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# Migrants, Mujahidin, Madrassa Students: The Diversity of Transnational Islam in Pakistan

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper explores the diversity of transnational Islam in Pakistan. The paper argues that most of Pakistan's transnational Islamic actors are tied to economic, cultural and religious forms of globalization. The radical and militant forms of transnational Islam in the country are largely driven by factors directly linked to Pakistan's political and security apparatuses. It is suggested that the increase in militant activities in Pakistan stems from the reluctance or inability of Pakistan's government to introduce firm standards of law and civility. The paper contends that networks centered on Islamic scholarship or Pakistan's identity, are not *per se* violent or threatening, but reflect the religious, cultural and ethnic concerns of an expanding global diaspora of South Asian Muslims.

### MAIN FINDINGS

Pakistan has become a major hub of transnational Islam in the region with intense in- and outbound activity rooted in its culture, history and politics. Pakistan's transnational Islamic actors largely emanate from competition between distinct religio-cultural milieus, the most important of which are the Deobandis, the Barelwis, Jama'at-i Islami, the Ahl-i Hadith, the Ahmadiyya and the Muhajirs. Transnational Islam in Pakistan can be distinguished by the different types of religio-political issues it pursues: 1) security and ideology, 2) religious mobilization, and 3) Pakistani nationalist identity. Mainly group one constitutes an abiding threat. The unstable, charged and polarized nature of the overall political framework in Pakistan pushes many transnational actors into the political, extremist and even militant realm. Currently, the major threat to the stability of Pakistan comes from sectarian and jihadi groups that spin out of control from state and religious patronage. The doctrines and politics of sectarianism as expressed in the antagonism between various Pakistani Islamic groups in the struggle for the "true" Islam have heavily contributed to the radicalization of transnational Islamic actors in the country. Religio-cultural networks focused on madrassas (Deobandis, Barelwis), missionary work (Tablighis, Da'wat-i Islami) or political mobilization (Jama'at-i Islami) have their own rationale of expansion and do not necessarily pose threats.

### POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- Pakistan cannot successfully fight the Pakistani Taliban as long as some elements in the administration hope to keep intact this militant network for operation against India and the Karzai government. Neither can Pakistan achieve success as long as it does not address the tribal dimension of this warfare successfully since much of current Taliban operations reflect long-standing disaffected and marginalized tribal concerns.
- The Pakistani state needs to resurrect its civil authority and regulate civil institutions without discriminating against them. It will further have to focus on the social rehabilitation and development of disaffected communities giving rise to militant Islam, with education, employment and social amenities holding prime importance.
- Pakistan and international agencies should be discouraged from punishing transnational actors of Islam for their efforts of religious mobilization as such behavior appears to be counterproductive.
- While some political analysts believe that the madrasa system is one major source of instability, religious education will always have to remain religious in nature. Educational standards can only be improved by lifting Pakistani public education in a major way.

Recent news about the abiding tension and violence in the conflicts in Afghanistan and Kashmir on the borders with Pakistan has again drawn international attention to transnational actors of Islam operating from Pakistan's territory. But can these transnational actors be uniformly considered a threat and is their virulence and violence related to their religious affiliation? Is all transnational Islam dangerous and why is so much of its activity associated with Pakistan?

Today it is an established fact that Pakistan has become a major international locus and hub of transnational Islamic networks and institutions. These networks and institutions have exercised various degrees of influence on the political and security situation in and around Pakistan. Their impact has grown continuously, particularly since the 1980s. Although most of these forces and networks are now well known through international media coverage and the academic literature, for many observers of international politics—and also of international Islam—the prominence of transnational Islam in Pakistan may still seem paradoxical considering its remote location and the often culturalist connotation of its body politics. To understand why Pakistan, coming from a rather particularist background in terms of its geography, politics and culture, plays such a prominent role in a universalist issue such as today's transnational Islam, this paper intends to discuss:

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- the historical background of this development, with a special emphasis on structural factors installing transnational activism in Pakistan's modern social and political system;
- the structure of this activism with regard to the nature and direction of the religio-political issues involved; and
- the main types of transnational actors and institutions in Pakistan and their relations to the issues driving them.

This explanation will be prefaced by a brief discussion of the nexus between transnationalism and Islam and an introduction of transnational actors of Islam in Pakistan.

### *Transnationalism and Islam*

In general, and even more so in relation to Pakistan, the nature of the transnational activism of Islamic actors and institutions needs to be seen in a rather nuanced light. This analysis here is based on the assumption that religious practice and knowledge alone are hardly responsible for transnational activism in the sense of crossing national borders in and out of Pakistan.

If looked at closely, such transnational activity constitutes only a part of their activism;<sup>96</sup> and is more often than not driven by sociological, political, ideological, ethnic and cultural concerns that are equally shared with non-Islamic actors and institutions.<sup>97</sup>

### *Transnational Actors and Institutions of Islam*

The major players in this field are networks of religious scholars and schools with their religious and political groups and parties creating separate traditions or milieus within Pakistani (and South Asian) Islam that go back to centers and activists in north India before independence. These milieus have acquired partly hereditary endogamous features of sects or clans with a large and continuously growing number of subsidiary outlets (see Appendix I). Their missionary efforts are directed as much at non-Muslims as at each other in the struggle for a larger share and control of the “Islamic field.”

*Deobandi.* The Deobandi scholars and schools refer to the purist and reformist interpretation of Sunni Islam of the Hanafi law school formulated at the Darul Ulum of Deoband in north India, which was founded in 1867. It has now spread through an estimated 2000 schools in Pakistan, India and Bangladesh each. The Deobandi cultural style has been frugal and text-based, fighting against “impermissible innovations” (*bida'*) and for the “true Islam.” This leads the Deobandis to polemical attacks at most other traditions of Islam, but also against non-Muslims. Their political approach is split between oppositional polemics and a pietist yearning for learning. The Deobandi political party, the Jami'yat-e Ulama-e Islam (JUI, Party of Scholars of Islam, founded in 1944), is the largest component of the Muttahida Majlis-e Amal (MMA), an alliance of Pakistani religious parties founded in 2001. The JUI attracted international attention for its close relations with the Afghan Taliban, sharing with them a reliance on Deobandi doctrine.<sup>98</sup>

*Barelwi.* These groups relate to the devotional tradition of Sufi-related Sunni scholars and schools that centered on the activities of Ahmad Raza Khan Barelwi (1856-1921) in the town of Bareilly in north India. The Barelwis have probably expanded within similar parameters as the Deobandis. The Barelwis' main *raison d'être* was the defense of spiritual rituals against the reformist critique of the Deobandis and others. Doctrine-wise, their differences are small as both follow orthodox adherence (*taqlid*) to the Hanafi law school. But the Barelwis emphasize Sufi traditions such as special praise for the Prophet, and the worship of saints and their shrines, all of which they justify with reference to the Quran and the Prophetic traditions, the Hadith. Their cultural style has been exuberant, and their politics were often marked by loyalty to the powers that be during the colonial period and, afterwards, the independent secular state. In the political

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<sup>96</sup> Nearly all madrassa and mosque networks fit this understanding as local worship and the local transmission of religious knowledge and practice dominate their activities.

<sup>97</sup> A good example for this understanding is the missionary movement of the Tablighi Jama'at (TJ): its main objective, the reconversion of Muslims, does not *per se* require the expansion of activities to other countries, but can be equally achieved by local efforts. It is rather the sociological group dynamics of leadership, control and competition in the Islamic field that drive the TJ around the globe. The same approach is shared by other non-Islamic religious groups from South Asia of Hindu, Sikh, Parsi and Buddhist denomination. This would also belie the assumption that it is monotheistic aspirations of universalist salvation that are reflected in such patterns of behavior. The religious traditions just mentioned are polytheistic and often local in the nature of their worship and practice. Also, non-religious actors have adopted the same pattern, as can be seen from the tendency of Pakistan's political parties to establish foreign branches. During the current author's recent field research in Barcelona, Spain, it was learnt that the Pakistani community there also comprises a unit of the Nawaz Sharif Muslim League. The creation of Pakistan community associations there including even a radio station would make the same point.

<sup>98</sup> See, Dietrich Reetz, “The Deoband Universe: What makes a transcultural and transnational educational movement of Islam?” in “South-South linkages in Islam,” eds. Dietrich Reetz and Bettina Dennerlein, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 27, no. 1 (2007), 139-159; and Barbara Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982).

arena the Barelwis are represented by the Jami'yat-e Ulama-e Pakistan (JUP, Party of Religious Scholars of Pakistan, founded in 1948).<sup>99</sup>

*Jama'at-i Islami.* The rather modernist Jama'at-i Islami (JI, Islamic Party) network centers on the JI political party created in British India in 1941 and the legacy of its founder Abu'l A'la Maududi (1903-79). The JI is an important political player in Pakistan and Bangladesh, while remaining a cultural and religious organization in India. Their cultural style is modern and technical, while their political approach is issue-based and power-oriented. The JI's objective is to establish political and cultural hegemony, to form the government and rule the country in much the same way as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) did in India, which has greatly inspired them.

*Ahl-i Hadith.* The Ahl-i Hadith (AH, People of the Tradition) scholars and schools represent a minority purist Sunni sect rejecting all Islamic law schools but privileging the Prophetic traditions (Hadith). The AH formed in the north Indian provinces of Punjab and United Provinces at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The AH is known for its strong orientation towards Saudi Arabia and affiliation with Salafi networks. The AH party (Markazi Ahl-i Hadith) consists of several factions. The AH network is polarized between a scholarly and a more radical, militant wing.<sup>100</sup>

*Shia.* The Shia scholars and groups of Pakistan form an important contestant of the Islamic field representing around 15% of all Muslims. Their influence on Pakistan's politics and culture can be traced back to their longstanding share in Muslim culture and politics in the subcontinent, partly through the Shia-dominated principalities and landholders in the late colonial period. The formation of the Tahrik-e Jafariyya-e Pakistan (TJP, Movement for the Introduction of the Shia Legal Code in the Tradition of Imam Jafar) in 1979 marked a turning point in Shia mobilization in Pakistan as Shia activists felt strongly encouraged by the Iranian revolution. Many Shia organizations are still closely connected with Iranian institutions, but also with Shia groups in neighboring countries such as Afghanistan and India, as with migrant communities abroad. Their political agenda is shaped by their desire to secure safe minority rights, to uphold traditional influence and to resist doctrinal pressures from the Sunni majority with defiance.<sup>101</sup>

*Ahmadiyya.* The minority sect of the Ahmadiyya founded by Ghulam Ahmad Mirza (1839-1908) also emerged in Punjab province in the late colonial period. Most mainstream Muslim groups regard the Ahmadiyya as heretic. It is particularly the claims of the Ahmadiyya's founder, and his successors to some degree, of Prophethood that have enraged radical Sunni Muslim activists. A constitutional amendment declared the Ahmadis non-Muslims 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 was made a criminal offence under Zia's Islamist dictatorship through amendments of the Penal Code in 1982-86.<sup>102</sup> In spite of strong political and religious pressures, they still

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<sup>99</sup> Usha Sanyal, *Devotional Islam and Politics in British India: Ahmad Riza Khan Barelwi and his Movement, 1870-1920* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996).

<sup>100</sup> Martin Rieinger, *Sanaullah Amritsari (1868-1948) und die Ahl-i-Hadis im Punjab unter britischer Herrschaft* (Würzburg: Ergon, 2004).

<sup>101</sup> Alessandro Monsutti, Silvia Naef, and Farian Sabahi. *The Other Shiites: From the Mediterranean to Central Asia*, Worlds of Islam, v. 2 (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007).

<sup>102</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.

manage to uphold a traditional presence among the middle classes and in the administration, including the security forces.<sup>103</sup>

*Muhajirs.* The Muhajirs (migrants) form yet another religio-cultural milieu irrespective of their strong heterogeneity. They descended from migrants from India's Muslim minority provinces—mainly from Delhi, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh—speaking Urdu as their mother tongue—unlike the local population in today's Pakistan. Today, the Muhajirs exercise their religious and political influence largely through the political party of the Muhajir Qaumi Mahaz (MQM, National Migrant Front, founded in 1984), its numerous wings and institutions. The Muhajir population share is about 8%;<sup>104</sup> the MQM currently holds 25 seats in parliament.<sup>105</sup> MQM's ideology is outwardly based on secularist notions of “practicality” though still marked by a religious background ranging from modernism to spiritual, local Islam. The MQM opposes the politicized Islam of the JI and the Deobandis. They are based primarily in urban Sindh—mainly Karachi and Haiderabad. Many leading representatives of the Pakistani administration and the security establishment have a Muhajir background, including the former presidents and military dictators, the generals Zia-ul-Haq and Pervez Musharraf. The MQM is the third-largest party in Pakistan, switching allegiances between the two major parties, the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League wing led by Nawaz Sharif (PML-N).<sup>106</sup>

These religious traditions and networks expanded into separate religio-cultural milieus with a large number of derivative organizations and institutions. For the propagation of their interpretation of Islam, they created NGO-type institutions devoted to religious education and missionary activities. The most widely known subsidiary Deobandi network is the pietist missionary movement of the Tablighi Jama'at that was founded near Delhi in 1926 but has since spread around the globe. In the political field, we find parties run by religious scholars (*ulama*) of all persuasions. The JI and the MQM are political parties in their own right. Several spawned or hosted youth, student and women's groups, while some affiliated sectarian and militant outfits, so-called jihadi groups, originally serving as party militias.

## Historical Background

The impact of transnational Islam on Pakistan can hardly be understood without considering major historical factors in its evolution that were already transnational in their own way. Against this background, it is probably not surprising that transnational Islam has come to play such a prominent role with regard to Pakistan. We are faced here with the evolution of a country that emerged from a multinational colonial empire, and went through two painful partitions of statehood—first, of British India in 1947 and, second, of the larger Pakistan state in 1971. And we are looking at Pakistan as the inheritor of traditions of South Asian Islam that had politically ruled for more than 600 years over vast territories of the subcontinent despite the minority status

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<sup>103</sup> Simon Ross Valentine, *Islam and the Ahmadiyya Jama'at: History, Belief, Practice* (London: Hurst & Co., 2008); and, Dietrich Reetz, *Islam in the Public Sphere: Religious Groups in India, 1900-1947* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006).

<sup>104</sup> See, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistan#Demographics>, accessed August 20, 2008.

<sup>105</sup> Election Commission of Pakistan, National Assembly, Party Positions Including Reserved Seats. See, <http://www.ecp.gov.pk/NAPosition.pdf>, accessed 20 August 2008.

<sup>106</sup> Oskar Verkaaik, *Migrants and Militants: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004).

of Islam, cutting across various state formations through history and the geographic expanses of the South Asian lands.

The culture, religion and politics of Pakistan had crossed national and state borders as a matter of inherent being. Pakistan's ideological nature—venturing to provide a home to Muslims in South Asia—aspired to a symbolic negation of state boundaries. Yet the political and ideological forces ruling the country resurrected nationalist concerns by marrying the two seemingly irreconcilable elements of an in- and outside orientation in the doctrine of the so-called *Pakistan ideology*, which was oriented towards the nation-state and also pointing beyond it at the same time. This ideology was based on the concept of Muslim nationalism that assumed Muslims in British India, as a religious community, were legally entitled to a nation-state of their own.<sup>107</sup>

This historical process created structural elements that installed cross-border interaction in the body politics of Pakistan on a permanent basis. To understand these dynamics it is proposed here to consider the role of: 1) migrants; 2) partition of the subcontinent; and 3) the subcontinent's cultural fragmentation.

Looking at it from today's perspective, *migrants* played a key role in the transmission of South Asian cultural, religious and political influences. The near-global, multi-national and multi-cultural nature of the British colonial empire was a major factor in this. Migrants from the subcontinent created a backbone for the expansion of cultural, ethnic and religious networks from South Asia, first across the British Empire and, later, much beyond, wherever new migrants went. The British Empire—and colonial rule in general—represented its own form of forced historical globalization. Labor migration from South Asia across the Empire was popular and common, but so was migration for commercial, political or social reasons.

While previously it was said that the sun would never set over the territories of the British Empire, today this saying has been rephrased by Indian politicians in charge of overseas Indians to the sun never sets down on the Indian diaspora<sup>108</sup> which, by extension, would also apply to Pakistani and other South Asian diasporas. This influence can be traced back further to trading castes from areas such as Gujarat which had prefigured such transnational flows by their outward expansion well before the British ruled over the subcontinent. South Asian traders went to Southeast Asia, to East and South Africa, and also to Europe.

The emergence of Pakistan through the *partition* of the subcontinent in the name of Islam introduced another structural element generating transnational activism. As the ideological and political headquarters of most Islamic actors had been located in north India, they were forced through partition to relocate to what is today Pakistan and Bangladesh. In this process they had to adapt to geopolitical change, and to replicate and multiply their activities in a transnational and transcultural context. For many of them, such as the Deobandis, Tablighis and Barelwis, this valuable experience constituted a blueprint for further expansion at a later stage. It also imbued them with an ideological mission that in many ways drove them beyond the geographical and political confines of their regions and countries of origin. As the process of partition radicalized political, religious and ethnic actors, religious and ethnic militias were further strengthened, creating an awareness and experience of militia violence as being a suitable or potentially successful tool to compete and fight for cultural and political influence and supremacy.

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<sup>107</sup> Cf. Reetz, *Islam in the Public Sphere*, 35f.

<sup>108</sup> The Chairman of High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora, Dr. L. M. Singhvi, at a media briefing on November 1, 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 June 17, 2008.

The cultural and religious fragmentation of the subcontinent had, early on, introduced a high degree of competition and infighting not only between various traditions and cultural norms, but also within such formations. Thus, Muslim groups and publics multiplied since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, vying with each other for domination among Muslims and further competing with other religious, cultural and secular groups. The combination of Islamic mobilization with the cultural pluralism of colonial India and the specific ways of introducing political modernity during the colonial era led to *competitive cultural mobilization* that took a leaf out of caste- and clan-based politics. This competitive mobilization fully extended to the Islamic field and expanded beyond geographical borders on the back of migratory and trading flows as well as universalist ambitions.

## Issues and Directions of Transnational Islam in Pakistan

As the factors responsible for the evolution of Pakistan's transnational Islamic activism already suggest, its structure is very heterogeneous. To make sense of this structure it is suggested here to distinguish between different types of religio-political issues and the direction of transnational activities. Such differentiation owes much to the historical influences discussed before. The rise and growing impact of transnational Islam in Pakistan can be traced back to issues rooted in the historical antecedents of Pakistan's statehood as it emerged from the partition of the South Asian subcontinent as a "homeland for Indian Muslims." Consequently, it also took different directions, vacillating between regional and global orientation.

In many ways this transnationalism was prefigured by the role and structure of Indian Islamic activism before independence as represented by the madrassa networks of competing Islamic schools and interpretations of the Deobandi, Barelwi, Ahl-i Hadith, or Ahmadi variety. While most of this mobilization proceeded on a pietist and self-consciously religious trajectory, part of it was pushed in a decidedly political direction by the impact of Pakistan's military and bureaucratic establishment. Consequently, it is suggested here to discuss transnational Islam in Pakistan from three different angles relating to the nature of the religio-political activism:

*Security- and ideology-related issues.* These are issues that Pakistan's military and intelligence establishment—for a significant period as an international ally of the United States and other Western countries—was involved and/or constituted the driving force behind their prevalence. These issues would include the regional conflicts in Afghanistan and Kashmir, but also pan-Islamist ambitions and activities towards other neighboring countries and regions, such as India and Iran, post-Soviet Central Asia and China's Xinjiang province. Actors within this category mainly date from the late 1970s and would include radical Islamic militants, with sectarian outfits forming an important sub-grouping, as well as radical madrassas and charities established under political tutelage during the Afghan civil war and its aftermath.

*Religious Islamic activism.* Islamic activism primarily originated in late colonial India. It extended into Pakistan and expanded from South Asia on the back of South Asian migrants and trading communities across the world. This group would include faith-based religious and pietist networks such as the Deobandi, Tablighi, Barelwi, Jama'at-i Islami, Ahl-i Hadith and Ahmadi varieties.

*Pakistan-specific activism.* Nationalist and localized activism pursued by Islamist institutions and globalizing networks are primarily rooted in or increasingly driven by Pakistan's social and political life. This category encompasses a diversity of group actors and networks that self-

consciously operate from or through the nation-state of Pakistan as their home base. Some of them are clear representatives of political Islamism. They would include the Jama'at-i Islami and the (Mirpuri) Kashmir support groups. Others are educational, pietist or devotional networks, examples of which would be the International Islamic Universities, the modern educational Barelwi network of the Minhaj-ul-Quran, the Barelwi missionary movement of the Da'wat-i Islami, Sufi scholars and their disciples. They combine their pan-Islamic or universalist ambitions with a clear association to Pakistani nationalist, and sometimes, local identity.

If we assume that transnationalism can be perceived on different trajectories and dimensions, we would base this classification on the understanding that these variations are united by the fact of crossing the border of the nation-state as a regular part of their activism or existence.

Different Islamic actors, institutions and concepts—elements of the public sphere, of a multiple process of public mobilization in the name of Islam—have imbibed this transnationalism in various ways. In a larger sense, every self-conscious Islamic actor is transnational pointing to the larger Muslim community—or *Ummah*—as the frame of reference. It is proposed here to differentiate those actors also according to the more dominant element and character of their transnational orientation:

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1. A transnational **global** orientation is **constitutive** for the movement. This would apply to the Tablighi Jama'at as it regards itself pursuing a global religious mission. To a lesser extent also other faith-based, pietist movements such as the religious traditions of the Deobandis, Barelwis, Ahl-i Hadith, Shia or Ahmadiyya do not relate themselves to state boundaries or nationalities but develop a global perspective.
2. A transnational **regional** orientation is **constitutive** for the movement. This applies to most jihadi outfits driven by the regional conflicts of Kashmir, Afghanistan, and to a lesser extent Central Asia.
3. Transnational (religious) orientation is **derivative** of connections with **Muslim migrant** communities. This can be observed on the Kashmiri (Mirpuri) migrant groups operating in Britain, North America and mainland Europe. It is also a striking feature of the networks related to the Barelwi tradition such as the Minhaj-ul-Quran or the missionary movement of the Da'wat-i Islami.
4. A transnational **political and ideological** outlook is constitutive for them, of which their transnational activism is **derivative**. Groups such as the Jama'at-i Islami, but also the Ahl-i Hadith strongly follow their ideological agenda when they cross Pakistan's borders, even though their migrant affiliations will also play out. But their ideological slant allows them to transcend the limitations of their origins and attract followers of other ethnic

and national background—for example, the Jama‘at-i Islami to their brand of mainstream political Islamism, and the Ahl-i Hadith to Salafism.

### *Radical Islamic Militancy*

In order to establish the (political) virulence of transnational Islam in Pakistan, Islamic networks have to be seen and understood as multi-faceted social, cultural and political networks, which may show a major thrust in one direction while still being driven in other directions. There is a strong belief that transnational Islamic activism from Pakistan’s soil may never have reached the political and security dimensions it has acquired today without the intervention of Pakistan’s military and bureaucratic establishment. The basis of intervention was a certain confluence—but certainly no identity—in the ideological orientation of these political and religious actors towards Islamist universalism. Pakistan’s military and bureaucratic establishment derived its political legitimacy from the so-called Pakistan ideology and its related “Muslim nationalism” which was a variant of pan-Islamic mobilization.

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It was particularly General Zia-ul-Haq who, with the express consent and encouragement of Western nations, and the U.S. in particular, politicized Islam to stabilize his own hold on power. During his reign several Islamic actors allowed themselves to be instrumentalized hoping to advance their own ideological objectives. This state intervention grossly “distorted” the Islamic field and created new players, institutions and concepts which later on acquired an identity and

life of their own. Most of the time, in the past as well as right into the present, transnational militant Islamist activity in Afghanistan and Kashmir has been under the control, on the leash or at least partly related to elements of Pakistan’s military and security-related bureaucracy. In turn, the current “threat” or political virulence of transnational Islam as seen from the West can hardly be separated from the conflicts in Afghanistan and Kashmir.

Major champions of these issues are transnational jihadi groups such as the Lashkar-i Taiba (LT, Pious Army, 1988, Ahl-i Hadith), Jaish-e Muhammadi (JM, Muhammad’s Army, 2000, Deobandi), or the Hizbul-Mujahidin (HM, Party of Holy Warriors, 1989, Jama‘at-i Islami), mainly operating in Indian Kashmir.

Separate mention has to be made of the issue of sectarianism. As discussed above, competitive Islamic mobilization has led religious groups to fight for the correct and true Islam. Given the cultural fragmentation of South Asian Muslims, these doctrinal differences turned into sectarian conflicts. Prominent Pakistani sectarian groups include the Sipah-e-Sahaba-e-Pakistan (SSP, Pakistan’s Army of the Companions of the Prophet, 1985, Deobandi), the split-away faction of the

Lashkar-i Jhangwi (LJ, Jhangwi's Army, 1994, Deobandi), the Sunni Tahrik (ST, Sunni Movement, 1990, Barelwi), and the Sipah-i-Mohammadi (SM, Muhammad's Army, 1993, Shia).

While the concepts underlying doctrinal differences are being promoted by the madrassa networks, it is through the formation of radical militias which have enjoyed the backing of the military and security apparatus that these differences turned into operational ideologies and politics. They were played out in violence between Sunni and Shia groups; battles for mosque control between Deobandis and Barelwis; clashes pitting Muhajir groups against local competitors in urban Sindh; attacks targeting Ahmadis, but also Ahl-i Hadith activists. Radical groups seeking to defend the "Finality of Prophethood" in Islam (*Khatm-e Nabuwwat*) against Ahmadi doctrinal claims are associated with acts of violence; they have also established a global presence. Being a major driving force behind the formation of jihadi groups and the expansion of their activism to Pakistan's neighboring states and territories, sectarian beliefs have fuelled jihadi militancy more than is commonly acknowledged. As such, sectarianism is a major factor in the continuing high levels of militancy on the Pakistan-Afghan border, as well as in Kashmir.

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There are numerous examples where sectarian groups got logistical support from the jihadi outfits of their networks. For instance, the SSP trained in camps of the Harkat-ul-Mujahidin in Afghanistan (while still under Taliban rule) and Pakistani Kashmir. The Shia militia Pasban trained in camps of the Shia jihadi group for Kashmir, Hizbul Momineen.<sup>109</sup> Their leadership structures and funding networks also overlap. Many jihadi groups are ideologically driven by the same quest for the "true" interpretation of Islam, a concept they share with the sectarian outfits of their milieu. According to Amir Rana, many of the sectarian groups rely on support from the business community which is also divided by ethnic and religious cleavages. They interact with the sectarian and radical milieu in order to promote their own business activities, to harm competitors, or to conduct personal vendettas. These business networks which evolved out of the South Asia Muslim trading castes sometimes also patronize the transnational activities of radical groups.

The backing of the military and intelligence services, combined with concomitant cash flows, created a market of religious violence in which groups split and degenerated into rogue militias which pursued religious objectives in name only, but were more interested in collecting money and handing out cars and perks to their members. Sociologically, they were more akin to urban banditry. While the ideologically motivated groups had sometimes listened to religious scholars serving as their patrons, the rogue militias had stopped doing so. This made it even more difficult for Pakistan to control them. Splinter factions of the Harkat-ul-Jihad-i-Islami and the Lashkar-e-

<sup>109</sup> Rana, *A to Z of Jehadi organizations in Pakistan* (Lahore: Mashal Books, 2004).

Jhangvi were at times considered rogue groups spinning out of any command. Some of the lesser known groups which had claimed responsibility for acts of violence could be counted here. The Al-Faran may have been such a group, claiming responsibility for the abduction of six western tourists in Indian Kashmir and killing one of them in 1995.<sup>110</sup> Some factions of the MQM, the Urdu-speaking migrant movement in Sindh, which in 1992 split with active help of the military hoping to control them, could also be considered rogue elements.

Most of the transnational mujahidin groups developed a regional focus as they had been formed to intervene in the conflicts of Kashmir, Afghanistan and sometimes also targeted post-Soviet and Chinese Central Asia. In a competition of its own, groups solely focusing on Kashmir have been linked to all of the major religious parties of Sunni and Shia Islam in Pakistan (Deobandi, Barelwi, Ahl-i Hadith, Jama'at-i Islami, TJP). Analysts believe that most of them have also received support from the military and intelligence establishment in Pakistan, which over a long period played a prominent role in coordination, funding, training and logistical support. While much of their activism was outbound, Pakistan had to face some inbound activities as a consequence of their intervention (such as the influx of ex-Taliban and other foreign fighters, but also of Indian Muslims recruited for the Kashmir conflict).

From among the jihadi groups operating in Pakistan, it is probably correct to assume that it is mainly "inbound" transnational actors that pursue a distinct global orientation. Al Qaeda constitutes the most prominent example as it linked up with radicalized sectarian Sunni groups of various denominations (Deobandi, Ahl-i Hadith, Barelwi). Uzbek, Chechen and Uighur fighters would constitute another group of foreign fighters stranded with their families in the northwestern tribal regions of Pakistan as a residue of the Afghan conflict. Fleeing from their local conflicts in Uzbekistan, Chechnya and the Xinjiang province of China, they had joined the Afghan war as "comrades-in-arms" of the Taliban.

The more peaceful and ideological global Islamic networks such as Hizb ut-Tahrir and Al-Muhajirun, would also fall in this category. Local Pakistani enthusiasts with an intellectual background ventured to establish national units, which failed to take off on a larger scale. It is their Arabo-centric culture which makes it difficult for these networks to strike deep roots in the Islamist milieu of Pakistan that is largely driven by Urdu- and local language tradition.<sup>111</sup>

Regarding outside actors of transnational Islam in Pakistan, the international media and policymakers often point to foreign students attending the traditional madrassas, but also the modernist International Islamic University. After 9/11, their number has significantly gone down, partly for lack of funding due to international political pressure, partly because of specific bans and restrictions introduced by the government of Pakistan, also under international pressure. In terms of motivation, those international students would consist of two groups: one which traditionally has sought guidance from religious scholars of other countries, and another, following the trajectories of political and ideological issues that have been fought in the name of Islam since the 1980s in the region.

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<sup>110</sup> Cf. Joseph Burns, "Worry Rising for Hostages Seized in India," *New York Times*, December 13, 1995, at <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=980DE6D71639F930A25751C1A963958260&scp=1&sq=al%20faran&st=cse>, accessed on June 17, 2008; Sanjoy Hanzarika, "Most Leaders Of Separatists In Kashmir Assail Killing," *Ibid.*, August 15, 1995, at <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=990CE4D7103AF936A2575BC0A963958260&scp=2&sq=al%20faran&st=cse>, accessed on June 17, 2008.

<sup>111</sup> Rana, *A to Z of Jehadi Organizations in Pakistan*.

### *Political Madrassas and Charities*

Newly formed radical madrassas and charities run by militant outfits have emerged as a separate group owing their existence to Pakistan's political and ideological polarization. Some of these groups established regular religious schools across Pakistan providing religious instruction—loosely based on the famous theological curriculum of the Dars-e Nizami followed by most Sunni mainstream madrassas. In addition, they would teach the ideology of their own militant group, including their special reading of the jihad concept. These include the schools of the Jama'at al-Da'wat (JD, Missionary Party) following the Ahl-i Hadith doctrine. The JD emerged in 2002 out of the former missionary center Markaz-ul-Da'wa-tul-Irshad (1986) and allowed the Lashkar-e Taiba fighters to regroup within its ranks when they were banned. According to various estimates, the JD runs 50 to 100 schools all over Pakistan with up to 10,000 students, many of which are known as Jamia-ud-Da'wa-tul-Islamiyya.<sup>112</sup>

But also the Jaish-e Mohammadi, now under the name of Al Furkan, and the Sipah-e Sahaba are believed to run their own madrassas. According to Muhammad Rana, six militant outfits are now working as charities. Jaish-e Muhammad is now working by the name of Al-Rehmat Trust, Harkatul Jihad-e-Islami as Al-Ershad Trust and Harkatul Mujahideen as Al-A(n)sar Trust on Pakistan territory, although they continue their operations under their old names in Pakistani and Indian Kashmir.<sup>113</sup>

One also has to consider those perhaps 50 to 100 madrassas, mainly of Deobandi persuasion, that had been selected in the early 1980s by Pakistan, the U.S. and Saudi Arabia to facilitate the conduit of military training and arms for the Afghan war.<sup>114</sup> Some of them were built anew, others were long established. The latter ones, with a clear radical reputation, include the so-called Binuri Town Madrassa in Karachi from where many Taliban leaders graduated, and the Madrassa Haqaniyya in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) in Akora Khattak, run by the Deobandi splinter party, the JUI (S), led by Samiul Haq.<sup>115</sup>

The Lal Masjid or Red Mosque in Islamabad, which gained notoriety through the stand-off with the Pakistani security forces in early 2007, is a prominent example of the mosques and madrassas newly created by the military and security establishment for the jihad against the Soviet Union. The two religious schools attached to it were attended by up to 10,000 students. Lal Masjid's founder, Maulana Muhammad Abdullah, was an outspoken cleric supporting the U.S.-sponsored war against the Soviet troops in Afghanistan. His two sons, Abdul Aziz and Abdul Rashid Ghazi, spearheaded the recent confrontation.<sup>116</sup> The clerics and students of these mosques and madrassas across Pakistan still breathe resentment over the "betrayal," or the reversal of the military leadership under General Musharraf to back the U.S. and other Western nations in the war against terror.

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 325f.

<sup>113</sup> Muhammad Rana, "Changing Tactics of Jihad Organizations in Pakistan," *Research and Development Reports*, Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies (March 2006), at <http://san-pips.com/PIPS-R&D-%20Files/Reports/R&D-Report-Article7/R&D-Report-A7-D.asp>, accessed on June 17, 2008.

<sup>114</sup> "For training this Army of Islam, Musharraf and Aziz, assisted by Maj. Gen. (ret'd) Mahmud Durrani, selected 100 of the then existing madrassas, almost all Deobandi, and introduced military training by serving and retired officers of the Pakistan Army attached to them." B. Raman, Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM)—A Backgrounder. Paper No. 332, South Asia Analysis Group, October 3, 2001, at <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/papers4/paper332.html> accessed on June 17, 2008.

<sup>115</sup> Rana, *A to Z of Jehadi Organizations in Pakistan*.

<sup>116</sup> "Lal Masjid—Pakistan's Red Mosque," About.com: *Islam*, at <http://islam.about.com/od/muslimcountries/p/lalmasjid.htm>, accessed on June 17, 2008.

### *Faith-Based Religious and Pietist Networks*

The rationale for most transnational religious activism emerging from Pakistan remains faith-based and piety-driven. Such activism aims at the transfer of religious knowledge, the perfecting and strengthening of religious observance, increasing the number of followers in a tough competition with other Islamic groups and recruiting new adherents from among non-Muslims. These

The rationale for most transnational religious activism emerging from Pakistan remains faith-based and piety-driven.

objectives can be clearly observed in the network of Deobandi madrassas. The vast network of Deobandi madrassas in the subcontinent and beyond continues to expand on its own rational grounds related to its expansion as a socio-cultural and educational movement, which cannot be sufficiently explained by security, military, or even political arguments.

Reasons for Deobandi activism are more related to competitive mobilization that started during the late colonial era. The religious Islamic networks established in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century have gone transnational and global through the lens of their own missionary ideology bent on expanding the influence of their groups.<sup>117</sup> The pattern they follow is time-worn: students go to new places where they establish a school of their own. This can be a pious endeavor or the attempt to become self-employed. In the process, students go abroad to service the foreign communities of Deobandi descent by offering them an educational outlet. Another driving force seems to be the doctrinal and ideological competition with rival groups in foreign Muslim communities (of South Asian descent) where they particularly seek to confront the Barelwis, Ahl-i Hadith, and to counter the perceived influence of the Ahmadis.

Pakistan's madrassas are estimated to include up to 20,000 schools which can be of a varying degree of sophistication. If we take those considered somewhat equivalent to a secondary education, they would teach a formal eight-year degree course awarding the title of a religious scholar (*'alim*). Their number would probably be less than 10,000 in the whole of Pakistan. Enrolment figures have become a matter of political debate. Accordingly, their estimates vary grossly. A recent study comparing various statistical data asserted that the size of the madrassa sector is much overrated. The authors consider schools teaching a religious curriculum and demanding full daytime attendance, and not secondary attendance after or before public school classes:

According to our analysis, the madrassa sector is small compared to educational options such as public and private schooling, accounting for less than 1 percent of overall enrolment in the country. Even in the districts that border Afghanistan, where madrassa enrolment is the highest in the country, it is less than 7.5 percent of all enrolled children. Furthermore, we find no evidence of a dramatic increase in madrassa enrolment in recent years.<sup>118</sup>

<sup>117</sup> See Dietrich Reetz, "The Deoband Universe"; "Dar al-'Ulum Deoband and its Self-Representation on the Media," *Islamic Studies* 44, no. 2 (2005): 209; and, "Change and Stagnation in Islamic Education: The Dar al-Ulum of Deoband after the Split in 1982," in *The Madrassa in Asia: Political Activism and Trans-National Linkages*, eds. Farish A. Noor, Yoginder Sikand and Martin van Bruinessen (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, forthcoming).

<sup>118</sup> T. Andrabi, J. Das, A. I. Khwaja, and T. Zajonc, "Religious School Enrolment in Pakistan: A Look at the Data," *Comparative Education Review* 50, no. 3 (2006): 446-477.

What is important for this paper is that the authors of that study, which was based on detailed household sample interviews, found no particular evidence to suggest that madrasa attendance in a household depends on religious or social variables. Differences with regard to the literacy level of the head of the household or its income situation between “madrasa” and “non-madrasa households,” where a child is enrolled or not, were marginal. They were below 10%. “The largest difference between household types is their proximity to a private school.”<sup>119</sup> The findings confirm that madrasa attendance is a matter of practical consideration with regard to education opportunities. The study also confirms the anthropological observation that madrasa attendance is driven by the wish and long-standing tradition in South Asian Muslim households to devote one child to a religious career which is expected to bring rewards for the whole family in the hereafter.

The madrasa networks from Pakistan (and South Asia) have now firmly established themselves on a global scale. Deobandi networks and institutions vie for influence not only with Barelwi networks from South Asia, but, for example, with Salafi institutions and networks, forming another distinct, even though highly amorphous and heterogeneous “rival” network. Modern Islamic schools combining religious and secular teaching form another type of transnational alliances, exchanging teachers, students and concepts; so do the International Islamic Universities. Sufi networks modernize themselves establishing “franchises” in various countries and regions.

Arguably the most successful transnational pietist network from South Asia, the Tablighi Jama’at, is now considered the largest living transnational movement of Islam on the globe. The TJ is believed to have attracted 12-15 million followers worldwide, thus transcending the socio-cultural boundaries of South Asian migrants. In France and Spain, the TJ largely relies on Muslim migrants from North Africa; in Central Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and South East Asia, local Muslims constitute the majority of followers where South Asia descent only plays a minimal role. While the movement expanded exponentially and joined the Muslim mainstream, its leaders kept away from politics. Yet the majority of lay followers brought into the movement new social, economic and political concerns. Its emphasis on ritual and observance has changed the political micro-climate in many regions in favor of Islamist political actors. Some militant groups have also tried to exploit the prestige and influence of the TJ as well as ideological affinity through a wider interpretation of the jihad concept as a struggle for the correct religious behavior.

While the TJ no doubt has a global concept of expansion, it would be far-fetched to assume that it organizes militant or political Islamism. In fact, it has long been attacked by political Islamists such as the Jama’at-i Islami for neglecting political struggle. Recently, it has tried to limit the transfer of Western recruits to local madrassas in South Asia. Such a transfer was heavily criticized by Western analysts as it allegedly created a conduit to militant groups, a highly speculative and largely unproven assumption as most convicted international terrorists had a modern educational background.

Religious networks from the Sufi-related Barelwi milieu have tried to catch up with Deobandi transnationalism, although as a rule they rarely manage to go beyond the South Asian Muslim diaspora. The modernist Sufi network of the Deedat Islamic centers is a notable exception as it managed to operate successfully in South Africa, Arabic and Western countries.<sup>120</sup> Their emphasis is on comparative religious propagation highlighting the superiority of the Quran as compared to

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 461.

<sup>120</sup> David Westerlund, “Ahmed Deedat’s Theology of Religion: Apologetics through Polemics,” *Journal of Religion in Africa* 33, no. 3 (2003), 263ff; and, Reetz, “The Deoband Universe.”

the Bible. Their pamphlets teach “correct” Islamic practice (prayer, dress, fasting, and education) in a modern setting. But the family network behind the organization based in South Africa (Durban) is related to the Barelwi section of the South Asian diaspora.

This diaspora background often emerged from links with specific South Asian trading casts that extended across the former British colonial empire and beyond. The religious networks of the Deobandis and Barelwis are the most prominent cases in point. Many of those networks rely on Gujarati or Memon trading caste connections. As mentioned, the Barelwis are less likely than the Deobandis to cross the social boundaries of South Asian/Pakistani migrant communities. This may be related to the much stronger hereditary element in traditional Barelwi culture. The madrassas at Deoband and the shrine of the Barelwi founder Ahmad Raza in Bareilly (India) act as normative centers for their global activities, with little strategy and policy in terms of expansion or control. Even though their global expansion is partly driven by competition, it is rarely planned and executed in a centralized manner. These groups developed several subsidiary networks. For the Deobandis, these would comprise Deobandi madrassas, sometimes affiliated with Deobandi shaykhs and their disciples, but also political groups (Jamiat-e Ulama in South Africa, Canada).

The Ahmadi network is driven by both religious and migration concerns. A transnational orientation has become constitutive for the Ahmadiyya, as the group has been persecuted in Pakistan where it had relocated its religious center after independence. The Ahmadis are currently running their British center as a global headquarters. They have also been able to transcend their South Asian background, notably in Africa and Southeast Asia, although their connection to Pakistan’s culture remains strong and important.

We should also consider here the religious groups drawing doctrinal inspiration from centers of normative Islam in the larger West Asian region, but outside Pakistan’s borders. This orientation would apply to Shia groups and their solidarity with Iran’s religious and political leadership. Their bonds, however, would be highly heterogeneous. In their outbound activity, these actors would be driven by local concerns and the search for religious guidance from Iranian theologians. Inbound activity could be driven by both the religious and political establishment in Iran which does not necessarily follow the same trajectories. In- and outbound activities will also be found with South Asian Shia migrant networks that not necessarily dissolve in global Shia migration.

Shia groups in their transnational attachment thus roughly divide into two camps—one loyalist to the state of Pakistan with a moderate agenda, and the other ideological with strong devotion to Iran and its religious leaders.

The Ahl-i Hadith subscribes in its own ways to the ideas of global Islamic activism for both political and religio-ideological goals. The Ahl-i Hadith transnational ideology is largely focused on Saudi Arabia with which it identifies because of its doctrinal and ideological affinity with Hanbalism and Wahhabism. If taken literally, though, this identification would reveal a paradoxical constellation as the Ahl-i Hadith rejects the Sunni law schools whereas Wahhabism derives from observance of the Hanbalite legal tradition. They are united in their “equal” reverence for the founders of these law schools and their rejection of impermissible or “un-Islamic” innovations (*bida*’).

Their ideology has been labeled—both by them and others—as Salafi, or following the pious founder generation of Islam (*as-Salaf*). Yet the term Salafi is loose enough to unite highly heterogeneous elements under its umbrella, with a pietist, political and militant faction. The target of Ahl-i Hadith/Salafi activism is religious and largely inner-Islamic, fighting for the “true” and

correct Islam. The Ahl-i Hadith network is at best regional, but as part of the larger Salafi network global. Its transnational activism with regard to Pakistan is both in- and outbound.

There is also a small but growing number of actors and institutions tracing themselves back to Turkish origins, such as the liberal Muslim Fethullah Gülen (b. 1938) schools now transforming into a global network of their own.<sup>121</sup>

### *Religious Nationalism and Migration*

The reasons why transnational networks and institutions of, for instance, the Jama'at-i Islami, the Bareilwi missionary movement Da'wat-i Islami, or the (Mirpuri) Kashmir groups show a preponderant influence of Pakistanis beyond the country's borders lie in the flexible adaptation of its migrant and social networks. Those religious actors and institutions carry a distinctly Pakistani flavor and refer back to their roots in the country. They are rather treated as overseas branches of the Pakistani organization.

The network of Jama'at-i Islami-affiliated groups and institutions now extends across the world, but has retained a clear Pakistani flavor despite the fact that the "mother" organization still exists in India.<sup>122</sup> Its "independent" status is partly derived from the fact that, after partition, the JI founder Maududi continued to direct its affairs in Pakistan. It was in Pakistan that the JI could develop its major ambition of political Islamism evolving into a regular political party. This is in marked contrast with the TJ where the Indian center still remains the global headquarters, with the Pakistani headquarters in Raiwind being second among equals.

Contrary to other Islamic groups, the JI founder Maududi had always emphasized the need of conquering the state and polity to mould society in the ways of fully observing and implementing the religious injunctions of Islam. The JI developed a complete set of organizations (see Appendix I) for party politics, the affairs of students, women, academic research, ideological training and international liaising coordinated at its headquarters, al-Mansura, in Lahore. The JI self-consciously presents itself as an ideological party that pursues political Islamism on the lines of the Muslim Brotherhood. Its political orientation is very much Pakistan-centric with a nationalist direction bordering on the chauvinistic, as can be seen by its strong stand on the Kashmir conflict and its ambition to become a governing party.

Despite being the smaller of the Islamic parties, the JI leader Qazi Husain strives to be seen as a political spokesman of all Islamic forces. Considering themselves a professional and modern force they seek to mediate between the conservative traditional Islamic sector tied to activities of religious scholars and the modern sector of government and private sector institutions. JI cadres and their families expanded into a closely knit community and social network developing sect-like features. In Lahore, the JI runs its own housing society (like other Islamic groups).

The JI international network has grown out of this social cohesion and its nexus with diaspora communities. However, its international activity went beyond these social and cultural limitations following its ideological ambitions of political Islamism. The JI looks at international political issues from the position of international solidarity in much the same way as did the historical groupings of the Communist and the Socialist International. Yet despite its ideological affinity it

<sup>121</sup> Sabrina Tavernise, "Turkish Schools Offer Pakistan a Gentler Vision of Islam," New York Times, May 4, 2008, at [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/04/world/asia/04islam.html?\\_r=2&ref=asia&oref=slogin&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/04/world/asia/04islam.html?_r=2&ref=asia&oref=slogin&oref=slogin), accessed June 17, 2008. Cf. M. Hakan Yavuz and John L. Esposito, *Turkish Islam and the Secular State: The Gülen Movement* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2003).

<sup>122</sup> See the Pakistani website, <http://jamaat.org/indexe.html>, which however contains little indication of the JI's transnational activism.

continues to keep a separate profile and identity feeding on the distinct ethnic and cultural roots of its foreign members, which are not all but predominantly of South Asian descent.

The JI transnational activism is both out- and in-bound. This activism demonstrates the increasing impact of the JI on the international Islamist scene and their reverse influence on the JI. Such impact 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. It is further demonstrated in cooperation with like-minded political parties of Islam, such as the Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS) in Malaysia. The JI runs foreign branches and student groups under different names developing into a globalizing JI network of transnational political Islam. Britain is the most prominent example here. The JI's UK branches play a key role through the UK Islamic Mission in London and the Islamic Foundation in Leicester.<sup>123</sup> These branches have become centers 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.

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>124</sup> Its pan-Islamic agenda is promoted by the affiliated academies of Islamic Law (shari'a) and Mission (da'wa). 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 organization fully autonomous in its international activities which are both outbound (seminars, workshops, conferences) and inbound (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.

Barelwi organizations constitute another group of transnational actors that strongly reflect the influence of the nationalist culture and politics of Pakistan. While they pursue a larger religious agenda as discussed above, their attachment to Pakistan is very close. Almost all of their transnational activities are carried out by Pakistani diaspora representatives and their descendents. They also firmly look at leaders and headquarters in Pakistan with their concepts based in Pakistan's social and cultural traditions.

Among the Barelwi organizations is the religious and educational movement Minhaj-ul-Quran,<sup>125</sup> led by Tahir-ul-Qadri (b. 1951), and the Barelwi missionary movement of the Da'wat-i Islami<sup>126</sup> that pursue a transnational ministry in distinctly Pakistani colors. Both were founded in 1980. Abroad, they provide cultural and spiritual services to the Pakistani diaspora community

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<sup>123</sup> See the UK Islamic Mission in London's website at <http://www.ukim.org>; and the Islamic Foundation in Leicester's website at <http://www.islamic-foundation.org.uk>.

<sup>124</sup> Cf. the university's website at <http://www.iiu.edu.pk>.

<sup>125</sup> The group's website, <http://www.minhaj.org/>, calls itself proudly "Minhaj-ul-Quran International."

<sup>126</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" (conference 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/>).

which is also targeted for funds and adherents. The Minhaj-ul-Quran runs a network of private schools in Pakistan with its center in Lahore, teaching secular degrees combined with religious instruction of the Barelwi variety. The Da'wat-i Islami developed in competition with the Deobandi-oriented Tablighi Jama'at. It established itself as a global actor with its headquarters (Faizan-e Madina) in Karachi at the Old Vegetable Market (Purana Sabzi Mandi).

Apart from Barelwi groups, Sufi scholars and networks emphasizing the spiritual message of *tasawwuf* (Islamic mysticism) operate out of Pakistan with growing intensity—although they do so also from India and other places of origin. The personal ministry of Maulana Hakim Muhammad Akhtar (b. 1928), who is based at his Sufi hospice in Karachi, the Khanqah Imdadiyya Ashrafiyya, presents an interesting case in point.<sup>127</sup> He is a disciple of the pietist Deobandi scholar and Sufi Shaykh Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (1863-1943). His global followers reside in India, the UAE, South Africa, or the UK.<sup>128</sup> As the current author learnt from an interview in 2005, Akhtar managed to gain the allegiance of the rector of the Deobandi school in South Africa, Darul Ulum Lenasia, thus weaning him away from the Tablighi Jama'at. During that time Akhtar was mentioned as a new, up-and-coming popular source of religious and spiritual guidance among migrant Deobandi activists.<sup>129</sup>

Maulana Abdul Hafiz Makki, a Deobandi shaykh, also runs a truly transnational ministry closely associated with Pakistan. As teacher of the Hadith, he is based at the Madrassa Saulatiyya in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. He has a strong base of disciples in Pakistan which he regularly tours to receive donations and to give lectures. The local press also reported him to be a patron of sorts for militant outfits in Pakistan. And he is in regular attendance at public preaching events in the diaspora, especially in Britain and South Africa.<sup>130</sup>

Transnational actors such as Kashmiri diaspora groups originating from Mirpur District in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir or the Muhajir Qaumi Mahaz operate out of Pakistan with a mixed agenda. Their political objectives are very much tied to Pakistani nationalism and outwardly secular. The Mirpuri activists support a nationalistic agenda on Kashmir with some wanting it to be part of Pakistan and others independent. The Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF, 1966) with its various factions has been a major platform for this program. The MQM aims at achieving a secured position in the politics and economy of Pakistan for the community of Urdu-speaking migrants (Muhajirs) hailing from India. But their social fabric as transnational networks is marked by clear affinity with local culture and, by extension, spiritual Islam of the Barelwi variety, which has a strong influence in their foreign communities. Both use their transnational networks to mobilize funds and support.

## State Response

The response of the state to the efforts of Islamic actors from other countries to wield influence in Pakistan has been shaped by political exigencies and military compulsions as Pakistan formally joined the coalition of countries fighting a war on terror. Pakistan closed the doors to foreign

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<sup>127</sup> Cf. the entry in the Wikipedia at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hakim\\_Akhtar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hakim_Akhtar), written probably by a follower and admirer.

<sup>128</sup> For the scholar's website with entries of his global followers, see, <http://www.khanqah.org/>; for his blog, see, <http://annoor.wordpress.com/introduction-an-noor/>.

<sup>129</sup> The author's interview during field research in 2005.

<sup>130</sup> Reetz, "The Deoband Universe."

students who attended madrassas in 2005.<sup>131</sup> Clerics argued, however, that such an approach was discriminatory and vowed to continue taking in foreign students. In practice, foreign students now have to master a long vetting process of the receiving country, i.e. Pakistan, and the sending country. Those limitations apply less to modern Islamic schools offering secular education in addition to a religious curriculum, such as the International Islamic University. Here limitations are conditioned by financial constraints of the students and of Pakistan's government. Nowadays scholarships for foreign students are rarely available. This resource crunch was mainly caused by the reduction in financial support from Middle Eastern donors who have lately been prevented from continuing their donations.

Pakistan's military and security agencies also fight foreign radical Islamists with military means, with varying degree of success. They pursue mainly three targets: foreign fighters operating clandestinely in Pakistan's large urban conglomerations; groups of foreign Islamist fighters stranded after the Afghan war, such as the Uzbeks, Chechens and the Chinese Muslims from Xinjiang; and those attached to the command structures of al Qaeda, allegedly hiding in the mountainous tribal areas of the Pak-Afghan borderland. It is, however, assumed that the state's reluctance to pursue the sectarian and jihadi groups operating in Kashmir leaves many loopholes for Islamic militants to regroup. In addition, the defeated Afghan Taliban established command structures in Pakistan, with their leaders more or less openly residing in Quetta, Baluchistan. Parts of Pakistan's military and security establishment still pursue a Central Asian hinterland option where they are ready to tolerate or utilize local militants to counter perceived Indian influence in Afghanistan and to prepare for a post-intervention scenario after the U.S. would withdraw from there.<sup>132</sup>

Pakistan has been reluctant to deal with these militants who, among other factors, contributed to the formation and emergence of a "local" Pakistani Taliban force under the leadership of Baitullah Mehsud.<sup>133</sup> Those groups, however, remain highly heterogeneous and are strongly marked by local tribal custom. It has often been argued that hard-hitting military measures on behalf of the Pakistani state and the U.S. allied forces accompanied by many civilian casualties have the tendency to prolong the conflict and strengthen the opponents as those tribal militias articulate not only Islamist political objectives, but also tribal concerns about marginalization and underdevelopment. The new Pakistan coalition government has vowed to find a political solution, an approach which has come in for heavy criticism by the Americans in turn.

## Evaluating Islamic Transnationalism in Pakistan

Given the complexity of the issue with regard to Pakistan, it seems difficult and perhaps not even useful to identify singular conduits or means of influence for transnational Islamic actors in the country.

While recognizing the mutual and overlapping influences of factors, this paper would, in conclusion, argue for a decided differentiation between political, religious and socio-ethnic actors, institutions and motives in transnational Islam with regard to Pakistan. The proposed

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<sup>131</sup> "Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf says all foreign students at madrassas, or religious schools, some 1,400 pupils, must leave the country," BBC, July 29, 2005, at [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/4728643.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4728643.stm), accessed August 19, 2008.

<sup>132</sup> Dietrich Reetz, "Pakistan and the Central Asia Hinterland Option: the Race for Regional Security and Development," *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies* 17, no. 1 (1993/94): 28-56.

<sup>133</sup> Cf. a profile of Baitullah Mehsud by Syed Shoaib Hasan for the BBC News website, December 28, 2007, at [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/7163626.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7163626.stm), accessed on June 17, 2008.

classification allows identifying the root causes of militancy in the transnational Islam of Pakistan. As a result, it is suggested to de-dramatize the actors and institutions under categories two and three relating to religious activism and Pakistan nationalism. Those actors and institutions have to be evaluated in the context of globalization, understood as a complex and historical process, going beyond economic and financial aspects. Instead, the paper would invite to firmly deal with the first category of political and ideological motivations—not on religious or Islamic, but on political grounds.

Against this background, it is rather the reluctance or inability of the Pakistani government to introduce firm standards of law and civility which has allowed transnational Islamic actors to create a political and security threat to its own citizens and to other countries, both in the region and beyond. It is strongly advised against conceiving concepts to manage or change aspects of the religious beliefs and practice of transnational Islamic actors as such interventions will inevitably backfire. While some political analysts believe that the madrassa system is one major source of instability, it is cautioned here that religious education will always have to remain religious in nature. Educational standards can only be improved by lifting public education in a major way. All social and political actors—religious or not—have to agree on the norms of civil cohabitation—and have to be bound by them.

The classification of transnational Islam proposed in this paper further helps in understanding that much of the transnational Islam emanating from Pakistan is driven by the desire to fulfill spiritual, social and cultural needs of Pakistan's extensive migrant communities around the world. Since many of them live in conditions of utter marginalization, these networks are meeting the needs of people who are at the receiving end of globalization. To improve their lot, better social and political concepts are required to integrate them instead of marginalizing and castigating their transnational religious support networks.

The diversity and heterogeneity of Pakistan's transnational Islamic actors and institutions also suggests questioning the analytical value of the category of transnational Islam. One has to ask if such a category is not more reflective of political impulses aiming to control Muslims and their organizations rather than the desire for a nuanced analysis. In any case, it is the political, social and cultural issues behind transnational Islam which need attention and solving.

Judged in terms of political virulence, it is the unstable, charged and polarized nature of the overall political framework in Pakistan that pushes many transnational actors of Islam into the political, extremist and even militant realm. Currently, the major threat to the stability of Pakistan comes from sectarian and jihadi groups that spin out of control from state and religious patronage. Pakistan cannot successfully fight the newly emergent Pakistani Taliban in the country's northwest regions as long as some elements in the administration hope to keep intact parts of the militant network for operation against India and the Karzai government. But Pakistan can neither achieve success as long as it does not address the tribal dimension of this warfare successfully since much of current Taliban operations reflect long-standing disaffected and marginalized tribal concerns.

To prevent transnational actors of Islam in Pakistan from harming each other and civil society, the Pakistani state needs to resurrect its civil authority and regulate these institutions without discriminating against them. It will further have to focus on social rehabilitation and the development of disaffected communities giving rise to militant Islam which is on the verge of turning into local insurgencies, with education, employment and social amenities holding prime

importance. On many of these issues the civil and security-related bureaucracy of Pakistan is currently on the retreat, a course which urgently needs to be reversed.

**APPENDIX I: Overview of Main Religio-Cultural Milieus of Islam in Pakistan**

Activity	Institutions	Transnationalism
<b>Deobandi</b>		
Religious/spiritual center(s), schools	Darul Uloom Deoband (north India, 1867) – Deobandi madrassas	Foreign students, graduates, teachers, branches; <i>fatwas</i> as international reference
Political party	Jami'yat-i 'Ulama'-i Islam (JUI, 1944) Faction led by Samiul Haq (JUI-S)	Foreign branches
Subsidiary groups (missionary, education)	Tablighi Jama'at (TJ, 1927)	Preaching groups traveling abroad
Student groups/ activities	Jami'yat-e Tulaba-e Islam (JTI) <i>Tarbiyati</i> camps (summer schools)	Foreign branches Format/concept exported, traveling speakers
Sectarian groups	Sipah-e-Sahaba-e-Pakistan (SSP, 1985, banned 2002) → Millat-e Islamia-e Pakistan Lashkar-i Jhangwi (LJ, banned 2001) Khatm-e Nabuwwat Organizations	Intervention in Afghanistan, Kashmir  Confronting Ahmadis in South Asia and worldwide
Radical/ militant groups, militias	Harkatul-Mujahidin (HUM) Jaish-e Muhammadi (JM) → Khudamul Islam	Interventions abroad, foreign militant members
<b>Barelwi</b>		
Religious/spiritual center(s), schools	Shrine of Ahmad Raza Khan, Bareilly (north India) – Barelwi madrassas, shrines	Foreign students, graduates, teachers, branches; <i>fatwas</i> as international reference
Political party	Jamiyat-i Ulama-i Pakistan (1948)	Foreign branches
Subsidiary groups (missionary, education)	Ahl-e Sunnat (AS, 1900) Minhaj-ul-Quran (MQ, 1980) Zia-ul-Quran Da'wat-i Islami (1980) Deedat Islamic Centers	Foreign branches, Traveling preaching groups
Student groups/ activities	Anjuman-e Talaba-e Islam (1969) Mustafavi Students Movement (MSM, MQ student wing)	Foreign branches
Sectarian groups	Sunni Tahrik (ST, 1990, under investigation 2002)	
Radical/ militant groups, militias	Local militias: Tanzim Ahl-e Sunnat, al-Baraq, Tehriq-e-Jihad, Sunni Mujahidin Force	Kashmir, Afghanistan, Frontier

Activity	Institutions	Transnationalism
<b>Jama'at-i Islami</b>		
Religious/spiritual center(s), schools	Mansura headquarters and schools, Lahore (1975) Islamic Research Academy (1963) Syed Mawdoodi International Educational Institute (1982) Markaz Ulum-al-Islamia (1980) Islamic Education Society (1982)	International students, courses for international Islamic activists
Political party	Jama'at-i Islami (1941)	Foreign branches
Subsidiary groups (missionary, education)	Jamiat Ittehadul Ulama (Organization of Religious Scholars) Institute of Policy Studies (1979) UK Islamic Mission (1962) Islamic Foundation in Leicester, UK (1972)	Intervention in conflicts in Afghanistan, Kashmir through participation in Afghan Defense Council
Student groups/ activities	Islami Jamiat-e Tulaba (IJT, 1947) Islami Jamiat-e-Tulaba Arabia Islami Jamiat-e-Talibat (female wing) Pasban	Foreign branches
Sectarian groups	Ministry of Dr. Israr Ahmed (B. 1932): Anjuman Khudamul Quran (1986); Tanzeem-e Islami (1956)	Foreign missionary activities
Radical/ militant groups, militias	Hizbul Mujahideen (1989)	Intervention in Kashmir conflict
<b>Ahl-i Hadith</b>		
Religious/spiritual center(s), schools	Ahl-i Hadith sect (1890) Ahl-i Hadith conference (1906) in (Indian) Punjab, Bihar, Bhopal	Branches in India, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, Britain
Political party	Markazi Ahl-i Hadith (1906/1956)	Foreign branches (esp. Saudi Arabia)
Subsidiary groups (missionary, education)	Markaz-ud-Da'wa-tul-Irshad (1986) → Jama'at-ud-Da'wa (2002) Jeddah Dawah Center	Intervention in Afghanistan, Kashmir conflicts  Preaching
Student groups / activities	Ahl-i Hadith Student Federation (ASF) Tulaba Jama'at-ud-Da'wa	Foreign branches
Sectarian groups	Jamiat Ulama Ahl-i Hadith	Foreign branches
Radical/ militant groups, militias	Lashkar-i Taiba (1991, banned 2002)	Intervention in Afghanistan, Kashmir conflicts

Activity	Examples	Transnationalism
<b>Shia</b>		
Religious/spiritual center(s), schools	Jamia al Muntazir, Lahore (also TJP headquarters and many offices of Shia community)	
Political party	Tahrik-e Nafaz-e Fiqu-e Jafariyya (TNFJ, 1979) → Tahrik-e Jafariyya-e Pakistan (TJP) → Millat-e Jafariyya (1993, TJP banned 2002, yet MMA member; 2 branches led by Naqvi and Musavi)	Connections with Iran, both Shia clergy and government, diaspora Shia communities
Subsidiary groups (missionary, education)	Shia Ulama Council (Wafaq-e Shia Ulema-e Pakistan)	Connections with Iranian clergy
Student groups/ activities	Imamia Student Organization (ISO, 1972) Jamiat-e Tulaba Jafaria (1972)	Connections with Iran, Lebanon (Hizbullah)
Sectarian groups	Sipah-e Mohammad-e Pakistan (SMP, 1993, banned 2001)	
Radical/ militant groups, militias	Hizbul Momineen (1991) Pasban-e Islam (1994)	Kashmir conflict intervention
<b>Ahmadiyya</b>		
Religious/spiritual center(s), schools	Jalsa Salana (Annual Conference, 1891, Qadiyan, Punjab, India) Sadr Anjuman-i Ahmadiyya (1906) Ahmadiyya Anjuman-i Isha'at-i Islam (Lahori faction, 1914) Pakistani headquarters of Ahmadiyya community, Rabwah, Punjab (1948, name changed to Chenab Nagar, 1998), includes: Masjid-e-Aqsa (central Ahmadi mosque)	Khalifa (head of community) resides in London (since 1984)
Political party	None (some politicians in Muslim League)	
Subsidiary groups (missionary, education)	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 Waqf-e Jadid (1957, community service) Waqf-e Nau (1987, volunteers) Muslim Television Ahmadiyya	International branches
Student groups/ activities	Ahmadiyya Muslim Students Associations	Branches worldwide
Sectarian groups	Ahmadiyya Anjuman	
Radical/ militant groups, militias	Khuddam-ul-Ahmadiyya (also security functions)	

Activity	Examples	Transnationalism
<b>Muhajir</b>		
Religious/spiritual center(s), schools	MQM secretariat at Nine-Zero, Azizabad, Karachi	
Political party	Muhajir Qaumi Mahaz (MQM, 1984) → Muttahida Qaumi Mahaz (1997) Muhajir Qaumi Mahaz – Haqiqi (MQM-H, 1992, split-off faction)	MQM International Secretariat in Edgware, UK; international units, branches in UK, US, Canada
Subsidiary groups (missionary, education)	Khidmat-e Khalq Foundation (KKF)	Diaspora activities
Student groups/ activities	All Pakistan Muhajir Students Organization (APMSO, 1978)	Foreign branches
Sectarian groups	Not applicable	
Radical/ militant groups, militias	Militant wings of both MQM and MQM-H	