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Curbing coercive identities

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1 Coercive uses of culture

There is an unfortunate but fashionable view today that differences in culture *in themselves* bear the roots of conflict. This Report proposes exactly the reverse: the multiplicity of cultures in the world enhances our human experience, and cultures also enrich each other. The HDR viewpoint is based on a central tenet: that humanity advances not only by the progressive implementation of the whole range of human rights (which includes the right to culture), but also by the *expansion of its choices and opportunities*. The expansion of cultural choice and freedom is part and parcel of human development. But it remains a fact that, in the name of culture, views have been propounded and actions undertaken which have brought about precisely the opposite: the limitation of choice, the closure of opportunities, the promotion of exclusiveness, the imposition of viewpoints, the *coercion* of people and, in the extreme case, conflict, violence and brutality. This paper discusses some of these coercive uses of culture, and their implications for policy makers.

It will become clear that those implications are not always unambiguous. A range of views exists about the most significant causal factors in the emergence of such coercive uses of culture and the ideologies which sustain them, and also on why identities become aggressively mobilised around culture (particularly in terms of religion and ethnicity). Discussing that range of views can, however, in itself help to clarify the choices that may exist for policy makers in particular concrete situations.

The term ‘coercive’ points to the exercise of power – and hence to politics. Coercive culture *imposes* itself; when this happens culture is placed in the political domain. Such coercive manifestations of culture have had the label ‘political’ attached to them: observers have spoken of political ethnicity or, for example, of political Christianity.

The ideologies that go with such coercive manifestations of culture (henceforth simply referred to as coercive ideologies), expect people to accept the picture they present of the world as a ‘correct’ one, and the conclusions drawn from that picture as (internalised) commands about how to act in the world. That is so for all ideologies. But coercive ideologies also expect *that all views which depart from this particular picture are to be rejected*. These ideologies demand and receive ‘exclusive attention’; consequently, their principal spokespersons have *power* over people.¹

Beyond ideology the extent of coercion varies. Truly coercive situations, where the repressive resources of the state are used to make people conform, are at the extreme of a spectrum. Well known examples include Iran² in the early years of the Islamic revolution for *religion* and ex-Yugoslavia as well as Rwanda for *ethnicity*. But more subtle forms of coercion, using open or veiled threats around methods that make it ‘costly’ for people not to conform, or discriminate against those who do not ‘belong’, are much more widespread. These will also be considered.

¹ This chapter deals with coercive ideologies *based on cultural identity*, so it does not consider situations where coercive power is exercised by authoritarian regimes that do not make reference to (cultural) identity.

² Gradually, however, Iran has become a society in which many shades of opinion find organised expression – though the Mullahs, as self-appointed guardians of ‘correct thinking’, continue to hold a constitutionally embedded veto on political decisions, which has blocked the implementation of the ‘will of the people’.

The ideologies under discussion have two main objects of reference: religion and ethnicity. One conclusion should *not* be reached. The fact that the coercive aspects of culture have mainly manifested themselves through religion and ethnicity does not imply that there is something inherently ‘wrong’ with religious faith or ethnic pride. Both of these are, in the vast majority of cases, valuable manifestations of culture, and positive aspects of identity, personal as well as collective. However, the implications of the closure of choice in these domains need to be seriously discussed, as these can actually diminish the acceptability of religion and ethnicity in a wider sense.

1.1 Coercive ideologies and identity

In contemporary societies identity and identity formation are quite complex. Because we ‘play so many roles’, and those roles are not activated at the same time, our individual identity emerges from a negotiation between our self-image, and the image of ourselves held by the people with whom we interact. Identity is hence not something we possess once and for all: it emerges out of a social process that tries to achieve an equilibrium between conflicting expectations. Because different people have different images of us and expect different things of us, we have to be able to endure ambiguity and ambivalence. Ideologies, in their ‘explanations’ of how societies work, provide overall ‘guidelines’ on how people are expected to deal with identities and their potential ambiguities.

Coercive groups, whether they are based on ethnicity or religion, want to eliminate these ambiguities, or at least push them into the background, by convincing people that *one* aspect of their identity is central and should guide their lives.

1.1.1 Ethnicity and ethnic groups

Coercive ideologies based on **ethnicity** derive, usually, from situations of ‘confrontation’ in terms of resources, especially the control over land. Such ideologies are supposed to justify the claims of the parties; they are used to underpin the search for power and dominance by one (ethnic) group over another. Where ethnicity and religion overlap, such resource issues are often given a religious cover.

While ethnicity is, of course, an issue in many parts of the world, a look at the situation in Africa can help clarify its most significant characteristics and shed light on the link between ethnicity and coercive identities. Africa is interesting because the question of identity arose starkly around the time of independence: people had to be brought to think of themselves as ‘nationals’, or at least as subjects of the new state, for the governments which took over from the colonial rulers to have legitimacy and to continue to function effectively in the new circumstances.

These governments did have a measure of success in getting people to think of themselves in ‘national terms’ – especially in those countries where an active struggle for independence preceded the hand-over of power. In this they imitated the modern states that emerged from the late 18th century, which had ‘insinuated’ themselves into the core identities of their subjects, making people think of themselves (for example) as French, Dutch or American.

Yet in Africa such a sense of *national* identity had nowhere been dominant in the years leading to independence, and did not become so afterwards. People in Africa, particularly in the rural areas, remained above all rooted in their ‘primordial’ small-scale communities, based on kinship, lineage and locality. While identities were multiple, those primordial ones were strongest. In many African countries they became even more prominent in the course of the

last twenty years or so, when the crisis of development and the declining legitimacy of central governments further eroded the strength of ‘national’ identities.

However, there has been a significant ‘twist’ to this re-emphasis on primordial groups. An intermediate identity level has taken on increased prominence, partly naturally, partly as a result of deliberate manipulation by people seeking power: the ethnic group. Before independence, ‘ethnic’ or ‘tribal’ designations had often been used by colonial powers as part of the arrangements to govern their heterogeneous colonial subjects – in Rwanda, ‘Hutu’ and ‘Tutsi’ were even mandatory descriptions on colonial identity passes. Recently, however, it has been said that ethnic groups have become the “... primary repository of loyalty,” and that “... [e]thnicity offers an alternative map of a community which is intimate, predictable, caring and privileged in its exclusivity”. (Ake 1994:51) For those who take this view, ethnic identity is therefore a *core* identity, not just one among multiple identities. “Ethnic identity is a total identity. It may well be ‘the’ total identity. Whether it is real or imagined, ethnicity is for its adherents a total experience, the epicentre of their very being.” And *political* ethnicity³ “... is an unequivocal commitment to the defense of a way of life, all that is meaningful and valuable, materially, culturally and spiritually.” (ibid:52)

It is not surprising that this construction is often pushed for political reasons. Take the ethnic tussles over the state that occurred in Rwanda, where political extremists have pursued the mobilisation of followings since the 1960s by promoting what has been called a *corporate* view of ethnicity. This involves not only ascribing uniform (usually negative) characteristics to all members of the other ethnic group, but also extending responsibility to *all* for the reprehensible actions of *some*. (Newbury 1998) The outcome in Rwanda was the genocidal horrors perpetrated on Tutsis by the state-protected Hutu militias.⁴

Elsewhere, too, corporate views of ethnicity have emerged, though thankfully not always with the horrific consequences that have been seen in Rwanda. However, there has been widespread fractioning of territories into ethnically defined regions, where much emphasis is placed on family and clan antecedents, giving rise to practices of identity-based closure, exclusion and even persecution. (Mbembe 1994) Ethnicity has, it is said, become a vehicle for oppression, for divide and rule, used by whichever ethnic group is dominant at any one point – often having used patrimonial and clientelistic mechanisms in better times to gain such domination. (van den Berg and Bosma 1994). Ethnicity has changed from being mainly a *cultural* characteristic of people, linked to one of a number of ‘identities’, to a *politically* defined label. This has nowhere been more pronounced than in Ethiopia, where the ruling regime has as its ‘core ideological assumption’ that it is only possible to establish democracy *through* ethnicity. There, people are assumed to *define* themselves in ethnic terms, and ethnic groups are presumed to have well-defined borders and be located in one region only.⁵ In Ethiopia, Abbink concludes, ethnicity “... has now been *politicised* to such a degree that it has become an ideology of opposition and exclusion.” (1995:157)

³ There is much similarity with the concept *corporate* ethnicity (or identity) used by other authors. (Wagner 1998; Newbury 1998)

⁴ Such ideas of corporate identity run very deep in Rwanda: the post-genocide Tutsi-dominated government has used the label *génocidaire* in ways quite similar to previously used corporate ethnic labels, implicitly justifying abuses and demonising large numbers of people. The official message was that for every (Tutsi) victim there was a (Hutu) killer – that there were some one million *génocidaires*. (Wagner 1998)

⁵ These assumptions are widely criticised in Ethiopia, as there is a considerable mixture of groups, in regional distribution, in the economy, even in marriage and descent.

1.1.2 Religions and believers

In contrast to coercive ethnic ideologies, those based on **religion** have more complex antecedents. All religious ideologies, from the coercive ones (those we call fundamentalist) to profoundly modernised and ‘liberal’ versions, rest on the same basis: on *belief*, and ultimately on belief in divine revelation.

Most liberal versions of religion have been willing to reinterpret traditional doctrines in the light of modern critical scholarship. They accept that no one religion contains the complete truth, and hence that their own views should not be imposed on others, that they should not be coercive. The extent of acceptable reinterpretation is, of course, enormously contentious – the cause of schisms and secessions. Nevertheless, even progressives hold on to certain core beliefs which were codified, long before progressive interpretations arose, by religious innovators who are said to have been divinely inspired. Even reformist religious leaders constantly refer to such purportedly divine origins, to religious innovators who have claimed to speak in the name of God. Even liberal religion has an assertive streak: you *must* accept this *because* it is God’s will.

The more traditional religious approaches have little sympathy for religious pluralism and no compunction to state that *theirs* is the truth, insisting that what they do and what they demand is based on divine revelation. They usually accept some reinterpretation to accommodate the differences in contemporary circumstances from those that pertained at the time of the religion’s origins, but the scope of such reinterpretation is limited. In traditional approaches, those we often call orthodox, human values, orientations and norms are given supposedly divine underpinning by direct reference to holy books.

Most extreme are fundamentalist religious views. It is seldom possible to draw a wholly unambiguous dividing line between traditional (orthodox) and fundamentalist versions of a religion. The most significant distinguishing characteristic would seem to be the extent of *aggressiveness* in propounding the beliefs, the degree to which intolerance is actually translated into attempts at coercive behaviour. Fundamentalisms have coercive characteristics that need to be explored more fully. But before that is done, an important *caveat* is in place. Fundamentalism is an extreme form of religiosity, and it certainly is usually coercive. But not all fundamentalist movements wish to impose their beliefs *by force* on those outside their own circle. Not all fundamentalists are ready to die – let alone kill – for their beliefs. Yes, there *are* violent extremist fundamentalists, most notably among Muslims, but also among Hindus and to a lesser degree among Jews. (See section on Extremist religious ideologies.) But it cannot be said that fundamentalists, in general, are extremists.

1.2 Coercive religious ideologies

1.2.1 How religions can be misused and become coercive

The term ‘fundamentalism’ has its origin in a series of pamphlets, written by evangelical churchmen and published in the US between 1910 and 1915, entitled “The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth”. There are many overlapping definitions. A serviceable one, by Bruce Lawrence (1989), is given on the Internet⁶. It runs as follows. Fundamentalism is “... the affirmation of religious authority as holistic and absolute, admitting of neither criticism nor reduction; it is expressed through the collective demand that specific ... dictates derived

⁶ <http://cti.itc.virginia.edu/~jkh8x/soc257/nrms/fund.html>

from scripture be publicly recognized and legally enforced. ... The most consistent denominator is opposition to Enlightenment values.”

Fundamentalists positively abhor ‘the modern’ as a set of values (while modern technology and modern business practices are wholeheartedly embraced). Modernity is *the* bête noir of the fundamentalists. In modern societies people are oriented primarily to the future; they want to increase the opportunities for choice, to see things as they *could* be rather than as they are. Modernity has difficulty with the traditional religious views which explain evil and suffering in daily life, and help one cope with them. (Webber 1987) The result in modern societies is much doubt, questioning and uncertainty, which leaves people disoriented, perplexed. Fundamentalism, and to a large extent coercive ideologies in general, are above all a response to such perplexities. Fundamentalism aims to reverse the process that led to these perplexities, with a denial of openness, ambiguity and uncertainty. In a closed system of faith and order fundamentalism picks out *one* alternative as the only one that is acceptable.

Such a socio-cultural position can have significant political consequences. Meyer suggests that notwithstanding their differences all the world’s fundamentalisms have a common element that links them: “... a style marked by an antagonistic approach to cultural differences, a strategy – oriented to gain supremacy – of politicising their own culture against the culture of the others, both within their own societies and outside. Cultural self-awareness becomes a lever of political enmity in the pursuit of power.” (Meyer 2001:8) Fred Halliday shares this politically charged view of fundamentalism: all fundamentalisms ultimately *aspire to political power*. One should question his assertion that fundamentalists desire power “... by whatever means – be it assassination, infiltration of armies, mass mobilization (as seen in Algeria and earlier in Iran), or guerrilla warfare (as in Afghanistan),” but few will disagree with his emphasis on their *intolerance*, which is “... principally directed against people of their own community, against the perceived traitors in their midst.” (1996:3)

So, notwithstanding their differences, all fundamentalisms have a common element that links them: they believe in the superiority of their own culture, defined in religious terms, and they want it to attain supremacy in the world. (Meyer 2001) In the case of Hindu fundamentalists, who base themselves on the traditional interpretation of the caste system, with its profound and inherent inequalities, the ‘others’ are unambiguously despised, as Frykenberg reports: “...there is Evil, as embodied in those ‘alien’ and ‘malignant’ impurities, elements not native to the ‘sacred blood’ or ‘sacred soil’ of India. Only after these have been completely eradicated or made permanently subservient will the Hindu Nation reach its true destiny.” (1994:602)

We can recapitulate the basic characteristics of religious fundamentalism as follows⁷:

1. *Opposition to theological modernism* –
by extension opposition to the values of modernity
2. Making reference to the absolute authority of *Revelation* –
hence fundamentalism is *authoritarian*
3. *Exclusivist*: if you do not agree, you are not a true believer –
hence fundamentalism is *intolerant*
4. *Anti-individualistic*
5. Reactionary, selective and defensive, with a firm belief in the *absolute truth*

⁷ This is largely based on Beck (2002), though the last characteristic – which he denies – has been added.

6. Defends its position *aggressively*, towards its own adherents and towards outsiders

The last characteristic may well provide the most helpful trait with which to separate fundamentalism from orthodox traditionalism in an otherwise often fuzzy borderland.

1.2.2 A closer characterisation of coercive religious ideologies

The inerrancy of sacred sources. All fundamentalisms legitimate their existence by reference to a body of sacred writings. The belief in the fundamental and unalterable truth of those writings constitute a prime test of faith for fundamentalists. The texts are beyond critical comment, and the social or historical context at the time of their origin is regarded as irrelevant: they are ‘valid for all time’. The non-fundamentalist Islamic scholar Mohammed Arkoun has expressed it as follows: “All the theories developed by sociology and anthropology on religion are still unknown, or rejected as irrelevant, by contemporary [fundamentalist] Islamic thought without any intellectual argument or scientific consideration.” (1998:214) Fundamentalists are dominated by a world-view centred on the idea that, possibly even at one particular moment in time, *God revealed the ‘correct’ way to act in the world*. The content of this revelation retains its validity throughout the ages – in fact, for ever. Basically, fundamentalism regards “... truth as unchanging, substantive and so ultimately knowable as an object in the external world ... It is an essentialist view which claims to know ‘what the world is truly like’”. (Caplan 1987a:21)

Fundamentalist movements share an unconditional acceptance of the doctrines propounded in the holy texts they regard as directly inspired by God, and resist modernist interpretations, dismissed as revisionist. Thus, among American Protestants, the ‘original’ 20th century fundamentalists, the key disagreement with the modernists revolved around the *doctrine of inerrancy* (which propounds, in a ‘typical’ fundamentalist manner, that the assertions in the Bible are correct, not only relative to the time in which they were made, but for all times). The bible story of creation is hence accepted as literally true; Darwinism and the theory of evolution, and its teaching in schools, are hence rejected.⁸ (Ammerman 1991) Hindu fundamentalists also have their Truth – Hindutva, revealed in an ‘inerrant text’. (Frykenberg 1994)

Among Islamic fundamentalists this approach to (religious) truth as unchanging and directly knowable from sacred sources finds expression in the idea, accepted by all Muslims, that Islam is the ‘final religion’ – that the Qur’an and the Sunna (the body of traditional customs attributed to Muhammed) contain all the essential truths required by all humanity from now until the end of time, and that Muhammed definitely was the last of the prophets. Islam is considered the only true faith, which Muslims have a duty to spread. (Watt 1988; Gule 1992) Fundamentalists demand the unquestioning acceptance (*bila kayf*) of the literal truth of holy scripture; this is said to produce a God-fearing personality convinced of the possession of the (unique) truth of divine revelation.

These views are transmitted from generation to generation through the *madrasas*, the religious schools led by mullahs, which often play a major role in Muslim countries in view of the deficiencies of the state educational system. Similarly, in Israel the ultra-Orthodox, the *Haredim*, run the *yeshivot* (religious study centres), which take thousands of young men out of modern society to immerse themselves in the study of Torah and Talmud. As in the

⁸ In six (mainly Southern) states laws forbidding the teaching of evolutionary ideas in schools actually got on the statute books.

Islamic *madrastas*, study here is carried on in a ritualistic fashion: "...knowledge [is] something to be acquired and not expanded ...the best questions to ask are those that have been asked before, ... reason is in subordination to religion ... [T]he results have also often been narrowness and rigidity." (Heilman 1995:91)

The politicisation of religion. A significant characteristic of fundamentalist movements is that they not only wish to see their views prevail in society, but that they will actively enter the political arena to achieve this. In the US the 1963 landmark decision of the US Supreme Court was especially important in this process: this ruled against the practice or teaching of any specific form of religion in schools and outlawed prescribed prayers in public schools. (Bruce 1990) Fundamentalists, who had fought this view all the way to the Supreme Court, wanted their long-held beliefs to be reflected in public life, and certainly to be taught in school to their own children.⁹

Other developments that were taking the US firmly down a liberal and secular road also caused alarm among fundamentalists.¹⁰ In reaction to these, in 1979 the ultra-conservative political organisation *The Moral Majority* was founded: fundamentalists played a leading role in it. This changed their primary relationship with the larger society from one in which the main message had been that of *individual* salvation, and the main instrument to achieve this that of individual conversion, to one in which active participation in the *public* arena became the driving force. This newly emerged 'political Christianity' has manifestly influenced politics and society at the local and state levels, and two Presidents (Jimmy Carter and George W. Bush) have willingly listened to their viewpoints. While they have not been able to impose their vision on society by means of a coherently Christian government programme, people with views close to those of the fundamentalists now occupy positions of influence, and even of power, in national government, and their voice is heard increasingly in public. Bruce's view of a decade ago, that fundamentalism in the US has remained mainly rooted in solidly conservative *regional* cultures may still be true. (Bruce 1990) But today his assertion that it has only managed to influence the more cosmopolitan *national* society to a very small degree is less evidently true.

Issues such as these are rather more clear-cut in Israel. There, too, the fundamentalists (the *Haredim*) want the consequences of their particular view of Judaism to be accepted by the rest of the community, or even to be imposed on it – in that sense their ideology is certainly coercive, and religion has been politicised. Of all the concessions wrested from the state, the exemption from military service for *yeshiva* students is probably the most irksome to the secular majority, because going to a *yeshiva* has now become a well-known route to avoid the obligation of serving in the army¹¹. However, the incorporation of aspects of Sabbath laws into secular legislation is also significant, as is the total control by the religious Orthodox establish of matters of personal status in relation to Jews (marriage, divorce, definition of who is a Jew). Another politically active, ideologically coercive group with extreme, religiously

⁹ They withdrew their children from public education and put them into evangelical primary schools. By the early 'eighties, there were about ten thousand of these. (Ammerman 1991)

¹⁰ Ammerman (1991) gives a list that includes moves by the Internal Revenue Service to investigate the finances of religious agencies, the application of civil rights arguments to the rights of homosexuals, public certification requirements even for Christian schools, and finally the Supreme Court's Roe-v-Wade decision which ruled that abortion was a matter of private choice.

¹¹ This concession was won during Israel's War of Independence, at a time when there were relatively few Haredi families. They were seen by the Zionist leadership as an 'old world remnant' and expected to disappear in due course. However, "...what seemed as a concession to the past became an inducement to the future." (Heilman & Friedman 1991:236).

inspired views is *Gush Emunim*, which is bent on securing a state that encompasses all of the Biblical lands of Israel, but also one that follows biblical religious precepts to the letter. They want to establish a ‘new-old society’, and in doing so are disdainfully unconcerned with the views of non-Jews or even secular Jews, and with the interests of Palestinians, whose claims are considered irrelevant.¹² (Aran 1991)

In Israel’s pure proportional representation system, fundamentalist or traditional minorities have been able to make their demands strongly felt in the horse-trading that goes with coalition formation, also to extract state support for their educational system. At the beginning of the 1990s, the *Haredi* primary schools, which are the ‘feeder centres’ for the *yeshivot*, received over three quarters of their budgets from Israeli taxes. (Heilman & Friedman 1991) Such compromises have seemed worth while to the secular Right or Left when they were looking for coalition partners. Yet the accumulation of such compromises has entrenched the power of those who strive for a Jewish state based on rules formulated thousands of years ago, and imposed on all its (Jewish) inhabitants. Success in these struggles, in addition to their demographic growth, has only served to strengthen the resolve of the activists: they are no longer the radical fringe, but set the ideological tone. (ibid) They have, in fact, achieved a substantial part of the fundamentalist goal, which is to impose ‘God’s law’ on all (Jewish) citizens, whether they are believers or not. They represent a politically successful coercive identity.

Hindu fundamentalism is another notable example of the politicisation of religion and its consequences. It arose in a number of waves, at first largely in reaction to militantly aggressive forms of Islam and later Christianity – with ideologically coercive conversion activities undertaken by missionaries among Hindu believers – and most recently also in reaction to radical forms of modernism and secularism, including Marxism. Hindu fundamentalism embraces a large number of organisations, various of which are directly active on the political scene, above all the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and various of its ‘offspring’ organisations such as the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP). These organisations have close links with the Bharatyia Janata Party, the BJP, at the time of writing in power in India. The BJP is a vehemently nationalistic and – despite some apparent softening in its approach since it gained power – an impassioned promoter of religious politics, placing Hinduism at the centre of its ideology. That worldview refers extensively to ‘the barbarism of the Islamic hordes’, to the ills done to Hindus by Muslim rulers, to the evils of Western colonialism, and also to the threats to the fabric of Hindu society from secularist governments drawn from Congress Party after Independence and to their ‘foreign ideas’ – a “...pseudo-secularism [which] had reduced [Hindus] to the role of an innocent bystander in the game of politics.”¹³

¹² Sivan (1995) suggests that Gush Emunim’s extremism in fact contributed to the emergence of a similar movement on the Palestinian side, which mirrors the idea of Greater Israel. He traces this through the renewed emphasis, after 1967, on Jerusalem as a third holy city of Islam to the eventual emergence of the idea that the whole of Palestine is the *waqf* (religious endowment) of the Islamic umma, so that none of it can be ceded to non-Muslims. “First [post 1967] came the renewed emphasis on Jerusalem ... as a third holy city of Islam. ... By the mid 1970s ... the city became essentially the focus of the sanctity of the whole of Palestine ... Later on, with the Intifada and the rise of the Hamas movement, an innovative concept was hatched out of this medieval framework: Palestine in its entirety is the *waqf* (religious endowment) of the Islamic umma and, in consequence, no part of it can be ceded to non-Muslims. The analogy, willy-nilly, with the idea of Great Israel ... is evident.” (1995:48f)

¹³ See the BJP’s website at: <http://www.bjp.org/philo.htm>

It is significant, however, that in reaction to such a militantly, politically active, coercive ideology other religious (and ethnic) groups, stigmatised by those in power as non-Hindu, have organised themselves and at times in turn embraced a fundamentalism of their own: various studies in Marty and Appleby (1994) consider such reactive "... militantly defensive Muslims ... Sinhala Buddhists ... Christians ...: each in its turn revolves around acute anxieties aroused by the various kinds of totalistic claims and demands of militant Hindus who are calling for submission to the Hindutva Motherland." (Frykenberg 1994:604)

The need for historical awareness. The previous section already demonstrated that fundamentalisms need to be seen in their concrete historical contexts. And where they have emerged, they have not always gained the upper hand. In the case of Islam, the elaborate body of Islamic jurisprudence, encouraged by Arab rulers over time, developed as a response to specific problems. The demands of *shari'a* were tempered by human realities; the balance that emerged led to the so-called 'medieval synthesis', a combination of ideal goals and pragmatic responses. This became what is now called *traditionalist Islam*, where the preservation of Muslim society through compromise takes precedence over the complete implementation of the law. (Ayubi 1991; Gule 1992) Pipes (1983) traces the rise of Islam and discusses those early, successful, Islamic societies, during which Muslims, Christians and Jews lived peacefully side by side. In its heyday, when the rule of Islam extended from the Eastern Mediterranean to the Iberian peninsula (al-Andalus), when it was self-confident and powerful, Islam was tolerant and reasonably respectful of other religions, particularly of the Abrahamic – and it was displaced by a militant and grossly intolerant medieval Christianity.

From the late 18th century onwards, Islamic societies were further humiliated by western conquest, as virtually the whole of North Africa and the Middle East came to be effectively colonized by Britain and France. Faced by the demands of colonialism, those Islamic societies half-heartedly adopted Westernisation. The waning of its power, and the increasing feeling of relative powerlessness, is said to have made Islam closed-minded and repressive, suspicious of outside ideas and influences. (Modood 2002) The Muslim ambivalence about Western culture in turn contributed to make fundamentalism more attractive.

Since the end of World War II, concrete historical circumstances have again had an important effect on Muslims. The repeated defeats of the Arab states in their wars with Israel (1948, 1967, 1973), has traumatized Muslims. In recent years the focus has shifted onto the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. The failure to deal with the situation, and the widespread perception that the US – a key player if a solution is ever to be found – has consistently favoured one side in the conflict, has convinced many people of the futility of normal political processes and driven them into the arms of those who stand for radical and holistic solutions. The proclamation of the US of itself as the unilateral arbiter of conflicts in the world is resented as an unwarranted – and self-interested – intrusion in local affairs, as is its continued support for regimes that have shown varying degrees of contempt for democratic processes. All this does not have a simple one-to-one relation with the attraction that coercive (religious) ideologies have for people in the Islamic world, but it is widely accepted as a significant contributory factor.

Politics also enters into the repression of the Islamic Brotherhood in Egypt by a government that was itself repressive; the long history of open or covert American interventionism in Iran to ensure the presence there of a 'friendly' regime, (from the deposition of Mossadegh to the lengthy support for the Shah); the early American support for Saddam Hussein and most

notably, of course, for the Taliban in Afghanistan – simply because these were fighting against the Soviet occupation.

1.3 When extreme becomes extremist

Few followers of coercive ideologies become truly ‘extremist’, in the sense that they do not hesitate to use violence, even indiscriminate violence, to achieve their aims. Independence movements usually have such an extreme ‘fringe’ – from the Mau Mau at the time of Kenya’s independence struggle, through the IRA in Ireland until very recently and the ETA in Basque country (Spain), to various Palestinian movements. These are all cases of violence driven by ideology. Of course, in these examples interests, resources and power are at stake in addition to beliefs, ethnicity or culture, but the latter at least play a recognizable part in the dynamics of the conflict. This contrasts with those cases where violence is driven solely by interests – by the wish to control resources without reference to any particular ethnic or religious justification. Such cases are not the concern of this Report.¹⁴

1.3.1 Ethnicity and ‘ethnic cleansing’

Nazism was the most notorious extremist coercive ideology of the 20th century, centring its claims around a spurious ethnic/racist worldview in which the ‘Aryan’ race was regarded as superior, destined to dominate the world and to dispose freely of its resources (there is almost always a resource issue, even with coercive movements whose primary reference is ideology). Nazism singled out the Jews as the most un-Aryan ‘race’, eventually settling on the ‘final solution’ which sent some six million to their deaths in the extermination camps. No other case of comparable scope exists, but the lessons from this horrific episode in modern history have hardly been learned. Hatred of other ethnic groups, and of their culture, has continued to flourish in the years and decades after the Nazi Holocaust: the Final Solution has given way to ‘ethnic cleansing’.

Perhaps the most notable case of ethnic cleansing was that of the Serbs in Bosnia and Kosovo – notable because these were people who themselves had lived through a Nazi occupation, and notable also for the expression of undiluted and violent racism in Europe at the end of the 20th century. Serb territory was to be ‘cleansed’ of those who did not have Serb ethnicity. The Serbs not only wanted to eliminate the Muslims, but also their history and culture, and any memory of their links to the land. Anything that could prove such historical roots, such cultural memory – mosques, libraries – was a deliberate target for destruction from the outset. (Vulliamy 1998) No multiple ‘identities’ were to be allowed within that territory (and of course the Serbs would control all the country’s resources).

Even more horrific in terms of its scale was the Rwanda massacre of Tutsis by Hutus. That massacre had multiple causes, many of them to do with perceived inequalities, poverty and the lack of economic prospects. One factor was the great shortage of land, leaving young people without prospects in their own communities. (Ellis 1994) That made access to public sector jobs all the more important. But these were to a significant extent filled by Tutsis, who had been systematically favoured by the colonial powers, and had then tried to entrench themselves in the apparatus of the state after Independence. Access to positions in the public

¹⁴ There are African instances galore, especially where very valuable resources such as diamonds are at stake (RENAMO in Mozambique was a case in point), but also at the local level – for example in Apartheid South Africa, where weak local government authorities led to the growth of competing local power structures in the townships. Their leaders (mini-warlords) sought to control the maximum of available local resources (land, home allocations, business rights etc), which set the scene for violence between competing groups. (Percival & Homer-Dixon 1998)

sector was one of the few avenues for advancement in Rwanda, as in all poor African countries, and the structural adjustment policies of the 1980s had put an extra squeeze on jobs in that sector. Another factor was that society at all levels had become militarised in response to the threats from the ‘rebel’ RPF army from the beginning of the 1990s, with in-groups and out-groups crystallising at all levels, particularly at the grass roots, where power and the control of resources were the main issues. Nevertheless, until the 1994 assassination of (Hutu) President Habyarimana the issue of ethnic identities had *not* been the pre-eminent, let alone the singular one, in public consciousness: local power struggles and conflicts of interest were not normally translated into ethnic terms. Habyarimana’s assassination was the trigger that shifted the public discourse clearly into a rapidly deteriorating ethnic mode: Tutsis were blamed *as Tutsis* in an increasingly violent ethnic discourse. (Wagner 1998) That people were receptive to this kind of ethnic manipulation was in turn related to the wider socio-economic factors listed above.

1.3.2 The slippery slope to religious extremism

In the case of religion, extreme positions do rather less easily slip into extremism. But while it is one thing to insist that the majority of fundamentalists are *not* violently coercive, it would be quite another to argue that none of them are. That is manifestly untrue.

There have been suggestions recently that an identification of (Islamic) fundamentalism and extremism has been systematically promoted both in the media and in academic writing, notably by the so-called Orientalist or neo-Orientalist school.¹⁵ Thus Donnan and Stokes, in the Introduction to the book Donnan edited, write that Islamic fundamentalism came to be associated ‘in the popular western imagination’ with “...bearded, kalashnikov-carrying clerics, urban carnage and scimitars dripping with blood” (2002:8). Of course such an association is nonsense, and as Milton-Edwards in an otherwise alarmingly one-sided article rightly argues in the same book, “...in reality the Islamic terrorists and radical Islam remain an exceedingly small cohort of disparate groupings and movements that have emerged out of a variety of political contexts.” (2002: 42) Islam has indeed to an extent taken over the role of the threatening ‘Other’ to the West – increasingly also internally, within Europe – since the perceived threat of Communism disappeared with the collapse of that system and its protagonist, the Soviet Union. Even so, it is doubtful whether the distorted image of Islam painted by Donnan, Stokes and Milton-Edwards actually exists in the ‘popular imagination’, with the possible exception of some otherwise also ‘extremist’ (right wing) circles in the USA.

The awareness of Islamic extremism is so acute because Islamic extremist fundamentalists have been more willing to translate their beliefs into deeds. Suicide bombers are extreme extremists: their deeds are driven not only by their hatred for others, but also by their belief in the reward for their deed in the afterlife. Not many people are willing to sacrifice themselves in that way, and outside of Islam there are few persons who will argue that their religion condones, let alone actually encourages, such acts. Where extremist beliefs appear to encourage violence, without however encouraging self-sacrifice, the believer is faced with the inner-worldly consequences of his or her deed. So it is less respect for the law (extremists usually want to change that anyway) than the possibility of getting caught that keeps most people who profess extremist views from acting on them.

¹⁵ Those associated with Bernard Lewis and his followers, including Daniel Pipes (1983).

Yet while examples come to mind most easily of terrorist fundamentalist Muslims – there is no need to dwell at length here on al Qaeda, 9/11, Bali, or Islamic Jihad – extremism can also be found among the other major religions. Without attempting to be comprehensive, it is useful to give a range of examples. (Bodelier 2002) Extremist religious views are held by many in relation to Israel. Although Judaism explicitly forbids inter-personal violence (and that goes for all varieties of Judaism, from the most fundamentalist to the most liberal), there have been ‘ideologically inspired’ violent acts by individuals. Best known are Baruch Goldstein, who was responsible for the death of some thirty Muslims at the grave of the patriarchs in Hebron in 1994, and Yigal Amir, who murdered Premier Yitzhak Rabin in the same year. Goldstein was associated with the Kach movement, outlawed that year by the Israeli government as a terrorist organisation. Kach and its offshoot Kahane Chai propagate an ‘ethnically pure’ Israel within its biblical borders. Though they are small movements, probably with no more than a few dozen core members and a few hundred sympathizers, they have been ‘linked’ to various small scale attacks since the Goldstein outrage. (Council on Foreign Relations 2003)

Potentially violent, rather than actually so, are a series of groups which wish to rebuild the Jewish temple on the Temple Mount (the site, now, of the Al Aqsa Mosque). They are the subject of a disturbing study by Gershon Gorenberg (2001), whose interviews show a range of people willing to contemplate blowing up Al Aqsa in order to re-establish the Temple, regardless of the likely consequences. And these are not only ultra-orthodox Jews hoping to speed the arrival of the Messiah, but also fundamentalist Christians, believing that a rebuilding of the Temple is necessary in order to bring about the second coming of Christ, and thereby the Millennium announced in the Book of the Apocalypse. Compromises are alien to people who hold such views (‘God doesn’t accept compromises’), and should a peace accord be reached – which would inevitably leave Al Aqsa untouched – some extremists might well take action, with obviously disastrous consequences.

Bodelier (2002) also puts us on the trail of other Christian extremist groupings, notably the ‘fanatical sect’ *Christian Identity*, centred on Elohim City in Oklahoma. Timothy McVeigh (the bomber of the FBI Building in Oklahoma) is said to have been inspired by the ideology of *Christian Identity*. Bodelier asserts that there are strong suspicions that they are heavily armed, supposedly even with chemical and biological weapons. “They make plans to take over power in the United States and refashion the country into a protestant-aryan state.” [my translation]. (ibid:209) Whether this is true or not, *Christian Identity* certainly is an extremist group with a virulently anti-semitic and anti-black ideology. Michael Barkun reports that it has some 50,000 followers in the United States alone, that it is “prevalent among many right wing extremist groups and has been called the ‘glue’ of the racist right.” (Ontario Consultants for Religious Tolerance 2003) It has recently spread to South Africa, where its followers have taken up the abandoned white supremacist Apartheid doctrines. According to the Ontario Consultants’ website, the FBI has reported on them in its Megiddo Report III¹⁶, from which the website provides the following quote: “Christian Identity also believes in the inevitability of the end of the world and the Second Coming of Christ. It is believed that these events are part of a cleansing process that is needed before Christ’s kingdom can be established on earth. During this time, Jews and their allies will attempt to destroy the white race using any means available. The result will be a violent and bloody struggle – a war, in effect – between God’s forces, the white race, and the forces of evil, the Jews and nonwhites.

¹⁶ See: http://www.cesnur.org/testi/FBI_006.htm

Significantly, many adherents believe that this will be tied into the coming of the new millennium.”

Another extremist Christian organisation is the anti-abortion group *Christian Gallery*, from Carrollton, Georgia, which used to publish (under the title ‘Nuremberg Files’) a list of all abortion clinics and doctors performing abortions in the US, with their names and addresses. Those who had been wounded were shown in grey and those who had been killed were crossed out. The original ‘Nuremberg files’ with the strike-throughs and semi-strike-throughs have recently been removed from the website (having been regarded as a threat in a judgment by a US court). They have been replaced by a similar listing taken from a pro-abortion website, basically giving the same information, but also giving the name of the attacker and what happened to him/her. Yet even after that judgment *Christian Gallery*’s frontman Neil Horsley revels in verbal and pictorial violence on the website¹⁷ against those who condone, practice or undergo abortions in what he choses to call ‘butchertoriums’, using a cartoon figure as his mouthpiece, inciting people to record on camcorders everything they can of the comings and goings at abortions clinics and make these recordings available to be shown.

Extremism also exists among Hindu fundamentalists in India, though the tensions with Pakistan over Kashmir (and the religious undertones in that dispute)¹⁸, as well as the cycles of interaction with internal Islamic violence have complicated the picture. These cycles started with the tearing down of an historic mosque in the northern city of Ayodhya in 1992, by a horde of Hindu extremists incited by senior Hindu nationalist figures, including the BJP’s Minister for Human Resources, Murli Manohar Joshi, who was charged in court with incitement to violence. Ten years later, in February 2002, a train carrying Hindu pilgrims returning from Ayodhya was attacked by a Muslim mob in the Gujarati town of Godhra, and fifty-nine pilgrims were burnt alive. The response was a campaign of mass revenge by Gujarat’s Hindus, under the indulgent eye of a BJP state government, with estimates of the number of Muslims killed ranging between 1000 and 3000.¹⁹ Less spectacular incidents have continued to occur: late in September 2003, 26 Muslim shops in the Gujarat town of Kodinar were burnt down, apparently in retaliation for the destruction of a Hindu shop the day before.²⁰ A little over three years before that an Australian missionary and his two sons were murdered in Orissa; not long afterwards, the local government passed an order prohibiting religious conversions without the prior permission of the local police and a district magistrate. A similar local law was passed in Gujarat state.²¹

Leading up to such extremist violence are various deliberate strategies, such as the incorporation into the caste system of tribal (adivasi) communities, who are then used to exploit divisions among those who are marginalized and enlisted to fight in the cause of religious nationalism. “Well organised, wide spread and acting in the name of the majority religion in India, Hindu extremism is positioned to silence diversity through force and terror,

¹⁷ See: <http://www.christiangallery.com/findabortionist.html>

¹⁸ The hard-line, radical nationalist and Hinduist anti-Pakistani Home Minister Lal Krishna Advani, was since late 2002 the number two man in the Indian government and a potential successor to the ailing Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

¹⁹ In one incident 12 Muslims were killed when a Hindu mob burnt down a bakery in the city of Baroda. Twenty-one Hindus were charged over the "Best Bakery" incident, but the prosecution case collapsed as witnesses withdrew their evidence and the Gujarat government let the matter drop.

²⁰ A report by Nick Hordern in the Financial Review (Australia) 27 September 2003.

²¹ “Hindu extremism on the rise in India”, Maranatha Christian Journal, 14 February 2000 (from Christian News Service)

the rhetoric of Hindu supremacy, and the positioning of minority groups as depraved enemies who must be punished.”²²

1.3.3 Ethnically grounded state terror under Saddam Hussein

Although this Report is concerned with coercive ideologies that are driven by culture, a brief comparison with a recently widely discussed dictatorship with both ethnic elements and cultural reverberations may be of interest.

From around 1979, the group/clan around Saddam Hussein in Iraq presents us with an unmistakable example of ‘coercive identity’. Vigeveno (2003) draws attention to the fact that the dominance of those associated with the regime (virtually all of them Sunni Muslims) became increasingly absolute in all spheres of life, in the political as well as social and economic spheres, with the regime resting on a combination of Stalinism and tribalism. The closer one moved to the centre, the smaller became the circle from which associates were drawn, narrowing down from the tribe to the extended family.

This privileged, largely tribal, stratum (estimated at between 0.5m and 1m people) was favoured and rewarded in economic terms through the skewed allocation of resources. Yet simultaneously there was massive coercion of a Stalinist kind to ensure loyalty and keep dissent in check: secret police, the party as a state within the state, the cult of personality, widespread purges, also within the inner circle, the liquidation of potential opponents and their families (to prevent retaliation), deportations and mass executions.

The Shi’ite uprising towards the end of the Gulf War was put down with exceptional brutality: the holy cities of Karbala and Najaf were largely destroyed, and Shi’ite clerics were systematically murdered. It amounted to an attempt to wipe out all expressions of Shi’ite identity. If ever there was a ‘predatory’ identity, it was that centred around Saddam Hussein.

1.4 Coercive ideologies are alike and feed on each other

1.4.1 They reject multiple identities

In the discussion of ethnicity we have already mentioned the emergence of the concept of corporate ethnic identity or political ethnicity, which Ake defined as “...an unequivocal commitment to the defence of a way of life...” (Ake 1994:52) Ethnic identity comes to be promoted as *the* relevant identity, the one identity that matters in the public domain (lower level and more ‘private’ identities, such as those that relate to, say, village or family are not excluded). In societies that are modernising, as is the case in much of Africa, this constitutes the reaffirmation of a relatively simple form of social organisation, which distances itself from the processes that create greater complexity in societies through the introduction of a wider range of relevant social roles, or identities.

That process has gone furthest in modern societies. There, one of the central characteristics is the fact that individuals have *multiple identities*. Moreover, many modern societies are recent or long-standing immigrant societies, where groups with different ethnic, cultural, language and religious backgrounds live in the same social space. In these multicultural societies different groups cherish different ‘core’ identities. In such societies multiple identities exist

²² Angana Chatterji, “Indian Diaspora Funding Hindu Extremism”, in Daily Times, Lahore, July 21, 2002.

both at the individual and at the societal level. It is the denial or rejection of such multiple identities that is the focus of attention, here.

Extreme ideologies attempt to impose a coercive identity on people – insisting on the central importance of one particular identity while denying the acceptability of others. This often goes together with the imposition of one *particular view of the past*, so that differences with other cultures and groups become unbridgeable and are also seen as unchangeable. Those ‘others’ are regarded as essentially inferior; the persons who do not belong to the in-group are not entitled to respect, nor are the cultures to which they belong. Taguieff (1997) called this heterophobia. (Berting 2002) Nazism was the extreme 20th century expression of this ideology: only those who belonged to the Aryan race – who had an Aryan cultural identity in the sense of supporting Nazi conceptions of what Aryan culture was all about – had the right to live in the Third Reich, and ultimately the right to survival. The violence with which this doctrine was imposed left little leeway for the emergence of effective counter-ideologies: submission or (armed) resistance were the only options.

In most contemporary situations the pursuit of identity ‘purity’ through the implementation of ideas put forward in extreme ideology occurs through rather more subtle means, without such overt use of violence (it can also be a *reaction* to prior discrimination or exclusion by a heterophobic majority). In multicultural societies, autochthonous people who are on the extreme Right of the political spectrum are usually heterophobic. They demand that ‘newcomers’ – often people who are second or third generation immigrants – assimilate, that they ‘adjust or return’. They clearly deny if not the existence of multiple identities, then at least their acceptability. Such a denial of multiple identities can be more widespread than is at first apparent. Even those who favour the *integration* of non-indigenous cultural groups may strive for a result that is not far removed from the assimilationist one. Heterophobic they may not be, yet policies that promote ‘adjustment with the maintenance of own culture’, like those pursued in the Netherlands and Belgium, are inherently ambiguous: how much adjustment is there to be, and how much maintenance of culture? (Loobuyck 2002)

In such situations the denial of multiple identities may be the outcome of two converging ideologies: that of the ‘racist’ majority, which discriminates, has prejudice, and wants the minority either ‘out’, or to become wholly like itself, and that of the culturally ‘conservative’ minority, who may withdraw into itself. Living in enclaves may be a chosen life style, but it may also be the result of outside pressure, of feeling uncomfortable among ‘racist’ others, even of compulsion (Nazi Germany and the Jews). So when such withdrawal into enclaves occurs – Berting (2002) notes this, for example, for Muslims in the UK, and he attributes this to their ‘communitarian model of collective identities’ – it may be the result of the denial of multiple identities on both sides. Berting is right in pointing out that such withdrawal holds back processes of ‘cultural enrichment’ and is also prejudicial to the minority in that it contributes, for example, to the poor educational results of their children. Yet this cannot be simply attributed to the discriminated side and its ‘communitarian model of collective identities’. Processes of exclusion and situations of inequality may have to take the greater portion of the blame.

It is nevertheless noted by many observers that all fundamentalisms, whether assertive or reactive, aim to overcome the tensions between different aspects of a person’s identity, and to reinstate an unambiguous ‘oneness’ of identity. Heilman notes that neither Jewish nor Muslim fundamentalists accept to be divided between their social and religious selves: they reject multiple identities and want to overcome the ‘frustrating compartmentalization’ of the

life of those who seek to live fully both in the secular and in the religious worlds. “For haredi [ultra-Orthodox] Jews this means a rejection of the acculturative model of the Jewish enlightenment or *haskalah* that urged people to be ‘a man in the street and a Jew in the home’.... The same might be said about those who have revived their attachment to Islam. They seek to be *kamal*, complete, and reject the idea of having several faces.” (1995:87)

Baptists have been at the centre of Christian fundamentalism since Curtis Lee Laws, a journalist and Baptist layman, appropriated the term ‘fundamentalist’ in 1920 as a designation for those who were ready ‘to do battle royal for the Fundamentals.’ Since then, fundamentalism has been especially strong in the evangelical churches, those who expect an individual commitment of their followers ‘to follow Jesus’, and who engage vigorously in proselytism and missionary activities. (Ammerman 1991)²³ Their doctrines, though supposedly going back to biblical origins, have in fact recycled much that was accepted in the 19th century, before the intellectual revolution in which Kant and Darwin were prominent, and which also saw the flourishing of the critical study of the bible. (ibid) These churches are strong in North America, from where they have spread out across the world; they have been particularly active (and successful) in Latin America. They have a double negative impact on cultural diversity: they promote blinkered identity, making religion into *the* identity, but in the process also contribute to the destruction of existing culture – especially among indigenous peoples.

Finally, in this context a few words need to be said about a range of new-fangled sects that wholly envelop – coercively control – those who fall for their message. Meyer calls these psychosects; one of the most notorious is Scientology. Psychosects “... offer their followers everything that modern-day fundamentalism could possibly offer by way of certitudes, claims to absoluteness, unified counterworlds, Manichaeic conceptions of the world, promises of salvation, of meaning in life and comfort. They create a world in which social identities are ‘absolute’, in the sense that everything different is excluded from the circle of experience...” (Meyer 2001:40) Psychosects manifest predatory behaviour in the extreme. They always have a hierarchical structure with a non-elected leader at the apex. Meyer extrapolates from a case study of Scientology to describe them all as inherently manipulative and evil, in that the dependency of the members is ultimately the very purpose of the operation: members are treated as tools, and their psycho-social needs are exploited. He regards scientology as a threat to democracy more serious than that posed by most extremist groupings. This may be true in principle. Yet, whatever the damage they can do to individuals, the wider political impact of such movements on Western societies would seem to be relatively weak.

1.4.2 They demand and impose compliance

In situations where they have managed to gain access to state power, both types of coercive ideology promote state structures with an authoritarian character. In the case of Nazi Germany, the epitome of arbitrariness and totalitarianism, the implementation of its racist ideology was made possible because it placed absolute state power in the hands of the Nazi party, which ruled the country driven by the intention to make its vision of a dominant and pure Aryan race come true.

Where fundamentalists gain power – as in Iran and Afghanistan – Nazi style atrocities should not be expected, but the imposition by the state of the central aspects of the religious doctrines should be. “Perhaps the most dangerous effect of fundamentalist movements will be the

²³ The following discussion of Protestant fundamentalism in the USA relies heavily on Ammerman (1991).

creation of dictatorships, such as that witnessed in Iran, involving the systematic violation of human rights and the denial of any opposition. Among the most frightening violations of freedom are those on ethnic grounds. Universalist in its claims, in practice Islamic fundamentalism becomes an instrument of the dominant ethnic group such as the Persians in Iran, the Pushtun in Afghanistan, and the Arabs in Sudan and Algeria.” (Haliday 1996:6) It does, however, need to be noted that in its civil society post-revolutionary Iran has significantly more participation than most states in the region: if one disregards the veto power of the Mullahs, Iran has become a considerably more democratic society than any in the Arab world.

In the conflicts between ethnic groups, the claims to territory are very often central. But these can also play an important, and rather unexpected, role in situations where religious claims are at the centre of the conflict. There, it is reference to God’s word that can greatly complicate the solution of essentially human problems. For example, Jews are said to have a ‘right’ to the entire land of Israel, not merely because they occupied this two thousand years ago, but because they occupied it having been ‘given’ it by God. Groups with influence on the Israeli government are bent on securing a state that encompasses all of the Biblical lands of Israel, a state where biblical religious precepts are followed to the letter. Many of the settlers in the occupied territories hold similar religiously inspired, if somewhat less fanatical, views. And various ministers in the current Israeli government insist on using biblical language in their discussion of contemporary problems – giving their claims a categorical flavour that will make compromise with the Palestinians even more difficult.

Such views are held not only held among Jews, but also among evangelical Christians. ‘American evangelists put their faith in Israel’ was the headline of an article in the Financial Times on 15 June 2002. The piece goes on to relate that the Christian Right believes the bible gives Jews the right to settle in the West Bank, ‘because God promised them the land’. That is why there are Jewish settlers in the West Bank, “...who themselves believe they are fulfilling God’s promise... [They] are favoured children of the evangelical movements, which also believe the settlers play a role in God’s master plan.”. All this according to Christian businessmen attending an International Christian Chamber of Commerce conference in Jerusalem, called ‘The Business of Loving Israel’.

Where power over the state and its structures has not been (fully) achieved and is unlikely, or where compromises have had to be made with other groups, those with coercive ideologies may well withdraw into enclaves – limited territorial areas where they can exercise their ‘muscle’, and where their ideology can be upheld and imposed on their members. (Lehmann & Siebzehner 2003) In such *withdrawal spaces* pressure is put upon members to conform, and they are coercive in that sense. But paradoxically they are also coercive vis-à-vis outsiders: they can force outsiders to conform to their particular views of culture when those outsiders enter their spaces, and they often do this using aggressive methods. Those groups that become true enclave communities will also seek to make their enclaves as homogeneous as possible – not by ‘ethnic cleansing’, but by the exercise of pressure. The ultra-orthodox Jewish communities in Israel are good examples: they seek to enforce their conception of Sabbath observance on all who enter their territory. Moreover, forcing non-Haredi families by a ‘war of attrition’ from the neighbourhoods where they dominate had become standard Haredi practice by the early 1990s. (Heilman & Friedman 1991)

1.4.3 They feed on each other

There are many conflicts in the world that have both an ethnic (national) and a religious component. Fox (2003) argues that when this occurs – for example in Israel, Sri Lanka, or Kashmir – the ethnic or national element tends to be the ‘driving force’, though religion is an exacerbating factor making a solution to the conflict more complicated.

Looking at the question more in terms of ideology, is fundamentalism in a box all of its own, driven by the religious nature of its underlying ethos, or are there links between fundamentalism and other coercive ideologies? It is difficult to generalise, here, because the historical circumstances in which particular fundamentalisms arose are so different. Yet there are intriguing suggestions that some of the ideologues of Islamic fundamentalism were directly influenced by secular coercive ideologies of the Right or the Left.

Notably, Fukuyama and Samin (2002) argue that the coercive nature of the fundamentalist Islamic ideology does not just derive from Islamic sources such as the Qur’an, but was fed by twentieth century extremist doctrines. Following Boroumand & Boroumand (2002), they contend that the main spokesmen for Islamic fundamentalism were inspired by fascism and communism and explicitly referred to them: its key attributes, “...the aestheticization of death, the glorification of armed force, the worship of martyrdom, and ‘faith in the propaganda of the deed’ have little precedent in Islam, but have been defining features of modern totalitarianism.” (Fukuyama & Samin 2002::35). Though this overstates the case – many Islamic fundamentalists have been able to quote from the Qur’an and other Islamic sources to justify part of the above – the Boroumands do suggest that some of the most influential recent leaders have indeed also found explicit inspiration in communist and fascist sources. Hassan al-Banna, who founded the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in 1928, borrowed openly both from Italy’s Fascists and from the Nazis (though a contributing factor here may have been hatred of the British). Maulana Mawdudi, the founder of Pakistan’s Jamaat-e-Islami movement is said to have been “well-versed in Marxist thought”. Sayyid Qutb, who became the Muslim Brotherhood’s main ideologue after World War II, called for a monolithic state led by an Islamic party, striving for a classless society. As for the Iranian revolution, Halliday (1996) asserts that that country’s cultural dictatorship was consciously modelled on Mao’s cultural revolution, thus providing another link to extreme political movements.

Such links or parallels were not exclusively ideological, however. Writing about Islamic fundamentalism, Fukuyama and Samin (2002) also point to a close *sociological* parallel, in that fascism was and Islamic fundamentalism is a reaction to rapid change, disruption and the loss of familiar norms & signposts, as has also been noted above. In both cases people *look for new social bonds*, or a *new identity*, in times of rapid social dislocation.

1.5 A clash of civilizations or struggles for identities?

Brief reference at least needs to be made to the debate stirred up by Samuel Huntington (1998). Across civilizations, which Huntington defines largely by differences in religion, he sees incompatible convictions, based on values, in a wide range of areas: state and citizen, woman and man, religion and the relation with God, rights and duties, the individual and society. He believes that these incompatibilities have often led to conflicts (hence the title of his book: *The Clash of Civilizations*), and that they will do so to a greater extent in the future. He points to the resurgence in religion – and its more extreme manifestations – in many parts of the world. Beyond the obvious cases of Islam and Hinduism, that resurgence can also be seen in Evangelical Protestantism (especially in the USA and Latin America), Russian Orthodoxy, the spectacular rise of Protestant sects in Africa, and ultra-orthodoxy in Israel.

Huntington's arguments are more subtle than many of his critics are willing to concede. He deserves recognition for his insight that culture now occupies a key position in future developments, and that the world is in the throes of a shift of one civilisational model ('Western dominance') to another ('pluriformity'). However, his critics are right in stressing that he is mistaken in making civilization or culture the *one* explanatory factor: reality is multi-dimensional and cannot be reduced to one factor, alone. Moreover, conflicts continue to result to a significant degree from being disgruntled about the economic situation, about *exclusion*, about one's position in an increasingly unequal society. (As this Report stresses, this is also a significant factor in driving people to fundamentalism as an alternative.)

In addition, Huntington all too easily presents cultures as homogeneous – his ideal types hide a great deal of internal difference and heterogeneity. Extreme ideologies and coercive identities are found within all civilizations – they are not just characteristic of some of them. Thomas Meyer (2001) places that issue at the centre of his whole analysis. Starting out from the opposite position to Huntington, namely that there are great similarities in the basic values between different civilizations, he emphasises two further basic points.

First, there are no fundamentalist, traditional or modern cultures (or civilizations), but fundamentalism, traditionalism, and modernism are three different ways of understanding each major culture and of giving it practical expression. He calls these 'styles of civilization', styles which lead to different approaches in handling one's own culture. Meyer argues that the main confrontations and conflicts are not *between* civilizations but *within* them, as these three styles are present in virtually all. And he points out that the three styles show similarities among themselves. Such similarities exist, for example, between modern Islam and modern Christianity, and these are greater than, say, those between fundamentalist and modern (even traditional) Christianity. All traditionalists tend to defend the patriarchal system, hierarchy, and the extended family; they see religion as central for individuals and communities. All fundamentalists oppose both modernism and traditionalism within their own religion or culture; they all want to achieve lasting supremacy and make religion into the very core of identity..

Meyer's other basic point is his repeatedly expressed view that when conflicts arise around cultural issues, these are almost necessarily politically 'engineered' by small strategic groups. It is difficult to have much sympathy for such a conspiracy theory of history, though he would have been less wide of the mark had he used 'exploited' instead of 'engineered'. The failure to achieve significant economic improvements for sections of a population, while inequalities grow, or the disjunction which young people from rural or small town environments encounter between what they learned at home and the approach of modern science, are more significant than conspiracy in accounting for the success or otherwise of fundamentalist movements. People are above all pushed towards fundamentalism by failure, uncertainty, economic trauma, and so on.

Yet paradoxically Meyer reaches a conclusion that has echoes of Huntington, seeing a 'global cultural fault line' not between civilizations but within them, as a result of this politicisation of cultural differences by the fundamentalists. Conflict is likely because it is inherent in fundamentalism to want to gain supremacy, and then to keep it. In that sense it is thoroughly coercive and anti-democratic. Like the Marxist-Leninists in their time, the fundamentalists' political ambition to stay in power, and impose their world-view on all citizens, provides a one-way street in politics – *once in, never out*.

2 Why are they on the rise today and who is tempted by them?

The causes of the rise of coercive ideologies are many. Different historically specific circumstances influence their rise (and decline).

One of these has been the profound change in the world's political economy since the demise of the Soviet Union, and the way people have reacted to this change. Until some fifteen years ago, Marxism seemed to promise a different kind of society and a better life. Its ideology – however coercive – gave hope to those who were believers. But since the end of the Cold War, and the abandonment of the command economy in almost all the previously 'communist' states, the free market and the Washington consensus have taken over. This may have been good for economic growth and for those who became successful, but for many others it has left an ideological vacuum. Turning to religion, in those circumstances, was one possible reaction.

Beyond this, a number of other factors have often contributed to the emergence or strengthening of coercive ideologies.

2.1 The disorienting nature of 'modernity' and unfulfilled expectations of a better world

The perplexities caused by 'modernity' have been mentioned above. These are especially acute when modernity comes in the form of rapid social change. If this is so in modern Europe or North America, how much more serious is the problem in non-Western societies. There, a usually small minority of people educated in the 'European' mould came to hold the reins of government, modernised the country, and changed the workings of the state. The majority, both uneducated in Western knowledge and usually poor, remained at the margins of the new society. But while they continued to live in traditional communities, they had to deal with modern public institutions which implicitly assumed that they, too, had changed. The result was even greater disorientation and perplexity than in the West. People came to feel that they didn't belong in the world around them; they no longer knew what was expected of them and were left to wonder who they really were. (Watt 1988)

In such situations of disorientation people look for support, for a way out of the uncertainty. This reaction to modernity was a factor of particular importance in the Islamic world, also because some of the basic moral mechanisms, there, differ substantially from those prevalent in the West. Arab-Islamic culture emphasises external rather than internal moral controls, with ethics being public rather than private, collective rather than individual, shame-related rather than guilt-related. Westernisation brings a shift to the latter concepts. Yet these are inadequately internalised by individuals, and, in Ayubi's view, this has been one of the main causes of psychological and social problems in many contemporary Arab societies. (Ayubi 1991)

The lack of *successful* development can also contribute to a more direct sense of disappointment, and thereby make people susceptible to being mobilised by coercive movements. Modernity can above all become a problem when, in addition to disorienting people, it also fails to deliver the goods, leaving most people poor and excluded, in increasingly unequal societies. In today's less developed countries, people often began to perceive this when they were expected to react enthusiastically to a language of development that had little resonance: "[D]ecades of secular leaders and dirigiste States talking at their peoples in the language of modernization and development did not correspond to the world-

view of these peoples, was often not understood or misunderstood, and left far less ideological impact than appeared to be the case at the time.” (Halliday 1991:298) Indeed, so-called development left large sections of the affected populations untouched.²⁴ In many developing countries it led to an increasing gap between rich and poor: in 33 out of the 66 countries for which data are available income inequalities worsened over the decade from 1990. (UNDP 2003) People felt cheated, young people particularly.²⁵ So even if this was not the *primary* cause, it helped mobilise young people who were willing to listen to the rallying cries of those who appealed to that part of their identity that had been put under pressure by modernisation: the fundamentalists.²⁶

Fundamentalists have managed to mobilize populations in the face of those failures of development, made easier where the failures could be blamed on foreign, notably Western, domination. Those who felt let down were willing to believe that the culprit was the global economy and particularly the most powerful and visible player in that new ‘McWorld’: the United States of America. With their simple and pure call the fundamentalists provided political hope and contributed to political emancipation. But where they have come to power they have not been successful in the creation of an effective social and economic order, nor, on the whole, to point the way to lasting social reform.²⁷ (Lubeck 1988; Meyer 2001)

2.2 What makes people accept coercive ideologies?

Extreme ethnic and fundamentalist movements often develop large followings. In both cases the role of charismatic leaders is usually significant: they are ‘mobilisers’ *par excellence*. But what about the followers? Can anything be said about the kind of people for whom ethnicity or religion becomes *the* core aspect of their identity, *the* identity that ‘drives’ them?

Followers of coercive movements are usually drawn from all sections of the group concerned, certainly in the case of ethnic movements. Leaders tend to come from the ‘middle class’, and so apparently do many of those who become extremists: most suicide bombers have been from such a background. But it is also suggested that people who feel left out, or left behind, are more prone to become followers than others, especially in the case of coercive religious movements. Caplan (1987a) provides some support for this view. He suggests that fundamentalist Sikhs in the Punjab have been supported by peasants hit by the unequal distribution of the benefits of the ‘Green Revolution’ and that Islamic fundamentalism seems to draw particularly heavily on an urban ‘intellectual proletariat’. He even argues that America’s Moral Majority started by mainly drawing support from an ‘economically pinched’ middle class – but the weight of that point is debatable. The Islamic Revolution in Iran, has also been seen as a reaction to the modernisation and secularisation promoted by the Shah,

²⁴ Like many others, Fukuyama and Samin (2002) point to fact that late C20 Islamic fundamentalism is inseparable from developmental failures of Arab societies.

²⁵ Studies in Egypt and Iran, reported by Zubaida, have shown that there fundamentalism’s main activists come above all from the young intelligentsia, the “... intellectual proletariat of students, teachers and minor functionaries”. Zubaida adds: “These are the same social groups from whom support is drawn for all oppositional politics, left and right, religious and secular.” (1987:49)

²⁶ Never mind that their promises were totally vague on precisely that aspect of life that left people most worried: making a living.

²⁷ This is also true for the New Christian Right in the USA, whose leaders were ‘co-opted’ by the Republican Party and who gave substantial electoral support to Ronald Reagan, and later to George W. Bush. They used their power where it existed – locally, in the ‘Bible-belt’ – to promote the *religious* causes close to their heart. In national politics they basically promoted the interests of their main supporters in socio-economic terms, and had no views of their own. The other side of the medal is that, whatever their rhetoric, neither Reagan nor Bush Jr. effectively implemented any of the fundamentalists’ core demands. (Bruce 1990)

and especially to the growing inequality and increasing corruption under a centralized and ultimately arbitrary regime. (Keddie 1988)

But failed promises were also significant. In the Arab world, as Ayubi points out, the promises abounded: Arab socialism, pan-Arabism, nationalism. These ideologies brought rising expectations among the expanding middle strata, particularly among an ill-paid and state-employed *petite bourgeoisie*, and among students and the intelligentsia. Already in the '60s and '70s their frustration, also in the light of Israeli successes – not least the traumatic experience of the Arab defeat in the 1967 war with Israel – found an increasing outlet in fundamentalist rather than merely Islamic tendencies. (Ayubi 1991) By the beginning of the 1980s Daniel Pipes was writing of the failures of the newly independent governments, whose imitative policies “... used up scarce resources, distorted the economy, harmed agriculture, caused farmers to move to the cities, and created mammoth urban populations of poor, isolated individuals ... [who then] often sought solace in Islamic goals and bonds.” (1983:283) Later in that decade, when structural adjustment programmes forced a retreat of the state from the provision of social services, Islamic organisations stepped into the breach, offering health care and education through mosques. This strengthened their claims to be a substitute for the state, and hence their hold on those who turned to them.

Then there is ‘bad politics’. A circular feedback loop exists between undemocratic regimes and fundamentalism. By their willingness to make light of democracy, undemocratic regimes have contributed to an atmosphere in which fundamentalist movements could flourish. But they have also used supposed threats from ethnic and religious movements to clamp down on opposition. A well-know case was the early suppression of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Eventually, the Brotherhood re-emerged and became tolerated as a more explicitly cultural movement. Even so, ‘religious extremism’ – in the current US-dominated climate conveniently identified with, or seen as leading to, terrorism – continues to provide an autocratic government in Egypt with excuses to act with a heavy hand against unwelcome opposition.

Politics also affects the issue in Africa. There, the accepted way to exercise power is for rulers (at all levels) to favour people from their own village, region, or ethnic group through extensive patrimonial or patronage practices, which pervade the entire apparatus of state, including the civil service. The political system is usually dominated by a single party, and corruption flourishes to a greater or lesser degree. This particular kind of mis-development process has adversely affected young people in particular. (de Kadt 1999) The venal single party systems have left them politically out in the cold, while the failure to bring about sustainable economic improvement meant that the majority had to fend for themselves in the ‘informal sector’. In some countries, the excluded have reacted by trying to capture the state apparatus. Seeing that this is the best way to enrich themselves, people join insurgents and militias. If successful, such change makes no difference to the basic problem – it merely rotates the beneficiaries. (Mbaku 1997) In the absence of civil war, the failure of democratisation can lead people at the local level into a kind of withdrawal or even sabotage syndrome. (Diouf 1998) But as in the Arab countries, people have also turned for support to the mosque – a mosque which through its fundamentalist orientation expressed hostility to the irruption of this Western world and to its broken promises. (Otayek & Toulabor 1990)

That also appears to have happened among Muslims in Europe. Meyer (2001) found that among 15-21 year old Turks living in Germany more than half held views that could be characterised as grounded in coercive Islamic ideology: they believed, for example, that

religions other than Islam were ‘invalid and false’; they also rejected adaptation to a more Western way of life. The reasons why these young people were driven to fundamentalism revolved around insecurity, lack of orientation, and lack of recognition by mainstream society.²⁸ Meyer believes that German society, unwilling to recognize or accept cultural differences, is to blame: Germany is not multi-cultural enough. Meyer also contends that these youngsters had first tried to find ‘a more open identity’ between their own culture and that of the host society, but failed. Following his argument, the conclusion would be that coercive ideologies are more likely to influence the identity of minorities after they have *unsuccessfully* attempted to evolve a secure identity within mainstream society.

There is some further information on the kind of people willing to be lured by coercive ideologies. Arjomand (1989) observes, with respect to Islamic fundamentalist movements, that they have a socially heterogeneous membership, with recruitment having been from newly mobilised groups as well as from those displaced by industrialisation and modernisation.²⁹ The membership is made up *both* of a threatened and disgruntled *petite bourgeoisie*, and of a professionally frustrated upwardly and geographically mobile intelligentsia, who have typically moved from small towns to major cities. Hofmann (1995) relates that they are often graduates in science, medicine or engineering who come from traditionally religious backgrounds, people in situations where the contradictions between values learned in the past and the realities of the present are most stark, causing disorientation and anxiety.³⁰ For such people a comprehensive (Islamic) solution is appealing. It has already been noted that those who take their fundamentalism to extremes – suicide bombers – are predominantly middle class, too. Hoffman also argues that economic frustrations, such as the growing gap between rich and poor, as well as ‘uneven development’, with development in education far outpacing the realistic chances offered by the economy, drive people into the arms of the fundamentalists.

This suggests that modernity as such is less likely to have been a significant factor in the rise of coercive ideologies, and especially of fundamentalism, than dashed hopes and unfulfilled promises, and the failure to give most people a sense that their situation had materially improved.

3 How can countries tackle the threat and maintain diversity?

Coercive ideologies pose a diversity of threats, some of them to existing democratic regimes, others – where they have established themselves in power – to a range of freedoms and (human) rights that have become part of humankind’s inheritance. The greatest difficulty in dealing with such threats is the often fuzzy borderline between perfectly acceptable ethnic pride or religious tradition on the one hand, and excessive ethnic militancy or religious aggressiveness on the other. Neither of the latter is consistent with accepted human rights standards, but unless there are well-established and efficiently functioning judicial institutions that can hear cases of human rights violations (such as the European Court of Human Rights), following the human rights route is unlikely to be particularly effective. The main concern has to be the effect which coercive ideologies can have on democratic institutions and procedures. As has already been mentioned, there is no merit in falling into the ‘democratic

²⁸ Entzinger’s research (2003) in the Netherlands points to some extent in the same direction.

²⁹ He also distinguishes between different cadres active in promoting the ideas of fundamentalism. Between the 1930s and 1970s the main role was played by ‘oppositional lay intelligentsia’, who created the new Islamic fundamentalist ideologies, but more recently clerics have played the major role in dissemination and mobilization.

³⁰ These conclusions are largely based on studies in Egypt and Tunisia.

trap’, namely, to curtail democracy itself in order to protect it from potential threats.³¹ While outside powers can sometimes effectively use expedients such as the reduction of development co-operation or even outright boycotts of ideologically coercive regimes, these tend to be blunt instruments, and they may well have the opposite effect of what was desired. So the emphasis should be on helping to prevent the emergence of the conditions that fuel coercive ideologies, and public authorities – from local governments to the UN – can contribute to this through a variety of approaches. Some are discussed in the following sections.

3.1 Promoting multiculturalism

All agencies able to influence societal values should promote the values of multiculturalism, and concomitantly urge local, national and international public agencies to make resources available for such activities. Elsewhere in this Report it is argued that this should happen under the broad umbrella of ‘state nation’ policies, an approach that can overcome the disadvantages which 19th century style ‘nation-building’ has in circumstances where a multiplicity of ‘nations’ inhabit one state. Focussing on the state (at all levels) rather than on the nation could facilitate maintaining and developing multiple and complementary identities, in contrast to single identities that are conflictual. (Linz et al 2003) Going even further, Loobuyck (2002) contends from a Flemish perspective that the whole debate over integration, assimilation, and adjustment has gone stale, and that policy makers should instead focus on the concept of *burgerschap*. While citizenship, the English translation of *burgerschap*, is basically coterminous with nationality (a citizen is a national, and vice versa), that is not so in Dutch. So *burgerschap* applies to all those who ‘permanently’ reside in the country; all *burgers* (not just nationals) living in the same social space have rights and duties and ‘citizen relations’ with the authorities. All inhabitants, also non-nationals, participate in *burgerschap*. From a changing *burgerschap* perspective, ‘natives’ also have to adjust and to ‘integrate’ – they, too, have to *learn* to interact (culturally) with newcomers.

Focusing on the state, and playing down the ‘demands’ of the (dominant) nation, can help strengthen multiculturalism to some extent and in some circumstances. In the states studied by Linz et al (2003), those institutional changes which give greater expression to the equality of different cultures, ‘nations’, or ethnic groups had been achieved through various kinds of challenges to the existing order – through struggle. Being faced with the alternative of the continued disruption, perhaps even disintegration of the state, lawmakers chose devolution of powers to territorially recognizable entities. Nevertheless, such straightforward devolution of political power is not an option where multiculturalism does not have a clear territorial pattern, where people of different cultural backgrounds live throughout the country, albeit locally often in neighbourhoods where – partly by exclusion from other locations – one group predominates. In such circumstances it makes sense to concentrate on the issue of democratic procedures, since it is clear from the evidence presented by Linz et al (ibid) that democracy is decidedly the preferred political option for most people in most societies. Hence ‘promotional efforts’ do best to concentrate on the *local* level, where normal democratic processes can help to ensure that persons representing the views and interests of the various cultural groups are elected, or at least seriously taken into account. If some of these turn out to be representatives of coercive identities, the selfsame democratic procedures should be used to expose the undemocratic nature of their viewpoints.

³¹ As happened when many Western democracies tacitly approved a military coup which cancelled the electoral results in Algeria in 1992 because of the victory of the fundamentalist FIS.

Countries with a significantly multicultural make-up, and considerable institutionalisation of expressions of multicultural identity, should also consider whether their electoral system is attuned to the needs of society. Some electoral arrangements are more likely to lead to a situation where minority groups have cannot properly express their historical identities and remain excluded and not represented, possibly even oppressed. (Salih 2000) This is particularly so for the classical ‘first past the post’ systems. In multicultural societies these are likely to yield majorities in parliamentary institutions (and hence governments) that hail from the majority ethnic or religious group. This could well encourage coercive approaches to politics. Pure systems of proportional representation can also have undesired effects. These require coalitions of different parties for the establishment of a parliamentary majority that will support a government. The bargaining process preceding coalition formation can allow relatively small coercive groups to gain a disproportionate voice in politics.

Israel is the ‘type case’ of this situation. As has already been noted, religious minorities have always been able to make their demands strongly felt at the time of coalition formation. The repeated compromises made by the secular parties have helped entrench the power of those with coercive religious identities, who have come to set the ideological tone. Aided by the effects of the electoral system, they have advanced a long way to being able to impose ‘God’s law’ on all (Jewish) citizens, whatever their beliefs.

Promoting multiculturalism may have its limits, however, as is suggested by work on the Latin American experience. Hale (2002), aware of the Latin American ethnic and class realities, coins the phrase ‘neoliberal multiculturalism’. As a concept, this matches neoliberal economic policies. It is promoted by the World Bank and other multilateral institutions and is increasingly accepted by local elites. Its essence is that it should be ‘non-transformative’: the indigenous cultural rights accepted and promoted should not lead to *fundamental* transformations in the power relations in society (it is of course recognised that there will have to be *some* ‘give’). The phrase which Hale consistently heard in his interviews in Guatemala was “*si, pero*” (yes, but), pointing to the fact that multiculturalism is acceptable ‘as long as it does not go too far’. It is acceptable to work for the improvement of the socio-economic position of the hitherto unfairly treated, excluded, *individuals*. But people are not to mount transformative political challenges, not to be ‘intransigent’, not to focus on collectivity, not to claim power *qua* Mayas – however much they have been discriminated against precisely in that sense. Significantly, a collectivist position is now at times dismissed by attaching the label of (reverse) racism to it.

There are some other lessons worth considering. The Netherlands is one of those societies which has had multiculturalism in its banner for many decades, in response at first to immigration from Dutch or ex-Dutch territories in the Caribbean, later to the rapid increase in the number of immigrants and their descendants from Islamic countries, especially Turkey and Morocco. Its multiculturalism was what Kymlicka (2003) has called *immigrant multiculturalism*. In parallel with growing antagonism, even hostility, to Muslims in other Western countries in the aftermath of 9/11, multiculturalism in the Netherlands has come under pressure. Today one can hardly call it the “...recognition, even celebration, of the cultural mixing that arises when immigrants are free to bring their cultural identities into the larger society, and to interact with members of other groups.” (ibid:32). Demands are increasingly being heard from within the established political parties that the ‘basic values’ of Dutch society should also be accepted by those from other cultures. Though few call openly for the full ‘assimilation’ of non-autochthonous groups, the emphasis in the phrase ‘integration with the preservation of own culture’ has shifted perceptibly away from

preservation and towards integration – that is towards relinquishing those characteristics that more obviously set the group apart from the autochthonous majority.

Not that this is entirely new: the substantial study on Islam in the Netherlands (Rath et al 1996) had already shown that in national and local negotiations over multicultural institutionalisation (such as licensing of mosques, provision of Islamic education) the Dutch majority often tried to steer this in a ‘liberal’ direction – away from ‘orthodoxy’ let alone fundamentalism. In general, Dutch views on Islam and Muslims lacked subtlety: Muslims were regarded as ‘sectarian’, with a ‘traditional’ leadership, and opposed to the separation of church and state. Islam is associated with ‘past times’ (the word used openly in Holland has been *achterlijk*, literally meaning backward or retarded).³² Moreover, the study found that the more strongly Muslims aimed at a *collective* identity, the less did a willingness exist to provide space for this: such a collective approach was seen as deviant from the Dutch norm. In spite of all the multicultural rhetoric, what was obviously wanted was an Islam ‘in tune with Dutch values’ – a position not all that distant from *assimilationism*.

It is significant that this pressure has been directed much more at migrants and their descendants from Muslim countries than at those from Caribbean. The latter, though formally citizens of the Kingdom, also bring a very different culture with them: they are much more extrovert and ‘loud’ than the autochthonous Dutch, and many of them have been involved in the illegal (hard) drugs trade, of which disapproval is widespread. Nevertheless, the debates about the Netherlands as a multicultural society focus on the issue of what to do with ‘strangers’ with a coercive ideology, namely Muslims, and much less on strangers, or people with a different cultural background, as such.

Since the early nineties, when the just mentioned study by Rath et al was undertaken, opinions have hardened further, also under the influence of the populist politician Pim Fortuijn and his assassination in 2002.³³ The views of Jan Berting (2002) are not untypical. Having surveyed different ‘collective representations’ of society prevalent in the Netherlands, of which multiculturalism is an important one, he notes that it is not enough “... to exhort the ‘original’ population to have more understanding for the cultural and religious distinctiveness of non-native minorities. At least as important, if not more so, is the demand that these minorities devote their attention to the nature of the society of which they are part, and recognise their own failings in respect of expressions of intolerance, xenophobia and criminality within their own circles.” (ibid: 251) [my translation] Berting specifically regards it as undesirable to try and accommodate ‘self-exclusionary’ (heterophobic) groups in a multicultural society. His position is close to that taken by Sen (2003), who recognises that conditions may have to be placed upon the acceptance of cultural *diversity* if it is cultural *liberty* that is the ultimate aspiration. Both Sen and Berting stress the importance of cultural choice. Sen does so by rejecting a situation in which people are *compelled* to retain their ancestral, inherited culture, in the context of the determination of identity. Berting stresses

³² Of course reality is more nuanced, though those nuances do not work through to the institutional level, where there are no signs of differentiated ‘orthodox’ and ‘liberal’ Islamic organisations.

³³ Here was a man who started a political movement that had as one of its foci precisely this failure of immigrants to integrate in Dutch society and accept some of its central values (another important issue was the growing sense of physical insecurity, experienced by many as a side-effect of what was seen as the excessively tolerant attitude to deviance and even criminality in the Netherlands). Fortuijn erupted onto the political scene in March 2002 by taking over a third of the seats in Rotterdam’s municipal council; his party became the second largest in the Dutch parliament in mid-May of that year, shortly after he himself had been assassinated. Since then its influence has, however, significantly ebbed.

that not all cultures provide enrichment to society: this is only the case when there is cultural ‘exchange’, and through the creation of new forms of cultural expression.

What is particularly significant in these positions is that they provide a counterweight to the usual argument that multiculturalism is required to defend and safeguard the lot of minorities. That is clearly problematic where a minority considers itself superior and lets that belief in its own superiority influence its relations with other social groups. And that is also the reason why coercive ideologies and predatory identities cannot be easily ‘tamed’ by ‘a dash of multiculturalism’. Even so, the *public affirmation* of the desirability of multiple and complementary identities, and the provision of public support for *non-exclusionary*, affirmative manifestations of the variety of groups in a multicultural society, especially at the local level (*ibid*), may help to counter some of the negative tendencies, among majorities as well as minorities.

3.2 Stimulating open-mindedness and religious reform

Countering the furtherance of extreme ethnic ideologies is possible by appealing to common human values and to people’s human qualities, by explicit reference to internationally accepted human rights, and by exposing the dangers of ethnic confrontation. In the case of extreme religious ideologies the problem is more complex: these are anchored in belief systems that will not yield to rational argument. Changes in a less coercive direction must, on the whole, come from within the religious groups concerned, and these can only be stimulated ‘from the outside’ to a very limited extent. This can be illustrated with the case of Islam: there, the issue of how to deal with ideological coerciveness has been internally confronted to a lesser degree than in the case of some of the other major religions.

Commentators have speculated about ways in which the fundamentalist features of mainstream Islam might disappear, or at least be softened. This usually assumes that resistance to fundamentalism will emerge from within Islamic societies, and in some cases developments in the wider world are expected to have an effect. Thus Barber in his snappily entitled book *Jihad vs McWorld* (1996) places his faith in the emergence of a ‘global civil society’. He suggests that forces of resistance to fundamentalism could evolve into what he calls ‘democratic jihad’; an ideology which could help tame the savage side of capitalism. To a limited extent the evolution of the Iranian situation appears indeed to point in that direction. But only so far: the mullahs remain extremely powerful, with effective vetoes in many areas of legislation and decision-making based on their coercive ideology.

In comparison with the other Abrahamic religions Muslims are faced with a singular lack of institutionalised forms of ‘progressive Islam’. As Kurzman’s (1998) collection of liberal Islamic sources testifies, there are indeed liberal or reformist Islamic theologians. They are people often quoted as pushing for an Islam ‘in tune with the times’. Yet these selfsame reformers often bemoan their lack of institutional influence in the Islamic world, and feel that they are crying in the wilderness. One of them, Nasr Abu Zaid, believes that it will take at least 10-20 years for a modern Islam of some stature and influence to emerge. (Havermans 2003) Individual Muslims, even Muslim leaders, can be ‘liberal’, stating, for example, that Islam ‘should’ be able to live with homosexuals. Yet the organisations they lead and the people who belong to those organisations remain largely stuck in traditional, ‘orthodox’ Islamic viewpoints. Because liberal mosques have not banded together, mosques as a whole appear to remain coercive or oppressive: Islam, as such, is not being ‘modernised’. (Kleijwegt 2003) It remains a coercive religious ideology.

A further point needs to be made that goes beyond the issue of ‘modernisation’, and focuses directly on extremism. Islamic leaders have so far been at best half-hearted in discouraging the conclusions which fundamentalists, and even violent extremists, can draw from Islam’s teachings. With the continuing horrors of indiscriminate terrorist attacks by Muslims, the non-violent Muslim majority needs to be explicit and unambiguous in its renunciation of the ideas that can underpin violence, notably the very concept of *jihad*. The tiny minority of extreme Islamic fundamentalists, those who engage in violence, continue to justify their acts by reference to *Jihad*, saying their acts are *Fi sabil illah*, the Arabic term for ‘in the path of God’ or ‘to the glory of God’. While, over the centuries, acting *Fi sabil illah* has taken on the broad meaning of acting piously, particularly if directed at the public good, “...[m]ost of the many occurrences of this expression in the Qur’an are associated with warfare against infidels. ... [Thus] the Qur’an exhorts Muslims to fight (2.190), it assures them that dying for this purpose is only apparent (3.169), and tells them that the deeds of those slain in the path of God will not be forgotten (47.4).” (Pipes 1983:22) Those phrases from the Qur’an are, obviously, grist to the mill of fundamentalist extremists.

Non-violent Muslims need to face up to a no doubt difficult fact: their Holy Book continues to provide not only the justification for terrorism for those who wish to read it in a certain way, it also lays large obstacles in the way of those who genuinely favour a multicultural society. While only an Islamic reform movement can truly challenge some of those basic tenets of Islam, the outside world also needs to overcome its misguided reticence to tackle those *specific* aspects of Islam (and other cultures) that continue to give support to extremist positions. And that includes non-Islamic governments and international organisations: these should stop sheltering behind otherwise admirable values such as freedom of belief and religion, and ‘non-interference in the internal affairs of other states’, when it comes to resisting coercive ideologies.

3.2.1 Giving support to existing countertrends

If the aim is to minimise the impact of coercive ideologies, then all forces that can check their advance need to be mobilised. Such forces do exist among all religions that have been considered here. The views propounded in their Holy Books do not all point in the same direction and provide useful authoritative quotes for quite a range of different perspectives and situations. In Islam, such different perspectives have emerged in the course of the last hundred years or so – including a ‘modernist’ Islam which has attempted to reconcile Islam with modernity through a more ‘scientific’ approach to its teachings. The Muslim concept of *ijtihad*, or independent reasoning, helped in this task: it made possible the by-passing of the establishment clergy, rather like the Protestant reformation challenging the Catholic Church. (Schulze 2002) One of earliest ‘modern’ reformers was the Egyptian Muhammed Abduh (1849-1905), who departed from traditional textual interpretation of Islam and tried to make it adaptable to ‘modern civilisation’. Fukuyama and Samin (2002) compare him to a Muslim Luther, because he created the possibility of independent legal interpretation, thereby opening up novel opportunities for subsequent interpreters of Islamic tradition – all the way to Osama bin Laden. But while *Ijtihad* also provided a useful tool for the fundamentalists, its main effect was to facilitate a more modern interpretation of Islam. There are many such ‘modern interpreters’ of Islam, as Kurzman’s (1998) sourcebook testifies. Unfortunately, their writings tend to be more widely available in the West than in Islamic societies, and financial support for reversing that situation could be important. Similarly, the stimulation of institutionalised as opposed to individual expressions of reformist Islam could have a beneficial impact.

In Judaism there are countertrends, too, though these also face an uphill struggle against a strengthened traditionalism that often ends up in fundamentalism. Various Jewish religious movements that promote an expressly non-coercive reformist vision exist world-wide. In Israel, the ideology of the *Haredim* and their traditionalist fellow-travellers has gathered strength over many decades (notably through Shas, a relatively new religious political party). But in more recent elections there have been signs that a counter-movement is gathering strength, which explicitly opposes the coercive religious ideologies that have had such an influence on state and society. In the *Knesset* (parliamentary) elections of January 2003 *Shinui*, the first secular party which is explicitly positioning itself against the influence of religion in politics, was the big winner, gaining 15 out of 120 seats in the Knesset. However uncertain the eventual outcome, democracy is providing an opening in Israel to challenge the coercive link between religion and politics.

3.3 Using the law

During the last thirty years or so of the past century legislation has come into force, both at the State level in the USA and at the national level in the UK, making ‘hate crimes’ a criminal offence. In the US, towards the end of the ‘eighties, a first batch of laws was in place which usually referred to race, religion, colour and national origin; ten years later, a second tier had emerged, commonly adding sexual orientation, gender and disability. In Britain, incitement to racial violence has been a criminal offence since the passage of the *Race Relations Act* in 1965; this was broadened some twenty years later to include colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins. In 1998 the concept of racially aggravated crimes was introduced: this allows for more severe punishment for a particular offence if there was racial motivation or expressed racial hostility. In the wake of 9/11, and the fear of attack among Muslims, the *Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act* of 2001 extended the provisions to cover ‘religiously aggravated offences’. In both countries there has been a fierce debate over the appropriateness, even the legality, of introducing such discrimination. Fundamental differences of opinion exist over whether hate crimes indeed hurt the victims – and their community – more than other crimes, and whether punishing hate crimes more than the equivalent normal crimes amounts to punishment of ‘improper thinking’, of holding certain unacceptable values, and thereby encroaches on the fundamental human right of freedom of (speech and) thought. The different sides of the argument are laid out clearly, and at times passionately, in Iganski (2002).

In the US, controversy has centred mainly around the choice of the ‘identities’ that are covered by hate crime legislation: the ‘norm of sameness’ in US law demands that laws must apply equally to all groups and individuals in society, while hate crime laws have singled out particular categories of people for attention. Jeness (2002) noted that in Oregon a bill was introduced in the State Senate which would make those supporting eco-terrorism and those attacking capitalism guilty of hate crimes: certainly that particular extension was far from the intention of those who over decades had supported the introduction of such legislation: “...the black civil rights movement, the women’s movement, the gay and lesbian movement, the disabilities rights movement and the crime victim movement. ... [H]istorically, all these movements have shared a common commitment to publicizing, framing and combating violence directed at minorities *because of* their minority status.” (ibid:19) (itals. in original) No wonder the Senator concerned said the main butt of his bill was ‘political correctness’.

In the UK discussion has centred not only around the acceptability of singling out particular categories of people for special legal protection, but also around the idea of making a particular kind of motive for the offence into an aggravating circumstance. Thus Jacoby

(2002) asks why bigotry should be a more reprehensible motive than greed, lust, ideology or a desire to humiliate, but also questions the selection of some groups, such as Jews or Blacks, for special attention when it comes to dealing with the experience of fear or menace: he argues that this aspect of hate crime legislation simply creates a double standard. In his view, hate crime laws punish not just deeds, but beliefs and opinions: they are an assault on freedom of speech and belief – George Orwell’s Thought Crime. “The purpose of the criminal law is not to protect Blacks from Whites, Jews from neo-Nazis, women from misogynists, gays from straights, or immigrants from nativists. It is to protect all of us from lawbreakers.” (121) Iganski sums up the central objection: to advocate more severe punishment for hate crimes “...on the grounds that they offend societal values can amount to nothing other than advocating punishment of the values of the offender.” (2002a:138)

The actual experience with hate crime legislation has been mixed. The extent of enforcement varies significantly between different jurisdictions. The idea that certain motivations or beliefs can ‘aggravate’ a crime is dubious at best. Yet it does seem desirable to recommend the possibility of prosecuting public acts that can be read unambiguously as *incitements to violence* against certain groups. This would be relevant to the more extreme manifestations of ethnic ideologies, given that these always direct themselves *against* another group. Contemporary coercive ideologies based on religion, however much they diminish or denigrate the value of other religions, are less likely to incite to violence against the members of those other religious groups. The question then becomes whether it is appropriate to criminalise simple denigration or defamation, i.e. denigration without explicit incitement to criminal behaviour. Even more difficult is the issue vis-à-vis the coercion placed by extreme religious groups on their own members: criminalising *that* would amount to using ‘thought control legislation’ to control ‘thought control’. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that that path is *not* to be recommended.

3.4 Tackling inequalities and exclusion

So, if the legislative route is distinctly dubious, does research on who commit hate crimes, and for which reasons, suggest other, and more appropriate, policies to counter coercive ideologies? Such research does give some strong leads which reinforce conclusions drawn from research on fundamentalism. Many of those who commit hate crimes in the US are youngsters ‘looking for a thrill’. Yet it is significant that such actions, intended to make others feel inferior, also make the perpetrators feel superior. This is often a need for people who themselves have felt at a loose end, lacked a sense of belonging, not been accepted by their peers, or done badly in the labour market. By joining an organised hate group they can get such a sense of belonging and a feeling of importance, which had been missing from their lives. (Levin 2002)

These conclusions are echoed in a paper on the UK. Ray and Smith (2002) conducted research in Manchester among traditional working class offenders. It showed that people who lose out in the processes of socio-economic transformation, those excluded from new labour market segments, and hence from rising prosperity, feel resentment which they may well direct at other ethnic groups.³⁴ They may come to place excessive value on their own identity as whites and particularly resent Asians – more than Blacks, who are often seen as losers, too. Ray and Smith conclude that offenders had “... few resources, little cultural capital, were excluded from smart housing, employment and life chances. Again, interventions *would need*

³⁴ Research also suggested that racist offending is often part of wider criminal behaviour: 64% of these offenders also had other convictions.

to address the underlying conditions, or at least assist offenders to find ways of breaking out of low-paid, low skilled forms of employment.” (ibid:99f; italics added)

This debate about hate crime is relevant to the choice of possible measures that might counter and neutralise coercive ideologies and identities. The parallel with the earlier discussion of the recruiting grounds for followers of coercive ideologies is striking. The *ideologies* of fascism, fundamentalism and political ethnicity may have quite different roots, and those who are its principal advocates may be inspired by quite different sources. Yet in two senses they are similar. They all proclaim the superiority of those who adhere to them – in the case of Islam this is so not only for its fundamentalist versions but more in general, a problem which has been referred to above. And the resemblance of their followers is unmistakable. In one sense or another they feel *excluded*.

What conclusions follow from this for policy makers? Before they can take action, they need to discover in what sense people feel excluded. Then they can consider remedies.

As for the first, Lawrence (2002) provides a useful entry route. In defending the rather limited categories of offences covered by bias or hate crimes in the UK he argues that, historically, race (interpreted broadly) is most significant. More generally, to determine what really *is* significant we need to look for what he terms ‘societal fault lines’, divisions deeply entrenched in the social history of a culture – or, one might add, divisions that have become particularly prominent in more recent times. The latter addition is necessary because such fault lines run, in many contemporary societies, along ethnic lines, brought about by inadequately absorbed, integrated or accepted immigrants. Any attempt at devising anti-coercive, or anti-predatory policies, therefore, must start by providing a clear image of such ‘societal fault lines’, of those fault lines that will characterise the nature of exclusion. This process may be helped by taking account of the perceptions of exclusion in civil society, for example, by considering what organisations exist to combat particular types of disadvantage.

Such an approach forces governments and civil society organisations not to rush into ill-considered measures. Nevertheless, in practice the outcome of such a search for ‘societal fault lines’ may well provide pretty clear signposts for action. There is considerable evidence (also from previous Human Development Reports) to indicate that in most situations exclusion on ‘cultural’ grounds goes together with palpable socio-economic exclusion – with poverty, unemployment, and bad housing, aggravated since the widespread implementation of ‘neo-liberal’ policies with growing inequality between the rich and the poor. By frontally challenging the socio-economic mechanisms that bring about such exclusion, by the promotion of policies that lessen *overall* socio-economic inequality, and then by the improvement of the life chances of the individuals from the disadvantaged groups, it can be made less likely that people will turn to those who promise ‘salvation’ by ethnic favouritism or religious redemption. Exclusion cannot explain everything, but as a contributing cause it is likely to be significant in many situations. In the end, it is the improvement of people’s life chances that is most likely to stabilise societies – and to reduce the attractiveness of coercive ideologies. In that sense Max Weber still rules OK!

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