

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

21 July 2005: I am walking back to my hotel in a post-7/7 London, when I see an unusual deployment of police and firefighters. I start to think that London could be under attack again. The closed gates of the Underground and the patrolling armed officers confirm the worst-case scenario. Approaching an Italian restaurant, I can see the waiters, customers and occasional passers-by gathering around a TV. I join them to watch a worried Mr Blair speaking to the nation. The message is clear: we are under attack, and although everything is under control, we have to stay where we are. Walking along the street, I see tourists still unaware of the attack, children playing, old ladies waiting for improbable buses. This time no life has been shattered, no other blood added to the 7/7 carnage. 'Life has to go on,' said the Prime Minister; 'life has to go on,' say the people I meet, yet the sirens of the emergency services remind me that life will not be the same. Many questions cross my mind, the most persistent of which is 'Why?' Why are these people taking their lives and killing innocent people in the name of Islam? Why are they conducting *their* jihad? What does jihad mean today?

To answer these questions, the mass media, politicians and often academics (see for instance Hoffman 1995; Hunter 1988; Huntington 1996; Kramer 1996; Lewis 2003; Pipes 1983; Roy 1994) have focused, among other things, on the political issues, on the alleged 'Clash of Civilizations',¹ on the failure of multiculturalism, the invasion of Iraq, the alienation of Muslims, the social ghettoization of young South Asians, and the radical preachers and imams. All these factors might be the tiles of a complex mosaic, but still do not explain why the mosaic itself exists; why certain individuals, who profess themselves to be Muslim, have decided to kill themselves and innocent people in the name of jihad. In this book, I am not interested in discussing the 'tiles', although I shall consider them, but 'the mosaic'. This means shifting our analysis from interpreting the 'aims' of terrorists' actions to the dynamics of radicalization. Why do some Muslims understand jihad as murder while the majority reject such a view?

Before discussing this issue, let me emphasize a fundamental premise, without which any anthropological analysis produces flawed results: no text, even the most holy, could speak without the human mind reading, understanding and interpreting it.² This simple, self-evident (but in the case of religion often undermined) observation has an important consequence, which other anthropologists working on Islam have emphasized. For instance, Donnan (2002: 1) has observed ‘what one knows about Islam, one knows, inevitably and inescapably, with reference to the ways in which the other people come to know about Islam.’ The attempts to scrutinize the Qur’an to find the Holy Grail of extremism or to describe violent and radical Muslim worshippers as ‘traitors’ of a ‘real’ Islam might be useful for political diatribes, but certainly not for understanding why so-called Islamic terrorists exist.³ The available studies on jihad tend to undermine the role that personal identities have on it, and rather focus on the historical and political elements of jihad. This has facilitated antithetical forms of essentialism.⁴ Something which is not new in the study of Islam.

Said’s book *Orientalism* (1978) has played an involuntary role in this essentialization process. Said’s complex critique of Western scholarship on the ‘Orient’ and Islam, in particular when focusing on literature and art, has too often been reduced to a Manichaean division. On the one hand, there are the *Orientalists*, the scholars who being in love with colonialism would retain a bias against Islam, on the other the anti-Orientalists, who would claim to represent Islam by respecting the *real* meaning (Milton-Edwards 2002). If we observe the social and political discussion available on contemporary jihad, we can see that this has produced two ‘schools of thought’, whose members, through their reciprocal denigrating cliché, have been termed neo-Orientalists and Apologists. So, following such a Manichaean division (cf. Sadowski 1993; Tuastad 2003), those suggesting that Islam leads to extremism have been classified as neo-Orientalists by those who deny that extremists are *real* Muslims; the neo-Orientalist has claimed that this latter position was nothing other than apologetic.⁵ Notwithstanding their irreconcilable positions and arguments, both the ‘neo-Orientalist’ and ‘apologist’ share an essentialistic view of Islam. Let me say that I reject this distinction as useless for social scientific research for it is produced by political interests dealing with the Middle East crisis and, in particular, the Palestinian–Israeli conflict.

An example of what neo-Orientalists would call an apologetic approach to jihad is Noorani’s book *Islam and Jihad: Prejudice Versus Reality* (2002). Noorani has argued, ‘the so-called Islamic fundamentalist is an *impostor*. He has *misused* a noble faith as a political weapon. Of course, Islam does have a political vision; but it is *far removed from the Islam* which very many Muslims and most non-Muslims imagine it to be’ (Noorani 2002: ix,

emphasis added). Noorani speaks of Islam as a physical entity possessing consciousness and an authoritative voice, against which the Islamic tone-deaf Muslim (the *impostor*) may be easily spotted. In other words, Noorani has not suggested that extremists are a minority among the Muslims with unorthodox interpretations of jihad, but rather that they are *Muslims without Islam*. The issue is that the *impostors* consider themselves the best Muslims. The impasse is created by the fact that both Noorani and his 'impostors' share the idea that Islam is one. So that only one interpretation is acceptable. Noorani's argument on jihad is theological. Indeed, his argument reminds us that the majority of Muslims love peace and that terrorist actions shock them no less than us, but Noorani in his discussion does not tell us *why* a minority of these Muslims wish to immolate themselves by *their* idea of jihad.

Noorani is not the only scholar who has tried to suggest a distinction between Muslims and Islam. For instance, Esposito (1992; 2002) has argued, '[Islam], like Judaism and Christianity, rejects terrorism' (2002: ix), and has suggested that some people manipulate Islam as a political tool in order to change their societies or oppose 'imperialism'. Esposito has observed, 'many in the Muslim world, like their counterparts in the West, opt for easy anti-imperialist slogans and demonization. At its worst, both sides have engaged in a process of "mutual satanization"' (1992: 172). In his books, Esposito has introduced short histories of Islam (see also Akbar 2002 and Piscatori 1983 and 1991), which, however, have remained rather detached from the rest of his argument. So, the impression is that he is arguing something very similar to Noorani, that Muslim extremists are unable to understand the *real* history of Islam as other religious extremists cannot understand theirs: 'Although the communities in these areas [Sudan, Lebanon, Kosovo, Yugoslavia, and Azerbaijan] may be broadly identified as Christian and Muslim, it is nonetheless true, as with Northern Ireland's Catholic and Protestant communities, that local disputes and civil wars have more to do with political issues ... and socio-economic issues than with religion' (Esposito 1999: 181). Esposito has not emphasized the theological misunderstanding of the extremists, as Noorani has done, but rather the general irresistible temptation that human beings have to manipulate their religion for the sake of political and nationalistic goals. While for Noorani radical interpretations of jihad are treason against Islam, for Esposito they represent the supremacy of political over religious values. Taken to its extreme, this interpretation of extremism leads to Hafez's argument.

In *Why Muslims rebel* (2003), Hafez has suggested that the political oppression of Muslims has caused their rebellions. After rejecting socio-economic and psychological explanations, Hafez has argued:

Muslims rebel because of an ill-fated combination of institutional exclusion, on the one hand, and on the other, reactive and indiscriminate repression that threatens the organizational resources and personal lives of Islamists. Exclusionary and repressive political environments force Islamists to undergo a near universal process of radicalization, which has been witnessed by so many rebellious movements. This process involves the rise of exclusive mobilization structures to ensure against internal defections and external repression, and the diffusion of antisystem ideological frames to justify radical change and motivate collective violence. (2003: 22)

His analysis ends in blaming external repressive and exclusionist factors, but the reader who may wish to understand why these ‘rebels’ transform Islam into a political ideology of rebellion would again be left without an answer. Hafez has left unwritten any discussion about Islam or Muslims. Yet we know that the suicide bombers who are striking in our Western and non-Western cities use a religious language, affirm religious identities, and see the world through specific religious interpretations. Could we, as Hafez has brilliantly done, leave religion aside?

The scholars who have been nicknamed neo-Orientalists⁶ have strongly argued against this possibility. Islam, according to them, is the reason why we have suicide bombers. As Noorani, so authors such as Pipes, Hunter Lewis and Kramer have based their arguments on a monolithic understanding of Islam. Islam, according to these authors, has prevented Muslims enjoying modernization and left Muslims in the dark times of Middle Age. So Pipes, Lewis and Kramer have suggested that to understand tragic events such as 9/11, March 11 and the recent 7/7 attacks we need to go back to medieval interpretations and to thinkers such as Ibn Taymiyya.⁷ These extreme essentialistic viewpoints have facilitated odd arguments, such as the claim that Muslims are conducting jihad because they wish to transform non-Muslims into *Dhimmi*.⁸ Although certain extremist leaders, such as Osama bin Laden, have used expressions which came from the ‘dark age’ of the Crusaders and Islamic chevaliers, it would be extremely naïve to believe that behind such Islamic retro-chic styles there could exist medieval minds. We know very well that the context enforces new meanings on ancient expressions. Bin Laden and his acolytes adorn themselves with a mystic aura of the past, but they speak to the present, to contemporary Muslims, not to Ottoman ghosts. In Chapter 8 of this book, we shall discuss the reasons why scholars such as Bat Ye’or, Pipes, Lewis, Kramer and Huntington prefer to believe in the extremists’ masquerade rather than trying to get behind it.

Halliday, while reviewing Pipes’s book *In the Path of God: Islam and Political Power*, has argued:

this book, for all its range, is deeply flawed because it overstates its case, ending up with that fallacy that besets so many writers about Islam, not least of all the faithful themselves. This fallacy is essentialism – the idea, for which the evidence is rare indeed, that the behaviour of Muslims through all centuries and countries can be explained primarily by reference uniquely to their belief system. (1984: 583)

In another article, Halliday has strongly criticized the ‘neo-Orientalist’ and ‘apologetic’ positions, because these debates have only ‘generated much hot air’ (1997: 401). Halliday, rejecting the use of the traditional polemic labels, has suggested a more accurate description of these opposing academic viewpoints as ‘essentialists’ versus ‘contingencists’. So, essentialists are ‘those who argued that the Islamic world was dominated by a set of relatively enduring and unchanging processes and meaning, to be understood through the texts of Islam and the language it generated’ (1997: 400–1). By contrast, Halliday has defined the ‘contingencists’ as those who reject any universalistic framework and prefer to focus on the ‘contingent’ realities that exist in each Islamic country or socio-political situation (as Esposito).

Of course, the dichotomy between these two approaches exists because of the methodology each side has employed. Hodgson (1993) has suggested that a third way may be developed, combining the essentialists’ and the contingencists’ paradigms and concluded that the main feature of any Muslim philosophy is to achieve the Islamic ideal. By contrast, Halliday has argued that the study of Islamic societies involves observing Muslims’ peculiarities and differences so that the student can develop different representations of the Muslim world. Nevertheless, both these ‘third ways’ have not convinced the scholarly community. Salla, among others, has argued,

I think that both Hodgson’s and Halliday’s attempts to find the ‘middle ground’ or ‘a third position’ are unconvincing. As far as Hodgson is concerned, his notion of the ‘cultural unit of Islam’, is not, as Leonard Binder [1988] the middle ground position of ‘pragmatic orientalism’, but a notion that is firmly located in the essentialist-contingencist debate in terms of an essentialist categorisation that is sensitive to cultural variation. It is therefore a variant of scholarly approaches that Said recommends in *Orientalism* – what Binder suggests are instances of ‘good orientalism’. On the other hand, Halliday dichotomies about reality and what is actually out there – the real (Muslim) world. Such a dichotomy is a critical part of the methodological debate and therefore fails to produce a distinctive third position. (1997: 731)

Unfortunately, Salla has not provided any new methodological frameworks, but suggested a pragmatic (yet analytically useless) political programme.

The search for a middle ground thesis has never been very successful, but the events of 9/11, exacerbating the political and ideological arguments, have definitely marginalized future attempts to escape the vicious circle started by the 'essentialists' versus 'contingencists' diatribe.

Essentialism has not spared some past or recent anthropological studies of Islam (for an interesting critique of anthropology of Islam, see Varisco 2005). Geertz's *Islam Observed* (1968) is surely one of the most quoted and influential studies of Islam. Although Geertz knew that essentialist approaches were not without risks (Geertz 1973), he ended in presenting an analysis of Islam (observed in Indonesia and Morocco) in which texts and myths explain Muslims' behaviour,

If they are religious men, those everyday terms will in some way be influenced by their religious convictions, for it is in the nature of faith, even the most unworldly and least ethical, to claim effective sovereignty over human behaviour. The internal fusion of world view and ethos is, or so I am arguing, the heart of the religious perspective, and the job of the sacred symbol is to bring about that fusion. (1968: 110)

Geertz has argued that the actions of scripturalists (i.e. fundamentalists) derive from 'the Koran, the Hadith, and the Sharia, together with the standard commentaries upon them as the only acceptable bases of religious authority' (Geertz 1968: 65). At the centre of his study is neither Islam as a religion nor Muslims as believers, rather the system of symbols which, according to him, shapes human behaviour. There are many flawed and weak points in Geertz's study of Islam which other scholars have noticed and discussed (el-Zein 1977, Varisco 2005), but the most evident is the lack of real Muslim voices, his informants are never mentioned, their words never reported.

Notwithstanding the essentialist approach that he has employed, the author of *Islam Observed* has at least admitted that his interpretation was only one among the many possible (see also Geertz 1973). Yet another influential anthropologist, Gellner, was not so ready to admit the same, and even less that Islam could have more than one interpretation. Gellner's theory has been very influential within British social anthropology until today (see Shankland 2003).⁹ In a few words, Gellner has reduced Muslims to being products of their religion, and since he has argued, 'fundamentalism is at its strongest in Islam' (1992: 4), he concluded that *real* Muslims could not be other than Muslim extremists. The reasons for Gellner's argument can be found in his most celebrated book, *Muslim Society*,

What are the ideological cards which are dealt by Islam? The crucial ones are: a scriptural faith, a *completed* one (the final edition, so to speak) is available, and

there is no room for further accretion or for new prophets; also, there is no warrant for clergy, and hence for religious differentiation; and, third, there is no need to differentiate between Church and State, between what is God's and what is Caesar's, since it began as a religion of rapidly successful conquerors who soon *were* the state ... The consequences of all this is that the trans-social standard which judges the social is a Book, and not a Church. (1981: 100–1)

Gellner has presented Islam as something historically unique, though the characteristics he has described are certainly not unique to Islam; furthermore, he has overlooked the role that Muslim clergy play within the disparate Muslim traditions. It is true that Muslims do not have a centralized and hierarchical church, but it is equally true that the Qur'an cannot interpret itself. Socio-political and cultural dynamics mark the relationships between single Muslim believers and 'the Book'.

According to Fuss, essentialism is 'an ontology which stands outside the sphere of cultural influence and historical changes' (1989: 3). A clear example of Fuss's definition can be found in Shankland's work (2003), which ideologically compares Sunni and Alevi traditions in Turkey. His essentialism becomes particularly visible when he has discussed gender and Islam, 'My explanation assumes that there is something *within Islamic faith* which assumes the axiomatic inferiority, or at least separation, of women from men (and therefore the power to run society)' (2003: 316, emphasis added). While Gellner has at least developed sophisticated socio-philosophical essentialism, which, however, condemned his study to a frantic Eurocentrism, Shankland has presented an essentialist account that even lacks the sophistication of his mentor. It would be easy to reject Shankland's work as polemic, ideological and irrelevant; yet my criticism *does not* deal with his representation of Muslim worshippers as an oppressive, barbaric and fanatical force (maybe his respondents were), rather I reject his assumption that the 'Islamic faith' *in itself* may cause misogynist behaviour beyond the mind interpreting the text. Paradoxically, Shankland's representation of Islam as an *ontological essence* perfectly fits the ideology of those 'strong Muslim believers' he was condemning. Essentialist positions have discussed Islam but ignored Muslims, and in particular their identities. Identity, I shall suggest, is an emotional commitment through which people experience their autobiographical selves. This could explain why those Muslims who do not practise, or even respect the basic rules of Islam (such as drinking alcohol) still define themselves as Muslim. Simply, because they *feel* to be Muslim.

To observe how Muslims form their identities is very important if we want to understand the current uneasiness within Western Muslim communities. Tensions between Muslims and their Western governments and societies are

certainly not a novelty. The so-called Rushdie affair perhaps represents the first event that attracted considerable scholarly attention to the European Muslims' mood. The Rushdie affair also represented the first visible turning point in the relationship between Muslims and the majority of the non-Muslim population. It is certain that the affair became *the symbol* of the long-standing concerns that Muslims and non-Muslims had about each other's cultures and lifestyles. Some of my Muslim respondents considered that the affair was the first evidence of that 'attack against Islam' they still perceive today. By contrast, the famous book-burning demonstration (organized in Bradford on 14 January 1989) convinced many non-Muslims that Islam could be a threat to Western democracies and lifestyles. I am aware that the majority of Muslims who performed that burning ritual could not foresee the consequences of their actions, and their lack of knowledge regarding European history left them surprised when journalists compared their actions to Nazi behaviour (Werbner 2002).¹⁰

Kepel (1997), in his book *Muslims in the West*, has devoted an entire chapter to this 'affair,' describing in detail the different phases. What the reader can grasp from this account is that, apart from its international political implications, the affair became a catalyst for Muslims' deep frustrations. As Lewis and Schnapper (1994) have emphasized, the image of the Prophet (which, according to some Muslims, Rushdie's book would have denigrated) has a particular emotional value for Muslims, in particular when they are of South Asian origin. Asad has suggested that *The Satanic Verses* has followed the 'long tradition of Christian anti-Muslim polemics' (1990: 252). However, my Muslim respondents seemed to react not against the 'Christian anti-Muslim polemic', but rather against the different treatment of the three monotheistic religions: European anti-blasphemy laws protect Christians and Jews but not Muslims. They felt themselves to be the children of a lesser God.

Many political discussions have focused on the Rushdie affair, yet in which way did anthropologists interpret the first noticeable Western Muslim 'rebellion'? Werbner has argued that a 'clash of aesthetics' caused Muslims to protest. She has argued that Muslims and non-Muslims have 'two distinct aesthetics, and two distinct moralities or world views. So, the confrontation was between *equal* aesthetic communities, each defending its own high culture' (2002: 110). Werbner's interpretation, which is based on a culturalist post-modern viewpoint, has highlighted the degree of mutual incomprehension between contemporary Western Muslims and non-Muslims. On the one hand, the events of 9/11 have increasingly convinced some non-Muslims that Islam, as a faith, is incompatible with 'democracy' and 'civilization', on the other, some Muslims strongly believe that the West has rejected and attacked Islam, not only as religion but also as an identity.

The fact that the majority of contacts between Muslims and non-Muslims tend to be mediated by stereotypes does not help reciprocal understanding, rather it facilitates reciprocal mistrust. This has recently caused a growing number of Muslims to experience imposed or self-imposed ghettoization.

In the majority of European cities I have visited, in some neighbourhoods the Muslim population tended to outnumber the non-Muslims. There are many studies and ethnographies available on Muslim migrants in the West,¹¹ and in different ways, they agree that ghettoization is taking place and that the effect on the communities is negative. *Students of Islam in the West*¹² have tried to analyse this trend and have suggested three different reasons. The first argues that some Muslim communities segregate from the mainstream society because it simplifies the process of providing Islamic facilities, such as school and shops, and provides a sense of security against racial or Islamophobic attacks (see Nielsen 1992 and Rex 1998). By contrast, other scholars (Roald 2002) have suggested that many Muslims suffer economically because of the diffidence towards them that Western societies display, and this process ends in the cultural as well as geographical ghettoization of Muslims. Vertovec (2002) has agreed with Roald, and argued that when Muslims are not rejected completely, they are still perceived as 'aliens', 'different' and 'not ordinary' citizens, while, according to Moore, although Muslims are not completely rejected, 'the Western institutions' still perceive them as a peculiar population that needs to be 'placed in the new world order' (2002: 173). Finally, some authors (for instance Amersfoort 1998) combine these factors, concluding that such a synergy isolates Muslim migrants and their children.

Some academics have suggested that since Muslims are exposed to secular cultures, they would become secularized and become not so different from the average Christian walking in our streets; integration, at this point would be achieved. So Nielsen observed, 'Muslims would become, if not secularised, at least like most northern European Christians in confining their religious life to a small private niche' (Nielsen 1992: 155). Today we have to question both these axioms. Kepel, writing twelve years later, has to admit, 'Instead of pushing young people away from Islamist organisations, the explosions of 9/11 created a vortex into which some young European Muslims were drawn.' (2004: 271) During my researches, I was able to appreciate Kepel's observation. Some Muslims living in Western countries have developed a monolithic and ideological representation of 'the West' and, by contrast, a self-representation of their identity as monolithically Muslim. Therefore it is not surprising that the concept of jihad has developed an independent life beyond the classical theological Islamic understanding of it (see Chapter 2).

As we have seen, there have been several attempts to develop different anthropological approaches to Islam.¹³ Yet in the case of studies focusing on jihad, political analyses have been prominent.¹⁴ In *Jihad beyond Islam*, I shall start from a very different position. Emotions have been overlooked in studies concerning Muslims and jihad and I have observed the impact that emotions have on the formation of identity and would therefore start to discuss jihad from the basic, but relevant, observation that Muslims *feel to be Muslim* despite how people may see them. The study of emotions and identity in the field of anthropology is not new, many anthropologists have discussed concepts such as self, identity, emotions and feelings from culturalist, psychological and psychoanalytic viewpoints.¹⁵ The culturalist tradition is the most prominent, and Rosaldo has argued,

Society ... shapes the self through the medium of cultural terms, which shape the understanding of reflective actors ... Previous attempts to show the cultural specificity of such things as personality and effective life have suffered from failure to comprehend that culture, far more than a mere catalogue of rituals and beliefs, it is instead the very stuff of which our subjectivities are created. (1984: 150)

Recently, anthropologists such as Kay Milton (2002; Milton and Suasek 2005) have demonstrated that emotions could be interpreted while avoiding the nature/nurture debate. Milton has suggested that emotions could be 'ecological mechanisms' that enable us to learn from our environments, despite them being natural, cultural and social.

Emotions are a key element in my interpretation of why today some Muslims have associated jihad with violence, while the great majority reject this interpretation. People act because they have consciousness, self and identity, which allow them to interact with their environment. Although acting in the most repulsive way, the suicide bombers are not less human than we are; as biologically human, they are equipped with emotions and feelings just as we are. Emotion is the key word of this study of jihad among ordinary Muslims. Starting from Damasio's theory of emotions and self and Milton's idea of emotions as 'ecological mechanisms' (see Chapter 3), I will argue that people's understanding of themselves derives from their primary emotional commitments. In other words *it is what I feel I am that determines my identity for me*, regardless of how others, engaged in countless public discourses around the use of cultural markers, might perceive me. Now, an increasing number of Western Muslims are becoming trapped in what Bhabha (1994) has defined as the 'circle of panic'. A 'circle of panic', according to Bhabha, develops when within a community an undefined and a-testable rumour is spread. In this case, the rumour spreading among

Muslims says that an imagined monolithic ‘West’ wishes to wipe out Islam, and consequently, Muslim identities. I shall suggest that a ‘circle of panic’ is what Bateson has defined as *schismogenesis*: the tendency for individuals to move apart through a systematic and divergent interaction produced by negative feedback. Schismogenetic processes may affect the emotions of certain Muslims to the degree that they feel *an act of identity* to be required in order to maintain a stable experience of their self. Because of the ‘circle of panic’, a certain rhetoric of jihad could easily become the preferred ‘act of identity’.

Jihad beyond Islam provides a new interpretation of the concept of jihad provided by ordinary Muslim men and women. The Muslims with whom I have conducted research from 1998 to 2004 were living in different European countries (i.e. Italy, France, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland and some parts of England). So, my respondents came from different ethnic origins, nations and status; in Continental Europe North Africans formed the majority of my respondents while in the UK I met mainly South Asians.

Indeed the reader may well understand the ethical issues that the topic of this book raises. Today, the increasingly draconian anti-terrorism legislation is affecting our freedom of speech and any controversial opinion on jihad or Islam may become the evidence to accuse non-violent people of terrorism. Some of the opinions I have collected could end in jeopardizing the people who expressed them. After 9/11, breaching basic human rights, for security reasons, has not just been a disagreeable exception but rather an established rule. The mass media has recently reported the ‘special rendition’ of Muslim suspects to the CIA who often pass them on to dictatorial pro-Western Muslim countries to be interrogated or tortured. None of the people I met were involved in terrorist activities, none of them has shown any intention to use violence. My respondents have only freely expressed their feelings and thoughts knowing that anthropologists are ethically compelled to pledge the anonymity of their informants. A sense of moral responsibility has forced anthropologists to use the fictionalized ‘I’ (for a decision on the topic see Benedict 2002; Geest 2003) or even compress several people in one ‘I’ in much less serious situations. Without affecting the overall argument, I have used different techniques to carefully disguise the identity of my respondents and, when I believed it to be appropriate, the locations where I met them.

Plan of the book

In Chapter 2, I explain that the Qur’an devotes very few words to jihad. I observe how the concept of jihad has changed during its historical develop-

ment and how the not-so-straightforward Qur'anic and Sunna definitions have been adapted to the temporal exigencies of the Islamic states. Islam is a universalistic religion, and in the Qur'an we find that the other monotheistic religions receive a particular status in the theological and political dimensions of Islam. Yet we shall observe how the Islamic juridical traditions have developed a dualistic vision of the world. Muslim theologians developed the concepts of *dar al-Islam* (the house of Islam) and *dar al-harb* (the house of war) in order to facilitate the military expansion of Islamic states. The different juridical schools, which developed after the death of Muhammad, have increasingly transformed jihad into an open concept flexible enough to adapt to different political contexts. Of course, the main differences among the schools has been epitomized in the difference between Sunni and Shi'a interpretations. This historical development of the concept of jihad has facilitated its ubiquity, so that even from a historical and theological perspective we may say that jihad is what Muslims, in different times and places, have said that it was.

For this reason, I suggest that we need to understand how human beings form their identities, since a 'Muslim identity' is no more than one of the many expressions of human identity. Therefore, in Chapter 3, after presenting and discussing the relevant sociological and anthropological theories of identity, I suggest a different interpretation of self and identity. Starting from Damasio's theory (2000), which demonstrates that what he calls the self and autobiographic memory have their origins in complex neurological mechanisms, I suggest that identity is a homeostatic process controlled by emotions which enable human beings to understand their self and express it in relation to their environments (seen as natural, social and cultural categories). Therefore, the stability of the self is derived from a successful, emotionally driven relationship between the sense of 'I' and the environment in which the individual lives. This means that human beings experience constant tensions between the self and the 'I'. Damasio, as we shall see in Chapter 3, suggests that emotions and feelings are not the same thing. I suggest that what I call 'acts of identities' are mechanisms to generate particular feelings which, in case of a crisis of the 'I', maintain the self safely coherent avoiding dissociation (which would lead to schizophrenia). It is by starting from this understanding of identity that we can observe the role that the concept of jihad has acquired today for some Muslims. So, by employing Bateson's (2000) concept of *schismogenesis*, I argue that the idea that Islam is under attack creates 'circles of panic' affecting the identities of some Muslims and consequently shaping their rhetorics of jihad.

In Chapter 4, after discussing the impact that colonialism and post-colonialism have had on Muslim migrant men, I deconstruct the stereotype

that represents mosques as the 'lions' den' in which Muslims plan their jihads. After presenting the everyday life of an ordinary mosque, we follow the experience of a migrant Muslim man when a suspicious itinerant imam tries to manipulate the emotional context of migration so as to result in my respondent's emotional reaction. Then I present the different discourses of jihad I encountered among migrant Muslims; from the idea of jihad as a spiritual struggle, to controversial, often unorthodox understandings of it. I show how these different 'interpretations' are in reality caused by the rumour, increasingly spreading among Muslims, that Islam is currently under attack.

In Chapter 5, after a short summary of the most important events and tragedies in the Muslim world that have facilitated the development of this rumour, I observe the role that the mass media, in particular Arab satellite TV, have in this process. We observe two Muslim migrant families watching television news concerning the war in Afghanistan and Iraq. By contrast, Chapter 6 observes how Western-born Muslims discuss jihad. After discussing and criticizing the approaches that describe Western-born Muslims as possessing 'in-between' identities, I observe how their societies (which are the host societies of their parents) constantly affirm their loyalty (Haddad 2004). This is often expressed through the recurrent question 'are you British (Italian, French, American and so on) or Muslims?'

In Chapter 7, we see that migrant Muslim women and their daughters are not passive subjects, as some scholars still argue, but active members not only within their families but also among their extended female networks. Their experience of migration is shown to be different from that of their male relatives. Muslim women use their memories and Islamic myths to adapt to the new, often not very welcoming, Western environments. Among the most popular Islamic stories and myths are those of the Muslim women martyrs, who offered their lives to defend Islam and the Prophets but also exhorted their male relatives to show their Islamic honour by performing jihad. Western-born Muslim girls know the traditional stories, but also have new models: the Palestinian Muslim women martyrs.

Muslim women are increasingly attending Islamic circles provided for them by Muslim associations and mosques. They are becoming the 'strong believers' among the members of their families. We observe how some Muslim women tend to compare 'real' Muslim men with their sons, husbands, brothers and fathers. Of course, because of the difficulties Muslim migrant men face, their masculinity is often a shadow of the Islamic archetype. In this chapter, I suggest that if some Muslim men show the characteristics of an honour and shame syndrome, some Muslim women also develop similar dynamics, which can facilitate the rhetoric of jihad within their families.

Today, many commentators link jihad and Muslim extremism to Muslim anti-Semitism. In Chapter 8, I discuss the issue of defining anti-Semitism and whether Muslim anti-Semitism might be similar, as some scholars have suggested, to the Nazi ideal. Throughout the chapter, it will become clear that, although Muslim communities in the West show a strong resentment against Israel and Jewish people, there are ideological and political reasons behind the allegations that Muslim anti-Semitism is similar to that of the Nazis. I suggest that to understand the rise of anti-Semitism among some young Muslims we need to understand a different concept: Westernophobia.

Notes

1. For my criticism of this concept, see Marranci 2004a.
2. Although some of my Muslim respondents have found this argument theologically wrong, the first word that Muhammad received from Allah was *iqra*, 'read!', which also means 'understand' 'discern', which, of course, implies a mind.
3. See Arjomand 1984; Bruce 2000; Choueiri 1997; Cooley 2000; Esposito 1999, 2002; Hafez 2003; Hoffman 1995; Hunter 1988; Huntington 1996; Kepel 2004; Noorani 2002; Pipes 1983; Piscatori 1983; Roy 1994.
4. It is important to remember that the main victims of the so-called Islamic terrorism have been Muslims.
5. Even when the allegation does not survive the burden of proof, as in the case of scholars such as Esposito or Piscatori.
6. Just to mention the most quoted: Bat Ye'or 1978, 1984, 1991, 2002; Bruce 2000; Hall 1985; Hoffman 1995; Hunter 1988; Huntington 1996; Kramer 1996; Lewis 1993, 2000, 2003; Patai 1973; Pipes 1983; Roy 1994.
7. Ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328) was the most important figure in the future Hanbali School of Islamic thought. His texts and conservative religious philosophy is at the centre of the Wahhab school which is the official school of Islamic thought in Saudi Arabia. I suggest the reader who is interested in more details concerning the relationship between the Saudi family and Wahhabism read Chapter 5 in Kepel 2004.
8. This is a medieval legal concept applicable to non-Muslims who lived under Islamic rule. Bat Ye'or (1978, 1984, 1991, 2002) has revitalized this classic Islamic concept by applying it to our contemporary problems with radical Muslims.
9. For an exhaustive criticism of Gellner's thought, Hall and Jarvie 1996, Mabry 1998 and recently Varisco 2005. For an attempt to reply to such critiques, see Shankland 2003, Chapter 8.
10. It is interesting to note that the people comparing this book-burning activity to the Nazi event have failed to observe that the Muslim demonstration might better resemble the traditional ritual burning of heretical books by the Inquisition.
11. See for instance, Alsayyad and Castells 2002; Gerholm and Lithman 1988; Haddad 2002; Kepel 1997; Khan 2000; Lewis and Schnapper 1994; Nielsen

1992; Nonneman, Niblock and Szajkowski 1997; and Werbner 2002.

12. See for instance, Amersfoort 1998; Mandel 1996; Metcalf 1996; Nielsen 1992; Rex 1998; and Roald 2002.

13. See for instance, the five volumes edited by Martin E. Marty and Scott Appleby (1991, 1993a, 1993b, 1994, 1995).

14. Just to mention some studies among many: Duquin 2000; Erikson 1968; Kitayama, Markus and Liberman 1995; Markus and Kitayama 1991; Rosaldo 1984. Yet it is interesting to note that in Rapport and Overing's *Social and Cultural Anthropology: The Key Concepts* (2000) among the key concepts discussed, *emotions, identity and self* are missing.