Islam and Islamism in Afghanistan

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The last half-century in particular has seen the recurrent use of religious Islam as ideology, often referred to as political Islam or Islamism, in groups espousing the establishment of an Islamic state. Attention was drawn to Afghanistan when it became the rallying point for Islamists in the 1980s. However, the earlier appearance of an Islamist movement in Afghanistan in the 1960s and its subsequent development offer an instructive, unique lesson in understanding Islam and Islamism in Afghan society.

This overview of the Islamist movement in Afghanistan is divided into three parts: It begins by defining the differing manifestations of Islam in Afghanistan, indicating how Islamism differs from or draws upon each manifestation in constructing its own vision. Then, the broader context of Islamism elsewhere in the Muslim world is discussed and analyzed. Although the theoretical basis for Islamism was constructed in the 1960s by Abu 'Ala Mawdudi in Pakistan and Sayyid Qutb in Egypt, this paper will show that the Islamist movement in Afghanistan did not mirror those in either of these countries. To this end, this paper reviews the thought of the above-mentioned theoreticians of Islamism, and outlines historical and social conditions that colored the implementation of their models in their respective countries. This leads back to a discussion of the Afghan context, which makes up the final part of the paper. It is necessary to review salient aspects of the traditional structure of Afghan society, and the role Islam has historically played in Afghanistan to understand how the Islamist experience was shaped and constrained by this structure, as well as how the Islamist experience has altered it.

As Afghanistan is now faced with the monumental task of rebuilding a state and legal system, Islamists are attempting to influence the reconstruction. This overview will underscore for those observing and participating in this process the importance of understanding the Afghan Islamist perspective, its historical underpinnings, and current demands.

DEFINING ISLAM IN AFGHANISTAN

It is important to illustrate the various manifestations of Islam in Afghanistan in order to provide the background for the emergence of Islamism there. Although the categorization of Islam into schools and trends can be uncomfortable and often misleads rather than directs, it is necessary if one is to understand the dynamics that are now playing out in Afghanistan. The designations that follow are not necessarily represented by distinct groups or individuals, nor are the terms themselves distinct; rather, some of the terms may overlap and be used together in various combinations to describe groups or individuals. It is only by identifying these categories that it becomes possible to determine how they influence or interact with the Islamists who are the focus of this paper. In this way, one can also deduce how those who are not part of the Islamist movement might view Islamist groups with varying degrees of hostility, sympathy, or

indifference. Moreover, an understanding of these designations is vital to the construction of broader categories and trends that may be applicable today.

1. *Popular Islam*

Afghanistan is a nation comprised almost completely of Muslims,[1] and Islam permeates Afghan life, providing a system of norms and basis for social morality. The term "popular Islam" refers to the way in which the religion structures everyday life, inhabits language, makes experiences meaningful, and augments a cultural identity;[2] it does not denote local variations of Islamic doctrine, however diluted they may be by pre-Islamic beliefs and customs.[3] In this sense, the category is not defined in contradistinction to the religion as understood or practiced by the *'ulama* (religious scholars, singular: *'alim*) or Islamists, indicating a high/low division, but rather it is a common denominator for all groups in society.[4]

Popular Islam includes a universal understanding of Islam as a system that enjoins good, and a belief that obedience to a number of specific rules ensures economic and social justice. Afghan popular Islam also includes an "Islam of the village," one that is presided over by the *mulla*, a mosque functionary who has a monopoly on religious activity in the village, such as circumcision, marriage, and burial.[5]

2. *Islam in the Tribal Context*

While Islam connects virtually the entire Afghan population, the society is divided along ethnic and tribal lines. The largest ethnic group, the Pashtuns, is also a tribal group. Tribes are formulated through patrilineal descent, and the notional ancestor of all Pashtuns is Qays, who, it is said, received Islam directly from the Prophet Muhammad. Effectively, Pashtuns deny having any pre-Islamic past or experience of conversion. Being Muslim is thus inextricable from their tribal heritage.[6]

In this way, what is Islamic and what is tribal overlap. Defense of tribal forms, for instance, can easily escalate into a defense of the faith, as demonstrated in the first Anglo-Afghan War and the *jihad* (struggle) against the Soviets, where tribes fought alongside one another against a non-Muslim entity. However, it is clear that conflicts do exist between tribal codes, for instance, and Islamic law. These conflicts are what bring the mulla into his authoritative role, clarifying "what the Book says," referring to the

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[1] The population is 99% Muslim, with approximately 80-85% of these being Sunni; the remaining 15-20% consists of Shi'is, primarily Twelver Shi'is, while Ismailis also have a community in Afghanistan. The small non-Muslim communities are made up of Hindus and Sikhs.

[2] Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 31.

[3] See M. Nazif Shahrani, "Local Knowledge of Islam and Social Discourse in Afghanistan and Turkistan in the Modern Period," in *Turko-Persia in Historical Perspective*, ed. Robert Canfield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 161-188 for a debunking of the myth that rural inhabitants are cut off from the main currents of Islamic thought or ignorant of orthodox Islamic teachings.

[4] I rely on conceptions of popular culture (considering religion a part of culture) in formulating this definition of popular Islam. Peter Burke explains that traditional definitions of popular culture as the culture of the uneducated or non-elite are too narrow because they dismiss participation of the educated elite in popular culture. See *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Harper & Row), 1978.

[5] Roy, *Islam and Resistance*, 32.

[6] Jon Anderson, "How Afghans Define Themselves in Relation to Islam," in *Revolutions and Rebellions in Afghanistan*, eds. M. Nazif Shahrani and Robert L. Canfield (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 274.

Quranic text, but also to its legal interpretation as embodied in *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence).[7]

3. *Textual Islam of the ʿUlama*
In Afghanistan, as well as elsewhere in the Muslim world, the ʿulama operate within a tradition of scholastic commentary and are defined by their education, not by membership in any formal institution. Fiqh is the body of applications of the *Shariʿa* (Islamic law) to society, of commentary developed over a thousand years by trained religious scholars, the ʿulama, who read and interpret the Shariʿa by using a particular set of rules. Fundamental sources in Islam are the Quran and Sunna, the normative practice of the Prophet, but for the ʿulama, these texts are not meaningful without commentaries and interpreters. Thus the textual Islam of the ʿulama also includes the body of fiqh. In Afghanistan, this means Hanafi fiqh, the school of jurisprudence to which all Afghan Sunni Muslims adhere.[8]

The ʿulama conceive of society as being governed by law derived from the sacred text. It is important to note that the ʿulama, who have expert knowledge of the sacred text and control its interpretation, acknowledge legitimacy of a de facto political power that governs areas where the text is silent. Historically, the ʿulama, who seek to regulate society in an Islamic legal system where development and interpretation of the law do not depend on the state, are essentially concerned with the legalistic and juridical, not the political. However, as the state takes on more functions previously reserved for religious institutions, such as personal status law, the ʿulama counter by making themselves heard in the political sphere.

Essentially, the above description describes the ʿulama in Afghanistan as well as in other parts of the Muslim world. It is important to note the following extenuating factors, that, combined, have challenged this one-dimensional characterization of the ʿulama: Sufism, reformist fundamentalism, and Islamism. These factors will be discussed at length below.

4. *Sufism*
Sufism is generally understood to be a mystical form of Islam that distinguishes between exoteric and esoteric revelation. Sufis seek esoteric revelation, an ascent to the Truth, or *haqiqa*, by undergoing spiritual initiation through a spiritual master. Most commonly, the spiritual master is called a *shaykh* or a *pir* and the pupil, a *murid*. The pupil follows a spiritual path (*tariqa*) to discover intuitive knowledge of the divine.

Sufi orders do not prescribe any political program. On the contrary, Sufis typically shun worldliness. The anti-materialistic stance and meditative practices of Sufi orders mean that Sufis can be ascetic and reclusive. Many Sufi practices, such as total submission to a Sufi pir, recollection of God (*dhikr*) in ritualistic circles, and pantheistic forms of saint worship, do not conform to the orthodox views represented by the formal intellectualism of the ʿulama.[9] The ʿulama have historically vacillated between resisting

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[7] Ibid., 278.
[8] The applicable Shiʿi jurisprudence is referred to as Jaʿfari fiqh.
[9] Basheer M. Nafi, *The Rise and Decline of the Arab-Islamic Reform Movement* (London: The Institute of Contemporary Islamic Thought, 2000), 13.

and tolerating these devotional practices of popular piety; the tolerance of Sufism has even extended to the inclusion of numbers of pirs in its ranks.

The three dominant Sufi orders found in Afghanistan are the Naqshbandi, the Qadiri, and the Cheshti. The above characterization of Sufis is challenged in Afghanistan by a form of Sufism that does not threaten the textual Islam of the 'ulama, a product of the reformist movement of Ahmed Sirhindi, discussed below, and despite the common association of unorthodox practices with Sufism, many Afghan 'ulama are also attached to a Sufi order and revered as pirs, especially in the north. The *pir-'alim* (master-scholar) practices a form of Sufism that does not rival formal religion, but rather, provides a more spiritual dimension for the 'alim who foremost respects the Shari'a. The dominant Naqshbandi order is most commonly associated with this more "orthodox" Sufism, but there are also some Cheshti and Qadiri brotherhoods that practice Sufism in a similar way.[10]

Maraboutism is a variation of Sufism in Afghanistan that involves a collective allegiance of a clan or tribe to a family of holy men. A disciple has a looser individual relationship to the pir. Hence, there is more of a superstitious veneration than a close master-pupil relationship involved. For example, the disciple only makes an annual pilgrimage to his master. The pir is not an 'alim and Marabout Sufism can be described as anti-clerical. This type of Sufism is more prominent in the south and often associated with the Qadiri order.[11]

5. *Reformist Fundamentalism*
The introduction of the term "fundamentalism" is fraught with difficulties. Nonetheless, it is a useful term if sufficiently clarified. Fundamentalism can denote a broad spectrum of attitudes. Foremost, fundamentalism implies a return to first things.[12] This paper primarily focuses on three variants of fundamentalism. The *madrasa* variant calls for a return to the study of the Quran and Sunna, the basis of Islam, without reference to the four schools of fiqh (Hanafi, Maliki, Hanbali, and Shafi'i). The fundamentalism variant of the 'ulama espouses a return to religious law, and, as discussed above, includes study of fiqh commentaries as well as of the sacred texts. This "return" involves both study and implementation of the Shari'a. Last, the Islamist variant propogates a return to practices of the first Muslim community; by advocating an Islamic state, the Islamists are seeking to reconstruct the social and political life of the Muslim community under Muhammad's leadership. For Islamists, the implementation of the Shari'a alone does not qualify a state as Islamic. The head of such a state should be the virtuous Commander of the Faithful (*amir al-mu'minin*), chosen according to Islamic principles, and all institutions should be based on the Quran and Sunna.[13]

Two reform movements emerged in the Indian subcontinent (Deobandism) as well as Saudi Arabia (Wahhabism) that have profoundly influenced Afghanistan. These movements can both be described as fundamentalist movements, most accurately ones

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[10] Roy, *Islam and Resistance*, 39, 40.
[11] Ibid., 40-41.
[12] Ibid., 3. Roy describes three variants: return to religious practice (fundamentalism of émigré circles), return to the Shari'a (fundamentalism of the 'ulama), and return to the study of the Quran and Sunna (fundamentalism of the madrasa). The first variant is irrelevant in our case, while the last two are insufficient to explain the way in which Islamists can be "fundamentalists" as well.
[13] Olivier Roy, *From Holy War to Civil War* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1995), 35.

corresponding to the fundamentalism of the madrasa. The movements differ from each other most significantly in how each views Sufism, and this has clear implications for their potency in Afghanistan, a country where Sufism, in its myriad forms, is especially pervasive.

5.a. Deobandism

Ahmad Sirhindi, a Naqshbandi Sufi and an 'alim born in India in the sixteenth century, began a movement that aimed to purify Islam of Hindu influence by returning to its basic sources (Quran and Sunna), while maintaining the integrity of its spiritual dimension. Thus he was able to formulate a form of Sufism that could coexist with the textual Islam of the 'ulama by bringing it under the aegis of the Shari'a. He emphasized that Truth (*haqiqa*) can be nothing but the Truth of the Shari'a, and that the test of an individual's ascent to God is the ability of that person to return to the world, to act, and to struggle within society.[14] He advised that if Sufi teachings contradicted the strict teachings of orthodox Islam, these Sufi teachers should not be followed.[15] While historically Naqshbandi Sufis were reclusive, Sirhindi stressed the importance of a strong relationship between the pir-'alim and political circles, believing that the ruler was instrumental in guiding Muslims along the straight path.[16] Sirhindi's teachings were the reaction of an orthodox 'alim and Naqshbandi shaykh to the syncretic practices in India at the time, and the Naqshbandi order that followed his teachings was henceforth known as the Naqshbandiyya Mujaddidiyya (*mujaddid* means "renewer").[17] A branch of his family, the Mujaddidis settled in Kabul in the nineteenth century, and the Naqshbandi order became the dominant Sufi order in Afghanistan.

Shah Waliullah (d. 1762), also an Indian Sufi and an 'alim, continued the work of Sirhindi. After embarking on the Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca, he joined study circles in Medina under the leadership of Shaykh Muhammad Hayat al-Sindi, who also taught Muhammad 'Abd al-Wahhab, discussed below. Upon his return to India, he increasingly emphasized unity, and thus tried to reconcile differences among the founders of the four schools of fiqh. He asserted that the truth did not lie within the boundaries of one school, and to this end, he stressed the importance of *ijtihad*, interpretation through individual reasoning, of the only eternally true sources, the Quran and Sunna. Shah Waliullah also sought to bridge the Sunni-Shi'i divide by repositioning their differences within the broader boundaries of Islam. His fundamentalist approach at times seemed to preclude approval of Sufism, but he asserted that as an individual pursuit, it could be accommodated, and indeed, for him, it still offered a path to experience of the divine. This attests to the popularity of Sufism in the region and the difficulty that reformist 'ulama experienced in their attempts to weaken its influence in the Indian subcontinent.[18]

A group of 'ulama in India, claiming the authority of Shah Waliullah, founded a madrasa at Deoband in 1867.[19] This Deoband school, however, did not purge its curriculum of all schools of fiqh in favor of the Quran and Sunna alone, but rather kept to

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[14] Fazlur Rahman. *Revival and Reform in Islam: A Study of Islamic Fundamentalism* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2000), 168.
[15] Nafi, *The Rise and Decline of Arab-Islamic Reform Movement*, 19.
[16] Rahman, *Revival and Reform in Islam*, 166.
[17] Nafi, *The Rise and Decline of the Arab-Islamic Reform Movement*, 20.
[18] Ibid., 21-23.
[19] Roy, *Islam and Resistance*, 57.

strict orthodoxy in accordance with Hanafi fiqh, and theology (works by al-'Ashari).
While rejecting the cult of the saints more often found in Maraboutism, and associated
with the puritan practices of the Barlevis, the Deoband school did accept the practice of
Sufism purged of unorthodox elements, and many teachers were associated with
Naqshbandi or Qadiri orders. Here we see the enduring influence of Sufism and Hanifism
on the Indian subcontinent. The thousands of madrasas that later appeared and call
themselves Deobandi are not necessarily formally tied to the original Deoband school,
but unequivocally share the same doctrinal orientation.[20]

Due to a dearth of prestigious private madrasa networks in Afghanistan, many
Afghan 'ulama are products of the Deobandi madrasa system, influenced by Ahmad
Sirhindi and Shah Waliullah.[21] Thus, the significance of these reformers to Afghanistan's
current situation, though outside the fold of Afghan society, cannot be overemphasized.
From 1920 on, however, when study at the Deoband school was prohibited, some
aspiring Afghan scholars began to seek their religious education at the conservative al-
Azhar University in Egypt.[22] In the 1940s, competition to the private madrasa system in
Afghanistan came in the form of government madrasas. Later, Islamists and Wahhabis
also began to set up madrasa networks there. [23]

5.b. Wahhabism
Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab (d. 1792) was a contemporary of Shah Waliullah. His
writings criticized the beliefs and customs of the Najdis in the Arabian Peninsula, where
social relations were organized on the basis of a customary code and parts of Islamic law
were fused with local traditions. Like Shah Waliullah, he pushed for a greater influence
of the orthodox 'ulama. Similarly, it was after his stay in Medina that he began
articulating his opposition to what he saw as non-Islamic aspects of Muslim life. He also
traveled to Basra, where he encountered a mixed Sunni-Shi'i population, which he
decried. This provoked his expulsion from the city by local 'ulama. His main concern,
unlike Shah Waliullah, was purity rather than unity.

Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab saw society in religious terms, and nowhere did he advocate
societal restructuring along political lines. His work was grounded strictly in the text of
the Quran and Sunna, and he gave no role to established methodology used to derive
fiqh.[24] However, after Wahhabism became the foundation of the Saudi state, it was
increasingly associated with the Hanbali school of fiqh.

Both Shah Waliullah and Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab gave primacy to the sacred texts,
making them both fundamentalist reformers. However, Wahhabism is distinguished by its
puritanical approach reflected in its total rejection of Sufism and hostility to Shi'ism.
Wahhabism has been influential in Central Asia since 1912 when a Medina native set up

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[20] Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press,
2002), 11. Ahmed Rashid notes that by 1967, there were over 9,000 Deobandi madrasas across south Asia.
Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia (New Haven: Yale University Press,
2000), 88.
[21] Roy, *Islam and Resistance*, 45.
[22] Eden Naby, "The Changing Role of Islam as a Unifying Force in Afghanistan," in *The State, Religion
and Ethnic Politics: Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan*, eds. Ali Banuazizi and Myron Weiner (Syracuse:
Syracuse University Press, 1986), 134.
[23] Roy, *Islam and Resistance*, 58.
[24] Nafi, *The Rise and Decline of the Arab-Islamic Reform Movement*, 24-28.

Wahhabi cells in Tashkent and the Ferghana Valley.[25] In the 1950s, Wahhabis began establishing madrasas in the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan, where many Afghans received schooling. Wahhabism also inspired provinces east of Kabul from the 1950s onward.[26] Though still relatively small, a Wahhabi following developed further after Saudi arms and money began to flow to the region in the 1980s.

6. *Shi'ism*

The development of Shi'ism finds its origins in the seventh century, when Muslims were faced with the issue of succession following the death of the Prophet Muhammad. The Party of 'Ali (*shi'at 'Ali*), cousin and son-in-law to the Prophet, supported him as the Prophet's rightful successor, although Abu Bakr emerged as the second leader of the Muslim community, despite these claims. Shi'is, therefore, see 'Ali's descendants as the rightful leaders (Imams) of the Muslim community. Shi'is and Sunnis also disagree as to the religious dimension of leadership. Sunnis insist that the leader of the community does not possess divine power, while Shi'is believe that the Imams are imbued with infallibility, and consider them vessels through which God provides guidance to the community. While the argument surrounding succession is the historical determiner of the split, Shi'is subsequently developed their own rich theological and legal literature, and are themselves split into multiple sectarian branches.

The Shi'a, who make up approximately 15-20 % of Afghanistan, are mainly comprised of ethnic Hazara and Qizilbash. At the level of popular Islam, there are many concepts and rituals common to Sunnis and Shi'is, and at the village level, differences between a Shi'i mulla and a Sunni mulla are difficult to ascertain.[27] Shi'i 'ulama, however, are educated in Iran or Iraq (Qom or Najaf) and each is trained as a *mujtahid* (person qualified to interpret Islamic law through ijtihad). While this paper deals primarily with Sunnis, the Shi'i presence in Afghanistan is important to recognize, as the Shi'a there did undergo a process of politicization similar to Sunni Islamists that are the focus of this paper.

7. *Pan-Islamism*

The unity of the entire community of Muslims (*umma*) is for many Muslims, and particularly for the 'ulama, an eternal fact unconnected with political realities. The political expression of pan-Islamism was a response to colonial expansion in the Muslim world and was articulated by the teachings of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (d. 1897), who spent his life traveling and propagating anti-imperialist pan-Islamism across the Muslim world.

Pan-Islamism for al-Afghani represented a unifying ideology that would mobilize believers to resist colonial forces. The strength of the West was seen in direct proportion to the decadence of Muslim societies. Revival and purification were necessary, and return to the Shari'a a concomitant imperative. Al-Afghani believed that Muslim countries did not need Western laws to treat new phenomena, and he opposed the adoption of

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[25] Rashid, *Taliban*, 85.

[26] Roy, *Islam and Resistance*, 72.

[27] Ibid., 51.

European courts and legal codes in Muslim countries.[28] Thus, he advocated resistance to foreign encroachment and tried to arm Muslims with the knowledge that their own religion was sufficient to treat any new situation. Essential to his thinking was the concept of a universal caliphate to implement the Shari'a. For this reason, pan-Islamism rejects nationalism, viewing it as divisive. Pan-Islamism as a political expression is in many ways the precursor to Islamist movements described herein. The primary distinction is that pan-Islamism is necessarily at odds with nationalism, a framework in which Islamists operate, though at times reluctantly.[29]

Despite the fact that al-Afghani spent most of his early life in Afghanistan,[30] pan-Islamism in its strictest sense did not take root in Afghanistan; rather, pan-Islamic sentiment was often manipulated by rulers in Afghanistan in the realm of foreign policy. In this way, Islam could not only be used to consolidate a nascent state, such as the ruler Abdur Rahman did in the late nineteenth century, but also to support foreign policy initiatives in the name of Muslim solidarity. These initiatives included campaigns of conquest as well as military aid to Muslims of other nations involved in conflict with non-Muslims.[31] Such politics continued into the reign of Abdur Rahman's successor, his son Habibullah, who was advised by the Afghan reformer Mahmud Tarzi (d. 1933). Tarzi had become familiar with pan-Islamic ideas during a brief period of exile in Damascus; he was most attracted to pan-Islamic arguments for modernization and did not advocate an Islamic caliphate.[32]

ISLAMISM (POLITICAL ISLAM)

As mentioned above, Islamism is the natural consequence of the pan-Islamism formulated by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, in that pan-Islamism was forced to operate in a system of modern nation-states. When al-Afghani traveled to Egypt in 1871, he taught at al-Azhar University, and his most devoted student and disciple, Muhammad 'Abduh, placed al-Afghani's teachings within the Egyptian context. 'Abduh agreed that the reform of Islam was necessary to resist the West, then encroaching on the Egyptian state in the form of the British colonialists. While he propounded the pan-Islamist ideology of his mentor, increasingly 'Abduh spoke in terms of Egypt, abandoning language that referred to a caliphate. 'Abduh often defended the concept of *watan* (nation), which ran counter to the Islamic ideal of the *umma* (Islamic community).[33] Overall, 'Abduh concentrated his efforts more locally than al-Afghani.

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[28] Walid Mahmoud Adbelnasser, *The Islamic Movement in Egypt* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1994), 30.

[29] For example, initially, Mawdudi opposed the creation of Pakistan. Islamist movements are generally torn between being national political parties contending for control of the state and being part of the struggle to achieve the realization of an ideal Muslim community, believing as they do that Islam offers a universal standard. See Frederic Grare, *Political Islam in the Indian Subcontinent: The Jamaat-i-Islami* (New Dehli: Manohar Publishers, 2002), 11-13.

[30] Nafi, *The Rise and Decline of the Arab-Islamic Reform Movement*, 34.

[31] Roy, *Islam and Resistance*, 62.

[32] Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1995), 99.

[33] Monroe Berger comments on a tendency in Islam to alternate between these two themes, as it at once instills in believers a strong sense of solidarity (as in the construct of the umma), as well as free association (whether through the watan, "nation," or other organizations) in which believers achieve the common goal of the right to individual conduct. Berger, *Islam in Egypt Today: Social and Political Aspects of Religion*

'Abduh referred to the movement he and al-Afghani advanced as "salafi." *Salaf* literally means "forefathers," and generally refers to the first generation of the Companions of the Prophet.[34] Salafis assert that the pure Islam of the early days of their forefathers was rational, practical and scientifically sound, and thus flexible and dynamic. According to the Salafis, Islam is inherently adaptable, and has been debilitated by the rigid structure imposed upon it by later generations. In advocating a return to the Quran and Sunna, Salafism is a reformist fundamentalist movement similar to Wahhabism and Deobandism. However, more emphasis is placed on reconciling Islam and modernity, and more attention is given to the early community as object of emulation. Al-Afghani and 'Abduh are also known as *nahda* (renaissance) intellectuals, as they are considered part of a larger Arab renaissance that developed in the latter half of the nineteenth century (1850-1914) and sought to assimilate modern Western achievements.[35]

As the confrontation with the West intensified, heirs to the Salafi movement were increasingly concerned with how to restore dignity to Islam, challenged by European hegemony. With the assault of colonialism and the dissemination of Western culture in the traditional setting of Islam, Muslim thinkers became conscious of a multitude of ruptures in society that were political, social, economic, and linguistic.[36] Faced with this religious and intellectual crisis, the thinkers gave birth to an Islamist program that envisioned a modern political movement, and sought to construct or transform power relations in society. Islamists saw an all-encompassing role for Islam that addressed society in its entirety: religion, politics, law, economics, and culture. They entrenched their ideology in religious terminology, though it was transparently political in nature. Since there exists no blueprint for, nor consensus on, the modalities of an Islamic political system within the sacred texts, the Islamist conception could provide the basis for either a conservative or a liberal form of government.[37] The defining characteristics of Islamism are its political ambitions and its decidedly modern goals and origins.[38]

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 3, 4. Charles Wendell details the evolution of the concept of umma and describes nationalism in those terms—as shift from the umma of the Prophet to the Egyptian umma, whereby the term remains the same, but the concept changes from a larger Islamic community to a smaller national community. Wendell, *The Evolution of the Egyptian National Image: From its Origins to Ahmed Lutfi al-Sayyid* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972).

[34] Muhammad 'Abduh conceived of the *Salaf* as not only the first generation of the Companions of the Prophet, but also the accomplishments of the third and fourth generations, according to Nemat Guenena, *The 'Jihad': An 'Islamic Alternative' in Egypt* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1986), 32.

[35] Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi', *Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence in the Modern Arab World* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 6.

[36] Ibid., 8.

[37] For example, see Gudrun Kramer, "Islamist Notions of Democracy," in *Middle East Report* (July/August, 1993), 2-8 for a discussion of Islamic concepts invoked by Islamist activists calling for pluralist democracy. See also Mumtaz Ahmad, "Parliament, Parties, Polls and Islam: Issues in the Current Debate on Religion and Politics in Pakistan," in *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, 2/1 (1985), 15-28 for an example of how Islam was used to justify a military dictatorship under Zia ul-Haq. What is important to glean from these discussions is that Islam is not useful for *explaining* the existence or non-existence of democratic forms of government, since Islam details only how an Islamic government might appear. Rather, it is vital to understanding issues of legitimacy.

[38] The origins of the members are modern in that they often come from urban environments and institutions of modern society, such as secular university faculties of science. The goals of the movement are modern in that they speak of Islam-as-ideology (not religion), that will compete with modern Western "isms" using modern technology and social organization.

1. *The Theoretical Basis of Islamism: Sayyid Qutb and Mawdudi*
The Salafi trend in Egypt gave birth to the Muslim Brotherhood, founded by Hasan al-Banna and transformed by his more radical disciple Sayyid Qutb. The same trend in Pakistan produced the Jamaat-e Islami, based on the writings of Abu 'Ala Mawdudi. The break between the reformist fundamentalism of the Salafi movement and political Islam or Islamism is encapsulated in the writings of these ideologues. For them, it is a religious duty to sever with a society in a state of *jahiliyya* (ignorance of Islam, as in pre-Islamic times), to establish a party of God, and to install God's sovereignty (*hakimiyyat Allah*) by establishing an Islamic government. Promoting social justice is also an imperative, beyond ensuring conformity to Shari'a. As mentioned above, the implementation of the Shari'a is not sufficient to qualify a government as Islamic; the head of state, or Commander of the Faithful, should be chosen according to Islamic precepts, and all institutions should be Islamic.

The emphasis on the early Muslim community in the writings of Sayyid Qutb is clear. However, it is important to note that Sayyid Qutb does not assert that the solution lies in the past, but rather that it is vital to look at the past to understand the issues at hand.[39] He explains that Islam is a practical religion, in that the history of the religion progressed in stages and that this process can be reconstructed in order to renew society if it once again falls into a state of jahiliyya.

> The requirement of Islamic belief is that it take shape in living souls, in an active organization, and in a viable community. It should take the form of a movement struggling against the jahili environment while also trying to remove the influences of jahili society in its followers, because they were people of Jahiliyya before the faith entered their soulds, and the influence of Jahiliyya might have remained in their hearts and minds as well as in their lives. Islamic belief has a much wider range of action than simply academic discussions, as it not only addresses itself to hearts and minds but also includes practices and morals.... From the above explanation we know that this religion has a particular method of action. Now we ought to know that this method is eternal.[40]

Jihad is an integral step in this progression. Sayyid Qutb writes:

> The causes of Islamic Jihad should be sought in the very nature of Islam and its role in the world, in its high principles, which have been given to it by God and for the implementation of which God appointed the Prophet-peace be on him-as His Messenger and declared him to be the last of all prophets and messengers.

> This religion is really a universal declaration of the freedom of man from servitude to other men and from servitude to his own desires, which is also a form of human servitude; it is a declaration that sovereignty belongs to God alone and that He is the Lord of all the worlds. It means a challenge to all kinds and forms of systems which are based on the concept of the sovereignty of man; in other words, where man has usurped the Divine attribute. Any system in which the final decisions are referred to human beings, and in which the sources of all authority are human, deifies human beings by designating others than God as lords over men. This declaration means that the usurped authority of

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[39] Abu-Rabi', *The Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence in the Modern Arab World*, 111.
[40] Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones* (Cedar Rapids, Ind.: Unity Publishing Company, 1981), 39-40.

God be returned to Him and the usurpers be thrown out-those who by themselves devise laws for others to follow, thus elevating themselves to the status of lords and reducing others to the status of slaves. In short, to proclaim the authority and sovereignty of God means to eliminate all human kingship and to announce the rule of the Sustainer of the universe over the entire earth. [41]

He reproves those who would define jihad as defensive:

> Anyone who understands this particular character of this religion will also understand the place of Jihad bis saif (striving through fighting), which is to clear the way for striving through preaching in the application of the Islamic movement. He will understand that Islam is not a 'defensive movement' in the narrow sense which today is technically called a 'defensive war.' This narrow meaning is ascribed to it by those who are under the pressure of circumstances and are defeated by the wily attacks of the orientalists, who distort the concept of Islamic Jihad. It was a movement to wipe out tyranny and to introduce true freedom to mankind, using resources according to the actual human situation, and it had definite stages, for each of which it utilized new methods.

> If we insist on calling Islamic Jihad a defensive movement, then we must change the meaning of the word 'defense' and mean by it 'the defense of man' against all those elements which limit his freedom. These elements take the form of beliefs and concepts, as well as of political systems, based on economic, racial or class distinctions. When Islam first came into existence, the world was full of such systems, and the present-day Jahiliyyah also has various kinds of such systems.[42]

It is clear that within this definition of jihad, the government (even if it claims to be Islamic) can become a legitimate target for Islamists as they strive to establish a truly "Islamic" state. It is unclear here, however, whether or not members of society, who also live in a state of jahiliyya may be considered "infidels" and also become targets.[43] It is on this point that many Islamist groups have split, since it largely determines their diagnosis of society and thus their stance on the potential scope for the use of violence.

Mawdudi's writings resonate with Sayyid Qutb's view:

> You have come to know that the cause of the evils which spread among God's servants is a bad government and that it is necessary for reforming it to set right the root-cause. But the question now arises as to what is the basic cause of the badness of the government itself; where is the root of this evil; and what basic reform should be effected in it in order to wipe out the evils mentioned above? The answer to this question is that the lordship of man is over man is the root-cause and there is no other method of reform except that there should be sovereignty of God over man.[44]

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[41] Ibid., 57-58.
[42] Ibid., 61-62.
[43] An infidel is a *kafir* (pl. *kuffar)*, and proclaiming someone a *kafir* is called *takfir*.
[44] Sayyid Abu 'Ala' Mawdudi, *Let us be Muslims*, (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 2002), on the Web at http://www.youngmuslims.ca/online_library/books/let_us_be_muslims/ch7top28.html.

Like Sayyid Qutb, Mawdudi saw the existing governments as the crux of the problem; likewise he advocates the total transformation of society beyond the implementation of the Shari'a. He sees jihad as the means to remove the servitude of man to other men:

> In the eyes of Islam it is certainly not enough for you to believe God as God and His law as true law. Simultaneous with your faith in these two verities, the duty devolves on you that wherever you are, in whichever country you live, you must get up there for the reform of God's creation, try to transform the wrong principles of government into correct principles, snatch away the power of legislation and lordship from those who do not fear God and are unbridled. And then taking over the leadership and superintendence of God's servants, conduct the affairs of the government in accordance with God's laws and with belief in their responsibility and accountability in the Hereafter as also in God being the Knower of the unseen. The name of this striving is Jihad.[45]

The ideology of Sayyid Qutb and Mawdudi is revolutionary in that it seeks to alter the existing social order and rebuild it in conformity with its own ideals. The revolution should be launched against existing regimes as well as fiqh, which accommodates the present society. True believers should join together under the authority of a ruler (*amir*) in forming a counter-society, a vanguard of the faithful, reflecting what the whole umma should one day be.[46]

2. *Islamism in Egypt and Pakistan*

Both Egypt and (what later came to be) Pakistan were intensely exposed to Western influences prior to the emergence of Islamism there. Both adopted Western patterns of political, legal, social, and economic development, as they each had long and complicated relationships with the West. Egypt, though never officially a colony, was occupied by British forces as early as 1882, and was exposed to the French presence from 1798 with Napoleon's invasion. Until partition in 1947, Pakistan was part of British India, where British presence dates back to the early seventeenth century.

Inasmuch as Islamism was a response to the cultural crisis caused by exposure to the West, it was also a response to the crisis of nationalism. In Egypt, the defeat of the Arabs in the Six Day War of June 1967 at the hands of Israel represented a blow to the socialist Arab nationalism espoused by Gamal Abd al-Nasser, who had led the Egyptian coup to overthrow the Western-leaning monarchy. In Pakistan, after Islam had provided the *raison d'être* for the new nation, serious questions arose as to what role Islam would play in informing the ideology and institutions of the state otherwise segmented along regional, linguistic, and ethnic lines. The ruling establishment in Pakistan in the 1970s consisted of the socialist Pakistan People's Party (PPP). The writings of Sayyid Qutb and Mawdudi proposed Islam as the cultural, social, and political standard in response to these socialist nationalist projects. Though the Islamist rhetoric indicated that nationalism was incompatible with Islam, recalling the pan-Islamism of al-Afghani, pan-Islamist aspirations quickly gave way to political reality. It became clear that they did not oppose nationalism itself, but rather a secular nationalism. Mawdudi declared,

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[45] Ibid.
[46] Roy, *From Holy War to Civil War*, 35.

...it is natural for me to wish and pray that my nation should have the proud privilege of leading the Islamic revolution in the present age, of being the first of the nations to adopt Islam in its totality, and to set up a model Islamic society which should serve as an example and a beacon for the rest of mankind.[47]

Hence, Pakistani Islamists pushed forth an Islamic nationalism, in hopes that other nations would follow suit.

The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt developed into a mass movement that enjoyed the support of urban youth from educated and deprived backgrounds, as well as the devout middle class, excluded from political power. Although the two groups were committed to the idea of an Islamic state, they differed as to how that state might materialize. The former, which developed into student groups that made up the Gama'at Islamiyya, was more inclined to view the process in social-revolutionary terms, promoting radical readings of Sayyid Qutb, while the latter saw a power struggle between themselves and incumbent elites that would not completely overturn the existing social structure. The Brotherhood successfully won the broadest base of support when they couched their political ideology in Islamic terms and emphasized morality, without offering a detailed social agenda. For its part, the regime tried to woo the devout bourgeoisie. This effort is epitomized in President Anwar Sadat's *infitah*, or economic opening, that sought to win the support of more moderate elements of the Muslim Brotherhood by offering the opportunities in a newly privatized economy.[48] When a coalition of the two groups collapsed, radical and moderate elements canceled each other out and Islamists failed to seize power.[49]

In Egypt, acts of violence by more radical Islamists allowed the state to discredit the Islamist movement as a whole. Especially horrific were terrorists acts committed by a group of Gama'at members arrested in the Nasser era, who, once released, formed the splinter groups al-Takfir wa-l-Hijra and Islamic Jihad. The former kidnapped and murdered a religious cleric, and the latter claimed responsibility for the assassination of President Sadat.[50] Takfir wa-l-Hijra, as its name suggests, took Sayyid Qutb's theory to its limit, and included civilian members of society as *kuffar* (infidels), and thus legitimate targets. Members of the devout bourgeoisie were thus shocked into joining the ruling faction, even as they were enticed with a minimal Islamization program or economic benefits. The violence allowed the Egyptian regime to instigate a campaign of repression against the entire movement.

In Pakistan, the more gradual approach of Mawdudi (when compared to Sayyid Qutb) found favor with the educated middle classes; it did not garner as much support among the masses as did Sayyid Qutb and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.[51] However, Jamaat-e Islami did have an associated youth branch, the Islami Jamiat-i Tulaba (IJT), which constituted an important force. As in Egypt, it included the more radical elements of the movement, and the group took recourse to violence on university campuses.[52] The

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[47] As quoted in Grare, *Political Islam in the Indian Subcontinent*, 24.
[48] Kepel, *Jihad*, 83.
[49] Ibid., 67.
[50] David Zeidan, "Radical Islam in Egypt," in *Revolutionaries and Reformers: Contemporary Islamist Movements in the Middle East*, ed. Barry Rubin (Albany: State Univeristy of New York Press, 2003), 13.
[51] Kepel, *Jihad*, 24.
[52] Grare, *Political Islam on the Indian Subcontinent*, 34, 37.

PPP under Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto tried to reduce the influence of Islamists by embarking on a campaign of Islamization, and founded a newspaper called *Musawat* that provided a mouthpiece for the Islamic justification of the PPP's policies. Nasser had established the paper *Minbar al-Islam* in Egypt for a similar purpose.[53] The Jamaat-e Islami, unlike the Muslim Brotherhood, was able to withstand government measures to diminish its influence. In the late 1970s, to stabilize his dictatorship, Zia ul-Haq promoted Islamism to the status of state ideology. Thus, Islamists and members of the devout bourgeoisie were successfully co-opted by the ruling camp, and were less tempted to ally with the more radicalized youth.[54] By 1984, the government outlawed all student unions, the IJT being the most powerful among them, and brutally repressed remnants of IJT resistance.[55]

The Islamist movements in these two countries both failed to secure control of the state for similar reasons. The coalition formed by Islamist intellectuals of the devout bourgeoisie and the urban youth disintegrated as the ruling camp was able to woo the middle-class elements. Realizing their predicament, the more restive factions radicalized, and increasingly employed violence. This violence enabled the regimes to repress these elements or even discredit the movement as a whole. It is noteworthy that the only successful Islamist project to date, that of the Iranian revolution, was able to build on and maintain this broad-based coalition, essential to capturing control of the state.

AFGHAN CONTEXT

1. *The Birth of the Islamist Movement in Afghanistan*
The Islamist movement in Afghanistan emerged in the late 1950s in the intellectual setting of Kabul University. It was initially supported by Dr. Gholam Mohammad Niazi, Dean of the Faculty of Religious Sciences, after his return from Egypt.[56] It is noteworthy that the Islamist movement in Afghanistan took its inspiration from the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt,[57] more so than from Islamists in Pakistan, though their influence can also be detected. This is largely because many of the professors who started the movement in Afghanistan, like Niazi, were educated in Egypt.

A group of "professors," led by Burhanuddin Rabbani, called the movement Jamiat-e Islami (not to be confused with the Pakistani Jamaat-e Islami), and focused on cultural activity within the student body. They began translating the works of foreign Islamists and introducing political Islam as a modern ideology. These included Sayyid Qutb's *Islam and Social Justice*, *Milestones*, and parts of his *In the Shade of the Quran*.[58] Mawdudi's works were also widely read, but his influence increased only after a number of Afghan Islamists went into exile in Pakistan in the late 1970s.[59]

From 1965-1972, the university campus was the scene of ardent political activism. It is noteworthy that the communist party in Afghanistan was founded in 1965

[53] John Esposito, "Islam: Ideology and Politics in Pakistan," in *The State, Religion and Ethnic Politics in Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan*, eds. Ali Banuazizi and Myron Weiner, 340.
[54] Kepel, *Jihad*, 101
[55] Grare, *Political Islam on the Indian Subcontinent*, 40, 41.
[56] Olivier Roy, "The Origins of the Islamist Movement in Afghanistan" in *Central Asian Survey* 3(2) (1984), 117.
[57] Roy, *Islam and Resistance*, 69.
[58] Ibid., 70.
[59] Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*, 229.

after the liberalization that followed the promulgation of the 1964 constitution. During this time, a more radical student branch of the Islamist movement developed and became increasingly active. This movement, called Sazman-i Jawanan-i Musulman (Organization of Muslim Youth), led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar (a student of engineering), demonstrated frequently, primarily in opposition to the establishment in Afghanistan, targeting King Zahir Shah and his cousin Prime Minister Daoud, and protesting the allowance of foreign influence into the affairs of Afghanistan.[60] They aggressively opposed the communists, who outnumbered Islamists on campus until 1970, when the latter won a majority in the student elections.[61]

In 1975, members of the Organization of Muslim Youth attempted to organize a popular uprising against the regime, but instead, the poorly coordinated movement only resulted in government repression.[62] Different outlooks on strategy led to a clash between the Jamiat-e Islami represented by the "professors" and the Muslim Youth. After the failed uprising, surviving elements of the Islamists movement went into exile in Peshawar.

2. *Constraints on the Growth of Afghan Islamism*
As mentioned above, the confrontation with the West through colonial projects in the Muslim world more than anything generated the environment from which Islamism emerged. Afghanistan, itself never a colony or protectorate, was not subject to as intense an interaction with the Western world as Egypt or Pakistan. Until the Soviet invasion in 1979, Islam in Afghanistan was not felt to be threatened from the outside.[63] This denotes the key difference between the Islamist movement in Afghanistan and elsewhere in the Muslim world. It is for this reason that we see a burgeoning Islamist movement coming out of a limited space where Westernization was most pervasive: Kabul University. And here, Islamist recruits, like their counterparts elsewhere in the Muslim world, came primarily from the governmental educational system.[64]

Moreover, this more isolated theater of East versus West confrontation also explains why in Afghanistan Islamism did not develop the mass support base that we see in Egypt, for example. In Afghanistan, where the domestic confrontation between the capital and the countryside has been the over-arching theme in history, the population has been more concerned with resisting the state than foreign ideologies. Asta Olesen, in *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*, explains,

> In Afghanistan, where the social and economic development was considerably slower than in the neighboring countries and the cultural polarization thus less pronounced, the Islamic revival movement was felt among the small group of educated young, rather than in the population at large. Since the revival largely affected the educated middle class, there was a comparatively close correspondence between revival as a social-psychological phenomenon and the spreading of the religio-political ideology of what came to be known as the 'Islamism.'[65]

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[60] Roy, *Islam and Resistance*, 71.
[61] Roy, "The Origins of the Islamist Movement in Afghanistan," 119.
[62] Roy, *Islam and Resistance*, 75.
[63] Naby, "The Changing Role of Islam as a Unifying Force," 127.
[64] Roy, *Islam and Resistance*, 69.
[65] Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*, 227, 228.

Moreover, Afghans who saw themselves as exemplary Muslims, unaffected by corruptive Westernization, would hardly respond to calls for re-Islamization.[66]

From the late 1950s, then, the Islamist movement was unable to mobilize any noteworthy popular support. The large numbers of poor urban youth were missing from this Islamist equation. Afghanistan did not experience the massive demographic changes occurring elsewhere in the Muslim world. There had been no massive rural-to-urban migration in the preceding years. On the university campus, however, a small group of Islamists daily mixed with communists, to whom they were fiercely opposed. Islam, through the formulation of Islamism, became the ideological antidote to communism.

Just before the invasion of the Soviets, however, the population at large became increasingly agitated by the pervasive reforms initiated by the Marxist government in 1978. For the first time, the rural areas that comprised the majority of the Afghan population were challenged by foreign ideas. As anthropologist Jon Anderson explains,

> What convulsed the population were the heavy doses of Marxist propaganda combined with abrupt, confused and arbitrary attempts of newly posted, inexperienced officials to impose such changes. The irrelevance of Marxist class theory to the essentially segmentary character of Afghan society aside, the peasants and the nomads reacted to what they saw as interference in religious and social matter, not improvements, in the fiats declared by the new regime.[67]

Direct confrontation with rural sensitivities resulted in a revolt, first in Nuristan, followed by Uzbek, Tajik, and Pashtun areas of Afghanistan. This uprising prompted the invasion of the Soviets in December of 1979.

The watershed moment for Islamists was the Soviet invasion. Islamists, in exile in Pakistan since 1975, provided ready-made jihad groups (*mujahiddin*) to channel the resistance. The call for jihad played the key role in marshalling support for the Islamists. Absent such a confrontation, it is unlikely that the Islamist movement would have been able to influence Afghan society at large.

3. *Importance of Traditional Social Structure and Tribal Identities*
As discussed above, Afghanistan is a highly segmented society, divided along ethnic and tribal lines. At the same time, Afghanistan is a society composed almost exclusively of Muslims. Afghans of all ethnicities recognize the need to defend the community of believers against the infidel. When jihad is invoked to confront the threat, it brings an increased authority to religious figures, at the expense of the khan, the traditional rural community leader and landowner whose authority is secular. In terms of Muslim solidarity versus tribal solidarity, it is better for the khan to come to an agreement with an enemy who will recognize his local standing, rather than win the jihad and lose his identity within the tribe. This explains the absence of a khan at the head of any mujahiddin group. Historically, an external threat gives Islam its power over tribal solidarity, but the traditional society and its leadership re-emerges.[68] It is a process that

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[66] Anderson, "How Afghans Define Their Relation to Islam," 266-287.
[67] Naby, "The Changing role of Islam as a Unifying Force," 117, 118.
[68] Roy, *Islam and Resistance*, 60-62.

has repeated itself time and again—traditional structures are for a time subordinated to functions of religion, and then resume their rightful order.

Defensive jihad is a familiar theme in Afghanistan. However, as mentioned above, Islamists have aspired to reinstate the notion of offensive jihad as a political strategy. Despite the fact that Islamists invoked Islamic terms at every stage of the Afghan jihad, popular discourse demonstrated the enduring elements of tribal identity for many. For example, while Islamists referred to exile as *hijra*, recalling the experience of the Prophet as he emigrated from Mecca to Medina to consolidate the community, many tribal elements conceived of their stay in Pakistan in terms of such tribal concepts as *milmastiya* (hospitality), *nanawatia* (refuge) or *panah* (asylum), obligations they imposed on their tribal brothers.[69] Islamists can draw upon tribal identity inasmuch as it overlaps with religious identity, but there are elements of the tribal structure and identity that continuously provide a source of tension.

The nature of the relationship between Islamists and the 'ulama during the jihad is not obvious or automatic. On the one hand, one would expect the relationship between Islamists and the 'ulama to be one of cooperation. After all, the 'ulama also support the implementation of the Shari'a, and they are not competitors for political power. An alliance with the 'ulama could only help Islamists in their drive for power. This was the attitude taken by some Islamists, especially those who comprised the Jamiat under Rabbani. However, Hekmatyar's group of Muslim Youth did not share this outlook. For the increasingly revolutionary Islamists, the 'ulama were too close to the establishment. Moreover, the 'ulama had their own views of the Islamists. In some cases, the 'ulama were amenable to membership in the Jamiat and the Muslim Youth (though understandably less often). However, for the most part, the 'ulama were distressed at the increasing radicalism of the Islamist movement and kept their distance.

As for the Afghan Sufis, those for whom the Deoband school influence was strongest were, not surprisingly, most open to the Islamist platform. These included the Naqshbandi pir of the Kabul region, where many Naqshbandis were members of the Islamist movement. The Islamists' attitude toward Sufis varied: For the most part, they condemned Sufism as a misrepresentation of Islam, but some were more symphathetic, paying homage to past pirs, while condemning the current generation.[70]

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While the traditional structures of Afghan society and conceptions of identity outside of Islam have not been entirely decimated, it is clear that the jihad against the Soviets drove many Afghans into refugee camps, where they became a potential recruitment pool which probably would not have been available otherwise. Islamists provided a vehicle for resistance against a foreign invader, as well as an education to a refugee population in madrasas that served to narrate their pre-packaged ideology. Moreover, many refugees were not only exposed to, but also raised in an increasingly Islamized Pakistan under Zia ul-Haq. Undoubtedly, political expectations of a younger generation of Afghans have been altered by the exposure to this model. Overall, the Afghan jihad destroyed pre-war

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[69] Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*, 278.
[70] Ibid., 249, 250.

elites and led to the development of new political elites founded on a prominent role for young people and Islamist ideologues.[71]

After the Soviets withdrew from Aghanistan, the mujahiddin attempted to form an Islamic state under Rabbani. However, intense internecine fighting between 1992 and 1995 severely damaged their aspirations for an Islamic state.[72] While this failure might indicate that the idea of an Islamic state has been discredited altogether, we must remember that the Islamic state under Rabbani was unable to implement any Islamist policy in the face of military opposition from his rival, Hekmatyar.

Moreover, it was this intense infighting that resulted in the rise of the Taliban, who were welcomed by the majority of Afghans, weary of disorder and violence. The prolonged war, continuing long after the Soviet withdrawal, maintained the new elites that had developed as a result of the jihad. It is clear that the recruitment source of the Taliban were those many young Afghans, born in Pakistan, who had attended the Deobandi madrasas run by Pakistan's Islamists, the Jamaat-e-Ulema Islam (JUI).[73]

Many scholars agree that much about the Taliban remains a mystery. Although their goals are perhaps still unclear, the Taliban formed a movement motivated by Islam and their desire to unify and purify Afghanistan. It is important to note here that the Islamists and the Taliban differ in important ways. The Islamists were closer to the Marxists than the Taliban in that they developed (or borrowed) an all-inclusive ideology and sought to impose radical change on the traditional social structure through revolution from the top. The Taliban, on the other hand, set out as a pure reformist movement, not echoing Islamists, Sufis, or traditionalists. They have in common that both were unwilling to accept the realities on the ground, which led to their failure.

Many have pointed out that the Deobandi background of the Taliban provided the basis for their ideas. It can be said that they represented an extreme form of Deobandism, sometimes called neo-Deobandism, preached by Pakistani Islamic parties in Afghan refugee camps. The JUI, headed by Maulana Fazlur Rehman, was instrumental in establishing hundreds of Deobandi madrasas in the North-West Frontier Province, as well as in Baluchistan. Mullas who taught at these schools were far removed from the original Deobandi reformist agenda, however. Their interpretation of the Shari'a, which many characterize as very strict, was actually heavily influenced by the tribal code of the Pashtuns. However, like the Deobandis, the Taliban opposed the tribal and feudal structure, and did not allow traditional tribal chiefs in leadership positions. These neo-Deobandi Taliban were also more sympathetic to the Wahhabi creed.[74] They enforced a restricted role for women (Islamists favored the education of women and their participation in social life), rejected Sufism, and were vehemently anti-Shi'i. The Taliban are opposed to modernism, which even the most radical Islamists adopt. From what is known, they governed without reference to any scholarship on Islamic or Afghan history and can be said to have lacked a sense of history. Islamists on the other hand include themselves in a long historical tradition of debate and scholarly thought. Though no

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[71] Larry Goodson, *Afghanistan's Endless War: State Failure, Regional Politics, and the Rise of the Taliban* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), PAGES.

[72] Roy, "Has Islamism a Future in Afghanistan?" in *Fundamentalism Reborn: Afghanistan and the Taliban*, ed. William Maley (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 207.

[73] Rashid, *Taliban*, 26.

[74] Rashid, *Taliban*, 86-90.

Afghan theorist rose to prominence, Afghan Islamists wrote their own commentaries in the same vein as their Egyptian and Pakistani mentors.

       Today, despite the violence of the experiences of the Islamic governments of Rabbani and the Taliban, one cannot ignore the fact that Afghan society has become more Islamized, or rather more politically Islamized after these experiences. The traditional structures of power have been severely damaged by a quarter-century of war, and the new generation has no memory of the old structure to which the society historically reverted after facing an external threat. In particular, the khan class, which was the paternalistic authority upon with the central government depended, has been destroyed. Moreover, the intense exposure to fundamentalist Islam as ideology (as well as to the Taliban) has resulted in the decline of the influence of Sufism, traditionally a moderating force that emphasizes the greater jihad, or spiritual striving, in favor of the lesser jihad, or striving through fighting.[75]

       History shows that Islamists succeed only when they can successfully garner a broad base of popular support. The Islamists are still powerful players in Afghanistan, and it remains to be seen whether or not the powers-that-be can reign them in by sufficiently Islamizing institutions while maintaining a largely secular government, as is so far the case in Egypt and Pakistan. As has been shown, Islamists successfully won the broadest base of support when they couched their ideology in Islamic terms and emphasized morality, without offering a detailed social agenda. Afghan Islamists are currently forming alliances that suggest such ambiguity. It remains to be seen whether or not these appeals to morality will be sufficient to win the combined support of the urbanized youth and the middle-class that will re-emerge in Afghanistan.

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[75] Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*, 250.