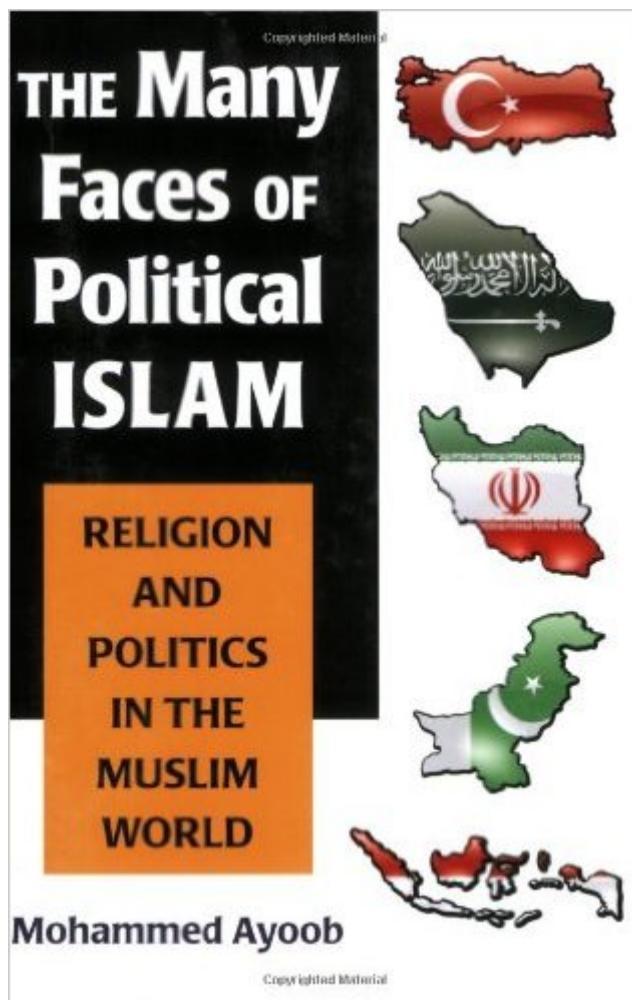


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# The Many Faces Of Political Islam: Religion And Politics In The Muslim World



## Synopsis

Analysts and pundits from across the American political spectrum describe Islamic fundamentalism as one of the greatest threats to modern, Western-style democracy. Yet very few non-Muslims would be able to venture an accurate definition of political Islam. Mohammed Ayoob's *The Many Faces of Political Islam* thoroughly describes the myriad manifestations of this rising ideology and analyzes its impact on global relations. "In this beautifully crafted and utterly compelling book, Mohammed Ayoob accomplishes admirably the difficult task of offering a readily accessible yet nuanced and comprehensive analysis of an issue of enormous political importance. Both students and specialists will learn a great deal from this absolutely first-rate book."---Peter J. Katzenstein, Walter S. Carpenter, Jr. Professor of International Studies and Stephen H. Weiss Presidential Teaching Fellow, Cornell University "Dr. Ayoob addresses the nuances and complexities of political Islam---be it mainstream, radical, or militant---and offers a road map of the pivotal players and issues that define the movement. There is no one as qualified as Mohammed Ayoob to write a synthesis of various manifestations of political Islam. His complex narrative highlights the changes and shifts that have taken place within the Islamist universe and their implications for internal Muslim politics and relations between the world of Islam and the Christian world."---Fawaz A. Gerges, Carnegie Scholar, and holds the Christian A. Johnson Chair in International Affairs and Middle Eastern Studies, Sarah Lawrence College "Let's hope that many readers---not only academics but policymakers as well---will use this invaluable book."---FranÃ§ois Burgat, Director, French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) and the Institute for Research and Study on the Arab and Muslim World (IREMAM), Aix-en-Provence, France "This is a wonderful, concise book by an accomplished and sophisticated political scientist who nonetheless manages to convey his interpretation of complex issues and movements to even those who have little background on the subject. It is impressive in its clarity, providing a badly needed text on political Islam that's accessible to college students and the general public alike."---Shibley Telhami, Anwar Sadat Professor for Peace and Development, University of Maryland, and Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution Mohammed Ayoob is University Distinguished Professor of International Relations with a joint appointment in James Madison College and the Department of Political Science at Michigan State University. He is also Coordinator of the Muslim Studies Program at Michigan State University.

## Book Information

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## **Customer Reviews**

Mr. Ayoob has just done readers in the U.S. a great service by writing this book. This book is essential reading for policy makers, students and anyone who really wants to understand what's going on in the Islamic world. The main problem with many books from the West on Islam and "Islamism" (political Islam) is that they are written from a Western perspective, and so they have inherent biases within them. This is of course a big part of the misunderstandings we have with this part of the world, the fact that we only see these societies and groups through the prism of our own standards and values which is not always concurrent with their own values. Indeed we seem to rarely ever be in synch with the realities of the area. This book puts political Islam into a vernacular that is ready for consumption by a U.S. audience. One of the most interesting things I found was the author's discussion of the affects that contact with democracy, no matter how limited the democracy, has had on Islamic political groups. The Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas, Hizbullah and many other groups have had contact with some forms of democratic participation with varying degrees of success. The Muslim Brotherhood went from being a group that was suppressed to being allowed limited participation in elected government. When it became clear how much support they had they were once again violently suppressed. The question becomes will they continue down the path of moderation and participation or will their suppression lead to frustration and a recurrence of violence. The Mubarak and U.S.

Dr. Ayoob's work on political Islam is a timely assault on many of the myths surrounding the nature and threat of Islamic activism that is often portrayed in popular American media. Dr. Ayoob characterizes the majority of these groups under the title of "Political Islam", which he defines as "a

form of instrumentalization of Islam by individuals, groups, and organizations that pursue political objectives." In essence, political Islam seeks to apply Islamic principles to the execution of modern government through acquiring the power of the state. The appeal of political Islam is multifaceted. The author cites the most basic appeal as the romantic notion of a "Golden Age" of Islam at the time of the Prophet and the first four caliphs. The golden age was modeled most prominently in the city-state structure of Medina during this period. Popular conception of this period has been idealized in popular literature and stories much the way the "founding fathers" are venerated in America. This appeal has been maintained throughout the centuries and found major revival in the 19th and 20th centuries as the majority of the Islamic world was brought under European domination during the colonial period. Dr. Ayoob contends the rise of Arab dictatorships in the mid-20th century has greatly aided the growth of political Islam due to the repressive natures of the regimes which often restricted or outlawed public dissent. Therefore dissent was often voiced through religious, rather than political means, and thus has reinforced the perception that religion and politics are inseparable in Islam. In fact, political repression is often so extreme that if many of these governments fall a religious replacement is the only organized option in many states.

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