

‘ALTERNATE’ GLOBALITIES?  
ON THE CULTURES AND FORMATS OF TRANSNATIONAL  
MUSLIM NETWORKS FROM SOUTH ASIA

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This chapter explores the concepts and approaches of transnational Muslim groups from South Asia pursuing their own religious, cultural and political agendas from salvation to emancipation and development. While the rationale of their activities is largely group-specific and often ideology-driven, they apply a variety of public and political means and tools to achieve their objectives, sometimes seeking to replace western domination with their own hegemony. For many western observers, their activities remain suspicious and even threatening. It is felt that the West may have to work with these movements rather than against them if a painful long-term collision course is to be avoided. In order to succeed, however, it will be necessary to closely study the competing religious, cultural and political compulsions they face.

While it is common place to argue that globalisation studies cannot be reduced to the subject of finance and the economy alone, nor to the impact of the West, we know very little as of yet about the influence of non-western forms of globalisation, how non-economic global processes function, how they interact with the economic processes and what drives them.

This paper seeks to contribute to the understanding of Muslim global networks and how they are adapting to the current processes of globalisation creating separate visions of the world and ‘alternate globalities.’ It will focus on those emanating from South Asia, a region which on the back of an expansive South Asian diaspora has generated a rising number of translocal and transnational Muslim networks. It is intended to point out new trends and developments worthy of further study. A discussion of categories and the conceptual arguments will be followed by a review of the historical antecedents. The main focus will be on the new features and formats of this networking, how it is evolving and in what direction it is going. It is thus hoped that the paper contributes to mapping the directions of internal and external expansion of these networks.

*Framing the Question*

Muslim global networking is being discussed here for its contribution to globalisation. It symbolises a direction towards religious awareness and embeddedness, a sector representing Muslim actors and institutions and an outcome creating new structures and establishing new formats, channels and procedures. When we link Muslim global activism to the emergence of 'alternate globalities' we refer to the assumption that there is a main direction of globalisation to which other processes constitute some form of 'alternative'. This assumption is based on the perceived or real domination of globalisation by western economic and financial interests. Many Muslim agents and networks position themselves consciously as an imagined alternative, opposition or antidote against this direction of globalisation. At the same time Muslim actors who cross borders and regions in the pursuit of religious networking also follow economic compulsions and interests. On various levels they are also part of globalisation as driven by financial and economic interests, even though from a weaker or disadvantaged position. Their disadvantages are often exacerbated by a colonial and dependent past within the world economic and political order.

If we want to study non-economic forms of globalisation with their historical antecedents as a process in stages the categories of time and space become important parameters. In a more general sense globalisation can be perceived either as a compression of time and space proceeding gradually or in leaps over a longer period of time.<sup>1</sup> This would represent a macro perspective looking at global networking and activism 'from above'. Such a perspective will have to be complemented with a perspective 'from below' where we can see globalisation as an extension of networks and values in space and time, or what Giddens calls time-space distanciation.<sup>2</sup> It is against this background that Muslim networking constitutes a real or perceived alternative to economic globalisation as it largely seems to follow a non-economic rationale of religious and cultural interaction, at least as far as intention and main thrust are concerned.

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<sup>1</sup> David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford, 1990).

<sup>2</sup> Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 64.

Using the term 'globality' is meant to highlight the results of global networking, the emergence of global conditions, structures, interaction and patterns of behaviour that exist because of their translocal and transnational reach. Global interaction has been dominated by structures and patterns resulting from both western-dominated and economy-centred activity.<sup>3</sup>

In this sense Muslim global networking creates 'alternate' globalities insofar as it positions itself against processes and conditions that have been dominated by the West and are centred on economy and finance.

However this positioning can be only relative. It partly reflects reality and partly the ideology of Muslim actors constructing a unitary understanding of the West and of economic activity. In reality, Muslim global networking is also partly and significantly rooted in the West and becomes part of a highly diverse western agenda in terms of globalisation. It is also inherently related to economic and financial flows, interests and institutions. These reflect trading networks, roots of migration, career paths and the need to finance the religious institutions constituting the backbone of Muslim global networking. But again, even as part of the West and any economic agenda, Muslim agents would be largely underrepresented, underprivileged and could therefore still be considered as 'alternate' agents.

The term 'alternate' globalities could therefore be used to describe the perspective and intention of Muslim agents and agencies in global networking, to model their contribution and impact in a globalisation process that is hierarchical and uneven in terms of areas, impacts, participants and outcomes.

When we talk about Muslim networks here, we are referring to repeated and relatively stable interaction and interrelation of social units such as agents, institutions, organisations, but also values, texts and concepts as mediated by Muslim activists.<sup>4</sup> Translocal will be understood as pointing to an exchange or movement of these units, activity patterns or symbols across real or imagined boundaries, whereas transnational will emphasise the importance of crossing the

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<sup>3</sup> Martin Shaw, *Theory of the Global State: Globality as Unfinished Revolution* (Oxford, 2000).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Roman Loimeier, *Die islamische Welt als Netzwerk: Möglichkeiten und Grenzen des Netzwerkansatzes im islamischen Kontext* (Würzburg, 2000).

borders of nation states in the process.<sup>5</sup> In this sense most globalising Muslim networks have to be seen as both translocal and transnational at the same time. The difference between the two terms is in pointing to different directions and in the qualities of the interaction. Translocality transcends the limitations and boundaries of the local, but is not necessarily transnational, whereas all transnational interaction is probably also translocal. In comparison, the translocal will also include sociological, religious and cultural qualities and will be a reminder of its other side, the local, as well, whereas transnational more points to the political dimension and importance of crossing the borders of nation states creating a separate grid of references.

The recent phase of globalisation has encouraged Muslim groups and sects to go out into the world and expand in new ways that go much beyond the traditional bounds and networks in which they organised historically. While references will be drawn from various 'Muslim' regions, the focus will be on Islamic groups from South Asia.<sup>6</sup> They are a good example of this trend as almost all sects and interpretations which developed there during the last 150 years or so have nowadays established branches and networks in other parts of the world. In this they not only follow the routes of migration of Indian Muslims within the former colonial British Empire and beyond. They have also established a presence where Indian or Pakistani migrants had not settled in larger numbers such as Indonesia or North and West Africa.

At the same time, South Asian Islam is not the only regional centre that has radiated such influence. Religious groups from Saudi Arabia, from Iran and Turkey, Sufi orders from North Africa and the Middle East, have followed suit. They are currently operating translocal and transregional networks of significant expanse.

They show that globalisation has not led to the homogenisation of Islam and of Muslim networks, as feared by secular and Islamist critics alike. While to the undiscerning observer from outside, the presence of Muslim actors and Islamic discourse in the public sphere has grown tremendously, it is a picture far from being uniform or homogeneous.

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<sup>5</sup> For the concept of translocality as a research perspective, see Ulrike Freitag and Achim von Oppen, "Translokaliät als ein Zugang zur Geschichte globaler Verflechtungen," *H-Soz-u-Kult* (June 10, 2005), <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/forum/id=632&type=artikel&sort=datum&order=down&search=translokalit%C3%A4> (accessed July 2006, 18), and introduction to this volume.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Dietrich Reetz, *Islam in the Public Sphere: Religious Groups in India 1900–1947* (Delhi, 2006).

*Antecedents*

The current phase of transnational Muslim activism is undoubtedly building on a historical legacy. Transnational networks of Muslim activists have long existed throughout the Muslim world. They are particularly well-known for Sufi scholars and their disciples.<sup>7</sup> Graduates of established religious schools, *madrasas* and *dar al-'ulums*, have stayed in contact with their alma mater and with each other. Also politically motivated global Islamic activity has existed before the current phase of 'Islamism'. It had been the focus of international attention around the turn of the twentieth century in the shape of 'Pan-Islamism'. Colonial powers felt that Muslim activists challenged their rule as they allegedly owed no allegiance to their country or the reigning sovereign, as they suggested, but to Mecca. The well-known British administrator William Hunter pointedly asked towards the end of the nineteenth century: "Our Indian Mussalmans: are they bound in conscience to rebel against the Queen?"<sup>8</sup>

It was during the early nineteenth century that modern Islamic mobilisation in South Asia split along sectarian lines. In quick succession a number of schools of thought and sectarian groupings emerged which started out as distinctly local phenomena. Their doctrinal ambitions soon shaped them into translocal forces. They wanted to prove that they represented the only 'true' Islam, seeking to 're-convert' other Muslims to their causes all over British-India and beyond.

The reformist Deobandi and Tablighi networks (Hanafi Sunni) were centred on the Islamic Seminary in Deoband, North India, which was founded in 1866 by Muhammad Qasim Nanaotawi (1832–79) and Rashid Ahmad Gangohi (1829–1905), two conservative scholars. The school advocated a purist, scripturalist and revivalist Islam, invoking the Qur'an and Sunna. Many Islamic schools in South Asia follow its teaching.<sup>9</sup> The Tablighi movement was created in north India in 1926 by Muhammad Ilyas (1885–1944) inspired by Deobandi teachings. Originally it was formed to oppose the re-conversion efforts of

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<sup>7</sup> Miriam Cooke and Bruce B. Lawrence, eds., *Muslim Networks from Medieval Scholars to Modern Feminist* (Delhi, 2005); Martin van Bruinessen and Julia Day Howell, *Sufism and the "Modern" in Islam* (London, 2007).

<sup>8</sup> W.W. Hunter, *Our Indian Mussalmans: Are They Bound in Conscience to Rebel Against the Queen?* (London, 1871).

<sup>9</sup> Barbara Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860–1900* (Princeton, 1982); Reetz, *Islam in the Public Sphere*, p. 64f.

reformist Hindu preachers from the Arya Samaj (Society of the Nobles, 1875). The latter was seeking to return Muslim tribes, mainly from the Mewat region around Delhi, to the fold of Hinduism to which their ancestors had belonged. The missionary approach of the Tablighi Jama'at (TJ)<sup>10</sup> dispatching groups of lay preachers to other Muslim communities turned out to be highly successful. The TJ grew into a mainstream mass movement in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.<sup>11</sup>

The Sufi-oriented traditionalist Barelwi School of thought goes back to the religious scholar and writer Maulana Ahmad Raza Khan Barewli (1856–1921) and first appeared at the end of the 19th century in Bareilly, North India, close to Deoband.<sup>12</sup> He defended Sufi-related practices of *Pir*- and shrine worship heavily attacked by Deobandi purists.<sup>13</sup>

The Ahl-i Hadith (AH, People of the Tradition) scholars and schools represent a minority purist Sunni sect rejecting all law schools but privileging the Prophetic traditions (*hadith*). It formed under the leadership of Siddiq Hasan Khan (1832–90) and Maulana Nazir Husain (1805–1902) in North India in Bhopal, the Punjab and the United Provinces around 1864.<sup>14</sup> The AH network is polarised between a scholarly and a more radical, militant wing.<sup>15</sup>

The minority sect of the Ahmadiyya founded by Ghulam Ahmad Mirza (1839–1908) in 1889 also emerged in Punjab province. Most mainstream Muslim groups regard it as heretic. It is particularly the claims of its founder and his successors to some degree of Prophethood that have enraged radical Sunni Muslim activists. Since the 1920s Ahmadis were persecuted for their beliefs by Sunni radicals accusing

<sup>10</sup> Urdu: Missionary Movement.

<sup>11</sup> Muhammad Khalid Masud, *Travellers in Faith: Studies of the Tablighi Jama'at as a Transnational Islamic Movement for Faith Renewal* (Leiden, 2000); Reetz, *Islam in the Public Sphere*, p. 75f.

<sup>12</sup> Usha Sanyal, *Devotional Islam and Politics in British India: Ahmed Riza Khan Barewli and his Movement, 1870–1920* (Delhi, 1996).

<sup>13</sup> Reetz, *Islam in the Public Sphere*, p. 64f.

<sup>14</sup> Martin Riexinger, *Sanaullah Amritsari (1868–1948) und die Ahl-i-Hadis im Punjab unter britischer Herrschaft* (Würzburg, 2004); idem, "How Favourable is Puritan Islam to Modernity? A Study of the Ahl-i Hadis in Late Nineteenth/Early Twentieth Century South Asia," in *Colonialism, Modernity, and Religious Identities: Religious Reform Movements in South Asia*, ed. Gwilym Beckerlegge (New Delhi, 2008), pp. 147–165.

<sup>15</sup> Dietrich Reetz, "Kenntnisreich und unerbittlich: Der sunnitische Radikalismus der Ahl-i Hadith in Südasien", in *Sendungsbewußtsein oder Eigennutz: Zu Motivation und Selbstverständnis islamischer Mobilisierung*, ed. idem (Berlin, 2001), pp. 79–106.

them of committing apostasy by subscribing to the Prophetic claims of their leaders. In 1924 an Islamic court in Kabul had sentenced one Ahmadi activist, Ni'matullah, to death for holding fast to key Ahmadi beliefs.<sup>16</sup>

The Jama'at-i Islami (JI, Islamic Party) created in British India in 1941 and the legacy of its founder Abu'l Ala Maududi (1903–79) are at the core of a rather modernist network of affiliated groups and institutions. From the beginning, the JI being a 'cadre party' and religious organisation, staged claims to political and ideological hegemony in society.<sup>17</sup>

Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817–1898) established a rationalist and modernist interpretation of Islam which was based on the dictum that God could not have given reason to man without wanting him to use it.<sup>18</sup> His emphasis was on providing Muslims with modern western education in a religious environment where they would not be alienated from their cultural and religious traditions. For this purpose he established the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College in Aligarh in 1875, which was converted into a full-fledged university in 1920. While his writings caused much controversy and created conflict with the religious scholars of the time, his thinking deeply influenced the discourse and institution-building among Muslims of South Asia. This applied as much to the inception of the Pakistan movement as to modern Muslim educational institutions.<sup>19</sup>

Ubaidullah Sindhi (1872–1944), a left-wing Deobandi scholar, was considered a political radical in his time because of his staunch anti-colonialist and pro-socialist views for which he used classical theological arguments. His political discourse combined with a critical reading of the Islamic sources turned him into an icon of progressive Muslim thinkers of the Southasian subcontinent ever since. Along with religious scholars from Deoband and other schools, he was arrested in 1916 and interned in Malta until 1920 for participating in a plot to

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<sup>16</sup> Yohanan Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous: Aspects of Ahmadi Religious Thought and its Medieval Background* (Berkeley, 1989), p. 28; Simon Ross Valentine, *Islam and the Ahmadiyya Jama'at: History, Belief, Practice* (New York, 2008).

<sup>17</sup> Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism* (New York, 1996).

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Aziz Ahmad and Gustav von Grunebaum, eds., *Muslim Self-statement in India and Pakistan 1857–1968* (Wiesbaden, 1970), pp. 25–48.

<sup>19</sup> David Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation: Muslim Solidarity in British India* (Delhi, 1996 [1978]).

overthrow colonial rule and to set up a nationalist Indian government in exile in Kabul.<sup>20</sup>

Since then these traditions and schools of thought have globalised themselves. The high global impact of groups from South Asia is largely explained by the flow of South Asian migrants, first within the British colonial empire, and later within the Commonwealth and the globalising economy.<sup>21</sup> Where British colonialism claimed that the sun never set down over the British Empire, today it is the Indian Ministry for Overseas Indians, proudly rephrasing the slogan that the sun never sets down on the Indian diaspora.<sup>22</sup> In 2005 alone it is calculated that the five major South Asian countries sent over 1.5 million migrant workers abroad legally. In 2000, there were 24 million South Asians abroad, a figure that does not include the historic and the illegal migration.<sup>23</sup>

Indian Muslim groups shared in these dynamics which were strongly pushed by Gujarati trading castes, the Memons, Suratīs, Khatris and others. Thomas Blom Hansen shows in his study of South African Muslims of South Asian origin how Gujarati origins are being reflected by Muslim activists. They undertake reformist efforts of Arabisation with the slogan “We are Arabs from Gujarat”.<sup>24</sup> Historically, the Deobandīs, Tablighīs and the Ahmādīs were the first to start globalising themselves towards the end of colonial rule.

The seventies and eighties saw another phase of expansion on the back of the Islamisation policies of the Zia-ul-Haq administration in Pakistan, and new massive flows of labour migration from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India, to the Gulf States, but also to Western Europe and North America. These developments helped the political Islamists of the Jama’at-i Islami, groups such as the Ahl-i Hadith, the Barelwīs

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<sup>20</sup> K.H. Ansari, “Pan-Islam and the Making of the Early Indian Muslim Socialist,” *Modern Asian Studies* 20, 3 (1986), 509–537; Reetz, *Islam in the Public Sphere*.

<sup>21</sup> Crispin Bates, ed., *Community, Empire, and Migration: South Asians in Diaspora* (New York, 2001).

<sup>22</sup> The Chairman of the High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora, Dr. L.M. Singhvi, at a media briefing on 1 November 2002: “I have often said that the Sun never sets on the Indian diaspora from Fiji to Canada around the world.” At <http://www.meaindia.nic.in/mediainteraction/2002/11/01m01.htm> (accessed 17 June 2008).

<sup>23</sup> “South Asia: A Special Report,” *Migration News* 14 (October 2008), 4. [http://migration.ucdavis.edu/mn/more.php?id=3446\\_0\\_3\\_0](http://migration.ucdavis.edu/mn/more.php?id=3446_0_3_0) (accessed November 11, 2008)

<sup>24</sup> Hansen, Thomas Blom, “‘We are Arabs from Gujarat!’ The Purification of Muslim Identity in Contemporary South Africa,” *RAU Sociology Seminar Series* (Edinburgh, February 14, 2003), <http://www.ukzn.ac.za/CCS/default.asp?3,28,10,900> (accessed June 24, 2009).

and the Pakistani Shias expand their transnational activities, first on a regional scale.

Partly as an outflow of the civil war in Afghanistan, the proliferation of an internationalist Islamist ideology in relation to conflicts in the Middle East, the first Gulf War, the conflicts in Kashmir and Chechnya, the nineties formed yet another phase of expansion of these groups to intense levels of global networking.

### *Doctrinal Differentiation*

This process of expansion in South Asia and beyond was marked by a growing differentiation. It followed both doctrinal and cultural markers. From the perspective of Islamic doctrine and practice these groups positioned themselves in the 'Islamic field'<sup>25</sup> in different ways. More general markers to such positioning are claims by these groups to some form of reformism, 'traditionalism' or modernism. Many scholars point to the relative nature of such classification.<sup>26</sup> However it is believed that it could still serve as an indication of a general orientation of these groups within the Islamic field. These claims more often speak about the intentions than about the realities. We would use these terms here less as analytical categories from 'outside' rather than as reflections of emphasis in Islamic doctrine and practice from 'inside' with a preference for 'reformation' (*islah*), 'adherence' (*taqlid*) or 'independent reasoning' (*ijtihad*). At the same time Muslim groups combined these orientations and developed sub-types of these concepts and practices. In the process of growth and global expansion we have seen gliding shifts of paradigm which require further exploration.

Within this configuration, the Deobandis, Ahl-i Hadith and Jama'at-i Islami broadly follow the doctrinal orientation of the reformists, championing *islah* as a way to return to the perceived or real original meaning of the teachings and practice of Islam. The term is used here with

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<sup>25</sup> The term 'Islamic field' is used here with reference to Bourdieu's theory of the field of cultural production as a system of "objective relations" between agents or institutions and as the "site of struggles" over power to consecrate values and beliefs. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (New York, 1993), p. 78.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Benjamin F. Soares and René Otayek, *Islam and Muslim Politics in Africa* (New York, 2007); Roman Loimeier, "Patterns and Peculiarities of Islamic Reform in Africa," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 33, 3 (2003), 237–262; Reinhard Schulze, *Islamischer Internationalismus im 20. Jahrhundert: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Islamischen Weltliga* (Leiden, 1990).

reference to the movement of *islah* as associated with the Egyptians Muhammad Abduh (1849–1905) and, with a more conservative orientation, the Syrian Rashid Rida (1865–1935) making a strong impact on Asia and Africa outside of Arabia.<sup>27</sup> In various ways they sought to intervene in Muslim society to bring it into conformity with their understanding of Islamic precepts. Inspired by the piety and practices of the first three generations of Islam, the *al-salaf*, the reformist trend of the Salafiyya branched off from the *islah* movement and took on a life of its own.<sup>28</sup> From the point of view of Islamic doctrine the revivalists have been critical towards the law schools rejecting blind adherence (*taqlid*) to them, although they still favoured some form of conformity. Instead many revivalists looked favourably at ‘independent reasoning’ (*ijtihad*) to apply the Qur’an and the Sunna to new and current circumstances, mostly in a more literal reading.

The Deobandi school of thought considered itself thoroughly reformist, i.e. oriented towards *islah*, although it still followed *taqlid* with regard to its own concept. It never shared the ‘anti-Sufi’ turn of many modern reformist movements as it advocated a balance between the law (*shari’a*) and the path (*tariqa*), between reformism (*islah*) and mysticism (*tasawwuf*). The Deobandis accepted those forms of Sufism which they saw as compatible with the *shari’a*. A number of Deobandi scholars even saw *tasawwuf* as indispensable for bringing out the right character of students and followers.<sup>29</sup> Such orientation is also reflected in the creed of Deoband<sup>30</sup> emphasising the unity of *shari’a* and *tariqa*, or in other words, reformism and spiritual mysticism. This double orientation is also visible in the promi-

<sup>27</sup> Malcolm H. Kerr, *Islamic Reform: The Political and Legal Theories of Muḥammad ‘Abduh and Rashīd Riḍā* (Berkeley, 1966); A. Merad, Hamid Algar, N. Berkes and Aziz Ahmad, “Iṣlāh,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* 2, 4 (Leiden, 1990), pp. 141–171.

<sup>28</sup> For a discussion of the many shades of the Salafiyya movement, cf. P. Shinar and Werner Ende, “Salafiyya,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* 2, 8 (Leiden, 1995), pp. 900–909; Werner Ende, Udo Steinbach and Renate Laut, *Der Islam in der Gegenwart* (München, 2005); Fritz Steppat and Thomas Scheffler, *Islam als Partner: Islamkundliche Aufsätze 1944–1996*, (Beiruter Texte und Studien) 78 (Würzburg, 2001).

<sup>29</sup> My interviews with leading Deobandi scholars at Deoband (December 2001).

<sup>30</sup> The school adopted a formal document describing the ‘Tack’ of the Deoband school, highlighting the importance of (1) the law (*shari’a*), (2) the path (*tariqa*), (3) the custom of the Prophet (*sunna*), (4) the Hanafi legal tradition, (5) the dialectics of the classical Hanafi scholar al-Maturidi, (6) the ‘defence’ against ‘false’ beliefs, such as polytheism, and (7) the preference for the thought of the founders of the school, Muhammad Qasim Nanaotawi (1832–79) and Rashid Ahmad Gangohi (1829–1905), Reetz, *Islam in the Public Sphere*, pp. 316–318.

nence of Deobandi scholars known for their reformist writings and also for their extensive networks of Sufi disciples. The scholars Ashraf 'Ali Thanawi (1863–1943) and Muhammad Zakariyya (1898–1982) are good cases in point. Thanawi's and Zakariyya's books are featured in various Deobandi seminars the world over. On the current website of the Deoband School, among the six books presented on the English-language interface, three are authored by Thanawi: "Rights in Islam", "Masail of Hairs", "Nikkah (Marriage) in Islam".<sup>31</sup> Thanawi's writings are a source of reference for the Deoband-influenced Association of Religious Scholars of South Africa (Jam'iatul 'Ulama).<sup>32</sup> Zakariyya penned the *hadith* selection commonly used by the Tablighi Jama'at, the *Fazail-e Amal*. It is recommended by various Deobandi institutions around the world.<sup>33</sup> The spiritual importance of these two scholars is amply demonstrated by Mufti Ebrahim Salejee who founded and heads the Deobandi School in Durban, South Africa. On his website, he lists his spiritual connection (*silsila*) with both Thanawi and Zakariyya.<sup>34</sup>

The Ahl-i Hadith are more rigid in their rejection of Sufi practices. They also reject the law schools and go back to the Prophetic traditions. The Ahl-i Hadith believed they had direct access to the divine insight of the Prophet through the Prophetic traditions (*hadith*). This allowed them to circumvent the law schools. They argued that Muhammad received the Prophetic traditions as part of the revelation (Qur'an 53:3, 4). For this reason they enjoined Muslims to follow all the Prophetic traditions.<sup>35</sup> They did not extend their reverence of the Prophet to saints and their shrines, regarding this as aberrant. Today they highlight the principle of *tawhid* (Unity of God), shared

<sup>31</sup> <http://darululoom-deoband.com/english/books/index.htm> (accessed November 4, 2008).

<sup>32</sup> A site-related search on Google reveals 18 such references: <http://www.google.com/search?hl=de&q=thanwi+site%3Ajamiat.co.za&btnG=Suche&lr=> (accessed November 4, 2008).

<sup>33</sup> See the Deobandi Darul 'Ulum in Holcombe, UK, on the website of which it appears in numerous references: <http://www.inter-islam.org/Biographies/biohazrtshyk.htm>, <http://www.inter-islam.org/Actions/ir105.html> (accessed November 11, 2008). See also the Islamic bookshop trading in reformist literature at <http://darul-ishaat.co.uk> and <http://www.iqra.org> (accessed November 11, 2008).

<sup>34</sup> [http://alhaadi.org.za//index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=257&Itemid=33](http://alhaadi.org.za//index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=257&Itemid=33) (accessed November 4, 2008).

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Mīr Siyālkoṭī, *Tarikh-e ahl-i ḥadīth* (Urdu: History of the 'People of the Traditions') (Sargodha, 1953), pp. 168ff.

with other Salafi groups. Other forms of devotion are regarded as *shirk* (polytheism) that should be actively countered.<sup>36</sup>

The Jama'at-i Islami combines doctrinal orthodoxy that is not far removed from Deoband with an emphasis on the importance of political power and the state for the formation of an Islamic society. Maududi consciously shaped this group as a religious organisation and a political party.<sup>37</sup> The party is eager to answer the modern challenges of politics by taking an active anti-western stand on issues of globalisation, anti-terror policies or the 'hegemony' of the United States. It embraces not only modern party politics, but also modern means of communication, catering to its middle class social basis.

The Barelwis could be considered to follow a 'traditionalist' line. As 'traditionalist' we will regard the diverse forms of interpretation and practice based on adherence (*taqlid*) to legal opinion and established custom as they have been inherited in the historical process. This legacy was embodied in local rituals, saint and shrine worship, and was transmitted through local mosques and Quranic schools. Anthropologists sometimes called it 'lived' or 'living' Islam.<sup>38</sup>

The Barelwis defend the traditions of lived Islam which they find under attack from purists of the Deobandi and Ahl-i Hadith school. They consider their approach as legitimate, i.e. being rightly guided by the Qur'an and the Sunnah, the tradition of the Prophet and his companions. Their customs include the veneration of Saints and shrines. They believe in their power of intercession as followers plead with God through their donations to have their wishes granted. They show special love and affection for the Prophet, and this is seen by their critics as detracting from the monism of Islam. Although they are attacked by the Deobandis for their alleged lack of ritual and doctrinal purity, most of their doctrinal and legal views are close to Deobandi orthodoxy.

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<sup>36</sup> See the declaration of their beliefs on their British website where principle no. one of their aims and objectives reads: "To spread the belief in Tawheed (the oneness of God) is the main purpose of the coming of the Prophets. It was their mission to wipe out Shirk (belief in other gods) from the lives of the people." <http://www.mjah.org/AboutMJAH/AimsandObjectives/tabid/60/Default.aspx> (accessed November 11, 2008).

<sup>37</sup> Nasr, *Mawdudi*.

<sup>38</sup> Imtiaz Ahmad and Helmut Reifeld, eds., *Lived Islam in South Asia: Adaptation, Accommodation and Conflict* (Delhi, 2004); Magnus Marsden, *Living Islam: Muslim Religious Experience in Pakistan's North-West Frontier* (Cambridge, 2005).

The Ahmadiyya is seen by most Sunni and Shia Muslims as heterodox because of the claims of its founder and subsequent leaders to some degree of (minor) prophethood. It also renounced violent jihad in contrast to classical Islam which argues for both peaceful and violent jihad. Beyond that the Ahmadis combine doctrinal conservatism with social modernity and political loyalism.

The Jama'at-i Islami and the followers of the Aligarh school of thought would be considered here representing different shades of modernism. This would be based on the understanding to call those scholars and trends modernist, which see no inherent contradiction between the confirmation of the faith and the pursuit of rational, scientific thought. They would share the method of 'independent reasoning' (*ijtihad*) with the revivalists. But their reading of the Qur'an and the Sunna was less literal and more allegorical and metaphorical. They applied this method to a 'rationalist' reading of the Qur'an, striving to bring it into consonance with modern scientific and technological thought. In consequence, many accepted the political and economic requirements of modern industrial and capitalist societies.

This process of diversification has helped to intensify competition between them in a global 'market' of Islamic institutions and concepts. At the same time it has led to some form of ideological convergence. Every contestant is anxious to present his vision of Islam as the only 'true' Islam, as their very own reformist agenda. We see the concept of reformation, or *islah*, acquiring new meanings and connotations. In a more general sense for the Islamic networks the task of reformation, or *islah*, becomes synonymous with expansion of their global institutions. It is also equated with development efforts in favour of Muslim communities which perceive themselves as being at 'the receiving end' of globalisation in Muslim minority societies and globally in relation to western domination.

While such classification was based on their major doctrinal beliefs (*aqida*) the groups also showed cross influences of other orientations in the Islamic field. Reformist groups tackle modern topics and retain traditionalist influences. Modern groups develop reformist pretensions. Traditionalist scholars modernise themselves. The double trend of diversification and convergence becomes more obvious if we look at the formation of 'religio-cultural milieus.'

*Religio-cultural Milieus*

In cultural terms, these groups grew into extended networks developing features of sects and clans. Some of them tended to become partly endogamous where followers would prefer to intermarry. Over time the groupings expanded into religio-cultural milieus. A 'milieu' is understood here as a religio-cultural life-world which expresses itself in preferences for a cluster of religious networks and affiliations sharing a common cultural, and sometimes regional-geographic profile of origin and orientation. Such an understanding of the 'milieu' would connect with research in philosophical and social anthropology where a milieu would present a "world arranged and structured according to the predispositions of the actor."<sup>39</sup> In a globalising world translocal actors would carry these predilections with them forming what would be for Max Scheler a 'milieu-structure'.<sup>40</sup> In globalisation, it helps travellers, migrants and their descendents "to make themselves at home in various places in the world."<sup>41</sup> From the perspective of our research, it is felt that such preferences are not only subjective attitudes, but take on features of social structures and networks, spawning institutions accompanied by a distinct internal social and organisational culture.

For the groups discussed here they would create competing religio-cultural milieus that formed separate segments of the 'Islamic field'. The milieus would adhere to the religious tradition and the cultural aspects associated with its implementation. In this process they would further differentiate reproducing the social and doctrinal differentiation of the Islamic field within each milieu where we would find reformist, orthodox-traditionalist and modernist elements side-by-side.

The following listing includes samples of such diversification within the translocal milieu of the South Asian Islamic groups:

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<sup>39</sup> Martin Albrow, John Eade, Jörg Dürrschmidt and Neil Washbourne, "The Impact of Globalization on Sociological Concepts: Community, Culture and Milieu," in *Living the Global City: Globalization as a Local Process*, ed. John Eade (London, 1997), p. 30.

<sup>40</sup> Albrow et al., "Impact of Globalization"; Max Scheler and Maria Scheler, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik* (Bern, 1966), pp. 148–172.

<sup>41</sup> Albrow et al., "Impact of Globalization," p. 31.

*Deobandis*

The Deobandi milieu nowadays encompasses *madrasas*, political groups, ideological organisations, (secular) school associations, social or cultural groups. The affinities between those institutional networks are maintained by Deobandi theologians. They concurrently get involved in different forms of activism responding to broad-ranged needs. They seek to serve local Muslim communities, build roads for the social and economic advancement of their followers and answer the missionary quest of spreading the 'true' Islam in Deobandi interpretation.

Deobandi *madrasas* and mosques have established a global presence following in the footsteps of South Asian migrant communities. They are prominently represented in Britain, Portugal, Spain, South Africa and South East Asia. In several places they have started attracting followers of non-South Asian descent, such as local Malay- and Bhasa-speakers in Malaysia and Indonesia, Muslims of Malay and North African descent in South Africa, East African Indians and Black African Muslims in Portugal, and Maghribean Muslims in Spain.

Most students attending Deobandi *madrasas* follow a regular six- to eight-year religious degree course giving them the qualification of an '*alim* (religious scholar). Others attend courses to become a Quranic memoriser (*hafiz*) or reciter (*qari*). Some of the more prominent and successful *madrasas* outside South Asia include the following:

- Darul 'Ulum Dewsbury, UK
- Darul 'Ulum Holcombe, Bury, UK
- Jami'atu'l Imam Muhammad Zakaria, Bradford, UK (for girls)
- Darul 'Ulum Zakariyya, Lenasia, South Africa
- Darul 'Ulum Azadville, South Africa
- Darul 'Ulum Sri Petaling (Tablighi Markaz), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- Darul 'Ulum al-Madania, Buffalo, NY, USA
- Darul 'Ulum al Islamia de Portugal, Palmela (1994).<sup>42</sup>

Deobandi political and religious pressure groups include the parties of religious scholars, the Jam'iat-ul 'Ulama, which have formed in Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, South Africa and Canada. Ideological bodies

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<sup>42</sup> Abdool Karim Vakil, "Do *Outro* ao Diverso: Islão e Muçulmanos em Portugal: História, discursos, Identidades," *Revista Lusófona de Ciência das Religiões* 3, 5/6 (2004), 283–312, [http://cienciareligioes.ulusofona.pt/arquivo\\_religioes/religioes5\\_6/pdf/283-312Vakil.pdf](http://cienciareligioes.ulusofona.pt/arquivo_religioes/religioes5_6/pdf/283-312Vakil.pdf) (accessed October 4, 2008), p. 306.

of Deobandi orientation can be found in the Khatm-e Nabuwwat councils and departments seeking to uphold the principle of Muhammad being the 'Seal of the Prophets.' They are chasing 'deviant' beliefs and groups seen as challenging this principle. Among those groups, the Ahmadiyya are their prime target as their founder and leaders supposedly claim some Prophetic faculties.

Deobandi scholars also participate in the organisation and running of public and private Muslim schools teaching the secular curriculum for primary and secondary education, combined with religious instruction. Such schools have successfully been operating since the 1980s in Pakistan, India, Britain and South Africa. It is the Association of Muslim Schools in South Africa that is particularly active in this field. For a long time it was run by a Deobandi *'alim*, Mufti Zubair Bayat.<sup>43</sup> The South African schools accept a modernist perspective on society. They view their service to the community as a means to provide Muslims with modern education in a religious environment. Any ideological pretensions about the 'Islamisation' of educational contents have been relegated to the background.

Deobandi thinking also reaches out into the production of modern teaching material on Islam. The Iqra Foundation Mumbai produces high quality non-sectarian teaching and reading material on Islamic subjects for general Muslim schools, but also for adult education. It forms part of an Islamic educational trust in Mumbai (India) and Chicago (USA) extending its influence across the Muslim world. Its material is used for Islam classes in public and private secular schools in countries such as India, South Africa, Britain, and the US. Its Mumbai director Ms Usma Naheed is related to a Deobandi *'alim* and mediates Deobandi concepts.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> For a lecture on the Islamic Awareness Day 2003 in Tooting, UK (September 28, 2003), Bayat was introduced thus: "Mufti Zubair Ismail Bayat is presently the director of DIRECT (Darul-Ihsan Research and Education Centre). He is a former chairman of the Association of Muslim Schools in Kwa Zulu Natal, South Africa. He is a graduate of Darul-Uloom, Deoband and has a Masters in Islam Studies from Rand Afrikaans University. For six years he taught Advanced Islamic Studies at Madrasah Arabiyyah Islamiyyah, Azadville, South Africa. In 1994 he established Zakariyya Muslim School, where he is currently serving as an advisor and patron to the school. Since the early 90s he has been actively involved in Islamic Dawah, having delivered a series of lectures on a variety of Islamic topics in several countries. He also serves as editor of the Al-Jamiat newspaper. He is an active young scholar to whom many students of Islam turn for help and guidance." <http://www.ummah.net/forum/showthread.php?t=23542> (accessed November 4, 2008).

<sup>44</sup> Cf. [www.iqrafoundation.com](http://www.iqrafoundation.com) for the US branch and its publishing house <http://www.iqra.org> (accessed November 4, 2008).

Today the missionary movement of the Tablighi Jama'at is believed to be the largest translocal and transnational Muslim organisation. It is known for its association with Deobandi scholars around the world. It operates through Deobandi schools and mosques, although not exclusively. Religious scholars have a varying degree of influence in its activity. Its doctrinal orientation is reformist-Deobandi, but it keeps alive a certain Sufi legacy. That influence is embodied in ritual prayers invoking God's name (*zikr*), in prayers of supplication (*du'a*) and in an emphasis on character and intention (*niyyat*)—practices and concepts common in Sufi Islam.<sup>45</sup> Its outward appearance is marked by a preference for local Muslim dress, often the long white trousers and shirt common in North India. But the local Muslim dress from the Maghrib or West Africa, for instance, is also accepted in those regions. In Europe and North America or Australia western dress is not uncommon either.

### *Barelwis*

The Barelwis also extended their religious community to the South Asian diaspora. The teachings of the founder, Raza Ahmad Khan, his shrine and the madrasa in Bareilly related to his family have become the centre of a worldwide network of Islamic schools, shrines and organisations often competing with Deobandi institutions. Their milieu has expanded enormously and grown exceptionally diverse. Their main influence is felt in South Africa, Great Britain and North America. They have formed institutions the world over, such as:<sup>46</sup>

World Islamic Mission, Wembley (UK)<sup>47</sup>

British Muslim Council, Derby (UK)<sup>48</sup>

Madrassa Ahle Sunny Jamat, Laranjeiro; Darul Ulum Kadria-Ashrafia, Odivelas (Portugal)<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Cf. Dietrich Reetz, "Sufi Spirituality Fires Reformist Zeal: The Tablighi Jama'at in Today's India and Pakistan," *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* 135 (2006), 33–52.

<sup>46</sup> Some of these links are owed to Martin Riexinger, *South Asian Islam: Worldwide Movements and Organisations Centered in South Asia*, Collection of Internet links, n.d., <http://wwwuser.gwdg.de/~mriexin/sasislam.html> (accessed November 11, 2008); <http://wwwuser.gwdg.de/~mriexin/sasislam.html> (accessed November 4, 2008).

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.wimuk.com> (accessed November 11, 2008).

<sup>48</sup> <http://www.wimuk.com> (accessed November 11, 2008).

<sup>49</sup> Vakil, "Do *Outro* ao Diverso," p. 306 (accessed November 11, 2008).

Masjid Abdul Aleem Siddique (Singapore)<sup>50</sup>

Imam Mustafa Raza Research Centre, Durban (South Africa)<sup>51</sup>

Most of their institutions are directly associated with Pakistan-based organisations. In the diaspora, they rarely transcend the limits of ethnic followers of South Asian descent, mostly from Pakistan.

Similar to the Deobandi madrasas, their teaching is associated with the orthodox curriculum of the *dars-e nizami*. Ritual distinctions from the Deobandis are largely focused on special prayers in praise of the Prophet (*nat, salami*) and on the commemoration of the Prophet's birthday (*milad-un-nabi*). Also the concept of intercession (*tawasul*) is a bone of contention as Barelwi followers believe in the power of saints and shrines to mediate God's influence, a belief, strongly attacked by the Deobandis.

Beside orthodox, scholar-based mosques and madrasas the Barelwis are running supplementary networks with a nuanced understanding of Islamic doctrine and practice. Recently the pietist network of the Barelwi missionary organisation of the Da'wat-i Islami has become very prominent. Founded in 1980 by Muhammad Ilyas ul-Qadri,<sup>52</sup> it was conceived as a counterweight to the Deobandi group Tablighi Jama'at. However, unlike the latter, it is mainly limited to migrants of South Asian origins and their descendents. The DI runs mosques and Quranic schools for children. Its style is conservative and pietist. While it follows the ritual spiritualism of the Barelwis with outbursts of emotions of joy and sorrow in their community meetings (*ijtima*), it also emphasises orthodox reformism in the tradition of *islah*. This emphasis on correct Islamic practice gives their activity a reformist ideological thrust turning them into some kind of 'Deobandi' force within the Barelwi camp. The group strictly emphasises traditional clothing in the style of North Indian Muslims (*shalwar-qamis*) combined with a trademark green turban.

<sup>50</sup> <http://aleemsiddique.org.sg/> (accessed November 11, 2008).

<sup>51</sup> <http://www.noori.org/> (accessed November 11, 2008).

<sup>52</sup> See, <http://www.dawateislami.net>. Cf. Thomas Gugler, "Parrots of Paradise, Symbols of the Super-Muslim: Sunnah, Sunnaization and Self-Fashioning in the Islamic Missionary Movements Tablighi-i Jama'at, Da'wat-e Islami and Sunni Da'wat-e Islami," Paper presented at the 20th European Conference of Modern South Asian Studies, Manchester University, July 9, 2008. See, <http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/savifadok/volltexte/2008/142/> (accessed November 11, 2008).

Parallel to the DI, the comparatively modern network of the Minhaj-ul-Qur'an (MQ),<sup>53</sup> founded in 1980 by Dr. Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadri (b. 1951), has spread among diaspora Muslims of Pakistani descent. It grew out of an educational movement started in Lahore, Pakistan, where its schools teach secular courses of the secondary and tertiary level combined with religious instruction. In other countries they run cultural-cum-religious centres where migrants of Pakistani descent can also pray and retain the contact with their cultural and religious tradition back in Pakistan. The group acts as a migrant support network, but so does the DI in many places. The MQ channels resources collected from membership fees of its global branches into its missionary and educational activity. The movement is operating in more than 80 countries around the world. In 1989 Qadri also established a political party, the Pakistan Awami Tahrik (PAT),<sup>54</sup> pursuing an "Islamic path of moderation, development, friendliness and peace."<sup>55</sup> Its distinct development orientation clearly gives it a modernist direction.

The South Asian Barelwi tradition also gave birth to the international network of Islamic Propagation Centres founded by Ahmed Hoosen Deedat (1918–2005). As a child he migrated with his family from Gujarat in India to South Africa and established the Islamic Propagation Centre International (IPCI) in Durban. Religious centres following his teachings are running in many Islamic and western countries.<sup>56</sup> Their emphasis is on comparative religious discourse highlighting the superiority of the Qur'an as compared to the Bible. Their pamphlets teach 'correct' Islamic practice (prayer, dress, fasting, and education) in a modern setting. Doctrinally the centres operate across the conventional lines of orientation. They combine propagation (*da'wa*) with reformation efforts (*islah*) and the observance of tradition (*taqlid*). For this reason they are sometimes counted with the modernist *da'wa* of the JI variety or even the Salafi type. But the family network behind the organisation based in South Africa (Durban) is related to the Barelwi section of the South Asian diaspora.

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<sup>53</sup> The group's website, <http://www.minhaj.org/>, calls itself proudly "Minhaj-ul-Qur'an International."

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.pat.com.pk/> (accessed November 11, 2008).

<sup>55</sup> *Pakistan Awami Tehreek, Putting People First: [Election] Manifesto 2002* (Lahore, September 2, 2009), p. 6, [http://pat.com.pk/campaign/20020902\\_pat\\_manifesto.pdf](http://pat.com.pk/campaign/20020902_pat_manifesto.pdf) (accessed October, 26, 2008).

<sup>56</sup> <http://www.ahmed-deedat.co.za> (accessed October 26, 2008).

*Ahl-i Hadith*

The milieu of the modern Ahl-i Hadith is known for its strong orientation towards Saudi Arabia and its affiliation with Salafi networks. The AH movement established its overseas branches since the seventies. Outside South Asia it is active in the Gulf region and on the Arabian Peninsula as well as in Britain, North America and South Africa. It is strongly tied to Muslim communities of South Asian descent. Its main headquarters overseas is in Britain in Birmingham where the movement established the Green Lane Masjid as its headquarters. It is registered as Markazi Jamiat Ahl-e-Hadith, UK (Central Party of the People of the Tradition)<sup>57</sup> which indicates the close connection with its Pakistani counterpart of the same name. In Britain it is running a network of over 40 affiliated mosques, community centres and basic Islamic schools.

From this headquarters it publishes a modern English-language journal *The Straight Path* propagating its Salafi ideology.

In Saudi Arabia it has recently established a highly ideological mission (*da'wa*) centre stoking the flames of intersectarian dissent, the Jeddah Dawah Centre (JDC).<sup>58</sup> It runs a separate TV channel on the video website YouTube.com—Noor TV9.<sup>59</sup>

Ahl-i Hadith scholars and graduates of their madrasas are also involved in setting up private (secular) Muslim schools in South Africa, Britain and the Gulf.

*Ahmadiyya*

Due to the enormous pressure from its opponents, but also because of its ambitious programmes of expansion and conversion, the Ahmadis developed into a sect and closed community early on. They took on features of a diversified religio-cultural milieu complete with religious schools, 'secular' schools, separate organisations and institutions for men, women, youth and children, professional organisations, health facilities and training institutions for *da'wa* preaching:<sup>60</sup>

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.ahlehadith.co.uk> (accessed October 26, 2008).

<sup>58</sup> <http://www.jdci.org> (accessed October 26, 2008).

<sup>59</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/user/NoorTV9> (accessed November 4, 2009).

<sup>60</sup> Cf. its official website: <http://www.alislam.org> (accessed October 26, 2008).

Sadr Anjuman-i Ahmadiyya (1906)  
 Atfal-ul-Ahmadiyya (boys 6–14 y.)  
 Khuddam-ul-Ahmadiyya (boys/men 15–40 y.)  
 Ansar-i Allah (1911, men, preaching and community service)  
 Lajna Ama' Allah (women)  
 (Anjuman) Tahrik-i Jadid (1934, foreign mission)  
 Taleemul Islam College,  
 Jamia-Nusrat College, in Chenab Nagar (Pakistan)  
 Waqf-e Jadid (1957, community service)  
 Waqf-e Nau (1987, volunteers)  
 Muslim Television Ahmadiyya  
 Ahmadiyya Muslim Students Associations

Fleeing from sectarian attacks and government persecution in Pakistan where they had moved after partition of the subcontinent in 1947, the Ahmadis shifted their headquarters to Britain. The head of the community (*khalifa*) took permanent residence in Britain in 1984. Since then they established their centre in the English county of Surrey.<sup>61</sup> They have now established a worldwide presence with strongholds outside South Asia in South East Asia, West and East Africa, Western Europe and North America.

As a result of longstanding opposition from Sunni radicals, a constitutional amendment declared the Ahmadis non-Muslims in Pakistan in 1974. The Ahmadis sometimes face violent repression in Pakistan, but have proven enormously resilient, particularly relying on their strong global missionary activities. For Ahmadis calling themselves Muslim has been made a criminal offence under Zia's Islamist dictatorship through amendments of the Penal Code in 1982–86.<sup>62</sup> In spite of strong political and religious pressures they still manage to uphold a traditional presence among the middle classes and in the administration, including the security forces.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Simon Ross Valentine, *Islam and the Ahmadiyya jama'at: History, Belief, Practice* (New York, 2008), p. 77.

<sup>62</sup> Pakistan Penal Code (Amendment) Ordinance, I of 1982; Anti-Islamic Activities of Qadiani Group, Lahori Group and Ahmadis (Prohibition and Punishment) Ordinance, XX of 1984; Criminal Law (amendment) Act, 111 of 1986; amending paragraphs 295 and 298 on offences relating to religion. Cf. Pakistan Penal Code, at [http://www.punjabpolice.gov.pk/user\\_files/File/pakistan\\_penal\\_code\\_xlv\\_of\\_1860.pdf](http://www.punjabpolice.gov.pk/user_files/File/pakistan_penal_code_xlv_of_1860.pdf) (accessed August 15, 2008).

<sup>63</sup> Simon Ross Valentine, *Islam and the Ahmadiyya jama'at*.

The Ahmadi network has been partly replicated by a split-off branch named after the city of Lahore, the Lahoris.<sup>64</sup> Its leaders have less insisted on the Prophetic qualities of Ahmadi founders. They have been more amenable to compromise with mainstream Sunni positions. But their following is considerably less numerous. Still they form part of the larger Ahmadi milieu.

Due to the high degree of institutional diversification there has been a functional differentiation of emphasis in doctrine and practice. While the training institutes for preachers would be more ideological, the professional organisations, health facilities and general Muslim schools would represent a more secularised face of the Ahmadi milieu.

### *Jama'at-i Islami*

The JI has also turned into a religio-cultural milieu, the separate elements of which have started globalising. This is particularly evident in Pakistan, but also visible in India and Bangladesh. The organisation is running separate institutions for international religious and political training, for women and for students. It even runs its own housing society in Lahore where it created a separate middle class JI settlement complete with schools, hospital and security forces.<sup>65</sup>

The JI is an important political player in Pakistan and Bangladesh, while remaining a cultural and religious organisation in India. Their cultural style is modern and technical; their political approach is issue-based and power-oriented. The objective is to establish political and cultural hegemony, to form the government and rule the country in much the same way as the BJP did in India, which has greatly inspired them. The JI runs foreign branches and student groups under different names developing into a globalising JI network of transnational political Islam. The network of its overseas institutions is most developed in Britain and North America, although the JI has developed a presence throughout the Pakistani diaspora.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. its official website: <http://www.muslim.org> (accessed October 26, 2008).

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Farish Noor, "The Uncertain Fate of Southeast Asian Students in the Madrasas of Pakistan," in *The Madrasa in Asia: Political Activism and Transnational Linkages*, eds. Farish A. Noor, Yoginder Sikand and Martin van Bruinessen (Amsterdam, 2008), pp. 141–162.

The JI's UK branches play a key role through the UK Islamic Mission in London<sup>66</sup> and the Islamic Foundation in Leicester.<sup>67</sup> These branches have become centres in their own right not only for the JI's influence in Europe, but they have also turned into a switchboard for reinforcing their impact in South Asia.

The JI also developed close links with the system of the International Islamic Universities. These universities, offering both religious and secular education, were established since 1980 as part of the movement of the 'Islamisation of knowledge.'<sup>68</sup> They are closely connected with the Institutes of Islamic Thought which emerged together with them.

Despite its relatively close association with the JI ideology, the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) is a transnational actor of Islam on its own. It teaches a whole range of secular courses (business and management administration, law, social science, engineering, applied sciences) combined with Islamic studies courses and extensive religious instruction.<sup>69</sup> Its pan-Islamic agenda is promoted by the affiliated academies of Islamic Law (*shari'a*)<sup>70</sup> and Mission (*da'wa*).<sup>71</sup> On one level, it is part of a multinational network of religious modernism, linking up to International Universities in Malaysia, Sudan or South Africa. Here it pursues a transnational concept of Islamic education and propagation that expands on its own religio-ideological rationale. On another level, the Islamabad University is a very Pakistan-centered organisation fully autonomous in its international activities (seminars, workshops, conferences, international students). It is nowadays almost totally financed by Pakistan's government acting more as a national educational institution than as an international agency. In the field of transnational Islam, the IIUI's agenda is driven both by the state and by Jama'at-i Islami thinking—a legacy of the Zia-ul-Haq era.

<sup>66</sup> <http://www.ukim.org> (accessed October 26, 2008).

<sup>67</sup> <http://www.islamic-foundation.org.uk> (accessed October 26, 2008).

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Leif Stenberg, *The Islamization of Science: Four Muslim Positions Developing an Islamic Modernity*, (Lund Studies in History of Religions) 6 (Lund, 1996), pp. 153–219.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. the university's website at <http://www.iiu.edu.pk> (accessed October 26, 2008).

<sup>70</sup> <http://my.iiu.edu.pk/Academies/Shariah/tabid/326/Default.aspx> (accessed October 26, 2008).

<sup>71</sup> <http://my.iiu.edu.pk/Academies/Dawah/tabid/318/Default.aspx> (accessed October 26, 2008).

*Aligarh thinking*

Even though the thinking of Sayyid Ahmad Khan and the activities of Aligarh graduates proved highly influential for institution-building within the Muslim body politics of South Asia, groups and institutions sharing this thinking have not yet been able to form a uniform and compact religio-cultural milieu. Yet the concept of a rationalist and modernist reading of the Qur'an has inspired thinkers and brought into existence a number of schools, publishing houses and think tanks gradually expanding from Pakistan and India to other parts of the Muslim world.

Ghulam Ahmad Parwez (1903–86) was a critical thinker and activist who shared the critical attitude of Sayyid Ahmad Khan towards the *hadith* literature. Like Khan, he recognised only those which were not in contradiction with the Qur'an, while those discussing miracles and jinns would be interpreted in allegorical terms. In 1938 he started publishing his monthly *Tolu-e-Islam* where he propagated his interpretation of the Qur'an. He published a large number of books on Quranic studies. His views were popularised through religious study centres called Bazm-e-Tolu-e-Islam. Those have now gradually expanded to Muslim communities around the world and can be found in Canada, Denmark, India, Kuwait, Norway, South Africa, the UK and the US.<sup>72</sup>

Javed Ahmad Ghamidi (b. 1951) is an Islamic scholar, exegete and educationist from Pakistan who gained popularity during the reign of the former President Musharraf for his position of 'enlightened moderation' on the nature of Muslim activism. He inspired Musharraf in his own position to fight Islamic militancy. He frequently appeared on television where he took questions from the audience on Islam and Quranic studies.<sup>73</sup> Ghamidi split away from the JI after he had originally worked closely with Maulana Maududi.<sup>74</sup> He founded the Al-Mawrid Institute of Islamic Sciences in Lahore. He is teaching an online course on Islam at <http://www.studying-islam.org>. Through his TV appearances and his online teaching he reaches a broad audience across the Muslim world with connection to the South Asian diaspora.

<sup>72</sup> [http://www.tolueislam.org/bazms\\_worldwide.htm](http://www.tolueislam.org/bazms_worldwide.htm) (accessed October 26, 2008).

<sup>73</sup> [http://www.al-mawrid.org/pages/tv\\_schedule.php](http://www.al-mawrid.org/pages/tv_schedule.php) (accessed October 26, 2008).

<sup>74</sup> <http://www.ghamidi.net/> (accessed November 4, 2009).

His emphasis on the historical contextualisation of Muhammad's revelation puts him in the line of a rationalist interpretation of the Qur'an.<sup>75</sup>

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan (b. 1925) is a religious scholar from India and editor of the influential Urdu journal *al-Risala* serving as the platform of his rapidly expanding network of Muslim study circles. He is another important former member of the JI and critic of Maududi's conservatism. Facing the Muslim-Hindu Conflict in India he developed an interpretation of Islam aimed at living the religion, conducting peaceful dialogue and finding the place of Islam in the modern world. New study circles of his thought have now emerged outside South Asia in the Middle East.<sup>76</sup> His views are being propagated through books, websites and video messages.<sup>77</sup> The journal issued by his movement, *al-Risala*, has formed the core of an international organisation, the Al Risala Forum International which was formed in the US.<sup>78</sup>

These scholars are using their very personal approaches to Quranic exegesis as a means to a critical and rational reconciliation of the Prophetic revelation with the modern world. Their personal ministries are expanding globally, only partially based on institutions, while more relying on modern media, including publications, books, television and the internet.

### *Progressive Muslims*

For Muslim thinkers and activists broadly belonging to the Southasian diaspora the thinking following the anti-colonial tradition of Obaidullah Sindhi led them to join a discourse and camp that nowadays has acquired the label of 'progressive Islam'. This concept seeks to discuss social change and emancipation politics in classical Quranic terms.

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<sup>75</sup> Asif Iftikhar, *Jihad and the Establishment of Islamic Global Order: A Comparative Study of the Interpretative Approaches and Worldviews of Abu al-A'la Mawdudi and Javed Ahmad Ghamidi* (Master thesis, Montreal, 2005).

<sup>76</sup> Irfan A. Omar, "Self-Reform or Missionary Work? The *Al-Risala* Movement's 'Moral Revolution' of the 21st Century," Paper presented at 19th European Conference of Modern South Asian Studies, Leiden, 2006; [www.milligazette.com/Archives/01032002/01032002280.htm](http://www.milligazette.com/Archives/01032002/01032002280.htm) (accessed November 10, 2008).

<sup>77</sup> [www.goodwordbooks.com](http://www.goodwordbooks.com) (accessed November 10, 2008).

<sup>78</sup> [www.alrisala.org](http://www.alrisala.org) (accessed November 10, 2008).

However, it remains heavily contested.<sup>79</sup> Tiesler calls this a political ‘ticket’ project formed on the lines of electoral politics. As it remains rooted in identity politics, its pragmatism will ultimately confirm stereotypes of difference, rather than do away with them, she believes.<sup>80</sup> The composition of this milieu is rather diverse. It is composed of activists holding up their credentials of religious training along with a political agenda, often in the sector of non-governmental organisations—NGOs. They are engaged in social and educational activities, in local development work. The most prominent South Asian example of this tradition would be the Centre for the Study of Society and Secularism (CSSS), Mumbai (India).<sup>81</sup>

The CSSS has been working since May 1993. The executive director of the centre is Asghar Ali Engineer. The major aims are to spread the spirit of secularism,<sup>82</sup> communal harmony and social peace, to study problems relating to Communalism and Secularism, to organise inter-faith and ethnic dialogue, but also to promote justice. The centre organises lectures and discussions. It publishes books and research materials. Engineer is known for his erudition in religious traditions, although his authority is strongly contested, if only on the grounds of his connection with the Bohra Ismaili community.

In the wider Islamic field these religio-cultural milieus related to South Asian descent have to position themselves towards other Muslim activists and institutions. This is a two-fold process of cooperation in managing their global presence and of competition for the commitment of fellow Muslims and the attention of non-Muslims. Both cooperation and competition are acted out in and between larger alliances of transregional Muslim networks.

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<sup>79</sup> Omid Safi, *Progressive Muslims: On Justice, Gender and Pluralism* (Oxford, 2003); Farid Esack, *Qur'an, Liberation & Pluralism: An Islamic Perspective of Interreligious Solidarity against Oppression* (Oxford, 1997); idem, *On Being a Muslim: Finding a Religious Path in the World Today* (Oxford, 1999); Manfred Sing, *Progressiver Islam in Theorie und Praxis: Die interne Kritik am hegemonialen islamischen Diskurs durch den "roten Scheich" 'Abdallah al-'Alāyilī (1914–1996)* (Würzburg, 2007).

<sup>80</sup> Nina Clara Tiesler, *Muslims in Europa: Religion und Identitätspolitik unter veränderten gesellschaftlichen Verhältnissen*, (Politik & Kultur) 8 (Münster, 2006), p. 140.

<sup>81</sup> <http://www.csss-islam.com> (accessed November 10, 2008).

<sup>82</sup> Secularism in India is not understood to be directed against religion and religiosity, but at the separation of religion and state mainly, promoting equal rights for all faiths and beliefs.

*Ideological Alliances*

In the process where Muslim networks and milieus globalise themselves they build alliances with networks from other regions, cultural backgrounds and interpretations. Here we would call such alliances ideological with a shared perspective and agenda based on common doctrinal grounds and their application to global conditions. Ideology here refers to a world view evolving from religious concepts and practices that extends beyond transcendental concerns to this-worldly objectives; that explains and maps the world with the aim of expanding presence and control in political and social categories. We are using it as an analytical approach with a connotation in political science and sociology. A growing number of Muslim actors also engage with the term. Their position is not uniform here. Some would see Islamic ideology as a positive value and argue that such an approach is inherent in Islam with a stipulated unity of religion (*din*) and world (*duniya*). Others would deemphasise it, concentrating on worship (*'ibadat*) and faith (*iman*). Among the South Asia-based Muslim networks the first position is exemplarily taken by the Jama'at-i Islami, the second by the Tablighi Jama'at. The policy of Islamisation as it was pursued in Pakistan was actively shaped by the JI. It brought into existence a Council of Islamic Ideology meant to oversee the compatibility of laws and regulations with Islamic injunctions. The JI pro-actively considers itself an ideological party (*nazriyati*). In one of its policy papers at its website it argues in favour of an Islamic revolution: "When the people rise in accord with an Islamic ideology and leadership, sure, no one will come in front of such a movement."<sup>83</sup> The Tablighis, as they emphasise worship and faith, would like to suggest that they have no ideological or political concerns. But they also develop a world view of expanding faith and religious compliance mapping the globe from which they derive practical policies of planning and implementation. This in our view would also see them develop a holistic ideological approach. But this interpretation of ideology has to be differentiated from the conventional negative interpretation of western political analysts. For western policy makers there is a tendency to demand a 'non-ideological' approach on behalf of their opponents whereas most of them also act within ideological paradigms. In fact, developing a

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<sup>83</sup> <http://www.jamaat.org/crisis/revolution.html> (accessed November 8, 2008).

world view, or ideology, for actors in the public sphere is a common and probably unavoidable feature of public activism.

It is with this utilitarian connotation that we look at the building of ideological alliances by Muslim global networks, and also by the religio-cultural milieus of Muslims of South Asian descent. Even though doctrinal markers often gain a prime importance for shaping the ideology of a group or network, we can observe a gliding shift of paradigm within such alliances. This also holds true for South Asian groups when they look for partners in global Muslim networking. The Deobandi-type of reformism, for instance, is seen as a partner by orthodox *'ulama* in South East Asia from the Nahdlatul *'Ulama* (NU). Established in 1926 in response to Muslim Brotherhood reformism, the NU claims a membership of 35 million at least. Socially it remained with the *'traditionalists*' and was led by the local religious scholars (*kyia*). As compared to South Asia, doctrinally and politically the NU was probably closer to the Deobandi school, whereas culturally more akin to the Barelwi milieu. The original madrasas of the *pondok*-type have been gradually phased out, upgraded or expanded to include regular curricula. Several of them also took to the teaching of worldly school subjects. But as with South Asia, here too we have an *'organised*' sector of the traditionalist approach, the institutions of the NU, and an *'unorganised*' sector consisting of unaffiliated local schools and scholars, who however broadly identify with the NU system even if they are not formally affiliated.

The Deobandis also cooperate with orthodox religious scholars from Afghanistan and Central Asia, even though their orientation is often more *'Salafi*'.

Issues of cooperation for the Deobandis also involve the question of the Islamic legal tradition. While in the past their adherence to the Hanafi code has sometimes limited their outreach, recent developments show that they become increasingly flexible, ready to cater to other law schools within their own institutions and outside as well. In India, some Deobandi Muftis also specialise on the Shafi legal tradition to answer inquiries from the small Shafi minority in India, but also from international students. The same applies to South East Asia, where Deobandi graduates have implemented Shafi law in the Deobandi madrasa they established at the Tablighi centre in Kuala Lumpur.<sup>84</sup> In South Africa, the Deobandi-dominated Council of Religious

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<sup>84</sup> My field research, Kuala Lumpur (September 2005).

Scholars (*jam'iatul 'ulama*) has also started offering legal advice on the Maliki and Shafi schools of Islamic law for Muslims of Malay descent and black African Muslim migrants.<sup>85</sup>

Through the World Islamic Mission the Barelwis run their own international ministry.<sup>86</sup> The Barelwis also cooperate with similar Sufi-related networks. The nature of such alliances becomes clear from the list of links at the website of the Rochdale-based British Sufi Muslim Council.<sup>87</sup> It lists among others the Islamic Supreme Council of America,<sup>88</sup> the As Sunnah Foundation of America,<sup>89</sup> the Crescent Network in the UK,<sup>90</sup> the Minhaj-ul-Qur'an mentioned above, and the British Internet portal [deenislam.co.uk](http://deenislam.co.uk).<sup>91</sup> Barelwi groups also share references to Barelwi theologians and concepts with Sufi orders and Sufi-oriented websites operating independently with a vast network of international disciples and followers. One example is the Naqshbandiyya Owaisiah which emerged in Pakistan in the seventies.<sup>92</sup> Another example is the Sufi-oriented Internet portal World of Tasawwuf featuring the biographies of the two sons of the Barelwi founder, Hamid Raza Khan and Mustafa Raza Khan, both renowned scholars and activists in their own right.<sup>93</sup>

The global cooperation of the Jama'at-i Islami is embodied in international students attending courses at its headquarters in Lahore. This activism also shows in the JI's strong connections with the International Islamic Universities and the JI's interest in international Islamic educational networking in general. The International Islamic University Malaysia is a preferred partner here.<sup>94</sup> It was founded in 1983. The affiliated International Institute of Islamic Thought (ISTAC) has been a major proponent of the 'Islamisation of Knowledge' project.<sup>95</sup> The shift of paradigm that can be observed here is in the decidedly more

<sup>85</sup> My field research, Johannesburg (February 2005).

<sup>86</sup> <http://www.wimnet.org/> (accessed November 11, 2008). It lists representation in Japan, Singapore, Pakistan, India, Dubai, Kenya, South Africa, Mauritius, Germany, the Netherlands, France, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Ireland, Canada, USA, Trinidad, Guyana, Suriname and the UK.

<sup>87</sup> <http://www.sufimuslimcouncil.org/links.php> (accessed November 11, 2008).

<sup>88</sup> <http://www.islamicsupremecouncil.org/> (accessed November 11, 2008).

<sup>89</sup> <http://www.sunnah.org/> (accessed November 11, 2008).

<sup>90</sup> <http://www.crescentnetwork.co.uk/> (accessed November 11, 2008).

<sup>91</sup> <http://www.deenislam.co.uk/> (accessed November 11, 2008).

<sup>92</sup> <http://www.naqshbandiaowaisiah.com/> (accessed November 11, 2008).

<sup>93</sup> <http://www.spiritualfoundation.net/sufishshaykhs6.htm#111011443> (accessed November 11, 2008).

<sup>94</sup> <http://www.iiu.edu.my/> (accessed November 11, 2008).

<sup>95</sup> <http://www.iiu.edu.my/istac/> (accessed November 11, 2008).

this-worldly orientation and sophistication of the Malaysian institutions which are embedded in the Malaysian context of strong economic development and educational achievements.

Internationally, 'progressive' Muslims closely cooperate with secularised and liberal Muslim thinkers. They do not disregard religion but would like to separate it from public and state activities which they feel are not only oppressive but would also corrupt the transcendental character of religion. They regard their position as an emancipatory project where religious beliefs are mainly a private matter, not necessarily less intense than in the other groups, a fact often deliberately misconstrued by their Islamist critics. These individuals are much less organised and only now start forming organisational backbones through NGOs which also link up internationally. Their networking primarily operates on the level of social and democratic activism.<sup>96</sup>

Prominent examples for the work of such groups can be found in Indonesia, Malaysia, and South Africa:<sup>97</sup>

- The International Centre for Islam and Pluralism (ICIP), Jakarta (Indonesia)<sup>98</sup>

The centre was established in Jakarta in July 2003. It is led by Syafi'i Anwar. The goal of ICIP is to build a network of Islamic Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and progressive-moderate Muslim activists and intellectuals in South-East Asia and beyond.

- International Movement for a Just World (JUST), Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia)<sup>99</sup>

This NGO was founded in 1992 by Chandra Muzaffar aiming at creating a 'spiritual and intellectual society' which will seek, in a modest way, to develop global awareness of the injustices within the existing system with the aim of evolving an alternative international order which will enhance human dignity and social justice.

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<sup>96</sup> Cf. Abdulkader Tayob, "Modern Islamic Intellectual History in Comparative Perspective," *ISIM Review* 17, 40 (2006), 63ff.

<sup>97</sup> For a listing of websites, authors and organizations discussing or promoting liberal themes in relation to Islam, cf. the website compiled by Charles Kurzman, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (<http://www.unc.edu/~kurzman/Liberal-IslamLinks.htm>) (accessed November 11, 2008).

<sup>98</sup> [http://www.icipglobal.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=28&Itemid=70](http://www.icipglobal.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=28&Itemid=70) (accessed November 11, 2008).

<sup>99</sup> <http://www.just-international.org/> (accessed November 11, 2008).

- Positive Muslims South Africa, being the first NGO taking care of HIV-positive Muslims<sup>100</sup>

It was founded in June 2000 and is led by Farid Esack. It is committed to raise awareness about Aids and offers support to Muslims living with HIV/AIDS. Working with a small staff and a lot of voluntary work the group tries to address all communities, linking all the relevant structures both in government and in civil society, particularly religious leaders.

Some authors interpret camp parameters more broadly. Charles Kurzman would include in the liberal camp also Islamic institutions dedicated to the promotion of religious values as long as they include in their agenda 'liberal themes' such as the furtherance of democracy and individual rights. In his interpretation this group would also include Muslim intellectuals such as Abdolkarim Soroush and Ali Shariati.<sup>101</sup>

### *Formats and Channels*

The emergence of religio-cultural milieus has highlighted the variety of forms in which translocal Muslim networks globalise and interact. In the process of adaptation they have developed new formats and channels of networking that are an important aspect of the quality dimension of translocal and transnational networking.

*Formats* of interaction appear to be crucial 'nodal points' that make the network function in its inter-relational capacity. To qualify them as formats for this purpose they should mediate or facilitate the mutual connections and impact of various social units forming the network. In other words they are ways of connecting.

For further research on Muslim translocal and transnational networks these formats could be a promising unit of analysis, as they can be described from an anthropological perspective, by their sociological parameters, with their historical antecedents or political impact. While certain movements have shown a preference for some well-known formats of local interaction, these movements should also be surveyed for formats of translocal and transnational interaction. Such connection

<sup>100</sup> <http://www.positivemuslims.org.za/> (accessed November 11, 2008).

<sup>101</sup> Charles Kurzman, *Liberal Islam: A Sourcebook* (New York, 1998).

is easier to see in movements such as the Tablighi Jama'at. Despite their extensive local work the Tablighis developed a strong translocal and even transnational thrust of their work. But also activities such as the annual celebrations of the (mythical) birthday of saints at their shrines (*'urs*) in the Sufi-related traditions of the Barelwis bear strong translocal and sometimes transnational aspects. Followers arrive from far-away places in a pilgrimage to the place binding them together in worship of a particular saint. And they carry this connection back to their home places where they interact with other devotees.

For the networks related to South Asia, the most common formats would include:

- Religious schools and universities (*madrastas, darul-'ulum*s)

These play an important role particularly for the groups driven by theologians (*'ulama*), the Deobandis, the Barelwis, and the Ahl-i Hadith. The format appeared very robust and belied speculations about a crisis of religious orthodoxy in teaching as it expanded to ever new regions of the globe. It now shows signs of crossing the borders of the South Asian diaspora attracting Muslims from different backgrounds, such as some Deoband seminaries in Portugal, the UK or in South Africa.

- 'Secular' Muslim schools and universities combining the state curriculum with religious instruction

As Muslim communities grow into the wider middle class and public education is increasingly seen to fail their aspirations, confessional private schools for Muslims have gained increasing importance. They are seen as tools to enable followers of a particular doctrine or interpretation of Islam to pass on the values of this tradition to the next generation while enabling it to master social and economic challenges of modern life. The parents electing to send their children to these schools want them to be pious and advanced. As such most religious-cultural networks have recently chosen to get involved in the opening of schools teaching regular state curricula in a religious environment. The example of the Association of Muslim Schools in the UK shows the convergence of different interpretations and milieus in this format.<sup>102</sup> The format of the 'secular' Muslim school represents a global growth industry in the private educational market. Many new schools

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<sup>102</sup> <http://www.ams-uk.org/> (accessed November 11, 2008).

can hardly satisfy the demands and have long waiting lists of parents anxious to enrol their children.

- Social networks and institutions devoted to the advancement of women, youth/students, and children

Such institutions are developed to strengthen the community aspect of the work. They underline the readiness and ability to offer specific programmes to all of its sections, and not only to the male activists, as historically has been more often the case. The format reflects the expansion of the social base of Islamic movements. Growing women's participation in global Muslim networks carries strong emancipatory aspects in mostly conservative colours. It reflects the strengthening of agency on behalf of pious Muslim women. As yet it is too early to judge the social and political consequences of this movement.

- Missionary grass-roots movements

Besides the Tablighis and the Da'wat-i Islami of South Asian provenance this format is adopted by new groups such as the East African street preachers.<sup>103</sup> It seems ideal to mobilise mainly young followers. But also established movements such as the Ahmadiyya have long adopted this format which caters to their perceived need of offensive propagation of their doctrine. The format helps bringing about mutual influences. The TJ activism served as a model for the DI to build a Bareilwi-oriented preaching movement. The Ahmadis are reported to have influenced African movements such as the street preachers.<sup>104</sup>

- Institutionalised centres of religious propagation (*da'wa*) and instruction

This rather urban format has been adopted by the modernising groups among which the Jama'at-i Islami, the Minhaj-ul-Qur'an or the Deedat centres are important. The modernist environment and clientele seem to shape the character of this format across dividing doctrinal and cultural lines.

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<sup>103</sup> Chanfi Ahmed, "The *Wahubiri wa Kislamu* (Preachers of Islam) in East Africa," *Africa Today* 54, 4 (2008), 3–18.

<sup>104</sup> Ahmed, "The *Wahubiri wa Kislamu*."

- Public meetings and conferences for the purpose of reformation (*islah*) or education, particularly of young followers (*tarbiyat*)

Religious scholars and activists have recently multiplied their efforts to organise public events featuring religious themes. They are somewhat modelled along the programme of the congregation (*ijtima*) that is so successful within the Tablighi Jama'at. And they have taken on specific forms. A very successful format is the tarbiyati conference or meeting for students designed to remind Muslim students of modern, secular subjects at universities and colleges of their Islamic duties and enhance their religious knowledge.

- Personalised ministries of individual scholars

A growing number of religious scholars run their personal ministries. They are based on their personal charisma, network of disciples and activism. This applies to Sufi-oriented scholars such as Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar from Karachi who can count on followers not only in his own city but in faraway regions such as India, the UAE, South Africa, and the UK.<sup>105</sup> But modernist and liberal thinkers like Ghamidi or Wahiduddin Khan also rely on this format.

- Media ministries driven primarily by electronic media, such as audio and video sermons on CDs, cassettes, or the Internet

The expansion of global communication facilitates preachers who give preference to the dissemination of their sermons and other religious texts through websites, CDs or cassettes. This is either intentional as a 'marketing' strategy or unintentional, driven by curiosity and a growing fan-base. The latter is the case for Tariq Jameel, a Deobandi scholar, running his own Madrasa in Faisalabad, and a leading functionary of the Tablighi Jama'at. His speeches can be downloaded from the Internet at <http://www.maulanatariqjameel.net>. They are available on CD and cassettes, recently also at the social networking video sites Youtube.com and video.google.com. Tablighi followers (and their critics) run their own video channels there, for instance at <http://www.youtube.com/user/munimmiah786> (as of November 2009). This YouTube

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<sup>105</sup> Cf. the websites featuring the Sufi hospice run by Akhtar: <http://www.voiceofkhanqah.com/> (accessed November 11, 2008), [www.khanqah.org](http://www.khanqah.org); and a blog of his followers: <http://www.khanqahakhteria.blogspot.com/> (accessed November 11, 2008).

user takes this channel as a chance to promote his own website offering information and literature on Islam.<sup>106</sup>

There are some forms of interaction which may more aptly be described as 'channels'. Such can be written, oral, electronic or even visual communication weaving the 'threads' between the 'nodal points' of the network. While unknown to outsiders, a closer inquiry may in fact reveal that units of the network coordinate through—for instance—personal communication between various travelling scholars or preachers. This seems to be the case for the networking mode among Deobandi madrasas. In other cases we have learnt through inquiries that formal written communications provides crucial input into the network as with letters in the case of the Tablighi Jama'at, where this was hardly suspected before as the movement is otherwise focusing on oral communication.<sup>107</sup>

Globalisation has contributed to diversifying the formats and channels of interaction within these networks. Historical formats such as networks of scholars, graduates, or the universal use of certain legal rulings, or key texts have been complimented with media activities, journals, internet sites, and wallpapers, with audio and video material. New channels popular with Muslim network activists are no doubt mobile phones and laptops with internet connections, internet cafes, specialised internet portals and email traffic in general. Their cultural specificity in servicing various Muslim networks has still to be studied and brought out. Such studies can feed into a more nuanced understanding of the internal culture of translocal Muslim networks as mediating between various locations while creating new virtual spaces, cultures and concepts travelling within the network with a certain degree of flexibility and yet stability.

### *Evolution and Change*

In the process of going global, groups and networks underwent evolution and change that keeps altering the 'alternate' globalities. It is important to realise that these camps—or groups of networks have

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<sup>106</sup> <http://www.findthetruth.uni.cc> (accessed November 11, 2008; defunct in November 2009).

<sup>107</sup> Dietrich Reetz, "Keeping Busy on the Path of Allah: The Self-organisation (*intizam*) of the Tablighi Jama'at," *Oriente Moderno* 23, 1 (2004), 295–305.

undergone a significant evolution in the course of recent globalisation. I would date back a marked intensification of these forms of advanced networking to the late seventies, early eighties. They were part of the Islamic response to the perceived failure of the western-type ideologies of nationalism and socialism in connection with the conflict between Israel and Palestine. The Islamic response was also symbolised in the 'Islamic revolution' in Iran (1979). Since then the diversity of the channels and formats for networking has grown tremendously. While in the seventies the transfer of religious knowledge, of Islamic education and of radical Islamic politics appeared to be on the upsurge, development issues became more prevalent themes of institution-building and networking since the late eighties. Political issues of religious, legal and social rights and the expansion of democracy seemed to become a growing factor in Muslim countries and among Muslim minority populations since the late nineties.

Besides a multiplication of agents, institutions, and bonds, some trends across the diverse milieus of Muslim networking became apparent which I would like to discuss here.

The global and translocal expansion seems to be driven by a variety of motives and developments. Some authors have tried to explain the mobilisation of religious movements in the paradigm of the market. Notably the model of 'religious economies' has argued that religious pluralism promotes religious participation.<sup>108</sup> The capital- and market-driven modern phase of globalisation on the surface seems to be ideal to test the truth of this model. But this theory is based on the assumption that actors are generally free to choose which religious model to follow. Translocal Muslim networks have not generally corroborated this approach. A transfer between the various networks delineated before seems to be obstructed by various limitations. As many of these networks are conditioned by cultural and regional interpretations of Islam, loyalty within these groups is generally strong. Sectarian interpretations create distinct cultural and regio-geographic milieus between which it is difficult to switch. They are marked by allegiance to certain doctrines, clan and family structures, but also to particular leaders and places of origin, languages or dialects. The networks from

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<sup>108</sup> Cf. Roger Finke, Avery M. Guest and Rodney Stark, "Mobilizing Local Religious Markets: Religious Pluralism in the Empire State, 1855 to 1865," *American Sociological Review* 61 (1996), 203–218; James D. Montgomery, "A Formalization and Test of the Religious Economies Model," *American Sociological Review* 68 (2003), 782–809.

South Asia (Deobandi, Bareilwi, Ahl-i Hadith, Ahmadiyya), but also Turkey (Gülen) are obvious examples of such fixation on the cultural parameters of the network.

At the same time, these networks in their global expansion adopt similar modes of operation where they act in clear competition with each other. In particular, they copy each other in the modes of operation, in their media activities, on the internet, in setting up religious instruction in both modern and traditional formats, in their ways of distributing religious literature, in operating local branches, community centres etc. However, if they cannot hope to win over many adherents from other milieus, and if their members are not fully free to choose where to go, what can they hope to gain from such competition? Their competition seems, first of all, to focus on establishing the superiority of their particular interpretation of Islam, its doctrines and practices, showing that they represent the only 'true' Islam. But they also appear to be in competition with non-religious and non-Muslim activist groups. They hope to show that they are the more effective and correct form of mobilisation—with a clear reference to the desired emancipation of actors mainly from the global 'South' as opposed to the global 'North' with all its connotations of development, political domination and post-colonialism. Their competition appears more directed at shoring up support among their potential adherents and followers of their own milieu aiming also at secularised Muslims from a shared cultural background.

In this they follow political parties which also establish their sociological identities by creating separate cultural and social milieus. During elections they equally aim at shoring up support amongst their own followers which is usually seen as a key to success over rival groups.

But while political parties gain access to power and control over resources through the political process, the expectations of Muslim networks are more ambivalent. On one level they want to use these resources to establish their superiority in terms of the 'true' Islam. It is the search for the transcendental truth and missionary goals in which they compete. This would be a situation radically different from a 'religious market' as seen from the 'end-user' of 'religious' products. But on another level behind the transcendental motives, there seems to be competition for the emancipation and promotion of those separate cultural milieus which are represented by these networks. Their expansion promises greater social prestige, a larger share in local resources, greater mobility of its members and therefore

greater promise of worldly success for the current and particularly for the future generations.

Global connections and branches are nowadays paraded as markers of a more successful and adaptable form of self-organisation. Establishing themselves globally with 'foreign' branches seems to be part of a competition by which they rival with other Muslim groups. Barelwis want to demonstrate to the Deobandis that they are as good in establishing an international presence or even better than their 'rivals'. The superiority of their brand of Islam is measured in terms of the extent of media operations and the mastery of the internet. New formats of activism are being copied amongst each other and from non-Muslim forms of self-organisation. After the Ahmadiyya community introduced some form of internet-based community television broadcasts, other groups followed suit. The modern religio-educational network of Barelwi institutions belonging to the group Minhaj-ul-Qur'an has established something similar through its multimedia department in connection with its website.<sup>109</sup> Religious television has been much on the upsurge among international groups of Turkish affiliation, as can be seen on TV channels available in Berlin. The Gülen movement also has its own television station, *Samanyolu*. It also has its own daily newspaper, *Zaman*.<sup>110</sup> Their distribution of audio and video tapes is a well-established feature of the media activities of most Muslim networks. Even the conservative missionary movement of the Tablighi Jama'at, despite its fear of global media activities, allows the distribution of audio tapes organised by followers. With tacit approval of its leaders the speeches of the annual congregations are popularised through the tapes. The orthodox Islamic seminaries of the Deobandi and Barelwi variety in South Asia where hardly any English is spoken have developed a propensity for publishing their own regular journals made easy through computer type setting. They are increasingly made available on the internet also.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>109</sup> <http://www.minhaj.org/> (accessed November 4, 2009).

<sup>110</sup> Bulent Aras and Omer Caha, "Fethullah Gulen and his Liberal 'Turkish Islam' Movement," *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 4, 4 (2000).

<sup>111</sup> See, for example, the monthly of the higher Islamic college, *Darul-Ulum Deoband*, coming out in Urdu since 1941 and reproduced on the website of the school at <http://www.darululoom-deoband.com/urdu/magazine/index.php> (accessed November 11, 2008).

While the media revolution in Islamic circles and the concomitant diffusion of religious authority has been discussed by Eickelman and others extensively, it should be noted here how much these characteristics become a measure of success or failure, of the superiority of Islamic tenets in the process of global competition.<sup>112</sup> This makes the process of the diffusion of religious knowledge more technical, potentially more uniform and 'modernist', although not less ideological.

The heightened competition of these global Muslim networks along with the media revolution also seems to have a profound impact on the formats of interaction, and through these, on the profile of these movements. In this way doctrinal orientations and interpretations are gradually changing. This can be clearly seen in the example of Sufi-oriented movements. Nowadays groups with a Sufi background have come to copy many of the formats of reformist and modernist Muslim groups. Traditionally, Sufi activism was known for its very private, oral and ritual forms focused on particular teachers and institutions. Today, Sufi-oriented groups are circulating religious tracts in large and growing numbers. They have established regional offices and institutes where 'modern' Islamic education can be obtained which is also offered in formats of regular academic courses officially recognised by the government, and partly combined with secular education.

It increases their ideological catchment area, but it also heightens the danger of watering down their ideological profile which is tied to a sectarian interpretation of Islam. Again, a typical example is the modern educational movement of the Minhaj-ul-Qur'an mentioned above.

But here also the Deedat centres have to be mentioned which are organising their international activities from Durban. Deedat hailed from Surat (India) and followed the Sufi-oriented Barelwi tradition, although with a very broad modernist outlook. The Islamic Propagation Centre International in Durban<sup>113</sup> distributes large amounts of religious literature, audio and video tapes. It is linked to the network

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<sup>112</sup> Dale Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson, eds., *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere* (Bloomington, 1999).

<sup>113</sup> <http://www.ahmed-deedat.co.za> (accessed November 11, 2008).

of the *Islamic Research Foundation* run by Zakir Naik,<sup>114</sup> who achieved enormous popularity as a television preacher on Q-TV,<sup>115</sup> a channel run by the UAE-based private television consortium ARY, broadcasting to South and West Asia as well as to the Middle East, the UK and the US.<sup>116</sup>

The modus of operation of these two networks is very difficult to reconcile with the traditional format of Sufi practices. Their ideology and the format of their activities is at times reformist in its emphasis on scripturalism and reformation (*islah*), as it is modernist in its deliberate service to a Muslim middle class aspiring to achieve social and economic success.

### *Conclusion*

We have seen translocal and transnational Muslim networks adapt to changing circumstances of globalisation at an amazing pace. Their main characteristics have been expansion to ever new regions, fields and formats, and vibrant activism across the board.

Their expansion has not necessarily led to a homogenisation of Islam. Diversity has increased in the sense that even remote and small translocal networks with few resources have been able to expand beyond their regions of origin, acting often globally among migrants, followers and converts.

Yet the introduction of new formats and channels of interaction typical of the global and media age, but sometimes also specific to certain Islamic movements, has modified the cultural and religious texture of their activism and messages. Particularly, folk and Sufi-oriented movements, but also scripturalist groups of Islamic reformation (*islah*), have grown into new and modern formats. They provide religious education and knowledge which increasingly seek to link up with or compliment modern secular institutions. Their modernist and/or technological evolution gradually makes their structures and formats more similar, which is bound to have an effect on their transcendental quality. There seems to be a strong tendency for them to grow more

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<sup>114</sup> <http://islamicresearchfoundation.com> (accessed November 11, 2008).

<sup>115</sup> Its website <http://www.qtvonline.com/> is not filled with content yet (accessed November 4, 2009).

<sup>116</sup> <http://www.arydigital.tv> (accessed November 11, 2008).

ideological, but also more development-oriented. At the same time, movements relying on the devotional and spiritual appeal of religious practice, which include conventional shrines and Sufi movements as much as the missionary groups of the Tablighi Jama'at, still ride high on the popularity scale of Muslim youth worldwide regarding them as new countercultures of modernity.

Through this process, a broader field of heterogeneous networks is emerging. As many of them follow a broadly defined 'reformist' agenda to champion their own vision of Islam, they also share 'modernist' orientation. Its participants gradually become stake holders of development and politics in society. This is even true where they sometimes act from a very selective or local perspective, or limit themselves to an oppositional stand on public policies. Such may be one of the consequences of cross-border Muslim networking bringing the compulsions of today's world closer to home, to the grass roots level of activism. But the study of these trends is only beginning. It requires a much more specific understanding of internal modes of operation as well as the emerging translocal and transnational culture of Muslim networking that facilitates much of the overlapping activities and concepts. These groups increasingly produce a 'travelling' organisational culture specific to these camps and different milieus that is no longer bound by one location of origin only. It is no longer solely determined by its new place of adaptation either. It is a culture that inhabits the 'in-between' spaces identified by Homi Bhabha with a more abstract and yet equally effective nature of impact.<sup>117</sup> To understand the future directions of Muslim networking these emerging translocal and transnational organisational cultures will have to be studied more closely and in detail. This should be done without prejudice and with an open mind. If indeed these groups could turn into stake holders of development and politics, they are more a potential for cooperation rather than a source of conflict in the process of globalisation. This does not mean that they will not follow their own agenda of propagating religious tradition, practice and knowledge. But the ways they are doing it, through their evolving milieus, new formats and channels, increasingly modify and shape their agendas. The emergence of 'alternate globalities' in the vision of these groups implies their close interaction with mainstream globalisation from which they cannot separate and

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<sup>117</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London, 1994).

by which these globalities are driven. Globalisation thus produces its own alternatives and diversification where uniformity was feared.

In this context the emergence of particular milieus and formats gives substance to the allusion of 'alternate globalities'. Inhabiting the global in-between places is no longer imagined only. It is no longer an experiment. It takes concrete shapes. Undertaking further study of the dynamics of these milieus and formats in a context of diversification and convergence will reveal more insight into such non-economic forms of globalisation which are emanating from the global South while striking firm roots in the global North.