

and tribal bases. The state or the "Moslem ruler" is necessary in order to achieve harmony and balance amongst these opposite and independent units. In this theory, Islam was presented as a timeless, monolithic and homogeneous culture which provides a perfectly adequate device for syphoning off the internal, factional conflicts of the social structure (Turner,1978:40; Abdel-Fadil,1988).

In this approach, Islam is held responsible for the static aspect of all social formations under the Ottoman rule. Some elements of this approach can be traced back to Marx's concept of the "Asiatic Mode of Production", while others seem to be derived from Weberian analysis. According to Weber (1968), Islamic culture is incompatible with the spirit of capitalism, unlike the "Protestant ethic" which is seen as a significant force in the emergence of Western capitalism. In Economy and Society Weber elaborates on this theme, suggesting that prebendal feudalism of imperial Islam is inherently contemptuous of bourgeois-commercial utilitarianism and considers it as sordid greediness and as the life force specifically hostile to it (Weber, 1968:109).

In Marx and the End of Orientalism (1978) and Capitalism and Class in the Middle East(1984), Bryan Turner provides an extensive critique of the work of the Orientalists, arguing that their "Mosaic Model" provides the theoretical basis for Wittfogel's elaborated notion of Oriental Despotism (Wittfogel, 1959). Other Middle Eastern scholars have dismissed the Orientalist approach as static and ideologically biased (Zureik,1981; Said, 1978).

Said associates the Orientalist view of Islam as a static society with the growth of western imperialism. In Orientalism, he argues that: "Orientalism changed from a scholarly inquiry into exotic language, into a theory of political practice.." for two reasons: one,