See also: James N. Rosenau, “Governance, Order, and Change in World Politics,” in *Governance Without Government: Order and Change in World Politics*, ed. James N. Rosenau and Ernst-Otto Czempiel, 1-29 (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

⁵⁴ Stephen D. Krasner, “Structural causes and regime consequences: regimes as intervening variables,” *International Organization* 36, no. 2 (Spring 1982): 185-205, 186. On regimes see also: Stephen D. Krasner, ed., *International Regimes* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985); John Gerard Ruggie, ed., *Multilateralism Matters: The Theory and Praxis of an Institutional Form* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1993).

⁵⁵ Sullivan, *Theories of International Relations*, 155.

⁵⁶ Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories*, 528.

⁵⁷ Krasner, “Structural Causes,” 189; Sullivan, *Theories of International Relations*, 157-8.

⁵⁸ Yosef Lapid, “The Third Debate: On the Prospects of International Theory in a Post-Positivist Era,” *International Studies Quarterly* 33, no. 3 (Sep. 1989): 235-254.

⁵⁹ Mark Neufeld, “Who’s Afraid of Meta-Theory?” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 23, no. 2 (1994): 387-93, 391.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Miles Kahler, “Rationality in International Relations,” *International Organization* 52, no. 4 (Autumn 1998): 919-41, 940.

⁶² Lapid, “The Third Debate,” 243.

⁶³ Ken Booth, "International Relations Theory vs. the Future," in *International Relations Theory Today*, ed. Ken Booth and Steve Smith, 328-50 (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 338.

⁶⁴ For example: James Der Derian and Michael Shapiro, eds., *International/Intertextual Relations: Postmodern Readings in World Politics* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1989); Robert Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

⁶⁵ John A. Vasquez, "The Post-Positivist Debate," in *International Relations Theory Today*, ed. Ken Booth and Steve Smith, 217-40 (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 218

⁶⁶ Richard K. Ashley, "Untying the Sovereign State: A Double Reading of the Anarchy Problematique," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 17, no. 2 (1988): 227-62, 229.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 233-4, 236.

⁶⁸ Wendt, *Social Theory*, 55-6.

⁶⁹ Vasquez, "Post-Positivist Debate," 225.

⁷⁰ Vasquez suggests that this is also "postmodernism's one essentialist sin; it provides a universalistic understanding of human nature and facts as a grand narrative of history." *Ibid.*

⁷¹ For example: Lapid, "The Third Debate," 251; Vasquez, "The Post-Positivist Debate," 225. Of course, there have been suggestions on both sides of the third debate that the combatants are more concerned with their own purposes than the advancement of knowledge. Vasquez observes: "Post-positivism has placed the scientific study of world politics in serious crisis. Many in the field take glee in this, for they believe it sounds the death knell for a form of analysis they never liked and which they found boring and difficult." (Vasquez, "The Post-Positivist Debate," 234.) This can be compared with Mark Neufeld's rhetorical questioning of the response to post-positivism from within the field: "If it is true that meta-theoretical critique is necessary to challenge mainstream theorizing at the most fundamental level, then is it any wonder that so many mainstream theorists seem intent on inculcating new generations of social scientists with the strongest possible antipathy to meta-theory?" (Neufeld, "Who's Afraid of Meta-Theory," 392.)

⁷² Mark Neufeld, "Reflexivity and International Relations Theory," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 22, no. 1 (1993): 53-76, 75.

⁷³ Although Wendt is referred to throughout this section, see also: Friedrich V. Kratochwil, *Rules, Norms, and Decisions: On the conditions of practical and legal reasoning in international relations and domestic affairs* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Nicholas Onuf, *World of Our Making* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1989). For a critical review of the "positioning" of constructivism as a "bridging" concept in between positivist and reflexivist approaches, see: Maja Zehfuss, *Constructivism in International Relations: The Politics of Reality* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002). Zehfuss identifies the rhetoric of the middle ground as a discursive tactic to marginalize more reflexivist approaches, insofar as "constructivism limits the space of critical thinking." (*idem*, 262.) Instead, "constructivism is acceptable, and even to some extent welcome, as a critical alternative to the 'mainstream' because it accepts the rules of the scientific game. Occupying the middle ground, in other words, is supposed to enable constructivists to have their cake and eat it, too. Whilst they critically distance themselves from the mainstream, they at the same time receive professional recognition from within it." (*idem*, 253.)

⁷⁴ Wendt, *Social Theory*, 19.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 135-6.

⁷⁶ Jeffrey Checkel, "The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory," *World Politics*, 50 (Jan. 1998): 324-348, 326.

⁷⁷ Andrew Latham, "The Politics of Stigmatization: Global Cultural Change and the Transnational Campaign to Ban Antipersonnel Landmines," paper presented at the University of Manitoba Political Studies Students Conference, Room 343, Drake Centre, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 31 January, 2003 (draft available online: <http://www.ciaonet.org/isa/laa01>), 8-9. See also: Andrew Latham, "Theorizing the Landmine Campaign: Ethics, Global Cultural Scripts, and the Laws of War," in *Ethics and Security in Canadian Foreign Policy*, ed. Rosalind Irwin (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2001).

⁷⁸ Latham, "Politics of Stigmatization," 9.

⁷⁹ Wendt, *Social Theory*, 126.

⁸⁰ Checkel, "Constructivist Turn," 326-7.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Wendt, *Social Theory*, 94.

⁸³ Strange's distinction between structural and relational power can be found in: Susan Strange, *States and Markets: An Introduction to International Political Economy*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1994). See also: Martin Griffiths, "Susan Strange," in *Fifty Key Thinkers in International Relations* (London, UK: Routledge, 1999), 41-6.

⁸⁴ Wendt, "Figure 2," *Social Theory*, 32.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 20.

⁸⁶ Wendt, *Social Theory*, 114.

⁸⁷ Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories*, 17.

⁸⁸ John C. Garnett, *Commonsense and the Theory of International Politics* (London, UK: Macmillan, 1984), 4.

⁸⁹ Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories*, 38.

⁹⁰ Fred Halliday, "The End of the Cold War an International Relations: Some Analytic and Theoretical Conclusions," in *International Relations Theory Today*, ed. Ken Booth and Steve Smith, 38-61 (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 39.

⁹¹ Alan Lamborn, "Theory and the Politics in World Politics," *International Studies Quarterly* 41 (1997): 187-214, 188.

⁹² Wendt, *Social Theory*, 4-5.

⁹³ Ibid., 6.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 5.

⁹⁵ Lamborn, taking micro-economic theory as his model, argues that strategic interaction in the context of interdependent outcomes underlies most theoretical approaches in international relations, and can form the basis of a common set of metatheoretical assumptions in political science and international relations. Lamborn "Theory and the Politics in World Politics," 190-1, 210-11.

⁹⁶ Smith, “Self-Images of a Discipline,” 7. The ten Smith identifies are: (1) international theory versus political theory; (2) communitarian versus cosmopolitan thought; (3) the three R’s [Martin Wight’s division of the field into Realist, Rationalist, and Revolutionist traditions]; (4) the three waves or the “great debates”; (5) the inter-paradigm debate; (6) state-centrism versus transnationalism; (7) neo-realism and neo-liberalism; (8) the post-positivist debate; (9) constitutive versus explanatory theory; and (10) foundationalist and anti-foundationalist international theory. Smith identifies the constitutive/explanatory debate as “the main meta-theoretical issue facing international theory.” (idem, 26).

⁹⁷ On the underdeveloped state of international relations historiography see: Richard Little, “Historiography and International Relations,” *Review of International Studies* 25 (1999): 291-99.

⁹⁸ Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories*, 17.

⁹⁹ The “speculative-normative” category is not addressed here because it concerns what could or should be and not to what is. However, it can be argued that there is a distinction with a difference between scientific / hermeneutic and normative approaches, both because of the fundamental difficulty of maintaining value neutrality when the subjects of inquiry are human beings, and also because any speculative-normative project, in seeking to elaborate on what could or should be, must also rely, implicitly or explicitly, on an analysis of what is. In this sense, the speculative-normative category is defined by the purpose rather than the methods of inquiry and presupposes a scientific or hermeneutic effort. In fact, Stanley Hoffman argues that taking reality as a starting point, rather than ethics or morality, is what distinguishes normative theory from applied ethics. Stanley Hoffman, *Duties Beyond Borders: On the Limits and Possibilities of Ethical International Politics* (New York, NY: University Press, 1984), 1-2.) For a discussion of normative approaches in recent international relations literature, see Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories*, 649-653.

¹⁰⁰ Positivism is “an approach in the philosophy of science... characterized mainly by an insistence that science can deal only with observable entities known directly to experience and is opposed to metaphysical speculation without concrete evidence.” Behaviouralism may be an example of positivism, but positivism is a broader concept. Abercrombie, Nicholas, Stephen Hill, and Bryan S. Turner, “Positivism,” *Dictionary of Sociology*, 4th ed. (London, UK: Penguin Books, 2000), 269-70.

¹⁰¹ Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories*, 22, 37.

¹⁰² Smith, “Self-Images of a Discipline,” 27.

¹⁰³ Waltz, *Theory*, 13. Although Waltz implies in rules 1, 4, and 5 that theories can be tested, he clarifies that there is “no way to test a theory directly.” (idem.) Theories are heuristic constructs only and therefore cannot be tested against real world occurrences. Instead, hypotheses derived from a theory – that is, predictions or expected relationships that conform to the logic of the theory – are tested against the available evidence, and in this way the theories from which these hypotheses are derived are tested indirectly.

¹⁰⁴ Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories*, 36.

¹⁰⁵ Waltz, *Theory*, 3.

¹⁰⁶ Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner, “Hermeneutics,” *Dictionary of Sociology*, 162-3.

¹⁰⁷ Smith, “Self-Images of a Discipline,” 27. To identify “classical” approaches to international relations as a single category is something of a misnomer, since a great diversity of thinkers fall into this category, including practically everyone who wrote or thought about international relations prior to the behaviouralist insurgency. Similarly, Smith notes that certain sects of post-positivists would reject this supposed affinity with critical and constructivist thinkers on the grounds that the latter are examples of approaches which adopt a “foundationalist” epistemology, in contrast to the anti-foundational or “radical interpretivist” approaches which see all attempts to construct “metanarratives” that can reconcile the claims

of competing theories as forms of a “problem-solving” or positivist approach. (idem, 29.) Smith refers to N. Rengger and M. Hoffman, “Modernity, post-modernism and international relations,” in *Post-Modernism in the Social Sciences*, ed. J. Doherty, E. Graham, and M. Malek, 127-46 (Houndsmills, Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan Press, 1992).

¹⁰⁸ Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories*, 35.

¹⁰⁹ Lapid, “The Third Debate,” 241.

¹¹⁰ Jean Bethke Elshtain, “International Politics and Political Theory,” in *International Relations Theory Today*, ed. Ken Booth and Steve Smith, 261-78 (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 274.

¹¹¹ Smith, “Self-Images of a Discipline,” 28. On the evolution of traditional approaches, see: Wight, *International Theory*, in particular the introduction (1-6). On post-positivism, see Lapid, “The Third Debate.”

¹¹² Adapted from Box 7.11, Robert Jackson and Georg Sørensen, *Introduction International Relations* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999), 245. A third axis detailing the normative orientation of each position – between value-neutral and value-laden, or descriptive and prescriptive – would provide a better assessment of each position.

¹¹³ Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories*, 36-7.

¹¹⁴ William O. Aydelotte, “Quantification in history,” *Quantitative History*, ed. Don K. Rowney and James Q. Graham, Jr., 3-22 (Homewood, IL: The Dorsey Press, 1969), 4. Reprinted from *American Historical Review*, LXXI (Apr. 1966): 803-25.

¹¹⁵ Waltz, *Theory*, 16.

¹¹⁶ Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories*, 22-3.

¹¹⁷ Elshtain, “International Politics and Political Theory,” 276-77

¹¹⁸ Milja Kurki, “Causes of a divided discipline: rethinking the concept of cause in International Relations theory,” *Review of International Studies* 32 (2006): 189-216, 190.

¹¹⁹ Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories*, 47.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 47-8.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 23.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ Garnett, *Commonsense*, 4.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 1. However, the relationship between fact and theory is often ambiguous; the problem with this view, for many, is its epistemic assumption that fact and theory are separable. By this argument, facts only attain importance when theoretically situated; without theory, there is no way to know what is essential and what is peripheral. However, to define facts in the manner of D. Easton, as “a particular ordering of reality in terms of a theoretical interest,” is to miss the distinction between theorizing and describing altogether. (idem, 2, 7.)

¹²⁷ Ibid., 4.

¹²⁸ Again distinguishing the scientific-hermeneutic approaches from normative approaches. Hedley Bull provides a good example of this. Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 3.

¹²⁹ Garnett, *Commonsense*, 7.

¹³⁰ Alexander Wendt, "On constitution and causation in International Relations," *Review of International Studies* 24, special issue (1998): 101-117, 102.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, *Explaining and Understanding International Relations* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1990), 49-50.

¹³³ Wendt, "On constitution and causation," 102.

¹³⁴ Hollis and Smith, *Explaining and Understanding*, 68, 71.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 1.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 3.

¹³⁸ Wendt, "On constitution and causation," 102. These positions have their uses: "Given the interest of positivist IR scholars in establishing the epistemic authority of their work as Science, this choice leads them to emphasize that the overriding goal of IR must be Explanation and only Explanation. And given the interest of post-positivist IR scholars in Understanding, this leads them to reject characterizations of their work as science, and some even to reject the possibility as well of Explanation in social inquiry." (idem)

¹³⁹ Ibid., 103.

¹⁴⁰ Wendt, *Social Theory*, 78.

¹⁴¹ Wendt, "On constitution and causation," 105.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 110-1.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 112.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 107.

¹⁴⁶ Walter Carlsnaes, *Ideology and Foreign Policy: Problems of Comparative Conceptualization* (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 39.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Smith, "Self-Images of a Discipline," 26-7.

¹⁴⁹ Mayer, *Comparative*, 21.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 29-30.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 30-1.

¹⁵² Mayer's reference: Adam Przeworski and Henry Teune, *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry* (New York, NY: John Wiley, 1970).

¹⁵³ Mayer, *Comparative*, 32.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁵⁵ Wendt, *Social Theory*, 171.

¹⁵⁶ Katerina Dalacoura, "Unexceptional Politics? The Impact of Islam on International Relations," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 29, no. 3 (2000): 879-87, 886-7.

¹⁵⁷ Lapid, "The Third Debate," 251.

CHAPTER 3: IDEOLOGY

Many people think of life as a dark stream of blood and sweat, of emotion and excrement, above which hovers the brighter, fragile, immaterial sphere of ideas, above which, in turn, stand certain theories, the constructions of Great Minds, systems of ideas which had been stuck together by them. Life, Ideas, Theories—three stages of an ascending hierarchy. But this is all wrong, of course: ideas are inseparable from human life, since man is the only living creature who knows that he lives while he lives. On the other hand, the more theoretical a theory, the less true it is: indeed, it may be said that theories are part of our ideas rather than ideas being parts of our theories.

John Lukacs, *Historical Consciousness*¹

Introduction

In the last chapter, it was suggested that materialist accounts of ideational factors in political life do not capture the importance of ideas in constituting social relations, and that this in turn has contributed to the under-theorization of ideational factors in the social sciences, including international relations. At the same time, theories that reify ideas into a structure of their own do not offer a sufficient account of the importance of concrete or material factors in social life. A constitutive approach – the notion that the social is intersubjective – implies that social reality “lives between” the material and ideational, and offers an epistemological framework for investigating the role of ideational factors in the constitution of social relations and vice versa. Building on this insight, this chapter proposes ideology, as it emerges from the writings of Karl Marx and Karl Mannheim, as a framework for examining the constitutive effects of ideas in social relations. The

emergence of ideology as a phenomenon and as an analytical category is closely connected with its dual nature as both a subject of social scientific inquiry, and as a phenomenon of political discourse. It is argued that Mannheim's conception of ideology offers a parsimonious framework that renders both aspects of ideology mutually intelligible within the same conceptual apparatus. This chapter examines the versions of ideology that have emerged in the social sciences, the "ideological tradition" that develops from the work of Marx and Mannheim, and the analytical framework that emerges from that tradition. It also identifies two common objections to the use of ideology as a social scientific concept.

Versions of Ideology

Ideology has been one of the core concepts used to explore the interrelationship of political thought and political action. It shares both its contestability and its propensity for reinterpretation with other foundational concepts in political science – power, class, and nation, among others. However, in its common political usage, ideology has been imbued with negative connotations, and its academic incarnations have neither escaped this sense, nor entirely disowned it.² Intended by its eighteenth-century *philosophe* originator to mean simply the scientific study of ideas, the derogatory sense of ideology emerged almost concurrently, making the use of ideology as an intellectual swearword nearly as old as the term itself (and of more illustrious extraction – it is usually credited to Napoleon).³ Nonetheless, the term has found a degree of currency at various times and in various social scientific fields, including political studies, sociology, and some branches of economics.⁴

In many cases, the scholarly understanding of ideology is not far removed from its common sense as a synonym for a belief or a set of beliefs.⁵ Some empirical studies have used the term as a euphemism for “political opinion” or for opinions on political and social arrangements.⁶ Several enquiries with a basis in social psychology use ideology as a descriptor for socio-political attitudes or to denote the location of an attitude on an “ideological spectrum.”⁷ For example, James Sidanius refers to “dimensions of sociopolitical ideology,” such as “general conservatism” and “racism,” to describe sets of “cognitive behaviors” or personality traits.⁸ In this case, ideology refers to cognitive processes and not to ideas or to the content of thought. There is only a tenuous link between ideologies and groups or classes of people in these studies, making it possible to refer to an individual’s “ideology” and mean only his or her particular constellation of beliefs or “cognitive tendencies.” Apart from upsetting the customary distinction between thought and idea, such understandings of ideology entail no conceptual value that could not be achieved with a simpler and less ambiguous vocabulary, while eschewing several common elements of ideology – ideational content, conscious adherence, and group or class affiliation. Ideology is made a “thin” concept, little more than a convenient label or categorical vessel.

Other analysts treat ideology as a “thick” concept with a distinct conceptual structure and content. Several approaches fall under this rubric, and each assigns different levels of descriptive and evaluative depth to the concept. These accounts of ideology can be categorised in different ways and at different levels. At the analytical level, David Minar suggests the key definitional problem is the need to “identify the differentia of ideology” in respect of related concepts, particularly “idea.”⁹ Minar

identifies six variants, in which ideology is delimited by content or area of concern, internal structure or form of ideas, personal-social function, organizational function, purpose of transmission, and locus or nature of the “subject-source.”¹⁰ None of these elements alone is capable of clearly differentiating ideology from related concepts and kinds of thought, and in applying the term, students of ideology generally stake out a position on each of the three axes Minar identifies – intrinsic constitution, function, and locus or group affiliation.¹¹

By contrast, Jorge Larrain identifies four conceptual dimensions of ideology that underlie the definitional debate at a meta-analytical level: normative, generative, cultural, and epistemic.¹² The first of these concerns the analyst’s normative assessment of ideology as a phenomenon, and the standpoint taken in respect of ideology as subject (critical or value-neutral). This is often caught up with the connotations of falsity and intentionality that accompany ideology. The second aspect concerns the origins or derivation of ideologies, in particular the question of whether ideology is subjective – a reality imposed by consciousness – or objective – a consciousness imposed by reality. The third dimension concerns the degree to which ideology and culture are coextensive – is culture the substrate of ideology, or is all culture ideological?¹³ The fourth element relates to the epistemic relationship between ideology and science, and has two dimensions. The first dimension concerns the extravagant claims made in favour of dialectical materialism in the physical sciences; while this controversy has abated, Thomas Kuhn’s work on the role of “paradigms” in scientific development may have some relevance in this respect.¹⁴ The second dimension relates to the role of ideology as a “foil” for social scientific or sociological inquiry; this question has persisted in the post-

structuralist and post-modernist critique(s) of social science and social scientific knowledge.¹⁵ While worth noting, the latter element is not directly at issue in this study; it is the first three elements that are principally of interest here.

Taken together, the criteria listed above form a useful matrix for comparing approaches to ideology, all of which must provide some answer to the following questions:

- 1) Where do ideologies come from?
- 2) What distinguishes ideologies from other forms of social thought?
- 3) What functions do they serve?
- 4) What are the elements of an ideology?
- 5) How do ideologies work?

These questions allow us to interrogate and compare the various approaches to ideology by identifying their commonalities and highlighting their dissonances.

Genealogy of the Ideological Tradition

The broad framework for addressing the questions set out above has been derived from a central tradition that builds upon the insights and modalities of the Marxian approach to ideology. While this tradition has fostered different approaches to ideology that have furnished different answers to the key questions listed above, the contributors within this tradition have been able to draw upon a shared discourse on ideology, embodying key assumptions about the origins, structure, and elements of ideology that makes their claims mutually comprehensible, if not always compatible. Of particular interest here are the accounts of ideology offered by Karl Marx, and the modifications

made by Karl Mannheim, that together form the core of the conception of ideology. This is not to say that other conceptions of ideology are irrelevant or uninteresting, and there are certainly other thinkers who have expanded upon or amended the Marxian tradition – including Louis Althusser, Georg Lukács, Antonio Gramsci, and others.¹⁶ However, the exploration of ideology offered by Mannheim is adopted as a starting point for its frank acceptance of the tensions inherent in the concept of ideology and because it represents an effort to embrace these tensions as central to the conceptual richness of ideology.

1) Marx: Ideology or Ideologies?

Karl Marx made the first application of ideology as a “thick” concept, and his work has had an enduring influence on the subsequent conceptual development of ideology.¹⁷ This influence may be partially explicable by the extent of interpretive scope Marx’s use of ideology allows. As George Sabine writes, “the conception of ideology was at once one of Marx’s most pregnant ideas and also one of the vaguest...”¹⁸ The connotative fecundity of the Marxian conception of ideology relates to the necessary complexity of the treatment of ideas within a materialist system. For Marx, “the material or economic forces are “real” or substantial, while the ideological relations are only apparent or phenomenal.”¹⁹ Nonetheless, ideas, and the belief that ideas are decisive in social relations, are identifiable phenomena, and the role of ideas within the Marxian framework requires explanation on two levels. The first of these concerns the origins of ideas within the materialist ontology; the second concerns the role that ideas actually play in the ongoing development of a society. In answering these questions, Marx and Engels seem to put forward two corresponding, and not clearly complementary, understandings

of ideology, one based on the notion of falsity and motivated self-interest in ideological production, and the other following from the social determination of consciousness based on class experience.²⁰

Marx and Engels originally used ideology in its pejorative sense in *The German Ideology* as part of their foundational critique of idealism, specifically the Hegelian variants of idealism then prevalent in Germany.²¹ Marx and Engels mean by ideology a form of knowledge grounded in falsity – an “upside down version of reality” in which ideas are held to create material circumstances – and contrast it with their own “scientific” proposal for a historical materialism.²² Initially, at least, the Marxian usage of ideology incorporates a large swath of ideational phenomena, all of which are held to be derived from material facts:

Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness... no longer retain the semblance of independence. They have no history, no development; but men, developing their material production and their material intercourse, alter, along with this their real existence, their thinking and the products of their thinking... Where speculation ends—in real life—there real, positive science begins: the representation of the practical activity, of the practical process of development of men. Empty talk about consciousness ceases, and real knowledge has to take its place.²³

Ideology is taken as a form of false consciousness – “the alienation of thought from life” – that produces an ideational chimera to “obscure, distort, or mystify reality.”²⁴ This in itself was not a new assessment – the Napoleonic usage contrasted the hard realism of politics with the fantastical musings of the “ideologues.”²⁵ However, Marx and his collaborator deployed a new modality of ideology by connecting the pejorative or polemical usage of ideology, which is in itself difficult to characterise as a “thick” concept, to their understanding of the generation and role of consciousness within a materialist framework.

In the Marxian scheme, consciousness is the awareness or understanding that people have of the social relationships in which they are embedded, and of the social edifice overall.²⁶ Consciousness is taken to be derivative of the underlying economic structures of society: the overall relations of production of a given society are shaped, more or less of necessity, by the arrangement of the “material productive forces” – that is, the preponderant mode of production – in that society.²⁷ These relations of production are characterised by a functional social stratification or class structure; each class is defined, in turn, by its interaction with the means of production, and the members of the class become conscious of the broader relations of production through this interaction.²⁸ This is held to be the source of social thought; thus, as Marx writes, “it is not the consciousness of humankind which determines their existence, but rather their social existence which determines their consciousness.”²⁹

For Marx, social existence operates as the wellspring of consciousness on two levels. First, as discussed above, the relations of production are the foundation of all other social relationships, and upon this economic “base” are built all the various ramifications of the whole cultural “superstructure” of a society.³⁰ At a macro-social level, this has often been interpreted as an assertion that ideology is coterminous with the cultural superstructure of a society.³¹ Through this superstructure, the ruling class – the class that controls the means of production – “establishes itself and builds social institutions corresponding to the new mode of production.”³² This is a continuation of the notion of ideology as false consciousness, but it brings a new understanding of the purpose of ideology in reinforcing the position of the dominant class; as Marx and Engels write, “the ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class.”³³ In this

conception – the dominant ideology thesis – ideology is little more than a rationalisation for power, and a means by which the dominant class conceals its own interests, even from itself.³⁴

In the dominant ideology thesis, ideology is an ideal construct that supports or rationalises the superstructure, and as such should not be conflated with the superstructure itself. Larrain suggests that, in the Marxist view, ideology is distinct from those portions of the “idealistic superstructure” that arise “naturally” from the objective social formation.³⁵ In this understanding, it is possible for the superstructure to be an organic extension of the relations of production, at least until the mode of production has exhausted or transcended its potentialities. Once that stage has been reached, the superstructure and the ideology that accompanies it cease to be functional *vis-à-vis* the economic base of society; indeed, they may become dysfunctional, as Meyer describes:

[The] ruling class seeks to perpetuate its rule even if it is made obsolete and superfluous by further economic progress. The class structure becomes a drag on further progress. The superstructure of institutions, ideologies, and habits, which was once part of the forces of progress, now paralyzes further development. The forces and relations of production are now in conflict with each other.³⁶

The conflict between the forces and relations of production is a class conflict; as the dominant mode of production changes, a rising class struggles to advance its own interests at the expense of the declining ruling class. As the rising class vanquishes the former ruling class, a new superstructure emerges that replaces the old and vivifies the new mode of production, and a new dominant ideology emerges to naturalise or justify these arrangements.

Ideological development is closely bound up in this process, but the generative logic of ideology in the Marxian conception is not clearly articulated by the dominant ideology thesis. Marx is careful to distinguish between the tensions derived from

underlying contradictions in social relations, and the ideational expression of these conflicts or in his words, “the legal, political, religious, aesthetic, or philosophic – in short, ideological—forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out.”³⁷ In this passage, ideology is not an element of the superstructure, but the form of consciousness by which social relations are deciphered and understood. More specifically, it is through conflicts over the “ideological forms” of the superstructure that class antagonisms are revealed. Wherever elements of the extant superstructure impede the progress of the new economic mode, the claims of the protagonists are articulated and comprehended in ideological terms.

In Marx’s study of the early capitalist period, this constitutes “an evolutionary theory of society in which the whole system of natural law fell into place as the ideology appropriate to a specific stage of development.”³⁸ However, Marx also introduces a new duality to his usage of ideology: ideology is both the means by which the dominant class reinforces its claims, and the means by which the emergent ruling class expresses its interests during the transition from one mode of production to another. Contending classes have divergent ideologies – indeed, they must, for classes are the agents of economic change, and class antagonisms, as much as they are a function of the underlying mode and relations of production, are perceived and expressed in ideological terms.

There is a clear incoherence between this view and the dominant ideology thesis. On one hand, ideology is the aspect of consciousness that conceals and justifies social contradictions.³⁹ On the other, it expresses and actualises these contradictions in consciousness, and consequently the essence of ideology cannot be concealment.

Instead, ideology refers to a specific kind of consciousness, and this is the second level on which social existence is held to determine consciousness. The class is a functional grouping, defined by the common relationship of its members to the means of production, and this relationship is the mechanism by which the shared consciousness of the class is generated. As Abercrombie and Turner write, “since social classes have different economic circumstances, they also have different interests, so that ideas grasp, represent and promote separate interests.”⁴⁰ Individual consciousness is bound up with the group consciousness of the class, as it is generated by the same social experience. Ideology is the means by which members of all classes become aware of and express the fundamental class antagonisms within their societies. This does not automatically imply group-identification among class members, although it does imply a shared cultural and ideational outlook.⁴¹

Ideology is the logical framework that overlays the consciousness individuals of a given class have of the historical development in which they are participants. However, this cannot be taken to imply that the social consciousness of the subaltern class is somehow more “real” or authentic than that of the dominant class. Ideology comprises ideas, while the superstructure comprises practices, and where the latter is directly implicated in the relations and mode of production, the former is, in the Marxian scheme, epiphenomenal, and therefore cannot be ascribed the “naturalness” or economic necessity that Larrain attributes to the superstructure. Sabine summarises:

[For Marx] ideas reflect and more or less misrepresent an underlying economic reality... As ideal motives or reasons for conduct they are merely appearances or manifestations of something which is in its real nature quite different. And though they seem valid and compelling to their unsophisticated possessor, their compulsive force is really something which is not in his consciousness at all but is

concealed in the social position of his class and in its relations to economic production.⁴²

Implicit in this understanding is the idea that all consciousness, regardless of its class origins, must be in some degree ideological, and therefore false. Indeed, if one accepts the communist teleology, then only in the final stages of the development of communism is it possible for men (and women) to approach true consciousness of their economic circumstances. This would imply that even where men become “conscious” of social antagonisms, the articulation of this realisation could be no more than an expression of their class interests, making the counter-ideology or “class consciousness” just as “false” as the dominant ideology or “false consciousness” it would supplant. It is only in the full view of the historical process that the objective reality of the social and productive matrix can be discerned. This is made clear in Marx’s insistence that “we cannot judge of such a period of transformation by its consciousness of itself,” but only upon our understanding of the true or material social changes which underpin that consciousness.⁴³

It may be argued, of course, that while a socially-derived consciousness can neither grasp nor articulate the “objective” social reality, it may still be a reasonable expression of the subjective experience of that reality for a given class, insofar as it is an expression of the interests of that class. However, even if we accept that the measure of ideological falsity is authenticity *qua* class interests, there remains a significant tension between the dominant ideology thesis and the conception of ideology as an expression of social consciousness. If class consciousness, and by implication class ideology, is rooted in social experience, how can there be a dominant ideology? The very notion of false consciousness implies that the “ideological forms” of the superstructure, which are an expression of the interests of the dominant class, can be accepted by the members of a

subordinate class *as being in their own interests*, and that the superstructure thereby reinforces the underlying productive relationships and regime of exploitation.⁴⁴

Acknowledging this, however, would imply that it is possible for the superstructure to either support or undermine the economic base, which is not a development contemplated in the Marxian understanding of cultural production. If social existence determines consciousness, then how can consciousness shore up the arrangements of social existence? In contrast with the epiphenomenal account of ideology, this suggests a more constitutive role for ideas in social relations.

This is not necessarily a fatal flaw, as neither Marx nor Engels were consistent adherents of a narrow economic determinism, and both seem to suggest that, while economic factors are the strongest or most fundamental force in historical change, the particular paths of historical development may be influenced by superstructural elements.⁴⁵ Nonetheless, this is a significant discontinuity in the Marxian theories of ideology. If ideology can shape human consciousness and historical processes, even in limited ways, then it has a functional or utilitarian role that is not appreciably developed in Marx's work, and this suggests that the generation and function of ideology may not be linked as closely as the dominant ideology thesis suggests.

2) *Mannheim: Reconciling Ideology and Utopia*

The inherent weakness of the dominant ideology thesis is the key juncture in Karl Mannheim's effort to develop sociology of knowledge. Mannheim confronts questions of political thought and political action directly, in contradistinction to Marx, for whom ideology was tangential to the principal economic focus. Mannheim seeks to address

thought in its sociological context by investigating “how men actually think,” and not the thought of philosophers.⁴⁶ Although Mannheim adheres to the broader Marxist philosophy of history, his work evinces an appreciation both of institutional factors and of the dynamic or fluid character of socially conditioned thought.⁴⁷ Mannheim accepts that thought is socially-derived as both the foundation and the prerequisite for his sociology of knowledge, but he self-consciously eschews the mechanistic tendencies of the Marxian account of history. While the “underlying” structure may be illuminating for the observer, the thought of the historical subject – contemporary or otherwise – is not epiphenomenal and bears a clear relation to the understanding those individuals have of their circumstances and actions, and to the constitution of the social reality in which they find themselves.

Mannheim begins with two conceptions of ideology, the particular and the total. The particular conception of ideology refers to the “more or less conscious disguises of the real nature of a situation, the true recognition of which would not be in accord with [the subject’s] interests.”⁴⁸ This corresponds broadly with the Marxian portrayal of ideology as false consciousness. The total conception of ideology encompasses the “opinions, perceptions, and interpretations” as well as the “conceptual apparatus” of the subject, and relates it to their “life-situation” or social milieu.⁴⁹ Mannheim also uses “*Weltanschauung*” in this connection, although “worldview” connotes a degree of systematic organisation and internal consistency, as well as an affinity with “philosophy,” that could be used to distinguish it from ideology, at least in Mannheim’s usage. Nonetheless, both concepts build on the awareness of different or plural ways of thinking, characterized by the modern substitution of “consciousness” for the assumed “objective

ontological unity of the world,” and by the embeddedness of perception in an “interdependent system of meanings” that “varies both in all its parts and in its totality from one historical period to another.”⁵⁰

Both the particular and total conceptions of ideology share an understanding that social ideas and awareness are derived from concrete social circumstances and experiences.

The ideas expressed by the subject are ... regarded as functions of his existence. This means that opinions, statements, propositions, and systems of ideas are not taken at their face value but are interpreted in the light of the life-situation of the one who expresses them.⁵¹

However, the total conception goes beyond the particular conception in its radical perspectivism. The suspicion that ontology and ideology might be comprehensively, if not inextricably, connected – or as Mannheim writes, “the awareness that our total outlook as distinguished from its details may be distorted” – is a logical outcome of the problem of “false consciousness” identified by Marx.⁵² It is also the basis for a “profound disquietude” about the prospects of objective inquiry into social phenomena, and for a growing concern with “relativism” in sociological and related disciplines in Mannheim’s time.⁵³ For Mannheim, analyses of false consciousness finally turn toward the analyst, since “this point of view ultimately forces us to recognize that our axioms, our ontology, and our epistemology have been profoundly transformed.”⁵⁴ The logical extension of the concept of false consciousness ultimately dissolves the criteria of falsity on which the concept is based, thereby problematizing the epistemological basis of social inquiry.⁵⁵

For Mannheim, the way out of this dilemma, and the way toward a sociology of knowledge, is “to combine ... non-evaluative analysis with a definite epistemology.”⁵⁶

Mannheim was critical of relativism, which he accused of combining the problematization of knowledge with an out-dated objectivist epistemology. He asserted that the relativism he was confronting was based on a “theory of knowledge which was as yet unaware of the interplay between conditions of existence and modes of thought,” and resulted in the “rejection of all those forms of knowledge which were dependent upon the subjective standpoint and the social situation of the knower, and which were, hence, merely ‘relative.’”⁵⁷ As an antidote to this “untenable” position, Mannheim advances his own approach, “relationism,” which accepts the social and historical contingency of both the content and categories of knowledge, and treats such knowledge as a valid object of social inquiry by eschewing an absolute standard of truth or falsity.⁵⁸ Critics of Mannheim’s categorization have observed that this *is* relativism in a different semantic guise. Goldman writes:

What Mannheim and others means [*sic*] by “relationism” was much more like the original meaning of relativism when skepticism emerged as a problem in sixteenth-century philosophy. Modern relativism arose during the Renaissance with the shattering of the unity of Christian culture in the Reformation; it was accentuated by humanist doubts engendered through rediscovery of the classics, especially the ancient skeptics, who cast doubt on the ability to ground ultimate beliefs in any form of reason.⁵⁹

Regardless of what name it is given, Mannheim’s position, and his advancement of the concept of “the non-evaluative general total conception of ideology,” represent a significant break with the Marxian understanding of ideology.⁶⁰

As discussed above, Marxist theory sees in all manifestations of the superstructure, however institutionalized, only a series of transitory equilibria that express the balance of forces of the fundamental economic structure. The conflicts over the form of the superstructure are competitions between the ideological expressions of the dominant class on one hand, and the emerging dominant class on the other. However,

both are “false” insofar as they reflect (and conceal) class interests and not the underlying social and economic arrangements. While the tension between the Marxian accounts of the function and the generation of ideology is discussed above, it should be noted that both accounts implicitly assume that there is a “real” reality against which ideological claims can be measured and found false. In the Marxian scheme, social knowledge can be reconciled with social reality only in the final synthesis that resolves the underlying contradictions of the economic order; nonetheless, in Mannheim’s view, the Marxian epistemology is objectivist, and therefore does not provide an adequate basis for understanding the relationship between knowledge and social reality. Indeed, Mannheim writes “it was not possible for the socialist idea of ideology to have developed of itself into the sociology of knowledge,” since the socialist conception, too, is a product of its historical and social circumstances.⁶¹

In place of the materialist or determinist account of cognition and the generation of ideology, Mannheim seeks to treat relativity as an insight rather than an affliction:

It is imperative in the present transitional period to make use of the intellectual twilight which dominates our epoch and in which all values and points of view appear in their genuine relativity. We must realize once and for all that the meanings which make up our world are simply an historically determined and continuously developing structure in which man develops, and are in no sense absolute.⁶²

Instead, the relationist or relativist holds that *all* knowledge is socially-situated, including knowledge which seeks to change the foundation of social relations as well as that which seeks to preserve it. Mannheim identifies two modalities of modern social thought, the ideological and the utopian.⁶³ Alluding to the dominant ideology thesis, Mannheim notes that “there is implicit in the word “ideology” the insight that in certain situations the collective unconscious of certain groups obscures the real condition of society both to

itself and to others and thereby stabilizes it.”⁶⁴ This is contrasted with what he calls the “utopian mentality.”

Utopian thinking reflects the opposite discovery of the political struggle, namely that certain oppressed groups are intellectually so strongly interested in the destruction and transformation of a given condition of society that they unwittingly see only those elements in the situation which tend to negate it.⁶⁵

The measure of a utopian mentality is not that it “is incongruous with and transcends the immediate situation,” since Mannheim argues that such descriptions apply to ideologies as well, insofar as the ideas in ideologies may be aspirational rather than attainable.⁶⁶ Rather, while ideological and utopian “states of mind” may both orient themselves “to objects that are alien to reality and which transcend actual existence,” a utopian orientation is one that would “tend to shatter, either partially or wholly, the order of things prevailing at the time.”⁶⁷ The distinction between utopian and ideological thinking is one of purpose, not of mechanism. In this understanding, utopian thinking could be characterized as a type of ideology, although Mannheim does not make this usage.

The possibility that ideological and utopian mentalities can be produced by the same set of social circumstances and “operate” by the same “mechanism” demonstrates the fundamentally constitutive nature of Mannheim’s account of ideology, and offers a means of reconciling the dominant ideology thesis and with the Marxian account of the generation of ideology.⁶⁸ This necessarily entails a constitutive understanding of ideology and the abandonment of economic determination of ideas. As Gunter Remmling observes:

Sociology of knowledge establishes the dependence of knowledge on social reality. Yet this premise would be meaningless were it derived from a crude realism that confronts the subject of perception with an autonomous object which has merely to be registered in photographic fashion. In the case of naïve realism,

perceiving man could never exert any influence upon the object of cognition. Such influence is conceivable only if we assume that the object of cognition is constituted by the perceiving individual.⁶⁹

However, if ideology is a pluralistic, constitutive phenomenon – if ideology is constitutive of social relations – then there is a basis for the argument that it “shores up” the social structure through persuasion and concealment. This account, while it eschews the deterministic account of ideational factors, seems to Mannheim to offer greater prospects of understanding and therefore a sounder foundation for the sociology of knowledge than the economic power-mechanics of the Marxian method.⁷⁰ Mannheim reconciles two concepts of ideology, that of a purposive *phenomenon* of political and social relations, and that of an analytical *concept* that can be used to investigate the way that ideas constitute social reality, one that applies equally to all social classes, including revolutionists and “utopians.”

Conceptual Framework for Ideology

Ideology, as developed by Marx and Mannheim, forms the core of the “ideological tradition,” which is not so much a conception of ideology but a theoretical discourse on ideology. Mannheim, in particular, eschewed rigid conceptualizations of ideology, on the premise that the study of politics “is never a closed and finished realm of knowledge which can be separated from the continuous process out of which it developed.”⁷¹ It is nonetheless possible to identify, from the descriptions given above, several conceptual parameters of ideology. These parameters situate the various conceptions of ideology – particular, total, and analytical – within a single framework, which in turn provides a guide to exploring the constitutive effects of ideology systematically. The first parameter defines the levels of constitutive interaction and

relates to the dual status of ideology as subject and object; the second concerns ideology as description or ontology, or as a framework of intelligibility for social relations; and the third relates to the link between ideology and action, in terms of defining the possible and the desirable.

1) Self, Society, and Other

First, ideology links individuals with society in a mutually constitutive relationship. While ideology relates to individual beliefs, it is not an individual phenomenon *per se*. This provides a different contextualization of ideational factors than that suggested by methodological individualism. As Mannheim writes:

Men living in groups do not merely coexist physically as discrete individuals. They do not confront the objects of the world from the abstract levels of a contemplating mind as such, nor do they do so as exclusively as solitary beings. On the contrary they act with and against one another in diversely organized groups, and while doing so they think with and against one another.⁷²

By reducing ideational factors to individual beliefs, they are rendered subjective and therefore beyond the realm of scientific inquiry. However, the recognition that social thought is intersubjective and constitutive brings ideology within the ambit of social science. This is crucial to the understanding of ideology, because it connects individual agency with both social and ideational forms. As Mannheim writes:

Strictly speaking, it is incorrect to say that the single individual thinks. Rather it is more correct to insist that he participates in thinking further what other men have thought before him. He finds himself in an inherited situation with patterns of thought which are appropriate to this situation and attempts to elaborate further the inherited modes of response or to substitute others for them in order to deal more adequately with the new challenges which have arisen out of the shifts and changes in his situation.⁷³

This relates to the subject matter as well: ideology is thought about social relations in the broadest sense. Both Marx and Mannheim are careful not to delimit their understanding

of ideology to discrete fields; while both might be prepared to acknowledge that not all thought is ideological, the definition of what is political or social or economic is conceived ideologically, and so cannot precede empirical analysis. This is an important point in the context of political Islam – as Charles Hirschkind has observed, “Western concepts (religion, political, secular, temporal) reflect specific historical developments, and cannot be applied as a set of universal categories or natural domains.”⁷⁴ Thus, while beliefs are individual, social thought is social – that is, human understandings of the social and political institutions and relationships in which they participate are derived from, and developed in, a social and ideational context.

However, the key realization associated with ideology, and the starting point for both Marx and Mannheim, is the emergence of ideology not as an ideational phenomenon but as a tactic of political discourse. Mannheim writes that “political discussion is, from the very first, more than theoretical argumentation; it is the tearing off of disguises – the unmasking of those unconscious motives which bind the group existence to its cultural aspirations and its theoretical arguments.”⁷⁵ This reification of ideology, or its use in a political context to characterize the thinking of another, is more than an ontology of structure; it is also an ontology of action, one that connects “I think that you think *X*” to “I think that you will do *Y*.” This is partly why Mannheim argues that the non-evaluative concept of ideology necessarily blurs into and becomes an evaluative concept of ideology.⁷⁶ Consequently, ideology is simultaneously the politicization of social order and social thought *and* a tactic in the ideological competition that this politicization creates; it is both subject *and* object, and that allows it to incorporate multiple areas of interaction.

2) *Ideology as Ontology*

Second, ideology forms the framework of intelligibility for social order and constitutes the social ontology of the thinking subject. This does not distinguish ideology from traditional cosmologies; rather, ideology is characterized by the condition of the plurality consciousness characteristic of modernity. Mannheim locates the basis for this in the ideational constitution of social relations:

‘Perspective’ in this sense signifies the manner in which one views an object, what one perceives in it, and how one construes it in his thinking. Perspective, therefore, is something more than a merely formal determination of thinking. It refers also to qualitative elements in the structure of thought, elements which must necessarily be overlooked by purely formal logic. It is precisely these factors which are responsible for the fact that two persons, even if they apply the same formal-logical rules... in an identical manner, may judge the same object very differently.⁷⁷

It is in this sense that ideology is a distinctively modern phenomenon. E. Doyle

McCarthy observes that “ideologies are coterminous with modernity itself, with the disappearance of a unified world view, with the recognition that there are numerous points of view and these represent alternative political views and strategies.”⁷⁸

Traditional societies precluded ideological competition, since “the multiplicity of ways of thinking cannot become a problem in periods when social stability underlies and guarantees the internal unity of a world-view.”⁷⁹ This is not to suggest that ideas were not relevant to the conduct of political or social intercourse in pre-modern societies. This is evident in the fact that pre-modern societies bothered to maintain a cosmology at all; rather, it is the realization of the plural and positional nature of knowledge that distinguishes modern and traditional social ideas.

The social effects of modernity have a two-fold effect on traditional worldviews. On the one hand, modern technological and economic structures intensify horizontal

mobility between countries, revealing that “different peoples think differently.”⁸⁰ Of course, such anomalies could be rationalized within traditional cosmologies or frames of reference “as curiosities, errors, ambiguities, or heresies.”⁸¹ However, place mobility *within* societies, largely in the form of urbanization, combined with increased “vertical mobility,” that is, “rapid movement between strata [of a society] in the sense of social ascent and descent,” exposes people to differences of worldview that cannot be reconciled within traditional ideational frameworks.⁸² These experiences reveal the perspectival nature of social thought, a development which is profoundly corrosive of traditional cosmologies. Consequently, ideology is a phenomenon linked to the social dislocation characteristic of modernity, and with “the disappearance of a unitary intellectual world with fixed values and norms.”⁸³ In this sense, ideology can be seen as social ontology, part of an attempt to fashion a functional replacement for traditions and practices that have been irretrievably damaged by the exigencies of modernity.

Related to this is the historical consciousness associated with ideology: perspective problematizes the past as well as the present. Lukacs dates the emergence of “historical approach as a form of thought” to the mid-1800s, concurrent with the rise of nationalisms and widespread literacy in Europe, and therefore with the emergence of modern mass politics.⁸⁴ Similarly, Foucault describes a new kind of history that appears in the early modern period, suggesting that “up to this point, history had never been anything more than the history of power as told by power itself, or the history of power that power had made people tell; it was the history of power, as recounted by power.”⁸⁵ History was embedded in the cosmology of the *ancien regime*. What emerges in the modern era is a new kind of history, a “new subject of history,” whether “the nobility” or

“society” or “the nation” or some other group, in which historical knowledge is generated through a counter-discourse for objectives not embodied by the “official” discourse propagated through the state, and which subvert the organic or cosmological linkage between authority and the political arrangements of a society.⁸⁶ It is by changing the subject, discursively speaking, that historical consciousness allows the emergence of the nation, the race, the class, and so on, from the cosmological unity of a given tradition.

Finally, ideology does more than describe the past and present; it also constitutes perceptions of social possibilities. This emerges most clearly in Mannheim’s discussion of ideology and utopia, which he distinguishes according to their relative perceptions of the possible:

[E]very age allows to arise (in differently located social groups) those ideas and values in which are contained in condensed form the unrealized and unfulfilled tendencies which represent the needs of each age. These intellectual elements then become the explosive material for bursting the limits of the existing order.⁸⁷

Mannheim points to the diverse meanings and understandings of the word “freedom” – which could connote negative freedom defined by privileges, inner freedom of conscience, or formal equalitarian freedom, depending on the perspective and social situation of the person using the word – as an example of the potentialities latent in existing ideational frameworks.⁸⁸ In short, ideology also constitutes the future.

3) Ideas and Action

Third, ideology mediates between ideas and action. As Mannheim writes:

Knowledge, as seen in the light of the total conception of ideology, is by no means an illusory experience... Knowledge arising out of our experience in actual life situations, though not absolute, is knowledge none the less. The norms arising out of such actual life situations do not exist in a social vacuum, but are effective as real sanctions for conduct.⁸⁹

Mannheim's conception of the "existential determination of knowledge" does not imply "a mechanical cause-effect sequence," but refers to the "correlation between life-situation and thought-process" as it is actually manifested in empirical cases.⁹⁰ This, in turn, leaves open the space for the immanent development of thought or "inner dialectic" without relying on it exclusively as a means of understanding political thought.

In some measure this is simply commonsensical: ideas do not think themselves, and as much as the internal structure or logic of an idea may suggest a path forward and limit the options available, these possibilities are mediated by human agency in social contexts. The intimations of ideas may be followed to their logical conclusions, combined with "varied opposing impulses" and the ideas associated with these, or abrogated outright.⁹¹ However, the source of these changes is not to be found within the ideas themselves. Mannheim retains an understanding of individual agency within the context of the social derivation of knowledge, by recognizing individuals as the source of innovation in social thought:

The belief that the significance of individual creative power is to be denied is one of the most widespread misunderstandings of the findings of sociology. On the contrary, from what should the new be expected to originate if not from the novel and uniquely personal mind of the individual who breaks beyond the bounds of the existing order?⁹²

In this sense, ideology also serves a normative function, defining expectations as well as possibilities.

4) Synthesis

Taken together, these factors offer a comprehensive framework for considering the role of ideational factors in social and political relations. This can be described in two

dimensions. First, ideology is multivalent: ideology allows the incorporation of multiple levels of interaction into a single framework. Drawing on the elements discussed above, these are characterized as “Self,” “Society,” and “Other.” Second, ideology is multimodal – that is, ideology entails three modalities, characterized as “Descriptive,” “Normative,” and “Prospective.” The recognition that ideology is both an analytical and a political phenomenon – that is, both the subject of inquiry and an object of politics – divides this framework into two sections. The first part describes the constitutive effects of ideology in relation to the thinking subject. The second part describes the constitutive effects of ideology as an object of thought or of political action for the thinking subject.

This double movement accounts for the richness of Mannheim’s account of ideology. By combining the key insights of Mannheim’s approach to ideology – the social constitution of knowledge with the ideational constitution of social relations – this framework allows the interrogation of ideational phenomenon in a systematic way. Ideology is shown as both a framework for perception, by defining and narrating social relations, and a framework for action, by defining the possibility and desirability of action. At the individual level, this framework also preserves, as far as possible, the symmetry between self and other; at the systemic level it connects the logics of reproduction and logics of change in social systems by incorporating individual agency and the definition of potentialities. Significantly, this framework also suggests a constitutive conceptualization of the connections between micro-motivation and macro-outcomes.

	Self	Society	Self-Society
Descriptive	What are my interests?	What is society?	How does society limit me?
Normative	What are my values?	What should society be?	What does society expect of me?
Prospective	How can I act?	How can society be changed?	What can I do in Society?

Figure 3: Ideology-As-Subject Matrix

	Other	Other-Society	Other-Self
Descriptive	What do others believe?	How do others affect society?	How do others affect me?
Normative	What do others believe?	How do others want to change society?	How should I treat others?
Prospective	How will others act?	How can others change society?	How can I use others?

Figure 4: Ideology-As-Object Matrix

Criticisms of Ideology

Two common criticisms of ideology should be noted here. The first relates to the “differentia of ideology” or to the characteristics that distinguish ideology from related concepts of social thought.⁹³ In his essay of the uses of ideology in political studies, Willard Mullins identifies the problem of boundaries as one of the core definitional lacunae in respect of ideology.⁹⁴ Mullins notes cases where “the terms “ideology,” “myth,” “creed,” “conceptual scheme,” and “*Weltanschauung*” are used pretty much interchangeably.”⁹⁵ Harold Walsby and others have extended ideology to correspond with the curious German notion of *Weltanschauung*, the all-encompassing worldview.⁹⁶ While there are certainly legitimate distinctions between terms such as these, this criticism conflates analytical concepts with ontological assertions, insofar as it rests on the understanding that the function or operation of ideational factors is caused by their

internal structure. For example, Lasswell and Kaplan used the term “myth” to describe Marxian ideology, an understanding wherein “myths are described as “certain fundamental assumptions which at the time, whether they be actually true or false, are believed by the mass of the world to be true with such confidence that they hardly appear to bear the character of assumptions.”⁹⁷ On this basis, Laswell and Kaplan, like Mannheim, pair ideology and utopia as forms of myth:

The approach of Lasswell and Kaplan makes no attempt to analyze the *structure* or form of ideology or to note the ways in which it differs structurally from other symbolic forms. The various types of political myth, including ideology and utopia, are distinguished on a *functional* basis.⁹⁸

The substance of the myth does not matter, in other words, for it may serve different purposes in different times and places, depending on the uses to which it is put. This is problematic if ideology, or in this case myth, is put forward as an explanatory structure. Mullins is critical of this lassitude, and argues that by defining ideology and utopia in functional terms, Lasswell and Kaplan “make it impossible through empirical inquiry to falsify the assumption that ideology is functional, or that utopia is dysfunctional, to the maintenance of a political system... as an empirical matter, we want to know just what consequences certain standardized cultural forms have for the system.”⁹⁹ However, this presupposes that ideologies – and, by extension, ideational factors – are being put forward in the context of a causal explanation. If ideational factors are understood to be constitutive rather than causal, then it is not unreasonable to expect that ideas will “work” in broadly the same way no matter their substance.

A related example is the relationship between ideology and discourse. Mannheim anticipated, in many ways, the constitutive understanding of knowledge advanced by post-structuralist and post-modernist social theorists. Trevor Purvis and Alan Hunt

observe that discourse and ideology have been closely related in post-structuralist and post-modernist critical theories.

[I]deology and discourse refer to pretty much the same aspect of social life – the idea that human individuals participate in forms of understanding, comprehension or consciousness of the relations and activities in which they are involved; a conception of the social that has a hermeneutic dimension, but which is not reducible to hermeneutics.¹⁰⁰

Foucault alludes to an understanding of ideology as “a doctrine of apprenticeship, but also a doctrine of contracts and the regulated formation of the social body,” capturing the emphasis many ideologies place on reforming the body politic or remoulding the body social, and hinting at a concern with the instruments and techniques of change or power associated with these projects.¹⁰¹ Instead of ideology, Foucault relates power and knowledge through discourse; hence his suggestion that ideology is a “speculative discourse” concerned with relating “a theory of ideas, signs, and the individual genesis of sensations” to “a theory of the social composition of interests.”¹⁰² Discourse is knowledge produced for the ends of power, but for Foucault, power is not a commodity that one has or does not have, but the force relations immanent in all human relations; power is the “moving substrate of force relations which, by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power, but the latter are always local and unstable.”¹⁰³ There is, in this sense, a possible distinction between discourse and ideology, in that the former “insist[s] that all social relations are lived and comprehended by their participants in terms of specific linguistic or semiotic vehicles that organize their thinking, understanding and experiencing,” while the latter “implies the existence of some link between ‘interests’ and ‘forms of consciousness.’”¹⁰⁴ Nonetheless, this is a distinction of degree insofar as both discourse and ideology are mutually concerned with immanence and experience – neither is put forward as a causal explanation.

The second criticism stems from the view that the elements of an ideology must be logically coherent or internally consistent.¹⁰⁵ This is related to the understanding, deeply ingrained in the discourse on ideology, that ideologies are determinative and ideologues must adhere to them in a systematic or automatic way. As Hannah Arendt expresses it, “nothing, after all, compromises the understanding of political issues and their meaningful debate today more seriously than the automatic thought-reactions conditioned by the beaten paths of ideologies...”¹⁰⁶ While there is a certain common sense to this notion, there are two possible responses, related to the meaning of consistency and the need for consistency, respectively. In the former case, Steven Brown notes that “consistency” is a difficult criterion to actualise in respect of the elements of an ideology, since it generally refers to consistency as understood by the observer, not by the subject. Like the social meanings activated by an ideology, consistency may be apparent only to those who have been “trained or socialized into the logic” of the tradition under investigation.¹⁰⁷ Internal consistency can only be assessed internally, a fact that renders it useful only in discussing the “potentialities” of an ideology: in exploring its “intimations,” to use Oakeshott’s phrase, or in identifying areas where an ideology may be susceptible or open to cross-fertilisation with extrinsic ideas or elements.¹⁰⁸

In the latter case, and related to the immanent conception of consistency, the logical coherence of an ideology cannot be understood as a precondition for its efficacy. Benedict Anderson points to the apparent incongruity of the “‘political’ power of nationalisms vs. their philosophical poverty and even incoherence.”¹⁰⁹ Similarly, Martin Kitchen suggests that the conception of ideology as a “coherent body of ideas” is at odds with the self-consciously anti-rational current within fascism. The fascist ideology, such

as it was, comprised an “extraordinary collection of half-baked and cranky ideas [which] certainly did not form a coherent whole,” and in which the emphasis on substance overwhelmed any requirement for system.¹¹⁰ Instead, and in contrast to the elaborate and systematic communist ideologies that are taken as prototypical in many analyses of ideology, fascism emphasized the transcendent community of the nation, both as present subject and as historical and utopian referent, as it was embodied and articulated by the leader.¹¹¹ Through this mystical communion with the nation, the fascist seeks “not a solution, but a salvation.”¹¹² This naturalistic insistence upon the authenticity of the national community trumps the artificial claims of logic; indeed, insofar as logic undermines tradition, it is viewed as cosmopolitan and suspicious.¹¹³ This allows for the cultivation of a self-conscious irrationality that exhibits little or no concern for consistency among ideas, provided these ideas are individually legitimised by reference to the true community.¹¹⁴ In short, immanent consistency, while interesting, is the hobgoblin of philosophers, not the hallmark of political thought. The key aspect is that the ideas subsumed by an ideology are interconnected – that is, ideology is “a ‘set’ of interrelated (though not necessarily logically interdependent) ideas” – and that they provide both an evaluative account and a normative guide for social and political relations.¹¹⁵

Conclusion

The conceptualization of ideology that emerges from the work of Karl Marx and Karl Mannheim offers a rich conceptual basis for considering the role of ideational factors in social intercourse. As a phenomenon, ideology is closely connected with the

material and ideational dislocations of modernity; these dislocations simultaneously problematize existing socio-political orders and make it possible to contest these social and political arrangements in ideological terms. The concurrent understandings of ideology as a subject of inquiry and an object of political action allow it to live “in between” the constitutivist and instrumentalist positions that emerge from the Marxian account of ideology, providing a conceptual structure, and also a conceptual space, for the consideration of the two approaches on commensurable terms. It is argued that a conceptualization of ideology that is both multivalent, incorporating Self, Society, and Other, and multimodal, encompassing the Descriptive, Normative, and Prospective modalities, may offer a fruitful second-order framework for addressing ideational phenomena like political Islam.

Notes

¹ John Lukacs, *Historical Consciousness or the remembered past* (New York, NY: Schocken Books, 1985), 147.

² Mannheim remarks on this in his treatment of the “particular” conception of ideology. Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, tr. Louis Wirth and Edward Shils (New York, NY: Harvest Books, 1936), 55-9.

³ E. Doyle McCarthy, “The Uncertain Future of Ideology: Rereading Marx,” *The Sociological Quarterly* 35:3 (August 1994), 415-29, 416-7. For a history of the English usage of ideology see: Raymond Williams, “Ideology,” *Keywords: A vocabulary of culture and society* (London, UK: Fontana Press, 1988), 153-7.

⁴ E.K. Hunt, *Property and Prophets: The evolution of economic institutions and ideologies*, 7th ed. (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2003).

⁵ E. Burke Rochford, Jr., “Recruitment Strategies, Ideology, and Organization in the Hare Krishna Movement,” *Social Problems* 29, no. 4 (Apr. 1982): 399-410.

⁶ Monica McDermott, “Race/Class Interactions in the Formation of Political Ideology,” *The Sociological Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (May, 1994): 347-66.

⁷ For an example of the latter see: Leslie A. Hayduk, Pamela A. Ratner, Joy L. Johnson, and Joan L. Bortorff, “Attitudes, Ideology, and the Factor Model,” *Political Psychology* 16, no. 3 (Sep. 1995): 479-507.

⁸ James Sidanius, “Cognitive Functioning and Sociopolitical Ideology Revisited,” *Political Psychology* 6, no. 4 (Dec. 1985): 637-61, 642, 655, 657-8.

⁹ David W. Minar, “Ideology and Political Behaviour,” *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 5, no. 4 (Nov. 1961): 317-31, 320.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 320-5.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 326.

¹² Jorge Larraín, *The Concept of Ideology* (London, UK: Hutchinson and Co., 1979), 13-4.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Thomas A. Kuhn, *The Structure Of Scientific Revolutions*, 3rd ed. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

¹⁵ McCarthy, “Uncertain Future of Ideology,” 415.

¹⁶ For an erudite and entertaining account of the history of ideology as a concept see: Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (London, UK: Verso, 1991).

¹⁷ Some analysts discern precursors to the study of ideology in Francis Bacon’s study of “idols,” the preconceptions and myths that confront the scientific method, or even in Plato’s “golden lie.” Mullins, “On the Concept of Ideology,” 499; Nicholas Abercrombie and Bryan S. Turner, “The dominant ideology thesis,” *British Journal of Sociology* 29, no. 2 (Jun. 1978): 149-70, 149. See also the first chapter of Larraín, *Concept of Ideology*.

¹⁸ George H. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory*, rev. ed. (New York, NY: Henry Holt and Co., 1959), 767.

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- ¹⁹ Ibid., 770.
- ²⁰ Abercrombie and Turner, “The dominant ideology thesis,” 150.
- ²¹ Phil Gasper, “The Classics of Marxism: The German Ideology,” *International Socialist Review* 33 (Jan.-Feb. 2004), accessed online, 25 June 2006 (<http://www.isreview.org/issues/33/germanideology.shtml>).
- ²² McCarthy, “Uncertain Future of Ideology,” 417; Raymond, “Ideology,” *Keywords*, 155.
- ²³ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology: Parts I & III*, Ed. R. Pascal (New York, NY: International Publishers, 1960), 14.
- ²⁴ McCarthy, “Uncertain Future of Ideology,” 417, 419.
- ²⁵ Ibid., 416-7.
- ²⁶ Ibid., 419.
- ²⁷ Karl Marx, “Preface,” *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, cited in Martin C. Spechler, ed., *Perspectives in Economic Thought* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1990), 116.
- ²⁸ Alfred G. Meyer, *Communism*, 3rd ed. (New York, NY: Random House, 1967), 16-7.
- ²⁹ Marx, “Preface,” *Critique of Political Economy*, in Spechler, 116.
- ³⁰ Abercrombie and Turner, “The dominant ideology thesis,” 151.
- ³¹ Willard A. Mullins, “On the Concept of Ideology in Political Science,” *The American Political Science Review* 66, no. 2 (Jun 1972): 498-510, 500.
- ³² Meyer, *Communism*, 16-17.
- ³³ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (London, UK: Penguin Books, 2004), 30. Cf. “[the ideas of] the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling *material* force of society, is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force.” Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology* (London, UK: Lawrence and Wishart, 1974), 64; cited in Abercrombie and Turner, “The dominant ideology thesis,” 151.
- ³⁴ McCarthy, “Uncertain Future of Ideology,” 418-9. For a classic example of this mode of application, see: Hunt, *Property and Prophets*.
- ³⁵ Larrain, *Concept of Ideology*,” 51.
- ³⁶ Meyer, *Communism*, 17.
- ³⁷ Marx, “Preface,” *Critique of Political Economy*, in Spechler, 116-7.
- ³⁸ Sabine, *A History of Political Theory*, 761.
- ³⁹ Larrain, *Concept of Ideology*, 50.
- ⁴⁰ Abercrombie and Turner, “The dominant ideology thesis,” 150.
- ⁴¹ Sabine, *A History of Political Theory*, 766.
- ⁴² Ibid., 766-767.

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- ⁴³ Marx, "Preface," in Spechler, *Perspectives*, 117.
- ⁴⁴ Exploitation must be understood in terms of surplus-value, not of substantive or distributive justice, as "Marx conceives the justice of economic transactions as their correspondence to or functionality for the prevailing mode of production." Allen Wood, "Karl Marx," *The Philosophers*, ed. Ted Honderich, 167-72 (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001), 172.
- ⁴⁵ Sabine, *A History of Political Theory*, 776
- ⁴⁶ Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 1.
- ⁴⁷ M. Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society: The Reorientation of European Social Thought 1890-1930*, rev. ed. (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1977), 420.
- ⁴⁸ Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 55.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 56-7.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 66, 69.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 56.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*, 70.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, 70; Harvey Goldman, "From Social Theory to Sociology of Knowledge and Back: Karl Mannheim and the Sociology of Intellectual Knowledge Production," *Sociological Theory* 12, no. 3 (Nov. 1994): 266-78, 268. Goldman points to this as recurring concern "Relativism has reemerged today as a problem for those who think philosophically about knowledge, and for those who wish to confront the implications of postmodernism in sociology." (*idem*, 268.)
- ⁵⁴ Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 76.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 78.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 79.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 80.
- ⁵⁹ Goldman, "From Social Theory to Sociology of Knowledge," 271.
- ⁶⁰ Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 80.
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 81. Antonio Gramsci also took ideology as a superstructural phenomenon, but applied it universally, including to Marxism, which he saw as the area of consciousness which follows from societal contradictions. However, Marxism is distinguished by its attempt to theorize these contradictions rather than to minimise or conceal them. Larrain, *Concept of Ideology*, 80-2. Gramsci and Mannheim share a concern with the conceptualization of Marxism within a scientific-historical framework, and it could be argued that this is the source of the *problematique* for both authors. Leonardo Salamini, "Gramsci and Marxist Sociology of Knowledge: an Analysis of Hegemony—Ideology—Knowledge," *The Sociological Quarterly* 15 (Summer 1974): 359-80.
- ⁶² Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 85.
- ⁶³ Compare this with Salamini's description of the Gramscian position: "Gramsci... did not minimize the importance of infrastructure [superstructure]; on the contrary, he sought to establish a just equilibrium

between the economic and political processes. The relations of production do not evolve according to autonomous and self-generating laws, but act, are regulated or modified by “human consciousness.” The economic moment of consciousness constitutes a *negative phase* (realm of necessity) in the historical ascendancy of subaltern classes toward political hegemony, which must be transcended and replaced by a *positive phase* (realm of liberty) characterized by the creation of a new proletarian *Weltanschauung* providing the masses with entirely new categories of thought.” Salamini, “Gramsci and Marxist Sociology of Knowledge,” 367. It is from this understanding that the concept of “ideological hegemony,” for which Gramsci is most remembered, is derived; if ideology is part of *modus operandi* of historical change, then the acceptance of the “negative phase” of ideology by subaltern classes is an important element of social stability. Thus, the political hegemony of the ruling class is accompanied by its ideological hegemony, which sustains the former and plants the seeds of its demise via the “positive phase” of ideology. (idem, 368.)

⁶⁴ Ibid., 40.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Mannheim offers the example of “Christian brotherly love ... in a society founded on serfdom.” Ibid., 192-5.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 192.

⁶⁸ Paul Ricoeur also identifies ideology and utopia as “two phenomena... within a single conceptual framework [designated] as a theory of cultural imagination.” Paul Ricoeur, *From Text to Action: Essays in Hermeneutics, II*, Tr. Kathleen Blamey and John B. Thompson (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2007), 308. See Chapter 14, “Ideology and Utopia.”

⁶⁹ Gunter W. Remmling, “Karl Mannheim: Revision of an Intellectual Portrait,” *Social Forces* 40, no. 1 (Oct. 1961): 23-30, 25.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 84; David Kettler and Volker Meja, “The Reconstitution of Political Life: The Contemporary Relevance of Karl Mannheim’s Political Project,” *Polity* 20, no. 4 (Summer 1988): 623-47, 636-7.

⁷¹ Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 171.

⁷² Ibid., 3-4.

⁷³ Ibid., 3.

⁷⁴ Charles Hirschkind, “What is Political Islam?” *Middle East Report*, No. 205, Vol., 27, No. 4 (Oct.-Dec. 1997), available online: <http://www.merip.org/mer/mer205/hirschk.htm>.

⁷⁵ Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 39.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 88-90.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 272.

⁷⁸ McCarthy, “The Uncertain Future of Ideology,” 416.

⁷⁹ Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 6.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 7.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

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- ⁸³ Ibid., 41.
- ⁸⁴ Lukacs, *Historical Consciousness*, 18.
- ⁸⁵ Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures At The Collège De France, 1975-1976*, trans. David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003), 133. Of course, Foucault here uses the “juridico-discursive” idiom of power that he discounts in *The History of Sexuality* and elsewhere. See Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1990), 82-5, 89-90.
- ⁸⁶ Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, 133-138. Of course, this cannot be the first such interruption; hereditary kingship emerged from the barbarization of the Roman West, through the Germano-Roman synthesis of imperial rule and Frankish primogeniture. Similarly, kingship by divine right gradually supplanted feudal arrangements in the early modern age.
- ⁸⁷ Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 199.
- ⁸⁸ Ibid., 273.
- ⁸⁹ Ibid., 86.
- ⁹⁰ Ibid., 267, 267n.
- ⁹¹ Ibid., 269.
- ⁹² Ibid., 206.
- ⁹³ This phrase comes from Minar, “Ideology and Political Behavior,” 320.
- ⁹⁴ Mullins, “Concept of Ideology,” 501.
- ⁹⁵ Ibid., 500.
- ⁹⁶ Steven R. Brown, “Consistency and the Persistence of Ideology: Some Experimental Findings,” *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (Spring 1970): 60-8, 61.
- ⁹⁷ Original citation: Harold Lasswell, and Abraham Kaplan, *Power and Society: A Framework for Political Inquiry* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1950), 117, cited in Mullins, “Concept of Ideology,” 501.
- ⁹⁸ Mullins, “Concept of Ideology,” 501.
- ⁹⁹ Ibid., 502.
- ¹⁰⁰ Trevor Purvis and Alan Hunt, “Discourse, ideology, discourse, ideology, discourse, ideology,” *The British Journal of Sociology* 44, no. 3 (Sep. 1993): 473-99, 476.
- ¹⁰¹ Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 140.
- ¹⁰² Ibid.
- ¹⁰³ Ibid., 93.
- ¹⁰⁴ Purvis and Hunt, “Discourse, Ideology,” 476.
- ¹⁰⁵ Mullins, “Concept of Ideology,” 510.
- ¹⁰⁶ Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York, NY: Pelican Books, 1977), 223.

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- ¹⁰⁷ Brown, "Consistency and the Persistence of Ideology," 67.
- ¹⁰⁸ On "intimations," see: Michael Oakeshott, "Political Education," *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays* (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Press, 1991).
- ¹⁰⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised Ed. (London, UK: Verso, 1991), 5.
- ¹¹⁰ Martin Kitchen, *Fascism* (London, UK: Macmillan Press, 1976), 28.
- ¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 28-9; J.P. Stern, *Hitler: The Führer and the People* (Glasgow, UK: Fontana/Collins, 1975), 26.
- ¹¹² Stern, *Hitler*, 96.
- ¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 48;
- ¹¹⁴ Kitchen, *Fascism*, 86.
- ¹¹⁵ Minar, "Ideology and Political Behaviour," 321-2.

CHAPTER 4:
POLITICAL ISLAM IN THE POST-SOVIET PERIOD

Introduction

The Islamic Revival in post-Soviet Central Asia is not an organic return to traditional modes of thinking and acting after the Soviet interlude. First, Central Asian understandings of the “traditional” have been inexorably modified by the experience of modernity under Russian and Soviet rule, and especially by the intentional secularity of the latter.¹ Second, the Islamic revival has been actively politically contested by state and non-state actors, and as such it has emerged concurrently as a political and as a religious phenomenon.² Third, the distinctive role of Islamic movements and Islamic thought in international politics at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century has altered significantly the space of emergence – that is, the global political context – of the Central Asian Islamic Revival. The understanding of Islam as ideology, in the sense discussed in Chapter 3, can be applied to each of these circumstances, which correspond broadly to the levels of analysis in international relations and demonstrate the distinctive but interrelated operation of ideology as subject and as object.

This chapter reviews the particular experience of modernization in Central Asia and the Islamic responses that emerged from this experience. The Islamic Revival in post-Soviet Central Asia is then examined in terms of the capacity for social mobilization

it engenders through Islamist movements in the region, the dual treatment of Islam as a resource and a threat at the state level, and the implications and uses of international apprehensions of the Islamic Revival, particularly after the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States and the resulting “War on Terror.”

Soviet Rule and the Islamic Revival

In the Central Asian context, the possibilities for Islamic responses to modernity or imperial rule were delimited by Soviet dominance, and the result could be described as a kind of imposed reformism. Islam in Central Asia has traditionally been moderate and relatively syncretic. There is a historical cleavage within Central Asian Islam between a Sufistic tribal variant, common among nomadic and rural populations, and a Hanafist tradition that took hold in the urban centres of the region, notably in the Ferghana Valley, following the Arab conquest. The latter form has dominated the Islamic institutions of the region, especially the *madrasahs* and the *ulama*.³ However, the two forms historically came to an effective *modus vivendi*, wherein “the Islam of the *ulemas* is strongly influenced by Sufism, while the tribal Sufis do not challenge the orthodoxy of the *ulemas*.”⁴ Between the suppression of the Basmachi revolt against the Tashkent Soviet authorities in 1920 and the Stalinist purges of the 1930s, the Soviet policy toward Islam was characterized by “uneasy tolerance.”⁵ There was a shift toward repression following the “National Delimitation” that divided Central Asia into national republics, however, as Islam became one of the principal targets of efforts to “Sovietize” the peoples of Central Asia.⁶

Sovietization proceeded on two tracks. The first was the destruction of the “social and organizational infrastructure of Islam” in the region.⁷ As Oliver Roy writes:

With the campaign against Islam between 1924 and 1927, the repression of the *ulemas*, the closure of the great *madrasas* and the ban on travel, the parallel *mullahs* in Central Asia were cut off from outside influences until the early 1980s.⁸

Although this was a period of relative tolerance, the use of Arabic script was prohibited in 1922, and separate Muslim units in the Red Army were disbanded in 1923.⁹ In 1928, alongside the forced collectivization of Central Asian nomads and peasants in, religious schools in the region were closed.¹⁰ Most significantly, between 1912 and 1942, the number of mosques in the Soviet Union fell from 26,279 to 1,312.¹¹ Repression was not uniform throughout the Soviet period. During World War II, restrictions on religious practices were loosened as part of an effort to promote patriotic feeling for the Soviet Union among Central Asians.¹² This included the establishment of an Official Islamic Administration comprising three Muslim Spiritual Directorates, including one situated in Tashkent.¹³ While official Islam did not disappear after the war, restrictions on Islam re-intensified in the 1950s under Khrushchev, when Islamic weddings and funerals were banned, and the veiling of women was officially prohibited.¹⁴ This trend was reversed somewhat under Brezhnev in the 1960s and early 1970s, and Khalid writes that “until the late 1970s, when the Iranian revolution and the war in Afghanistan changed the calculus drastically, officials at the highest level of Soviet power seemed to genuinely believe that neither Islam nor Muslims posed a threat to the country.”¹⁵ The final round of repression, under Gorbachev between 1985 and 1987, was launched against “Wahhabism,” but this campaign was discontinued in 1988, inaugurating what is now referred to as the Islamic Revival in the region.¹⁶

Notwithstanding periods of relative tolerance, Islamic worship was pushed from the public space and into the home.¹⁷ The perpetuation of Islam under Soviet rule depended in large part on the use of eighteenth and nineteenth century “guide books” that included the rote Arabic phrases and basic principles of Islamic worship and conduct.¹⁸ In fact, as Shirin Akiner writes, by the 1980s Islam was “more a marker of cultural and ethnic identity than an active spiritual commitment for most Central Asians.”¹⁹

The chief manifestations of allegiance to the faith at this period were the celebration of religious ceremonies connected with rites of passage, such as (male) circumcision, marriage and burial... In popular understanding such practices were considered to be in keeping with Muslim belief, but in fact were syncretic accretions. Knowledge of Islamic doctrine, of prayers, and even of the basic Muslim profession of faith (‘There is no God but God and Muhammed is His Prophet’) was limited to a small number of predominantly elderly individuals.²⁰

The innovations of the Jadids and other Islamic modernists were therefore not a significant component of Central Asian Islamic knowledge at the end of the Soviet period. Even basic religious knowledge was considerably diminished by these developments, although Khalid notes that “Muslims did not so much lose the ability to understand the literal meaning of the Qur’an or prayers as the implicit cultural knowledge” that sustained these practices and gave them spiritual meaning and significance.²¹ Crucially, “unofficial Islam” was not only privatized, but also avowedly apolitical, which was part of the reason for official tolerance of these practices. Khalid writes that “local Party elites might look the other way when unofficial Islamic activity took place, but they had absolutely no patience with challenges to their position.”²²

The second track of Sovietization was the submergence of Islam into the national identities that were identified and developed under Soviet auspices. The titular nations recognized by the Soviet Union, though based on existing identities in the region

(“Uzbek,” “Kazakh,” “Tajik,” etc.), were developed as “nations” as a matter of Soviet policy. These nations also served as the basis for the division of Central Asia into “national” republics, and in this way national identities were reinforced through the trappings of statehood.²³ This did not entail a loss of political control for the Soviet authorities. Russian dominance within the overarching Soviet hierarchy limited the horizons for political aspirants from the Central Asian republics. As Rywkin observed in 1990, “nobody expects the representatives of non-Russian groups to compete for top positions within [the Soviet] leadership... a non-Russian has hardly any hope outside his own republic.”²⁴ Several mechanisms of political control persisted in Islamic areas of the Soviet Union. For example, while “first secretary” of the Communist Party at the republic and regional levels was a member of the dominant nation or nationality in that area, the second secretary was Russian or Slavic, and it was commonly understood that “the second party secretary in Muslim areas plays a much larger role than does the analogous party functionary in Russia or Ukraine.”²⁵ This pattern was replicated in other areas of the party, army, and administrative apparatuses.²⁶

Kaiser’s description of the evolution of national recognition in the Soviet Union gives a sense of the arbitrariness of the Soviet policy:

The nations [*sic*] of Soviet Central Asia and throughout the USSR as listed in the Soviet censuses are at least in part contrived... During the postwar period, the number of nationalities enumerated dropped from 109 in the 1959 census to 101 in 1979, in an apparent effort to reinforce the perception that the national communities of the state were merging into one Soviet people. The increased number of national categories from 1979 (101) to 1989 (128) is more a reflection of the new political reality, which has undermined official support for international integration, than a real increase in the number of national communities resident in the USSR.²⁷

The somewhat artificial nature of these national designations did not preclude them from taking on a certain reality for their putative members. This was in part because they were

not entirely arbitrary, but based on emergent “national” movements that pre-dated the Soviet intervention in Central Asia.²⁸ Insofar as these projects succeeded in defining the identities of indigenous peoples in Central Asia, they also diminished the appeal of Islam “as a unifying force superseding the national and subnational distinctions that exist in Soviet Central Asia.”²⁹ The repression of Islamic rituals and worship divorced the *identity* of indigenous populations in Soviet Central Asia as Muslims from traditional Islamic *practices*.³⁰ Bereft of these moorings, being Muslim became just another part of what made indigenous populations indigenous, pursuant to the “Soviet... ideology that held that each ethnic group... had its own determinate set of characteristics – traditions material culture, foods, dress, music, language, etc. – that were essential to the identity of each group.”³¹

Against this backdrop, the *glasnost* and *demokratizatsiya* policies of the Soviet Union under Gorbachev provided space for the assertion of national and religious expression, actuated at least in part by the underlying social tensions created by modernization and Russian ethnic hegemony in Central Asia.³² This new policy of openness was not initially implemented to the same degree in Central Asia, and it arrived somewhat later than elsewhere in the Soviet Union when religious restrictions were relaxed by local authorities in 1988.³³ The new policies fostered a renewed interest in religion in Soviet Central Asia in the 1980s, accompanied by an increase in nationalism in the region.³⁴ These two developments were interrelated. Khalid writes that this religious interest was closely interrelated with “a very important element of the recovery of *national* memories and national legacies.”³⁵

Whatever the impetus, however, the outcome was the increased presence of Islam in the public sphere:

Islam became visible in public again. Many people who had never prayed before began to pray regularly and to observe other Islamic injunctions. It became possible again to travel to Mecca for the annual pilgrimage, and every year thousands of people make the trip. New mosques began to be built, whereas those that had long operated in disguise came out into the open and sometimes moved to more appropriate premises... The number of mosques in the region swelled, and religious education began to be re-established. Older ulama who had taught in secret (hujra) could now do so in the open. A number of madrasas were opened in the first years of independence to provide higher Islamic education.³⁶

As was the case elsewhere in the Soviet Union in the latter part of the 1980s, many calls for reform or change in Central Asia were made in ethno-nationalistic terms. Kaiser describes these developments:

National territoriality in the USSR, as in other multinational, multi-homeland states, is a strong centrifugal force which, in the absence of an equally powerful countervailing force from the centre, will lead to the devolution of political power... The “national question” in the USSR may thus be viewed as the competition between indigenous nationalists striving for greater sovereignty over their homelands and the central authorities pressing for greater territorial and international integration... [T]he center-republic interaction is at the same time a reflection of the Russian-non-Russian relationship.³⁷

At this time, there were some indications of an Islamic component to protests in Central Asia, particularly in Tashkent. At the first such rallies in December 1988, related to calls for “the restoration of the Uzbek language and culture,” some protestors waved the green banner of Islam and read verses from the Quran.³⁸ A second protest in Tashkent in early 1989 was more directly religious, and was based on demands for the resignation of the head of the official Islamic body for Central Asia.³⁹ It should be noted, however, that in contrast with the Baltic Soviet Socialist Republics, few appeals for independence from the Soviet Union emanated from Central Asia.⁴⁰ This was illustrated by the fact that the five Central Asian republics were made founding members of the Commonwealth of

Independent States – the successor entity to the USSR – only after the fact.⁴¹ Instead, assertions of nationalism were, to some extent at least, efforts to access political and economic resources, and to improve the standing of indigenous populations *vis-à-vis* their Russian counterparts.⁴²

The Politics of Islam in the Post-Soviet Period

The geopolitical collapse of the Soviet Union was accompanied, and in some sense precipitated, by the ideological collapse of the Soviet project. Haghayeghi notes that the ramifications of this ideological collapse were apparent in all of the post-Soviet republics:

Decidedly unprepared to cope with the vacuum created by the death of Marxism, these [post-Soviet] republics have become a lively forum for a multiplicity of ideological trends, of which Islam has become a major source of preoccupation for the West, particularly in the context of Central Asian republics where Islam has exhibited considerable vigor after 70 years of Soviet antireligious repression.⁴³

In post-Soviet Central Asia, as in other post-Communist states, various combinations of democracy, ethnic nationalism, and unburnished authoritarianism compete within this ideological vacuum. However, in spite of the Islamic Revival that began in the late 1980s, the role of Islam as one of the contending ideological successors to Communism has been relatively muted. Based on the conceptual framework of ideology set out in Chapter 3, there are three areas in which the effects of political Islam or Islam as ideology can be analysed. The first relates to ideology-as-subject and the effect that Islamism has in shaping the actions of individuals in Central Asia. This is most easily explored by examining Islamic movements and organizations in the region. The second

area relates to Islam as an object of political action at the state level. The third area concerns the international dimension of political Islam in the region.

1) Islamic Organizations and Movements

Islamic organizations have played a limited role in the formal political processes of the Central Asian republics since independence. While this is partially a reflection of the repressive policies toward Islam that have been put in place by the Central Asian republics, it also reflects a broader lack of support for political Islam in the region. Those Islamic movements that have emerged have been concentrated in the Ferghana Valley, the so-called ‘heart’ of the Central Asian region by virtue of its relatively dense population; “once a cohesive economic unit,” the Ferghana Valley was deliberately divided among Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan in the 1930s.⁴⁴ While this was merely a formal division when the three republics were under a common Soviet sovereignty, independence has rendered the borders much more “real,” and created significant barriers for the natural economic and social intercourse of the Ferghana Valley’s seven million inhabitants.⁴⁵ Madeleine Reeves describes the barriers to movement that have arisen since independence:

In recent years internal USSR borders between Tajik, Uzbek, and Kyrgyz republics have been transformed into militarized international boundaries, backed up by an elaborate system of visa controls regulating population movement and customs regulations to limit cross-border trade.⁴⁶

Despite this, the Ferghana Valley, which was historically the locus of Islamic resistance to Russian colonialism, has continued in its role as the focus of Islamist activity in the post-Soviet period.

This may be related in part to the strong Uzbek character of the Islamic clergy throughout Central Asia. As Oliver Roy observes:

The influence of the Uzbek-Tajik *ulemas* over Central Asia as a whole can still be seen today: the three muftis of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan are either Uzbeks or come from sedentary areas that are very Uzbekised... If one adds the fact that the mufti of Tashkent is also Uzbek, and that the mufti of Tajikistan (in 1994) speaks Uzbek fluently, it becomes obvious that Uzbekistan now carries the torch of Islamic revivalism.⁴⁷

Islamist organizations in Central Asia do not have a strong track record when it comes to persistence or popular support.⁴⁸ The first such movement identified, named “Islam and Democracy,” was established in Alma Ata in 1988, prior to the dissolution of the Soviet Union.⁴⁹ Taking as its platform “the spiritual cleansing of people from immorality and preaching of the democratic principles of the Koran,” this organization was involved in the February 1989 demonstrations against the mufti of the official “Muslim Religious Board of Central Asia and Kazakhstan” noted above.⁵⁰ While it was intended as an inter-republic party, its effective reach never extended beyond Uzbekistan, and its membership was estimated at 2,500 members in 1989, before it disappeared in the early 1990s.⁵¹ Similarly, the Islamic “Alash for the National Independence of Kazakhstan” was a party established in 1990 that was critical of official Islam and briefly played an activist role in Kazakh opposition politics.⁵² The Alash party later abandoned its calls for an Islamic republic in favour of a pan-Turkic and anti-Russian platform. Despite this, the party was moved to Moscow in 1993 to avoid persecution in Kazakhstan.⁵³

The first significant Islamist movement in the region was the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP), which emerged in Astrakhan in Russia in 1990 as a movement dedicated “to unify[ing] Muslims over the entire Soviet territory.”⁵⁴ The IRP also advocated the establishment of *shariah* courts and Islamic education in state schools.⁵⁵ Although

participation by delegates from outside Central Asia was diminished at the third party congress in 1992, Haghayeghi writes that the IRP “commanded a relatively large following, particularly in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, thus constituting the core of Islamic activism in Central Asia” in the early part of the 1990s.⁵⁶ However, it was the Tajik branch of the IRP that came to prominence through its role in civil war in Tajikistan.⁵⁷

The conflict between the Communist Party of Tajikistan and various nationalist and “Islamist” factions began in 1990 when ethnically-motivated riots ended with eighteen dead and 110 wounded.⁵⁸ While the IRP was notionally an Islamist party, it was closely affiliated with nationalist causes and movements.⁵⁹ Through 1990 and 1991, a loosely Islamic opposition coalesced around the IRP, the head of official Islam in Tajikistan, and various Sufi brotherhoods. The crisis these developments precipitated resulted in a split within the Communist Party of Tajikistan and ended with the dissolution of that party and the amendment of the Tajik constitution to create an executive presidency.⁶⁰ By this time, the IRP “had succeeded in developing an elaborate republican-wide organizational network, expanding its membership through active involvement in mosques and prayer houses,” and the party was officially recognized in October 1991.⁶¹ However, following the presidential election one month later, the victor and incumbent, President Nabiyeu, moved to purge members of the opposition movement from the legislative and executive branches. In response, opposition members staged a siege of parliament in March 1992.⁶² This was met with a counter-demonstration of government supporters and resulted in the formation of a coalition government was formed in May 1992. Neither side considered this acceptable, and both groupings armed

themselves and their followers.⁶³ This was the beginning of a civil war that left between 25,000 and 100,000 dead.⁶⁴

What is striking about the role that the IRP played in the civil war is not its ideologically Islamist orientation, but its involvement with a coalition of non-Islamist forces as one faction among many, and its embeddedness in a more complicated struggle between clan and political networks.⁶⁵ Malashenko writes:

The allies of the IRP were secular nationalistic forces, such as the Democratic party [*sic*] of Tajikistan and the Rastokhe movement. Its opponents were postcommunist political structures. Simultaneously, ethnic and interclan contradictions became important. Indeed, the confrontation between ex-communists and their opponents is a struggle between the traditional forces of the north and the south: the mountainous Pamirs and flatland central Tajikistan.⁶⁶

Moreover, while the IRP platform was responsive to the circumstances facing Tajik citizens and was framed in Islamic terms, the program adopted by the IRP was also decidedly non-Islamist. As Muriel Atkin notes, “the IRP repudiated the stereotypical anti-Westernism of Islamic radicals and joined with the secular opposition parties in supporting popular sovereignty, civil liberties, and economic reform.”⁶⁷ Despite the involvement of other political groups in the war, “the bloodshed in Tajik cities was attributed to Muslim fundamentalists,” and this perception has “had a negative impact on the prestige of fundamentalists throughout Central Asia.”⁶⁸ This perception is perhaps unsurprising and provides an example of the potential for divergence between ideology-as-subject and ideology-as-object. Urban populations fearful of “the prospect of restoring the Shari’a legislation and religious fanaticism” focussed the blame for the conflict – admittedly, not without cause – on the Islamist elements of the opposition coalition.⁶⁹ Despite the generally secular goals and partners of the IRP, this narrative also had a significant effect on the perception of Islamist parties as a threat throughout the region,

and reinforced perceptions about the risk that Islamist violence could spread or grow. It should be noted that following the Russian “peacekeeping” intervention in 1994, the IRP was merged with the “United Tajik Opposition,” based in southern Tajikistan and with links into Afghanistan.⁷⁰ While this diverse grouping maintained connections with Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Iran, it cannot be characterized as an Islamist movement given the involvement of several secular groups; indeed, forces affiliated with the United Tajik Opposition fought with some groups of Islamist radicals in northern Afghanistan, and Roy has characterized the orientation of the new grouping as “islamo-nationalism.”⁷¹

The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, renamed the Islamic Movement of Turkestan in 2001, has also received significant attention as a militant Islamist group in the region. Johnson describes it as “the most notorious terrorist organization of [post-Soviet] Central Asia” and “a deeply ideological group, steeped in the theories and techniques of jihadism.”⁷² Igor’ Rotar’ offers a quote from a member of the IMU he interviewed:

The daily regime in the camp was as follows: physical education in the mornings, followed by instruction in how to use various types of weaponry. In the evenings we were shown films about Islam... [and] about those regions of the world where Muslims fight against nonbelievers. We were told that it was the duty of Muslims to fight until they had freed Muslims throughout the world from the rule of non-believers... We were only allowed to read religious literature. We were not allowed to listen to music, as that is a sin for Muslims...⁷³

The IMU is also well connected to Islamist groups outside of post-Soviet Central Asia, and Khalid indicates that the group has “received support from the Taliban, Pakistan’s Interservices Intelligence agency, and Osama bin Laden.”⁷⁴ Whatever the group’s outward connections, it was implacably hostile to the Karimov regime in Uzbekistan, against which it declared *jihad* when it was founded in 1998.⁷⁵ IMU leader Tohir Yuldeshev called for “fighting against oppression within our country, against bribery,

against the inequities and also the freeing of our Muslim brothers from prison,” and the program of the IMU initially was the replacement of the Karimov regime with an Islamic state based on *shariah* law.⁷⁶

It is not clear whether the IMU was responsible for the February 1999 bombings in Tashkent, where six car bombs exploded, likely as part of an assassination attempt against President Karimov, killing 13 and injuring 128.⁷⁷ These attacks inaugurated a new round of repressive measures against alleged Islamists and suspected opponents of the Uzbek government. It is estimated that in 1999 and 2000 up to 5,000 people were arrested.⁷⁸ The IMU was also responsible for the kidnapping of four Japanese geologists in Kyrgyzstan in June 1999, as well as several small incursions into that country in 2000 and 2001.⁷⁹ After the 9/11 attacks on the United States, IMU bases in Afghanistan came under attack by American and Northern Alliance forces as part of the intervention in that country.⁸⁰ These attacks seem to have diminished the capacity of the IMU to pursue its political program, and David Lewis writes that by 2004, the group was largely defunct with small groups of members reduced to “cross-border drug smuggling and other low-level crime.”⁸¹ Despite the considerable attention given to the IMU by regional and international actors, the real threat posed by the group remains unclear. Lewis notes that “the IMU had never been able to recruit significant numbers of followers within Central Asia: there simply was not the appetite for their form of violence among most of the population, who remained largely sceptical of Islamist promises of utopia through terror.”⁸²

A splinter group of the IMU, identified as the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU), has been identified as active in Central Asia since 2002. The IJU has been linked with a 2004

bombing campaign that targeted the Israeli and American embassies in Uzbekistan, and a terrorist cell associated with the IJU was disrupted in Germany in 2007.⁸³ Einar Wigen suggests that the group may have been established as part of an effort to “de-Uzbekize” the IMU and thereby increase its “recruitment base” among non-Uzbek populations.⁸⁴ There is some evidence for this view in the communication approaches adopted by the group: “The propaganda effort of the IJU is directed mainly through a Turkish-language website called *Şehadet Zamani*. The Turks of Turkey and the Turkic peoples of Central Asia speak languages which are, to an extent, mutually intelligible.”⁸⁵

Whatever its specific aims in the region, the IJU has clear affinities other Islamist groups, and claims more concrete connections. It is worth excerpting at length from an interview with IJU “Commander” Eby Yahya Muhammed Fatih, dated May 31, 2007, that has appeared on the *Şehadet Zamani* website. In the interview, which appears on the website with several images of masked and armed *mujahidin*, Fatih’s message offers some insight both into the rhetoric and stated objectives of the IJU, and into the use of Islamic symbols by Islamist groups in Central Asia.

After the fall of the Afg[h]anistan Islamic Administration, we who shared the same opinions came together and deci[ded] to organize groups which will conduct jihad operations against the infidel constitution of cruel Karimov in [U]zbekistan. The sole aim of all the emigrant-mujahedeen brothers was to find war-like solutions against the infidel constitution of cruel Karimov...

Our union’s aim is, under the flag of justice an[d] Islam[ic] Dominanc[e], to save our [Mu]slim brothers who have been suffering from the cruelty of pre-soviet period and [U]zbekistan, and to take them out of the swamp of cruelty an[d] infidelity, as well as to help other [Mu]slim brothers all around the world as [G]od [Allah] and his [P]rophet orders. And this Islamic Jihad Union is composed of [S]unni [Mu]slims who act under the creed of honest predecessors [*salaf?*] who fight with the principles of the [S]unnis in the way of [G]od and who spread [Allah]’s invita[t]ion to Islam.

One of the targets of th[e] [Islamic Jihad U]nion is to invite the world to [G]od’s religion, to save [Mu]slims in the above mentioned countries from the cruelty of

the godless and to bring freedom to them as well as to fight in the way of the sole god under the name of Jihad until all religions be [G]od's.

And all the above mentioned duties are obligatory for all [Mu]slims. Being a [Mu]slim community [*umma*?], we came together to fulfill our duties with [G]od's blessing."⁸⁶

There are several interesting elements in these statements. First, Fatih indicates that the IJU embraces violence as a tool against established governments, notably the Karimov regime in Uzbekistan. The reference to *jihad* as a duty of all Muslims is consistent with the view espoused by other militant Islamist groups, notably al-Qaida.⁸⁷ In addition to *jihad*, Fatih also makes allusive references to key Islamic concepts by invoking the “brotherhood” of Sunni Muslims in the *umma* and by implying the restoration of a universal temporal Islamic order (often referred to as a “caliphate”). The reference to “predecessors” can be seen in similar terms; as was noted previously, “predecessors” may be used to refer to the *salaf* or original Muslims who are taken as exemplars of righteous behaviour by the *salafi* movements.

Notably, Fatih’s remarks on the broad community of Muslims and the universality of Islam may also be seen as an effort to appeal to non-Uzbek Muslims, especially when read in conjunction with a statement made subsequently by Fatih in the interview:

As we are also saying that members of our union are not members of a specific tribe or a nation. As there is no nationalism and tribalism in [I]slam, our union is formed of the believers from all over the world and multi-national emigrants travelling to praise the religion.⁸⁸

It is even possible to read the reference to the time “when all religions will be God’s” in light of the Islamic eschatology as a reference to Judgement Day, although there is little in this brief text to substantiate such an interpretation.⁸⁹ Regardless, the use of Islamic concepts and imagery in the context of a political struggle against the existing political order in Central Asia, and especially the Karimov regime in Uzbekistan, may be seen as

an ideological deployment of religious discourses as part of an effort to mobilize and motivate popular support for a political program.

Motivation is a key concern for Islamist groups in Central Asia, and to date the exception to the apparent lack of popular support for Islamism is a peaceful movement known as Hizb ut-Tahrir. Hizb ut-Tahrir was originally established in 1953 by a Palestinian jurist, Sheikh Taqiuddin an-Nabhani, in response to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.⁹⁰ According to the global Hizb ut-Tahrir website, it is a “political party whose ideology is Islam.”⁹¹ The group also offers a summary of its mission, which is worth reviewing at length:

[Hizb ut-Tahrir’s] objective is to resume the Islamic way of life by establishing an Islamic State that executes the systems of Islam and carries its call to the world... The party calls for Islam in its quality as an intellectual leadership [*sic*] from which emanate the systems that deal with all man's problems, political, economic, cultural and social among others. Hizb-ut-Tahrir is a political party that admits to its membership men and women, and calls all people to Islam and to adopt its concepts and systems. It views people according to the viewpoint of Islam no matter how diverse their nationalities and their schools of thought were. Hizb-ut-Tahrir adopts the interaction with the Ummah in order to reach its objective and it struggles against colonialism in all its forms and attributes in order to liberate the Ummah from its intellectual leadership and to deracinate its cultural, political, military and economic roots from the soil of the Islamic lands. Hizb-ut-Tahrir endeavors to change the erroneous thoughts which colonialism has propagated, such as confining Islam to rituals and morals.⁹²

As in the statement by Egy Yahya Muhammed Fatih of the IJU, cited above, this statement includes references to several key concepts within Islam that can be taken to have a political content or import: *umma*, the universalism of Islam, the role of Islam as a total conception of human relations, and the importance of purity against outside or non-Islamic influences. According to the Hizb ut-Tahrir mission statement, Islam is seen as total conception of politics and society “because politics in Islam is looking after the affairs of the Ummah domestically and externally and Allah... has commanded the

governing of the Ummah’s affairs by Islam and nothing else.”⁹³ This requires the implementation of *sharia* law, which is “clear and pure,” in place of un-Islamic (*kufir* or unbelieving) laws “that do not consider the sins as crimes that entail punishment.”⁹⁴ These conceptual derivations also correspond with the modalities of ideology discussed in the previous chapter – Descriptive, Normative, and Prospective. In short, Hizb ut-Tahrir is a global movement that has positioned itself as a universal Islamic party for the universal Islamic community or *umma*.

The relationship between the global structure and Hizb ut-Tahrir in Central Asia is not entirely clear due to the clandestine operation of the group in the region, where it is widely deemed an illegal organization. However, the program of the Hizb ut-Tahrir in Central Asia does show some signs of modification from its global exemplar, insofar as the movement aims for “the establishment of a single, unified caliphate across Central Asia, from Xinjiang Province to the Caucasus.”⁹⁵ Unlike the IMU and the IRP, Hizb ut-Tahrir is a mass movement, estimated in 2007 to have been 16,000 and 35,000 members in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan.⁹⁶ Karagiannis describes the emergence of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Central Asia:

Hizb ut-Tahrir probably became active in the Central Asian region in the mid-1990s; regional governments have responded with repressive measures against its members. Long years of underground existence have taught its supporters rigid discipline: members of the organisation are divided into small groups and people from different groups often do not know each other.⁹⁷

As Johnson writes, Hizb ut-Tahrir has survived and grown in spite of these restrictions due to the adoption of an organizational structure reminiscent of revolutionary groups: “Its leaders’ identities and locations are kept secret. Activists operate in seven-man cells, each one led by a cell chief. Only the chief knows the identity of the next layer in the hierarchy.”⁹⁸ Despite its unprecedented size and reach in the region, Hizb ut-Tahrir has a

predominantly Uzbek membership, a fact reflected in its “primarily national argumentation – its demands include the removal of President Islam Karimov, the release of political prisoners and the relaxing of legislation on religion [in Uzbekistan].”⁹⁹

Hizb ut-Tahrir has undertaken an extensive propaganda campaign in the region, notably in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. It has also been associated with a monthly magazine or pamphlet under the title *Ong Al-Waie* (Conscience) that has been published in Uzbek, Kyrgyz, and Russian language versions since 1993.¹⁰⁰ While *Ong Al-Waie* is not an official Hizb ut-Tahrir publication, the group does “maintain close contacts with the monthly” and Hizb ut-Tahrir is involved in the distribution of the magazine.¹⁰¹ *Ong Al-Waie* includes news from the Muslim world, material from its correspondents in Australia, Austria, Germany, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States), religious articles on matters such as *sharia*, and political articles which “encourag[e] civil resistance to the legitimate authorities.”¹⁰² The latter contributions are often critical of US policies and of foreign intrusion on Muslim land, as this excerpt indicates:

Turning over the ancient Islamic lands to the kjaifirs [infidels] for their military bases; dividing Moslem countries; joining organizations like the UN, NATO, OSCE or recognizing validity of their resolutions; establishing any friendly relations with countries hostile to Moslems; denying Moslems aid; not being involved in the jihad; separating the faith from the state – all of that is Haram [taboo]. Establishment of any socialist, democratic, national, patriotic party that does not share ideas of the Islam [*sic*] and membership in such a party is a Haram.¹⁰³

As in the Hizb ut-Tahrir materials reviewed above, Islamic concepts are deployed for political purposes, and both the interpretation political circumstances and the program for political activity are cast in Islamic terms, invoking two of the modalities of ideology (Descriptive and Normative).

Unlike some previous movements, which have been concentrated in rural areas, Hizb ut-Tahrir “draws its strength from urban, more educated elements of society,” notably “students, teachers, urban workers and men in their twenties.”¹⁰⁴ Their program shares the objectives of more militant Islamist groups, as Mike Redman notes:

Rejecting the legitimacy of secular government in the region, [Hizb ut-Tahrir] calls for the creation of a caliphate throughout Central Asia, governed by the principles of Islam and ruled by Sharia law... The modern party's main activity in Central Asia is distributing leaflets, many including openly anti-Semitic proclamations or accusations. These leaflets are, as a rule, directly translated into Central Asian languages from identical proclamations distributed by its activists in the Middle East.¹⁰⁵

Hizb ut-Tahrir has officially condemned Islamic militancy as practiced by the IMU, and the party has reportedly attempted to persuade the IMU to abandon militant activities in the Ferghana valley.¹⁰⁶ However, Rashid suggests that “several hundred [Hizb ut-Tahrir] activists have escaped to northern Afghanistan, where they have been welcomed by the IMU.”¹⁰⁷ Similarly, the 2008 report of the U.S. Department of State’s Office of the Coordinator of Counterterrorism notes that Hizb ut-Tahrir has expanded in northern Tajikistan and in Kyrgyzstan, and cites local reports that the group may have 15,000 members in the latter country, largely among the Uzbek population in the south of the country.¹⁰⁸ Here again there are claims that Hizb ut-Tahrir is working in conjunction with other Islamist groups.

Supporters of terrorist groups the Islamic Jihad Group (IJG) and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) were also believed to maintain a presence in Kyrgyzstan, and Kyrgyz authorities alleged that both groups received material support from [Hizb ut-Tahrir].¹⁰⁹

Whether these allegations are true or not, the eschewal of violence by Hizb ut-Tahrir should not be taken as an indication of moderateness. For instance, Rotar’ cites a Hizb ut-Tahrir leaflet denigrating President Karimov as “‘Satan and Jew, who hates Islam with

his whole body and soul and who is the enemy of the Quran and Muhammed (blessings and peace on him).”¹¹⁰

Hizb ut-Tahrir remains the largest, if the least understood, Islamist movement in post-Soviet Central Asia, and in this it is the exception. While the IRP and the IMU did experience brief periods of success, they have not succeeded in marshalling widespread popular support for their programs. Similarly, while there has been a modest spread of the Wahabi movement, notably in the Ferghana Valley in Uzbekistan and in Uzbek enclaves in Kyrgyzstan, these have not become a significant political or social force in the region.¹¹¹ This has not diminished the efforts of governments to counter these groups, and characterizations of the Islamism as a growing threat have continued. For example, Tajik forces arrested 40 “Islamic fundamentalists” in June 2009, “many of who [*sic*] had studied in Islamic schools in Pakistan, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia [and] are suspected of inciting religious strife and being adherents of the illegal Salafiyya movement.”¹¹² Nonetheless, despite persistent fears about the possible rise of Islamism in Central Asia, none of the Islamist movements in the region have enjoyed strong popular support, and what backing they have received has generally been concentrated in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, and to some extent in southern Kyrgyzstan.

Notwithstanding the relatively low-level of participation in these movements, it is clear from these examples that Islamists have enjoyed some success in mobilizing individuals for social or political causes, including the establishment of *shariah* courts, *madrasahs*, and mosques or “Islamic centers.” However, it should be noted that the relative success of these movements has depended in large part on their connection to ethnic or nationalist causes, as in the Central Asian version of the Hizb ut-Tahrir

program. These in turn have forced the modification of party doctrines and objectives, at least for public consumption, away from pan-regional and strictly Islamist ideals and toward more secular and nationally-oriented goals. This suggests that the Soviet nationalities project has been somewhat successful in limiting the potentialities of Islamist politics in the region, at least in terms of mass social mobilization.

2) State Approaches to Islam

Until recently, the Central Asian Republics remained largely under the control of former Soviet elites. This, combined with the weakness of democratic practices in the region, has meant that legitimacy has been a problem in some measure for all of the Central Asian republics. Of course, the administrative boundaries of these republics were notionally predicated on the basis of nationality, and with the exception of Kazakhstan, the titular nations – Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Tajik, and Turkmen – each constituted a majority in their respective republics at the time of independence.¹¹³ This has recommended nationalism as a key legitimizing narrative for the post-Soviet states.¹¹⁴ Throughout the region nationalism has been the easiest means for the new elite to legitimate themselves and their states. The basis for the nationalist resurgence has roots in the Brezhnev era, when the Central Asian republics were turned into virtual fiefdoms by communist officials. This was abetted by Gorbachev's decentralisation efforts, which gave greater latitude for local elites to devise "national" solutions.¹¹⁵ However, the tortuous boundaries devised for the region left significant ethnic irredenta in each of the republics, which can create its own difficulties with transborder nationalism. As a result, ethnic

unrest has been a concern for the states of the region, notably with respect to Uzbek nationalism among the significant Uzbek irredenta:

[Uzbeks] constitute sizable minorities in both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, where they have caused serious problems. In the former case, violence between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz in the Osh region claimed hundreds of lives in 1990, and Kyrgyz leaders are wary of a repeat of this episode and possible Uzbek intervention to defend their co-ethnics or goad them towards succession.¹¹⁶

This is complicated by the relative contiguity between ethnic irredenta and their national states. As of 1979, for example, 88.7 percent of Uzbeks living outside of Uzbekistan were located in administrative units adjacent to Uzbekistan.¹¹⁷

The irrationality of borders in the region also creates a functional legitimacy issue in respect of border security in the former Soviet Union, which was a key part of the impetus for the establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States.¹¹⁸ The deconstruction of the unified Soviet military command resulted in the dismantling of the comprehensive forward and border defence systems that had been established, and as a result, at the dissolution of the Soviet Union these formerly common armed forces and military installations were effectively divided among the former Soviet republics.¹¹⁹ The borders of the newly independent states lacked the infrastructure necessary to make them secure, especially from one another, as is demonstrated by the essential fluidity of borders in the Ferghana Valley, where “people, stories, rumors, television broadcasts and jokes move across borders and re-embed in new contexts just as much as goods and currency and contraband do.”¹²⁰

Consequently, the deep security integration of the Soviet period has been more or less recognized by Central Asian leaders. The Central Asian republics have all undertaken defensive arrangements and/or treaties with Russia, whether these have been bilateral or under the auspices of the CIS. During and after the Civil War, Tajikistan

relied on some 19,000 Russian troops to provide border protection.¹²¹ Similarly, Turkmenistan, after an anti-Russian period in the early 1990s, agreed to joint Russian-Turkmen border guards until 1999.¹²² There are also Russian military facilities in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, and the latter has continued to cooperate with the CIS states in security matters despite having left their collective security body in 1999.¹²³ At the same time these measures, ostensibly undertaken to reinforce the sovereign *capacity* of the Central Asian republics, also undermine the sovereign *legitimacy* of those states, particularly in an environment of heightened ethnic and geopolitical tension.

The concern to build legitimacy has been a preoccupation for all of the Central Asian states, particularly those with little or no popular representation in their political systems. For instance, the cult of personality built by Communist Party First Secretary and later President of Turkmenistan Saparmurat Niyazov incorporated strong nationalistic overtones. Early in his career before independence, Niyazov “was praised by some intellectuals for his attempts to revive the Turkmen language, and promote indigenous history.”¹²⁴ Niyazov later reinvented himself as the “Great Saparmurat Turkmenbashi” or “Father of all Turkmen,” and offered his book the *Ruhnama* (“Book of the Soul”) – the first of several books allegedly authored by the President that displaced existing and new Turkmen literature in schools and bookstores – at the decadal celebration of the independence of Turkmenistan in October 2001.¹²⁵ The *Ruhnama*, which provides an idiosyncratic and mythologized history of the Turkmen nation that traces its patrimonial territory to a divine mandate from Allah through “the Prophet Noah,” became “required reading in all schools, universities and workplaces.”¹²⁶ This

“nation-building” exercise was abetted by the state monopoly on communications in Turkmenistan, and by severe limitations on international media coverage and Internet access.¹²⁷ There has also emerged a tendency toward anti-outsider, and especially anti-Uzbek, sentiments among the Turkmen population, reinforced by “overt, government-sponsored racism in favour of ethnic Turkmen, and against other minorities, notably Uzbeks, Russians, and Armenians.”¹²⁸ Mandatory Turkmen-language instruction and enforcement of traditional costume in schools, the banning of Russian and other foreign cultural events, and the imposition of nationality requirements for state jobs and university education are part of a “state-level official policy of racial purity, and effective ethnic cleansing.”¹²⁹ Official figures for the non-Turkmen population fell from 23 per cent in 1995 to 5.3 per cent in 2005, partially due to a combination of out-migration and incorrect self-reporting, but largely due to “deliberate government underreporting.”¹³⁰

Unsurprisingly for a government that seeks to reinforce its own legitimacy through invented and appropriated national traditions, the government of Turkmenistan under Niyazov sought in to co-opt Islam for nationalist purposes. Sunni Islam was one of two legally allowable religions, and Niyazov did refer to Allah and the Koran in some of his writings and speeches, albeit not in a theologically serious sense, while repressing other religious movements.¹³¹ According to David Lewis:

In Turkmenistan, unlike Uzbekistan, all the well known opponents of the regime were committed to secular politics. The Turkmen were perhaps the least religious of the Central Asian peoples; they were largely indifferent to organized religion, and few visited the grandiose mosques that Niyazov had built in Ashgabad. Instead, their version of Islam was limited to traditional rituals and pilgrimages to shrines.¹³²

Moreover, Islamism in Turkmenistan has not been subject to the same threat-construction efforts as in Uzbekistan.

In this context, efforts by Central Asian States to simultaneously co-opt and repress Islam can be seen as sensible policy choices. Given the historical connection between Islam and Central Asia, and the persistence of several elements of Islamic tradition, if not of Islamic belief, in spite of Soviet repression, the potential for Islam as a narrative to naturalize or legitimate the authority of the state is considerable, at least in theory.¹³³ Moreover, the subordination of Islam as an element of national identity has meant that it remains a latent narrative for self-identification by many Central Asians. This growing interest in religion cannot easily be distinguished from the expression of national feeling. As Khalid writes, “for most people, Islam continues to mean a “return” to national tradition, the rediscovery of a cultural heritage that was much maligned during the Soviet era.”¹³⁴ More to the point, Islamic practices have largely been separated from Islamic beliefs:

The Islamic revival in post-Soviet Central Asia shows little sign of affecting every day life. There is little concern about observing the basic prohibitions of Islam against alcohol and even pork... Pride in Islam as national heritage can coexist with complete lack of observance or indeed any belief at all, let alone a desire to live in an Islamic state.¹³⁵

Instead, the practice of religion subsists, as it did in Soviet times, largely in the observance of traditional practices around life events such as weddings and funerals.¹³⁶

The “officialization” of Islam characteristic of the Soviet period has continued under the new regimes as well, albeit with five “Mufitates” in lieu of the one established under Soviet auspices.¹³⁷ As Akiner describes, the channeling of Islamic practices into “official” forms is inextricably linked to the repression of unofficial Islam:

In all five states, religious communities must be officially registered by the authorities. If not, they are likely to be prosecuted, and to suffer personal harassment as well as the confiscation or destruction of community property. Most of the so-called ‘nontraditional’ faiths (meaning those that have only recently been introduced into the region) have experienced great difficulties in

securing registration; insofar as they operate at all, their activities are regarded as illegal, and therefore criminal.¹³⁸

There is potential for official Islam to have a counter-legitimizing effect. Para-official Islam has persisted in Kazakhstan under the Spiritual Board for the Muslims of Kazakhstan. However, Redman suggests that “in the long-term... the unpopularity of the pro-government Spiritual Board for the Muslims of Kazakhstan could encourage the emergence of a politicized militant element.”¹³⁹

The evident risk of engaging Islam in the service of the state has resulted in the combination of cooptation with repression, in varying degrees, in each of the Central Asian states. The emergence of Islamist movements has certainly been the impetus for religious repression. Akiner describes these developments:

Since independence, new laws on religion and on religious associations have been passed in the Central Asian states. The law adopted in Uzbekistan in 1998 is regarded as the most restrictive. However, the draft amendments that are currently under consideration in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan propose measures that are almost equally severe. Political parties of a religious orientation are proscribed everywhere except in Tajikistan, where in mid-1999, in the run-up to parliamentary elections, the Islamic Rebirth Party, outlawed in 1993, was again legalized.¹⁴⁰

Official Islam can also be a means of religious repression. For instance, the Kyrgyz Islamic *ulama* adopted a “licensing system” for religious literature in 2002.¹⁴¹

Nowhere is this repression more severe than in Uzbekistan. Even before the Tashkent bombings, the Karimov regime had taken a hard line against religious expression, as Johnson discusses:

In 1998, following the Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organisations, the government of Uzbekistan launched a crackdown on all Islamist suspects. It was declared illegal to preach Islam. All mosques and imams had to be registered. Women were arrested for wearing the hijab, and thousands of men with beards were questioned... The following year, fifty-five death sentences were awarded and fifteen executions took place.¹⁴²

The Uzbek government has also made extensive use of informants and torture in investigating suspected Islamists, and Johnson notes that “the police are not above planting weapons, drugs, ammunition or inflammatory literature in order to make an arrest, get a conviction or sometimes just to extract a bribe.”¹⁴³

The events in Andijan in May 2005 are of particular interest in this context. On May 12, supporters of 23 local businessmen who were on trial for being “Islamic extremists,” attacked a police station and army garrison, using weapons stolen there to storm the jail where the businessmen were being held. The 23 businessmen – some of whom had prior connections to Hizb ut-Tahrir – and other prisoners were freed, and a government building was also seized.¹⁴⁴ The next day, thousands of protestors gathered in Andijan’s main square to demand democracy and economic reform. After several hours, soldiers entered the square and began shooting the unarmed protestors. Official Uzbekistani estimates of the death toll were 187, which the government blamed on “militants.”¹⁴⁵ Locals and human rights groups put the death toll much higher at over 750 people.¹⁴⁶ More than 400 people fled to Kyrgyzstan.

The Uzbek regime alleged that the massacre was masterminded by an extremist group, identified as “Akramiya” after the putative leader of the group Akram Yoldoshev. The 15 “extremists” arrested and tried by the Uzbek authorities confessed to membership in this group, and to involvement in terrorist and criminal activities.¹⁴⁷ However, other sources indicated that the group of which Yoldoshev and his associates were a part was, in fact, a loose association of community-minded businessmen who were involved in religiously motivated social activities. It is not clear if they were originally arrested due to suspicion of these activities or from a desire by local officials to obtain a bribe.¹⁴⁸

Regardless, Eric McGlinchey observes that “radical Islamist groups are a boon to Central Asia’s autocratic rulers,” insofar as they offer a convenient excuse for the apparatus of terror and repression:¹⁴⁹

[T]he Islamist opposition and the region’s dictators both benefit from a symbiotic relationship. Uzbek president Karimov, for example, justifies authoritarian rule as a temporary necessity, a defense against the “terrorism, extremism and fanaticism, which has been posing a threat to our peaceful and calm life.” HT [Hizb ut-Tahrir] responds by rallying Uzbek public opinion against “the arrogant, tyrant ruler.” Radical Islam and authoritarianism are mutually legitimating, an irony which HT, the IMU, and the region’s autocrats actively encourage.¹⁵⁰

Of course, the potential and risks of engaging Islam are not the same everywhere in the region. Just as Hizb ut-Tahrir and other Islamic movements have had a more difficult time in Kazakhstan than the other Central Asian republics, the potential for Islam to legitimate the Kazakh state is also diminished. Redman suggests that this is linked to the country’s superior economic performance in relation to its neighbours:

Islam is not as deeply rooted or widely practiced [in Kazakhstan] and many of the economic grievances of its neighbours have not shared in the oil-bolstered economy of Kazakhstan. The group’s support there has mainly been confined to the southern areas of Kentau, Turkestan, and Shymkent, where the wealth brought by the booming oil sector is yet to have any real impact on the local population. It is thus unlikely that the dissemination of pamphlets by Hizb-ut-Tahrir will be able to capitalize on the county’s economic and social conditions, not to mention unease about American foreign policy adventures in the Muslim world, to any great degree in the short term.¹⁵¹

Redman also observes the absence from Kazakhstan of demonstrations against the Iraq War, which were common in some of the other Central Asian republics.¹⁵² On the other hand, the eroded legitimacy of “official” Islam, ongoing allegations of corruption within the Presidential administration, and the unequal distribution of the benefits of economic growth may individually or collectively contribute to the future success of an Islamist opposition in Kazakhstan, which may in turn offer an incentive for continued control of Islamic practices even in the absence of a defined threat.¹⁵³ It is worth noting that, as of

April 2008, the government of Kazakhstan had banned 16 groups as terrorist or extremist organizations.¹⁵⁴

The two paths taken by the Central Asian states, between cooptation and repression of Islam, both rest on an understanding of political Islam as an object. However, they engage different elements within the ideological matrix. The first, cooptation, invokes beliefs about the way that others behave in relation to the self and about the possibilities for acting on the beliefs of others. The second, repression, sees political Islam as an active threat, and invokes beliefs about how others will act in relation to society and about the ways in which they may seek to change society. This is the same mechanism involved at the international level. However, the social referents and expectations change as other actors are brought into consideration. The end result is an even greater reliance on beliefs about how others will act in relation to society. Here again, these beliefs about the intentions of others are not necessarily congruent with the own-understandings of these others, further diminishing expectations that there is necessarily a correspondence between the content of ideology-as-subject and immanent possibilities of ideology-as-object.

3) Islamism as a Threat to Regional and International Security

The Central Asian states have made several attempts to “securitize” the Islamic resurgence, casting non-traditional manifestations of Islam as existential threats to the state, as in the treatment in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan of Hizb ut-Tahrir members, or accusing oppositionists of being “Wahabis” or Islamist extremists, as was the case in the terrorism trials following the Andijan massacre.¹⁵⁵ The perception of Islamism as a

threat to regional and international security owes a great deal to Islamist movements and religiously affiliated violence elsewhere in the world. Central Asians have had a near view of at least two such “external” conflicts: the Chechen conflict in the Caucasus, and the lengthy war in Afghanistan, both before and after the Taliban seizure of power in 1994.

The perceived threat of a global Islamist movement has been actuated by the proximity of the Central Asian republics to Afghanistan. This was based in part on the real connections that existed between Afghanistan and Tajikistan during the Tajik Civil War. As Nojumi writes, “during civil war in Tajikistan, Afghanistan was the main supply route as well as training base for the Tajik rebels.”¹⁵⁶ The prospect of an Islamist regime in Afghanistan that could offer material support for similar groups in the Central Asian republics resulted in a renewed willingness on the part of Kyrgyz, Tajik, and Uzbek authorities to accept Russian military involvement on the Afghan border. This concern with the spread or spill-over of conflict across borders is particularly intense in the Central Asian context given the porosity of southern border that Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan share with Afghanistan. However, this concern is also germane to Uzbekistan:

According to the Uzbek authorities units of Muslim fanatics from Uzbekistan have been formed in special military camps on Pakistani territory, just waiting for the right moment to seize military power in their homeland. In 2001 the southern borders of the CIS were being approached by the Taliban, who were seriously debating whether to follow up their liberation of Afghanistan as a whole by pushing the war further into Central Asia. The leaders of the Central Asian states and Moscow were worried that the Taliban might form an alliance with the local Muslim extremists, with a ‘holy war’ then flaring up all over the lands of Central Asia and even spreading to areas in Russia.¹⁵⁷

The Afghan conflict was closely connected with the Civil War in Tajikistan. While the intensity of the fighting flagged in 1993, raids out of Afghanistan refocused Russian

attention and deployments on border defence. The dissolution in that year of the CIS Joint Armed Forces High Command left the would-be peacekeepers without any infrastructure and forced a multilateral solution.¹⁵⁸ By the end of 1993, there were 25,000 troops, mostly Russians, in Tajikistan. In 1994, a temporary cease-fire was negotiated under U.N. auspices, during which Tajik presidential elections were attempted. However, the peace enforcement mission in the interior proved to have done little to minimize the political use of violence.¹⁵⁹ At the same time, the border protection initiative has had some effect, although the border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan is still not sealed.¹⁶⁰

The second example of Islamism that has concerned Central Asian states encompasses the successive and related conflicts in Chechnya and neighbouring areas of the Caucasus. During the first Chechen War between 1994 and 1996, “a small but influential group of international jihadi fighters based themselves in Chechnya under the leadership of an Arab with the nom de guerre of Khattab, while home-grown rebel leaders, such as Shamil Basayev, Arbi Barayev, and Movladi Udugov, allied themselves with this group and began to look to Middle Eastern Islamists for support.”¹⁶¹ After the war, Chechnya achieved virtual independence under rebel-turned-President Aslan Maskhadov.¹⁶² Maskhadov was unable to suppress Basayev’s and Khattab’s forces, and the power and prevalence of warlords, criminal gangs, and Islamists (including foreign terrorists) increased. The Islamic “fundamentalists” set up terrorist training camps in Chechnya and recruited aspiring *jihadi* (holy warriors) from all over southern Russia and Central Asia, offering them military training as well as political and religious indoctrination.¹⁶³

Ware writes that “in an apparent effort to compete with Islamist warlords in Chechnya, Maskhadov disbanded parliament, signed a constitution resembling that of Sudan, and established Sharia courts in Chechnya.”¹⁶⁴ These courts issued sentences of flogging, mutilation, and death, for crimes including adultery and homosexuality. What followed was a descent into chaos as Maskhadov’s government proved incapable of bringing a semblance of order back to the breakaway republic. Connections also developed between Chechen Islamists and Saudi and Afghan jihadis, who established training facilities that prepared fighters for duty in Chechnya.¹⁶⁵ The Chechen conflict offered another example of conflict spread when, in 1999, a group of Islamist fighters occupied ten villages in western Dagestan and proclaimed an Islamic republic.¹⁶⁶ As Kramer writes, “the terrorists Basaev and Khattab led the military actions of Dagestani and Chechen ‘Wahhabis’ to free Dagestan from ‘non-believers.’”¹⁶⁷

While the conflict in Afghanistan, like the Tajik civil war, presented a risk that the conflict would spill into the neighbouring republics through the movement of combatants across borders, especially into Tajikistan, the conflict in the Caucasus, and the growth of a global Islamist movement present a threat of a different kind, which might be called “conflict resonance.” This has also been referred to as contagion, and it highlights the capacity of ideas to “jump” between social milieus that are culturally and politically similar, but not geographically proximate. A key element of conflict resonance is the existence of parallel social and political conditions in non-adjacent areas. On the surface, at least, the case of Chechnya includes several compelling parallels with Central Asia, including the movement of participants from Central Asia to the Caucasus and vice versa. In addition, the role of modern information technology in abetting conflict resonance can

be seen as another factor that permits the spread of Islamist ideology without direct spread alongside Islamic movements. As Michael Dartnell observes, “the key impacts of today’s [information technology] are to spread previously inaccessible information, and transform political communication by allowing non-state actors to directly address target publics.”¹⁶⁸ This has been reflected in the practices of some Islamist groups. Johnson notes that “Hizb ut-Tahrir now also makes extensive use of modern communications technologies to spread their message,” including “videos, CDs, printing and photocopying facilities and e-mail.”¹⁶⁹

The advent of the “War on Terror” has also reoriented both international interest in Islamism in Central Asia as a global and not just a regional phenomenon. To some extent, of course, the end of the Cold War also brought a reconceptualization of Islam in Central Asia among outside observers, particularly those in the U.S. While Islam had been seen as a potential Western ally against Soviet power – externally, most notably in Afghanistan, but also internally, through the substantial Muslim population within the Soviet Union – the end of the Cold War reoriented the potential of Islamic politics not as an opportunity but as a threat.¹⁷⁰ As Adeb Khalid writes:

No sooner had Central Asia become independent than its population ceased being “good Muslims” and became the object of fear and suspicion... The spectre of fundamentalism and the need to counteract it came to define how Western observers thought about Islam in Central Asia. The result is a tendency to exaggerate all Islam-based political activism and all threats of militancy while ignoring the broader context in which they exist.¹⁷¹

Within his narrative, the Islamic potential of the Central Asian region was coupled with the existence of foreign networks dedicated to the spread of Islamism. This phenomenon has been observed in Central Asia. For example, the so-called “Wahabi” movement in Central Asia has received “sizeable financial support from the Saudi Arabian movement,

Ahl-e Sunnah, for the construction of mosques and *madrases*.”¹⁷² Similarly, connections between post-Soviet Central Asia and neighbouring Islamic areas came to be viewed in a new light, in particular following Chinese actions against the Islamic Uighur minority in Xinjiang. This has been viewed both as a security risk and as an example of ethnic solidarity. For instance, at the fifth congress of Kyrgyzstan’s Uighurs in 2003, the Chairman of the Uighur Society sought to distance the ethnic Uighur minority in that country from allegations of “criminal activities connected with separatists who want to set up an independent Uighur state in China’s Xinjiang Province.”¹⁷³ However, Oresman and Steingart also suggest that there are links between other Central Asian Islamist groups and the Uighur resistance movement.¹⁷⁴

The “War on Terror” also presented significant opportunities for the Central Asian republics to engage in domestic practices that would otherwise have resulted in Western approbation.¹⁷⁵ As Johnson writes:

The behaviour of the Central Asian regimes towards public protest has also attracted international interest. There are accusations that the Global War on Terror is used as an excuse to crack down on political opponents and that the regimes fail to recognize that their own hard-line strategy is fostering unrest, even to the extent of pushing young men towards extremist groups.¹⁷⁶

At the same time, the material support provided by the Central Asian republics for the U.S.-led international intervention in Afghanistan was a difficult policy domestically, due to public opposition in those countries to American policy in Iraq, and externally, as this could interact with international geopolitical dynamics, notably between Russia and the United States. Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Armenia, and Belarus, members of the members of the regional Collective Security Treaty, came out against the U.S. war in Iraq in March 2003.¹⁷⁷ While this could be seen as part of geopolitical maneuvering in the region, it could also be seen, at least in the case of the three Central

Asian republics and Russia, as an effort to forestall criticism that they had turned their backs on fellow Muslims, although the statement referred to humanitarian and ecological damage as key concerns and avoided the issue of Islam altogether.¹⁷⁸ For its part, the United States has been sensitive to criticisms that it would turn a blind eye to the practices of authoritarian regimes in exchange for assistance in the War on Terror, and extracted commitments from Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in respect of human rights, democracy, and free-market reforms as part of its treaties with these countries.¹⁷⁹ Conversely, as Simons writes, “neutral Turkmenistan limited its contribution to use of its airspace and territory for transit of humanitarian supplies, so the United States was later free to criticize the savage political crackdown, which began there as 2002 drew to a close.”¹⁸⁰ What the “War on Terror” in Central Asia demonstrated was not so much the fragility of narratives of legitimacy offered in support of the state, but the contingency of these narratives upon external circumstances and dynamics, and in turn, the capacity of state actors to turn these narratives to their advantage.

Conclusion

The imperial relationship between the Soviet centre and the Central Asian periphery created, under Soviet auspices, an insular international subsystem in which the Central Asian republics were embedded. Within this system, one of chief concerns of Soviet policymakers was the possibility of a pan-Islamic movement against Soviet power. The effort to forestall such a movement resulted in a two-fold policy: first, the division of Central Asia – politically into several units, and ethnically into several nation-states – and second, the assimilation of the indigenous Central Asian peoples into modern, Soviet socio-cultural frameworks. Both the Islamic and Islamist potentials of post-Soviet

Central Asia are actuated by this historical legacy and the failure of Soviet hegemony, in the broadest conceptual sense that hegemony implies. The demise of the Soviet Union was a collapse in two dimensions. The first collapse was the deflation – perhaps temporary but still evident – of Russian geopolitical dominance in the region. The second collapse, no less germane in the present case, was the ideological collapse that the Soviet implosion implied. In both cases, however, the encapsulation of Central Asia within the Soviet power structure has made an enduring imprint on the geopolitics and political culture of the region.

Based on a review of Islamist movements, state level responses to the Islamic Revival, and international perceptions of the Islamist “threat” in Central Asia, it is possible to argue that the potential for political Islam as a means of social mobilization (ideology-as-subject) is distinctly limited in the region. This is due in part to the subordination of Islam to the various nationalisms recognized in Soviet nationality policy. It may also be attributable to the repression and privatization of Islam during the Soviet period that divorced Islamic practices from the intellectual and ideational traditions by which they were previously animated. While there are instances of appeals to Islam to motivate individuals, these are restricted in scope, and the success of Islamist movements seems to depend more on their willingness to pursue secular and nationalistic platforms. Despite the evident limitations of Islamism as a means of social and individual mobilization, Islamism has been seen by states in the region as both a threat to their authority, and as a means of reinforcing the legitimacy of that authority. State efforts to repress and control Islamic expression are present in all five Central Asian republics to varying degrees, and they suggest that the perception of Islamism (ideology-

as-object) does not correspond closely with the reality of Islamism in the region (ideology-as-subject). This tendency is reinforced at the international level, where the possibilities of political Islam in Central Asia are perceived in the context of the global Islamist movement and, therefore, in terms of a threat to regional and international security. Here again, ideology-as-object and ideology-as-subject do not align. This is not to say that Islam cannot serve as a means of mobilizing individuals or that certain forms of Islamism do not constitute a challenge to the legitimacy of existing regimes, nor is it to deny that Islamist movements in the region have posed and continue to pose a threat to domestic, regional, and international security. However, the dual deployment of ideology does allow for the consideration of these diverse and apparently inconsistent manifestations of political Islam through a single conceptual framework.

Notes

¹ Adeb Khalid, *Islam After Communism: Religion and Politics in Central Asia* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), 118.

² Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, 118.

³ Oliver Roy, *The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2000), 143-4. From their inroads in Sassanid Persia, the Arabs subjugated the kingdom based in Kabul and, in 651, Arab forces conquered the city of Merv (near Mary in modern Turkmenistan). (Ahmed Rashid, *The Resurgence of Central Asia: Islam or Nationalism?* (London, UK: Zed Books, 1994), 12.) After a period of settlement and conversion, a new wave of conquests extended Arab rule to Bukhara and Samarkand in 705, and into the Ferghana valley as far as Kashgar in 713. The Arab conquests culminated in the defeat of forces backed by the Chinese T'ang dynasty at Tashkent in 751. (Scott Levi, "Turks and Tajiks in Central Asian History," in *Everyday Life in Central Asia: Past and Present*, ed. Jeff Sahadeo and Russell Zanca, 15-31 (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007), 19-20.)

⁴ *Ibid.*, 144.

⁵ Michael Rywkin, *Moscow's Muslim Challenge: Soviet Central Asia*, revised ed. (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1990), 33; Shirin Akiner, "Post-Soviet Central Asia: Past is Prologue," in *The New States of Central Asia and Their Neighbours*, ed. Peter Ferdinand, 4-35 (New York, NY: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1994), 13.

⁶ Akiner, "Post-Soviet Central Asia," 11-3.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁸ Roy, *New Central Asia*, 145.

⁹ Rashid, *Resurgence*, 32-3.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 33; Rywkin, *Moscow's Muslim Challenge*, 87.

¹¹ Rywkin, *Moscow's Muslim Challenge*, 87.

¹² Dilip Hiro, *Between Marx and Muhammad: The Changing Face of Central Asia* (London, UK: HarperCollins Publishers, 1995), 32.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 32-3.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁵ Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, 105.

¹⁶ Roy, *New Central Asia*, 145, 153.

¹⁷ Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, 104.

¹⁸ Roy, *New Central Asia*, 144-5.

¹⁹ Shirin Akiner, "The Politicisation of Islam in Postsoviet Central Asia," *Religion, State & Society* 31, no. 2 (2003): 97-122, 97.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 98.

²¹ Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, 104.

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- ²² Ibid., 106.
- ²³ Rashid, *Resurgence*, 5.
- ²⁴ Rywkin, *Moscow's Muslim Challenge*, 123.
- ²⁵ Ibid., 125.
- ²⁶ Ibid., 128-36.
- ²⁷ Robert J. Kaiser, "Nations and Homelands in Soviet Central Asia," in *Geographic Perspectives on Soviet Central Asia*, ed. Robert A. Lewis, 37-73 (London, UK: Routledge, 1992), 285. Kaiser does not adequately distinguish between nations and nationalities in their Soviet usage. The historical level of development of an ethnic or national group determined the degree of recognition they were granted in the politico-territorial organizational hierarchy of the Soviet state.
- ²⁸ Ibid., 288.
- ²⁹ Ibid., 286.
- ³⁰ Ibid., 286-7.
- ³¹ Morgan Y. Liu, "A Central Asian Tale of Two Cities," *Everyday Life in Central Asia: Past and Present*, ed. Jeff Sahadeo and Russell Zanca, 66-83 (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007), 68.
- ³² Kaiser, "Nations and Homelands," 279.
- ³³ Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, 118.
- ³⁴ Kaiser, "Nations and Homelands," 288.
- ³⁵ Emphasis in original. Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, 117.
- ³⁶ Ibid., 118.
- ³⁷ Kaiser, "Nations and Homelands," 281-2.
- ³⁸ Mehrdad Haghayeghi, *Islam and Politics in Central Asia* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 66.
- ³⁹ Ibid.
- ⁴⁰ Kaiser, "Nations and Homelands," 284.
- ⁴¹ Rashid, *Resurgence*, 2.
- ⁴² Kaiser, "Nations and Homelands," 305; Lee Schwartz, "The Political Geography of Soviet Central Asia: Integrating the Central Asian Frontier," in *Geographic Perspectives on Soviet Central Asia*, ed. Robert A. Lewis, 37-73 (London, UK: Routledge, 1992), 46.
- ⁴³ Haghayeghi, *Islam and Politics*, xviii.
- ⁴⁴ Rashid, *Resurgence*, 7.
- ⁴⁵ Madeleine Reeves, "Travel in the Margins of the State," in *Everyday Life in Central Asia: Past and Present*, ed. Jeff Sahadeo and Russell Zanca, 281-300 (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007), 285; Rashid, *Resurgence*, 7-8.

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- ⁴⁶ Reeves, "Travel in the Margins of the State," 285.
- ⁴⁷ Roy, *New Central Asia*, 144.
- ⁴⁸ Sébastien Peyrouse, "Islam in Central Asia: National Specificities and Postsoviet Globalization," *Religion, State & Society* 35, no. 3 (Sep. 2007): 245-60, 255.
- ⁴⁹ Haghayeghi, *Islam and Politics*, 85.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid.
- ⁵¹ Ibid.
- ⁵² Ibid., 86.
- ⁵³ Ibid.
- ⁵⁴ Roy, *New Central Asia*, 154. Hiro traces the party's roots to the Kurgan Tyube province on the Afghan-Tajik border in 1976. Hiro, *Between Marx and Muhammad*, 193.
- ⁵⁵ Haghayeghi, *Islam and Politics*, 87.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid., 87.
- ⁵⁷ Roy, *New Central Asia*, 155.
- ⁵⁸ Hiro, *Between Marx and Muhammad*, 199.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid., 202.
- ⁶¹ Haghayeghi, *Islam and Politics*, 88.
- ⁶² Iver B. Neumann and Sergei Solodovnik, "The Case of Tajikistan," in *Peacekeeping and the Role of Russia in Eurasia*, 83-101, 88.
- ⁶³ Ibid.
- ⁶⁴ Muriel Atkin, "Thwarted Democratization in Tajikistan," in *Conflict, cleavage, and change in Central Asia and the Caucasus*, ed. Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott, 277-311 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 279.
- ⁶⁵ Alexei V. Malashenko, "Islam and Politics in the Southern Zone of the Former USSR," in *Central Asia and Transcaucasia: Ethnicity and Conflict*, ed. Vitaly V. Naumkin, 109-26 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994), 122-3.
- ⁶⁶ Ibid., 123.
- ⁶⁷ Ibid., 124; Atkin, "Thwarted Democratization," 286.
- ⁶⁸ Malashenko, "Islam and Politics in the Southern Zone," 123.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid.
- ⁷⁰ Rob Johnson, *Oil, Islam and Conflict: Central Asia since 1945* (London, UK: Reaktion Books, 2007), 84.

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- ⁷¹ Ibid., 84-5. Roy, *New Central Asia*, 157.
- ⁷² Johnson, *Oil, Islam and Conflict*, 114.
- ⁷³ Igor' Rotar', "Under the Green Banner: Islamic Radicals in Russia and the Former Soviet Union," *Religion, State & Society* 30, no. 2 (2002): 89-153, 145.
- ⁷⁴ Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, 156.
- ⁷⁵ Rashid, *Jihad*, 148.
- ⁷⁶ Tohir Yuldeshev, interview with *Voice of America*; cited in: Rashid, *Jihad*, 148.
- ⁷⁷ Ibid., 149-50.
- ⁷⁸ David Lewis, *The Temptations of Tyranny in Central Asia* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2008), 188-9.
- ⁷⁹ Ibid., 189.
- ⁸⁰ Ibid., 190.
- ⁸¹ Ibid., 190-1.
- ⁸² Ibid., 193.
- ⁸³ Einar Wigen, "Islamic Jihad Union: al-Qaida's Key to the Turkic World?" Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI) Report 2009/00687 (23 February 2009), 7.
- ⁸⁴ Ibid., 12.
- ⁸⁵ Ibid., 7.
- ⁸⁶ Quotations have been edited for readability and to remove Turkish characters. "A Chat With The Comm[a]nder of Islamic Jihad Union Ebu Yahya Muhammed Fatih," *Şehadet Zamani* (dated 31 May 2007), available online: http://www.sehadetzamani.com/haber_detay.php?haber_id=1203, accessed 18 August 2009.
- ⁸⁷ On the evolution of the doctrine of *jihad* see: Reza Aslan, *No god but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam* (New York, NY: Random House, 2006), 84-8.
- ⁸⁸ Ibid.
- ⁸⁹ In the Islamic eschatology, the period preceding the Day of Judgement will be characterized by spiritual entropy: "There will be no more righteous people, no more preachers of God's word, no one will read the Qur'an, there will be no more compassion nor kindness, no more honour nor propriety, no truth or honesty." ("Section 3.3: The Future: Signs of the End," in Andrew Rippin and Jan Knappert, eds./trans., *Textual Sources for the Study of Islam* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 85-9, 86-7; original citation: "Hajji Chum of Zanzibar, *Utenzi wa nushuri*, unpublished Swahili manuscript, stanzas 1-200, summarized.")
- ⁹⁰ Johnson, *Oil, Islam and Conflict*, 68.
- ⁹¹ Hizb ut-Tahrir, "About us," available online: <http://english.hizbuttahrir.org/1-19-about-us.aspx>, accessed 18 August 2009. See also: Hizb ut-Tahrir, "Concepts of Hizb ut-Tahrir, 1373-1953," available online: <http://english.hizbuttahrir.org/downloads/The%20Concepts%20of%20Hizb%20ut%20Tahrir.pdf>, accessed 18 August 2009.

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- ⁹² Hizb ut-Tahrir, "About us."
- ⁹³ Ibid.
- ⁹⁴ Ibid.
- ⁹⁵ Johnson, *Oil, Islam and Conflict*, 67; Kathleen Collins, "Ideas, Networks, and Islamist Movements: Evidence from Central Asia and the Caucasus," *World Politics* 60 (Oct 2007): 64-96, 75.
- ⁹⁶ Collins, "Ideas, Networks, and Islamist Movements," 66.
- ⁹⁷ Emmanuel Karagiannis, "Political Islam and Social Movement Theory: The Case of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Kyrgyzstan," *Religion, State & Society* 33, no. 2 (Jun. 2005): 137-49, 138.
- ⁹⁸ Johnson, *Oil, Islam and Conflict*, 72.
- ⁹⁹ Peyrouse, "Islam in Central Asia," 255.
- ¹⁰⁰ Alisher Saipov, "Underground religious literature in Kyrgyzstan: publication, distribution, contents," *Ferghana.ru Information Agency* (25 February 2005), available online: <http://enews.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=827>, accessed 18 August 2009.
- ¹⁰¹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰² Ibid.
- ¹⁰³ Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁴ Johnson, *Oil, Islam and Conflict*, 73.
- ¹⁰⁵ Mike Redman, "Hizb-Ut-Tahrir: Making Inroads Into Kazakhstan," *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst* 4 (Jun. 2003): 3-4, 3.
- ¹⁰⁶ Johnson, *Oil, Islam and Conflict*, 76; Redman, "Hizb-Ut-Tahrir," 3.
- ¹⁰⁷ Ahmed Rashid, *Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 133.
- ¹⁰⁸ U.S. Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2008, Chapter 2. Country Reports: South and Central Asia Overview," 30 April 2009, available online: <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2008/122434.htm> (accessed 18 August 2009).
- ¹⁰⁹ Ibid.
- ¹¹⁰ Rotar', "Under the Green Banner," 146.
- ¹¹¹ Haghayeghi, *Islam and Politics*, 92.
- ¹¹² Roman Muzalevsky, "Kyrgyz Operation Against IMU Reveals Growing Terrorist Threat," *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Analyst* (1 July 2009), available online: <http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/5144/print>, accessed 18 August 2009).
- ¹¹³ Paul Kubicek, "Regionalism, Nationalism and Realpolitik in Central Asia," *Europe-Asia Studies* 49, No. 4 (Jun. 1997): 637-55, 645.
- ¹¹⁴ See for example: Shahram Akbarzadeh, "National Identity and Political Legitimacy in Turkmenistan," *Nationalities Papers* 27, no. 2 (1999): 271-90; Ainura Elebayeva, Nurbek Omuraliev, and Rafis Abazov, "The Shifting Identities and Loyalties in Kyrgyzstan: The Evidence from the Field,"

Nationalities Papers 28, no. 2 (2000): 344-9; Henry E. Hale, "Cause without a Rebel: Kazakhstan's Unionist Nationalism in the USSR and CIS," *Nationalities Papers* 37, no. 1 (Jan. 2009): 1-32; Marlene Laruelle, "The Return of the Aryan Myth: Tajikistan in Search of a Secularized National Ideology," *Nationalities Papers* 35, no. 1 (Mar. 2007): 51-70; Morgan Y. Liu, "Hierarchies of place, hierarchies of empowerment: Geographies of talk about postsocialist change in Uzbekistan," *Nationalities Papers* 33, no. 3 (Sep. 2005): 423-38.

¹¹⁵ Kubicek, "Regionalism, 646.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Kaiser, "Nations and Homelands," 290

¹¹⁸ Renée de Nevers, *Russia's Strategic Renovation*, Adelphi Paper, No. 289, International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) (London, UK: Brassey's (UK) Limited, 1994), 49.

¹¹⁹ Christopher Bellamy, "Russian Army," in *The Oxford Companion to Military History*, ed. Richard Holmes, 790-3 (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001), 793.

¹²⁰ Reeves, "Travel in the Margins," 185.

¹²¹ Mehrdad Haghayeghi, "Central Asia," in *Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, 2nd ed., ed. Joel Krieger, et al., 119-20 (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001), 120.

¹²² Grigory Bondarevsky and Peter Ferdinand, "Russian Foreign Policy and Central Asia," in *The New States of Central Asia and Their Neighbours*, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, ed. Peter Ferdinand, 36-54 (New York, NY: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1994), 45.

¹²³ Johnson, *Oil, Islam and Conflict*, 45.

¹²⁴ Lewis, *Temptations of Tyranny*, 89.

¹²⁵ Rashid, *Jihad*, 73; Johnson, *Oil, Islam and Conflict*, 51; Lewis, *Temptations of Tyranny*, 80-1.

¹²⁶ Lewis, *Temptations of Tyranny*, 81.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 93.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 93.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 95-7.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 94.

¹³¹ Rashid, *Jihad*, 74; Lewis, *Temptations of Tyranny*, 106-7. Legal dispensation was also made for Orthodox Christianity.

¹³² Lewis, *Temptations of Tyranny*, 106-7.

¹³³ On the persistence of tradition see: Rywkin, *Moscow's Muslim Challenge*, 89-91.

¹³⁴ Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, 120.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 121.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 120.

¹³⁷ Akiner, "Politicisation of Islam," 103.

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- ¹³⁸ Ibid., 102.
- ¹³⁹ Redman, "Hizb-Ut-Tahrir," 3.
- ¹⁴⁰ Akiner, "Politicisation of Islam," 102.
- ¹⁴¹ Redman, "Hizb-Ut-Tahrir," 3.
- ¹⁴² Johnson, *Oil, Islam and Conflict*, 74.
- ¹⁴³ Ibid., 74-5.
- ¹⁴⁴ *The Economist*, 1 October 2005, 39-40.
- ¹⁴⁵ Lewis, *Temptations of Tyranny*, 60.
- ¹⁴⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 66.
- ¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 54-6.
- ¹⁴⁹ Eric McGlinchey, *Revolutions and Religion in Central Asia*, PONARS Policy Memo 364 (Jun. 2005), 3.
- ¹⁵⁰ Ibid.
- ¹⁵¹ Redman, "Hizb-Ut-Tahrir," 3 .
- ¹⁵² Ibid.
- ¹⁵³ Ibid.
- ¹⁵⁴ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2008."
- ¹⁵⁵ Human Rights Watch, "Kyrgyzstan: Human Rights Fact Sheet," available online: <http://www.hrw.org/press/2002/09/kyrgyzstan-factsheet.htm> (accessed 12 April 2006); "Uzbek Official Press Lambastes Controversial Witness In Terror Trial," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) Newline Vol. 9, No. 197, Part I, 19 October 2005; "Andijon Witness Testifies That Troops Shot Civilians," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 14 October 2005, available online: <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2005/10/CF345AC1-BC99-4A6D-8651-3E0EDAFC694B.html> (accessed 12 April 2006).
- ¹⁵⁶ Neamatollah Nojumi, *The Rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan: Mass Mobilization, Civil War, and the Future of the Region* (New York, NY: Palgrave, 2002), 191.
- ¹⁵⁷ Rotar', "Under the Green Banner," 89.
- ¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 92-3.
- ¹⁵⁹ Andres Smith Serrano, "CIS peacekeeping in Tajikistan," In *Regional Peacekeepers, Regional Peacekeepers: The Paradox of Russian Peacekeeping*, ed. John Mackinlay and Peter Cross, 156-82 (Tokyo, Japan: United Nations University Press, 2003), 156-82, 174.
- ¹⁶⁰ Neumann and Solodovnik, "The Case of Tajikistan," 96.
- ¹⁶¹ Fiona Hill, Anatol Lieven, and Thomas de Waal, "A Spreading Danger: Time for a New Policy Toward Chechnya," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Policy Brief 35 (March 2005), available

online: <http://www.CarnegieEndowment.org>, accessed 8 November 2005: 2. Ware disagrees, arguing that Islamists were active in Chechnya before the first Chechen War. Robert Bruce Ware, "A Multitude of Evils: Mythology and Political Failure in Chechnya," in *Chechnya: From Past to Future*, ed. Richard Sakwa, 79-115 (London, UK: Anthem Press, 2005).

¹⁶² Dzhabrail Gakaev, "Chechnya in Russia and Russia in Chechnya," in *Chechnya: From Past to Future*, ed. Richard Sakwa, 21-42 (London, UK: Anthem Press, 2005), 30-1.

¹⁶³ Mark Kramer, "The Perils of Counterinsurgency: Russia's War in Chechnya," *International Security* 29, no. 3 (Winter 2004-05): 5-63, 7.

¹⁶⁴ Ware, "Multitude," 99.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ Michael Dartnell, "Weapons of Mass Instruction: Web Activism and the Transformation of Global Security," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 32, no. 3 (2003): 477-99, 478.

¹⁶⁹ Johnson, *Oil, Islam and Conflict*, 72.

¹⁷⁰ Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, 116.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 117.

¹⁷² Haghayeghi, *Islam and Politics*, 94.

¹⁷³ "Kyrgyzstan's Uighurs hold Congress," *Central Asia Caucasus Analyst* (30 July 2003): 16.

¹⁷⁴ Matthew Oresman and Daniel Steingart, "Radical Islamization in Xinjiang – Lessons From Chechnya," *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst* (30 July 2003): 9-10, 10

¹⁷⁵ For example, see: "Unofficial Censorship On War Reporting Instituted In Uzbekistan," *Central Asia Caucasus Analyst* (26 March 2003), 13.

¹⁷⁶ Johnson, *Oil, Islam and Conflict*, 240.

¹⁷⁷ "Russia, Former Soviet Republics Security Chiefs Condemn Iraq War," *Central Asia Caucasus Analyst* (26 March 2003): 14-5.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 277-8.

¹⁸⁰ Thomas W. Simons, "The United States, Asian Security, and Central Asia before and after September 11," in *Islam, Oil, and Geopolitics: Central Asia after September 11*, ed. Van Wie Davis and Rouben Azizian, 271-85 (Plymouth, UK: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007), 277.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

In November 2005, I had the privilege of joining the “Russia and Central Asia” roundtable of the United States Military Academy’s Student Conference on United States Affairs. In keeping with the conference topic, “U.S. Responsibility in the Global Community: Interests, Opportunities, and Ethics,” each roundtable was charged with exploring options and avenues for U.S. foreign policy in a specific region or issue area. After several lengthy sessions on Russian matters, we turned to Central Asia with little time to spare. To encourage brevity and focus, the U.S. Army Colonel who was one of the roundtable co-chairs opened the discussion by asking, “Why do we care about Central Asia?” The silence that followed – in a room full of students of Russian and Central Asian affairs – is illustrative of the chief difficulties facing any study of Central Asia: real obscurity and apparent irrelevance.

Why do we care about Central Asia? Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, a rich, though not voluminous, area-studies literature has “emerged” in the Western world, encouraged by the availability of previously inaccessible research materials and by access to the five Central Asian republics themselves, and propagated by students of the history and culture of the region. Accounts of the Islamic Revival in the region have come largely from these efforts. In the post-September 11, 2001 period, it is a matter of common sense that the political implications of these developments may be of interest to

students of international relations. However, this potential importance has not been reflected in the international relations literature on the post-Soviet Central Asia, which has concerned itself largely with matters of geopolitics – an echo, perhaps, of Halford Mackinder’s 1904 assessment that the heart of the Eurasian landmass was the “geographic pivot of history.”¹ Similarly, the study of Islamism in international relations has focussed predominantly on the Middle East and to a lesser extent on South Asia.

Without diminishing its value, the Central Asian Studies literature that has developed since the dissolution of the Soviet Union nearly two decades ago has been largely descriptive, and description in the social sciences is notionally subordinate to the aim of explanation.² This in turn depends on the capacity of social scientists to devise and test theoretical claims against the imperfect empirical evidence that time and circumstances conspire to provide through the course of human events. In short, social science is nothing without history, but it is not the same as history, and by this measure the exploration of Islam in post-Soviet Central Asia that has emerged from the international relations discipline in the same period leaves something to be desired.

It is argued here that this speaks more broadly to a neglected area of international relations theory – the role of ideas in international politics – and that this in turn is linked to positions staked out by most international relations theorists in the scientific-hermeneutic debate. By focussing on the alleged dichotomy between explanation and understanding, and by privileging causal explanations, this debate has foreclosed or diminished the possibility of investigating the constitutive role that ideational factors play in international politics. By complementing the causal approach to social inquiry with a constitutive approach that attempts to comprehend social phenomenon in relation of the

social wholes of which they are a part, it is argued that we may be better able to integrate the different manifestations of ideational factors, including Islam, in international politics.

In order to link the Islamic revival in Central Asia and international relations theory, this thesis deploys the concept of ideology, as developed originally by Marx and Mannheim, as a possible conceptual bridge between the two areas of study. Within this framework, ideology provides an account of ideational factors in the context of modernity as both a subject of inquiry and an object of political action. This duality reflects the constitutivist insight that social thought and social action are necessarily intersubjective phenomena that shape and reflect one another. In this view, the “causal” and “constitutive” effects of ideational factors that are identified in international relations theory are not contradictory but commensurable accounts of the role ideas play in shaping actor identities and interests, on the one hand, and in constituting the social structures and relationships comprised under the rubric of “social reality” or the context of social action. In other words, ideology, as the manifestation of social ideas under the social and material conditions of modernity, provides an account of both ideational factors as they affect the subject actor, as they affect actor perceptions of other actors, and as they constitute the perceptions of socially possible and desirable action.

In the broadest sense, the problem this thesis seeks to address is related less to Central Asian studies than it is to international relations theory. However, the Islamic Revival in Central Asia does present a unique opportunity to examine the emergence of political Islam in a region where it was previously latent. Insofar as the Islamic Revival has been a post-independence phenomenon, or at least a phenomenon that emerged in the

later stages of Soviet rule, the development and deployment of Islamist ideology in Central Asia provides an exceptional case study in the relationship between ideational factors and social change and upheaval. Moreover, the dual role accorded to ideology in Mannheim's conceptualization – first, in motivating individuals and constituting their understanding of their social circumstances, and second, as an object of political action toward which domestic and international actors orient themselves – provides a framework that may suggest a link between the manifestations of political Islam across levels of analysis in international relations. As was discussed in Chapter 2, the international relations discourse on Islam has explored empirically a number of connections between Islam and political phenomena that can help to define political Islam, but have not generally accounted for these trends or correlations through a single conceptual framework. Similarly, systemic approaches to Islam in international politics have not generally succeeded in integrating the manifestations of political Islam into a single framework. The account of ideology developed in Chapter 3 suggests one way of linking the role that ideas play in motivating actors and as instruments of political action, and also of linking individual motivation, the treatment of political Islam at the state level, and the place of Islam in international politics.

The examination of the Islamic Revival in Central Asia within this framework, far from reinforcing an immanent interpretation of Islam as a totalising political narrative, suggests that the evolution of Islam as a constituent, and in many senses subordinate, element of Central Asian nationalisms, as well as the Soviet circumscription of religious expression, have combined to limit the appeal of Islamism as a means of mobilizing support or social action in Central Asia. This is not to say that there are no examples of

Islamist influence, and certainly the existence of Islamist organisations such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and Hizb ut-Tahrir speaks to the potential political and security ramifications of Islamism. However, these examples are relatively limited and the appeal of such groups among the wider Central Asian populations in which they move has not been broad.

The Central Asian republics have taken these threats seriously nonetheless, and the relative paucity of evidence for a strong Islamist movement in Central Asia has not diminished the perception that the Islamic Revival *could* have political or security implications. This has been evident in efforts to co-opt Islam as a means of legitimizing state authorities, as well as in efforts to repress or control religious expression by governments in the region. However, these developments speak more to the perception of Islamism as a source of legitimacy domestically, on the one hand, and as part of a global phenomenon and a threat to national and regional security, on the other hand, than to the reality of the Islamic Revival in Central Asia. This should not be taken as a suggestion that the perception of an Islamist threat is not grounded in reality. The existence of Islamist groups in the region and the reality of religiously-framed terrorist attacks, notably in Tashkent in 1999, suggest that these concerns are not unfounded though they may be exaggerated. Nonetheless, the role played by Islamism as an object of political action in Central Asia is not delimited by the reality of Islam in the region.

Avenues for Further Research

The conceptualization of ideology put forward in this thesis may have some uses in other contexts. First, the understanding of ideology as a concept that sits in between

the causal and constitutive approaches to ideational factors in an international context could be expanded through comparative research into the development of Islamism or political Islam in other contexts. Similarly, deeper case study research on political Islam in Central Asia and on other instances of political Islam could serve to test this framework more rigorously than has been possible here, and could clarify further the tension between ideological function and ideological content. This model could conceivably be applied to the study of other ideational phenomena in international relations, particularly nationalism. The division of the study of nationalism between primordialist, instrumentalist, and constructivist approaches may offer one such area where the dominant approaches “talk past another” about the same topic, in part because they treat different aspects of the same subject, but in part because these approaches correspond to different levels of analysis.³ There is also a clear connection between the politicization or ideologization of religion and the account of “securitization,” or the process by which objects become security referents for actors, that has emerged from the Copenhagen school of security studies.⁴ Beyond international relations theory, the approach to ideology developed here may support the consideration of insights from theories in other areas of the social sciences. Given the close connection to the work of Mannheim, this conceptualization has clear affinities with sociological theory, and especially sociology of knowledge.⁵ Institutional approaches to economics and politics, many of which discuss the importance of rules in “constituting” the choices facing actors, may also be amenable to this treatment of ideational factors.⁶

Whatever the utility of the conceptual framework advanced in this thesis, understanding the dynamics of political Islam in Central Asia is a worthy project in its

own right, and may also support a greater understanding of Islam as a force in international relations, and, more broadly, of the role ideas play in international politics. The risk to this approach, one that is shared with geopolitical inquiries into Central Asia, is that the region may serve as a sort of “darkest Africa” for political theorists, where imagination and interpretation may co-mingle liberally – or, put another way, to the man with a hammer all problems are nails. However, it is often the lot of the political scientists, and perhaps especially students of international relations, to trample inexpertly through fields not their own, and while it is hoped that this thesis constitutes a contribution to the field of international relations, an effort has been made to tread cautiously and with due respect for the complexity of Central Asia. Insofar as post-Soviet Central Asia has much to suggest itself as the subject for inquiries of this nature, it is hoped that this thesis may also suggest part of the answer to the Colonel’s question.

Notes

¹ Halford J. Mackinder, "The Geographical Pivot of History," in *Democratic Ideals and Reality*, Anthony J. Pearce, ed. (New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company, 1962), 241-64.

² Lawrence C. Mayer, *Redefining Comparative Politics: Promise Versus Performance*, Sage Library of Social Research, Vol. 173 (Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications, 1989), 29.

³ Adeed Dawisha, "Nation and Nationalism: Historical Antecedents to Contemporary Debates," *International Studies Review* 4 (Spring 2002): 3-22. See also: Anthony D. Smith, "The Nation: Invented, Imagined, Reconstructed," *Millennium* 20, no. 3 (1991): 353-68; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London, UK: Verso, 2001); Ernest Gellner, *Encounters with Nationalism* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1994).

⁴ See, for example: Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1991); Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998); Andrew Brian Green, "Is There A Central Asian Security Complex? An Application of Security Complex Theory and Securitization to Problems Relating to Identity in Central Asia," M.A. Thesis (Kingston, ON: Queen's University, 2000).

⁵ In particular sociology of knowledge. See for example: Nico Stehr and Volker Meja, eds., *Society and Knowledge: Contemporary Perspectives on the Sociology of Knowledge and Science*, 2nd rev. ed. (London, UK: Transaction Publishers, 2005).

⁶ See, for example: James G. March, and Johan P. Olsen, *Rediscovering Institutions: The Organizational Basis of Politics* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1989); Douglass C. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Andrew Schotter, *The Economic Theory of Social Institutions* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981). In particular, the "garbage can" model of idea selection and generation might be of interest in this context as an account of the way in which new problems force the adaptation of existing responses and development of new ones within an institutional context. Johan P. Olsen and B. G. Peters, eds., *Lessons from Experience: Experiential Learning from Administrative Reform in Eight Democracies* (Oslo, Norway: Scandinavian University Press, 1996).

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