

SERIES EDITOR'S FOREWORD

Edinburgh Studies of the Globalised Muslim World is a series that focuses on the contemporary transformations of Muslim societies. 'Globalisation' is meant here to say that although the Muslim world was always interacting with other societal, religious, imperial or national forces over the centuries, the evolution of these interconnections constantly reshapes Muslim societies. The second half of the twentieth century has been characterised by the increasing number and diversity of exchanges on a global scale bringing people and societies 'closer', for better and for worse. The beginning of the twenty-first century confirmed the increasingly glocalised nature of these interactions and the challenges and opportunities that they bring to existing institutional, social and cultural orders.

The series is not a statement that everything is different in today's brave new world. Indeed, many 'old' ideas and practices still have much currency in the present, and undoubtedly will continue to in the future. Rather the series emphasises how our current globalised condition shapes and mediates how past worldviews and modes of being are transmitted between people and institutions. The contemporary Muslim world is not merely a reflection of past histories, but it is also a living process of creating a new order on the basis of what people want, desire, fear and hope. This creative endeavour can transform existing relations for the better, for example by reconsidering the relations between society and the environment. They can equally fan violence

and hatred as illustrated in the reignition of cycles of conflicts over sovereignties, ideologies or resources across the globe.

The Globalised Muslim World series arrives at a challenging time for any inquiry into Muslim societies. The new millennium began inauspiciously with a noticeable spike in transnational and international violence framed in ‘civilisational’ terms. A decade of ‘war of terror’ contributed to the entrenching of negative mutual perceptions across the globe while also reinforcing essentialist views. The ensuing decade hardly improved the situation, with political and territorial conflicts multiplying in different parts of the Muslim world, and some of the most violent groups laying claim to the idea of a global caliphate to justify themselves. Yet a focus on trajectories of violence gives a distorted picture of the evolution of Muslim societies and their relations with the rest of the world. This series is very much about the ‘what else’ that is happening as we move further into the twenty-first century.

Hanna Pfeifer’s *Islamists and the Global Order* constitutes a timely contribution to the debates about the place and role that actors identified as ‘Islamists’ in the policy and scholarly literature can have in the international arena and the global political imaginary. Focusing on the post-9/11 foreign affairs context in the Middle East, the book illustrates the tensions, opportunities, strategic choices and trajectories of two movements embodying different forms of political Islam which are simultaneously presenting themselves to, and being represented by, a Western-dominated discourse about world order. The subtitle of Pfeifer’s work, ‘Between Resistance and Recognition’, highlights two crucial dynamics that have characterised multiple Islamist actors over the last few decades. In her perceptive analysis, Pfeifer details and elucidates the agency of these movements in creating a discourse and practice that is meaningful to them and that can also be accurately recognised by the main international powers of a secularised global international system.

Considering the rather different approaches of Hezbollah in Lebanon and Ennahda in Tunisia, the book analyses how those movements that have made the choice to embrace formal politics interact with national and international actors in situations of both normalcy and crisis. Delving into the discourses and positions of those Islamist actors, Pfeifer documents the strategic choices, options and dilemmas that have shaped their initiatives and responses to politi-

cal events and actors over time. While Hezbollah and Ennahda have embarked on different political and social strategies – i.e. resistance versus recognition – the analysis of their specific predicaments illustrates more generally the factors that weigh heavily on Islamist actors across the board and that structure their patterns of engagement on the international scene. Hence, Pfeifer's contribution constitutes a most welcome addition to the literature on both Islamism and international affairs that undoubtedly paves the way for more research of those dynamics across more movements throughout the globalised Muslim world.

*Professor Frédéric Volpi
Chair in the Politics of the Muslim World
University of Edinburgh*

