countries.[493] There is not however, as pointed out by many experts, a monolithic Islam or pan-Arab structure or civilisation. Basically there are two groups each with different aims and strengths of religiosity namely, Arab nationalism and Islamism or Muslim statism.[494]

Arab nationalism is primarily secular in orientation though it does acknowledge the Islamic component of Arab identity and history. Arab nationalism has a relationship and in some cases a dependency with Islamism. Islamism or Muslim statism on the other hand, is more religiously orthodox than Arab nationalism and is utterly premised upon the Quran. It melds the church and state into one community. In reality the majority of countries in the Muslim world fall into a middle position between these two groups, containing aspects of both, though many are more Arab nationalist than they are religiously orthodox. These nations are Muslim states, in that the majority of the population and its heritage are Muslim but they also pursue secular development with some sort of separation of church and state. As with all nation state structures domestic influences and pressures will combine in the formulation of policy response intra or inter to the state. It is very difficult to regard an aggregation of such nation states as monolithic.

Even given the secular aspect of many Muslim countries Islamic extremism has accelerated in intensity violence and political organisation in the past few decades. Most scholars cite several conflicts, which have mobilized the activity and the militancy of these Islamic extremists. The 1967 Arab-Israeli war, Chinese-Malay riots in Malaysia in 1969, the Pakistani-Bangladesh civil war of 1971 and the Lebanese civil war of the mid 70s, are often regarded as initialising a profound change within the Islamic world. In particular intensified Muslim dissent in the Near East directly stems from 1967. Israel's quick victory in the 6 Day War, and its capture of the Golan Heights, Sinai, Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem, was a blow to Arab/ Muslim pride, identity, and self-esteem. A common front against the military, political, and socio cultural oppression of Western neo colonialism and Judaic imperialism emerged, which led to the quest for a more authentic society and culture based upon Arab nationalism and Islamic culture.

In forging an Arab and Islamic identity Western neo-imperialist ideals were avoided. Both Western capitalism and Marxist socialism were rejected within Islamic societies as not viable solutions to redress Arab poverty and the mal-distribution of wealth. Capitalism was regarded as the system of Western special interests and new elites driven by materialism and no concern for equity and social justice. Marxism was non-spiritual and perforce rejected. Neither could satisfy nor solve the Arab world's pressing problems. In many Muslim countries idealism, hard work, and study had resulted in under employment, housing problems and a lack of political representation. Socio-cultural modernization and innovation was seen as a part of neo-colonialism and was not therefore pursued. Criticisms on extraneous frameworks ranged from economic dependency analysis to cultural dependency upon Western methods, and the development of elitist systems resulting in a valueless secular society. Internal change, internal values and religious fundamentalism and a moral autarchy if not in fact an economic autarchy, seemed the proper mandate to combat the ills facing Islamic society and to protect itself from Western dependency.

We can therefore state that at the heart of revivalist Islam is the belief that the Muslim world is in a state of decline. A return to Islam in personal and public life is a path to ensure the restoration of an Islamic identity, its values and power. For some in the Muslim world this version of Islam has become a total way of life based upon the Quran and the nature of the Muslim community-state embodied in the comprehensive nature of the Sharia God's revealed law. However, inimically, radical movements move beyond these principles using simplified assumptions. They assume that Islam is at war with a materialistic un-enlightened Western colonial powers.[495] Extremists believe that there is a conspiracy of super power neo-colonialism combined with the power of Zionist Israel. Violence against such governments and their representatives as well as Western multinationals that support perceived neo-colonialism, is seen as legitimate self-defence in the war with 'infidels' who would defy and desecrate the Muslim community state.

Such conflict and extremism is reflected in Huntington's thesis,