Introduction

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With the turn of the twenty-first century, scholarship and policy debate on Islam and Muslim societies have come to focus primarily on Islam's ability to make young Muslims—both men and women—gravitate towards violent anti-modernity movements. If September 11th established the threat to the West from jihadi groups who had found safe havens within ungoverned spaces such as war-torn Afghanistan, the November 2015 attacks in Paris (and later the March 2016 attacks in Brussels), planned and executed by European-born Muslims, have been interpreted as confirming the threat posed to the West from within by militant Islam.[i] Further, within policy circles and even academia there is a strong impulse to attribute not only jihadist violence, but also the overall socio-economic and political stagnation experienced in many Muslim societies, to Islamic theological or legal dictates.[ii] The persistence of authoritarian rule in many Muslim countries is routinely attributed to an alleged incompatibility between Islam and democracy, as is any evidence of women's marginalization. As a result, the interpretative rigidity of the '*ulamā'* (traditionally trained Islamic scholars) who control the mosques and the *madrasah*s, the primary platforms for transmission of Islamic knowledge, routinely comes under scrutiny: many are accused of promoting radical ideas encouraging Muslims to resist Western modernity. These assertions, however, ignore much evidence which proves otherwise.

Firstly, a growing number of studies show the need to distinguish between Islam (a set of scriptural beliefs) and the lived experiences of Muslim societies. The sheer diversity of institutional arrangements within Muslim societies across the globe and across time show how they have been shaped by local socio-economic and political institutions, and not only by religious dictates. The burgeoning theoretical literature on institutions, of which religious belief is but one, convincingly illustrates how any given individual action or collective societal outcome is contingent on a complex interplay among different institutions: in Douglass North's terminology, the "institutional matrix".[iii] Rarely is one institution the sole shaper of an individual or collective societal outcome. Second, scholarship in the field of Islamic studies demonstrates how classical Islamic educational tradition is intellectually much too rich and methodologically far too complex to endorse such narrow and literalist

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interpretations of the texts as the jihadis deploy when they extract *Qurʾānic* verses out of context in defence of their attacks. Studies of the working of the four Sunni *madhhab*s (schools of law) show the complex set of rules that classical Islamic scholarly tradition uses when interpreting a particular *Qurʾānic* verse.[iv]

At the same time, survey data tell us that most Muslims do not endorse the violence perpetrated in the name of Islam, that they are active participants in modern institutions, and that quite often it is a sense of injustice (whether genuine or imagined) rather than religious beliefs that makes people vulnerable to the calls of the jihadist.[v] Even the relatively simplistic media commentaries on Islam acknowledge its rich civilizational past, when Muslim societies contributed to the flourishing of science, arts, and the humanities—advancements which, as the historians of classical Islamic scholarly tradition note, in turn contributed to the rise of Western humanism.[vi] Yet this evidence is normally easily dismissed, and the challenges faced by Muslim societies and communities are attributed to the influence of Islamic texts. Even within scholarly literature, little effort has been made to understand competing Islamic intellectual trends at a global level, the specific historical and societal contexts in which they emerged, and what moral and ethical advice they offer to their followers. Despite the growth in studies of Islam and Muslim societies since September 11th, comparative studies on Islamic intellectual thought and Muslim societies are rare. Such a comparative approach is essential if we are to move beyond simplistic assertions about an inevitable clash of civilizations between Islam and modernity; it is also critical to understanding the future of Islamic thought, and which strands within it are gaining prominence among Muslim youth, and why. This two-volume project is designed to fill this gap: it focuses on the current debates within the most influential scholarly platforms in Sunni Islam[vii], explains how these institutions attained their current position in the first place, and maps the socio-economic and political context which is shaping their current *fiqhi* (Islamic jurisprudence) debates and the advice that they provide to Muslims of today.

As is often noted, Islam does not have a Vatican; the importance of the proposed project thus rests in recognizing that there have always been, at any given point in time, Islamic scholarly platforms with the popular authority to define for the masses what it means to be a believing Muslim. Scholars trained in these institutions have played a significant role in defining the legitimate application of Islamic legal and theological debate across different times and contexts.[viii] They have thus defined the moral compass for Muslim believers,

making study of *'ulamā'* and their scholarship a central strand of Western scholarship on Islam and Muslim societies. The plurality of Islamic thought within Sunni Islam is in fact embedded in the existence of these parallel Islamic authority platforms, whose differing approaches to reconciling the apparent tension between Islam and modernity often result in them being differentiated by labels such as 'orthodox', 'conservative', 'traditional', 'moderate', 'progressive', or 'liberal'. Such casual use of these complex and contested terms understandably often irks scholars of Islamic Studies: a specific institutional methodology of Islamic reasoning can, as we will see in these two volumes, be orthodox yet socially progressive (examples include the classical al-Azhari approach discussed in Chapter 3, and the neo-traditionalism of Humza Yusuf and Tim Winter discussed in Volume 2); while a highly conservative social milieu can in terms of its underlying methodology be unorthodox (see discussion on Saudi Salafism in Chapter 6).

Yet, while being cautious to avoid simplistic labelling, the need to distinguish between the competing Islamic methodologies employed by leading Islamic authorities to deal with the subject of change and the diverse societal implications of their rulings makes it inevitable for any comparative analysis to develop some analytically meaningful categories of differentiation. In this volume institutions have mainly been classified as advancing one of the two approaches: Islam as a civilization and Islam as a theology. The *civilizational approach* to Islam requires that Islam should not simply be equated with its theological texts. Rather, it should be interpreted in the light of the creative spirit that it has inspired since its revelation: a spirit which led to the birth of a dynamic Islamic civilization, which not only flourished economically and militarily but which also supported major scientific advancements, provided models of good governance, and gave birth to distinctive Islamic arts, poetry, and architecture that continue to generate awe to this day.[ix]

According to this civilizational approach, respect for the Islamic legal tradition established by the four Sunni *madhhab*s remains important; but so, too, do scholars known for their contribution to Islamic philosophy, intellectual mysticism, and humanism, with a particular interest being shown in the work of Imām al-Ghazālī (1058–1111), Ibn Rushd (1126–1198), Ibn 'Arabi (1165-1240), and Sufi poets such as Jalal al-Din Rumi (1207–1273). Thus, rather than narrowly focusing on theological beliefs, Islamic arts, architecture, and poetry take on an equal importance. Many young, educated Muslims, who I have interviewed across different Muslim countries, nurture an active desire to revive that creative intellectual

energy which they see as an essential part of Islamic society in its prime. It is an approach that has confidence in Islam's ability to find optimal answers to the needs of the time: answers which, rather than shunning or mimicking Western modernity, might actually be able to enrich and improve upon it (an approach similar to that of Humza Yusuf and Tariq Ramadan, to name a few, who despite their different methodological approaches argue that Muslims can enrich modernity and not merely mimic it—see Volume 2). Such an approach is also in sync with critiques of modernity by some Western thinkers who argue that the increasingly materialistic and isolated mode of modern existence is contributing to an increasing sense of inner emptiness.[x] Here it is also important to note that this approach is distinct from one adopted by the Muslim modernists, most post-colonial Muslim political elites included, who have tried to reform Islamic norms to fit Western liberal framework (see Chapter 3 for a contemporary example of this approach in form of the religious revolution promised by al-Sisi). The key to civilizational approach is its emphasis on loyalty to Islamic legal and moral framework but with equal emphasis on Islamic humanistic and philosophical tradition.

The *theological approach* to Islam, on the other hand, is more inward-looking. It more often than not is also more prone to adopting literalistic readings of the text, which often seem to place Islam and Western modernity in sharp opposition to one another; examples include the Deobandi aversion to watching TV or use of photography, or some Salafis' aspiration to live as if they were still living in the times of the Prophet. The result is disengagement, either complete or partial, from what is seen as Western modernity (given that it is seen as a product of the Western liberal tradition); or worse, vocal and armed resistance to it, as voiced by groups such as al-Qaida and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). The theological approach is noticeable for its resistance to philosophical strands within Islamic sciences, as is visible in its proponents' active condemnation of the work of scholars such as Ibn Rushd and Ibn 'Arabi. It is very important to note that in itself such an approach is not hostile to the West; but in some cases, such as certain strands of Saudi Salafism, it has been accused of precisely that. The latter's strong emphasis on *takfīr* (excommunication) is argued to provide intellectual justifications for radical extremism of the kind associated with al-Qaida and the ISIS. Its inward-looking theological approach and its propensity to endorse radical jihad reflect a certain lack of confidence in Islam's ability to shape modernity and to preserve Islamic belief against the lure of Western modernity.

The civilizational approach thus refers to an outlook, which allows Muslims a degree of flexibility (though within clear limits) to adapt to modern institutions and realities. The theological approach insists on preserving practices as they were understood to be in the seventh century at the time of the birth of Islam, irrespective of how the world around has changed since then. Both approaches claim to be guardians of authentic Islamic tradition; however, they vary in their modes of engagement with the texts and thus lead to quite different societal implications in all areas of social, economic or political activity. The volume thus is focused on institutions which all claim to adhere to traditional Islamic scholarship yet their methods of understanding the tradition vary considerably. A more nuanced understanding of the specific methodological tools used by scholars within these influential Islamic authority centers to answer modern-day questions is not exclusively relevant to Islamic-studies scholars: such an inquiry can also help to decipher each institution's ability to retain its influence over the next generation of Muslims. While *ijtihād* (independent reasoning) and *qiyās* (deductive analogy) remain central methodological pillars within the Islamic intellectual tradition, enabling the Islamic moral and legal codes to be responsive to the changing needs of the time, the manner and frequency of their employment is shaped by the specific intellectual legacy of a given institution, by the societal conditions in which it emerged and continues to evolve, and (arguably most critically) by the nature of its relationship with political authority and the changing subjectivities of ordinary Muslims.

This two-volume project is aimed at mapping today's most influential Islamic authority platforms across the globe — institutions that are instrumental in shaping Muslims' conceptions of their faith. Volume 1 focuses on the four most influential institutions to emerge across four different Muslim-majority regions. Volume 2 covers the new Islamic authority structures emerging in the West; some are entirely home-grown, while others are an extension of the institutions studied in this volume. Together, the two volumes map the most influential Islamic authority structures in the Sunni Muslim world today, unpacking the modes of reasoning that scholars within these institutions deploy; examining both the historical and political considerations that made them choose these specific approaches; and illuminating which of these rival institutional platforms, and the scholarly tradition which each harbors, is best placed to enable young, educated Muslims to engage confidently with the West yet remain loyal to core Islamic beliefs, laws, and ethics. Such a historically and sociologically embedded analysis of the evolution of these competing Islamic authority structures and their discourses enables us to identify the societal conditions and political

arrangements that are most conducive to the flourishing of a confident Muslim identity: an identity in which young Muslims do not feel compelled to choose between two equally limiting options: harboring reactionary sentiments towards modern-day institutions; or viewing the mimicking of Western modernity as the only barometer of success in today's world.

The four Islamic authority centers analyzed in this volume are: al-Azhar Mosque and University network; Saudi Salafism; Deoband *madrasah* network and *Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı* (see Table 1).

Table 1: Globally Influential Authority Platforms in Sunni Islam

Institution	Historical Origin	Approach	Base Country
al-Azhar Mosque and University network	Founded in tenth century	Civilizational	Egypt
Saudi Salafi establishment	Evolved from the middle of the eighteenth century with the formation of a pact between Muhammad ibn Wahhab and the House of Saud but was consolidated only after the founding of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932.	Theological	Saudi Arabia
Deoband *madrasah* network	Founded in the late nineteenth century	Theological	South Asia (Pakistan, India, Bangladesh)
Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı	The Turkish Presidency of Religious Affairs established in the first quarter of the twentieth century; it, however, has a strong continuity with the Ottoman religious	Civilizational	Turkey

	hierarchy that dates back to the fourteenth century		

MAP 1: Countries housing globally influential scholarly platforms in Sunni Islam

These institutions today dominate the popular understanding of Islam not just in the Muslim majority countries but also among the Muslim diaspora communities in the West. It is therefore important to understand how responsive are scholars within each institution to changing social realities. Further, it is also equally important to understand how are the immediate socio-economic and political developments in their home countries impacting their discourse. Thus, the analytical focus is two-fold:

1. What tools of methodological reasoning are scholars within these leading centers of Islamic authority using to adjust Islamic law to changing societal conditions? How do the real-life choices available to Muslims differ between followers of one Islamic authority from another?
2. What material conditions and intellectual genealogies have historically shaped the evolution of each institution? What is its contemporary political economy? And, how does a better understanding of these factors helps us understand an institution's likely future intellectual trajectory and its ability to retain its influence over the next generation of Muslims?

Adopting such a two-fold focus enables us to examine not just the specific discourses promoted by each institution but also to situate them within the broader socio-political milieu. Thus, for example, when looking at Diyanet, the volume does not only map its discourses but also situates them within the context of the broader Islamic scholarly revival that Turkey has witnessed under the AKP. Consequently, while on one hand these two volumes refine our understanding of the specific conceptual and methodological tools being used by scholars within these institutions to adapt Islamic law to modern reality, on the other hand they help us better assess the likely future trajectory of each institution based on its political economy. Examples of some important contextual questions informed by these volumes are: Is Turkey under President Erdogan moving towards Salafism as its secular critics contend or is it witnessing a revival of Islamic philosophical and mystical tradition rooted in the work of Ibn

Arabi and Rumi? Is Saudi Arabia sponsoring global jihad or are the major attitudinal shifts among young Saudi men and women, and the members of the royal family, pushing Saudi scholars to show flexibility in interpretation in face of changing realities? Is al-Azhar the protector of *wasaṭīyah* (moderate) Islam on the global stage or its alliance with General al-Sisi has so comprised its moral authority that it runs the risk of losing that position to an increasingly assertive Turkish Diyanet? Is Deoband (which inspired many of the initial Taliban leaders and remains in control of largest share of mosques in the UK) showing flexibility in face of changing social conditions or is it even more resistant to reform of Islamic law than Saudi Salafism? Finally, are the second and third generation Muslims in the West content to learn their Islam from representatives of these four globally influential Islamic authority platforms, and their likes, that have traditionally staffed mosques in the West or are they welcoming (and in fact) actively contributing to rise of new Islamic learning centers in the West that have started to extend their influence even in Muslim majority countries?

While the answers to these specific questions will unfold in the subsequent chapters, the core contention of this volume is that among educated Muslims, geographical and cultural diversity notwithstanding, there is a growing demand for reviving an intellectual and civilizational approach to living Islam, as opposed to adopting a narrowly theological outlook. Such an assertion is based on the shared experiences of young Muslims whom I have encountered in my fieldwork across Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, the United States, the United Kingdom, and various other western European countries. Finding refuge in scriptural rigidity, and becoming preoccupied with issues of personal piety, are common responses among religious authority platforms to preserve the faith when faced with harsh external change; and Islam is no exception. But complete refusal to recognize change proves to be a poor strategy when the pace of external change is as rapid as is witnessed in this globalized age. Instead of endorsing an inevitable clash of civilizations between Islam and the West, the analysis presented in this volume reveals a clear demand among educated Muslims for productive engagement between Islam and Western modernity; a conviction among the majority that such harmony can be achieved without violating the essence of Islamic beliefs, morals, or ethics; and, most importantly, a concerted effort by some of these established Islamic authority platforms to respond to this demand. The pressure on Islamic scholars to be reasonable when applying Islamic *fiqh* to modern-day realities can be seen in the case of all four institutions; their degree of responsiveness, however, varies.

It is Diyanet which appears best placed to nurture the civilizational approach; al-Azhar, which has traditionally nurtured this approach, runs the risk of losing its status. On the other hand, Saudi Salafism, while is normally argued to be most rigid of all Islamic scholarly traditions and closest in the view of most to what in this volume has been defined as the theological approach, is showing greater flexibility to adapt to change than Deoband. This volume will illustrate how it is important to situate these institutions in their current socio-political and economic context in order to understand these results.

High Education and Traditional Islamic Authority

Within the Islamic tradition, an emphasis on travelling to seek knowledge ensured that, from very early on, the influence of prominent scholars and Sufi mystics was not localized; instead their presence often led to the emergence of prominent Islamic centers of learning in the form of *madrasah*s or *khānqāh*s (Sufi lodges), which attracted students and disciples from far and wide. Moreover, from the very early days, the practice of *hajj* (Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca) and *'umrah* (optional Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca) turned Mecca and Medina into a hub where scholars and Sufis from different regions and from different Islamic intellectual and methodological traditions could meet. Despite this steady flow and exchange of ideas within Muslim communities across geographical divides, it is perhaps easier to talk about global Islamic authorities today than at any time before. The influence of scholarship produced at leading centers of Islamic authority is no longer confined to the traditional Muslim lands, but extends to Muslim diaspora communities across the globe.

The expansive reach of mass media and growth in information technology, especially the spread of the internet and mobile phones with new apps which facilitate the rapid spread of ideas at little cost, has made it possible for these centers' influence to grow beyond their immediate home bases. Ironically, technological advancements have also facilitated the rise of increased competition for these traditional centers of learning: individuals with no formal Islamic training can now claim to speak in the name of Islam, leading to what Dale Eickelman and James Piscatori drawing on Francis Robinson's work on impact of printing press on expanding popular Islamic literacy, have famously referred to as the "fracturing of Islamic authority".[xi] Some scholars see within this an opportunity to generate a pluralistic Islamic intellectual sphere; others interpret it as a challenge, attributing the rise of militant

Islamic groups to this very fracturing of traditional Islamic authority, whereby the right to interpret Islamic texts is no longer seen strictly as the preserve of traditionally trained scholars.

In reality, however, the emergence of self-taught and self-proclaimed online *imām*s, leaders of jihadist groups, or hosts of popular Islamic television shows, has not eroded respect among the public for the traditional centers of learning and those with specialist training in traditional Islamic sciences. Rather, we have seen these traditional centers of Islamic authority successfully co-opt the same technology and expand their reach beyond their local communities to a global audience. As we will see in this volume, all four Islamic authority structures under study actively use the media of television, radio, and the internet to advance their message; and they all increasingly operate both phone and online *fatwā* (Islamic ruling) hotlines which are heavily subscribed.

It is important to note that the argument about the fracturing of Islamic authority in contemporary times is based not only on a recognition of the changing modes of modern communication, which make it easy to spread one's reading of the texts without the need for a mosque-*madrasah* platform. It is equally premised on there being an inverse relationship between increased literacy and the need for the specialist. An increase in popular literacy gives direct access to the religious texts, which in turn is assumed to remove dependence on Islamic authority structures.[xii] This is indeed true; but I have increasingly found during my fieldwork that it is equally true that, in the long term, improved literacy cultivates a greater awareness of and appreciation for the work of the specialist, especially among the university-educated. While to some young, university-educated Muslims the Salafi methodological emphasis on self-reasoning appears intellectually empowering, for most such efforts quickly reveal the limits of one's own intellectual ability to reach depth of meaning without seeking specialist advice.

This assertion ideally should be tested further through survey work, but in my own ethnographic and interview based fieldwork, I have come across many Muslim students in Western universities who were initially attracted to Salafi methodological emphasis on self-interpretation, finding it consistent with their training in critical thinking and rational inquiry—only to conclude that guidance from a specialist was necessary in order to pursue ideas in depth. Without seeking the advice of a scholar, these young students were limited by their own and fellow students' somewhat simplistic interpretations. The experience of one of

my respondents in Chicago, who during her initial university days had become part of the Salafi network, is illustrative:

> I was inspired by Salafi networks in university as it emphasized the use of reason much more than what I had heard from the mosque *imām* my parents used to consult. I always found it difficult to connect to an *imām* who could not even speak English properly; I just could not communicate to him much as he spoke Urdu. Therefore, the idea of engaging with the texts myself and sharing my reasoning with fellow students initially felt quite empowering. But, pretty soon there was a saturation point. How much could we make of the *Qurʾānic* verses or hadith on our own? I wanted more intellectual depth and I realized that I have to seek a specialist teacher who knows the texts well if I am to acquire serious knowledge of Islam.

Similarly, another of my respondents who I met at the al-Ghazālī retreat in Spain led by Tim Winter (Abdul Hakim Murad) and Dr. Umar Faruq Abd-Allah noted:

> Islam has a rich scholarly tradition in all fields be it fiqh, theology or philosophy. In fact, Islamic theology if properly studied is intellectually very powerful. Yet, to acquire that depth of understanding, we need to go back to work of great Islamic legal scholars, theologians, philosophers, and mystics and it is simply not possible to study those dense texts on your own. You need to be guided by a teacher and ideally a teacher who has very sound proficiency of Arabic grammar in addition to knowing that specific text. Arabic is such a complex language that to understand a text properly you need to learn from one who knows the nuances of the language. That is why I like to attend such retreats. I don't have time to pursue study of Islam full time, but participation in these short retreats acts as a good reminder that there is much intellectual depth to Islamic scholarly tradition.

I have repeatedly had such responses from participants in such retreats that are increasingly becoming popular among young Muslims; the annual Rihla programme initiated by Humza Yusuf under the Deen Intensive Foundation is one good example. These retreats attract university educated young Muslims not just from Western countries but also from the Muslim majority countries (see Volume 2).

Further evidence in support of the continued importance of formal centers of learning in eyes of ordinary Muslims comes from analyzing the profiles of young Muslims in the West (including converts) who have recently become influential Islamic preachers or scholars in their own right.[xiii]All have spent significant lengths of time in Muslim-majority countries, training with traditionally educated scholars; and none was able to establish a following within their home community by claiming to be self-taught or by virtue of being a student of an online *imām* (Islamic scholar). In my own interviews I have found that the scholars (as well as their followers) acknowledge the importance of the time spent studying at a traditional center of learning in the Muslim world in enabling the scholar to gain legitimacy in the eyes of Muslim communities.

Even most of the self-proclaimed online *imām*s more often than not claim to hold a certificate or a degree from an institutional platform, in order to establish their credibility. The technological advancements of the last three decades have indeed, therefore, led to increased competition among Islamic authorities, but increased literacy and access to higher education have at the same time re-centered traditional Islamic scholarly authority, instead of eroding it. We therefore need more ethnographic, and more importantly survey based studies, to see how socio-economic and educational background shapes a young Muslim's decision to follow one Islamic authority over another. The four institutions studied in this volume are the most influential, as measured by the numbers of their adherents worldwide and the prominence that they command in global academic and policy debates. It is time to introduce them properly.

Few contemporary Islamic discourses have attracted more attention in the Western scholarly and policy discourse than Saudi Salafism.[xiv] However, as we shall see in Chapter 5, what is today considered as Saudi Salafism is actually a mid-eighteenth-century invention, resulting from the alliance between a tribal leader and a self-proclaimed Islamic reformer, rather than representing the classical learning tradition of Islam (perhaps best illustrated in the pluralistic Islamic culture of Hijaz, whereby until the early twentieth century followers of all four Sunni *maddhab*s could organize their own prayers in *ka'bah*, until the House of Saud imposed one joint prayer).[xv] This highly literalist approach to the study of Islam has won large numbers of adherents around the globe. The global influence of Saudi Salafism has been attributed to three factors. Firstly, it emanates from the birthplace of Islam and thus, in the minds of ordinary Muslims worldwide, is associated with the Islam's two holiest cities of

Mecca and Medina. Secondly, since the 1970s the oil boom has enabled the Saudi state to fund Salafi mosques and *madrasah*s around the globe. Thirdly, by arguing for direct engagement with the foundational texts, including the *Qurʾān* and the *ḥadīth*, and by minimizing reliance on the weighty canon of commentaries produced by scholars working within the four *madhhab*s, Salafi methodology gives the individual greater autonomy in the eyes of its adherents.

The approach is criticized for promoting high levels of rigidity and for inculcating a desire to live like the *salaf* (pious forefathers) in the first century of Islam, rather than identifying the underlying moral and legal principles which guided their actions in order to answer the needs of contemporary times. The refusal to interpret the foundational texts, or to view the actions of the *salaf* in their historical context, together with the Salafi emphasis on *takfīr*, is often blamed for creating a rift between Islam and modernity. Of all the strands of Islamic thought today, Saudi Salafism is the one most commonly accused of directly inspiring militant jihad.[xvi] The use of Saudi money to promote this rigid reading of Islam is highly exaggerated, giving Saudi intelligence services a degree of sophistication that is unlikely. It is also highly simplistic to assume that money alone can make communities dramatically alter their conception of Islam.[xvii] Further, it ignores how the Saudi state itself feels threated by such militancy, and how both the Saudi state and the religious establishment openly condemn militant groups and warn Muslim youth against joining them.[xviii] However, it is true that, as in the case of the other three institutions under study, the Saudi state has used different platforms for the global promotion of its specific understanding of Islam; the Islamic University of Medina (IUM), founded in 1961, is an important example of one such platform. Catering to Muslim students from around the world, this university has played an important part in the Saudi state's aspiration to assert its leadership of the Muslim world.[xix]

If Saudi Salafism is today frequently labeled as the most divisive voice of Islam on the global stage, the al-Azhar Mosque and University network, which in 1961 was brought under the Ministry of Education and absorbed into the Egyptian state bureaucracy, is perceived to be its most influential counterweight. Proud of its positioning as the global representative of *wasaṭīyah* (moderate) Islam,[xx] al-Azhar has traditionally commanded high levels of respect for its methodological rigor and for the depth of training in classical Islamic texts that it provides to its students, despite various complaints of a lowering of educational standards in recent years. Al-Azhar is one of the few institutions which, in line with classical

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Islamic scholarly tradition, attempts to teach all four Sunni *madhhab*s (although *Ḥanbalīsm* has received less and less attention in recent times). Even when the Ottoman Empire spread to Arab lands and *Ḥanafī fiqh* became the official school of law, al-Azhar continued to teach all four *madhhab*s. Egypt's geographical location on the periphery of the Ottoman Empire enabled al-Azhar to survive as a local Egyptian institution, despite the expansion of a formal religious bureaucracy under the Ottomans.[xxi] Historically supported through *waqf* (religious endowments) property, until the twentieth-century state reforms the Azhari scholarly elite remained independent and among the most prestigious Islamic scholarly platforms in the Muslim world.

Today, al-Azhar continues to attract students from across the globe. In East Asia, in particular, its influence is striking.[xxii] And among second- and third-generation Muslims in the West, as well as among Western converts, spending time at al-Azhar is seen as an important route to acquiring Islamic authority. The future of al-Azhar, however, is in flux. Forced to become a University as part of the state's modernizing agenda, al-Azhar has found its moral authority increasingly called into question because of the compromises it has made with the state. This crisis of authority became particularly pronounced after the Arab Spring in 2011. The decision of Shaykh al-Azhar Ahmad al-Tayyib to support the regime of General Abd al-Fattah al-Sisi has raised serious concerns. The al-Sisi government continues to receive active cooperation and endorsement from Shaykh al-Azhar, even after it has violated the very same ideals of freedom and liberty that the latter actively defended in the famous *al-Azhar Document*, which he used to critique the Muslim Brotherhood government.[xxiii]

Next to these two globally influential Islamic authority structures sits the Deobandi *madrasah* system. An anomaly compared with the other three institutions in terms of its relationship with the state, the network is the only one of the four authority structures under study to rely on community donations, both large and small, instead of being part of a state bureaucracy. Its literalist readings of the text, which often sees it placed in the same league as Saudi Salafism, developed in response to the decline in Islamic political authority under British colonial rule. Anxious to see Islamic law lose its socio-economic and legal relevance under colonial rule, the founders of Deoband saw a turn inwards, with a focus on cultivating personal piety, as the best mechanism to help Muslims in India preserve their faith. Unlike the Salafis' emphasis on direct engagement with the foundational texts and neglect of the four *madhhab*s, Deobandi tradition relies heavily on a specific kind of *taqlīd* of the *Ḥanafī*

madhhab, although it shares the former's emphasis on a literalist as opposed to a contextualized reading of the texts. The result is Diyanet, which, like Deoband, inherited the *Ḥanafī fiqh* (but not the textual rigidity) due to its continuity from the Ottoman religious hierarchy, sits on the opposite end of the Islamic scholarly spectrum from Deoband, despite both adhering to the same *madhhab*. Deoband's interpretative rigidity has been held responsible for inspiring the Talibans—a movement out of keeping with modern sensibilities, which has not only protected al-Qaida but also advocates a very archaic approach to living Islam, including extreme restrictions on women's mobility, barbaric punishments, and destruction of all art forms, including the centuries-old statues of Buddha in Afghanistan.

Unlike Saudi Salafism and al-Azhar, the Deobandi movement remains predominantly an ethnic one, popular mainly among South Asian Muslims and their diaspora. The United Kingdom, the United States, and South Africa have a number of Deobandi *madrasah*s, which have developed strong roots. In recent years, especially in parts of East Asia, the Deobandi movement has managed to spread beyond South Asian communities. The success of Tablīghī Jamāʿat, one of the largest Muslim proselytizing networks to be inspired by the Deobandi school of thought (although operating independently from it), has also helped the spread of the Deobandi *madrasah* network. While many other Islamic movements, most noticeably Barelvism, also command a strong following among South Asian Muslims, when it comes to the textual study of Islam, Deoband remains the most influential South Asian Islamic tradition with a global reach; one good barometer of this is the disproportionately high number of Deobandi *madrasah*s in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, compared with the numbers of those belonging to other sects.[xxiv]

Last but not least, the new competitor to emerge in the sphere of global Islamic authority in recent years is Diyanet, the Turkish Presidency of Religious Affairs. The strengthening of democracy, economic stability, and the rise of a center-right party sympathetic to Islam has made Turkey, with its rich Islamic history, one of the most widely observed Muslim countries today. Although forming the core lands of the expansionist Ottoman Empire, for much of the twentieth century Turkey largely disappeared from global Muslim consciousness, owing to the Kemalist modernization agenda and its staunch defence by the Turkish military establishment. Religion was kept under strict control, *madrasah*s and Sufi *ṭarīqah*s (orders) were banned in 1924 and 1925 respectively,[xxv] and the state even attempted to modernize public sensibilities by force, regulating traditional dress codes and

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promoting Western music.[xxvi] The Kemalist regime offers the best example of how for many Muslim rulers, especially in the post-colonial period, modernization came to be equated with Westernization. Yet almost a century later, the failure of the experiment to expel Islam from Turkish society is clear; instead, it caused the Turkish state to establish one of the largest and best-funded religious bureaucracies in the Muslim world: the ban on *madrasah*s and *khānqāh*s inadvertently forced the state to take responsibility for running mosques where Muslims could carry out their ritual obligations, especially those marking the critical milestones of birth, marriage, and death. Today Diyanet has more than 150,000 state employees, most of whom are *imām*s in mosques. By banning the traditional Islamic learning platforms, the state ended up having to take responsibility for providing *imām*s to the local mosques.

However, despite its steady expansion, Diyanet's relationship with both state and society is complex. The devout have traditionally found it lacking in independence, yet the secular state that established it (given its distrust of religion) has consciously denied Diyanet the status of a ministry,[xxvii] despite its having one of the largest budgets of all state departments. Like most interesting questions on Turkey within the social sciences today, in order to understand the current positioning of Diyanet and its future role at home and aboard, it is important to focus on developments in the past 15 years. With the gradual strengthening of democracy and the rise of the center-right Justice and Development Party (AKP), Diyanet is undergoing subtle but important shifts. Since coming to power in 2002, the AKP has not attempted to change the relationship between the Turkish state and Diyanet, an institution constitutionally committed to respecting a Kemalist separation between state and religion. But what has changed is that, being sympathetic to religious sentiment in society, the AKP has created an environment in which more traditional Islamic groups (both *madrasah*s and Sufi lodges) are in a position to engage with Diyanet and to influence its discourse, rather than letting it be shaped purely by graduates from theology departments known for their rationalist, scholarly orientation. This opening up of Diyanet to surrounding influences has helped to increase its legitimacy among devout Muslims. Today, Turkey is actively positioning itself as a leader of the Muslim world.

In 2014, Mehmet Görmez, President of Diyanet, announced Turkey's plan to establish an International Islamic University in Istanbul.[xxviii] Statements issued by Diyanet increasingly show its ambition to become the leading voice of moderate Islam on the global stage,[xxix] and

a growing number of emergent platforms show that it takes this ambition seriously. The elevation of ISAM (*Islam Araştırmaları Merkezi,* Center for Islamic Studies), a leading Islamic research center in Turkey, which operates under the aegis of the Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, to a full university (İstanbul 29 Mayıs University, 29 May University) is an example of one such platform. At the same time, since Diyanet provides trained, state-salaried *imām*s to the Turkish diaspora, it already exerts significant influence in shaping Islamic discourse in western European countries with large Turkish diaspora communities.[xxx] Owing to its historical ties, Diyanet has also acted as a model for post-Soviet states of the Caucasus and the Balkans.[xxxi] Keen to curtail Salafi influence, the governments in these countries have taken inspiration from Diyanet in order to learn how to model similar state institutions. Diyanet's overseas activities are, however, no longer exclusively confined to the Turkish diaspora: it is increasingly supporting many progressive Islamic platforms that are emerging in the West. Its large mosque complex in Washington DC facilitates events for Muslims from all backgrounds, irrespective of their national or ethnic background.[xxxii] Such expansiveness is not surprising, given the rise of the AKP's assertive foreign policy, which under Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu (2009–2014) increasingly came to be known as *Neo-Ottomanism.*[xxxiii]

Turkish Islam's historically deep spiritual roots, with its emphasis on the cultivation of the intellect along with focusing on the purification of the heart (a combination of ibn 'Arabi's metaphysical understanding with Rumi's mysticism) to nurture belief, make the revival of the Turkish Islamic tradition particularly appealing to moderate Muslims who are keen on a civilizational approach to the religion. A well-funded infrastructure of theological departments, beautifully maintained mosques, and state-salaried *imām*s, a pluralist Islamic intellectual and spiritual sphere with a particular focus on *taṣawuf* (Islamic mysticism), while retaining a strong focus on the *Ḥanafī madhhab*, all make Turkey a conducive environment for an intellectually engaging and spiritually grounded approach to the study of Islam. In this approach, the arts, aesthetics, music, and science are as important as learning to perform obligatory Islamic rituals.

As we will see in Chapter 10, while the revival of a traditional yet pluralist Islamic scholarly sphere is directly tied to the democratic strengthening in Turkey since 2002, (however, limited it might be) economic development has played an equally critical role in this process. Institutions of Islamic learning can now afford more investment in their students

and teaching resources, including funding their students to learn Arabic in an Arabic-speaking country.[xxxiv] Increased investment in English-language teaching within more traditional and university-based Islamic education platforms is also helping to disseminate religious debates within Turkey to a global audience. It is therefore not surprising that Turkey is host to an increasing number of students from Western universities who wish to pursue Islamic-studies summer programs and degrees. One of the few dividends of the Syrian crisis, which otherwise poses the biggest threat to Turkey's stability, has been that more than one hundred traditionally trained Syrian scholars are estimated to have taken refuge in Istanbul alone. In my own fieldwork I came across students from both the United States and the United Kingdom who were studying with these Syrian scholars in Istanbul; they had chosen to stay away from Egypt because of the political oppression associated with al-Sisi's government, but also because of an unease about the Azhari establishment's support for such a regime.

This volume thus considers the intellectual debates taking place within these four platforms of global Islamic authority. It looks at the profiles and orientation of the scholars leading these debates, to explore how conscious they are of the challenges posed by modernity and the changing subjectivities of today's young educated Muslims. What real-life choices do they advise, and what methodological reasoning do they use to justify those choices? What are the dominant historical trends that have shaped these institutions, and, given the situation today, what shape are they likely to take in future? The results that it presents are counter-intuitive.

Core arguments

The core contention of this volume is that all four institutions studied are under pressure to adapt to demands of modern times; their ability and willingness to respond, however, does vary. Although Turkey, after the demise of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of a secular Turkish Republic in the first quarter of the twentieth century, had lost all influence within the sphere of Islamic scholarly activity, today it holds the greatest promise for reviving Islamic scholarly debates which respect the limits set by the four *maddhab*s but also offers the intellectual and spiritual depth that the young educated and progressive modern Muslims are seeking. In the name of modernization, the Kemalists banned *madrasah*s and Sufi *khānqāh*s; this constitutional ban remains in place to date. Today's prominent Turkish Islamic scholars and historians themselves are quick to point out the lasting damage this has

done to the quality of Islamic scholarship in Turkey: in the words of İsmail Kara, the most influential contemporary historian of the Turkish Islamic scholarly tradition, "Turkey today has no '*ulamā*'".[xxxv] The theology departments that the Kemalists established to replace these traditional centers of Islamic learning are found by traditional Islamic scholars (and most devout Turks) to be lacking in methodological rigor, as well as lacking an ability to inculcate moral piety in their students – two elements which are seen as cornerstones of classical Islamic scholarly tradition. Diyanet is itself known for producing quite simple *fatwā*s and Friday sermons which respect the dominant consensus within *Ḥanafī fiqh*, but at the same time fail to demonstrate deeper engagement with the Islamic texts.[xxxvi]

However, one of this volume's key contentions is that the fate of any Islamic scholarly tradition is closely tied to societal conditions, especially the economic realities and the political framework in which it has had to evolve. As we will see in the chapters in Section 4, it is currently Turkey, out of all the Muslim-majority countries, which offers the most favorable conditions for the flourishing of the civilizational approach: an approach which preserves the essence of Islamic law but is equally focused on reviving the Islamic humanistic tradition and rationalist inquiry that is both intellectually challenging and spiritually deep,[xxxvii] and does not create a forced wedge between Islam and modernity. Under the successive AKP governments, their shortcomings notwithstanding,[xxxviii] Turkey holds the greatest promise of advancing the civilizational approach to Islam. The main threat to Turkey's chances of fulfilling this potential lies in the worsening of regional dynamics due to the conflict in Syria and the resulting insecurity, risks of economic instability, and political uncertainties resulting from the 2016 failed coup attempt. Prolonged regional tension runs the risk of disrupting gains that the country has made in the areas of economic development and democratic strengthening. As I demonstrate in Chapter 10, both of these have been crucial for the revival of traditional Islamic scholarly practices in Turkey.

This volume also contends that although al-Azhar, with its emphasis on *wasaṭīyah* Islam, has traditionally dominated the civilizational approach to Islam, this global dominance is increasingly under threat, especially if the Turkish Islamic scholarly revival sustains itself. The political compromises which al-Azhar has had to make since it became a part of the Egyptian state bureaucracy in 1961, and especially after its leadership supported the coup led by al-Sisi in 2013, have seriously compromised its legitimacy in the eyes of Muslims across the globe—much more so than the crisis of legitimacy that it has suffered at home.[xxxix]

Further, the secular voices within Egypt calling for a complete reform of al-Azhar are becoming strong. Today, there is no longer any guarantee of al-Azhar's ability to retain a balance instead of tipping in favor of the Egyptian state's vision of a 'moderate' and 'enlightened' Islam—whereby a desire to be like the West rather than staying true to your tradition becomes the primary focus of reform.[xl] Al-Azhar's prominence as the leading voice of moderate Islam on the global stage has partly been a result of the conceptual and methodological rigor of the Azhari approach. Even today, this comes closest to what is understood as the classical Islamic scholarly tradition, and it has been very effective in synchronizing Islamic law with the specificities of a given cultural or political context.

In retaining this position, however, a lack of competition and more than ten centuries of relatively independent existence also helped al-Azhar. The democratic strengthening in Turkey which has led to a revival of traditional Islamic learning, compared with the perpetuation of authoritarian rule in Egypt and the state's continued exploitation of religious authority to gain legitimacy, is for the first time in recent history providing a socio-economic and political context for a credible rival to Azhari authority to emerge on the global stage. If the Azhari leadership actually reforms its curriculum on the advice of the al-Sisi government, a move which it has endorsed in principle,[xli] it will further compromise its popular legitimacy. It will remain credible only to modernists for whom modernity often simply equates to mimicking the West, and not to the Muslim moderates, who are the majority, and who want to be part of the modern world while retaining their Islamic civilizational identity.

Comparing the two more socially conservative platforms which come closest to what in this volume has been described as a theological approach—Saudi Salafism and the Deobandi *madrasah* network—we will see that the former, which is often blamed for fueling global Islamic militancy, is in reality more alive to changing contexts and is adapting to these at a faster pace. This is counter-intuitive, given that most perceive Saudi Salafism to be the most rigid of all the Islamic traditions. But, as we shall see, once again the reasons for this unexpected outcome have to do with the societal conditions in which each intellectual and methodological tradition is evolving, and the nature of its relationship with political authority. Saudi Arabia is undergoing major societal change, due to a major investment in education for both boys and girls. This, combined with increased access to media, internet, and mobile connectivity, is changing societal values. Also, the country's oil wealth has allowed for ease of travel and the integration of younger Saudis, men and equally women, into global culture.

Further, as we will see in Chapter 4, it is important to understand how the Saudi royal family has played a key role in triggering this change. It is thus not surprising that Saudi Salafism is proving more responsive to the changing global and domestic pressures (see Chapter 4) than Deoband, which largely caters to not very affluent pockets of South Asia Muslims.[xlii]

The core contribution of the above analysis, however, is not the actual predictions which could change if the context changes but the underlying argument routinely ignored in policy debates: the context plays a critical part in shaping a given Islamic discourse. Studies attributing Islamic militancy to Islamic text thus need a serious review; for successful eradication of Islamic militancy greater emphasis has to be placed on understanding the context that breeds it instead of simply attributing it to religious indoctrination by *imām*s at mosques or *madrasahs*. This comparative study thus shows how the socio-economic and political institutions heavily influence how an Islamic authority platform, and the discourses that it promotes, will evolve. The findings in fact uphold the conclusion that Francis Robinson draws from his comparative analysis of the scholarly traditions under the three major Muslim empires, the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals: "rational sciences, …, tended to flourish when Muslims were confidently in power: … transmitted sciences, …., tended to flourish when Muslims felt that Muslim state power, either because of compromises with non-Muslim forces within or because of compromises with non-Muslim forces from without, was threatened or destroyed as the upholder of Islamic society….".[xliii]

Such a conclusion indicates that, despite evidence that many leaders of Islamic militant groups come from the educated classes (or in fact appear to be engineers),[xliv] the more educated and stable a Muslim society, the less the risk of Islamic militancy. As we will see across the two volumes, the civilizational approach, with its emphasis on a more humanistic reading of Islam while remaining loyal to its legal framework, is developing more visibly within Turkey (which despite growing critiques of Erdogan's style of governance has made more visible gains towards consolidation of electoral democracy than the other three contexts mapped) and within the more affluent Muslim diaspora communities in the West (see Volume 2). Rigid orthodoxy is best preserved in contexts of low socio-economic prosperity, or where Muslims are politically marginalized, whether through state authoritarianism or due to minority status. The evidence presented in the two volumes suggests that the more politically stable and economically prosperous they are, the more Muslim societies become confident of their Islamic identity, and confident of Islam's ability

to contribute to modernity instead of being threatened by it, thereby reducing the appeal of reactionary sentiments. Such findings are consistent with evidence that even when militants implicated in high-profile targets come from well-to-do backgrounds, it is the collective failure of their societies, the poverty, state authoritarianism, and lack of hope for societal reforms that is central to their radicalization.[xlv] Similarly, we see how a sense of socio-economic marginalization among Muslims in Europe, especially those growing up in disenfranchised communities, or a sense of fear and political victimization, as experienced by Muslims in India, paves the way towards religious radicalization or textual conservatism respectively.[xlvi]

Inevitably, the trends predicted in this volume are contingent upon the socio-economic and political contexts mapped for each institution staying on course. For example, the Turkish economic boom and democratic stability that have been seen under a center-right party[xlvii] sympathetic to Islamic values are central to the promise of a revival of the Islamic intellectual tradition in the country, despite the fact that it faces a dearth of traditionally trained Islamic scholars. The confidence that devout Turks, as well as more educated believers around the globe, are starting to develop in Diyanet could be quickly eroded if the Turkish democracy unravels and the military reasserts the former Kemalist agenda. And if the Syrian conflict on the Turkish border continues to fester, it risks reversing these supportive trends within Turkey, with consequences for the proposed trajectory of Islamic scholarship. But, while the specific details of each context might change, what is clear is that the overall context in which these Islamic scholarly platforms have to operate today requires from them much more dynamism if they are to survive. In order to appreciate the importance of this point, all we need to do is to map the major transformation in modern Muslim subjectivities.

Modern Muslim subjectivities: cross-country evidence

In the introduction to the volume *Subjectivity: Ethnographic Investigations*, the editors argue:

In the many settings in which anthropologists now work, the vagaries of modern life are undoing and remaking people's lives in new and ominous ways. The subjects of

our study struggle with the possibilities and dangers of economic globalization, the threat of endless violence and insecurity, and the new infrastructures and forms of political domination and resistance that lie in the shadows of grand claims of democratization and reform. Once the door to the study of subjectivity is open, anthropology and its practitioners must find new ways to engage particularities of affect, cognition, moral responsibility, and action.[xlviii]

This summary of the shared challenge that anthropologists face in understanding individual subjectivities in traditional societies, which unlike a few decades ago are today exposed to rapid change due to the forces of globalization, is indeed equally applicable to any study of Islamic authority in contemporary Muslim societies. This context of dramatically altered conceptions of right and wrong in this age of global connectivity is in fact the most accurate starting point for understanding the significance of the questions explored in this two-volume project.

Globalization has dramatically altered the nature of people's desires and aspirations, their modes of economic survival, and their moral conception of right and wrong. These changed material conditions and the altered sense of morality, authority, and the good life in turn have a bearing on what social economic and political structures a society might deem desirable; in order to survive, existing authority structures have to be responsive to these changing material conditions, as well as to changing tastes. Religious institutions are no exception; in fact the pressures that they face are often more severe, given that modern sensibilities lead to the very questioning of the basis of religion.[xlix] Scholarship on Muslim societies, while cognizant of these socio-economic and political shifts within Muslim sensibilities, has nonetheless often presented a highly exaggerated role of religion in these societies. In particular, within the anthropology of Islam, inspired by Talal Asad's critique of secularism as an ideologically motivated Western colonial project imposed on Muslim societies,[l] a number of recent studies have used evidence from within Muslim societies, most noticeably Egypt, to challenge some of the central assumptions of liberal theory, of which secularism is argued to be an essential feature.[li]

In reality, as this comparative study shows, the experience of Muslim societies in terms of secularization of public imagination and societal institutions is not so very different

from what prevails in the West. The colonial period dramatically altered the importance of *sharī'ah* in shaping popular Muslim imaginaries, as well as the socio-economic and political institutions. Initially, this change of sensibilities, whereby, rather than being the predominant guiding framework, *sharī'ah* became just one of the many competing frameworks to shape the individual and collective sense of right and wrong, primarily affected the societal elites who were largely educated in Western educational institutions established by the colonizers and who often were direct beneficiaries of colonial rule. It was these socio-political elites, who came to power in the post-colonial context in most Muslim societies, who not surprisingly pushed forward secularism as an ideology.[lii] Fifty years on, this state-led project of secularism indeed has failed in most Muslim societies; Turkey remains the most prominent example of a state where a concerted push to modernize and Westernize public sensibilities has not resulted in an erosion of faith, but other examples abound across Muslim societies.[liii]

Analysts, however, make a serious mistake when they assume that the failure of the state-led project of secularism can be interpreted as a failure of the secularization thesis or evidence of its irrelevance for Muslim societies. What this volume instead shows is that to understand the future of Islam it is critical to understand how in the last three decades the spread of communications media and increased access to TV and cable networks, combined with increased access to higher education and ease of travel, has overtaken the state-led ideologically charged project of secularism with an organic process of secularization which has seen a dramatic shift in Muslim subjectivities across all classes (not exclusively among the societal elites, which was the case during the colonial period). Consequently, Islam is no longer the dominant framework shaping individual life choices or societal outcomes within Muslim societies. There might still be large turnouts at the Friday prayers across Muslim societies, but, as Charles Taylor has convincingly illustrated, a simplistic division between state and religion, or a decline in levels of religious adherence, are by no means the most effective measures of secularization. Instead, secularization is best measured and understood by mapping the changes in the mode of religious belief and changed social imaginaries within the public.

In his influential work, *The Secular Age*, Charles Taylor has demonstrated the limitations of defining secularization as one of the following two conditions (or assuming an inevitable link between the two): (1) separation of state and church, and (2) decline in religious belief and practice such as church attendance. These in his view are not necessarily

the best analytical frameworks within which to understand secularization; he instead argues for studying the actual "conditions of belief": "The shift to secularity in this sense consists, among other things, of a move from a society where belief in God is unchallenged and indeed, unproblematic, to one in which it is understood to be one option among others, and frequently not the easiest to embrace." Understanding secularization, in his words, requires close study of "how we got from a society in which it was virtually impossible not to believe in God, to one in which faith, even for the staunchest believer, is one human possibility among others. This is typical of the modern condition… We live in a condition where we cannot help looking over our shoulder from time to time, looking sideways, living our faith also in a condition of doubt and uncertainty."[liv] And it is at this level that the nature of change within Muslim societies has been dramatic.

Muslims' relationship with their faith across all classes has changed dramatically in the last century. Islam is still important as a spiritual force, but *sharīʿah* is by no means the dominant framework shaping individual desires or collective societal outcomes in any Muslim society, except arguably in Saudi Arabia, where *Qurʾān* and *Sunnah* remain the law;[lv] but, as we will see, even in the context of Saudi Arabia individual aspirations are highly Westernized and globalized. Only a small fraction of Muslims actually adhere to the Islamist or piety movements that argue for strict adherence to highly conservative interpretations of *sharīʿah*; most instead increasingly focus on observing the basic principles of *sharīʿah*, often referred to as *Maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* (Objectives of the *sharīʿah*), to find optimal answers to the needs of the time. As we will see in case of the followers of the two most conservative Islamic movements, Saudi Salafism and Deoband, even the willing followers often are much more discerning of how they apply highly conservative rulings to everyday life practices. Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband classifies watching television or use of photography as *harām* (forbidden by Islamic law), but in my own fieldwork I have found that most students and followers do use both these mediums.

The changes in Muslim societies akin to those associated with Western modernity are visible in everyday interactions in all areas of social, economic, and political engagement. If we define modernity as "that historically unprecedented amalgam of new practices and institutional forms (science, technology, industrial production, urbanization), of new ways of living (individualism, secularization, instrumental rationality), and of new forms of malaise (alienation, meaninglessness, a sense of impending social dissolution)",[lvi] its encroachment

on traditional modes of living and the resulting individualism are equally visible in Muslim societies. Not only are technological advancement, urbanization, and global connectivity a part of the reality of modern Muslim lives, there is a growing recognition of the importance of the self as opposed to the family: joint families are increasingly giving way to nuclear families, there are increasingly vocal voices against any role of religion in public sphere, and there is increased questioning of religious authority. Further, the resulting consequences of these choices (increased isolation and individualism) are starting to become visible too.

Urbanization is on the rise in most Muslim countries, leading to rise of mega cities. Western economic and commercial patterns are being copied. Western-style shopping malls, selling Western clothing brands, promoting Western food chains, and featuring advertisements flaunting Western models are a common feature across major cities in Muslim countries. More specifically, the hype we now see created around Valentine's Day in most Muslim countries, where until only a few years ago it was shunned as a Western idea reflective of secular sensibilities, presents an important example of how Western ideas are increasingly coming to be idealized in most Muslim contexts.[lvii] The same is true about shifts in what are seen as valued modes of relaxation and entertainment. Highly Westernized modes of social entertainment, including cinema attendance, socializing with friends (often in mixed-sex settings) in trendy cafés, or going out partying in groups (for activities such as bowling) are replacing old norms of sociability which prioritized social obligations within the extended family network.

The most visible shift is in gender dynamics. Extended families are giving way to nuclear families. The birth rate has started to decline in most Muslim country contexts. In my own fieldwork, I have come across a growing number of cases where elderly parents in very affluent families are being left alone, while all their children migrate to Western countries – due not to economic pressures but to a conscious preference for Western lifestyles. Even in Saudi Arabia, which is arguably the most religiously regulated society within the Sunni Muslim world, major societal shifts are visible: Western consumerism has invaded this Muslim country arguably more than any other— the multi-story shopping malls surrounding *ka'bah* being one example, as is women's highly Westernized clothing, worn underneath their *'abāyah* (cloak).

This change in sensibilities is not confined to the socio-economic sphere but is also visible in the political arena. Popular tolerance for authoritarian regimes is on the decline: the

Arab Spring was the best example of this. Starting in 2011, young Egyptian boys and girls from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds came out in Tahrir Square to question established structures of authority and to demand representation and democracy, as did their counterparts in Morocco, Syria, and other parts of the Arab world. While the immediate outcomes of the Arab Spring have been disillusioning, with the return of authoritarian regimes to positions of power, and outbreaks of civil unrest, the popular protests did show how democracy and participation are an essential feature of modern Muslim subjectivities. The recent pressures on the al-Sisi regime in reaction to its increasingly authoritarian and oppressive practices reaffirm the same.[lviii] Even in Saudi Arabia, the royal family is under pressure to create increasing numbers of consultative platforms to create some semblance of popular representation, if not direct democracy.[lix]

The factors contributing to these shifts in subjectivities are numerous. Most important has been the increase in literacy. While the colonial period introduced Western educational institutions into the Muslim world, it is the post-colonial period that has seen the major spread of Western education to both Muslim men and women as part of the states' modernization agenda. In particular, the global push for *Education for All,* starting from the 1970s, made education a primary goal for international development agencies.[lx] Apart from education, increased access to mass media, cable TV, dish antennae, and the internet, along with improved communication technology through mobile and internet connectivity, has had a major impact on people's values systems. TV is inside every household, and ideas which once were shocking to Muslim sensibilities, such as the example of Valentine's Day given above, no longer appear so when those ideas are routinely presented in the media as normal, or in many cases are even valorized in the TV soap operas. At the same time, increased ease of travel has played a major role in bridging the cultural gulf across societies.

Today many Muslims travel to the Western world in order to pursue higher education or gain meaningful employment, or simply for the purpose of vacation and tourism. Arjun Appadurai, in his influential work on globalization,[lxi] notes the importance of media and travel in pushing forward the processes of globalization that he personally witnessed in India, starting from the 1970s; the evidence presented in this volume shows that the Muslim world has been no exception. The findings of these two volumes thus fully endorse Eickelman's emphasis on recognizing how access to higher education and mass communication has affected Muslims' association with their faith.[lxii] As he argues: "Even when mass higher

education is used to sustain old patterns of belief and authority, its very structure engenders new 'authoritative' ways of thinking about self, religion, and politics. In short, older styles of understanding religious authority coexist with newer ones."[lxiii]

It is true that many of these changes, such as improved access to education and exposure to modern-day technologies, as well as modes of communication, are more of an urban phenomenon, but to assume that those in the rural areas remain isolated from modern influences is an exaggeration. TV and the internet have reached almost all corners of the developing world, as has mobile-phone technology. People in rural areas might have limited access to modern institutions, but the difference in the rural societies of today as compared with those of the past is that there is much more awareness now, even in rural societies, of competing life choices and options, and improved connectivity to the urban areas.[lxiv] In my own fieldwork with female Islamic education groups in different country contexts, I have found young women in the rural areas harboring aspirations similar to those of their counterparts in the urban areas, due to the shared influence of TV dramas and cable TV networks.[lxv] The only difference is that girls in rural areas have limited opportunities to pursue these modern desires, compared with those in the urban areas. This increasingly shared change in desires and sensibilities due to the expansive reach of modern media across rural and urban areas is important for understanding the future of these societies and the place of religion within them.

In documenting this change, the idea is not to propose an exaggerated notion of change in Muslim societies in recent decades. Indeed, change is an integral part of history; previous generations have had their own major points of departure from the settled past which seemed to usher in an era of profound change. The colonial encounters of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the decline of Muslim political authority were perhaps one of the periods of most dramatic change. The shock felt by Muslim populations as well as the thinkers of the time is visible in the writings of Muslim intellectuals, *'ulamā'*, and reformist writers from that period. As Qasim Zaman notes:

There is much in the fluid and rapidly changing world of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that the life and career of Rashid Rida and others allow us to glimpse: colonial rule in the Middle East and North Africa; the demise of

the Ottoman caliphate, pan-Islamism and its discontents; Salafism, and not least, the flow of people and ideas between South Asia and the Arab Middle East.[lxvi]

As he further notes, "The second half of the twentieth century and the first years of the twenty-first are at least as momentous. Few lives reflect this better than that of Yusuf al-Qaradawi."[lxvii] These changes, which were part and parcel of the colonial experience, left a lasting impact on the subjectivities of the Muslim elites who took control of their countries at the end of the colonial period. Further, we have enough evidence to illustrate how Muslim scholars of that time were as fixated with understanding 'modernity' and comparing it with the Muslim moral code as are scholars of this time.

However, the context of changed subjectivities of modern Muslims today, it is argued in this volume, is different in two important ways: the speed of change is much faster; and more importantly its reach is pervasive, affecting all sections of the society, not only the elites. That the changes confronted today are of a higher magnitude is also asserted in the work of scholars committed to making Islamic *fiqh* and moral ethics inform contemporary socio-economic and political institutions. Referring to the reformist Islamic scholarly tradition, *fiqh tajdidiyyah*, Tariq Ramadan argues:

> For many centuries, that method was and remained the best means to advance Islamic legal thought. However, the fields of the human, experimental, and exact sciences have now become so complex, and the acquisition of knowledge has developed to such an extraordinary extent over the past century, that it has become urgent to reconsider the nature of the relationship established by scholars between scriptural sources on the one hand and social and scientific contexts on the other.[lxviii]

The defining influence of colonial rule in Muslim societies was the marginalization of *sharī'ah*, and thereby of the scholars who defended the right to interpret it, from socio-political and economic affairs of society. In all contexts, the *fiqh* related to *mu'āmalāt* (social affairs) was largely marginalized; the main area of *fiqh* that remained relevant concerned

ibādāt (ritual practices) and personal family law. And, knowing that this is the only area where they were still consulted by the public and the elites, this is what the *'ulamā'* most emphasized; the focus on preserving inner piety and *'aqīdah* (Islamic creed) became central to the work of Islamic scholarly platforms in this period. Now if the subjectivities are changing due to the penetration of Western value systems within the masses, then the relevance of Islamic authority even in the domain of the family law is under question. Former areas of established consensus within Islamic societies, such as the strict prohibition of homosexuality or cohabitation without marriage, an aversion to mixed-sex socializing, men's right to have four wives, and women's restricted inheritance rights, are all today being openly questioned, not only by Western critics but by liberal voices within Muslim societies on public platforms and widely watched TV channels. The resentment shown towards the Muslim Brotherhood by a major section of the Egyptian population, for what was seen as its attempt to impose a rigid reading of *sharī'ah*, itself bears testimony to how over-restrictive understanding or enforcements of Islamic moral code are no longer seen as acceptable by the majority.[lxix] The duration of Muhammad Morsi's government (June 2012–July 2013) resulted in the re-centering of al-Azhar in the political arena, which showed how for the majority of the ordinary Egyptians the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* style approach, which is closer to the al-Azhari position than a *sharī'ah*-centric approach which (rightly or wrongly) was attributed to the Muslim Brotherhood,[lxx] was more palatable. Most Muslims today have much more diluted and globalized sensibilities; for them, Islam or *sharī'ah* is just one of the many dominant frameworks influencing their aspirations, desires, and actions.

Recognizing this change in Muslim subjectivities due to processes of material modernization and global cultural connectivity through media and the internet, it becomes critical to ask the questions addressed in this volume: how are the Islamic authority structures responding to these changed subjectivities of modern Muslims, which even call into question the relevance of Islamic personal law (the last preserve of *sharī'ah* in many Muslim societies)? How bound are these institutions by the weight of tradition, and the specific methodological approaches inherited from the past, when they try to respond to the needs of the time? Further, have the same opportunities and shifts that have changed the subjectivities of the broader public also affected the subjectivities of the scholarly classes, making younger generations of scholars deviate from the practices followed by the older generations? Is there an active dialogue among these competing Islamic authority structures to cope with this

changing context, which ultimately poses a risk to the survival of the very faith, or at least the version that they are committed to defend?

Islam and Social Change: the methodological challenge

If the changing context alters the subjectivities of the Muslim masses, it also affects the subjectivities of the religious classes. It is often assumed that the *'ulamā'*, just because of their commitment to the study of Islamic texts, are impervious to change. Such a reading ignores the simple fact that *'ulamā'* (or any religious elite) are part of society, and the changes affecting the broader society also affect them. It is due to this that recent scholarly debate on the *'ulamā'* has come to question their assumed rigidity. Scholars have shown how internal reform (initiated from within the scholarly classes) has been critical to Islamic scholarship.[lxxi] Further, this scholarship has also illustrated how internal reform can be as intellectually rigorous as that propelled by external actors such as the modernizing states. Consequently, as Zaman notes, it is often ignored that "Muslims of varied intellectual orientation have long discussed such matters [militancy], and the debates continue, indeed with special vigor, in the aftermath of September 11, 2001. Despite their centrality to any sophisticated understanding of religious and political thought, many crucial dimensions of these debates remain little understood, however."[lxxii] Noting that the complexity of these internal reforms has not been understood, Zaman asks: "What forms have internal criticism taken in modern Islamic thought, how does it relate to the specificities of the social, economic, and political context in which it is articulated, and what questions of religious authority are at stake in such criticism?"[lxxiii]

Such internal critique and attempts at reform are not surprising in a religious tradition whose central methodological pillars encourage consultation and consensus building to find answers to new questions which are products of changing times. *Ijtihād, qiyās,* and *ijmā'* (consensus building) are central to ensuring the relevance of classical Islamic scholarship to modern times. Whether developing consensus on these unsettled new questions requires the agreement of the community as a whole or only that of its legal scholars has long been debated; not surprisingly, the scholarly classes traditionally tried to confine the use of this right to themselves. Further, again to draw from Zaman, it is important to note that the consensus once developed was absorbed by the community and became part of the local

knowledge. This partly was a result of the Prophet Muhammad's reported statement that the community "would not agree on an error" that was both widely accepted and influential.[lxxiv]

The fact that the Muslim communities historically were quick to absorb a new-found consensus and then move on is also understandable in the light of basic understandings of Islam that are part of Muslim consciousness across different contexts. These include the *Qurʾānic* emphasis on Islam being for all times; the claim that it is close to human nature and thereby realistic; the *Qurʾānic* promise that God has made this religion easy for you; and the requirement that a Muslim should excel in this world as well as the other. In my own fieldwork, I have found these basic conceptions of Islam shared across different Sunni Muslim contexts as they are explicitly addressed in the *Qurʾān* itself.[lxxv] Thus, despite widespread assumptions in Western media and policy circles that Islam is a highly static religion, in reality for the majority of Muslims Islam's ability to adapt and adjust to changing times while respecting the core ethical principles of the Islamic tradition is central to the religion's appeal. It is therefore very common in Muslim societies to hear how Islam is a logical religion and how it is very close to human nature.

The tension within the scholarly tradition has thus not been concerned with the provision for using these tools, but with how to actually use them meaningfully: how to be modern yet be loyal to the core of Islamic belief? How to strike the right balance between the two? How to determine what is fixed and what is changeable in Islam, given that different Islamic authorities can have varying positions? This tension to adapt to the times yet stay loyal to the core of the Islamic tradition has been repeatedly noted in the work of most Islamic scholars, including those leading the institutions under study. And again this is not a uniquely modern realization. Looking at the work of the influential twentieth-century Egyptian scholar, Rashid Rida, Qasim Zaman similarly notes: "Finding ways of being at once modern and authentically religious was always foremost among Rida's concerns, and he liked to both shame and inspire his audiences by pointing to non-Muslims as examples of that combination."[lxxvi]

What the modernist Muslims who are often critical of the scholarly classes fail to recognize is the actual magnitude of the intellectual challenge faced when attempting to find answers from within the tradition which can meet modern challenges. As we will see in this comparative study, the Islamic scholarly platforms considered in the two volumes are struggling to find precisely this balance; their conceptual and methodological approach and

the resulting societal implications vary according to the intellectual legacy that they embody and the societal and political context in which they are currently evolving. However, an increasingly influential concept being invoked by many of these platforms is that of *fiqh al-wāqiʿ* (fiqh of realities), which argues for being reasonable and responsive to one's immediate reality. As we will see, this concept is increasingly being used in conjunction with that of *Maqāṣid al-sharīʿah,* by scholars from across diverse institutional and methodological backgrounds. The results from such reasoning are highly successful in blending Islamic dictates with the demands of modern times – and not just in the form of mimicking Western modernity but by meaningfully engaging with it and then coming up with solutions that are distinct but compatible with it. Further, a growing number of Islamic scholars are engaging with the human-rights framework to examine if and how it can fit within an Islamic legal and moral framework.

Measuring Islamic authority

What shapes the nature of Islamic authority is a much-debated topic in the studies of *ʿulamāʾ* as well as among modern-educated reformers wanting to speak in the name of Islam. Zaman takes religious authority to mean "the aspiration, effort, and ability to shape people's belief and practice on recognizably 'religious' grounds".[lxxvii] Authority is different from power in one critical sense: that it involves voluntary adherence, as opposed to subjugation by force.[lxxviii] What enables an individual or institution to win Islamic authority thus is a complex matter, but certain factors are known to be important.

First, studies of Islamic authority have repeatedly recognized command over foundational Islamic texts as being central to establishing Islamic authority. The *Qurʾān* in Arabic, *tafsīr* compilations by scholars in Arabic, works of prominent scholars from the four Sunni *madhhabs,* and the six canonical *ḥadīth* compilations form the core of the foundational texts. Ability to demonstrate a thorough knowledge of these foundational texts does remain the ultimate claim to Islamic authority.[lxxix] The intellectual engagement with the texts, familiarity with the method of reasoning, and the historical knowledge of its evolution are critical to establishing this authority. In the Sunni tradition, actual memorization of the *Qurʾān* and the ability to reference its verses with ease in establishing an argument lends much credibility to the scholar. These foundational texts mainly developed in the first three centuries of Islam within geographical boundaries that are normally referred to as the heartland of Islam; this is the period when the *ḥadīth* compilations were completed and

sharī'ah schools were established,[lxxx] and Arabic was enriched and became consolidated as the language of Islam. This corpus of foundational texts is what I like to call *Islamic mega scholarly tradition*— the core of the Islamic scholarly tradition with which Islamic authority platforms across all geographical settings have to engage. It is the centrality of this mega-tradition to the shaping of Islamic discourse across diverse geographical regions that has ensured that, despite adapting to local culture and practices, certain core Islamic beliefs (belief in God and Muhammad as his last Prophet), ritual obligations (such as the five obligatory prayers, fasting, etc.), and moral ethics (the emphasis on justice) remain recognizable across different sites of the Sunni Muslim world.[lxxxi] It is again the presence of this Islamic mega scholarly tradition which ensures that the command of the Arabic language (spoken, written, and comprehension) remains critical to winning credibility across geographically diverse Muslim communities.

Developing the desired levels of Arabic fluency in different geographical and linguistic settings, however, remains a challenge not just for the scholars but more so for ordinary Muslims, giving rise to a dense corpus of Islamic texts in vernacular languages. This vernacular literature in turn has its own hierarchy and has developed its own reference points, landmark texts, and influential scholars. The South Asian or Turkish Islamic literature, for example, has its own clear hierarchy of canonical works written by influential scholars, often having a reach beyond their local communities and being part of transnational Islamic scholarly networks even in early generations. This is what I will refer to as *Islamic meta scholarly traditions*. The prominent scholars or those who produced the foundational texts for these meta-level traditions often also wrote in Arabic, thus helping to establish their credibility among Arabic-speaking scholars.[lxxxii] In day-to-day working, however, they primarily engage with the vernacular texts. For example, within the Deobandi tradition in South Asia, even the most reputed scholars, such as Taqi Usmani in Pakistan, demonstrate their scholarly expertise to their followers by drawing on the canonical texts from within their immediate tradition.

The same holds true for the rich Islamic scholarly literature in Turkish which remains the primary reference point for scholars in everyday debates within the theology departments. Even in Turkey, however, the most esteemed scholars are those who can demonstrate the ability to engage meaningfully with the mega tradition in Arabic. It is the dearth of such scholars, due to the elimination of the *madrasah* system, which makes some senior Turkish

scholars lament the loss of the traditional Islamic scholarly rigor under the Kemalist regime. This existence of strong geographically located Islamic scholarly traditions, which connect to the same foundation texts but have over the centuries developed rich vernacular Islamic scholarly traditions of their own, often in response to local socio-economic and political realities, has contributed to the entrenching of competing Islamic authority structures across different sites. Here it might also be appropriate to acknowledge how a rich scholarly tradition in the vernacular language (of orthodox as well as reformist bent) has evolved within East Asia, especially in Malaysia and Indonesia[lxxxiii]. The reason why no institutional platform from this region is included in this volume is that East Asia is a good example of the absorption of al-Azhari influence and in recent years of the Islamic University of Medina too;[lxxxiv] unlike South Asia, it did not develop a globally influential movement of its own, such as Deoband.

In addition to demonstrating knowledge of the classical texts and Arabic language, the second important prerequisite for the acquisition of Islamic authority is the scholar's moral authority. In forging this relationship, the scholar's way of life, as reflected in his *adab* (Islamic norms of behavior), uprightness, and conduct on material matters, becomes very important. The persona of the Prophet and his *Sunnah* become the model against which the scholar is judged; in the spirit of the Prophet's tradition, the scholar is expected to live by what he teaches. This means that certain aspects of the Prophet's life have become central to shaping the credibility of an Islamic scholar in the society. Central to these features are living a simple life (shunning excessive material indulgences), being truthful, being honest, and standing up to injustices. I have repeatedly found similar references and conceptions of the Prophet's *Sunnah* invoked across the different social contexts in which I have done fieldwork over the years. Central to this is also an understanding that the scholar must maintain a distance from political authority. As we will see in this volume, the idealized notion of morality expected from the scholar in terms of piety, honesty, distance from material greed or power, and fearlessness still plays a critical role in shaping the popular legitimacy of a given Islamic authority platform. Interestingly, we will see in Volume 2 how this particular aspect of authority is very important for the legitimization of some of the new platforms gaining popularity in the West; the embodiment of Islamic virtues and ethics is very central to their leaders' claim to authority.

The above two are frequently acknowledged sources of Islamic authority. Traditionally, there was also a third critical dimension of Islamic authority: a scholar's ability to relate to the realities of the time. Traditionally Islamic scholars had to demonstrate their authority over and knowledge of the modern world as much as their knowledge of the Islamic spiritual and legal sciences to gain respect.[lxxxv] This mixed knowledge base was product of two structural factors of the organization of Muslims societies: one, since *sharī'ah* was the dominant frame of reference, the state and society made demands on the Islamic scholarly classes to provide answers to socio-economic and political challenges of the time; two, Islamic knowledge was not seen as a profession and many jurists often followed other professions actively. The result of these dimensions of the organization of pre-colonial Muslim societies was that the scholars were often well-verses in the Islamic as well as other sciences and also had direct knowledge of the realities of the field.[lxxxvi]

The key shift during the colonial period was that Islamic scholarly platforms lost their socio-economic and political relevance and Western educational institutions replaced them. This in the long term resulted in lowering of public expectations that the *'ulamā'* should demonstrate knowledge of the modern sciences and the technical realities of the field such as economics, banking, and science. Before, Islamic legal and moral debates were expected to have relevance for all areas of Muslim societies; today, for most Muslims these debates are confined largely to issues of personal piety and rituals observance. Even when they are state-funded, such as al-Azhar, Diyanet, and the Saudi religious establishment, the influence of Islamic scholarly platforms is primarily confined to issues of personal piety, while the state controls debates on modern political and economic issues. This holds true not just for those Muslim-majority countries such as Turkey and Egypt which adopted Western constitutions, but also for a state like Saudi Arabia, which declares the *Qurʾān* and *Sunnah* as its constitution: *'ulamā'* leave the economic and political debates clearly in the hands of the royal family (see Chapter 4).[lxxxvii]

As we will see, especially in Volume 2, the noteworthy shift today is that young, educated Muslims in the West as well as in the Muslim-majority countries are recreating pressure on Islamic scholars to demonstrate expertise in both Islamic and modern sciences. The scholars leading new Islamic scholarly initiatives in the West, and in countries such as Turkey (see Chapter 12), are thus showing an ability to engage with Islamic as well as modern sciences. Further, they come from the same socio-economic background as their

followers. They thus have, what in literature on types of knowledge, has been referred to as *tacit* knowledge (a form of knowledge which can only be acquired through experiencing something first hard)[lxxxviii]. The importance of *tacit* knowledge and why it is central to understanding the appeal of these new Islamic scholarly initiatives emerging in the West to young educated Muslims will be explained in detail in Introduction to Volume 2.

Table 2: Core Dimensions of Islamic Authority

No.	Dimension	Revered Level	Acceptable Level	Centrality to Islamic tradition
1.	Textual knowledge of Islamic Sciences & Command over Arabic	Command over Classical Arabic texts	Command over vernacular Islamic texts	Across all time periods
2.	Moral authority	Living by Prophetic standards	At least not being visibly corrupt or power hungry	Across all time periods
3.	Knowledge of everyday social reality	Knowledge of other scientific and professional fields so that the Islamic law can relate to changing needs of the time	Knowledge of changing social reality	It is this dimension of Islamic authority that was most compromised during the colonial period. Traditionally, al-Azhari *'ulamā'* and Ottoman *'ulamā'* best demonstrated this ability.

When we compare the four institutions under study, al-Azhar, Deoband, and Saudi Salafism emerge strongest in the study of the foundational texts. Al-Azhar comes out the

strongest in its rigor and ability to combine knowledge of the modern realities with the traditional texts; it is also closest to the classical Islamic learning tradition. Deobandis and the Saudi Salafis suffer in the eyes of many Muslims because of their inability to demonstrate expertise in the modern sciences, their perceived intolerance of arts and aesthetics, and their refusal to acknowledge the changing realities of modern times. The Turkish tradition in the twentieth century suffered the most in terms of its ability to nurture scholars with a sound knowledge of the foundational texts. However, it is also the one best placed to meet the expectations of modern educated progressive Muslim youth, who demand that the scholar develops a knowledge of the modern sciences, should be open to arts and aesthetics, and must be willing to reason and adapt in the face of modern-day reality. It is because here and in the West, the Islamic scholars are financially well-placed as compared to the other contexts being studied, the historical focus on philosophical and mystical aspects of Islamic sciences is strong, and the state is operating under a democratic framework.

Ultimately, one of the important arguments of these two volumes is that we need to recognize that the boundaries of what are considered legitimate limits of reform are actually defined not by the scholar, though that is what is often assumed, but by the public. It is actually the public consensus which shapes the limits to which the scholarly classes can deviate from the established consensus inherited from the previous generations. Fazlur Rahman, the influential Islamic reformist scholar from Pakistan who held a chair at University of Chicago, points towards this to indicate the challenges to Islamic reform. Arguing that a scholar has to be very dynamic to initiate religious reform that goes against the established consensus, he notes how reformist interpretations run the risk of a scholar losing legitimacy among the masses.[lxxxix] Such a view will support the theory that secularism follows secularization, instead of the relationship operating the other way around.[xc] Public subjectivities have to change before religious authority platforms will change or reform dramatically. This was the experience in the West.[xci] In the case of Muslim societies, on the other hand, the project of secularism was imported by colonial rulers and pushed by post-colonial Westernized elites through the state machinery, but the public social imaginaries were not ready for that shift, as the actual processes of modernization (especially those related to new patterns of production and accumulation) had not touched the majority of the public. It is little wonder that it failed.

However, in the first quarter of the twenty-first century, when the subjectivities of young Muslims are changing due to the organic process of globalization whereby media and modern communications technology have effectively spread Western consumer culture and more liberal social norms, the limits of acceptable reforms within religious thought are changing too. It is this bottom–up rather than top–down understanding of who shapes the limits of reform, the scholar or the public, that is critical to explaining why the turn of the twenty-first century has put particularly intense pressure on Islamic scholars to adjust to change. To understand the evolving debates within the Islamic scholarly platforms, it is thus important to understand the shifting consensus within the Muslim public about what role religion should play in shaping social imaginaries or influencing how society should be organized. It is this which ultimately helps to explain why the state-led project of modernization and secularism could not develop roots in most Muslim countries (Egypt, Turkey, Pakistan, to name a few); while the changing subjectivities of young Muslims due to organic processes of globalization are making secularization (changed Muslim social imaginaries of collective life) a reality in these very countries.

Relating Islamic law: conceptual and methodological tools

A close study of the ongoing debates among scholars within the four institutions under study reveals two dominant methodological approaches popular among those in favour of systematically adapting Islamic law to modern reality by placing emphasis on the underlying concept of *ijtihād*. The first approach is keen to advance the traditional *fiqh* scholarship while the other develops a new language of *fiqh* by relating Islamic moral, legal and philosophical concepts to Western conceptual frameworks. Further, we also find evidence of selective pragmatism, especially on matters to do with economics and commerce, even within traditions that are otherwise resistant to change.

Model 1: Working within the traditional fiqh framework

Among traditionally trained scholars, three concepts are most in vogue today to argue for adjusting Islamic moral and legal framework to modern realities: *fiqh al-wāqiʿ*, *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*, and *maṣlaḥah*. Primarily developed by scholars from within the al-Azhari tradition, the specific methodological tools of reasoning being developed under these

conceptual frameworks, have had a wide appeal. Yusuf Qaradawi, Ali Goma'a and Bin Bayyah, who has been made popular in the West by Humza Yusuf, have made significant contribution to advancing the concept of *fiqh al-wāqi*. Further, as we will see in Chapter 6, these conceptual debates are also being referenced by progressive scholars within Saudi Salafi sphere to argue for greater individual freedoms.

Wāqiʿ literally means reality, and in terms of Islamic legal theory it refers to the lived realities of Muslims in the contemporary context. The concept of *wāqiʿ* requires an appreciation of how the modern context differs from the context in which the revelation was revealed. It allows for the development of new hermeneutical categories and approaches that enable reform in Islamic law. The concept of *wāqiʿ* has also been very influential in the development of a new genre of *fiqh* labeled *fiqh al-aqalliyyāt*, the jurisprudence of minorities, that has allowed for adaption of many Islamic principles to make it easier for Western Muslims to cope with their immediate context.

Qaradawi maintains that there is a broad range of issue that impact *wāqiʿ* (the reality). Privileging reasoning over literal understanding of the text and *ijtiḥād* over *taqlīd,* he argues for acknowledging that exceptional circumstances (*ḍarurāṭ*) occur in people's lives, that religious rulings change according to time and place, and that religious laws should be implemented gradually. Bin Bayyah similarly argues for *taḥqīq al-manāṭ* (refinement of the cause) to closely analyze the text in order to understand the reason that a ruling was decreed in order to apply that reason to the new context of today. Supporting similar reasoning Goma'a argues that we understand Islamic law (*fiqh*) through the traditional literature, namely the *Qurʾān* and *sunnah*. Yet, the process of deriving a ruling (*iftāʾ*) requires an additional step which requires understanding the realities of the time (*wāqiʿ).* The important contribution of the scholars in this tradition is that they are taking a more expansive notion of *ijtihād* whereby they are willing to apply these tools not just to find answers for questions where there were no earlier ruling in Islamic law; they are willing to change rulings that already exist.

These scholars' justification of the above approach rests in the Islamic concept of *maṣlaḥa* (the common good), which requires that unlike the ritual practices (*ibādāt*), transactions (*muʿāmalāt*) such as marriage, leasing, and sales, are meant to serve the utility and common interest (*maṣlaḥa*) of the Muslim community and thus are more amenable to change based on circumstances. Together the concepts of *wāqiʿ* and *maṣlaḥa* enables these

scholar to simultaneously stay committed to the textual sources while arguing for reform. In terms of seeking answers to specific questions, the concept of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* that enables a scholar to focus on the principles of *sharī'ah* as opposed to being tied to specific legal rulings from the past fits in naturally with these two concepts. The three concepts together thus form a very popular toolkit in the hands of scholars trying to provide deeper conceptual scaffolding for defending change within Islamic legal tradition.

Model 2: Developing a new language of fiqh

Among scholars trained in Western based university system, a popular method to relate Islamic law to contemporary needs is to compare complex legal, moral, or philosophical concepts from Islamic scholarly tradition with the dominant conceptual debates in the West. In this volume, the Turkish scholarly tradition is most actively developing this line of scholarship; in Volume 2, however, we will see that within the new Islamic scholarly platforms emerging in the West, this is in fact the most popular approach.

This methodological approach requires the scholar to show command of both the Islamic and Western philosophical traditions in order to make meaningful comparison between the two. The method makes the Islamic moral and legal framework accessible to modern educated Muslims, who have limited knowledge of traditional *fiqh* debates. By relating these concepts with dominant frameworks shaping contemporary societies, such as the concept of human rights, these scholars show how Islamic tradition can rival and in fact enrich such moral or legal concepts attributed to Western humanism or enlightenment tradition. Recep Şentürk's work, analyzed in chapter 12, is illustrative of the appeal of such a scholarship among young university educated Muslims. Among other topics, he has written extensively about the methodology of *fiqh* as a science by comparing it with modern social sciences. Referring to *fiqh* as an open science, which unlike the social sciences does not divide human experiences into narrow fields, Şentürk enables young university educated Muslims to think of *fiqh* in relation to other sciences as opposed to thinking of it in isolation.

Scholars like him thus try to act as the bridge between the traditional *fiqh* literature and the modern sciences and thereby end up developing a new language of *fiqh* which might have limited traction within traditionally trained *'ulamā'* but which is more easily relatable for

young university educated Muslims. Rather than producing dense *fiqh* texts on a given issue, such as one would expect from scholars such as Yusuf Qaradawi or Bin Bayyah, scholars like Şentürk draw their followers because of their ability to develop meaningful synergy between Islamic and modern sciences. As we will see in Volume 2, this is precisely how most new Islamic scholarly platforms emerging in the West are building their discourse.

Model 3: Selective pragmatism

As opposed to the openness of the above two approaches to relate Islamic legal and moral framework to realities of the time, there is resistance among the Deobandi and official Saudi Salafi establishment to accepting wide scale social change. Muhammad Taqi Usmani, one of the most influential Deobandi scholar on the global stage today, for example when writing about the principles of deriving *fatwā*s (*uṣūl al-'iftā*), limits not only the ways that a scholar or *muftī* can bring about change in Islamic law, but also limits the cases in which change is applicable. For Usmani, if one were to work outside of this *taqlīd* framework, one would lose the benefits that the tradition of the *madhhab* provides. Moreover, his approach to textualism limits the role of rational reasoning within Islamic law. He is thus quite critical of those who try to use *maqāsid* (objectives) and *maṣlaḥah* (expediency) in order to understand the spirit of the law.

It is thus not surprising that leading Deobandi *'ulamā'* as well as the prominent Deobandi *madrasahs* still continue to issue *fatwā*s which show a strong disconnect to reality. For instance women are told to forego formal education if that entails attending a co-educational institution (see Chapter 9). Such a position is deemed unrealistic by many because barring a few exceptions all higher education institutions in South Asia are co-educational. It is almost impossible for a Muslim woman in South Asia to do a master's degree without entering a co-educational institution. Given that many Muslim women do join these co-educational institutions, it means that either none of these women belong to Deoband tradition or else they choose to ignore Deobandi *fatwā*s on this subject. Compared to this Deobandi rigidity, the two approaches outlined above instead prefer to focus on how both genders should behave when studying in co-educational institutions given that this is the modern social reality. However, we do see that even within the Deoband tradition despite this unwillingness to accept changed social reality, there is willingness to be adaptive on matters

of economic expediency. Taqi Usmani himself is an advisor to many Islamic banks on development of new Islamic financial instruments and in this area has shown a great deal of flexibility in interpreting the traditional *fiqhi* positions (See Chapter 9).

Thus, comparing the discourses across the four platforms, it is clear that there are pressures on the scholars to respond to change. The degree of responsive, however, varies.

The secular age and Muslim exceptionalism

It is finally time to connect the foregoing analysis to debates on secularization and Muslim societies. Literature on secularization and Muslim societies often ends up presenting the two as inherently resistant to each other. Interestingly such assertions come from scholars with opposing ideological positions: those for whom secularization represents the ultimate achievement of modernity and a universally desirable project, and those whose scholarship is dedicated to establishing modernity as a hegemonic Western colonial project. Bernard Lewis and Samuel Huntington have both advanced influential arguments about Islam being inherently incompatible with Western liberal norms;[xcii] others have tried to nuance such arguments by arguing that it is not Islam but Islamism (the political project), which in itself is a reaction to modernity, that is failing to absorb secularism. Such studies view secularism as a positive normative framework with universal relevance.

It is not surprising that among anthropologists, inspired by the legacy of Foucauldian critiques of power, there is a slight tendency to critique such accounts of secularism on the grounds that it is a Western reality, being imposed through Western scholarship as well as colonial history on the other contexts. As Humeria Iqtidar notes, it is considered to be "particularly problematic in studying societies that are markedly different from the contexts in which these concepts took initial shape".[xciii] The most sophisticated of such critiques of secularism has come from Talal Asad, and the extension of this critique by its application to Muslim societies has today become an influential intellectual project, especially in American anthropology of Islam: the work of Saba Mahmood, Charles Hirschkind, and Mohammad Agrama are obvious examples.[xciv] Geared primarily towards critiquing the foundational assumptions of secularism and liberal theory, which expects decline in religious observance to be a natural progression for all societies, these authors have ended up presenting a highly ethical and pietistic image of Muslim societies. Based on fieldwork with specific Islamic groups, whose members represent a small fraction of the total population, these studies have

ended up promoting an image of Muslim societies as being "deeply religious"[xcv]—and thereby an exception to the processes of secularization. In reality, however, the subjectivities of ordinary Muslims are in flux and are increasingly aligned to a global, largely Western culture, instead of demonstrating a stringent commitment to Islamic moral or legal codes; further, what is viewed as the authentic Islamic tradition is debated vigorously even among members of the same Islamic movements.

As opposed to the above strand of scholarship, Charles Taylor's conceptualization of secularization yields a much more accurate understanding of the reality in Muslim societies. Instead of focusing on a critique of secularism as a Western hegemonic project, Charles Taylor is concerned with studying the condition of belief and "the ways in which people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations".[xcvi] Taylor argues: "The social imaginary is that common understanding that makes possible common practices and a widely shared sense of legitimacy;"[xcvii] he defines Western modernity as a new conception of the moral order of society, where consensus is shaped by deliberation, irrespective of religious or other differences. Initially an idea in the minds of some influential thinkers, it gradually "came to shape the social imaginary of large strata, and then eventually whole societies".[xcviii] It is his contention that this new moral order could not have become the dominant view in our culture without this penetration and transformation of our imaginary; this, he argues, was made possible as a result of the development of certain social forms that characterize Western modernity: the market economy, the public sphere, the self-governing people, among others.

What these two volumes capture is precisely this shift in Muslim social imaginaries in response to processes of economic modernization, whereby Islam or *sharīʿah* is no longer the dominant framework shaping individual desires, aspirations, or actions. Highly conservative or literalist readings of Islam no longer shape the dominant social imaginary; instead, evidence suggests that the majority of Muslims are actively resistant to any attempts at the strict imposition of *sharīʿah*.[xcix] This is not to deny the existence of orthodox platforms within Muslim societies, or their attempt to spread their worldview, but to highlight how they are often given disproportionate attention in Western scholarship. The move towards secularization has been strong, and the real question in fact is: does this secularization of modern Muslim social imaginaries imply an end of faith? The answer that this volume offers

is No. Secularization has not led to the erosion of religion even in the West (demonstrating the failure of extreme secularization theses), and the chances of such an outcome are even more remote in Muslim societies. There are two reasons for the latter: the fact that they have Western experience ahead of them, and the fact that Islam lays greater claims to textual fixity and authenticity than Christianity.[c]

Just as Charles Taylor has argued that the secularization of belief in the West has not led to the demise of religion but to a greater degree of creativity within it,[ci] what we will see in these two volumes is evidence of precisely the same kind of creative and pluralistic responses coming from Muslim societies, especially from those countries, communities, and diaspora Muslim communities which have higher levels of material prosperity. What we are seeing is not an absolute decline in religion, though some even within Muslim societies are defecting to atheist camps,[cii] but an increased focus on a relatively relaxed reading of Islam, with an emphasis not just on piety, material achievement, or military might but equally on artistic, aesthetic, and spiritual dimensions. Taylor notes how the younger generations in the West have started to feel the isolation that results from modernization and for some leads to a revival of religion:

> In societies where the general equilibrium point is firmly within immanence, where many people even have trouble understanding how a same person could believe in God, the dominant secularization narrative, which tends to blame our religious past for many of the woes of our world, will become less plausible over time….
>
> At the same time, this heavy concentration of the atmosphere of immanence will intensify a sense of living in a "waste land" for subsequent generations, and many young people will begin again to explore beyond the boundaries.[ciii]

In the same way, among educated Muslims around the globe, globalization, while spreading Western values, has also brought greater awareness and experience of the resulting isolation experienced by many in the West, making them question its desirability. To quote from Taylor again:

> Running through all these attacks is the spectre of meaninglessness; that as a result of the denial of transcendence, of heroism, of deep feeling, we are left with a view of human life which is empty, cannot inspire commitment, offers nothing really worth while, cannot answer the craving for goals we can dedicate ourselves to. Human happiness can only inspire us when we have to fight against the forces which are destroying it; but once realized, it will inspire nothing but ennui, a cosmic yawn.

Muslim societies are likely to experience greater degrees of secularization in the coming years, but they are unlikely to become a replica of Western modernity; instead we are likely to see the arguments for multiple modernities well supported.

In shaping these alternative modernities, my interviews suggest, the conviction that the *Qurʾān* is the untouched word of God plays an important role. This conviction helps to ensure a certain consensus on things that must not be changed. The continued resistance within Muslim societies to the sexual liberty that is today central to Western conceptions of human freedom and bodily autonomy, despite economic modernization and resulting changes in gender roles in these societies, is a good example of the centrality of the *Qurʾān* in ensuring that even when Muslim societies secularize they are unlikely to follow the exact path followed by the West. Since sexual liberty is firmly denied within the *Qurʾān* itself, even with changing Muslim subjectivities major reinterpretations of such fundamental rulings in Islam (and consequent changes in the importance of the family structure) are unlikely. Other factors also are helping Muslim youth to think of alternative ways of being modern. The negative publicity that Islam has received since September 11 has, in my experience, motivated many young Muslims to pursue serious study of Islam (which they would not have otherwise undertaken) in order to better respond to criticisms of their faith. This increased involvement of modern-educated Muslims with the study of Islamic texts has energized the religious debates about how to be modern and yet remain loyal to the tradition. Lastly, the increasing distance from the years of colonial rule is also gradually weakening the influence of the colonial legacy, giving some Muslims more confidence in themselves and their tradition.

It is the contention of this volume that the more economic prosperity the Muslim societies experience, the more we will see a secularization of public sensibilities, but combined with a confidence that to be modern does not mean mimicking the West. This link between economic modernization and secularization of tastes is established not just by mapping the economic conditions of each Islamic scholarly platform studied in this volume, but also by monitoring the variations within the Muslim diaspora communities in the West: most dynamic scholarly platforms are emerging in the United States, where affluent members of the Muslim diaspora can patronize them; Deoband, which as we will see is proving more resistant to change, is on the other hand thriving in the Muslim-concentrated neighborhoods in the United Kingdom where the Muslim diaspora community is still often economically and socially marginalized.[civ]

It is therefore important to recognize that studies which consciously draw on specific Islamic movements or phenomena in Muslim societies to advance a critique of secularism and the underlying liberal framework, with its related notions of agency and creativity, often end up placing an artificial wedge between them and Western societies. More importantly, they end up denying the Islamic tradition access to the creativity and agency that for modern Muslims holds promise of a vibrant future. Instead, these studies end up promoting a picture of deeply religious Muslim societies, where commitment to faith trumps all other commitments, for which there is little actual evidence. The result is that the only form of agency that such studies find in Islamic movements is one that reinforces "illiberal movements";[cv] and the only scholarly ability that they can find within leading Islamic scholarly platforms (including al-Azhar) is a passive one capable only of "mimicking the past", instead of being confident to find creative new answers.[cvi] Paradoxically, while keen to advance Talal Asad's claim that there is no one objective past, these studies in reality end up reinforcing the understanding that for believing Muslims the conservative readings of Islam present the only authentic Islam;[cvii] they also end up presenting authentic Islamic tradition as capable simply of replicating the past, ignoring its ability to meet tough knowledge standards, undertake fresh reasoning, and produce new answers.

Presenting such an image of Muslim societies and institutions (as Agrama, for instance, does for al-Azhar) not only runs totally against the very essence of the al-Azhari scholarly tradition,[cviii] which is highly conscious of the need for creativity and intellectual energy to meet the demands of the time, it also demonstrates a serious neglect of Islamic

history. The very rise of Islamic civilization is nothing but a story of the application of dynamic creative human agency within the framework of a tightly defined basic moral code, but one whose application had inbuilt flexibility to adapt to the specificities of the local contexts.[cix] To deny any creative energy to Islamic scholarly tradition just because one's theoretical interests rest in critiquing the emphasis on creativity within the liberal tradition,[cx] and to deny Muslim women any forward-looking agency (as Mahmood does by calling mosque-based women's movements "illiberal"), merely to critique the notion of feminist agency, reflects insincerity with respect to the subject of inquiry.

The reality is that if modern-educated Muslims are proud of Islam, and in many contexts are even more proud of it than of their national identity, it is for the creative energy that they associate with the Muslim tradition that led to the rise of a distinct Islamic civilization. Muslims talk about the appeal of Islamic theology, but equally of the Islamic civilization that Islamic beliefs were able to inspire. It is the contention of this volume that it is this dynamic creative energy, which was influential at many points in early Islamic history, that is today most successful in capturing the modern Muslim social imaginaries; the static notions of female piety presented by Mahmood, and the equating of "creativity" with "deception" by Agrama, holds true for very small pockets (and often from socio-economically marginalized sections) within Muslim society.[cxi]

The structure of the book

The starting premise of this comparative project was that to understand the evolution of contemporary Islamic thought we must be cognizant of the historical evolution of each dominant Islamic scholarly tradition, as well as its current political economy. Looking at these institutions without considering their historical evolution limits the ability to see them in their entirety, and thereby the ability to predict their future evolution or to understand how the specific positions were influenced by the historically shaped socio-economic context and the nature of the relationship between a given institution and the political authority. Similarly, reading the work of contemporary scholars within these institutions without mapping the socio-economic and political context in which these contemporary debates are being shaped severely limits an understanding of how religious discourse is shaped. This volume thus is divided into four sections; each section is dedicated to one institution and comprises three

chapters. The first chapter in each section maps the current relationship of that institution with the state and the society. These chapters primarily draw on interviews and observational data gathered between 2014 and 2016. Except for the Saudi religious establishment, the other three institutions covered in this volume have, however, been part of my previous studies, thus in reality enabling me to draw on interviews and observations stretching over a much longer period.

The second chapter in each section traces the evolution of the intellectual milieu in which that institution had its birth and gradually evolved. These historical chapters are unique in the sense that they map the conditions at the time of origin and not just the recent past; this emphasis on tracing the evolution over time means that the chapters draw on secondary sources, instead of engaging with primary references. A difficult compromise had to be made, but one that was inevitable, given that the analytical justification for including a historical dimension to this comparative project necessitated tracing developments over a number of centuries. These historical chapters thus trace how the intellectual and methodological approaches inherited and developed by each of the four institutions, though grounded in certain foundational principles, which have indeed shown remarkable tenacity, were also equally a product of the societal context, economic conditions, and nature of state patronage that each received. The starting point of the historical analysis was not the birth of the institution, but the preceding intellectual and educational context that led the way to its genesis.

These historical chapters thus give the reader a rare insight into the conditions that led to the birth and evolution of these leading Islamic scholarly platforms, whose large following today is simply taken as a given. The questions that these historical chapters hope to answer are thereby complex. What were the traditional platforms for Islamic learning in that society, and what prompted the birth of that institution, and when and how? What domestic, regional, or geopolitical developments led to the strengthening of that institution over time, enabling it to outshine other competing scholarly institutions and establishing its credentials as the center of Islamic authority domestically and eventually transcending to the global level? When a specific intellectual tradition and methodological approach became embedded in that institution, to what extent was the choice shaped by dictates of the ruling empire rather than by the intellectual interests of the scholarly classes? What are the conditions that led to the popularity of rationalist and philosophical approaches to the study of Islam in two of the

institutions under study, while promoting a heavily textual approach in the other two? The historical chapter in each section is devoted to understanding these critical questions, requiring a broad-based historical analysis, which is often ignored in more contemporary studies that more often than not focus on study of reforms within these institutions during the colonial and post-colonial period.

Chapter 3 in each section in turn focuses on the actual substance of the debates taking place within these competing scholarly platforms, and the methodological tools being developed to justify either adaptation or resistance to change. The questions that these chapters address are thus at the heart of the debate about Islam and modernity: what tools of methodological reasoning do scholars within these institutions employ to talk about modernity or social change? How aware or willing are they to acknowledge the rapidly changing social contexts in which their followers find themselves? What specific responses do they give to questions which are arguably a unique product of the modern secular age? What are the real-life implications of these debates for the way in which their followers live their lives and how they deal with plurality, secularism, and Western hegemony on global culture? These chapters are so structured that they first outline the key methodological tools being used by scholars to defend or resist adaptability within the Islamic law to deal with societal change, and then draw on specific thematic debates to show what specific implications those methods have for the real-life choices of their followers. Examples are taken particularly from the fields of politics, gender, economy, science, arts, and aesthetics. The selection of these themes appeared natural, given that more often than not proponents of the claim that Islam is incompatible with the West cite examples from within these very themes. When approaching the thematic analysis, certain underlying questions acted as the guiding framework.

When looking at positions on political engagement, the chapters attempt to understand what forms of political structures were thought legitimate by these different institutions within an Islamic legal framework. Some of the sub-themes studied include the role of *sharī'ah* in shaping the constitution; approaches to democracy; legitimate forms of political dissent; and views on jihad and suicide bombing. When studying an institution's approach to gender roles, the emphasis is on understanding their positions on the idealized role of a Muslim woman, while also studying their positions on specific Islamic injunctions that are seen to be discriminatory or limiting of women's agency. Examples include women receiving

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half the share of men under Islamic inheritance laws; the emphasis on a wife's submission to her husband; and gender segregation.

Although Muslim societies are heavily embedded in the global economic order, discussions focused on developing an Islamic economic framework are gaining ground. Adopting a broad interpretation of economy, the chapters attempt to study institutional positions on sub-themes such as interest (*ribā*) and interest-free banking; Islamic financial instruments; the Islamic emphasis on wealth redistribution in society (*zakat*); and how well-to-do Muslims should best use their money.

Islam's contribution to scientific progress in earlier centuries plays a critical role in modern Muslims' perception that Islam is not against reason. However, today Muslims are often presented as being opposed to modernity. The chapters thus seek to answer the following questions: what is the approach of leading Islamic institutions to the importance of scientific progress? Are some sciences seen as more legitimate than others? And how do Muslim scholars deal with advances in medicine and the ethical challenges posed by modern science?

Last but not least, the approach of these institutions towards arts and aesthetics was another critical part of this comparative project. Islam is often seen as restricting artistic human expression. Many forms of entertainment, such as the cinema and music, which are part of daily life for most Muslims, are prohibited by traditional Islamic authorities. Yet, for proponents of what this volume defines as a civilizational approach to Islam, arts and aesthetics are important aspects of the rich Islamic civilization and history of which they are proud. The chapters therefore also attempt to assess institutional approaches towards the performing and visual arts. Which forms of artistic expression are restricted, and which are encouraged? What emphasis do these institutions place on historical Islamic architectural sites in developing a sense of Islamic history?

Inevitably, while mapping the underlying theological and philosophical positions of these competing scholarly platforms, their approach to *taṣawuf* also had to be a key area of cross-cutting thematic analysis. Methodologically, the main challenge in undertaking these institutional-level analyses rested in the selection of scholars who could be argued to represent the dominant approach within a given scholarly tradition; each scholarly tradition is pluralistic in its own right. The chapters have thus focused on writings of those scholars from

each institution who are known to be respected among their peers and have a significant following among members of the public. In addition, wherever possible, institutional positions have been mapped by looking at institutional-level *fatwā*s as they represent the official position of that institution. Unlike the historical chapters, these chapters draw on primary sources, namely books written by scholars whose work is being studied, individual and institutional *fatwā*s, and lectures and speeches available online as YouTube videos.

Each section thus opens by situating the institution under study in its socio-political and economic context, to help the reader understand the reality in which it operates and to which its scholars have to relate. The next chapter then allows the reader an opportunity to step back and understand how the given institution arrived at this point in the first place. In the final chapter, the reader gets to understand the specific tools of methodological reasoning that are currently evolving in that institution, and the real-life consequences of that mode of reasoning for the Muslims who follow that authority. While this volume focuses on the four Islamic scholarly platforms that have historically been most influential across the globe, Volume 2 answers the same questions with regard to the new Islamic scholarly platforms emerging in the West. Most importantly it shows how what once was unthinkable is today quite plausible: in the coming decades, many influential Islamic authority platforms might actually be based in the Western hemisphere, eclipsing the power of the institutions covered in this volume. Islamic authority is certainly in a state of flux.

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[i] David A. Graham, "What's the Matter With Belgium?," *The Atlantic*, November 17, 2015, accessed August 12, 2016, http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/11/belgium-radical-islam-jihad-molenbeek-isis/416235/; Nick Thompson, "A Tale of Two Brussels," *CNN*, March 26, 2016, accessed June 23, 2016, http://www.cnn.com/2016/03/25/world/tale-of-two-brussels/index.html; Robert S. Leiken, "Europe's Angry Muslims," *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2005, accessed August 12, 2016, http://www.cfr.org/religion/europes-angry-muslims/p8218.

[ii] For a review of the assumed tensions between Islam and democracy see John L. Esposito and John O. Voll, *Islam and Democracy* (New York–Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); John Anderson, "Does God Matter, and if so Whose God? Religion and Democratization," *Democratization* 11 (2004), 192–217; "Islamic and Democracy: Uneasy Companions," *The Economist*, August 6, 2011, accessed August 12, 2016, http://www.economist.com/node/21525410. On the economic backwardness of contemporary Muslim societies see Timur Kuran, *The Long Divergence: How Islamic Law Held Back the Middle East* (Princeton, NJ–Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012).

On Islam and purported restrictions on female agency, see Fatima Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam* (Reading, MA: Perseus Books, 1992).

iii North defines the institutional matrix as "consist[ing] of an interdependent web of institutions and consequent political and economic organizations that are characterized by massive increasing returns" Douglass C. North, "Institutions," *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 5 (1991), 97–112 at 109.

iv Wael B. Hallaq, *Sharia: Theory, Practice, Transformations* (Cambridge–New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

v Masooda Bano, *The Rational Believer: Choices and Decisions in the Madrasas of Pakistan* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), esp. ch. 8, 176–203. For a broader analysis of individual motivations to join jihad, see Diego Gambetta and Steffen Hertog, *Engineers of Jihad: The Curious Connection between Violent Extremism and Education* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016).

vi George Makdisi, "Scholasticism and Humanism in Classical Islam and the Christian West," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 109 (1989), 175–182.

vii Scholarly platforms representing Shīʿite Islam (estimated to have following within 20 to 25 per cent of the global Muslim population) are not covered in this volume; "Shīʿite," *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, accessed August 11, 2016, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Shiite.

viii Francis Robinson, *Islam and Muslim History in South Asia* (Delhi–Oxford: Oxford University Press India, 2003).

ix Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, Vol. 1: *The Classical Age of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization: The Classical Age of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977); George Saliba, *Islamic Science and the Making of the European Renaissance* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011).

x Roxanne L. Euben, *Enemy in the Mirror: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Limits of Modern Rationalism: A Work of Comparative Political Theory* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999).

xi Francis Robinson, "Technology and Religious Change: Islam and the Impact of Print," *Modern Asian Studies* 27 (1993), 229–251; Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori, *Muslim Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

xii Robinson, "Technology"; Eickelman and Piscatori, *Muslim Politics*.

xiii Examples would include Humza Yusuf, who spent prolonged time in Mauritania and credits his learning to his Mauritanian shaykhs, especially Shaykh Murabit al-Hajj. Tim Winter similarly spent time with scholars in **Hadhramaut** (Yemen), al-Azhar and Saudi Arabia.

xiv Stéphane Lacroix, "Sheikhs and Politicians: Inside the New Egyptian Salafism," *Brookings Doha Center, Policy Briefing* (June 2012), accessed August 12, 2016, https://www.brookings.edu/research/sheikhs-and-politicians-inside-the-new-egyptian-salafism/.

[xv] Saud al-Sarhan, "The Saudis as Manager of the Hajj," in *The Hajj: Pilgrimage in Islam*, ed. Eric Tagliacozzo and Shawkat M. Toowara (New York–Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 196–212.

[xvi] As an example, see Alastair Crooke, "You Can't Understand ISIS If You Don't Know the History of Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia," *The Huffington Post*, August 27, 2016, accessed August 12, 2016, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alastair-crooke/isis-wahhabism-saudi-arabia_b_5717157.html.

[xvii] Masooda Bano and Keiko Sakurai, "Introduction," in *Shaping Global Islamic Discourses: The Role of al-Azhar, al-Medina and al-Mustafa,* ed. Masooda Bano and Keiko Sakurai (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 1–18.

[xviii] During my fieldwork in Saudi Arabia, during my daily reading of the *The Arab News,* I routinely came across many statements to this effect from state officials and senior Islamic scholars. To consult a collection of such statements see, "Public Statements by Senior Saudi Officials and Religious Scholars Condemning Extremism and Promoting Moderation," May 2008, *Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, Washington DC*, accessed July 20, 2016, https://www.saudiembassy.net/files/PDF/Reports/2008Reports/Extremism_Report_May08.pdf.

[xix] Mike Farquhar, "The Islamic University of Medina since 1961: The Politics of Religious Mission and the Making of a Modern Salafi Pedagogy," in Bano and Sakurai, *Shaping Global*, 21–40.

[xx] For an analysis of al-Azhar *'ulamā'*s definition of *wasaṭīyah* Islam, see Masooda Bano, "Protector of the 'al-Wasatiyya' Islam: Cairo's al-Azhar University" in Bano and Sakurai, *Shaping Global*, 73–92.

[xxi] Hallaq, *Shari'a*.

[xxii] Bano and Sakurai, *Shaping Global,* esp. chapters in Part 3.

[xxiii] For an analysis of the *al-Azhar Document* and the civic and political rights defended in it, see Bano "Protector."

[xxiv] Bano, *Rational Believer*.

[xxv] Iştar Gözaydın, "Religion, Politics and the Politics of Religion in Turkey," *Occasional Paper* 121 (Berlin: Liberales Institut, 2013), http://edoc.vifapol.de/opus/volltexte/2015/5694/pdf/Religion_Politics.pdf.

[xxvi] Muhammet Habib Saçmalı, "Compliance and Negotiation: The Role of Turkish Diyanet in the Production of Friday Khutbas" (MA thesis, Istanbul Boğaziçi University, 2013).

[xxvii] Amit Bein, *Ottoman Ulema, Turkish Republic: Agents of Change and Guardians of Tradition* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011).

[xxviii] Fatma Aksu, "Turkey Aims to Open Islamic University: Top Religious Head," *Hurriyet Daily News*, October 1, 2014, accessed August 11, 2016, http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-aims-to-open-islamic-university-top-religious-head.aspx?pageID=238&nID=72418&NewsCatID=393; Mustafa Akyol, "Secular Turkey to Build an 'International Islamic University'", *Al-Monitor*, October

2, 2015, accessed June 23, 2016, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/10/turkey-international-islamic-university.html.

xxix The challenges that Diyanet's global ambitions pose to al-Azhar are being recognized in the Middle Eastern media: Walaa Hussein, "Al-Azhar Rewrites Curricula," *Al-Monitor*, June 29, 2015, accessed July 27, 2016, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/06/egypt-azhar-curriculim-revise-religious-discourse-extremism.html.

xxx Zana Çitak, "The Institutionalization of Islam in Europe and the Diyanet: The Case of Austria," *Ortadoğu Etütleri / Middle Eastern Studies* 5 (2013), 167–182.

xxxi Şenol Korkut, "The Diyanet of Turkey and its Activities in Eurasia after the Cold War," *Acta Slavica Iaponica* 28 (2010), 111–139.

xxxii Diyanet has established a large mosque-based residential complex called *Diyanet Center of America* in the suburbs of Washington DC which welcomes all Muslim groups to use its facilities. Many American Muslim organizations host their retreats and events at this new center, including the Deen Intensive Foundation that is linked to Humza Yusuf (Volume 2, Chapter 1) and which organizes an annual *Rihla* retreat. For information see: http://diyanetamerica.org/our-campuses/mosque/ (accessed August 12, 2016).

xxxiii For a discussion on Neo-Ottomanism, see Chapter 12.

xxxiv See Chapter 10.

xxxv Personal interview, Istanbul, November 2015; during interviews, other senior Turkish scholars—such as Professor Mahmud Erol, a prominent scholar of ibn 'Arabi from Marmara University—expressed similar remorse about the demise of the traditional Islamic scholarly platforms in Turkey during the Kemalist era.

xxxvi Saçmalı, "Compliance."

xxxvii For an understanding of how classical Islamic scholarship ensured such adaptability and creativity, see Umar Faruq Abd-Allah, "Innovation and Creativity in Islam," *Nawawi Foundation Paper* (2006), accessed August 12, 2016, http://www.nawawi.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Article4.pdf.

xxxviii AKP is increasingly subjected to heavy criticism in the Western media which accuses President Erdogan of centralizing political authority and Islamization of Turkey—critiques which are shared by the secular minded and Kemalist Turkish elite. My own fieldwork in Turkey, however, showed strong support for President Erdogan among ordinary Turks. Many were critical of this negative media coverage of President Erdogan in the West, making one young, highly educated and very progressive female anchor of a popular TV show (whom I had interviewed soon after the November 2016 elections) emphasize: "The West much understand that such biased coverage of Erdogan makes the Turks convinced that the West is biased against any Muslim country that starts to assert a strong standing on the global stage."

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xxxix Michael Kaplan, "Under Egypt President Sisi, World Famous Muslim University Al-Azhar Faces Global Backlash," *International Business Times*, August 13, 2015, accessed July 27, 2016, http://www.ibtimes.com/under-egypt-president-sisi-world-famous-muslim-university-al-azhar-faces-global-2048315.

xl Hanan Fayed, "Al-Azhar Responds to Sisi's Call for 'Religious Revolution'," *The Cairo Post*, January 2, 2015, accessed July 27, 2016, http://thecairopost.youm7.com/news/132144/news/al-azhar-responds-to-sisis-call-for-religious-revolution; "El-Sisi Says Al-Azhar Has Failed to Renew Islamic Discourse," *Ahram Online*, July 14, 2015, accessed July 27, 2016, http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/135369/Egypt/Politics-/ElSisi-says-AlAzhar-has-failed-to-renew-Islamic-di.aspx.

xli Walaa Hussein, "Al-Azhar Rewrites Curricula," *Al-Monitor*, June 29, 2015, accessed July 27, 2016, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/06/egypt-azhar-curriculim-revise-religious-discourse-extremism.html.

xlii For South Asia, see Bano, *Rational Believer*; outside South Asia, Deoband *madrasah*s are thriving in the United Kingdom within South Asian Muslim communities, which are economically not well integrated. On the economic isolation of British South Asian Muslim communities, see Tahir Abbas, "British South Asian Muslims: State and Multicultural Society," in *Muslim Britain: Communities under Pressure,* ed. Tahir Abbas (London–New York: Zed Books, 2005), 3–17.

xliii Francis Robinson, "*Ottomans-Safavids-Mughals: Shared Knowledge and Connective Systems*" *Journal of Islamic Studies* 8 (1997), 151–84 at172.

xliv Gambetta and Hertog, *Engineers of Jihad.*

xlv Bano, *Rational Believer*, 176–203.

xlvi Graham, "What's the Matter."

xlvii AKP disowns the label of an Islamist party, instead preferring to present itself as a center right party; on the evolution of political Islam in Turkey, see M. Hakan Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

xlviii Joao Biehl, Byron Good and Arthur Kleinman, *Subjectivity: Ethnographic Investigations*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), 1.

xlix Dale F. Eickelman, "Mass Higher Education and the Religious Imagination in Contemporary Arab Societies," *American Ethnologist* 19 (1992), 643–655.

l Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003).

li Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011); Hussein Ali Agrama, *Questioning Secularism: Islam, Sovereignty, and the Rule of Law in Modern Egypt* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

lii In the literature on secularization, a clear distinction is maintained between secularization and secularism. The former refers to the organic process of shift in public sensibilities due to changing

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material conditions and resulting separation of church and state while the latter is understood to be a political ideology emanating from Western liberal framework and often imposed on non-Western cultures as part of colonial rule. See Asad, *Formations of the Secular*; Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007);

[liii] For an example from South Asia see Masooda Bano, "Madrasa Reforms and Islamic Modernism in Bangladesh," *Modern Asian Studies* 48 (2014), 911–939.

[liv] Taylor, *A Secular Age*.

[lv] Comparable example is Iran in the Shīʿite world.

[lvi] Taylor, "Modern,".

[lvii] Worried by the fervor surrounding the Valentine Day celebrations in Pakistan in 2016, the country's president made a vocal critique of this change in attitudes: "Pakistan President Condemns St Valentine's Day," *BBC News*, February 13, 2016, accessed 11 August 2016, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-35570606.

[lviii] Magdy Samaan and Raf Sanchez, "Egypt: Protests Against President Fattah El-Sisi Broken up with Tear Gas While Pro-Government Demonstrations go Unhindered," *The Telegraph*, April 25, 2016, accessed August 12, 2015, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/04/25/egypt-braces-for-mass-protests-against-president-fattah-el-sisi/.

[lix] Mark C. Thompson, *Saudi Arabia and the Path to Political Change: National Dialogue and Civil Society* (London: IB Tauris, 2014).

[lx] "Education for All: History," *UNESCO Website*, accessed August 11, 2016, http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/education-for-all/the-efa-movement/.

[lxi] Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions in Globalization* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

[lxii] Eickelman, "Mass Higher Education."

[lxiii] Ibid.

[lxiv] S. Akbar Zaidi, "Rethinking Pakistan's Political Economy: Class, State, Power, and Transition," *Economic and Political Weekly* 49 (2014), 47–54, accessed August 12, 2016, http://www.epw.in/journal/2014/5/special-articles/rethinking-pakistans-political-economy.html.

[lxv] Masooda Bano, "Education and Aspirations: Evidence from Islamic and State Schools in Pakistan and Nigeria," paper presented at 2015 AALIMS Conference, University of Oxford, May 15–16, 2015, accessed August 12, 2016, http://aalims.org/uploads/Bano-Education%2520and%2520Aspiration.pdf.

[lxvi] Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *Modern Islamic Thought in a Radical Age: Religious Authority and Internal Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 18.

[lxvii] Ibid.

[lxviii] Tariq Ramadan, *Radical Reform: Islamic Ethics and Liberation* (Oxford–New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 31–32.

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lxix Hazem Kandil, *Inside the Brotherhood* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2014).

lxx Ibid.

lxxi For an insightful analysis of a strong tradition of internal reform within Islamic thought, see Robinson, "Islamic Reform"; Zaman, *Modern Islamic Thought*.

lxxii Zaman, *Modern Islamic Thought*.

lxxiii Ibid.

lxxiv Ibid.

lxxv On ease in religion, some of the often quoted *Qurʾānic* verses are: "God desires ease for you, and desires not hardship" (2:185); "Truly with hardship comes ease" (94: 6); "God will assuredly appoint, after difficulty, easiness" (65:7). On Islamic emphasis on aspiring to excel in this world as well as the next, one of the most often repeated *Qurʾānic* verses is: "Our Lord, give us good in this world and in the Hereafter, and protect us from the torment of the Fire" (2:201). This verse is argued to be one of the favorite supplications of Prophet Muhammad and Muslims are encouraged to recite it during *Ṭawāf* (circling the *Kaʿbah)*.

lxxvi Zaman, *Modern Islamic Thought*, 8.

lxxvii Zaman, *Modern Islamic Thought*, 29.

lxxviii Hilary Kalmbach, "Introduction: Islamic Authority and the Study of Female Religious Leaders," in *Women, Leadership, and Mosques,* ed. Masooda Bano and Hilary E. Kalmbach, (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2013), 1–29.

lxxix Masooda Bano, "Conclusion: Female Leadership in Mosques: An Evolving Narrative," in Bano and Kalmbach, *Women, Leadership and Mosques*, 507–534.

lxxx Hallaq, *Shari'a.*

lxxxi Even historically this shared understanding of core Islamic principles, stemming from the study of similar texts, was visible in the ease with which students could move from studying in one region of the Muslim world to another: Jonathan P. Berkey, *The Formation of Islam: Religion and Society in the Near East, 600–1800* (Cambridge–New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

lxxxii Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, a prominent scholar from Dār al-'Ulūm Nadwatul 'Ulama (a reformist *madrasah* within the Deoband tradition) for example, wrote in Arabic and was highly respected among scholars in the Middle East, see Zaman, *Modern Islamic Thought*.

lxxxiii Michael Feener. *Muslim Legal Thought in Modern Indonesia* (Cambridge University Press, 2007).

lxxxiv Bano and Sakurai, *Shaping Global*, see chapters in Part 3.

lxxxv Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*; Berkey, *Formation of Islam*; Saliba, *Islamic Science*.

lxxxvi Ibid.

lxxxvii Nabil Mouline, "Enforcing and Reinforcing the State's Islam: The Functioning of the Committee of Scholars," in *Saudi Arabia in Transition: Insights on Social, Political, Economic and Religious*

Change, ed. Bernard Haykel, Thomas Hegghammer and Stéphane Lacroix (Cambridge–New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 48–70.

lxxxviii Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension* (Chicago, Ill. ; London : University of Chicago Press, 2009).

lxxxix Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

xc The critics of the secularization project have often argued that Western countries have tried to impose secular values on other cultures and that is partly the reason that such efforts have normally failed; in the West on the other hand, the public sensibilities (or as Charles Taylor puts it, public 'social imageries') changed first due to the changing material conditions and only them privatization of religion ensued.

xci Taylor, *Secular Age*.

xcii Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong? Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response* (London: W&N, 2002); Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011).

xciii For a good review of these debates see, Humeira Iqtidar, *Secularizing Islamists? Jama'at-E-Islami and Jama'at-Ud-Da'wa in Urban Pakistan* (Chicago–London: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 12-15.

xciv Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*; Charles Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counterpublics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009); Agrama, *Questioning Secularism.*

xcv Agrama, *Questioning Secularism,* back cover.

xcvi Taylor, *Secular Age*.

xcvii Ibid.

xcviii Ibid.

xcix The popular resistance to the Muslim Brotherhood government in Egypt, the failure of Jamā'at-i-Islami in South Asia to establish electoral success, and the recent announcement by Tunisia's Ennahda that it is abandoning its Islamic identity are important examples to this effect: "Tunisia's Ennahda Distances Itself from Political Islam," *Al Jazeera*, May 21, 2016, accessed August 11, 2016, http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/05/tunisia-ennahda-distances-political-islam-160520172957296.html.

c Estes, Yusuf and Miller Gary. 2015. 'Bible Islam - Bible Compared to Quran.' [http://www.bibleislam.com/bible_vs_quran.php; Accessed 20 August 2015].

ci Taylor, *Secular Age*.

cii The recent killings of atheist bloggers in Bangladesh shows their growing presence, albeit under threat; in Egypt, many prominent media figures, when accusing al-Azhar of supporting jihadi sentiments, have also expressed a general hostility towards religion, see Chapter 1.

[ciii] Taylor, *Secular Age*, 770.

[civ] Abbas, "British South Asian Muslims."

[cv] Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*.

[cvi] Agrama, *Questioning Secularism*.

[cvii] Mahmood's primary concern is to demonstrate that women in Islamic piety movements. irrespective of their backgrounds, eventually end up working on themselves to imbibe a very orthodox sense of female piety; Agrama similarly is keen to establish that al-Azhari *'ulamā'* are replicating the past instead of being creative or imaginative in adapting Islamic law to needs of the time— Chapter 3 in this volume illustrates, however, indefensible is such a position.

[cviii] Agrama, *Questioning Secularism*.

[cix] Abd-Allah, "Innovation."

[cx] Agrama, *Questioning Secularism*.

[cxi] Ibid.