The Relations between Nationalism and Islam in the Middle East

Zhongmin Liu∗

Abstract：*This paper argues that the conflicts between modernity and tradition in the process of modernization in the Middle East are rooted in the complicated relations between the two different ideologies, i.e., nationalism and Islam. The author probes the complicated relations between nationalism and Islam from three aspects: the impact of the Middle Eastern nationalism on Islam, the responses of Islamic fundamentalism to nationalism and the influence and prospects of the conflicts between Islam and nationalism in the political development in the Middle East.*
Key Words: *the Middle East*；*Nationalism*；*Islam; Islamic Fundamentalism; Islamic Reformism; Middle Eastern Political Developments; "Ummah"; Western Imperialism*

The Islamic culture sphere is a pluralistic cultural complex involved with the Arabs, the Turks, the Persians, the Kurds and other nationalities. It is pluralistic because of the variety and uniqueness of the nationalities concerned; it is complex because all these nationalities share one religion, Islam. Therefore, the identity and loyalty of the nationalities in the Middle East embody a dualism ---- they identify themselves with the Islamic culture and its community organization "*Ummah*" as well as the uniqueness of their own national culture. This dual identity contains a conflict between religious loyalty and national loyalty. Before nationalism took shape, the imperial regime of Arab and Ottoman Empire, however, had been prevailing in this area as its political framework. Islam integrates beliefs, law, politics, economy, ethics and values, emerging as the ideological core in the reign of the empire.　Political identity at that time mainly referred to religious identity rather than national identity, which is the basis of the political legitimacy of modern nation-states. "Virtually no independent school of Arab political thought existed until nationalism appeared as an ideological force toward the end of the nineteenth century. Before that, practically every Muslim intellectual in the Middle East, regardless of his ethnic origin, tried to interpret the social and political changes according to Islamic notions of government and authority."[1] Therefore, in

∗ Dr. Zhongmin Liu, Professor of Middle East Studies Institute at Shanghai International Studies University.
[1] Kamal Karpat, ed., *Political and Social Thought in the Contemporary Middle East* (NY: Frederick Praeger, 1968), p.21.

the political evolution in the Middle East before the dawn of the 20th century Islam was barely related to nationalism.

Conflicts first arose between nationalism and Islam in the Middle East in the 20th century and deeply affected the political development in this area. Looking back at the modernization history of the Middle East, "its deviousness typically exemplifies the relations between non-Western social tradition and modernization. In general, the profundity and integration level of history and cultural tradition determine the dimension of resistance and conflicts facing the modernization reform."[2] In this process, the complicated relationship between the two ideologies, nationalism and Islam, was one root reason for the conflicts between modernity and tradition. On the one hand, nationalism contributed tremendously to the realization of national independence, yet it came across a lot of difficulties in the following nation building and modernization drive, which turned out to be one important impetus for the Islamic revival. On the other hand, Islam's ability for social and political interference has not been diminished and the mission of harmonizing itself with nationalism has not been completed. To sum up, the complicated relationship between Islam and nationalism was an important factor that influenced the political modernization drive in the Middle East. No doubt, a probe into these relations can help us better understand the historical evolution and the future developmental tendency of the Middle East. [3]

Ⅰ. The Impact of Nationalism on Islam in the Middle East

In the political evolution of the Middle East, the ties between Islam and modern nationalism could date back to the initiation of Islamic reformism, the same origin of both nationalism and Islamic political thoughts. The influence of Islamic reformism upon nationalism and Islamic political thoughts lies in two aspects: it gestated plenty of nationalistic thoughts with its rational appeal for reforming the Islamic society and its opposition to foreign invasion; it obviously set itself up against modern secular nationalism out of its emphasis and insistence on tradition. From the beginning of the thoughts of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, conflicts came forth between Islamic reformism and nationalism in terms of the relation between religious identity and national identity. Later the conservative Islamic reform thoughts of Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida became the ideological origin of Islamic fundamentalism. Their political theories, different

---

[2] Peng Shuzhi, *Islam and the Process of Modernization in the Middle East* (Xi'an: Northwest University Press, 1997), p. 251.

[3] Currently relevant research on the relations between Middle Eastern nationalism and Islam is limited either to the studies of Middle Eastern nationalism or the Islamic revival. Since the former focuses on nationalism while the latter emphasizes Islamic fundamentalism and social movements, they only make a general discussion on the relations between nationalism and Islam. Their defects are as follows: In terms of the division of historical phases: they follow different developmental threads and clues so they cannot carry out comprehensive and systematic research on the topic. The lack of width and depth makes their study unsatisfactory. As for research achievements, their research purposes have hindered them from completing any systematic or comprehensive study on the relations between nationalism and Islam.

from secular nationalism, provided profuse ideological resources to the birth of Islamic fundamentalism.[4]

The nationalism in the Islamic countries in the Middle East sprouted after the invasion of Western colonists and the fall of the Ottoman Empire. John Esposito, the reputed American scholar of Islam, believed that the rise of Islamic nationalism in the Middle East was a result of the interaction of the following forces: the breaking up of the Ottoman Empire after World War I and the emergence of modern nation-states; the development of independence movements that aimed at casting off the political and religious control of Western imperialism; the "*Salafiyya*" (ancestor in Arabic, means religious reform and resurgence.) movement started by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and his followers Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida.[5] Certainly the internal crisis occurred along with the decline and disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and the multiple external pressures imposed by Western countries on its politics, economy, military and culture brought deep-felt survival, legitimacy and identity crises to the Arab world. In this sense, nationalism was a response to Western imperialism and the rule of European colonists. It was also an outcome of the Westernization over the past century. Many leaders of the national liberation movements had received a modern Western education and had been influenced by liberal nationalism, the spirit of the French Revolution (freedom, equality and fraternity) and especially modern Western political ideologies and values such as democracy, constitutional government, parliamentry system, individual rights and nationalism. Unlike the Islamic political ideal of the Muslim community (*Ummah*) based on common beliefs (political faithfulness and unity), the concepts of nation-state that modern nationalism advocates are not founded on religious beliefs but on the same language, land, ethnicity and history. [6] As a result, the conflict hidden between religious faithfulness and national loyalty in the Middle Eastern history took the form of the relations between nationalism and Islam on the political arena of the Middle East.

Representative branches of the Middle Eastern nationalism in history included Arab nationalism, regional Arab nationalism, Turkish nationalism and Iranian nationalism, which held similar but different attitudes towards Islam. Arab nationalism and regional Arab nationalism branched out under the influence of the Islamic reformism put forward by ideologists such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida. Another branch of the Islamic reformism was Islamic fundamentalism, with Hasan Banna, Sayyid Qutb as its spokesmen. In the first half of the 20th century, Arab nationalism, despite its depreciative attitude

---

[4] The elaborate discussion can be seen in Peng Shuzhi, "Development of the Arab Nationalism Tide," *World History*, No. 3, 1992; Peng Shuzhi, "From Islamic Reformism to Arab Nationalism," *World History*, No. 3, 1991; John L. Esposito, *Islam and Politics* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1984); Sylvia G. Haim, ed., *Arab Nationalism, An Anthology* (Berkeley & LA: University of California Press, 1964).

[5] John L. Esposito, *Islam and Politics* (New York: Syracuse University Press), 1984, p.59.

[6] John L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality*, translated into Chinese by Dongfang xiao, (Peking: Social Science Literature Press, 1999), p.80.

towards Islam in nature, endeavored to integrate Islam as a cultural resource into the ideology of Arab nationalism by highlighting the function of the Arab nation in Islam so as to harmonize the relations between Islam and nationalism. However, regional Arab nationalism prevailing in Egypt and Syria valued more their national culture but negated Islam. Yet it still revealed some traces of Islamic ideology due to the distinctive status of Islamic culture.[7] Turkish nationalism, as a representative ideology of non-Arabian nationalism, was first launched by Pan-Turkism and Pan-Islamism of Young Ottomans and Young Turks and further interpreted later by the nationalist Ziya Gǒkalp[8] in terms of its relation with Islam. Finally it turned to Kemalism, ultimately a completely secular nationalism. Turkish nationalism totally denied the position of Islam in the state's political life and finally initiated the first secular and modernized nation-state in a real sense, Turkey. In respect of the relations between Iranian nationalism and Islam, the early Iranian nationalism had a special kinship with the Islamic Shi'ism. Nevertheless, conflicts gradually came into light between them after the establishment of the Pahlavi Dynasty and a seed of the Islamic Revolution in Iran was thereafter sown.

The combination of Arab socialism with the rapid rise of Arab nationalism, Nassarism in Egypt, Arab *Ba'th* (its meaning in Arabic is renaissance) Party in Syria and Iraq in particular, has become the dominant ideology on the political arena of the Middle East in contemporary history. The nationalist regime of Turkey has been further consolidated. The Pahlavi Dynasty in Iran turned to secular nationalism and launched a modernization reform in "the White Revolution". During the national liberation movement in the Middle East, nationalism, as the mainstream ideology in the Middle East, worked not only as the guiding ideology in most Islamic countries, expediting the formation of modern nation-states in this area, but also functioned as the guideline of rising nation-states, providing them with ideological groundwork for their modernization quest.

In addition, nationalism in the Middle East gravely undermined the traditional ideology, Islam, which was gradually marginalized in politics.

First, as the mainstream ideology, nationalism was the common choice of the Middle Eastern countries in their nation-state building. Thanks to this choice the system of modern nation-states established in the Middle East has grown to be a key part of the developing nation-state system in the world.

Second, history shows that the relations between politics and religion in the Middle

---

[7] The elaborate discussion can be seen in Zhongmin Liu's "The Egyptian Regional Arab Nationalism and Islam," *World Ethno-National Studies*, No. 1, 2001; "Antun Saadah's Regional Arab Nationalism," *West Asia and Africa,* No. 2, 2001.

[8] Ziya Gǒkalp is an important nationalist in the contemporary history of Turkey. Although he has a great influence on Kemal, research on his theory is still deficient either at home or overseas. In terms of the relations between Turkish nationalism and Islam, he maintains that modern nationalism holds national identity above religious identity. He refutes Turkish nationalism featuring Pan-Islamism and Pan-Ottomanism. He insists on the separation of politics and religion and the secular nationalism that objects to the religion's interference into politics. His thoughts can be seen in Niyazi Berkrs, ed., *Turkish Nationalism and West Civilization, Selected Essays of Ziya Gǒkalp* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959).

East have undergone great changes along with the decline of Islam and the rise of nationalism. Secularization has become an important goal in the modernization drive of many countries in the Middle East while religion has been made second to politics. In accordance with the different positions of Islam in a country's political life, the relations between politics and religion in the Middle Eastern countries fall into three categories, namely, countries featuring separation of state and religion, integration of state and religion and those monarchies in between. Whatever category a country falls into, Islam has been more or less undermined in political life.

Third, with the decline of the traditional position of Islam, the Middle Eastern Islamic countries have gradually developed towards secularization in respect of their official ideology, political system, party organizations, parliament institutions and other superstructures. The constructive functions of Islam were no more than a supplement to nationalism, socialism and capitalism, which provided a traditional basis for the legitimacy of the government. At the same time, the legal and educational systems have also been secularized.

Finally, most Islamic countries in the Middle East have entered into the establishment of their independent national economy system and thereby carried out their experiments on modernization and reform of their national economy. The governments of these countries played an important role in the process of economic modernization; they took nationalism, socialism or capitalism as their theoretical guideline and basis. The economic modernization reform has brought profound changes to the economic structure, economic relations, lifestyle and other relative fields in the Islamic world. Meanwhile, the traditional Islamic economic and ethic norms and principles found themselves under violent attack along with the deepening of secularization.

The rise of nationalism and the decline of Islam could be seen in both the political life and international relations in the Middle East. Most nation-states would make their foreign policies for the sake of their national interests, which was particularly obvious in the relations between Arab and Islamic countries and the Arab-Israeli conflicts. As the dominant ideology oriented to the unity of Arab countries, Arab nationalism not only has advanced the Arab unification movement but also the birth of the League of Arab States, which is now a rather influential organization in the politics of the world. As a leader of Arab nationalism, Egypt once realized the unification of Egypt and Syria during the government of President Gamal Nasser. Pan-Islamism, represented by Saudi Arabia, was apparently in a disadvantageous position. During the Arab-Israeli conflicts, nationalism functioned as an ideological weapon with which the Arab nationalism in the Palestinian area fought against Israeli Zionism and Western imperialism, and the main spiritual pillar for the solidarity and co-operation of Arab countries as well.

Ⅱ. Islamic Fundamentalism: Islam's Response to Nationalism

As for the evolution of ideologies in the Islamic countries in the Middle East,

the first half of the 20th century witnessed the formation and growth of nationalism which dominated the period before the end of the 3rd Middle East War that broke out in 1967, the period of "political marginalization" of Islam. In contrast with the rigorous development of nationalism, Islam, the traditional ideology, faded away. Yet the decline of Islam never meant that this traditional force was simply disappearing. On the contrary, it did not give up its tradition of participating in politics; it made a prompt response to the challenges of nationalism instead. For instance, Islamic fundamentalism, represented by Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb, completely denied various forms of nationalism and fought against the concept of the modern nation-state with the traditional Islamic "*Ummah.*" They alleged that the Islamic society should be reconstructed by Islamic fundamentalism. Later they founded "The Muslim Brotherhood," a pioneer organization of Islamic fundamentalism. However, nationalism was rising and claiming leadership of the national democratic movement in most countries at that time and Islam was basically off the edge of the political ideology in the Middle East. All this paved the road for the later revival of Islamic fundamentalism.

Islamic fundamentalism first posed real challenges in reality and theory against nationalism at the end of the 1960s. As a matter of fact, Arab countries were badly defeated in the Middle East War in 1967 and their modernization met grave setbacks. Arab nationalist regimes confronted threats and challenges of Islamic opponents and its political legitimacy and authority also faced grave crises. Since the late 1960s, Islamic fundamentalism launched general challenges against nationalism, "Islamic resurgence, as a form of political discourse, is currently competing successfully with its secular counterparts—liberalism, socialism, and nationalism."[9] Egypt, as the center of Arab nationalism, received constant threats from The Muslim Brotherhood and the threats reached their peak at the assassination of President Mohamed Anwar al-Sadat in 1981. The Islamic Revolution in Iran buried the Pahlavi Dynasty which was founded through the nationalistic secularization reform of Reza Khan Shah. The aftermath of the Islamic Revolution shocked those countries in the Persian Gulf region and impaired the status of the Arab *Ba'th* Party which had been ruling Syria and Iraq for so many years. Even in Turkey, where secularization was rather successful and thorough, there was once a renaissance of Islamic forces which was engaged in politics through political parties in the 1970s and 1980s. After the Cold War, the Islamic renaissance reached a climax in some countries in West Asia, North Africa and even Mid Asia, especially Algeria, Sudan, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia. There was also a revival of Islamic forces in moderate Islamic countries like Saudi Arabia and secularized countries like Turkey. After the mid-1990s, the climax of the Islamic renaissance came to an end but its basis of launching social movements was still there. In the future development of the ideology in the Middle East, the conflict

---

[9] Saad Eddin Ibrahim, "Egypt's Islamic Activism in the 1980s," *Third World Quarterly*, No. 2, 1988, p.632.

between nationalism, the modern ideology, and Islam, the traditional political culture, will stay in existence as a key factor that may determine the modernization in the Middle East.

As far as political developments are concerned, the challenges of Islamic fundamentalism against nationalism fully reveal their conflicts as follows:[10]

1. The conflict between national and religious identity. Nationalism emphasizes national identity that includes language, terrain and national culture; and a logical inference of this political identity must be that a modern nation-state should be founded, with the nation as its main body and national identity as the main theory in the political construction and social integration of the country. However, Islamic fundamentalism emphasizes "*Ummah*," a universal religious community that surpasses race, nation and geographic boundaries, and regards this Muslim community established at the beginning of Islam as an ideal archetype of political organizations.

2. The conflict between the sovereignty of state and the sovereignty of Allah. The theoretical basis of modern nationalism is the "people sovereignty" theory of the neoteric Enlightenment Movement and Bourgeois Revolutions, which advocates state sovereignty, that is, state sovereignty is entitled to supremacy. The state theory of Islamic fundamentalism includes: *Allah Sovereignty* that argues that Allah is the only sovereign and any other "supreme sovereignty" that defies Allah is an "illegal sovereignty"; *Prophet Authority* that claims any state that goes against the behavior or speech of the Prophet Muhammad is an "illegal regime"; *Deputy Sovereignty* that says that the state and its ruler can only act for Allah as sovereign and any state that acts on its own will is an illegal state; *Political Consultation* that insists that the leader of the state should be recommended by the consultant institution selected in light of the principles of mass discussion and political consultation so as to fully implement "Islamic democracy." One of Islamic fundamentalism's political goals is to derogate and replace the exotic and half-grown secular nationalism in the Middle East by Islam. The ultimate goal of Islamic fundamentalism is to establish an Islamic state with the integration of politics and religion. In this sense, "an Islamic state is a state governed in accordance with Islamic law, the *Sharia*. Government in accordance with the *Sharia* implies the pre-eminence within the state of the judiciary or, rather, of the judicial aspect of the state over both the executive and the legislature."[11] To sum up, Islamic fundamentalism acknowledges nothing but *Allah sovereignty* and an "Islamic state," which is correctly the ideological source of Islamic fundamentalism that attempts to overthrow the nationalistic regime in the Middle East and reconstruct an "Islamic state" that highlights Allah's sovereignty.

---

[10] Zhongmin Liu, "Islamic Fundamentalism: An Ideological Challenge to Nationalism," *World Ethno-National Studies*, No. 6, 2001.

[11] Hugh Roberts, "Radical Islamism and the Dilemma of Algerian Nationalism: The Embattled Arians of Algiers," *Third World Quarterly*, No. 5, 1988, p.558.

3. The conflict between secularization and Islamization. Nationalism sticks to the secularization road featuring the separation of state, law, education and religion while Islamic fundamentalism insists on the Islamization road featuring the integration of state and religion or the integration of politics and religion and the combination of law, cultural education and religion. Apparently, the social development outlook of all-round Islamization makes up of one of Islamic fundamentalism's political aspirations. Regarding the relationship between religion and secularity, Islamic fundamentalism holds on to comprehensive Islamization and insists on establishing political, law and social cultural education institutions of the state on the basis of the integration of politics and religion. However, modern nationalism advocates social secularization and argues that the political and other social frameworks should be established upon secularization. In terms of the social development outlook, Islamic fundamentalism has repeatedly attacked the practice of following the development mode of secular Western states, by saying that the chaos and disorderly "obscuration" in present Islamic society caused by Westernization and modernization should be replaced by the undeniable Islam. It suggests rethinking modernization in accordance with Islam and the concept of "neither Eastern nor Western road, only Islam" or "the third road" which is unique to the Islamic world and essentially different from modern nationalism.

The distinction of the Middle Eastern nationalism shows the reasons that Islamic fundamentalism is able to impugn nationalism lies in the defects of nationalism itself. A social foundation was laid for the revival of Islamic movements caused by the lack of nationalistic development theory, the confusion of developmental directions, the crises of self-identity, political legitimacy and social cultural identity triggered by setbacks in modernization, the breaking up of the illusion of building a more prosperous country, powerful army and the polarization between all social classes in the process of modernization. As Esposito said, the reason for the defeat of nationalism is that politically, modern secular nationalism has been found impotent. Neither liberal nationalism nor Arab nationalism has honored their promises. In respect of constructing political legitimacy and creating an ideology of national unity, it seems that some governments of Muslim countries are neither interested nor successful. Instead they have a greater passion for maintaining lasting authoritarianism. Some monarchies and military or quasi-military autarchies still prevail in the Muslim world.[12] Indeed, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism is not only closely related to nationalism but also has a deep root in its intrinsic political cultural tradition, i.e., its prophet political authority under the principle of "Allah sovereignty." Allah is regarded as the only holder of the state sovereignty and the ruler of the state can merely "act for" Allah's authority; hence the emergence of a religious political

---

[12] John L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality*, translated into Chinese by Dongfang Xiao, (Peking: Social Science Literature Press, 1999), p.16.

culture with Islam as the political authority. "This cultural system of religion and politics became a historical tradition and social mentality that endowed the Islamic culture with a unique system and permanent quality."[13] Besides its political ideal of purifying religion, returning to nature and wiping out corruption, Islamic fundamentalism embodies the political religion and religious politics. It put forward political theories different from that of nationalism by exploring and learning from the rich political culture resources stored in the Islamic culture.[14]

Ⅲ. The Conflict between Nationalism and Islam: the Plight and Prospects of the Political Development in the Middle East

In the political development in the Middle East, nationalism and Islam, as two different ideologies, co-worked and influenced the political modernization process. The interwoven and complicated relations between Islam and nationalism in the transition from traditional to modern society could be seen in the construction of nation-states, political legitimacy, political democratization, political institutions and political systems. The conflicts between nationalism and Islam will stay strongly in the future politics of the Middle East.

Since conflicts between tradition and modernity, more or less, are unavoidable in the modernization of developing countries; to balance tradition and modernity has been a tough problem. For the Middle East, a place with deep-rooted religious and political cultural traditions, these problems are, of course, much tougher than those in other developing countries and regions. In the political modernization process of Middle Eastern countries the conflicts between nationalism and Islam have always been in existence through the political development in Muslim countries: [15]

1. In terms of the building of nation-states, the conflicts between nationalism and Islam are mainly between national identity and religious identity. They have reflected the conflict between the unity of Islamic culture and the ethical variety and also between exotic and native culture or the conflict between the exotic ideology of nationalism and the native Islamic political culture.

2. In terms of political legitimacy, the conflicts between modern legitimacy and traditional legitimacy have existed. In essence, it is not only closely linked to the multiple identities of the ethnic groups, races, religions and religious sects in the Middle East area but also is connected with the profound Islamic political culture. The immaturity of the Middle Eastern nationalism itself also has provided ideological space for the revival of Islam.

---

[13] Peng Shuzhi, *Islam and the Process of Modernization in the Middle East* (Xi'an: Northwest University Press, 1997), pp. 3-4.

[14] Zhongmin Liu, "The Political Cultural Mechanism of Contemporary Islamic Revival Movement in the Middle East," *Social Sciences in Ningxia*, No. 5, 2000.

[15] Zhongmin Liu, "The Movement of Islamic Revival and Contemporary Political Development in the Middle East," *Social Sciences in Ningxia*, No. 1, 2004.

3. In regard to political systems, there appeared conflicts between traditional and modern political systems. The Middle Eastern nationalism follows the example of Western political reforms in constructing its political systems, which has resulted in a great impact on Islam. Apart from that, some military authoritarianism and other forms of dictatorship have also met with grave challenges posed by Islamic fundamentalism in their political system construction.

4. As far as political participation and democratization are concerned, some powerful nationalistic governments in the Middle East once suppressed democratization but democratization created opportunities for fundamentalism to challenge nationalism. As a result, there appeared an "inconceivable parallel" between the political democratization advance and the renaissance of Islam in Middle Eastern Islamic countries, which led to social turbulence and conflicts.

5. A glance at the present relationship between Middle Eastern nationalism and Islam reveals that Arab nationalistic states will have to face the austere challenges of Islamic fundamentalism, which mainly refer to the criticism of Islamic political oppositions on the political legitimacy and authority groundwork of present governments. To relieve their pressure, Arab states will have to make more efforts to restrain the extreme Islamic fundamentalist forces and let the "official Islam" play a more important role. Although Turkish nationalism feels under the pressure of a possible renaissance of Islam, the latter is not powerful enough to change the nature of the secular nationalism in Turkey. "The two seemingly opposite concepts 'secularized state' and 'religious nation' will still be able to find unity in the Republic of Turkey and keep it for rather a long time."[16] In respect to Iranian nationalism, the independent secular nationalism is no longer in existence because Iran was fully Islamized after the Islamic Revolution, in which Iranian nationalism again showed its parasitical dependence on Islam.

All in all, the conflicts between nationalism and Islam not only increased the difficulty of the modernization of the Middle East but also hindered the historical advance of the political development in this area. Therefore, it is certain that how to mediate and resolve the tense relation between Middle Eastern nationalism and Islam will become a long-term task in the political modernization of the Arab-Islamic countries. On the one hand, the completion of this task depends on the Middle Eastern nationalism's capability of integrating Islam and how Islam will adapt itself to coordinate its tie with nationalism. On the other hand, it relies on whether the Middle Eastern countries can wipe out the social roots of Islamic fundamentalism and how the international relations, especially the peace process, will develop in the future in the Middle East.

---

[16] Yang Haocheng & Zhu Kerou, *Historical Exploration of Hot Issues in Contemporary Middle East: Religion and Secularism* (Peking: People Press, 2000), p.231.