
This book falls in the line of recent studies on religious claims of political authority. But whereas most studies concentrate on one particular religion or one particular geographical region, the present study deals with various religions in different regions and particularly with groups and regions which have not yet received much attention. The chapters of the book show, as would be expected, a high degree of diversity, from conservative Protestantism in North America to Islamism in Indonesia and Malaysia.

The editors, David Westerlund and Carl F. Hallencreutz, establish the theoretical framework of the study in its introductory chapter. The question that has been examined in the book is: "How, according to the so-called fundamentalist or anti-secularist groups in various religions, should the state relate to the religious entities within its area?" The editors who attempt to define the term 'fundamentalism' are critical of the massive Chicago-based Fundamentalism Project, which seeks to establish a common terminology for all research on religious activism, and which unreservedly accepts 'fundamentalism' as a term comprehensive enough to cover all relevant phenomena. The following sentence summarizes the objection to the use of the term 'fundamentalism'.

As a derogatory concept, tied to Western stereotypes and Christian presuppositions, it easily causes misunderstandings and prevents the understanding of the dynamics and characteristics of different religious groups with explicit political objectives (p.4).

According to the editors, the Fundamentalist Project's aim of dialogue between religious faiths is impaired by introducing such a key-concept as it will necessarily lead to that very misinformation and misunderstanding which it seeks to avoid. They further point out that the particular brand of Protestantism which, in the beginning of the twentieth century was termed 'fundamentalism', did not read the Bible 'literally'. Their point of emphasis was the inerrancy of the Bible rather than its literal interpretation. What the Protestants reacted against was the historic-critical method based upon the literary criticism of the Bible which had gradually received acceptance in the eighteenth century and onwards. Hallencreutz and Westerlund thus conclude, as Yvonne Haddad did before them, that if one held the inerrancy of the Scripture as the basic characteristic of fundamentalism, then all Muslims would be 'fundamentalists'
since the Qur'ān has not gone through the kind of extensive literary criticism to which the Bible was subjected.

The 'introduction' also points out another aspect of how the term 'fundamentalism' is (mis)used. According to the editors, "it appears that in some Muslim countries, regimes have consciously used the tactic of branding political opponents 'fundamentalists' and depicted them as serious threats in order to gain support from the West and soften the criticism of their own authoritarian and repressive rule" (p.5).

The book is divided into three parts — (1) the Americas and Europe, (2) Africa, and (3) Asia. In the first part, which relates to the Americas and Europe, such diversified subjects as conservative Protestantism, the Nation of Islam, and the Odawa Indians of the state of Michigan in the United States, the increasing Protestant influence on Guatemalan policy, and the rise of Christian orthodoxy as the substitute of Stalinistic atheism have been studied.

Simon Coleman, in his chapter entitled "Conservative Protestantism, Politics and Civil Religion in the United States", discusses the concept of "civil religion" in the US which he defines, in Robert Bellah's words, as "the generalized religion of the American way of life, existing with its own integrity alongside the more particularistic faiths of the denominations" (p.25). Coleman thus concludes that for the US, the religious and political spheres are structurally differentiated, and "the civil religion provides a symbolic means of uniting the two in a separate realm of existence" (p.25). But a symbol can have various meanings. It seems that with the intensification of religion in the American society a diversity of understanding of the previously common symbols tends to flourish. Coleman cites Peter Berger who has expressed the view that in the past religious pluralism was combined with moral unity, but presently this unity is "threatened by the growth of disputes over moral issues such as abortion and the role of the military" (p.27). Coleman further points to the globalization of the (American) civil religion by showing how a new Swedish religious sect, The Word of Life Foundation, find their way in transforming certain ideas from America to Sweden and in Sweden they acquire a local, Swedish colouring. This phenomenon, however, is not a characteristic of Christian sects alone since many ideas of the New Age Movement originated in the US.

Mattias Gardell, in his article "Behold, I make All Things New! Black Militant Islam and the American Apocalypse", analyses the ideology of the Nation of Islam. Research on this group is scarce and Gardell's study is very informative. Gardell guides the reader through the mythological world of the Nation of Islam, pointing out their basic presupposition that God is a black man; that the Black Nation was created from His substance and that, therefore, God and the Black man share a common nature (p.52). The Black population has suffered much under the supremacy of the White, but the Nation of Islam sees
the End of Time as the restoration of the Black power. Louis Farrakhan's interpretation of the hadith: "I heard the footsteps of Bilal going into Paradise ahead of my own" is that "it is the Black who is going to lead the Arab world back to the faith they have forsaken" (p.58).

The second part, which relates to Africa, discusses the Algerian Islamists, the Ikhwan of the Sudan, Islam in Senegal, Christian Fundamentalism in Black Africa, and Tanzania's religious revivalism.

Leife Sternberg analyses the political programme of the Front Islamique du Salut (FIS) in Algeria. He shows how evocative texts from the Qur'ān and the Sunnah are used in order to activate the people of Algeria on religious grounds. He also observes that in FIS, as in other contemporary Islamist movements, Qur'ānic verses are quoted in order to justify certain arguments. However, Sternberg states, "statements and demands are substantiated by quotations from the Quran, although it is sometimes difficult to discover the connection between the statement and the Quranic passage" (p.152).

In "The Discourse of the Ikhwan of Sudan and Secularism", Muhammad Mahmoud mainly examines Hasan al-Turabi's approach to an Islamic state. As the title of the article testifies, Mahmoud regards Turabi as a representative leader of the Muslim Brotherhood in Sudan. Here is the first indication of Mahmoud's purely 'literary' relationship with his subject. For it is a well-known fact that Turabi does not belong to the Muslim Brotherhood and that there are even some ideological differences between Turabi and the Ikhwan in the Sudan. That Turabi has sympathies with the international organization, the Ikhwan, is quite another matter.

Mahmoud first analyses Turabi's concept of an Islamic state before considering Turabi's booklet of 1973 concerning women. He indicates that in spite of Turabi's 'progressivity' in matters of fiqh, in matters pertaining to women Turabi is just as traditional as the general 'ulama'. He notes that Turabi has neither treated the question of a woman becoming the leader of an Islamic state, nor the question of women's testimony. Mahmoud goes on to reflect on the issue of female imām(s). He says that although the matter has not yet been raised as an issue by Muslim feminists, most probably it will be on their agenda in the future. Mahmoud also discusses whether a Muslim woman could function as a judge. He points out that there is one madhhab which accepts female judges in civil but not in criminal courts. He then expresses the view that in the present times quite a large number of Sudanese women have studied law. It is likely, then, that "the Ikhwan's Islamist project" will be in trouble if they tried to exclude women from the legal profession. This statement is another evidence on Mahmoud's rather purely 'literary' knowledge of the present political status of the Sudan as it is a quite well-known fact that in the Sudan there are many female qādis in the shari'ah court (not in criminal courts, though).
Frieder Ludwig speaks about Tanzania, which has been regarded in recent years as one of the African states with little tension between Christians and Muslims. Tanzania is, however, presently witnessing the beginning of an aggravation of tension and conflict as the general religious revival increases. The author concludes that there is presently a process of reconceptualisation of national identity. Stability in Tanzania would depend on the relationship between religion and the state in the future.

The third part, which relates to the Asian countries, discusses such subjects as "Hindu nationalism," Religious Nationalism and Sikhism, "Buddhist Activism in Sri Lanka and Burma," "The Politics of Philippine Fundamentalism" and "Islamic Movements in Indonesia, Malaysia and Afghanistan".

Sven Cederroth's article "Islamism in Multireligious Societies: The Experience of Malaysia and Indonesia" shows how Islam has become a factor to reckon with in the Malay Archipelago. Cederroth also remarks that the perception and manifestation of Islam in Indonesia are quite different from those in Malaysia. Cederroth selects the Malaysian Islamic movement, Darul Arqam, for case study. He describes the organizational features of Darul Arqam and shows how the movement has concentrated on the establishment of communities in various parts of Malaysia. He points out to a paradox: that although the Malaysian dakwah movement is an urban phenomenon and members of Darul Arqam were mainly drawn from towns and cities, they eventually moved out to remote villages. On the basis of some knowledge on Malaysia I would say that many members of the dakwah movement in fact have a rural background: either they have come from the countryside to study in big cities or they are the first generation town-dwellers. Some studies on Malaysia stress the urbanization of the sixties and onwards as one of the main reasons for the rise of these movements. One can thus conclude that the deurbanisation mentioned in the case of Darul Arqam is not a paradox but is part of a circuitous process of going back to one's roots.

Cederroth also points to the ideological differences between Darul Arqam and the official Malay establishment which has emphasized Islam as an important aspect of the state. He sees that the main reason of this conflict is that "many of the leading Islamic establishment scholars adhere to the reformist Wahhabi school which rejects all Sufi practices including those adopted by Darul Arqam" (p.373). Islam in Malaysia is influenced by Sufi thought and this also pertains to those movements which Cederroth calls "the leading Islamic establishment". I would argue that it is less a Wahhabi understanding of Islam which creates an ideological cleavage between the two, rather it is the Islamic understanding of Islam which can be named "capitalistic" Islam, an understanding of Islam which emphasises "rationalism, individualism and independent judgement" (cf. Maruf, Malay Ideas on Development 1988) and dubs Sufi ideas as retrograde.
To read Questioning the Secular State is a journey from the West to the East and through all different kinds of ideologies and spiritual messages. It is a useful work as most of the groups mentioned in it are not well-known to the Western readership. Moreover, the book is well-structured and thus easy to follow. Although the different contributors to the book stress, and naturally so, different matters we find in the book an overarching arrangement and a high degree of logical sequence which attest to a strict and competent editing of the text.

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