Political Islam in the 21st Century: An analysis of the contestation between "Militant" and "Progressive" Islam, with particular emphasis on forms of political expression amongst Muslims in post-apartheid South Africa

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences of the University of KwaZulu Natal, Howard College Campus, Durban (South Africa)

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DECLARATION

I, Lubna Nadvi, declare that this PhD dissertation entitled *Political Islam in the 21ˢᵗ Century: An analysis of the contestation between "Militant" and "Progressive" Islam, with particular emphasis on forms of political expression amongst Muslims in post-apartheid South Africa*, is my original and independent research. It has not been previously submitted for any degree, and is not being concurrently presented in candidature in any other University. All sources and literature have been duly acknowledged.

Candidate's signature:

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I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my two late younger brothers, Syed Tanweer-ul Haq Nadvi and Syed Munawwar-ul Haq Nadvi, who were part of my life for a very short period. They are however in my thoughts and prayers at all times. I wish to also pay tribute to my late maternal grandmother Syeda Masooma Khatoon, who has through her life, taught me how to rise above all of life's difficulties, and emerge victorious.

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Foreword

This doctoral project began in 2002, however due to various factors outside of my control, had to be put on hold and suspended, to be resumed at a later date.

One of these factors was the resignation of all the senior professorial staff at the former University of Durban-Westville in the Department of Political Science, where I was employed, in 2001. As a result, I (as one of the more experienced lecturers at that point), was expected to assume administrative and management duties, in an effort to sustain the academic programme. In 2003, the former Universities of Durban-Westville and Natal, embarked on intensive merger negotiations, and as Head of Department of Political Science at UDW, I was expected to lead these discussions for my programme on behalf of UDW.

Although I registered in 2002 and 2003, for doctoral studies, in an effort to try and continue with my research, this proved virtually impossible due to the heavy administrative load I was expected to carry. The other factor was that two previous supervisors that I had worked with, left the University of Natal, where I was registered, for various reasons. I was therefore forced to suspend registration. My colleagues and I in the Westville Political Science programme, even asked for the professorial posts that had been vacated, to be filled, to allow younger academics to continue with their research. However this request was denied.

In 2006, I indicated that I was unable to continue taking on any major administrative tasks. I then re-registered, and have over the last two and a half years been engaged in intensive research and writing, enabling me to complete this thesis. This task was only possible as a result of the commitment and guidance of my supervisor and mentor, Prof. Goolam Vahed, to whom I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude.

Abstract

The political events that unfolded on September 11 2001, marked a turning point in world history. The attacks on the United States brought into sharp focus, the very complex issue of political violence being perpetrated by elements from within the Muslim world, and the project of what is commonly referred to as Political Islam. These events have subsequently led to an intensification of scrutiny of Muslims globally, by the Western world, as well as the establishment of heightened security measures by many governments, with Muslims being subjected to increasing levels of suspicion and the curtailment of civil liberties. Accompanying this scrutiny of Muslims, has been the United States led "War on Terror," which has further fuelled anger and resentment within the Muslim world, and inspired the carrying out of further attacks of political violence against Western targets such as Britain and Spain, by Muslim militants.

This thesis attempts to locate the unfolding of these acts of political violence, within the broad framework of an examination of what constitutes the arena of Political Islam (which is seen as the interface between the Islamic faith and political activity by Muslims), and to interrogate two streams of political expression within Political Islam. These are Militant Islam and Progressive Islam. This interrogation will attempt to take into account the historical development of political thought and action within the Muslim world, and Islam's encounter with the projects of colonialism, empire and orientalism, in order to understand and offer some analysis around the possible reasons for the phenomenon of contemporary political violence emanating from the Muslim world. The study will also argue that progressive expressions of Islam are more representative of the essence of Quranic teachings and that militancy, while sometimes necessary, is not an ideal way for Muslims to engage politics. The case study within which the broader theoretical argument unfolds, is the post-apartheid South African Muslim context. This case study examines how SA Muslims are expressing themselves politically in a democratic dispensation, and whether they are inclined towards militant or progressive expressions, as a faith based community engaging politics. The thesis concludes by offering suggestions for how SA Muslims can advance a peaceful progressive political agenda, which acts as a model for Muslim communities elsewhere.

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Introduction

Political Islam

The horrifying increase in the rise of terrorism in the past few years and incidences such as September 11 2001, the Bali bombings, London bombings, ongoing suicide bombings in the Middle East, together with the "War on Terror," has many people questioning whether the "Western" world can co-exist with the world of Islam and Muslims, which appears to be the central denominator in all of these terrorist acts. This has created an urgent need to interrogate more closely, the relationship between Islam and politics, commonly referred to as Political Islam.

The state of contemporary global politics, in particular the increased focus on the political dynamics emerging from within the Muslim world, obliges us to develop a deeper theoretical and contextual understanding of Islam as an ideological framework, considered by many as informing and shaping events in the contemporary epoch. Many incidences of political violence globally are characterized as the hallmark of Muslim extremists who believe they are engaging in "holy war," or *jihad*, against the evils of the "West." It has become common for perpetrators of militant acts, which often target civilians, to quote religious scripture as inspiration for their actions and to locate their militancy within the political theology of Islam. This theological interpretation of the political sphere of Islam is commonly referred to as "Political Islam." It constitutes a variety of sub-discourses that have attempted to interpret and explain Quranic terms such as *"jihad,"* sometimes referred to within broad intellectual discourse as "holy war," appropriate forms of government within Islam, national identity, relationship between religion and politics, and so on. [1]

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[1] Political Islam is a fairly new term introduced into Islamic discourse during the past half century by intellectuals like A.A. Mawdudi, S. Qutb, O. Roy, J. Esposito, Z. Sardar, and G. Kepel. Whilst political issues have been central to Islamic thought since the seventh century, the discourse of political Islam has evolved within a predominantly contemporary context. See J.L. Esposito, *Political Islam. Revolution, Radicalism, or Reform?* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997).

The notion of what constitutes "holy war," for example, is intensely contested and vigorously debated within the global Muslim world. The emerging consensus among many Muslim activists and intellectuals, particularly outside the Middle East, is that the idea of *jihad* as a process of struggle (which can be emotional, psychological, physical, spiritual, etc), has essentially been usurped by a network of militants who subscribe to a brand of Islamic extremism that is out of synch with a 21st century "progressive" understanding of Islam. Militants are perceived as distorting Quranic text to justify their particular political agendas. [2] Militants and armed "liberation movements," in turn, contest this view. They argue that militancy is an appropriate and legitimate response to the imperialist nature of political engagement by western regimes, particularly the United States, and that their actions should therefore not be referred to as "terrorism" but as "resistance." [3]

In the wake of the attacks of 11 September 2001 against the United States, considered to have been inspired by Islamic "extremism," the nature of global politics and international relations has clearly shifted, in terms of security considerations. Many governments have as a result of these attacks on the US, put into place harsh measures to deal with militant groups, and allegedly militant groups, whom they label "terrorist."[4] These events have dominated recent international relations and are effectively changing the nature of engagement between state and non-state actors. Increasingly, individual freedoms are being severely compromised as governments seek to address violence

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[2] See O. Safi, *Progressive Muslims : On Justice, Gender and Pluralism* (Oxford : Oneworld, 2003); R. Bonney, *Jihad : From Quran to Bin Laden* (London : Palgrave, 2004) and Z. Sardar, *What Do Muslims Believe?* (London: Granta Books, 2006).

[3] Militant groupings such as Al- Qaeda, Jamaah Islamiyah, Islamic Jihad, Hamas, and Hezbollah, who are engaged in militant activity in their respective geographic regions, have argued vociferously that civic and political engagement has been futile, and that militancy is the only option of exercising dissent and resistance to accomplish their goals. See J. Corbin, *The Base : In search of Al-Qaeda – The Terror Network that Shook the World* (London : Simon and Schuster, 2002) and M. Bishara, *Palestine / Israel : Peace or Apartheid* (London : Zed Books, 2002).

[4] All of the planes that were part of the co-ordinated attack on the US were allegedly hijacked by Muslim / Arab individuals, primarily of Saudi origin. Investigations revealed that all those who had planned and / or carried out the operation were in some way connected to Al-Qaeda or some militant movement that based its ideologies on Islamic religious rhetoric. In most instances this rhetoric was considered extremist by the broader international community.

through draconian legislation which clamps down on civil liberties.[5] The implications for the stability of the world order is grave, especially given that many Muslim minorities in the West are now subject to extreme pressures, increased vigilance, and indeed outright intimidation as a result of the actions of Muslim militants elsewhere.[6]

The discourse of Political Islam has come under greater scrutiny as governments, security personnel, and policy analysts attempt to understand how the links between Islam as a religion and the political ideology of the faith might be inciting political violence.[7] While there have been attempts by the non-Muslim world to understand the discourse of both political Islam and the religion as a whole through engagement with Muslim communities, the assumptions that conflate Islamic political theology with political violence remain deep-seated in many minds. The notion that Islam is anti-modern, archaic, and incites hatred of non-Muslims has seemingly taken root in large sectors of the Western world.[8] Such views are reinforced through western intellectual discourses, such as those advanced by Samuel Huntington and Bernard Lewis, who argue that Islamic culture is on an inevitable collision course with western civilization because of its inability to conform to modernity, notwithstanding 1400 years of sophisticated political thought within Islam, which has shown itself to be highly adaptive as a discourse and intellectual framework without losing the essence of its core theological foundations.[9]

Contemporary tensions, it can be argued, are not endemic to the faith but emerged when the predominantly egalitarian ethos of political Islam was confronted with the

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[5] The United States and its coalition partners have been waging a "War on Terror", arguing that terrorism is *the* major threat facing the international community today. The term terrorism has, however, also been used to describe militant acts carried out, arguably, in self-defense against state military apparatus, such as is the case in Israel / Palestine. Given that most perpetrators of "terrorism" are emerging from within the Muslim world, there has been a greater focus on the faith and its ideologies by the international community. See O. Roy, *Globalised Islam : The Search for a New Ummah* (London : Hurst and Company, 2004) and J.L. Esposito, *Political Islam. Revolution, Radicalism, or Reform?* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997).

[6] See T. Ali, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms : Crusades, Jihads and Modernity* (London : Verso, 2002).

[7] See G. Kepel, *Jihad : The Trail of Political Islam* (London : IB Tauris, 2004).

[8] See C. Benard, *Civil Democratic Islam : Partners, Resources, Strategies* (Santa Monica : The Rand Corporation, 2003).

[9] See S.P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York : Simon and Schuster, 1996) and B. Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam* (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1988).

reality of militancy which articulated itself throughout the globe as a peculiar manifestation of post-colonial Islamic political movements resisting imperialist and colonial domination.[10] This study is primarily about the ideological contestation between those who claim that militancy and political violence is a necessary tactic within Islam to respond to contemporary political realities (such as the invasion and occupation of Muslim lands) and those who argue that Islam is not about violence, and can engage politics, but within a progressive paradigm. This thesis aims to understand how this contestation locates itself within the South African Muslim context, and whether either ideology has any significant following within this community.

Tendencies within Militant Islam

The scholarship of political Islam in the 19th century has documented Islamic movements (religious and political) that emerged as a response to the imperialist project of the western world.[11] It essentially traces the development of nationalist resistance struggles to overthrow colonial regimes which had caused political and socio-economic fragmentation in the Muslim and Arab worlds. Some movements that originated as primarily religious, political, or nationalist groupings subsequently evolved into militant factions, using religious scripture to rationalize their violent activism.[12]

Two predominantly religiously inspired ideological movements, *Wahabbism* and *al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun* (Muslim Brotherhood) stand out in particular, as they are seen as having spawned various contemporary militant groups. They fall under the broad ideological framework of what Olivier Roy articulates as Neo-fundamentalism, a school of thought that encapsulates a variety of religiously conservative modes of belief.[13]

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[10] See J. Beinin and J. Stork, eds., *Political Islam : Essays from The Middle East Report* (London : I B Tauris and Co, 1997).

[11] Beinin and Stork, eds., *Political Islam : Essays from Middle East Report.*

[12] Mahmood Mamdani argues that the rise in militancy is a consequence of Cold War dynamics that resulted in some of political movements evolving into armed militant groups taking on liberation struggles because of the failure of political processes to resolve territorial and other disputes. See M. Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim* (Johannesburg : Jacana, 2004). See also, Roy, *Globalised Islam : The Search for a New Ummah.*

[13] See Roy, *Globalised Islam : The Search for a New Ummah*, 232 – 247.

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Wahabbism, which has its roots in the peculiar legacy of Saudi political history and religious fundamentalism, has been identified as having inspired extremist militant groups such as Al-Qaeda and Jamaah Islamiyah.[14] The Muslim Brotherhood, which has its origins in Egyptian worker and nationalist struggles, gave rise to militant groupings such as Islamic Jihad and Hamas in Palestine, and Hezbollah in Lebanon.[15] In South Africa, *Qibla*, which emerged in the 1980s as a response to the political oppression of Apartheid, was inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood, while People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD) emerged in the post-apartheid period as an expression of political militancy within the South African Muslim community. PAGAD however did not necessarily have any direct links to either ideological movement.

A third movement has also influenced the broader global Muslim community in terms of militant rhetoric but its influence has been largely localized. This is the Iranian regime that emerged out of the Revolution of 1979.[16] While the revolution inspired many Muslims ideologically, it has not given rise to extreme militant factions globally, although Iran is often accused of supporting militant groups like Hezbollah in Lebanon, which have a Shiite identity. The regime consolidated itself as a religious based authority, with Mullahs regulating the national life of Iranians. The Iranian religious leadership is primarily Shiite-based, whereas much contemporary violent militant activity is emerging out of Sunni groupings inspired by Wahhabism and the Muslim Brotherhood.[17] This does not however make Iranian politics any less militant. The latest trajectory of the Iranian ideological revolution has manifested itself in a political dispute with the American

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[14] The idea of religious fundamentalism articulated here is that which would constitute an orthodox understanding of Islam within Saudi Arabia. It does not necessarily imply that religious orthodoxy is inherently connected to militancy. See Roy, *Globalised Islam : The Search for a New Ummah.*

[15] See Roy, *Globalised Islam : The Search for a New Ummah.*

[16] See D. Westerlund, ed., *Questioning the Secular State : The Worldwide Resurgence of Religion in Politics* (London : Hurst and Company, 1996).

[17] The Islamic tradition has two distinct theological sects / groups that manifest themselves as Sunni and Shia. The points of divergence have historically emerged as a result of differences over succession of leadership. Shiites insist that the true leadership of Islam must emerge from within the bloodline of the Prophet Muhammed (saw), while Sunnis subscribe to the idea of electing leadership from those deemed most capable and religiously competent. There is a debate around the degree of militancy that exists in both Sunni and Shiite camps. Shiites have historically refrained from engaging in the level of militancy that Sunni groups have resorted to. The current political impasse in Iraq is a clear indicator of these historical disputes, and has begun to manifest itself as religious sectarian tensions. See Chapter Two of this thesis for more detailed discussion on the Sunni / Shiite distinction.

administration over the development of nuclear technology. While the Iranian political space has arguably not generated violent militancy, it does nevertheless reflect degrees of organised political resistance and will be referred to in this thesis, when necessary.

Progressive Ideology in Islam

The global Islamic political landscape is not a homogenous space with any single ideological movement enjoying hegemony. While militancy appears dominant for now, a new movement has been emerging over the past few decades in response to the changing face of global Islam. This movement emerged in response to militant ideologies and is challenging violent modes of political engagement by some in the Muslim world. This movement refers to itself as "Progressive Islam" and in many respects fashions itself as an egalitarian, democratic ideological space concerned with social justice and opposed to violence.[18] The tag "Progressive Islam" is however, value-laden. For the purposes of this study it refers to Muslims who "oppose fundamentalism and militant religion; people who are open, flexible and want to rework their age-old beliefs to engage with the modern world. They are also critical of modernity and the West from their faith perspective but crucially, seek to live peacefully within their communities...with the aim of averting a new round of energy-sapping hostilities between peoples." [19]

Progressive Islam is itself a contested ideological terrain, with serious differences around what constitutes the core principles of this emerging movement and how we are to define notions of "progressive" and "religious" as mutually compatible, given that there are differing understandings of progressive thought. This nascent movement has manifested itself in various contexts ranging from civic groupings that have a predominantly Muslim identity to those that are geared towards organizing and creating a space for engagement for Muslims living in predominantly secular societies. South African examples include the Muslim Youth Movement and Taking Islam to the People.

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[18] See O. Safi, *Progressive Muslims : On Justice, Gender and Pluralism.*
[19] See G. Doogue and P. Kirkwood, *Tomorrow's Islam : Uniting age-old beliefs and a modern world* (Sydney : ABC books, 2005), 2.

South African Context

South Africa as a nation has been subject to a violent and tumultuous history, but has since 1994 become a model for constructive engagement and conflict resolution in many quarters, despite occasional incidences of political violence during the past decade. The country's relevance to this project as a case-study is ideal because its Muslim community has been involved at various levels of national political life, from participating in the anti-apartheid struggle to being part of the global anti-war movement post-2000.[20] The nature of political engagement by South African Muslims is extremely fascinating given that it reflects both a militant and a progressive rhetoric, and has expressed these in various ways. This thesis will document and analyse various forms of political expression in an effort to interrogate the hypothesis of this study, viz,

"Progressive Islam, as an ideology within Political Islam inspired by Quranic text and Islamic political thought, represents an ideological alternative to militant post-colonial Islamic movements and provides a viable model for political engagement within a 21st century context."

Muslims constitute less than 2.5 per cent of South Africa's population of 45 million but have been in the public eye since South Africa achieved its freedom. Initially, it was because of the militant activities of the anti-drug group, People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD) in the mid-to-late 1990s, which had an overtly "Islamic" identity. This was followed by ongoing debates among Muslims about participating in the democratic process, protests over Palestine, Muslim reaction to the post-2001 global "War on Terror," invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq; the cartoon controversy in later 2005; and deportation of Pakistani national Rashid Khalidi in October 2005 in connivance, allegedly, with the British, amongst other incidences, such as the global anger in response to comments made by the Pope and British MP Jack

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[20] See A. Tayob, *Islam in South Africa ; Mosques, Imams and Sermons* (Gainesville : University Press of Florida, 1999).

Straw, in relation to Islam and Muslims. This has been accompanied by serious debates amongst Muslims over the nature of their religious beliefs and practices. The tendency however among some in "western" circles, to see Muslim reaction to these events as homogeneous, masks important nuances. This is reflected in the manner in which Muslims have been taking advantage of spaces in the post-apartheid landscape.

If we throw into the mix the quite remarkable fact that the war in Iraq could not mobilise as many people as the cartoon issue, emerging spiritual tendencies within Islam, the changing nature of identity, the "toenadering" (close association) with the ANC government by some Muslims, the rapid spread of Muslim schools, the (re)turn to the beard and the veil in recent times, the shunning of the beard by some, popularity of Muslim "souks" (flea markets), growth in listener-ship of Islamic radio stations, the emergence of "Gift of the Givers" as a major national charitable organisation, and different trajectories of Islam in the Cape, Durban and Johannesburg, then all this makes for a vibrant political space among Muslims, but a divided one with multiple voices.[21]

The Study

This thesis engages in a historical analysis of Political Islam and provides a framework for understanding this discourse in a 21st century context. It examines competing ideological movements that have inspired specific modes of political engagement, historically and in the contemporary period, in order to find answers to the many new questions that seem to be emerging. Has Political Islam historically served to advance notions of egalitarianism or is it predominantly an ideological space that inspires violence and militancy? Does Political Islam incite violence and advocate the killing of civilians, or does it seek to promote social justice, based on principles of humaneness and dignity? Is there systematic engagement between progressive Muslims and mainstream Western audiences? Why do Western audiences only know of Muslims who are

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[21] See G. Vahed and S. Jeppie, "Multiple Communities : Muslims in Post-Apartheid South Africa," in *State of the Nation : South Africa, 2004 – 2005*, ed. J. Daniel and others, 252 – 286 (Cape Town : HSRC Press, 2005).

perceived to be hostile and aggressive? Does Progressive Islam provide answers to whether Muslims and non-Muslims can live in long-term harmony? Are militant modes of contemporary Muslim resistance against Western domination effective in achieving their objectives? Is political violence a viable alternative to democratic and progressive engagement around these issues? The study locates these key questions within the South African Muslim context.

The primary hypothesis locates itself within the argument that contemporary Progressive Islam is a dynamic space which, while having contesting and competing internal theological paradigms, essentially provides a model for constructive politics and engagement that complements modern democracy, and that extremist militant modes of engagement are essentially political tools external to the core theological foundation of Islam as a religion, which means peace and submission to a higher power. There is a context for Muslim rage and militancy. However, this must be located within the framework of international relations and global politics, as opposed to being reduced to simply, inspiration from the Quranic text. While the phenomenon of religious extremism is often couched in religious terms, arguably it has nothing to do with "authentic" Islam.

The study has attempted to achieve the following six primary objectives;

a) Provide a historical and contextual background to the development of Political Islam as an intellectual space, examining the relationship between cultural and religious discourse and the framework of secular modernity;

b) Locate Political Islam within the framework of contemporary global politics and analyze the links being articulated between modern political militancy and the discourse of political Islam;

c) Provide an alternative understanding of Political Islam that challenges mainstream western misconceptions of the discourse, located in Orientalist and "Islamophobic" rhetoric;

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d) Interrogate contemporary groupings in South Africa that are political, civic, and religious in nature, and locate their activism within certain forms of ideological rhetoric, which are either militant or progressive;

e) Engage in qualitative and quantitative analysis of the multiple ways in which Political Islam and forms of political expression manifest themselves within the South African Muslim community, through structured interviews and analysis of archival material;

f) Conclude by assessing the degree to which Progressive Islamic ideology provides a model for a politics of engagement that is complimentary to modern democracy within a 21st century context, as opposed to militant modes of engagement.

The study has also posed the following five basic research questions:

i) What are the core ideological assumptions of historical and contemporary Political Islam, located within various movements that emerged since the late nineteenth century, and how do these provide a framework for political engagement in a 21st century context?

ii) How have the discourses of culture, colonialism, and modernity shaped and transformed political Islam over the past century?

iii) Why is Political Islam linked with contemporary political violence and how should we seek to re-examine the connections between the theoretical / theological paradigm of Islam and expressions of religious militancy?

iv) What forms of political expression are being articulated within the South African Muslim community in the post-apartheid period? How are South Africa's Muslims embracing political spaces which have opened up as a consequence of

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fundamental political, social, and economic changes that came with the demise of apartheid, which was roughly coterminous with globalization?

v) In what ways does Progressive Islam as a modern movement provide alternatives for political engagement within a trans-national framework? Is it compatible with democracy in the 21st century?

Below are the chapter summaries, which give a brief overview of how the study has been divided into various sections.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter One: Political Islam – Origins, history, and transformation

This chapter contains a description of the current political status of the contemporary Muslim world and traces the development of the discourse of Political Islam, its intellectual influences as well as its various manifestations globally, from the early 20th century to the 1970s, to the current period. It also engages in a critical evaluation of the evolution of both Militant and Progressive Islam.

Chapter Two: Empire, Colonialism, Orientalism

This chapter articulates the evolution of Orientalist thought and Western Empire in relation to the development of Political Islam, and traces the impact of Western political projects such as Colonialism, and modern day military invasions and occupations of Muslim territories and discrimination towards Muslim minority communities, which has shaped particular forms of responses by Muslims towards such projects. It also examines latter day forms of Orientalist discourse, manifesting itself as "Islamophobia."

Chapter Three: The Context: Islam in South Africa: Multiple communities

Chapter Three focuses on describing South African Muslims and their origins and development into a contemporary minority community. There is an emphasis on the various regional dynamics, based on province and race, which have shaped particular expressions of Muslim identity and practice. There is also a brief description of the broad political landscape which SA Muslims inhabit.

Chapter Four: Methodology Review and Summary of Qualitative Data : South African Muslims and Political Participation

This chapter outlines the methodology used in this study and some of the constraints faced in the research process. Chapter Four also summarises the main trends of thought and popular opinion within the South African Muslim community as expressed by the various interviewees. It delineates the broad spectrum of political views and practice that shape the contemporary experience of SA Muslims. It also profiles a variety of Muslim organizations that function within the Muslim and broader community space, and assesses the impact that these organizations have had on developing either a conservative (even militant) or progressive (moderate / liberal) worldview amongst SA Muslims, and further evaluates how these perspectives have impacted on how they express themselves politically.

Chapter Five: Post-Apartheid Period – Insular or participating citizens?

Chapter Five evaluates the degree to which SA Muslims have become isolated or engaged, in relation to the key political issues of the day, through an analysis of archival material which documents their political participation since 1994. In particular it highlights the political achievements of SA Muslims in a post-apartheid context, who have sought to engage within the framework of their religious beliefs, but arguably do so within the context of a progressive Islamic paradigm, and through primarily civic modes of participation.

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Chapter Six: Conclusions – In pursuit of a way forward

This chapter summarises the discussion and findings of the previous five chapters and attempts to locate the broader study within the hypothetical paradigm which the thesis began with,

> *"Progressive Islam, as an ideology within Political Islam inspired by Quranic text and Islamic political thought, represents an ideological alternative to militant post-colonial Islamic movements and provides a viable model for political engagement within a 21st century context."*

In the final analysis, the hypothesis is affirmed as being applicable in the South African context. This chapter also outlines a vision for a sustainable way forward for SA Muslims, in terms of developing and strengthening their political profile nationally.

Chapter One

Political Islam: Origins, History, and Transformation[22]

Introduction

The post Cold War international relations terrain has been increasingly redefined by an emerging contestation within the Muslim world, between what we can broadly refer to as liberal and secular forms of political engagement on the one hand, and those forms of political expression that are rooted in more rigid and conservative Islamic theological tradition.[23] This contestation is the subject of this study which is located within the broad overarching framework of an interrogation into the form, nature and substance of the contested spaces, taking into account the factors, history and contemporary dynamics which shape these debates.[24]

While some intellectuals may regard these debates as part of the evolving character of a religion that is just over fourteen centuries old, the tensions that have emerged from the contestations over the past decade, such as increased militancy and political violence against Western targets in particular, have led to an increased scrutiny of Islam, especially by Western politicians, intelligence agencies, and scholars, in a

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[22] For more detailed discussion on issues referred to in this chapter, see A. Hourani, *Arab Thought in the Liberal Age 1798 – 1939* (CUP, 1983), H. Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought* (London : Macmillan Press, 1988) and I. Boullata, *Trends and Issues in Contemporary Arab Thought* (SUNY, 1990).

[23] The term liberal is used in this thesis to refer to a set of ideas that reflect a particular political ideology, viz, Liberalism, as espoused by Western philosophical thinkers such as John Locke (reflected in essays such as *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, 1689), and John Stuart Mill (J.S. Mill, *On Liberty and Other Writings*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1859, 1989). The phrase liberal is usually used to denote individual/s or actions that are inspired by liberalism as an ideology. The notions most central to liberalism are liberty, equality and humanism, all being articulated by Locke as 'god-given / natural rights'. The phrase Secular / secularist is used in this thesis to refer to a conceptual separation between religion and state/ politics, but can also be used interchangeably to refer to a person / idea that is inspired by liberal ideologies. The term conservative / conservatism in this thesis, is used to refer to the ideas as espoused by Western thinkers such as Edmund Burke (late 1700s). The notions considered most central to conservative thought are tradition, pragmatism, human imperfection, organicism, hierarchy, authority and property. A. Heywood, *Politics* (New York : Palgrave Macmillan, 2002). While these concepts have emerged as part of a Western intellectual tradition, they are used frequently in all societies to frame arguments and discourses. Their use in this study therefore is to provide a conceptual backdrop to the main arguments of this thesis.

[24] See J. L. Esposito, "Introduction," in *Political Islam : Revolution, Radicalism or Reform*, ed. J.L. Esposito, 1 - 14 (Boulder : Lynne Rienner, 1997). Esposito argues that Islam in a political context (Political Islam) is regarded by some as a multifaceted and diverse phenomenon and by others as a "clear and present danger to be consistently and persistently repressed".

manner and on a scale that is perhaps unprecedented either in Islamic or modern political history.[25] This scrutiny has resulted in the proliferation of numerous reports, and "studies", many "commissioned" by a variety of western think tank spaces, in an effort to understand what has led to the emergence of these competing forces and to also examine how these contestations are impacting on interactions among Muslims, and between Muslims and the non-Muslim world.

In a 2006 study conducted on the perceived impact that Islamist thought as an ideology has had on the Arab, and to a lesser extent the broader Muslim world, from the turn of the twentieth century, N. J. Brown, A. Hamzawy and M. Ottaway identify six "grey" areas viz; Islamic law, violence, pluralism, civil and political rights, women's rights, and religious minorities, as the source of much of the political contention among Muslims, both in Muslim majority countries as well as in the "western" world, where substantial Muslim minorities live. [26]

A 2003 analysis of Islam titled *Civil Democratic Islam: Partners, Resources, Strategies,* but popularly referred to as the 'Rand Report on Islam', sought to "diagnose" the problems within the Muslim world and its relation to the broader international community.[27] The report was underpinned by the assumption that two components constituted the contemporary "crisis" in Islam: i) a failure to thrive and ii) a loss of connection to the global mainstream. The report argues:

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[25] Samuel Huntington in his seminal work, *The Clash of Civilizations : The Remaking of World Order* (New York : Touchstone, 1996), explores the notion of contemporary contestation between historical civilizations, and in particular the idea of Islam being a force, which is in many ways, incompatible with other "western" ideologies. He emphasizes that "fault line conflicts are particularly prevalent between Muslims and non-Muslims, 208 - 218. In many ways this idea and his general thesis have been used to legitimate the increased global scrutiny of Muslims by Western state forces, by posing the argument that there is some theoretical basis for the monitoring of Muslims, given their so called "inherent" inclination to be antagonistic to "democracy" etc. Such practices have become even more prevalent, particularly since the events of 11 September 2001.

[26] N.J. Brown, A. Hamzawy and M. Ottaway, *Islamist Movements and the Democratic Process in the Arab World : Exploring the Grey Zones* (Washington : Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006), 4.

[27] The RAND Corporation (Research and Development is a nonprofit global policy think tank first formed to offer research and analysis to the US armed forces. Present and past members of the board of trustees has included Francis Fukuyama; Frank Carlucci, Deputy Director of the CIA from 1978-81; Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defence under Gerald Ford and George Bush, and United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

"The Islamic world has been marked by a long period of backwardness and comparative powerlessness; many different solutions, such as nationalism, pan-Arabism, Arab socialism, and Islamic revolution have been attempted without success, and this has led to frustration and anger. At the same time, the Islamic world has fallen out of step with contemporary global culture, an uncomfortable situation for both sides." [28]

This, it increasingly appears, has come to reflect the sentiments of large numbers of scholars and even ordinary citizens within Western society, if one observes the nature of public discourse in the mainstream media around issues such as the wearing of the headscarf (*hijab*) by Muslim women and their public role, Islamic Law (*shariah*), democracy, human rights, the issue of Islam's relationship to popular culture, best epitomized by the furor displayed globally by Muslims in the aftermath of the publication of cartoons in Denmark in 2005, which were contemptuous of the Prophet Muhammed (pbuh) in the Western press, and so on.[29] Much of the public sentiment, however, is being shaped by discursive engagements taking place between certain scholars, and their rhetoric has very often been uncritically consumed by western media and masses, as representing an accurate and unbiased perspective on the developments unfolding within the Muslim world, with sometimes disastrous consequences.[30]

The author of the RAND report, Cheryl Benard, claims to "objectively analyse" the core reasons for the current "chaos" manifesting itself both within the Muslim world and between Islamic and Western worlds. While aspects of her analysis may ring true when the levels of socio-political and economic development in some regions of the Muslim world are compared to those in the Western or "developed" world, her broad argument is questionable as she implies that these problems may be attributed to an

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[28] C. Benard, *Civil Democratic Islam : Partners, Resources, Strategies* (Santa Monica : The Rand Corporation, 2003), ix.

[29] PHUH, which is an abbreviation for 'Peace Be Upon Him', is generally invoked by Muslims when the name of the Prophet of Islam is mentioned as a sign of reverence and respect. However, for academic purposes, this thesis will omit to do so in further references to the Prophet, which is not intended as a mark of disrespect, rather it is in the interest of observing clinical scholarly practice. Muslim readers can invoke this blessing when reference is made to the Prophet. When reference is made to 'Prophet' it refers specifically to the Prophet of Islam.

[30] American news channels such as Fox and ABC, have become notorious for the "spin" they tend to put on stories related to Islam and the Middle East.

inherent flaw within Islam and the Muslim world.[31] In so doing, Benard fails to take into account the historical reasons for the "crisis" and "failure" that she alludes to, which have as intellectuals like Mahmood Mamdani point out, been alternatively contextualized as part of broader post World War Two politics rooted in the paradigm of Cold War rhetoric and practice, primarily shaped by American hegemonic forces.[32] Hence her analysis ends up as a one-dimensional critique of Islam, devoid of history and context.

Even more worrying is Benard's classification of the global Muslim population into four "types," and providing suggestions on how the United States in particular and the West in general, should relate to each. The categories that she articulates are "Fundamentalist," "Traditionalist," "Modernist," and "Secularist." Fundamentalists, according to Benard, reject democratic values and contemporary Western culture. They want an authoritarian, puritanical state that will implement their extreme view of Islamic law and morality. They are willing to use modern technology to achieve that goal. Traditionalists, on the other hand, are suspicious of modernity, innovation, and change and want a conservative society. Modernists want the Islamic world to become part of global modernity, and to this end want to reform Islam to bring it in line with the contemporary age in every respect. Secularists want the Islamic world to accept a division of church and state in the manner of Western industrial democracies, with religion relegated to the private sphere. [33]

On closer inspection, these "categories" inevitably raise certain questions about their usefulness in terms of "documenting" Muslims. What they do actually manage to accomplish, is to essentialise Muslims, without taking into account the multiple and nuanced dynamics present in Muslim societies, which cannot simply be neatly contained into four broad descriptive "types."[34] However this kind of "analysis" is precisely what

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[31] The argument may be made that Benard engages in essentialising Muslims into particular categories. However some extremist Muslim groups also use language which may fall into "essentialist" categories, such as 'infidel.'

[32] M. Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim* (Johannesburg : Jacana, 2004).

[33] Benard, *Civil Democratic Islam*, x.

[34] See I.M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies.* 2nd ed. (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2002), who provides an expansive analysis of the rich and multiple dynamics which makes up the global Muslim community.

has been surfacing within some western intellectual circles, over the last few years, leading to a rethinking by western governments of how to respond to the Muslim typologies that are articulated in many of these reports, within the framework of international relations and foreign policy agendas.

In unpacking the nature of the discourses that many of these "commissioned" studies are utilizing, this thesis intends to argue very strongly, that the kind of intellectual rhetoric that Benard and others are engaging in, has to be "exposed" as "anthropologically constructed" and "orientalist" in its articulation, servicing primarily a range of political agendas which are being shaped and defined by a range of imperialist global forces.[35] Some of these stand to gain economically and militarily from being the architects of division and fear of the "other" (which has historically been regarded as anathema, to western interests) and, in other instances, benefit politically from shifting the historical paradigm of what Francis Fukuyama referred to as the "end of history," which celebrated the victory of western liberalism, to one framed by the discourse of the now infamous "clash of civilizations" thesis postulated by Samuel Huntington and supported by other latter day Orientalists such as Bernard Lewis.[36]

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[35] See for example, T. Ali, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms : Crusades, Jihads and Modernity* (London : Verso, 2002). Ali makes reference to the broad imperialist project which the United States and its allies have been engaging in, for many decades, which has led to the current political impasse in the Middle East and chaos in the broader Muslim world. See also R. Khalidi, *Resurrecting Empire : Western Footprints and America's Perilous Path in the Middle East* (London : IB Tauris, 2004), who engages in a similar anti-imperialist discourse. The disclaimer here though is that not all "western" think tank studies of Muslims are orientalist in nature.

[36] Orientalist thought has been a historical feature of European colonial expansion since the 1600s. It is effectively a mode and practice developed by Western explorers and writers to observe and document the sociological and cultural identities of the various non-Western societies (particularly from the geographic east) which they encountered in their travels, during the period of colonial domination. The debate on "anthropological" constructions of persons of Eastern origin by Orientalists in an attempt to conquer, occupy and oppress such peoples, has been addressed comprehensively by Edward Said in E. Said, *Orientalism : Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London : Penguin, 1978) and Z. Sardar, *Orientalism* (Buckingham : Open University Press, 1999). The Orientalist paradigm and its framing of the main thesis in this dissertation will be expounded upon in greater detail in Chapter 2. See also S. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations : The Remaking of World Order* (New York : Touchstone, 1996); F. Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (London : Penguin, 1992) and B. Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam* (Chicago : The University of Chicago Press, 1991). On the architecture of chaos, see L. Nadvi, "Islam and Politics in the 21st Century", in *Islam in the 21st Century*, ed. H Solomon, (Pretoria : Centre for International Politics, 2005).

It is important to point out however that terms like Fundamentalist, Traditionalist, Modernist, and Secularist, as labels to describe certain modes of thinking, are not necessarily problematic per se, when viewed from a social science lens. It is the purpose for which they are ultimately employed, that is problematic. When they are used to "categorise" Muslims, they tend to conjure up images of hordes of people from the Orient who can be defined in an "essentialist" manner and neatly placed into boxes for containing, managing and consuming. While some of these categories are occasionally used by Muslims to describe themselves in a contemporary context or even by scholars of Islam such as Olivier Roy, they inevitably end up, as the ensuing discussion will illustrate, becoming political frameworks which are used to legitimate unethical practices and violations of human rights, such as the contemporary practice of imposing limits on civil liberties, racial and ethnic profiling, and extraordinary renditions executed by American and other Western state agencies.[37]

While this thesis also uses broad categories to describe Muslims, the contention here is that the "branding" and stereotyping of Muslims by New Orientalist Western scholars is responsible for, or at least exacerbates, tensions both within the Muslim world, and that which some parts of the Muslim world directs towards the rest of the global community through militant engagement. "Good Muslim" / "Bad Muslim", "with us" / "against us," are some of the manifestations of this thinking. According to Mamdani, the attempt to engage with contemporary Muslim society by the "West" has in many cases become more of an exercise in anthropological practice reminiscent of nineteenth-century "orientalist" discourse rather than a genuine effort to begin to understand the roots of the contestations, which arguably lie, he contends, in the remnant effects of colonialism and the post-Cold War era.[38] The United States, as articulated by the RAND Report, sees itself involved in a battle of ideas as much as a battle of arms. There is a conflict of ideas within the Muslim world and the United States sees its task as being an agent which can intervene, in order to influence the outcome. The role of the United States government in

[37] O. Roy, *Globalised Islam : The Search for a New Ummah* (London : Hurst and Company, 2004).
[38] Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*, 32, 11.

impacting upon and shaping the debates within the Muslim world is well documented.[39] The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) for example, funds radio and television shows, Muslim Think Tanks, Islamic schools, the curriculums of these schools, and political workshops in an effort to promote "moderate" Islam, one that it feels is more in line with its worldview.

The use to which the RAND Report's categorisation of Muslims is put, arguably reinforces the idea shared by many Muslim and non-Muslim sectarians that there are monolithic and hostile groups, one Western and the other Oriental, that coexist in separatist isolation and where one, the inferior Muslim group, should assimilate into the other. Under circumstances where some Muslims feel that they are presumed guilty until proven innocent, there is a likelihood of further withdrawing into the identity which such discourse is constructing for them. Perceiving relations between Muslims and the West as essentially hostile also masks the multiple links between the West and Islam as well as differences among Muslims themselves.

The position which this thesis advances, in challenging orientalist discourses, is by no means a novel one; however, what will constitute an original contribution to the existing scholarship is the application of this idea to understanding how these categories are manifesting themselves in the context of political expression within the South African Muslim community in the post-apartheid period, and particularly the ways in which they lend themselves to explaining the kinds of positions that South African Muslims are taking around the key issues identified by Brown and others, at the beginning of this chapter, namely, the place of *shariah* in contemporary society, the role of violence as a political solution, pluralism, civil and political rights, women's rights, and the rights of religious minorities.

A key approach of this study is to focus on the various ways in which certain ideological categories, some of which have been self-defined by some Muslims

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[39] The US government has attempted to promote more moderate forms of Islamic practice, such as Sufism, by funding groups which prescribe to these ideas.

themselves, such as "Progressive Islam", and others like "Militant Islam" which were coined by Western scholars and policy planners to describe an ideology that is motivating some Muslims to engage in militant modes of articulation, are providing impetus and inspiration to South African Muslims, and their expressions of political rhetoric and practice.[40] Central to this project is examining the broader discursive space within which these modes of ideological articulation are evolving and the manner in which this space, which will be referred to broadly as Political Islam, is constituted. Political Islam may generally be understood as an area of engagement within Islamic thought that has gained greater currency in the twenty-first century context, primarily because it is the core area of engagement foregrounding contestations within the Muslim world and between Muslims and the West.[41]

Prefixes like militant, progressive, radical, and fundamentalist indicate how elusive it is to define Political Islam. In its simplest form, according to Knudsen, it refers to "Islam used to a political end."[42] The term is accepted widely, though it has several shortcomings. These include the fact that Islam fuses religion and politics, which the term does not capture completely; it leads to a conflating of legitimate political and democratic protest with militancy, potentially making all forms of social protest illegitimate; and finally, according to Hirshkind, it tends to imply "an illegitimate extension of the Islamic tradition outside of the properly religious domain it has historically occupied."[43] Olivier Roy, Giles Kepel and John Esposito, amongst others, have attempted to provide an intellectual framework for the discourse of Political Islam and to contextualize what is

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[40] See O. Safi, *Progressive Muslims : On Justice, Gender and Pluralism* (Oxford : Oneworld Publications, 2003).

[41] See J. Esposito, *Political Islam. Revolution, Radicalism, or Reform?* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997); G. Kepel, *Jihad : The Trail of Political Islam* (London : IB Tauris, 2004); O. Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1996).

[42] R. Knudsen, 'Political Islam in the Middle East,' Chr Michelson Institute. Development Studies and Human Rights (2003) : 3, http://www.cmi.no/public/public.htm. See also C. Hirschkind, 'What is Political Islam?' *Middle East Report*, October – December: 12-14 (1997).

[43] Knudsen, 'Political Islam,' 10.

currently unfolding within the broader Muslim world, within mainstream political and international relations discourse and scholarship.[44]

Origins

There is vigorous debate around exactly when Political Islam first emerged as a distinct area of discursive thought and intellectual engagement. Anthony Black has suggested that political thought in Islam has existed virtually from the time of the Quranic revelations to the Prophet Muhammed in the seventh century. Indeed, Black argues, Islamic political thought forms a significant part of the intellectual history of homo sapiens. [45] He further contends that while Western political thought may claim to be the history of all political thought, it is not possible to "understand the history of ideas even in any single culture without some awareness of what was going on in other cultures." [46]

To this end, it is important that one reflects on the emergence of Islamic political thought as having been central to not only the faith of Islam and Islamic civilization but significant to an understanding of how other cultures, particularly the currently predominant culture of Western civilization, has evolved. While chapter Two deals in greater depth with the history of Islamic thought and the Orientalist response, and the resultant contested spaces, this chapter makes brief reference to salient points on the nature of Islamic thought, which will frame the discussion on the emergence of Political Islam as a discursive space.

To fully appreciate the principles which underpin Political Islam, a brief explication of the theological framework within which it takes form is necessary. The three important components of Islamic thought are *Tawheed* (monotheism), *Risalah*

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[44] O. Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1996); G. Kepel, *Jihad : The Trail of Political Islam* (London : IB Tauris, 2004) and J.L. Esposito, *Political Islam : Revolution, Radicalism, or Reform?* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997).

[45] A. Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought* (Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press, 2001), 1.

[46] Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought*, 2.

(Prophethood), and *Khilafah*, which refers to the responsibility that humankind assumes as vice-regents of the Sovereign God on earth. Islamic thought is based on the idea that all sovereignty resides in a single God who is the supreme authority on all matters. Muslims submit totally to the will of God, who has no partners or associates.[47] The notion of *Tawheed* (monotheism) is a central defining facet of both the faith and the existing bodies of thought and canons that constitute the substantive set of ideas and beliefs that are identifiable as Islam the religion, as well as its constituent parts, such as socio-economic, political and cultural thought. Monotheism also underpins the political notions which have historically informed all aspects of Islamic activity. In other words, all the deeds and thoughts of Muslims must be informed by the idea that it is this one God ("Almighty") to whom they are ultimately accountable. Quranic revelations concretely describe how Muslims, as followers of Islam, should conduct their day-to-day activities in order to reflect and give substance to the idea of *Tawheed*.[48] These verses have been codified into a form of law (*Shariah*) that effectively constitutes the moral and penal framework that legislates the actions of Muslims.[49]

The idea of *Risalah* (Prophethood) is another central component of Islamic thought. Given that the revelations that form the basis of Islam were made known to the Prophet, his ideas and teachings, and the way he lived, are extremely important to Muslims. His way of life is often referred to as *Sunnah* and *Seerah*, which refer to the example that he left to his congregation, which came to be known as the *Ummah*. It is this example, and in particular the political dimension, which provides a guiding beacon for the *Ummah* to deal with contemporary challenges for all times and ages. [50]

The third dimension of Islamic thought is the idea of *Khilafah* or the representation and moral responsibility that humankind assumes as the vice-regent of the Sovereign God. The concept of the Caliphate, which is commonly also referred to as the

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[47] C.E. Farah, *Islam* 7th ed (New York : Barrons, 2003), 3.

[48] C.E. Farah , *Islam*, 79 – 103.

[49] A.R.I. Doi, *Shariah : The Islamic Law* (London : Ta Ha Publishers, 1984). See also S.H.H. Nadvi, *Islamic Legal Philosophy and the Quranic Origins of The Islamic Law : A Legal Historic Approach* (Durban : Academia, 1989).

[50] K. Armstrong, *Muhammad : Prophet for our Time* (London : Harper Perennial, 2007).

Islamic state, refers to a political system that is the substantive manifestation of *Khilafah*. It is the divinely ordained political and socio-economic system within which Muslims are meant to reside and conduct their daily affairs. The Caliphate has evolved numerous times since the seventh century. The last major Caliphate was the Ottoman Empire which was dismantled after four centuries of continuous rule at the end of the First World War following the defeat of the Central Powers. The contestation unfolding in the Muslim world today revolves to some extent around the idea of establishing a modern-day Caliphate, a project that Islamic movements such as Hizb ut Tahrir are intent on pursuing,[51] using militant means if necessary. Other Muslims believe that the realities of contemporary international relations make the establishment of a Caliphate unrealistic. This includes the changing nature of Muslim populations globally, including the fact that Muslim minority communities scattered across the globe seem content to live in a secular context where they are able to enjoy various rights and privileges that such societies afford them.[52] In attempting to unpack the complex nature of political expression in a Muslim minority context in South Africa, the notion of *Khilafah* will constitute a substantive theological basis of the study.

These components of Islamic thought are important for this study, which examines how Muslims in a particular political and socio-economic milieu, viz, South Africa, are expressing themselves politically in relation to their religious beliefs, and which forms the foundation for understanding what drives contesting and competing theoretical and ideological frameworks such as Progressive and Militant Islam, which are central to this thesis. These concepts and their relationship to the central questions of this study will be further expounded upon in later chapters.

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[51] Roy, *Globalised Islam : The Search for a New Islam,* 177, 198, 238, 275, 288.

[52] K. Armstrong, *Islam : A Short History* (London : Phoenix Press, 2000). See also Roy, *Globalised Islam : The Search for a New Islam* and Kepel, *Jihad : The Trail of Political Islam.*

History and Evolution of Political Islam

Contemporary Political Islam as a discernible discursive space is generally assumed to have first emerged in the early 1970s, following the defeat of Arab forces by Israel in 1967, which put an end to pan-Arabism and marked the beginning of an Islamic revival.[53] Joel Beinin and Joe Stork trace the ideological roots of modern political thought in Islam to the nineteenth-century scholarship of Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839–97), Muhammed Abduh (1849–1905), and Abduh's student Rashid Rida (1865 – 1935), who are credited with laying the foundation for modern political ideology which inspired various political movements in the late twentieth century. Movements of reform usually occur in periods of political turmoil and cultural challenges and these ideologues were responding to the challenges posed by the decline of the Ottoman Empire and rapid expansion of Western colonialism.

Rida, in particular, promoted the idea of the *Salafiyya* movement which was regarded as "a 'neo-traditionalist' orientation that restricted what was to be regarded as 'correct' in Islam to the Quran and *hadith* reports of the period of the Prophet's life and the reign of the first four 'rightly guided' Caliphs in the Sunni tradition: Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali."[54] This should however not be seen as a defence of tradition. As McDonald points out, Al-Afghani by returning to the original sources to find the "correct interpretation" of Islam, ensured that Muslims would find that there was no contradiction between Islam and science and rational thought.[55] The "fundamentalisation" of Islam was seen as a pre-requisite to its modernization.[56] The Salafiyya movement, known as Salafism, was a particularly influential ideological space as it had a huge impact on *Sunni* political thought in the twentieth century.[57]

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[53] J. Beinin and J. Stork, eds., *Political Islam : Essays from Middle East Report* (London : I B Tauris and Co, 1997), 5.

[54] Beinin and Stork, *Political Islam,* 5 -6.

[55] K. McDonald, "Globalization, Civil Imagination and Islamic Movements," in *Muslim Modernities : Expressions of the Civil Imagination,* ed. A. B. Sajoo, 192 (London: I.B. Taurus, 2008).

[56] McDonald, "Globalisation", 191.

[57] Roy, *Globalised Islam : The Search for a New Islam,* 233.

While Salafism did not aim at overturning the political order, several scholars and activists in the twentieth century did advocate just that. Hasan al-Banna (1906 – 49), an Egyptian schoolteacher heavily influenced by Rida's ideas, established the Society of Muslim Brothers (*Jam'iyyat al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin*) in 1928, commonly referred to as the Muslim Brotherhood, which is considered as having been the largest and most influential "Islamist" organization in the Sunni Arab world.[58] The Muslim Brotherhood established branches in Syria, Palestine, Jordan, and Sudan. The "Islamist" tradition which the Brotherhood embraced as a central ideological force will be dealt with in greater detail in later chapters.

The Muslim Brotherhood, in turn, influenced and shaped a number of other leading intellectuals of modern Islamic political thought. One of the most prominent was Syed Qutb (1906-1966), a Western educated Egyptian school teacher and political activist who was eventually executed by the Egyptian government in August 1966 on charges of trying to overthrow the regime. Qutb was arguably the most significant Arab Sunni thinker of the twentieth century in that he transformed prior discourses "in the direction of revolutionary jihadism."[59] It was Qutb who, drawing on Lenin and the Bolshevik model, theorized the role of the vanguard. Reinbold regards Qutb as the "Arab world's first important theoretician of the radical Islamist cause."[60] Qutb influenced an entire generation of activists from the 1970s who have been involved in grassroots liberation movements such as Hamas (Palestine) and Hezbollah (Lebanon) which emerged largely as a response to the creation of Israel in 1948 and subsequent usurpation of Palestinian land. While much of the Muslim world would consider these groupings as liberation movements fighting to free 'occupied' territories, and see them as militarily resisting the oppression of Muslims, they are conversely regarded by many in the non-Muslim world as 'terrorist' groupings.[61] This contestation between what constitutes a liberation movement and what comprises a terrorist organization is reflected quite

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[58] Beinin and Stork, *Political Islam*, 6.
[59] J. Reinbold, 'The "Humanity" of Radical Jihad', in ISIM Review 18 (Autumn 2006): 14-15, 14.
[60] J. Reinbold, 'The "Humanity" of Radical Jihad', in ISIM Review 18 (Autumn 2006): 15.
[61] See for example, L. Richardson, *What Terrorists Want : Understanding the Terrorist Threat* (London : John Murray, 2006).

significantly in the contemporary discourse of Political Islam as well as the emerging tensions between Islam and the Western world.

Another key thinker of Political Islam in the twentieth-century was Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi (1903-1979), (sometimes also spelt as Maududi or Maudoodi) who followed a parallel intellectual trajectory to Rida, Al-Banna, and Qutb, on the Asian subcontinent.[62] He is famous for his principle of *Iqamat-i-Deen*, literally meaning "the establishment of religion", which held that society and state were subordinate to the authority of Islamic law as revealed in the Qur'an and practiced by the Prophet. In Mawdudi's worldview, Islam was the basic form of organising all aspects of human life, from the religious to the political to the social, and the *Shariah* was to be the central law that governed these aspects. He founded the *Jamaa-e-Islaami* in India in 1941 but inspired Islamist movements globally because of the universal potency of his message that Islam was the central force for uniting all divided Muslim populations.

The Jamaat's (*Jamaa-e-Islaami*) Constitution described its goal as the establishment of *hukumat-e-ilahiya*, or "Islamic State." For Mawdudi, Islam was synonymous with the state, which in the modern era was playing an interventionist role in the daily lives of Muslims. To be a Muslim meant worshipping *Allah* (God) alone, both on a metaphysical level as well as in political life. Since God was Ruler, one who claimed to be the ruler of a country was thus "claiming to be God on the metaphysical plane." Rulers therefore had no option but to implement God's laws. Every action of Muslims, including rituals like prayer and fasting, trained them to acquire "just power." Muslims could not worship God in their metaphysical life but ignore Him in their political life.[63]

Mawdudi's ideas galvanised in particular the notion of a Pan-Islamist revolution and Islamic revivalism, as ignited by al-Afghani a century earlier. Some of the consequences however, of how his ideas have been interpreted, it may be argued, were different to the outcomes envisaged by early Islamists. An example would be the

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[62] See for example, S. A. Mawdudi. *Towards Understanding the Quran* (New Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islamic Publishers, 1998).

[63] See I. Ahmad, "The State in Islamist Thought" in *ISIM Review*. 18 (August 2006), 12-13.

movement of Al-Qaeda ("The Base" in Arabic) which emerged in the 1990s as one face of this pan-Islamist idea.[64] While hailed as true *"jihadi"* ('one who struggles,' or alternatively 'fighters') forces struggling in the path of Islam in some Islamic quarters, they have also been criticised by many Muslims as not representing their views or not acting on their behalf when they engage in militant violence.[65]

Events within the Muslim world since the 1970's set the stage for contemporary Political Islam to emerge as a discourse that provides space for a range of contested ideas and beliefs around the issues alluded to at the beginning of this chapter. As Benard argues, "many different solutions, such as nationalism, pan-Arabism, Arab socialism, and Islamic revolution, have been attempted without success, and this has led to frustration and anger."[66] While Benard rightly points to some of the challenges facing the Muslim world, her assumption that Muslim solutions have failed because "the Islamic world has fallen out of step with contemporary global culture, an uncomfortable situation for both sides," is questionable.[67] Benard assumes that the primary issue is religion and culture, being virtually dismissive of politics and the policy frameworks of both Muslim and Western governments, within the context of a predominantly unequal set of power relations within the global international relations system.[68]

Benard fails to substantively address the complicity of the very same "contemporary global culture" in ensuring the so-called "failure" of the Muslim world,

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[64] See the literature on the rise of movements such as Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. A.B. Atwan, *The Secret History of Al-Qa'ida* (London : Abacus, 2006); J. Burke, *Al-Qaeda – The True Story of Radical Islam* (London : Penguin, 2003); J. Corbin, *The Base : In search of Al-Qaeda – The Terror Network that Shook the World* (London : Simon and Schuster, 2002); J. Gray, *Al-Qaeda and what it means to be modern* (London : Faber and Faber, 2003); P Marsden, *The Taliban : War and Religion in Afghanistan* (London : Zed Books, 2002); N. Nojumi, *The Rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan : Mass Mobilization, Civil War, and the Future of the Region* (New York : Palgrave, 2002).

[65] See for example, O. Safi, ed., *Progressive Muslims : On Justice, Gender and Pluralism* (Oxford : Oneworld, 2003).

[66] Benard, *Civil Democratic Islam,* ix.

[67] Benard, *Civil Democratic Islam,* ix.

[68] Academics such as Samir Amin, Patrick Bond and Naomi Klein and journalists like John Pilger, have written extensively on the negative effects of imperialist and neo-liberal economic policy in a contemporary context. See S. Amin, *Maldevelopment : Anatomy of a Global Failure* (Tokyo : UN University Press, 1990); P. Bond, *Looting Africa : The Economics of Exploitation* (Scottsville : UKZN Press, 2006); N. Klein, *The Shock Doctrine : the Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (London : Penguin, 2007) and J. Pilger, *Freedom Next Time* (London : Bantam Press, 2006).

through its various machinations of political and foreign policy that have led to the inability of the Muslim and Arab world, either through a lack of capacity or failure of leadership, to ensure that the "frustration and anger" that she refers to, can be kept in check. She provides, instead, a blueprint of how the United States and other Western countries can both "manage" the unruly elements within the Muslim world as well as encourage "friendly" elements. Benard's approach will be unpacked to some degree in the next chapter which interrogates Orientalist thinking and methodology.

Since the 1970s, the global spotlight has focused firmly on events unfolding in the Muslim and Arab world. Much of this, it may be argued, was driven by American and European foreign policy which was shaped by the politics of crude oil, which was fast becoming the centre of global commerce and which flowed in abundance in the Middle Eastern region, especially in Saudi Arabia. This was compounded by the rise of "Islamist" politics which aimed to establish an Islamic State / Caliphate, and resistance against Israel by Arab nations. [69] Together, these developments led to a highly unstable political climate in the region.

In sum, it may be argued that the factors that provided the context for the emergence of Political Islam included the shift in foreign policy focus by the US and Europe towards the Middle East, especially Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Iran; the emergence of oil politics or "Petro Islam";[70] Cold War politics and the emergence of proxy wars; [71] resistance against Israel by Arab nations; contestations between Islamic nations; and internal civil strife caused by religious and sectarian tensions.[72] While these factors clearly do not constitute an exhaustive list, they represent the key components of the elements that foreground Political Islam as a significant space of engagement, and those areas within global Islam which are currently under increased scrutiny by the international community.

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[69] B. Utik, 'Islamism. Digesting modernity the Islamic way,' Forum for Development Studies 2 (1993), 197-210.
[70] Beinin and Stork, *Political Islam,*. 8.
[71] See Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim.*
[72] See Esposito, *Political Islam : Revolution, Radicalism or Reform.*

Contextualizing Political Islam

It is important to contextualize the emergence of Political Islam within the broader framework of interrogating how it is that various theologically inspired forces within the Middle East were impacting on the politics of the region during the 1970s. There was a shift in focus from Sunni Islamist politics to Shiite Revolutionary politics following the Iranian Revolution in 1979, which effectively overthrew the secular regime of the Shah and brought into power religious forces centered in the figure of Ayatollah Khomeini. This marked an interesting development in the relationship between Sunni and Shiite forces. While some suggested that the Iranian Revolution was similar to the Islamist notions advanced by Sunni Muslims, namely, the establishment of a *Caliphate*, but utilizing the concept of *Velayat – I Faqih*, the equivalent of the *Emir / Caliph* (Ruler),[73] Sunnis and Shiites have been ideological rivals throughout Islamic history. This rivalry was clearly manifest in the post-revolutionary period which witnessed the war between Iraq and Iran during the 1980s, and more recently in the internal sectarian conflict within Iraq following the overthrow of Saddam Hussein by the United States and its allies in March 2003. Notwithstanding this, the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the romanticism of the idea of an Islamic regime, has to some degree enamored Iranians to many in the Sunni Muslim world, who may not necessarily embrace the Shiite ideologies that informed the revolution. [74]

Central to contestation within Islam since the 1970s is the tension between secularist and religious thought. The rise of Islamist thinking was, in fact, a reaction to secularist tendencies within the Muslim and Arab world. Beinin and Stork argue that Islamist elements, particularly within Saudi society, funded the Muslim Brothers so that they could spread their brand of Islamist ideology widely and in this way contain secularism.[75] Political Islam more broadly, can therefore, be considered a space wherein contestation for supremacy of the religious vied for popularity with secular or "moderate" (progressive) spaces. The ideological struggle between religiously conservative elements

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[73] Roy, *Globalised Islam : The Search for a New Ummah*, 83 – 88.
[74] Roy, *Globalised Islam : The Search for a New Ummah*, 83 – 88.
[75] Beinin and Stork, *Political Islam*, 8.

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and secular / progressive forces is the central theoretical paradigm which this thesis attempts to engage with.

However it is important to also contextualize the emergence of Islamist thought and Political Islam as a phenomenon, in relation to multiple dynamics rather than simply being a response to the rise of secularism. Beinin and Stork remind us that we need to "examine the local circumstances and historical particularities of each (ideological) movement, which often turns out to be more substantial than a simple conception of "Islam" in opposition to secular politics."[76] In documenting and explaining the emergence of these political spaces, we need to understand the various differing contexts of the Middle East region, particularly in the twentieth century, where a number of factors impacted on the evolution of what we are broadly referring to as Political Islam.[77]

Nevertheless, in perusing the literature on Political Islam, and through sociological observation and analyzing media reports, it becomes clear that one of the ways in which conservative Islamist elements throughout the Muslim world, have been contesting for political power, either by choice or because they are forced by circumstances, is through engaging in militant modes of expression.[78] This does not however mean that progressive spaces (leftist organizations engaging in political liberation struggles) do not utilize militant modes. Hence this study does make a distinction between militancy as a mode for progressive political expression and the militancy exercised by movements which Oliver Roy refers to as neo-fundamentalist, an expression that is largely inspired by a conservative set of ideas.[79] The question that this

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[76] Beinin and Stork, Political Islam, 7

[77] Benard refers to the rise of Arab nationalism as a factor in shaping the complex political dynamics within the Muslim world, and there are other factors, such as petro politics which have been identified earlier in this chapter as also contributing to the rise of the contemporary Islamist movement. See pages 17 -19.

[78] Roy, Globalised Islam, 290 – 307. There has also been a great deal written about the history of the militant trajectory within Islam. See for example, A.B. Atwan, The Secret History of Al-Qa'ida (London : Abacus, 2006); J. Burke, Al-Qaeda – The True Story of Radical Islam (London : Penguin, 2003); J. Corbin, The Base : In search of Al-Qaeda – The Terror Network that Shook the World (London : Simon and Schuster, 2002); J. Gray, Al-Qaeda and what it means to be modern (London : Faber and Faber, 2003); P Marsden, The Taliban : War and Religion in Afghanistan (London : Zed Books, 2002); N. Nojumi, The Rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan : Mass Mobilization, Civil War, and the Future of the Region (New York : Palgrave, 2002).

[79] Roy, Globalised Islam, 232 – 287.

study seeks to answer though, is which of these ideological paradigms, progressive or militant (inspired by neo-fundamentalism) Islam, is the predominant framework shaping current political discourse among South African Muslims, and whether there is much purchase in creating such a dichotomy, or whether there are in fact, other ideologies or approaches that are determining their attitudes and behaviour.

Transformation

In a seminal study, *The Failure of Political Islam*, Olivier Roy argued that Political Islam has failed to deliver on its objectives.[80] The most compelling period of Political Islam was around 1970–82, with the movement peaking with the revolution in Iran (1977–78). By equating Islamism with Political Islam, Roy was suggesting that Islamist thought had effectively failed, and that Islamist movements "had reached a crossroads; they could either opt for political normalization within the framework of the modern nation-state or evolve towards neo-fundamentalism, a closed, scripturalist and conservative view of Islam that rejects the national and statist dimension in favor of the Ummah, based on *Sharia*."[81] Roy further argued that the move towards neo-fundamentalism had indeed been the option of the Islamists of the 1970s and 1980s, a phase he calls post-Islamism.[82] Further, Roy argues, the political violence once associated with Islamists had become the preserve of neo-fundamentalist groups such as Al-Qaeeda, Jemaah Islamiyah and the Taliban whose militant actions were not directly related to the idea of an Islamic Revolution. They had no clear state agenda and were targeting the West and its symbols very generally.[83]

Random political violence, it may be argued, should not be seen in a vacuum but within the context of the invasion and occupation of many parts of the Muslim world, and especially the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, and militant resistance to this, as well as the collapse of the State across much of Africa, Asia and the Middle East where many

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[80] O. Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1996).
[81] Roy, *Globalised Islam*, 1.
[82] Roy, *Globalised Islam*, 58.
[83] Roy, *Globalised Islam*, 290.

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are living in anarchy or semi-anarchy. The groups that Roy brands 'militant' are not static and insular but have multiple tendencies that vary from country to country. Their shape and form depends on political and economic conditions within states, as well as the wider, regional and international geopolitical environment. As Lia and Skjølberg point out, explanations for political violence and terrorism are complex, and must take into account *psychological* (pathology, deprivation), *societal* (economy, governance) and *state* (sponsorship, hegemony, failed states) explanations.[84] The most common explanations of 'Islamic terrorism,' according to Knudsen, combine these explanations: "it is argued that fundamentalist beliefs make adherents psychologically predisposed to use violence and surrender their lives, that abysmal social conditions and frustration promote extremism and that authoritarianism and secularism as well as political persecution have spurred a violent backlash from Islamist movements".[85]

We find here a contradiction between explanations which consider the use of violence a result of *internalizing* Islamist beliefs and those that locate them in *external* socio-political conditions.[86] The question here is whether resorting to violence to achieve certain goals is inherent in the Islamist project, which some Islamists understand as a divine mandate to implement *shari'a* which ultimately sanctions the use of force against dissenters, or whether it is contingent, in that the violent exclusion of Islamists from the political arena has driven them to arms, best expressed by François Burgat's contention that any Western political party could be turned into the Armed Islamic Group in weeks if subjected to the same repression that Islamists had endured, and looms large in this debate.[87]

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[84] B. Lia and K. Skjølberg, *Why Terrorism Occurs – A Survey of Theories and Hypotheses on the Causes of Terrorism*, FFI-Report – 2000/02769 (Norway : Norwegian Defence Research Est, 2000).

[85] M. Taylor and J. Horgan, "The psychological and behavioural bases of Islamic fundamentalism", *Terrorism and Political Violence* 13 (2001), 37-71 and L. Andoni, "Searching for Answers: Gaza's Suicide Bombers," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 26 (1997), 33-45.

[86] V. Langohr, "Of Islamists and ballot boxes: Rethinking the relationship between Islamisms and electoral politics," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 33 (2001), 591-610.

[87] F. Burgat, *Face to Face with Political Islam* (London : I B Tauris, 1999).

Progressive Islam

A broader and more significant question however, is whether this militant expression is the only substantive form of engagement within the space of Political Islam, as is often portrayed within the discourse of Western political thought? Some scholars and activists in the Muslim world, such as Omid Safi, Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies at Colgate University, in Hamilton, New York, and South African academics Farid Esack and Ebrahim Moosa, contest the notion that Political Islam is primarily about Islamists or neo-fundamentalists dominating the discursive spaces within the "house of Islam", and suggest that there are other constructive ways of framing discursive and political engagement within Islam, such as Progressive Islam.[88] The concept of Progressive Islam, which constitutes an important component of this study, is examined below. In sketching this typology, this study is by no means suggesting that any one version is the "authentic" interpretation of Islam while others have nothing to do with 'true Islam', nor is it implying that "Progressive" Islam itself is a homogeneous doctrine. Moosa, in fact, argues that progressive Islam is a work-in-progress.

[It] is not a "carefully calibrated theory or interpretation of Islamic law, theology, ethics, and politics. Neither is it a school of thought.... [It] is a wish-list, a desire.... , and, if at all something, then it is literally, accumulated action, as the word "progress" in the phrase "a work-in-progress suggests. At best it is a practice. Another way of putting it is to say that progressive Islam is a posture: an attitude."[89]

It is important to state though that this study employs the term "progressive" with caution. This discomfort is due partly to the "ambivalence of progress"[90] and partly to the

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[88] Safi, *Progressive Muslims : On Justice, Gender and Pluralism.*

[89] See E. Moosa, "Transitions in the 'Progress' of Civilization: Theorizing History, Practice, and Tradition" in *Voices of Change*, ed. Omid Safi. General editor, V. J. Cornell, *Voices of Islam*, 5, 115-130 (Westport & London: Praeger, 2007).

[90] See Z. Bauman, "Holocaust," in *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Cornell University : Cornell University Press, 1989), 19 and J. Gray, *Black Mass, Apocalyptic Religion and the Death of Utopia* (London : Penguin Books, 2007), who question the Hegelian worldview that that history is moving towards some concrete end and that all change along the way constitutes "progress". Gray (2007: 288) writes that "over the past two centuries the dominant story line has been one of human progress, but it has also included a tale of a world besieged by dark forces and destined for destruction. The two plots were interwoven – as when Marx and

flawed argument that those who do not employ the methodology of progressive Islam are "by default adhering to a retrograde agenda."[91]

"Progressive" Islam as a form of political expression within the Muslim world, has emerged over the past two decades. According to Farid Esack, the term was first popularized in 1983 by Suroosh Irfani in his *Revolutionary Islam in Iran – Popular Liberation or Religious Dictatorship?*[92] "Prior to that," he writes, it "had a few sporadic appearances in some articles where it was really employed as a synonym for modernist or liberal Islam."[93] Esack also draws comparisons between the works of Suroosh Irfani[94] and Iranian sociologist Ali Shariati (1933-1975) who influenced him, and earlier Islamic scholars like Sayyid Ahmed Khan (1817–98) and Jamal al-Din Al-Afghani (1838–97) whom he regards as "quintessential representatives" of early expressions of liberal and progressive Islam. Irfani, however, was the first to use the concept in the way that it is now used in leftist ideological circles, according to Esack.[95]

Muslim activists and scholars from many parts of the world, concerned at trends in the Islamic world towards conservative moralism and radicalism, began seeking alternative forms of Islamic practice in the 1990s. They participated in discussions around Progressive Islam on the internet under the banner of the Progressive Muslim Network (PMN) and reached consensus on a broad working definition of "Progressive Islam" in 1998.[96] Both Esack and Moosa concede that Progressive Islam has a "contingent nature."

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his followers believed that humanity advanced through a series of catastrophic revolutions and the Nazis, that demonic powers were conspiring against the *Volk* and its ascension to a state of semi-divine immortal harmony. In a different idiom, liberal humanists talk of humanity advancing inch by inch, in a gradual process of improvement. In all these accounts, history is told as a coherent narrative and nothing is more threatening than the idea that it is a meandering flux without purpose or direction."

[91] Moosa, "Transitions", 118.

[92] S. Irfani, *Revolutionary Islam in Iran :Popular Liberation or Religious Dictatorship?* (London: Pluto Press, 1983).

[93] F. Esack, "In Search of Progressive Islam Beyond 9/11" in *Progressive Muslims : On Justice, Gender and Pluralism*, ed. O Safi, 79 (Oxford : Oneworld Publications, 2003).

[94] S. Irfani, *Revolutionary Islam in Iran :Popular Liberation or Religious Dictatorship?*

[95] Esack , "In Search of Progressive Islam Beyond 9/11", 79.

[96] "Progressive Islam is that understanding of Islam and its sources that comes from and is shaped within a commitment to transform society from an unjust one where people are mere objects of exploitation by governments, socio-economic institutions and unequal relations. The new society will be a just one where people are the subjects of history, the shapers of their own destiny, in the full awareness that all of humankind is in a state of returning to God and that the universe was created as a sign of God's presence."

Plurality, in fact, plays an intrinsic role in the praxis of Progressive Islam. Moosa, in fact, concedes that even those associated with what is a progressive understanding of Islam, "propose different practices and accompanying methodologies to verify and justify the content of ethical propositions, philosophical visions, and contestations of history they hold." He welcomes this;

"What would certainly signal the death-knell for progressive Muslim thought is if there were to emerge a single voice, a unifying institution, an exclusive guild or association of scholars and practitioners who monopolized the epithet 'progressive' and dictated its operations, debated its values and determined its content, like an orthodoxy.... Once one advocates a specific content for progressive Islam, then it becomes an institution with ideological interests that will cauterize its dynamism."[97]

It is important to reiterate the idea, that the notion of plurality is anathema to those who subscribe to either a conservative or militant understanding of Islam, who generally demand homogeneity of thought and action. Hence progressive forms of Islam would be severely frowned upon by the kinds of neo-fundamentalist groupings referred to earlier, as described by Olivier Roy.[98]

Notwithstanding this contingency, Esack points to several key beliefs that underpin its perspective, and do ground the thinking within a common framework. The "locus of Progressive Islam," he stresses, "is the struggle for justice – or praxis - rather than the arenas of critical thinking for its own sake." The primary subjects of progressive Islam are those who find themselves pushed to the edges of society to live in conditions of social, political and economic oppression. Progressive Islamists claim to be opposed to American imperialism, the promotion of corporate culture and consumerism, racism, sexism, homophobia and all other forms of socio-economic injustices both within and

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Cited in F. Esack "In Search of Progressive Islam beyond 9/11," 80. From the Progressive Muslim Network website, http://www.progressivemuslims.com/index2html / http://www.progressivemuslims.com/?404=Y
[97] Moosa, "Transitions", 116, 126.
[98] Roy refers to these rigid definitions of Islam, which eschew notions of pluralism, as 'neo-fundamentalism'. Roy, *Globalised Islam : The Search for a New Ummah*, 233 – 289.

outside of Muslim societies and communities.[99] Progressive Islamists are attempting to understand Islam "through the eyes of the marginalized ... [and] cultivate new kinds of values, such as compassion and non-judgmentalism." Differences between Progressive and Liberal Islam will become clearer when we discuss reactions to the events of September 11.[100]

According to Moosa, an important difference between progressive Islam and Islamists / conservatives[101] is that "the latter are either wedded to dated methodologies or committed to doctrines and interpretations that have lost their rationales and relevance over time."[102] Like those Muslims who are broadly regarded as conservative or those who advocate militancy, progressive Muslims also sustain their position by reference to texts. As Abdulkader Tayob, head of the Centre for Contemporary Islam at the University of Cape Town, has pointed out, since the nineteenth century, Muslim intellectuals have used texts to argue Islam's compatibility with modernization and nation-building by both left-wing activists and Islamists. "More recently", he adds, "support for violence faces a similar contradiction that sees the meaning of Islam thrown from one side of the political fence to another."[103] For Tayob, the principle position of most Muslims is not a value but the selection of texts as a "tool of legitimization," a means to prop up particular worldviews and present them as "authentic." [104]

There is a key difference in the way in which Progressive and Islamist / conservative Muslims approach Quranic text. According to Ebrahim Moosa, quoted by Bremer :

[99] F Esack "In Search of Progressive Islam beyond 9/11" 80. This is cited from the declaration of an online discussion list, called Network of Progressive Muslims
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NPMuslims/?yguid=127854211.
[100] See Moosa, "Transitions in the 'Progress' of Civilization: Theorizing History, Practice, and Tradition", 115 – 130.
[101] As Esack, Moosa, Tayob, and others emphasize, what constitutes "conservative" Islam is not uniform and should not be essentialised. In fact, some who are characterized as conservative may identify with aspects of the progressive methodology. However, some essentialism is necessary for this study and, with Moosa, this is done for the "purposes of characterization, but not defamation." See Moosa, "Transitions," 117.
[102] Moosa, "Transitions", 116.
[103] A. Tayob, "Liberal Islam: Between Texts and its Modern Condition," in ISIM Review, 18 (August 2006): 18-19.
[104] A. Tayob, "Liberal Islam: Between Texts and its Modern Condition," in ISIM Review, 18 (August 2006): 18-19.

"For centuries Muslims did not follow the literal word of the Koran. The Koran was combined with the prophetic traditions and an understanding of the world at large to create an interpretive platform. Today's Muslim fundamentalists want to reduce Islam to the Koranic text, without any consideration of history - and this is exactly what progressive Muslims are fighting against."[105]

Moosa considers it critical to, "study the different communities of the Quran. Without that voice of the communities engaged with their scripture, we can hardly make sense of revelation and the various communities of revelation."[106] While the idea of Islam was inspired by non historical forces (prophecy and revelation), Islam's subsequent development is rooted in history and its interpretation and practice should consequently be "context- driven" and "informed by people's historical experiences."[107]

According to Safi, the ideology of Progressive Islam has, in important ways, been shaped by the works of intellectuals like Leonardo Boff, Gustavo Gutiérrez, and Rebecca S. Chopp, as well as the secular humanism of Edward Said and Noam Chomsky.[108] These sources of inspiration are non-Islamic, and constitute a body of western secular thought that has impacted on a movement that claims to be both Islamic and politically grounded in Humanism, which can be extrapolated from Muslim thought over the past fourteen centuries. This study will engage Humanism in more detail in later chapters which focus on how political expression within the Muslim community can best be served by engaging in praxis inspired by humanist ideas.

Progressive Islam as a body of thought is a fairly recent evolution within the corpus of Islamic writing and scholarship. Its early roots date to roughly the mid to late

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[105] K. Bremer, "In God's Name : Muslim Scholar Ebrahim Moosa On Freedom, Fundamentalism, And The Spirit Of Islam", *The Sun* Interview April 2006 | issue 364 Accessed at http://www.thesunmagazine.org/issues/364/in_gods_name?page=. It is important to note that the spelling of the word that refers to the holy book of Islam, differs throughout the thesis depending on whether it is from a quote or the researcher's own spelling. The preferred spelling by the researcher is Quran / Quranic.

[106] E. Moosa, "The Debts and Burdens of Critical Islam" in *Progressive Muslims : On Justice, Gender and Pluralism*, ed. O Safi, 125 (Oxford : Oneworld Publications, 2003).

[107] Moosa, "Transitions", 127.

[108] Safi, "What is Progressive Islam", 48.

nineteenth century, while its contemporary linkages are more clearly established within the context of the post World War Two period. The fact that some commonalities can be drawn between the writings of Al-Afghani, Ahmed Khan, Ali Shariati, and Suroosh Irfani is indicative of the notion that the ideas were being framed as a broad political school of thought, rather than being part of a religion with doctrinal and theological teachings. Shariati, for example, is well known for his writings on social justice while Al-Afghani popularized the idea of Muslim unity against British imperialism as well as Pan-Islamism, both of which were revolutionary political concepts of the time.[109] This effectively makes their writings inherently political, rather than primarily theological; they were shaped by the imperialist milieu in which they lived and conceptualized their ideas. The same can also be said of Abduh, Rida, al-Banna, Maududi, and Qutb as thinkers who inspired a more militant approach to political engagement, and who also wrote primarily in response to the social circumstances that molded their political activism.

Contemporary proponents of Progressive Islam, such as Farid Esack, Ebrahim Moosa, Amina Wadud, Farish Noor, and Omid Safi, amongst others, are also responding to present-day developments.[110] In comparison to the period which followed the immediate aftermath of World War Two and the onset of Cold War politics, the present era is arguably marked by even greater differences within Islam. The extremes of this contestation are marked, on the one hand, by increasing political violence as more and more Muslims are prepared to sacrifice their lives in the name of Islam while others strongly oppose violent modes of resistance, seeking instead to engage in vigorous protest and rejection of imperialist agendas through involvement in civic organizations and peaceful methods of political expression.

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[109] Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought*, 325 – 328. See also, A. Shariati, *What is to be done : The Enlightened Thinkers and the Islamic Renaissance* (Houston : Islamic Publications International, 1986).
[110] See for example, F. Esack, *On Being a Muslim : Finding a Religious Path in the World Today* (Oxford : Oneworld, 2002) and E. Moosa, *Ghazali and the Poetics of Imagination* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2005).

A cursory glance at the scholarship which constitutes the core writings of contemporary Political Islam, makes clear the very real similarity and overlap between the writings that have inspired Militant Islam and that which give impetus to Progressive Islam. Both streams of thought are shaped by the political realities of the contemporary period, both reject in nuanced ways the vilification and domination of Islam by external forces, and yet each contests for ideological space and hegemony. This contestation has effectively come to define the space that is Political Islam in the current epoch. What is very different, however, is the modus operandi and forms of engagement that they employ. It is these forms of engagement that this thesis will concern itself with, through attempting a quantitative and qualitative assessment of political Islam in the South African context and the deeper schisms that have become the hallmark of contemporary political praxis within this particular Muslim community.

Proponents of progressive thinking in Islam, such as Esack and Moosa are rare among South African Muslims in that their paths began in traditional / conservative circles and eventually crossed into Progressive Islam. Farid Esack was born in Cape Town in 1959. He joined the revivalist Tablighi Jamaat movement at a young age and in 1974 at the age of fifteen proceeded to Pakistan to do a course in Islamic Studies. He spent eight years in Karachi, completing the traditional "Dars-i-Nizami" program of Islamic studies and qualifying as a "mawlana". He wrote in the introduction to his book *On Being a Muslim*, that some of his fellow students later joined the Taliban in Afghanistan. He too could have followed this path. But having grown up in Cape Town, where he lived side-by-side with Christians, coupled with his own political activism against apartheid, he became critical of attitudes towards Christians and other religious minorities in Pakistan. When he returned to South Africa, Esack was drawn to the Muslim Youth Movement of South Africa. In 1983 he helped form an anti-apartheid group "Muslims Against Oppression", which later became the Call of Islam, an affiliate of the anti-apartheid United Democratic Front. Esack formed ties with inter-faith opponents of apartheid, and became involved in the World Conference on Religion and Peace. In 1990, Esack continued his theological studies at the University of Birmingham, England, where he completed a Ph.D, and undertook postdoctoral studies in Biblical

hermeneutics at the Sankt Georgen Graduate School of Philosophy and Theology in Frankfurt, Germany. He was appointed by Nelson Mandela as a gender equity commissioner in 1996, was involved in the organisation Positive Muslims, which was dedicated to helping HIV-positive Muslims in Africa, and is currently the Prince Al-Waleed Bin Talal Visiting Professor of Islamic Studies at Harvard Divinity School. His publications include *The Struggle* (1988); *Qur'an, Liberation and Pluralism: An Islamic Perspective of Interreligious Solidarity Against Oppression* (1997); *On Being a Muslim: Finding a Religious Path in the World Today* (1999); and *The Qur'an: A Short Introduction* (2002).

Ebrahim Moosa was also born in Cape Town in the 1950s. He too was drawn to the Tablighi Jamaat movement and between 1975 and 1981 studied at the Indian seminaries of Deoband and Nadwa, qualifying as a "mawlana". It during his stay in India that he began to question his chosen path:

"After three years in India I started asking questions about the relevance of the texts and how to apply their insights in the modern world and, especially, in South Africa. By now I had become acutely aware of the political challenges of my home country: racism, and the intransigence of the Muslim clergy there to speak out against the evil of apartheid. Reading the uncensored Indian press and following political developments at home through the literature of Nelson Mandela's banned African National Congress, all impressed upon me the challenges I would face in South Africa. My restlessness drove me to read widely and independently—especially literature written by more contemporary authors. One such author was Mawlana Abul Ala Mawdudi, whom most teachers in Deoband reviled and for whom only the bravest expressed guarded admiration. Mawdudi was the gadfly among clerics who pushed for what is called "political Islam."... I thus discovered an interpretation of Islam outside the walls of the madrasa where I could find inspiration and guidance for building

society from an Islamic platform. The ancient texts I was studying suddenly seemed musty and stale".[111]

Moosa taught at the University of Cape Town's Department of Religious Studies from 1989-1998. He left South Africa after his house was bombed, and taught in the Department of Religious Studies at Stanford University from 1998 to 2001. He is at present a Professor of Islamic Studies at Duke University. His numerous publications include *Ghazali and the Poetics of Imagination* (2006) and *Revival and Reform: A Study in Islamic Fundamentalism* (1999). He is currently working on a book called *Inside Madrasahs*.

The histories of both Esack and Moosa as articulated above, are important in locating the development of the global progressive Islam movement. They are some of the key individuals who have traversed a unique path in shaping this space, and have played a very significant role in impacting on the development of this movement. The fact that they are also South Africans, enables a particular worldview which they bring to the space, which is rooted in both their own journeys as Muslims, as well as that of the historical context from which they have emerged.

There are certain concerns with Progressive Islam however, which are significant to note at this point. It is important to point out that Progressive Islam has come under criticism from some quarters as has militant Islam, as both approaches have their respective detractors within the scholarship as well as within broader civil society.[112] While these criticisms are not central to this study, reference will however be made to some of the key objections as they have been articulated by various authors, throughout this thesis. It should also be noted that many who participated on the global Network of Progressive Muslims' online discussion list dissociated themselves from the Progressive Muslim Union (North America) which was launched in 2004 by Omid Safi and Ahmed Nassef, because individuals such as Seeme and Malik Hassan, founders of "Muslims for

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[111] E. Moosa, "Inside Madrasa. A Personal History," *Boston Review*, January/February 2007. http://www.bostonreview.net/BR32.1/moosa.php.

[112] G. E. Fuller, *The Future of Political Islam* (New York : Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 194 – 198.

Bush" who raised around a million dollars for the Bush presidential campaign of 2004 and referred to him as 'The Muslim World Savior'; Farid Zakaria of *Newsweek* who supported the Iraq war, and who wrote, "Done right, an invasion (of Iraq) would be the single best path to reform the Arab world"; and Nawaal al-Sadawi who campaigned for the ban on the *hijab* (head scarf) in French public schools, were appointed as advisors to the PMUNA.[113]

A member of the Advisory Board, Muqtedar Khan, resigned in July 2005, and in an "Open Letter" to Safi, stated that in the PMUNA, those "who believe in the teachings of the Quran are ridiculed and those who express ambivalence about it, even about the existence of God are celebrated." This thesis is not about PMUNA, and will not engage with that organisation's ideology and history. However, the relevant point for this dissertation is that this broad concept of "Progressive Muslims" (regardless of it being disputed over in certain quarters), is an important one and refers to those Muslims who are seeking to find processes by which they can engage in political participation in liberal democracies without losing their religiosity. Most importantly, progressive notions of Islam also challenge the idea that the only way in which Muslims can engage politics is through militancy or political violence.

It is unfortunate that debates around progressive expressions of Islam often get caught up in controversy, such as the one referred to earlier, viz the heated arguments taking place within the PMUNA space, leading to the fracturing of some of these spaces, resulting in many Muslims who do subscribe to Progressive Islam distancing themselves from such politics. Nevertheless the movement of Progressive Islam thrives in multiple spaces as will become evident from the subsequent discussions in the following chapters.

The South African Muslim context has, as has been alluded to earlier, been chosen as the case study within which to frame much of the empirical study in this thesis, which examines the broad contestation within Political Islam. Contemporary South

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[113] "A Comment on the formation of PMUNA", http://commentpmuna.blogspot.com/2004/11/text-of-comment-on-formation-of-pmuna.htm. Accessed on 3 July 2008.

African Muslims are both a product of a post-apartheid society as well as constituting a dynamic force which is responding in various ways to the demands of a rapidly evolving global paradigm, with its focus on the contestations between Islam and the West, and Islam as a political threat to "civilized" society. These competing discourses cannot be understood in a vacuum, but must be framed against a more comprehensive historical backdrop which links the Orientalist project and broader political developments of the twentieth-century to latter day constructions of Islam and Muslims, in order to develop a sustained understanding of why the categories of Militant and Progressive Islam, as well as other categories like Wahhabi, Salafi, Deobandi, Neo-Sufi, Tablighi, and so on, are competing with each other, and how South African Muslims are locating themselves in this broader debate. Chapter Two will constitute the bulk of this historical reflection.

Chapter Two

Empire, Colonialism, Orientalism

Chapter One outlined the necessity of undertaking a study in the area of Political Islam within the framework of interrogating and understanding the dynamics of political engagement and expression, both within the Muslim world and between it and a predominantly Western secular, multi-cultural paradigm, in light of emerging tensions and intense scrutiny to which Muslims are currently subject. This chapter provides a historical and "evolutionary" context within which the debates around contemporary political Islam have developed, to the extent that it elicits the current state of contestations referred to earlier.

In prefacing this explication, it is first necessary to construct a theoretical paradigm that would provide a backdrop to the arguments which this thesis aims to develop. In constructing this paradigm, two key elements form the backbone of the discussion; first, reference to select scholarship on the history of Western empire and Western colonialism, predominantly as it relates to interaction with Muslim civilization and, secondly, an analysis of key debates in Orientalist thought, which intellectuals such as Edward Said and Ziauddin Sardar argue are central to understanding the ideological contestation between "Western" and "Islamic" civilizations in a contemporary context.[114]

The contemporary literature that documents the vast expanse of the history of the Western empire, spans over several centuries of the existence of the empire, and in summary provides a contextual overview of the multitude of dynamics that informed the

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[114] E. Said, *Orientalism* (London : Penguin, 1978 / 1991) and Z. Sardar, *Orientalism* (Buckingham : Open University Press, 1999). The use of "Western" and "Islamic" is not to suggest that these are fixities or solidarities (as Samuel Huntington may imply in his arguments in *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York : Touchstone, 1996). They are used partly for convenience and partly because they reflect popular and even some academic thought. As Kaiwar and Mazumdar point out, "political and cultural projects have been at great pains to invent fixities and solidarities spanning large expanses of time and space, a kind of heroic continuity and a sense of belonging in a world of radical discontinuity. The concepts of race, Orient, and nation – categorical innovations of the modern epoch, notwithstanding their appearance to the contrary and claims to antiquity made on their behalf - have been crucial, if not indispensable in doing so.' V. Kaiwar and S. Mazumdar, "Race, Orient, Nation in the Time-Space of Modernity," in *Antinomies of modernity : Essays on Race, Orient, Nation* (London: Duke University Press, 2003), 261.

construction of the idea of "empire" as a historical means of subjugation and domination of one group of peoples by another. In essence this amounted to the political, economic and cultural domination of "natives" primarily by Europeans seeking to expand their territorial advantage through acquiring colonies on other continents, a practice commonly referred to as colonialism.[115] While colonialism as a political project only emerged several centuries after the West's first encounter with Islam, this chapter will argue that colonialist practice was in many ways a catalyst to develop and institutionalise Orientalist thought and subsequently its various manifestations in a contemporary context.[116]

This chapter engages with the Western world's initial encounters with Islam; elaborates on (Western) colonial history and practice; and links the trajectory of colonial history to the emergence of Orientalism as a particular ideological framework within the broader project of Western territorial expansion as a methodology of defining, describing and engaging with the geographical region of the Orient, and in particular Islamic civilization. This remains relevant into the present for, despite attempts by "progressive political activists to cast doubts on the continued salience in the postmodern moment" of concepts like Orient and race, even nation, these have 'not lost their bite in the 'real' world of identity and cultural politics."[117] The arguments presented in this chapter are particularly significant for the broader thesis, which argues that "constructions" of Islam, by the "non-Muslim world," be they terminology such as progressive or militant Islam or "interpretations" of existing ideological schools of thought within Islam such as *Sunni* (including *Hanafi, Hanbali, Shafi and Maliki*) or *Shiism*, are being negotiated through a political lens, which ultimately serves various latter day Orientalist agendas (which find expression in the kind of current neo-conservative foreign policy of the United States, or the discourses of the Rand report as discussed in Chapter One). Within the South African context (which comprises the case study for this thesis), the links between the broader Orientalist project and the manner in which the local Muslim community responds to it

[115] See M. Hardt and A. Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge : Harvard University Press, 2000), who develop an analysis of modern empire within the context of the colonial project.
[116] The earliest encounter between Islam and the West, could be considered as having occurred between 705 – 715 AD, when Islam first appeared in Spain. See K. Armstrong, *Islam : A Short History* (London : Phoenix Press, 2000), xv.
[117] Kaiwar and Mazumdar, "Race, Orient, Nation in the Time-Space of Modernity", 261-298.

(apart from its responses to other political developments within South Africa), is what will constitute the key qualitative and quantitative aspects of this study.

The rise and Expansion of Islam

Islam as a faith and belief system had its origins in the seventh century in the Middle East (Makkah) with the first scriptural revelations to the Prophet Muhammed in 610 AD.[118] The subsequent spread of Islam has been documented extensively as testimony to the broad ideological revolution that defined Islam as not just a religion but as a holistic way of life encapsulating all aspects of human existence. The basic principle of Islam was that of uniting all who accepted the message of the Prophet, and this was the principle that his companions Abu Bakr and Umar ibn-al-Khattab argued should define the *Ummah,* after his demise.[119] This concept of the unity of all Muslims was, however, severely tested from the very beginning, with debates ensuing among the Prophet's followers after his death regarding who should succeed him. This dispute laid the foundation for the most serious political disagreement among early Muslims, and led to the creation of two sects within Islam, viz *Sunnis* and *Shiis.*[120]

The Shiis had their origins in the establishment of what was referred to as the Shiah-i-Ali, the Party of Ali,[121] a breakaway group which believed that the successor to the Prophet should be a blood relative. They considered Ali ibn Abi Talib, the Prophet's cousin and also his son-in law, to be his rightful successor, and not Abu Bakr, who was elected the first Caliph (representative / leader) of Islam after the Prophet.[122] While Ali

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[118] See K. Armstrong, *Islam : A Short History* (London : Phoenix Press, 2000), xii. This study mainly relies on Armstrong for this brief overview, but A. Afsaruddin, *The First Muslims : History and Memory* (Oxford : Oneworld, 2008) and the monumental M.G.H. Hodgson, The *Venture of Islam* (UCP, 1974) are indispensable for more in-depth discussion and analysis.

[119] Armstrong, *Islam : A Short History,* 21. The word *Ummah* refers to "community" of Muslims.

[120] Brief mention has been made of the role that *Shiite* Muslims have played in the arena of developing Political Islam in Chapter 1. The Iranian revolution which took place in a *Shiite* dominated country in 1979, is considered as one of the key historical events of the 20th century which led to the rise of Islam as a modern day political force after the end of the Second World War. While this thesis does not focus on *Shiism* as a central ideology within Political Islam, it is nevertheless a significant one, which has played a fairly influential role in defining Political Islam.

[121] Armstrong, *Islam : A Short History,* 31.

[122] Armstrong, *Islam : A Short History,* 31.

did become the fourth Caliph after his predecessor the Caliph Uthman was assassinated in 656 AD, he faced a difficult time as his rule was not accepted by all Muslims.[123] The belief that Ali and his bloodline were the rightful leaders of Islam after the Prophet, has shaped Shiite thought into the contemporary era, and while Shiite thought is not dominant in the broader Muslim world, it has nevertheless played a significant role in shaping Islam as a political force in the contemporary era.[124]

Early Islam's geographic and political expansion began in the broader Middle East region and spread to North Africa and eventually to Spain (705-715AD), which could be considered its first formal encounter with the Western world.[125] While Islam entrenched itself in Spain for several centuries, Armstrong notes that the Ummayad caliphate[126] in Spain collapsed in 1010 and disintegrated into rival, independent courts.[127] In effect this signaled the end of the *Caliphate* as a unified institution which ruled the Muslim world. Given the decentralisation of Islamic rule, Armstrong points out that it was the Seljuk Turks who gave fullest expression to the new order within the Fertile Crescent where decentralisation was most advanced.[128] They combined the political leadership of *amirs* (commanders) and *ulema* (religious scholars) to govern the various territories that formed part of their empire.[129] *Ulema* established *madressahs* (theological seminaries) throughout the empire, travelled extensively, spreading their Sunni ideology which came to be seen as the dominant form of Islam, and established a power base distinct but equivalent to that of *amirs*.[130] Given that the empire was vast, Muslims felt part of an international community.[131]

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[123] Armstrong, *Islam : A Short History*, 28.
[124] This is particularly relevant when considering the role played by the Iranian Islamic revolution in 1979, in creating a revival of Islamic thought in the 20th century.
[125] Armstrong, *Islam : A Short History*, xv.
[126] The term *Caliphate* emerges from the notion of the *Caliph* (ruler), and was meant to represent the system of governance for the early Muslims, or what would be considered as the State in the contemporary world. The Arabic word *Khalifah* is more commonly used instead of Caliph and *Khilafah / Khilafat* to refer to the rule of the *Khalifah*, in Muslim circles. See A.H. Al – Mawardi, *al-Ahkam as-Sultaniyyah – The Laws of Islamic Governance*. Translated by A. Yate (London : Ta-Ha Publishers, 1996), 5, 20 – 26.
[127] Armstrong, *Islam : A Short History*, 71.
[128] Armstrong, *Islam : A Short History*, 72.
[129] Armstrong, *Islam : A Short History*, 73.
[130] Armstrong, *Islam : A Short History*, 73.
[131] Armstrong, *Islam : A Short History*, 74.

The existence of autonomous Muslim territories governed by *amirs* had political drawbacks. *Amirs* were constantly fighting each other, and this disunity allowed Christian Crusaders from Western Europe to conquer Jerusalem, the third holiest site in Islam, in 1099.[132] Muslim leaders such as Salah-ad-Din eventually succeeded in re-claiming territories back from the Crusaders and entrenching Islamic culture in these regions. The Ayyubid dynasty (1171-1260) that he established, is considered as one of the highlights of Islamic political history.[133]

The subsequent "golden age" of Muslim civilization was based on the adoption of advanced military technology such as gunpowder, which strengthened the Muslim military state and facilitated the establishment of strong Islamic empires in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, viz the Safavid Empire in Iran, the Moghul Empire in India and Ottomon Empire in Anatolia, Syria, North Africa and Arabia.[134] These empires did not advance the traditional egalitarian project of Islam, which had been its original vision, but established themselves as monarchies, essentially influenced by the Mongol idea of the army state. They won grassroots support because they involved civilians in crafting their imperial policies.[135] Each of these empires subsequently faced unique challenges.

The Safavid Empire established *Shiism* as the state religion, and this led to major political rifts between *Sunni* and *Shiite* Muslims, which continues to this day.[136] The Ottoman Empire, established in Constantinople (Istanbul) in the mid-fifteenth century and lasting formally until the early twentieth century, is regarded as the most successful and enduring of all Islamic empires, and was perhaps the most significant in terms of contemporary Political Islam.[137] According to Armstrong, despite Europe's many achievements, the Ottoman Empire was, during its existence, the most powerful in the

[132] Armstrong, *Islam : A Short History*, 79.
[133] Armstrong, *Islam : A Short History*, 81.
[134] Armstrong, *Islam : A Short History*, 97.
[135] Armstrong, *Islam : A Short History*, 97.
[136] See footnotes 6 and 10 in this chapter.
[137] Olivier Roy makes reference to the glory days of the Ottoman Empire in his analysis of how many contemporary global Muslims, crave for a return to the hegemony of Islam's presence in Europe. See O. Roy, *Globalised Islam : The Search for a New Ummah* (London : Hurst and Company, 2004), 12, 94.

world.[138] Ottoman rule was shaped by the principle of the *Shariah* (Islamic law) and had a series of *Sultans* as rulers. The empire was divided into provinces ruled by *Pashas* (governers), and included citizens of different faith and ethnic groups, such as Christians, Jews, Arabs, Turks and Berbers. Ottoman ideological decline began when the *ulama* were disempowered politically by *Pashas* and became extremely conservative in reaction to this "emasculation." As a result, there was greater focus on *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and the practice of engaging in *Falsafah* (philosophical / spiritual thought) declined.[139] While political courts were still open to ideas from Europe, madressahs, controlled by the *ulema* became centres of opposition to experimentation that derived from what were considered European "infidels." [140]

The *ulema* became stuck in an old ethos, and when Western modernity "hit" the Muslim world, Armstrong argues that they were unable to provide guidance to Muslims as a result of their conservative tendencies.[141] In the Arabian region of the empire, Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab separated himself from the political hegemony in Istanbul and created a state in central Arabia and the Persian Gulf. He believed that excessive European influence seeping into the empire could only be addressed by a return to the fundamental *Quran* and *Sunnah* and militant rejection of all other aspects of Islamic tradition, such as mysticism and *falsafah*. He rejected the Ottoman Sultans as apostates and tried to create an "enclave of pure faith" in the Arab peninsula.[142] This was a significant political development as his thinking, subsequently termed "Wahhabism", has been a major ideological influence in the contemporary Muslim world.[143]

European territorial, political and economic expansion from the fifteenth century meant that Islam and the Ottoman empire were constantly facing major ideological and political challenges. By the eighteenth century, the Ottoman Sultans realized that they

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[138] Armstrong, *Islam : A Short History*, 112.
[139] Armstrong, *Islam : A Short History*, 113.
[140] Armstrong, *Islam : A Short History*, 114.
[141] Armstrong, *Islam : A Short History*, 114.
[142] Armstrong, *Islam : A Short History*, 114 – 115.
[143] Armstrong, *Islam : A Short History*, 115. See also, Roy, *Globalised Islam : The Search for a New Ummah*, 234.

could no longer claim hegemony over Europeans who were making significant gains in Muslim territories through colonial occupation.[144]

This brief overview underscores two points that are relevant to this study, viz, the divisions that have emerged and exist among Muslims today, despite continued reference to the idea of the collective *Ummah* and the emergence of the *Ulema* as an important force shaping Muslim society. The following section focuses on the Muslim world's encounter with Western colonialism, and subsequent emergence of Orientalist thought and practice.

Western Empire: Colonialist Strategies and Objectives

For the purposes of this dissertation, this chapter takes as its point of departure the impact of western political thought and action on the global community from around 1492 with the "discovery" of the New World which "came as an immense shock" to Europeans who "believed that the scriptures, together with the writings of the church fathers and the ancient authorities, contained the sum of all human knowledge." None of these sources mentioned a New World; hence there was "no guidance on how the new world should be seen – as an earthly paradise, like Eden before the Fall, or a terrifying place inhabited by satanic creatures from which God had protected his flock. And how should Christian Europe deal with a whole continent of pagan people?"[145] The project of the discovery of new lands and territories by European adventurers, brought with it a new chapter in the political and religious history of the continent. The appointment of a viceroy to Peru in 1569 by Philip II of Spain signaled the beginning of a formalized process of colonial government to rule overseas territories.[146] This was replicated by other European countries as they conquered territories in the Americas, Africa, and Asia.

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[144] Armstrong, *Islam : A Short History*, 115.
[145] R. Osbourne, *Civilization : A New History of the Western World* (London : Pimlico, 2007), 256 – 257.
[146] Osbourne, *Civilization : A New History of the Western World*, 263.

In the Muslim world, the colonial project began in Moghul India with the British occupation between 1798 and 1818. In 1798, France occupied Egypt, which it initially failed to control, and later Algeria in 1830.[147] Subsequently, other parts of North Africa were occupied. After the First World War, in which segments of the Ottoman empire had supported Germany, France and Britain, protectorates and mandates were set up in Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Iraq and Transjordan, by these European powers. This outraged Arabs as European nations had promised them political independence.[148]

A prominent leader of the failing Ottoman empire, Mustafa Kemal (1881-1938), also known as Ataturk, repelled European occupation and established the independent state of Turkey in 1923. One of his first acts was to abolish the *Caliphate* on 3 March 1924.[149] Other regions of the former Ottoman empire did not fare as well in terms of becoming independent nations. The Balkans region, Russia and central Asia became part of the Soviet Union after the Second World War; India was partitioned into India and Pakistan, which was divided further with the formation of Bangladesh, after the withdrawal of the British; and the protectorates in the Middle East became embroiled in bitter disputes for independence. While they eventually gained independence from their British and French colonial masters, the establishment of Israel as a Jewish state in 1947 on part of the original Palestinian territory, left a legacy that has sown the seeds of much of the political and militant contestation between Muslim and Western nations, as many Muslims believe that Western nations, led by the United States, continue to ignore Israeli state terrorism against Palestinians.[150]

European colonial expansion from the fifteenth century produced political and ideological frameworks which have effectively shaped and molded the political landscape in a contemporary context. While this study concerns itself primarily with how

[147] Armstrong, *Islam : A Short History*, 125 – 127.
[148] Armstrong, *Islam : A Short History*, 127.
[149] Armstrong, *Islam : A Short History*, 127.
[150] See E. Said, *The Question of Palestine* (New York : Vintage, 1992); E. Said, *The Politics of Dispossession : The struggle for Palestinian Self-Determination, 1969 – 1994* (New York : Vintage, 1994) and S. Hadawi, *Bitter Harvest : A Modern History of Palestine*.(New York : Olive Branch Press,1989). The 2006 war between Israel and Lebanon is an example of how the region's conflicts go beyond the contestation between Palestine and Israel.

colonialism and its associated campaigns impacted on the Muslim world, it is significant to note that colonialism was a global project undertaken by Europeans to advance narrow political and economic interests, but resulted in very negative consequences for the colonized. The political and socio-economic effects were massive and indeed pervasive, and resulted in the establishment of what is commonly referred to as "Empire", an arrangement of global hegemonic forces that continue to shape the contemporary world.[151]

The effects of colonial practice leading to the hegemonic establishment of Empire has arguably resulted in the complex articulation of dominant and subservient identity constructions between "colonizer" and "colonized", which in many ways continues to manifest in a contemporary context, shaped by a recurring Orientalist discourse.[152] This is a particularly important point to note for the purposes of this study, which is attempting to unpack the discourse of militancy and its contestation with progressive ideology vis-a-vis, a contemporary understanding of what frames this contestation, in the context of evolving and shifting identity formations. Frantz Fanon perhaps describes the phenomenon of crafting dominant and subservient identities, most succinctly in his masterpiece on colonial history *The Wretched of the Earth* by arguing that "in the colonies, it is the policeman and the soldier who are the official instituted go-betweens, the spokesmen of the settler and his rule of oppression." [153] Even though most colonies no longer exist, the institutionalized framework of the "authority" of the instituted go-betweens of the colonial era continues to frame the relationship between the "rulers" and the "ruled". Fanon further argued that "the intermediary does not lighten the oppression, nor seek to hide the domination; he shows them up and puts them into practice with the clear conscience of an upholder of the peace; yet he is the bringer of violence into the home and into the mind of the native." [154]

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[151] See M. Hardt and A. Negri, *Empire*.
[152] See A. Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (London : Earthscan, 2003).
[153] F. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (London : Penguin, 1961 / 1967), 29.
[154] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 29.

In many ways the historical legacy of institutionalized violence which was what colonialism represented, continues to shape even contemporary hegemonic discourses and provides, as this study will attempt to show, a backdrop to the development of new and evolving forms of the classic "settler / native" paradigm, advanced by various post-colonial theorists, such as Mahmood Mamdani.[155]

Mamdani, in *Citizen and Subject*, reminds us of the oft used comparison to equate the African or "Negro" to a "childlike" being, which was clearly a rationale by colonialists to justify a strict paternalistic form of administration, and was certainly used as an argument to entrench imperialist superiority over adult subjects who were reduced to an infantile status through colonialist discourse and legality.[156] Indeed Ziauddin Sardar corroborated this strategic approach within the "Magrieb" or Orient, when he wrote that Orientalism "construct[ed] the Orient as a passive, childlike entity that can be lover and abused, shaped and contained, managed and consumed." [157]

Orientalism is not "just about prejudices; it is about relationships of power," and this power is not only achieved through the conquest and violence described so effectively by Fanon but also through "modern technologies of representation and with methods of research, collection, and presentation of data, all of which transpired to produce an impressive body of knowledge that hegemonised the colonizer and the colonized." This 'knowledge' produced Europe's *Other*, who lacked "rationality, history, modernity, and the powers of self-transformation," qualities that made up the European.[158]

Rashid Khalidi highlights the disparity in the way that dominant "democratic" colonial powers such as Great Britain, France and Holland mobilized to expand the rights of individuals at home, yet "conquered and ruled over the peoples of much of the earth without the slightest reference to the liberal principles that animated their own systems of

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[155] See M. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject : Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (New Jersey : Princeton University Press, 1996).
[156] Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, 4.
[157] Z. Sardar, *Orientalism* (Buckingham : Open University Press, 1999), 6.
[158] [158] Kaiwar and Mazumdar, "Race, Orient, Nation,", 270.

government."[159] They utilised a variety of strategies to justify this, ranging from "overt racism that argued that some peoples were too primitive to be allowed to rule themselves, to the more sophisticated arguments of Orientalism about the regions where great civilizations had existed for millennia in East Asia, South Asia and the Middle East."[160] Whatever the justification, "arguments for colonial rule and the denial of self-determination ... were clothed in the self-serving and patronizing rhetoric of cultural improvement, whether this was described in terms of the white man's burden or the *mission civilisatrice*." [161]

This similarity in tactics, regardless of geography, clearly points to the strategic methodology that architects of Orientalist thought employed in order for the region commonly referred to as the Orient to be subsumed within the broad framework of the colonialist project.[162] While the construction of an Orientalist paradigm was part of the broader project of western expansion and discovery of new lands, it was also distinct from the imperialist and colonial campaigns undertaken in other parts of the world, largely because of the historical contestation between Islam and Christianity. These differences and similarities are highlighted below.

Constructing an Orientalist Paradigm

The idea of the Orient has historically had an allure for both traveler and social scientist. In geographical and cultural terms, it comprises of the great civilizations to the East of the West; Islam, China, India and Japan.[163] For Sardar, the "Orientalist vision" was "based on two simultaneous desires: the personal quest of the Western male for Oriental mystery and sexuality and the collective goal to educate and control the Orient in

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[159] R. Khalidi, *Resurrecting Empire : Western Footprints and America's Perilous Path in the Middle East*.(London : IB Taurus, 2004), 16.
[160] See Khalidi, *Resurrecting Empire*, 16.
[161] Khalidi, *Resurrecting Empire : Western Footprints and America's Perilous Path in the Middle East*, 16-17.
[162] Sardar describes the Orient as a geographical space, which consists of the great civilizations to the East of the West, viz, Islam, China, India and Japan; Sardar, *Orientalism*, 2. The Orient could however also be regarded as an "ideological" space, representing various cultures and schools of thought.
[163] Sardar, *Orientalism*, 2.

political and economic terms."[164] The roots of Orientalism, he argues, can be traced back to Christendom and its encounters with Islam.[165] While there was engagement between the West and other "regions" within the Orient, it is this critical relationship between Christendom and Islam that forms the foundation for the rest of this chapter.

Edward Said's magnum opus *Orientalism*, considered by many as the definitive modern literary work on the subject, points out that Orientalism "can be discussed and analysed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient - dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient."[166] This is arguably the most succinct definition of what Orientalism as a "discourse" *does*; however, the issue of what it *is* and what it constitutes is perhaps the more critical question. According to Said :

> It is an elaboration not only of a basic geographical distinction (the world is made up of two unequal halves, Orient and Occident) but also of a whole series of "interests" which by such means as scholarly discovery, philological reconstruction, psychological analysis, landscape and sociological description, it not only creates but also maintains, it is, rather than expresses, a certain will or intention to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even to incorporate, what is a manifestly different (or alternative and novel) world; it is, above all, a discourse that is by no means in direct, corresponding relationship with political power in the raw, but rather is produced and exists in an uneven exchange with various kinds of power, shaped to a degree by the exchange with power political (as with a colonial or imperial establishment), power intellectual (as with reigning sciences like comparative linguistics or anatomy, or any of the modern policy sciences), power cultural (as with orthodoxies and canons of taste, texts,

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[164] Sardar, *Orientalism*, 2.
[165] Sardar, *Orientalism*, 2.
[166] Said, *Orientalism*, 3.

values), power moral (as with ideas about what 'we' do and what 'they' cannot do or understand as 'we' do). [167]

It is important to reflect on the use of the words "we" and "they" in Said's analysis. The idea of a "they" or 'them", has been a central theme of western "philosophical" and intellectual justifications to argue for a theory of supremacy of one group over another, predominantly based on race, ethnicity and geography.[168] Political systems of oppression throughout history, from slavery to segregation in the United States, to fascism in Europe, to imperialism and colonialism in the Third World, and to apartheid in South Africa, have all been premised on the idea that one racial group is "inherently" superior to another and is therefore "entitled" to dominate the so-called inferior race.[169]

Over time, cultural-academic Orientalism produced a "vast repertoire of images and stereotypes with claims to the 'disinterested pursuit of truth' via the application of supposedly impartial scientific methods and value free techniques in studying the peoples, cultures, religions, and languages of the 'Orient'." In this way Orientalism became "a set of factualized statements about a reality that existed and could be known independent of any subjective colonizing will.... The transformation of general philosophical precepts into a body of law ... was the very stuff of Orientalism."[170]

The notion of race and by implication, the culture and origin of the dominant race group is central to the question of Orientalist thought and practice. To return to Sardar's earlier definition of the discourse, he points out that it was based on the personal quest of the Western male for Oriental mystery. Western political philosophy and thought is a useful source to locate the idea of the imperialist project as defined by the "western male", given that much of Western thought is rooted in this very specific context, that is,

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[167] Said, *Orientalism*, 3.
[168] See M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*. Translated by J. Stambaugh, (New York : State University of New York Press, 1927, 1996) and J.P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*. Translated by H.E. Barnes (London : Routledge, 1985, 2003).
[169] See for example, M. Macdonald, *Why Race Matters in South Africa* (Scottsville : UKZN Press, 2006).
[170] Kaiwar and Mazumdar, "Race, Orient, Nation," 274.

the historical preoccupations and desires of the "white man."[171] It is evident in writings by most Western Enlightenment philosophers such as John Rawls, John Stuart Mill and John Locke, that notions of liberty, freedom and equality are central to their theories of "liberal" thought; however these political rights were never considered relevant to, nor were they afforded to the residents of colonies and territories that formed part of the broader European empire. In promoting equality at home, while producing "ascriptive hierarchies cloaked in the language of science" in the colonies, Europeans "revealed their split personalities." [172]

It is in this framework that we unpack Orientalist thought and practice as it related and continues to relate to Islam.

Orientalism and Islam

Much of the geographical region to the "east of the west", as Sardar defines it, was home to Islam from about 610 AD onwards.[173] This included the Middle East, large portions of Asia, and later on Spain and Turkey in Europe. Sardar argues that "from its inception, Islam presented the Christian world with a 'problem'," and further it became a political problem because the "achievements of Muslim civilization made Islam an intellectual, social and cultural problem. Orientalism emerged as Europe's rationale for meeting the challenge of Islam." [174] Both Said and Sardar suggest that Orientalism as a discourse did engage with the broader geographic region of the Orient, including India and China, but that there was a greater focus on Islam as the "challenge."

Sardar attempts to isolate the exact historical point at which the foundation for Orientalism was laid. He points us to the writings of John of Damascus, a Christian scholar and friend of the Ummayad Caliph Yazid (ruled from 680 - 683), who declared Islam to be a pagan cult, the Ka'aba in Makkah an idol, and the Prophet Muhammad an

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[171] The concept of "white man" is used as an anthropological notion to refer to a historical set of events defined by a very specific patriarchal context
[172] Kaiwar and Mazumdar, "Race, Orient, Nation," 268.
[173] Armstrong, *Islam : A Short History*, xii.
[174] Sardar, *Orientalism*, 17 – 18.

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irreligious and licentious man.[175] His works became the classical source of all Christian writings on Islam.[176] Said affirms the idea of Islam being perceived by the Christian West as a "problem." "Doubtless," he wrote, "Islam was a real provocation in many ways. It lay uneasily close to Christianity, geographically and culturally." [177] American academic Bernard Lewis, an Orientalist by Said's definition, argues, on the other hand:

> Early Islam defined itself against Christian faith and power....For the medieval Muslims, Europe thus presented a double challenge. On the one hand, there was the Christian imperial rival to confront and overcome; on the other there was the mission, felt by other empire builders before them and after them, to conquer, convert and civilize the barbarous peoples beyond the imperial frontiers.[178]

Clearly, there are contested versions of the engagement between Islam and Christianity since Islam's inception as a new faith. Said and Sardar portray this encounter as Western Europe perceiving Islam as presenting a multi-dimensional (political, economic and cultural) challenge, hence the emergence of Orientalism, whereas Lewis, articulates it as Islam being on a mission to "conquer and convert." These positions reflect not only diverging analyses but differing histories that may indeed be the cause of contemporary tensions between Islam and the West.

Chapter One made reference to the contemporary intellectual and ideological discourse emerging within the western world to describe Muslims and the manner in which they are responding to a range of political crises confronting them. In particular Cheryl Benard's use of categories to "label" Muslims, such as Fundamentalist, Traditionalist, Modernist, and Secularist, have come to be used quite liberally within Western political circles, especially within the neo-conservative realm of American

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[175] Armstrong, *A Short History of Islam*, xiv.
[176] Sardar, *Orientalism*, 18.
[177] Said, *Orientalism*, 74.
[178] B. Lewis, *From Babel to Dragomans : Interpreting the Middle East* (London : Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2004), 123.

foreign policy, and have served to create a particular "Orientalist" understanding of Muslims.[179]

In creating such categories, there is a tendency on the part of those that are attempting to engage in what Sardar refers to as the "shaping", "containing", "managing" and "consuming" of this construction, to not acknowledge their own complicity in the problematic posed by such articulations, and their resulting political consequences. As a result of this process, there is inevitably a form of ideological denial that lends itself to the architect of the Orientalist paradigm being unable to fully understand the nature of the entity that s/he is describing, other than to relegate it to a space where it can be packaged as something to be "consumed." Hence, there are numerous constructions of Muslims as being "typical" of any number of categories ascribed to them. This makes it easier for a "western audience" to engage with this "unknown" element, and certainly helps to advance political agendas which call for containment and management of "militant" and "unruly" masses of Muslims who are reminiscent of the colonial "savage."

This chapter has attempted to link the development of Islamic history with its "political" encounter with Western imperialism, and the emergence of Orientalist thought, particularly in academia and western scholarship, as a strategic response to this process, in order to undermine and "control" counter-veiling political forces, particularly within the Muslim world. In essence, this chapter has argued that the project of colonialism and its associated Orientalist discourse, has served to entrench hegemonic forms of behavior within the West, which continue even in a contemporary context, notwithstanding claims that globalisation is leading to uniform cosmopolitanism. Orientalism's myths "have become central to identity politics in the postcolonial world."[180]

Nineteenth-century concepts like Orientalism, Kaiwar and Mazumdar remind us, "have a great and continued vitality ... not because one approves of them, but because

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[179] Sardar, *Orientalism*, 6. See also C. Benard, *Civil Democratic Islam : Partners, Resources, Strategies* (Santa Monica : The Rand Corporation, 2003), ix.

[180] Kaiwar and Mazumdar, "Introduction," in *Antinomies of modernity : Essays on Race, Orient, Nation*, 3.

they are thoroughly integral to the overall cultural and political economy of the capitalist world. Fundamentalism ... cannot be understood apart from the histories of Orientalism and nationalism."[181] In the "post-modern moment", they argue, Orientalism "survives as a form of racism, yoked to post-World War II modernisation theories and the supposed incapacity of the ex-colonial world ... to respond to new political and economic challenges."[182] While this thesis does not attempt to argue that those Muslims who engage in political violence or militant behavior are to be condoned or their actions deemed acceptable, it does attempt to provide a context for the existence of militancy within the contemporary Muslim world, and why Orientalist patterns of "labeling" serve to detract from an understanding of the broader reasons underpinning such militancy.

The emergence of Hindutva and Islamic fundamentalism, for example, seen in the context of "the uneven geography of global capitalism," are an attempt to "bring about a modern sense of community and representation without the meltdown of old forms implied by capitalism in full flow."[183] As Farid Esack has pointed out:

[Post-9/11] there was desperation to distance Islam from 'terrorism' and while some attempted to reflect on the underlying causes of terrorism there was little or no attempt at defining it. When it was discussed at all, it was presented as the result of long-standing and cumulative cultural and rhetorical dynamics rather than concrete historical conditions of political marginalization or dispossession. Demands for clarity were usually dismissed as "fudging the issue" ... It sadly appeared as if issues of globalization, the rise of the new empire and corporate power, the unbridled exploitation of the earth's limited resources, global warming, consumerism and its twin sister, poverty, as well as HIV/AIDS seem to belong to another planet. Flushed

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[181] Kaiwar and Mazumdar, "Race, Orient, Nation," 263.
[182] Kaiwar and Mazumdar, "Introduction," 10.
[183] Kaiwar and Mazumdar, "Introduction," 10.

away were all memories of the co-operative relationship between the Taliban and the USA administration-oil industry nexus.[184]

The significance of the argument outlined above, to this study, lies in trying to frame a better understanding of how Orientalist discourse is impacting on contemporary contestations between Islam and the West and how it is shaping the arena of Political Islam as expounded upon in Chapter One. This chapter has attempted to illustrate that the historical political, economic and cultural encounter between Europe and Islam, from the seventh century onwards, and the various contested spaces that this encounter has given birth to, has been instrumental in crafting a latter day discursive framework that seeks to advance the Orientalist agenda, which Sardar framed as the West's project to "shape", "contain", "manage" and "consume" the Orient.

The rise of Political Islam as a clearly defined space for political engagement by Muslims in a twenty-first century context, as elaborated upon in Chapter One, continues to be the subject of "Orientalist-like" scrutiny, more so because it has come to represent the contemporary version of what Sardar referred to as the challenge to Christendom, during its period of colonial and territorial expansion from the fifteenth century onwards. Political Islam's ascendance in a contemporary context has been perceived, as argued by various intellectuals, as a threat to the hegemonic project of empire, and therefore it continues to receive unprecedented attention.[185] In some respects this attention arises from western intellectual discourses such as those advanced by Samuel Huntington which "theorise" that Islam is a major political fault line (along with others such as China), and will be the continuing cause of a clash between civilizations.[186]

Given that a significant component of the discourse of Political Islam in the contemporary era revolves around militancy and militant attacks on western targets, this

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[184] F. Esack "In Search of Progressive Islam beyond 9/11," 80.
http://www.progressivemuslims.com/index2.html / http://www.progressivemuslims.com/?404=Y.
[185] See for example, G. E. Fuller, *The Future of Political Islam* (New York : Palgrave Macmillan, 2003),.;R Khalidi. *Resurrecting Empire : Western Footprints and America's Perilous Path in the Middle East* and M. Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*. (Johannesburg : Jacana, 2004).
[186] See S. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. (New York : Touchstone, 1996).

poses a challenge not only to the West at large, but even to those Muslims who may be sympathetic to the political causes espoused by their militant co-religionists, and reject the Orientalist nature of the scrutiny to which they are subject, but reject militant violence as a way of resolving political differences.[187] This debate around how Muslims are supposed to respond to the various contesting political ideologies that compete for co-existence within the global Muslim world, is effectively the key question which this thesis attempts to grapple with. It engages this question largely within the context of how it is that a particular community of Muslims, viz South African Muslims, is trying to respond to the broader challenges of firstly dealing with being subjected to increased scrutiny by a western lens of inquiry, and secondly how it is that they are participating as political agents and the manner in which they have opted to respond to the key political questions that face them nationally and at a global level.

Brief Overview: Studies of Islam in South Africa

It is important to briefly locate the discussion on how Orientalism and Empire, and the encounter between Islam and the West has been documented within writings on Islam in South Africa, as well as examine how the unique history of Muslims in South Africa has been recorded. While much of this discussion will take place in Chapter Three and Five, which focuses on Muslims in South Africa, it is useful to introduce some of that work at this point.

Most of the writing on Islam in South Africa has focused on the Cape, and understandably so, as this was the first region, where Islam was introduced to the southern tip of Africa. The lead was given by writers such as A. Davids and Y. Da Costa, who have written in particular about the Cape region, as well as documented developments in the rest of South Africa.[188] Others such as E.M. Mahida, E. Moosa, A.

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[187] Giles Kepel engages with this debate within the context of European Muslims, arguing that there is an ongoing "war for Muslim minds". See G. Kepel, *The War for Muslim Minds : Islam and the West* (Cambridge : Belknap Press, 2004).

[188] See for example, A. Davids, *The Mosques of Bo-Kaap: A Social history of Islam at the Cape* (Cape Town: South African Institute of Arabic and Islamic Research, 1980) and Y. Da Costa and A. Davids, eds. *Pages from Cape Muslim History* (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1994).

Tayob and S. Jeppie have written about the national context, covering a variety of themes such as identity construction, the role of mosques and sermons, religious conservatism and the significance of Muslim organizations such as the Muslim Youth Movement and the Arabic Study Circle.[189] Some of this work (especially by Davids and Moosa) was produced during the apartheid era and reflects many of the political dynamics of this period.

In the post-apartheid period, there has in fact, been a proliferation of writings on Islam and Muslims in South Africa, and work produced by South African Muslim social scientists on a broad variety of subjects relating to Islam. While authors like Jeppie, Tayob, Esack and Moosa have been writing since the 1980s, and continue to produce prolifically, more recently, writers such as M. Haron, S. Shaikh, G. Vahed and others have been focusing on more current developments. Some of the themes that they have focused on include, transformation and evolution of Muslim identities, media, Islamic feminisms, and regional dynamics.[190] Some of the most recent writings on Muslims in South Africa, have been produced by graduate students, being mentored and tutored under the supervision of scholars mentioned above, such as Tayob and Jeppie. Two excellent studies on Muslims in the Cape have recently been completed by S. Bangstad and S. Matthee, who have looked at issues such as the secularization and Islamization of Cape Muslims, as well as their involvement in politics.[191]

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[189] See E.M. Mahida, *History of Muslims in South Africa: A Chronology* (Durban : Arabic Study Circle, 1993); E. Moosa, "Muslim conservatism in South Africa," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* (December 1989), 73 – 81; A. Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa : The Muslim Youth Movement* (Cape Town : UCT Press, 1995); A. Tayob, *Islam in South Africa ; Mosques, Imams and Sermons* (Gainesville : University Press of Florida, 1999) and S. Jeppie, *Language, Identity, Modernity : The Arabic Study Circle of Durban* (Cape Town : HSRC Press, 2007).

[190] M. Haron, "Voices from Beyond and Within the South(ern) African Frontiers : The Muslim Print Media," *Archiv Orientalni – Quarterly Journal of African and Asian Studies* 73 (2005), 13 – 42; S. Shaikh, "Transforming Feminisms : Islam, Women and Gender Justice," In *Progressive Muslims : On Justice, Gender and Pluralism*, ed. O. Safi, 147 – 162 (Oxford : Oneworld, 2003); G. Vahed, "Changing Islamic Traditions and Emerging Identities in South Africa," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 20, no. 1 (2000a), 43-73; G. Vahed, "Constructions of community and identity among Indians in colonial Natal, 1860 – 1910 : The Role of the Muharram Festival," *Journal of African History* 43 (2002), 77 – 93.

[191] See S. Bangstad, *Global Flows, Local Appropriations : Facets of Secularization and Islamization among Contemporary Cape Muslims* (Cape Town : UCT / Radboud University, 2008) and S. Matthee, *Muslim Identities and Political Strategies : A Case Study of Muslims in the Greater Cape Town Area of South Africa, 1994 – 2000* (Kassel : Kassel University Press, 2008).

The questions that this thesis grapples with are not dissimilar to some of themes contained in the writings already cited above. However, what does represent something of a departure from these other works, is an attempt to locate the political actions and participation of SA Muslims in the post-apartheid period within the context of the global paradigm of political Islam, locating these within the broad categories of Militant and Progressive understandings of Islamic thought.

The next chapters will extrapolate further on the context within which South African Muslims are engaging these broad ideological categories.

Chapter Three

The Context - Islam in Post Apartheid South Africa: Multiple communities

Introduction

Muslims constituted approximately 1.46 percent of South Africa's population, according to the 2001 census.[192] The largest constituencies making-up this community were predominantly the descendants of slaves who began arriving in the Cape from 1658 and the descendants of Indo-Pak immigrants who arrived as indentured laborers or free passenger migrants in the then province of Natal from 1860.[193] The latter are commonly known as "Indian Muslims" and are concentrated mostly in KwaZulu Natal and Gauteng in the contemporary period, while the former, known in popular usage as "Malay" Muslims, and officially categorized as "Coloureds" in the census, are based primarily in the Western Cape. Both communities have made very strong historical contributions to the growth and establishment of Islam in South Africa and have shaped the dominant Muslim cultural discourses in those areas where they predominate. They have had a huge impact on the manner in which Islam is practiced in the contemporary period.[194]

There has also been a growing population of indigenous African Muslims, termed "Black African" in the census. In fact, a steady stream of conversions to the Islamic faith has been observed within the African indigenous community, particularly over the last twenty years. African Muslims now make up almost 12 percent of the overall Muslim community, whereas in 1980 they constituted approximately 2.5 percent.[195] The reasons for this growth are varied, but include the arrival of economic migrants from Malawi and

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[192] G. Vahed and S. Jeppie, "Multiple Communities: Muslims in post-apartheid South Africa,".*State of the Nation : 2004 – 2005*, ed. J. Daniel and others (Cape Town : HSRC Press, 2005), 252.

[193] Vahed and Jeppie "Multiple Communities: Muslims in post-apartheid South Africa", 260. See also A. Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa : The Muslim Youth Movement* (Cape Town : UCT Press, 1995), 39 – 41.

[194] G. Vahed, "Indian Muslims in South Africa: Continuity, Change and Disjuncture, 1860-2000," *Alternation* 2 (2000), 67 – 98. This piece highlights the significant influence that Indian Muslims have had on the way that Islam in South Africa has evolved. While the role of the Coloured or Malay Muslims in South Africa has been similarly profound, it could be argued that Indian Muslims have had a hegemony over the practices and institutional formations within the SA Muslim community.

[195] Vahed and Jeppie, "Multiple Communities: Muslims in post-apartheid South Africa", 262.

Mozambique who brought the Islamic way of life with them to the townships in the 1970s and 80s, resulting in the spreading of Islam amongst locals.[196] Soweto Township in the former Transvaal became a centre for the Islamic faith and many migrants from other parts of Africa were drawn to this area largely because of the work in the mines around Johannesburg. In Kwa-Zulu Natal, the arrival of freed slaves from Zanzibar in 1873 led to the establishment of Islam among Africans. Ironically though, they were as a result of a complex race classification system, re-settled by the apartheid government in the predominantly Indian township of Chatsworth.[197] The evolution of the "Zanzibari" community, as they are known locally, has thus been impacted upon by the broader socio-cultural dynamics of being assimilated into an Indian community. The table below provides a numerical breakdown of the South African Muslim population per province at the last census.

Table 3.1 : Muslim Population Per Province and Race : Census Data 2001[198]

Province	African	White	Indian	Coloured	Total
Eastern Cape	3601	630	5866	9575	19672
Free State	1798	108	1847	284	4037
Gauteng	24597	2967	98823	23695	150082
KwaZulu-Natal	2987	1036	117424	6143	142460
Limpopo	3760	90	6242	195	10287
Mpumalanga	9429	227	6680	500	16836
Northern Cape	738	65	1015	2833	4651
North West	4717	221	7234	961	13133
Western Cape	8204	3065	29800	251837	292906
Total	74701	8409	274931	296023	654064
Percentage	11.42	1.28	42.04	45.26	100.00

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[196] Vahed and Jeppie, "Multiple Communities: Muslims in post-apartheid South Africa", 263.

[197] Vahed and Jeppie, "Multiple Communities: Muslims in post-apartheid South Africa", 26. For a recent analysis of African Muslims in KZN and Indian – African Muslim relations, see P. Kaarsholm, "Population Movements, Islam and the Interaction of Indian and African Identity Strategies in South Africa during and after Apartheid," *The Journal of Natal and Zulu History* vol 24-25 (2007).

[198] Vahed and Jeppie, "Multiple Communities: Muslims in post-apartheid South Africa", 253.

The practice of *dawah* (to proselytize in an Islamic way) has also been a contributing factor to the growth of Islam in South Africa, not just in the African community but across all race groups.[199] However the manner in which *dawah* has been implemented, over the last few decades has come under severe criticism by many African Muslims as simply being a way of advancing Indian or Malay "cultural" hegemony, which leaves Africans as the recipients of *Zakaah* as dependents of charity, as opposed to becoming empowered beneficiaries.[200] There are complaints too that Africans are compelled to follow a foreign brand of Islam, mixed with cultural practices, as opposed to determining their own path.[201]

Muslim influence in South Africa over the last 300 odd years has been substantial. The role played by Islamic institutions such as mosques and the religious leadership (usually referred to as the *ulema*), and over the past few decades, the increasing number of Islamic schools (run by both local and foreign trusts), the rise of civil society groupings such as the Muslim Youth Movement (MYM) and World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY), the influence of Muslim owned businesses on the trade and economic sector and the opening up of various foreign investment and exchange opportunities since the end of apartheid in 1994, have provided significant opportunities for Muslims to impact on the broader social, economic and political life.[202]

Much of the recent influence will be discussed in further detail in Chapter Five. This chapter provides a brief historical background to the establishment, evolution and

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[199] *Dawah* is generally understood as the conceptual framework within Islamic theology that advances the spreading of the religion amongst communities. It can be exercised through various means, ie, preaching, humanitarian initiatives such as the giving of charity, or the intellectual engagement of Islamic thought and philosophy.

[200] *Zakaah* is one of the pillars of faith of Islam, which requires that Muslims must donate a portion of their earnings to the poor. This is considered as a compulsory act of faith, and the percentage to be given in charity is usually 2.5% of a person's income.

[201] Vahed and Jeppie, "Multiple Communities: Muslims in post-apartheid South Africa", 265. See also Kaarsholm, "Population Movements, Islam and the Interaction of Indian and African Identity Strategies".

[202] See A. Tayob, *Islam in South Africa ; Mosques, Imams and Sermons* (Gainesville : University Press of Florida, 1999). Tayob attempts to provide a comprehensive analysis of the impact that the religious institutions (in particular the traditions of the mosques and their leadership in Gauteng (Transvaal) and the Cape) set up by the early Muslim arrivals to South Africa, and their more contemporary evolution, have had on how the religion is practiced today .

emergence of complex Muslim identities in South Africa, which leads us to speak of "multiple" communities.

Arrival of Islam in South Africa and the Development of Muslim Political Life[203]

i) Early Period of Islam in South Africa

In order to fully appreciate where the Muslim community is located politically in a post-apartheid context, it is critical to understand the origins of Muslim political life since the arrival of the first Muslims to current-day South Africa. Islam was first brought to Southern African shores by Muslim slaves and political exiles sent to the Cape by the Dutch East India Company (DEIC).[204] One of the most significant political exiles was Shaykh Yusuf, a religious and political leader born in what is now modern Indonesia. Having landed at the Cape in 1694, Shaykh Yusuf began to spread Islam among the Cape slaves very soon after he arrived. He is in essence considered to be the founder of Islam in South Africa, although he was not the first Muslim to land on Cape shores. That is thought to be Ibrahim van Batavia, a slave working for the DEIC.[205] Other Muslim slaves arrived soon after or were converted to Islam through the teachings of the Shaykh. Others who made a contribution to establishing Islamic practices in the Cape included The Rajah of Tamborah, Tuan Said Aloewie and Kadi Abdus Salaam.[206]

What is interesting about these early Muslim migrants is that Islam arrived on South African shores primarily under the guise of political oppression, and found a home within a colonial context that necessitated a "struggle conscience", an ethos that continued to inform Muslim political life, particularly under apartheid. These early Muslims became the ancestral foundation to what is today called the Cape Muslim community. Included in this community are the Malay Muslims, primarily descendants of

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[203] While South Africa formally came into existence in 1910, this thesis makes reference to the territory at the Southern tip of the African continent as South Africa, before 1910, although it was still a colony at that point.

[204] R.C. Shell, "Islam in Southern Africa, 1652-1998," in *The History of Islam in Africa*, eds. N. Levtzion and R. Pouwels (Athens : Ohio Press, 2000), 327-348.

[205] Shell, "Islam in Southern Africa, 1652-1998 ", 327-329.

[206] Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 39 – 41.

the early Cape slaves, Coloured Muslims, descendants of slaves and parents of mixed racial background, and a small number of Indian Muslims who arrived as traders directly from India or via Natal and the Transvaal.[207] Together, they form a very diverse and colorful backdrop to cultural life in the Western Cape province.[208]

The subsequent arrival of Muslims in South Africa, after the Cape slaves, was largely through the importation of indentured Indian labourers from India between 1860 and 1911.[209] They were brought specifically to work on the sugar-cane plantations of what was then Natal and is today called Kwa-Zulu Natal. Of approximately 152,000 indentured Indians, approximately 7-10 percent was Muslim. Over 80 percent were Hindu. As Vahed points out, "the indentured Muslim population was characterized by diversity of religious tradition, caste, language, ethnicity and culture as migrants were drawn from a range of ecologies and modes of production."[210]

Indentured migrants were followed by Indian traders who made their way to South Africa from the early 1870s. They were referred to as passenger Indians, because they came at their own expense, often via Mauritius.[211] A large percentage of passengers were Muslims. While many set up businesses in the city of Durban, where their historic presence is still in evidence in what has been called the Indian district in the city, others made their way to the north and south coasts and the Midlands, with the result that there is an Islamic presence in all parts of the province.[212] After serving their indentures, many Indians, including Muslims, as well as passenger migrants, made their way to the Transvaal (today incorporated into the province of Gauteng). A few made their way to the Cape, where entry requirements were more stringent, while they were forbidden from the

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[207] The names of the provinces, viz the Cape, Natal and Transvaal are used in their historical context. All three regions have had their names changed, and are now referred to as the Western / Eastern Cape, Kwa-Zulu Natal and Gauteng respectively.
[208] Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 39 – 54.
[209] Vahed, "Indian Muslims in South Africa".
[210] Vahed, "Indian Muslims in South Africa".
[211] Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 55.
[212] Shell, "Islam in Southern Africa, 1652-1998 ", 339-344.

Orange Free State.[213] In the Transvaal they absorbed the regional language of Afrikaans, and become socially and politically active within the broader community.

ii) Islamic Resurgence in South Africa and Transition to an Anti-apartheid Politics

It is important to locate Muslim responses to political developments in apartheid South Africa, which unfolded from 1948 onwards, within a broad framework of what Tayob refers to as Islamic resurgence. In many ways the period of Islamic resurgence is what has ideologically shaped the participation of South African Muslims in a contemporary context. This resurgence focused primarily on ensuring that Muslim religious interests were incorporated into broader civic life, through the establishment of various Islamic oriented civic organizations, in the various regions where Muslims were located in significant numbers, such as the Cape, Natal and the Transvaal. While Tayob contends that resurgent organizations came into existence predominantly after the Second World War, there were according to him, traces of a "new approach" to Islam present at the end of the 19th century, particularly in the Cape.[214] The resurgence was driven primarily by a class of educated Muslim elites, who began to establish a variety of Islamic schools and civil society organizations that would service Muslim religious needs and interests such as burial associations and mosque boards and trusts.[215] This trend was also seen in the other major urban centers such as Natal and Transvaal.

Apart from the various Islamic civic organizations that were being set up, the religious leadership in the Cape, consisting of *shaykhs* and *imams* organized themselves by setting up the Moslem Judicial Council (MJC). The MJC was considered the main body that represented the voice of the religious authorities, and was regarded as

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[213] Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 55.

[214] Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 78.

[215] Tayob refers to the establishment of the Malay Cemetery Board, Muslim Cemetery Board, South African Moslem Association, and Cape Malay Association amongst others. See Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 81. In addition, there was the setting up of Islamic missionary schools such as the Rahmanniyya School, to meet the educational gaps that were not being addressed by the existing traditional madressah education system, Tayob, *Resurgence in South Africa*, 80.

something of an ideologically conservative space.[216] It is significant to note that many of the graduates of the newly established Muslim schools and the younger generation of that era, who formed themselves into various youth groups, had a very different conception of Islam to that of the religious authorities represented by the MJC.[217] These ideological differences between the religious authorities and some youth groups, continue to permeate broader Muslim society today, across all the major centers.

It is also important to note that in the Cape there were Muslims from two distinctly different ethnic backgrounds, viz Malay and Indian. In 1902 the South African Moslem Association was formed in an attempt to try and represent the interests of both Malay and Indian Muslims, however it did not survive for very long after its formation, due to the intense nature of the responsibilities, that it was tasked with, viz, trying to reconcile the differences between both groups.[218] The Malay community then tried to organize itself through setting up bodies such as the Cape Malay Association (1922), and was relatively successful in its efforts as it represented the interests of one group only. Achmat Davids points out that the Cape Malay Association represented a clear statement of the division between Malay and Indian Muslims. [219]

The resurgence phenomenon in Natal was also driven by Muslim elites, predominantly of Indian origin. Pursuing an education and investing in educational institutions was considered as the ideal way to uplift the Muslim community, especially those that had come from an indentured labour background. Many of the indentured workers (including both Muslim and non-Muslim) did not stay in the sugar industry for very long and eventually moved onto other economic pursuits.[220] After 1926, when state schooling was being widely promoted, Muslim schools that had been set up through community trusts and endowments were approached by the state and offered the option of becoming state-aided schools, with a variety of benefits, such as state recognition. One of

[216] Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 82.
[217] Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 82.
[218] Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 81.
[219] A. Davids, "Politics and the Muslims of Cape Town : A Historical Survey," in *Studies in the History of Cape Town*. Vol 4, eds. C. Saunders and others (Cape Town : UCT, 1981), 174 – 220 as cited in Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*.
[220] Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 90.

the first schools that accepted this offer was the Jummah Madressah, which had been established in 1917.[221] Many other Muslim schools followed suit. Subsequent generations of the indentured community would have had greater educational opportunities, as a result of the efforts made by the Indian elite / business community to invest in educational institutions.

The first Muslim resurgent body in Natal was the Natal Muslim Council (NMC), set up in 1943, and was the primary supporter of integrated Islamic schooling in Natal.[222] It attempted to vigorously advance modern education among both men and women, a position which can arguably be considered as a precursor to the later ideologically more progressive Islamic groups, which emerged in an attempt to create spaces for Muslims of all backgrounds to express themselves more freely. In terms of an organized voice representing the religious authorities in Natal (consisting of the *ulema*), there was none until the establishment of the Jamiatul Ulama (Natal), which was formed in 1952.[223] Hence the Natal Muslim Council remained the primary voice of an organized Muslim community in the province, for a very significant period.

The NMC was concerned with various aspects of Islamic life, including the language in which young Muslims were to be given religious instruction. While Urdu was considered a very important language and was used widely in the *madressah* system as the medium of instruction, largely by the Indian immigrant *ulemas* teaching at the schools, the NMC felt that Arabic should become the lingua franca of Muslim life in South Africa, and so resolved to advance this cause.[224] In an attempt to promote the teaching and learning of Arabic, an organization called the Arabic Study Circle was set up in 1950, and worked hand in hand with the NMC to both promote Arabic, as well as a more modernized professional approach to education for the Muslim community.[225]

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[221] Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 91 – 92.
[222] See S. Jeppie, *Language, Identity, Modernity : The Arabic Study Circle of Durban* (Cape Town : HSRC Press, 2007), 27 and Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 92.
[223] Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 93.
[224] Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 94 – 95.
[225] Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 95 and Jeppie. *Language, Identity Modernity*.

As part of the Islamic resurgence trend in Natal, a *dawah*[226] based organization called the Islamic Propagation Centre International (IPCI) was set up in 1957, by Ahmed Deedat, a well known religious personality, who became popular because of his ability to engage spontaneously in a comprehensive critique of Christianity and the Bible, as well as comment on other faiths.[227] It was his charismatic personality around which the organization built its name and legacy. The IPCI has become internationally renowned for its Islamic outreach programmes in the city of Durban, especially to visiting non-Muslim delegations. Tayob argues that there were essentially three organizations in Natal that can be considered to be the core of the early Islamic resurgent movement in the region, in the post World War Two period, viz, the NMC, the Arabic Study Circle and the IPCI.[228]

The Islamic Resurgent Movement in the Transvaal did not enjoy the kind of popular support that it did in the Cape and Natal. Part of the reason for this was that the schooling system in the Transvaal did not combine Islamic and secular syllabi, which in effect suited the Jamiatul Ulama Transvaal, which wanted to have exclusive control over the domain of Islamic training in the madressahs.[229] These madressah classes were held after regular school hours in school buildings. This arrangement effectively meant that the Jamiatul Ulama began to establish a monopoly over the Muslim community in various ways, particularly around Islamic practices and religious ideological spaces. There were however one or two "resurgent" oriented or modern organizations that did emerge in the Transvaal such as the Universal Truth Movement (1958) and the Young Men's Muslim Association (1955), with the latter eventually becoming heavily influenced by the *ulema* fraternity, and Deobandi Islam.[230]

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[226] *Dawah* is the act of taking the message of Islam to non-Muslims. This can be done via outreach programmes which include addressing the social and economic needs of people, or simply through an information dissemination campaign.
[227] Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 98 and http://www.ahmed-deedat.co.za/frameset.asp.
[228] Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 99.
[229] Tayob *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 101.
[230] Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 101 – 102.

iii) Anti-Apartheid Struggle and Initial Transition to Democracy

The policy of apartheid and institutionalized segregation was introduced into South African society in 1948, by the National Party.[231] Apartheid meant that people from different race groups were separated legally, with regard to where they lived, who they could marry, where they could work, in addition to a number of other areas, which regulated people's everyday lives. Apartheid impacted primarily on African, Coloured and Indian South Africans. When these apartheid policies came into effect, there was a consensus between progressive African, Coloured and Indian forces and political formations that they had to fight the apartheid enemy as a collective, because of its oppressive nature, and hence many activists from these communities, regardless of religion or sect, joined together in political resistance, were arrested and also detained together, many on Robben Island.[232]

In the Cape, resistance by Muslims to apartheid policies began through mobilizing within the Muslim Teachers Association, which is regarded as the first Cape based Muslim organization to express an overtly Islamic anti-state rhetoric.[233] Other organizations in the Cape such as the District Six based Cape Muslim Youth Movement (formed in 1957) and individuals such as Imam Abdullah Haron, who was a prominent religious leader and Imam of the Stegman Road Mosque, stand out as other notable groups and figures from this province, who were visibly opposed to the way in which the introduction of apartheid policies in 1948, were impacting on people of color.[234]

Imam Haron is perhaps one of the best known Muslim religious leaders who was at the fore-front of struggles against the apartheid state. He was involved in training the

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[231] See F. Walsh, *A History of South Africa* (London : Harper Collins Publishers, 1998) and J. Barber, *South Africa in the 20th Century.*(Oxford : Blackwell, 1999). ·

[232] See the history of Ahmed Kathrada at http://www.anc.org.za/people/kathrada.html. He together with Nelson Mandela was arrested and sentenced at the Rivonia trial, and served his sentence on Robben Island and Pollsmoor Prison. See also http://www.robben-island.org.za/.

[233] Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 82.

[234] See, M. Haron, *Imam Abdullah Haron : Life Ideas and Impact*. MA Thesis (Cape Town : UCT, 1986). See also Barber, *South Africa in the 20th Century* for detailed discussion on the introduction of Apartheid in South Africa.

Muslim youth in the Cape in various ways, in particular to fulfill the religious needs of the community. He together with some teachers from Muslim Mission Schools formed the Claremont Muslim Youth Association, which became an ideologically progressive space, circulating a newsletter called the Islamic Mirror, quoting extracts from the writings of A.A. Mawdudi and S. Qutb, who were considered leaders in the international Islamic resurgence movement.[235] This exposed Cape youth to Islamic ideas outside of the standard information circulated by the Moslem Judicial Council. He also came into contact with young people from the Black townships and worked with newly converted African Muslims.

In 1961, he together with his youth organization was able to convene a very successful meeting of Muslims, including *ulema*, mission schools and welfare organizations, to mobilize against the state. The meeting passed a set of resolutions referred to as the Call of Islam, which became a Cape based initiative bringing together Muslims against apartheid.[236] These resolutions were based on not just political objections to the policy of apartheid but were inspired by Islamic notions of justice. The Call of Islam statement had thirteen signatories to it, however there were many Muslim organizations who were unable to identify with or align themselves with what they regarded as the political radicalism of the resolution.[237]

Imam Haron through his trips abroad and pilgrimages became a link between the South African Muslim anti-apartheid movement and liberation activists and movements in exile. As a result of his political activities he came to be considered as a threat by the apartheid state and was heavily monitored. He was taken into detention several times by the authorities, and in September 1969 was found dead in his cell.[238]

In Natal, anti-apartheid activities amongst Muslims were organized predominantly through the work of the Natal Indian Congress (NIC), until the formation of the Muslim

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[235] Haron, *Imam Abdullah Haron* as cited in A Tayob. *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 83.
[236] Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 86.
[237] Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 87.
[238] Haron, *Imam Abdullah Haron*, 79, 91, 97.

Youth Movement in 1970.[239] The NIC represented the political interests and aspirations of Natal Indians, both Hindu and Muslim.[240] The Natal Muslim Council, while being an Islamic resurgent group, did not get very heavily involved in anti-state activities and politics, as it supported what might be regarded as an accommodationist stance which allowed it and other Muslim organizations to extract as many concessions as possible for state aided Muslim schools. The NIC on the other hand would not engage in any direct negotiation with the apartheid state. Many Muslims were prominent in the NIC fold. They included, I.C. Meer, Fatima Meer, Dawood Seedat, Cassim Amra, A.K.M. Docrat, Jerry Coovadia and Farouk Meer.[241]

The Muslim Youth Movement (MYM), which eventually became one of the most vociferous voices against apartheid, was launched in Durban in 1970, by three well known personalities, viz, Ebrahim Jadwat, Mahmud Moosa and Abu Bakr Mohammed.[242] The MYM was initially devoted to largely Islamic activities, such as Islamic education and training, and its annual conventions had prominent Islamic intellectuals and professionals such as Mawlana Fazlur Rahman Ansari, Dr. Ahmed Sakr and Prof. Salman Nadvi speaking.[243] The organization eventually set up chapters in various provinces and cities and one of its key objectives was to profile and advance the plight of women and African South Africans within the organization and more broadly. It also started publishing a newsletter, which eventually became a fully fledged newspaper, Al-Qalam, which became one of the key modes of disseminating the MYM's religious and political message.[244]

The MYM was a contemporary of other political organizations in South Africa like the Black Consciousness movement, Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and South

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[239] Tayob, Islamic Resurgence in South Africa, 106.
[240] See S. Bhana, Gandhi's Legacy : The Natal Indian Congress, 1894-1994 (Pietermaritzburg : University of Natal Press, 1997).
[241] See I.C. Meer, A Fortunate Man (Cape Town : Zebra Press, 2002) and S. Bhana, Gandhi's Legacy : The Natal Indian Congress.
[242] Tayob, Islamic Resurgence in South Africa, 106.
[243] Tayob, Islamic Resurgence in South Africa, 107 – 109.
[244] The MYM started a newsletter in 1971, which was a supplement to the local Indian views, but this was replaced by the Al-Qalam Newspaper from 1974. See Tayob. Islamic Resurgence in South Africa, 113.

African Students Association (SASA), all of which were engendering an ideological approach which affirmed "blackness" as an identity, and rejected apartheid.[245] In many ways this was similar to the MYM's agenda of affirming Islam as an identity and a holistic way of life. While the MYM's initial involvement with African communities in the townships was largely restricted to outreach programmes such as Operation Winter Warm and *Qurbani* meat distribution, this eventually changed when through its various training programmes, such as the *Tarbiyyah* sessions, it came into greater contact with more African Muslims.[246]

The MYM sought inspiration for its Islamic resurgence agenda and anti-apartheid policies, from many sources. One of the key events which inspired it was the Iranian Revolution of 1979, although some aspects of Iranian Shiite thought were approached with some degree of caution, and the Iranian model was not seen as being suitable for the South African context.[247] The MYM, however, took up a more radical political agenda in the 1980s, after being exposed to the thought of thinkers like Khuram Murad, who encouraged a more direct approach to political praxis.[248] As a result of these engagements, some members of the MYM began a more radical political agenda, joining forces with groups like the Muslim Students Association (MSA) and the Call of Islam in the Western Cape and began a campaign to discourage Muslims from participating in the Tri-cameral parliament of South Africa, established by the government in 1983, because it was seen as a racist structure.[249] The MYM also engaged in other forms of activism against the apartheid state, such as issuing statements against the comments of then President PW Botha, who criticizes what he referred to as the specter of Islamic militancy

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[245] The Black Consciousness Movement was started by activist Steve Biko, and affirmed "blackness" as a political identity. The PAC was a splinter group that broke away from the ANC in 1959, because of their disagreement with the ANC's replacement of the 1949 Programme of Action, with the 1955 Freedom Charter. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pan_Africanist_Congress_of_Azania.

[246] *Tarbiyyah* refers to Islamic etiquette and an Islamic way of engaging. See Interview with Ebrahim Jadwat by Goolam Vahed, 13 October 2008.

[247] Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 148 – 149.

[248] Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 161.

[249] The Tri-cameral parliament was designed by the South African state in an effort to include the Indian and Coloured community in the country's political system. See A. Guelke, *Rethinking the Rise and Fall of Apartheid* (Hampshire : Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 141 – 143. See also Tayob. *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 162.

arising in South Africa, in reference to Muslims who were agitating against the South African state.[250]

A 1983 MYM manifesto entitled 'Our vision for South Africa' contained the MYM's response to apartheid. It began with an Islamically politicized declaration of faith: "Our vision for South Africa is the establishment of a community that is subservient to no authority, no race, no class, no individual even no ideology but to the authority of God Almighty alone. The stance adopted by the MYM came to be known as "positive neutrality" in that it did not (officially) align itself to any political formation but broadly supported the struggle against racial capitalism, its perspective inspired by Islam.

There were some individuals who were however not convinced that the MYM was effective and radical enough against the racist state, through their Islamic outreach strategy. One such person was Achmet Cassiem, a well known anti-apartheid activist, who had attended the MYM's *Tarbiyyah* programme in 1977. In 1980, he, together with some Cape based students launched the Qiblah Movement, which basically sought to marry the message espoused by the Iranian Revolution and local South African anti-apartheid rhetoric.[251] There was also a general ideological tendency for Qiblah to align itself with the PAC. Another prominent Cape based anti-apartheid activist who was also not convinced by the MYM's strategy was Maulana Farid Esack, who together with some Cape Town based students launched the Call of Islam, which was based on the 1961 resolutions, mentioned earlier.[252]

In 1983, the Call of Islam was involved in the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF), which was forged out of a coalition of a wide ranging group of community based organizations, and organized boycotts of the elections for the Tri-cameral

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[250] Tayob. *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 163.

[251] Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa : The Muslim Youth Movement*, 151.

[252] Esack later became a vocal spokesperson for progressive expressions of Islam. See F. Esack, "In Search of Progressive Islam Beyond 9/11," in *Progressive Muslims : On Justice, Gender and Pluralism*, ed. O. Safi (Oxford : Oneworld Publications, 2003). See also Chapter Two of this thesis, for more information on Esack's ideological background.

parliament.[253] The Call of Islam supported Muslim membership of this body, and by extension of the African National Congress (ANC), arguing that the broad goals of the UDF were informed by an ideology compatible with Islamic principles.[254] While some Muslims may have supported the system of apartheid by voting in the exclusionary tri-cameral system, significant pockets of Muslims rejected apartheid and did not vote. Members of the MYM and the MSA also promoted the UDF amongst Muslims and successfully dissuaded people from voting in the race based elections. [255]

While the MYM and Qibla, two prominent Muslim organizations, were visibly involved in fighting apartheid, the ANC, as a leading political party shaping the anti-apartheid movement, already had many Muslim recruits, nominal and practicing, who were part of its various arms, including the Women's League, Youth League and its militant wing Umkhonto We Sizwe. Chief amongst these were Yusuf Dadoo, IC and Fathima Meer, Ahmed Kathrada, Dullah Omar, Valli Moosa, Kader Asmal, and Molvi Cachalia and the Cachalia family.[256] Others such as Abdullah Abdurahman from the African Political Organization and Imam Haron had links with both the PAC and ANC. Imam Haron, Ahmed Timol and Babla Saloojee stand out as notable Muslims who gave their lives for the cause of fighting apartheid.[257] All died in detention at the hands of the security police.

Resistance against political, social and economic oppression by South African Muslims was considered in predominantly progressive spaces as effectively an extension

[253] See A. Guelke, *Rethinking the Rise and Fall of Apartheid* (Hampshire : Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 142.

[254] R. Ederies, *The Emergence of the progressive Islamic Movement in the Western Cape 1977 –1989 : The case of the MYM, Qiblah and the Call of Islam*. BA (Honours) dissertation (Cape Town : University of Western Cape, 1991). See also A. Tayob, "Muslims discourse on alliance against apartheid," *Journal for the Study of Religion* 3, no. 2 (1990), 31-47, quoted in I. Buccus I and L. Nadvi, "Muslims, Participation and Local Government Elections in Durban, " *Critical Dialogue* 3, no. 1 (2007), 38 – 46.

[255] A. Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa* quoted in I. Buccus and L. Nadvi, "Muslims, Participation and Local Government Elections in Durban," *Critical Dialogue* 3, no. 1 (2007), 38 – 46.

[256] Various Authors, *They Shaped Our Century* (Cape Town : Human and Rousseau, 1999).

[257] See I. Cajee, *Timol : A Quest for Justice – Ahmed Timol's Life and Martyrdom* (South Africa : STE Publishers, 2005) and B. Desai and C. Marney, *The Killing of the Imam* (Quartet Books, 1978) on Imam Haron.

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of the Islamic faith, and consequently many mosque spaces, particularly in the Cape, became places for the organizing and rallying of resistance. With the collapse of apartheid, the new democratic dispensation after 1994, acknowledged the role that Muslims had played in the resistance struggle, through events such as the leaders of the ruling party, the ANC, speaking at various mosques and attending other functions hosted by Muslims. Further, ex-President Nelson Mandela counted amongst his "right-hand men" Ahmed Kathrada and I.C. Meer to advise him on critical matters of policy and governance. They also shared deep friendships going back almost six decades in Meer's case.[258]

In the post apartheid context, many Muslims have become actively involved in South Africa's non-racial government, shunning a view among a minority that they should not embrace the broad democratic process, as co-operation with non-Muslims was somehow "un-Islamic." This tendency within a minority to digress on the appropriateness of political participation by Muslims within a predominantly non-Muslim political system that does not use *Shariah* as the basis of its operation, tends to confirm the generally held belief among scholars of Islam, that there are differing interpretations as regards modes of political participation.[259]

Socio-economic and Political Life in a Post-apartheid context : Responses by Muslims[260]

    i)   *Muslim Participation in Crafting the New Democratic Dispensation*

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[258] See, I.C. Meer, *A Fortunate Man.*

[259] Tayob (*Islamic Resurgence in South Africa : The Muslim Youth Movement*,125) makes reference to the South African Deobandi leadership's refusal to support political involvement and reform as a response to the MYM's call for greater political participation in national life, particularly during the era of the anti-apartheid struggle. While the leadership of the MYM and Qiblah was resolute that Islam advocates fighting against injustice through political engagement, the Deobandis were rigidly against it. Even in a post-apartheid era, there are those conservative elements who are against participating in what would be termed "secular" politics. Many of the *Ulema* councils were opposed to the participation by Muslims in struggle politics, during the anti – apartheid period.

[260] This theme will be covered in greater detail in Chapter Five. What follows here, is a brief overview of the context in which SA Muslims are engaging politically, and what some of the challenges that face them, are.

The crafting of the basic tenets of what would constitute South Africa's constitution, its governance structure, and its socio-economic framework was clearly a very difficult task when the negotiation process began. Political parties who took part in the negotiation processes and even those who threatened to derail the discussions, were representative of an assortment of complex political positions, which were shaped by inter alia, race, ethnicity, class, language and, of course, religion.[261] The views of religious leaders from the main faith groups were sought as part of a broad process of consultation. This, in turn, led to the emergence of Muslim political parties such as the Africa Muslim Party who wanted to contest the first elections around a largely religious manifesto, in an attempt to represent the Muslim community's interests in parliament.[262]

Even though Muslim political parties performed very poorly, as we shall see, as a result of this foray into national political life in the early post-apartheid period, given impetus by internal developments, Muslims remained part of the minority group political scene up until the last national election in 2004, and local elections in 2006. This is indicative of two very clear trends. First, the South African political dispensation was tolerant of religious communities organizing politically, and created a space for them to exercise their right of expression. Second, that many Muslims, by and large wanted to identify themselves primarily as a religious group in their day to day lives even if the majority did not vote for Muslim political parties. This is reflected in the way that much of Muslim civil society engages with those who represent it in parliament. The Islamic value system is often cited as informing the overall politics of Muslims, hence the fact that alcohol is legal in this country, and the rights of homosexuals are protected in the constitution, would be regarded as counter to a core Muslim political agenda.

Nevertheless, the freedom to practice their religion openly is seen as the ultimate political triumph for Muslims, who have over the last fourteen years increasingly begun to support the ANC, because this party, as the ruling party in government, is seen to be advancing the agenda of freedom of religious worship. However, there seems to be the

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[261] See Walsh, *A History of South Africa*, Barber, *South Africa in the 20th Century* and Guelke, *Rethinking the Rise and Fall of Apartheid.*
[262] See Chapter Five for more detailed discussion on Muslim political parties and electoral politics.

existence of a misconception in some quarters of the Muslim community that freedom of religion is only guaranteed by virtue of the ANC being in power, and not by the constitution per se, such that were there to be another political party in power, freedom of religion might be compromised.[263] While this is clearly a fallacy, this notion has been used effectively by the ANC as a campaign strategy within the Muslim community.

This was again most clearly evident in the lead up to the 2004 national elections and the 2006 local government elections, in which there were calls by various Muslim organizations calling on the Muslim community to vote for the ANC because it would protect religious freedom and the right to practice one's faith and that the party had historically been supportive of international struggles close to the hearts and minds of South African Muslims, such as the Palestinian struggle for independence.[264]

This call to vote for political parties that advanced religious agendas seems to have been affirmed by some religious bodies considered by many Muslims as their religious "authority", such as the KZN Jamiat Ulama which, in an online newsletter, advocated using the following guidelines, based on *Shariah*, in choosing a candidate to vote for: viz, The candidate should be able to serve the Muslims; should not become an obstacle to Muslims practicing the Laws of Islam; and the candidate should be able to protect Muslims from *Zulm* (oppression).[265] Although many of the Muslim religious councils have historically refrained from actively encouraging Muslims to participate in elections and political processes, there seems to be a visible shift in their thinking, in recent times.[266]

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[263] This idea has been advanced numerous times through the various pro- ANC political campaigns, and through support offered by various Muslim organisations to the ANC. Some Muslim radio stations such as Channel Islam International, also promote this idea.

[264] A number of pamphlets were issued during the national election campaign of 2004, by a variety of Muslim NGOs mobilizing Muslims and endorsing support for the ANC. This included organizations such as the Durban based, Islamic Forum.

[265] Fataawa Mahmoodiyya vol.13 Pg. 425, Online Newsletter, KZN Jamiat Ulama, 24 February 2006, http://www.jamiat.co.za/newsletter/online_newsletter., Accessed 17 November 2007.

[266] See Chapter Six for more detailed discussion on this.

ii) The National Picture: Socio-Economics, and the Politics of Service Delivery in Post-apartheid South Africa

The attempt to build a post-apartheid society that can look forward to a more prosperous future without forgetting its past, has given rise to new tensions that retain elements of past prejudices and oppression. There has been disappointment for many South Africans, regardless of race, who thought that after 1994 they would enjoy a better quality of life. Increased poverty and unemployment levels since 1994 and growing inequality on many levels have permeated negatively on efforts to reconcile South African society. [267] It is a commonly held belief among political analysts, economists and social scientists, that the introduction of a macro-economic policy such as GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution) by the ANC government in 1996, has been responsible for the high levels of poverty and unemployment in South Africa.[268] The application of the neo-liberal principles of this policy has resulted in a spate of retrenchments and increased unemployment levels in the late 1990s leading up to the 2008 period. This in turn has led to greater poverty, amongst the majority black population as well as the Indian, Coloured and even White communities.[269]

In addition, the overall GEAR policy has compounded the discriminatory effects of the ANC government's other strategies around issues such as HIV Aids and service delivery. Given that social delivery within municipalities to poor non-white communities under apartheid was virtually non-existent or administered by badly resourced local authorities, these services have witnessed a decline in a post-apartheid period, most significantly in the township areas. [270] While middle class and affluent communities enjoy the benefits of the transition to democracy, the shanty town communities and other

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[267] South Africa has been ranked third from the bottom of all countries, in terms of inequality by a recent UNDP survey. Quoted by S. Liebenberg in G. Mare, "The State of the State," in *State of the Nation*, eds. J Daniel and others (Cape Town : HSRC Press, 2003), 43.

[268] See for example P. Bond, *Elite Transition : From Apartheid to Neo-Liberalism in South Africa* (London : Pluto Press, 2002) and R. Ballard and others. eds. *Voices of Protest : Social Movements in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (Scottsville, UKZN Press, 2006).

[269] A. Desai, *We are the Poors : Community Struggles in Post – Apartheid South Africa* (New York : Monthly Review Press, 2002).

[270] D. Atkinson, "The State of Local Government," in *State of the Nation : 2003*. eds. J. Daniel and others, 138 (Cape Town : HSRC Press, 2003).

residential areas that had been demarcated under apartheid as "non-white", still experience discrimination. This has become manifest in frequent electricity and water cutoffs, and evictions carried out by local government authorities in these areas because of the inability of residents to pay accumulated utilities bills. [271] Increasingly, residents in these communities include Indians and Coloureds, some of whom are Muslims.

There are, on the other hand, many affluent South Africans across the racial spectrum, some of whom have been the beneficiaries of the apartheid era (mostly Whites but in some cases Indian merchants), and others of the post-apartheid period (an emerging African, Indian and miniscule Coloured middle class).[272] What is often portrayed to an international audience as "South Africa; the success story", is really the "success" story of this small prosperous middle class. Though it is now spread through all the racial groups, whites still predominate economically. The plight of the masses of poor black South Africans has continued to deteriorate since 1994, with occasional improvements in terms of service delivery. [273]

This includes, apart from government programmes, many self-help schemes initiated by civil society NGO's and a smattering of Islamic *dawah* organizations, such as the Islamic Dawah Movement (IDM) and Africa Muslims Agency (AMA), and humanitarian relief groups such as Gift of the Givers. However, real transformation of the living standards of the indigent population is still not being dealt with substantially enough, as part of the post-apartheid transformation project, as many development and economic theorists have argued.[274] This is of particular concern, given that poverty, unemployment and AIDS have arguably become the defining political agenda for South

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[271] A. Desai, *The Poors of Chatsworth : Race Class and Social Movements in South Africa* (Durban : Madiba Publishers, 2000).

[272] Use of racialised discourse, in social science analysis while considered broadly undesirable, is something that is a remnant of apartheid era data gathering, and hence such terminologies are still used up till today.

[273] See N.C. Gibson, ed., *Challenging Hegemony : Social Movements and the Quest for a new Humanism in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (Trenton : Africa World Press, 2006). Many of the essays in this collection highlight the huge social and economic disparities in South African society.

[274] See for example the edited collection of essays dealing with issues of mass mobilization against poverty in South Africa; R, Ballard and others, eds., *Voices of Protest : Social Movements in Post-Apartheid South Africa* and J.S. Saul, *Development After Globalisation : Theory and Practice for the Embattled South in a New Imperial Age* (London : Zed Books, 2006).

Africa in a post-apartheid context, part of what Patrick Bond refers to as an "elite transition", referring to the transfer of political and economic power to an elite minority of blacks, while the previously disadvantaged masses remain largely disadvantaged in terms of their socio-economic status. [275]

What emerges then as part of the national picture in the post-apartheid period, is the huge class divide within South African society that is beginning to cut across racial lines. What has also become clear over the last decade is that class as a category is not necessarily a unifying factor within racial groupings. In other words, the plight of the poorest within South African society has primarily been ignored, by the more affluent citizens of the same race group, and has been left to be dealt with by government, which has not delivered satisfactorily either. [276] Where there has been an attempt by community outreach and grassroots forums to deal with development issues, such initiatives have been riddled with a variety of obstacles that have impeded the advance of a progressive political agenda, one which advances egalitarian values and socio-economic equity for all. The test of democracy in South Africa a decade and a half after the first democratic election is no longer about achieving political stability and legitimacy, but of ensuring social development and creating a safety net for its poorest citizens who, if neglected, could be the very force that destabilizes the new democratic order, still very much in its infancy.

Given the extent of the problem, this is arguably as much the responsibility of the elected government as it is of members of civil society, and the business and corporate sector. Hence, this raises critical questions around social and civic responsibilities of a collective civil society, particularly within the context of a faith based social system such as that of Islam, with *Zakaah* (charity) being an obligatory facet of the faith. Thus Muslim South Africans, as part of the democratic dispensation, ideally need to be

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[275] The socio-economic challenges facing South Africa have been outlined by many writers, in a post-apartheid context, in particular authors such as A. Desai and P. Bond. See in particular P. Bond, *Elite Transition : From Apartheid to Neo-Liberalism in South Africa* (London : Pluto Press, 2002).

[276] There have been initiatives by the ANC government to advance an agenda that creates a middle class group amongst the previously disadvantaged African community, through Black Economic Empowerment. However this has not addressed the issues of growing poverty, unemployment and Aids in the country.

integrally involved in a post-apartheid scenario of development and transformation, taking on the toughest socio-economic and political challenges, armed with progressive and constructive strategies that are not merely shaped by narrow religious considerations, but are informed by the social realities present on the ground.[277] This is particularly important in tackling social issues such as HIV Aids, substance addiction, prostitution and gambling, which are integrally linked to questions of poverty in this country.

iii) Poverty and Social Development in an Islamic context : A Dawah-based Approach

Early Islam in the Cape within the socially disadvantaged communities (especially the slave community) developed in a very similar fashion to that of Christianity, that is, through the provision of social and welfare services by religious leaders and institutions.[278] While Christians used their missionary-based approach, Muslims used *dawah*, which is regarded as the duty of all Muslims, that is, spreading of their faith to non-Muslims. This does not mean however that the *Imams* who tended to the social needs of the slaves and free blacks, necessarily did so with the sole purpose of conversion. What is also significant about Islam in its early days in South Africa was that it was used as a political rallying tool which united the early Cape Muslim slaves against their colonial oppressors and advanced the idea that all were equal in Islam. Many slaves would have converted to Islam, based on this belief.[279] The transfer of political power in the Cape from Dutch hands to English rule in 1795 led to a relaxation of the strict regulations relating to religious practice that had been imposed by the Dutch. This led to a more visible presence of Islam in the Cape.[280]

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[277] It has been the case that some Muslims and Muslim organisations have in the past opted to not engage with social issues that are related to sexual promiscuity (eg. prostitution, HIV Aids) and therefore considered un- Islamic and taboo areas. However much has changed, particularly over the last few years, with Muslim medical groups like the Islamic Medical Association (IMA), adopting a very pragmatic scientific approach to address the social dynamics of such issues.

[278] Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa : The Muslim Youth Movement*, 45.

[279] Tayob speaks about the sensitivity of the Imams to the needs of the slave population, which resulted in a high rate of conversion. See Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 45.

[280] Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 43.

Tayob argues that the new government's decision to relax restrictions relating to religious practice, was because it believed that it was politically more feasible to allow Muslims to practice their faith openly than to risk the possibility of having underground spaces where Muslims organized and prayed in secret. It was therefore in the best interests of the colonialists to allow Islam to flourish out in the open.[281] As a result of these early policies to allow Islam to flourish openly, *dawah* aproaches and religious propagation within Islam, has always been a significant part of Muslim life in South Africa. However this thesis argues that *dawah* work must now actually go beyond just being about conversions to Islam, and act as a force for socio-economic transformation and development.

During the years of apartheid (1948-1994), where racial segregation was legally enforced, many *dawah* centres opened up in largely rural African communities, which were run by fairly affluent Muslim organizations or individuals.[282] Many indigenous Africans who were poor were given *dawah*, and arguably some saw acceptance of Islam as a way of receiving socio-economic benefits (food, shelter, employment), and as a result, many converted to the faith. However many African South Africans still also believed that Islam was a politically progressive religion, and converted just on this conviction alone.[283]

The application of *dawah*, post 1994, has seen some changes, but otherwise has remained largely the same. Most *dawah* centres prefer to work only amongst converted Muslim communities, in terms of providing social relief services to the unemployed, poor, sick and elderly. There are very few *dawah* centers that provide services to non-Muslim poverty stricken communities, without expecting or in some instances coercing these people to convert to Islam.[284] If these services exist, then it is mostly to carry out

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[281] Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 43.

[282] The As Salaam Educational Institute, located in the South Coast of Durban is an example of such centres. It was started by Sheikh Ahmed Deedat.

[283] See interview with Ebrahim Bofelo, who expressed this sentiment.

[284] An example of a Muslim organisation, that does primarily humanitarian work amongst all religious communities, is the Gift of the Givers. Whether their outreach work results in conversions to Islam is not known by this researcher. There are other groups such as Islamic Dawah Movement and As Salaam Educational Institute that provides primarily Islamic education to Muslim reverts, as well as engages in a

Zakaah obligations to the poor and needy. What this arguably indicates is that there are a number of problematic assumptions in the approach to social redress within sectors of this Muslim community, as part of a *dawah* framework, which must be addressed. [285]

Firstly, there seems to be an implicit assumption that people who are the recipients of *dawah* should ideally convert to Islam and that this should be a criterion for receiving any benefits. Given that social upliftment is very often an incentive, coupled with the promulgation of the message of Islam, this would no doubt be very attractive to many, who are poor and do not receive benefits from elsewhere. However, this is arguably far too mercenary an approach, and is essentially counter-productive to advancing a social development agenda but ends up rather promoting a purely religious one. The second problematic assumption focuses around that of race. For most of the twentieth century, *dawah* in South Africa has been rendered by Indian Muslims towards African or Coloured Muslims, with the exception of certain areas, such as the Cape, where the demographics are different. [286]

What this method of *dawah* promulgation has meant is that there has arguably been both a racial and cultural hierarchy that has emerged, which has privileged Indian, and to a lesser extent Malay /Coloured Muslims in many respects. In other words, the relational dynamics between indigenous Africans as the "receivers" of *dawah* and Indian Muslims as the "givers" has constructed a social paradigm of historical inequality. [287] The fact that apartheid had institutionalized racial segregation has meant that while Islam was in many ways seen as a faith that united people from different race backgrounds, the

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range of outreach activities. Perhaps the most well known *dawah* group is Islamic Propagation Centre International that has the infrastructure and capacity to promote Islam more widely, and supports reverts in various ways.

[285] These were the same issues that progressive leaders such as Imam El-Seppe were raising at a South African conference on Islam in 1999. See E. El-Seppe, "Dawah – Theme Paper 2," in *Muslim Vision 1440 / 2020 Conference Proceedings*, ed. E. Essof and others, 68 - 76 (Durban : Muslim Vision 1440 / 2020, 1999).

[286] The majority of Muslims in the Cape have a Malay or Coloured heritage. The question of charity and social development work in Islam is a complex one. While some of it is related to *dawah* and conversion, much is also about collecting funds for Muslims who face challenging social circumstances elsewhere in the world, such as Palestine and Iraq.

[287] It is important to clarify though that this is not necessarily the case at all times, in a contemporary context, and that there are spaces where race dynamics are not really an issue. What is being referred to here is the historical manner of the application of dawah, which is being raised as a problematic construct.

political pressures of this system, forced people to develop fears and insecurities that manifest themselves today as cultural bigotry. An example of this is the linguistic discourse which developed among many Indian Muslims towards the indigenous Africans, such as the word "kaliyas", a derogatory reference to black African people, similar in nature to "nigger", a word that was used in the United States to refer to the original black slaves who were brought from Africa to work on the cotton plantations.

It would, however, be misleading to argue that such cultural and racial bigotry exists as a generalized phenomenon. There have been attempts made to reform race and religious interaction between Muslims of all race groups, particularly between Indian and indigenous African Muslims, within a post-apartheid context. However much of this extends largely to a public space, or the work environment, and there is very little social interaction outside of this, for example marriages between Indian Muslims and African Muslims would generally be frowned upon, even though the couple were both Muslim. One could argue though, that this has more to do with overcoming a legacy of apartheid, where inter-racial marriages were prohibited and social segregation very often, has a long term impact on communities.

Given however, that race still predominates the social and cultural fabric of a post-apartheid South African society at many different levels, it is critical that a new paradigm be effected in order to ensure socio-economic progress that is defined within an egalitarian framework, and not purely within either race or religious terms. While Islam as a religion advances the principle of social redress, the *dawah* agencies who engage in social upliftment schemes must not do so purely to achieve religious ends, but rather socially equitable ones.[288] The issue of *dawah* and its implementation in a contemporary context, must arguably be articulated, as one that promotes political and social justice, without seeking to promote a narrow religious agenda, that is purely ritualistic and symbolic. This idea will be expanded upon in the concluding chapter.

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[288] Ideally *dawah* should be about bringing the message of Islam to people, but not expecting a conversion in return. Part of this work should be about building clinics, schools, and other facilities in communities, where Islamic work can take place, without forcing anyone to convert.

iv) Religion vs Secularism : Dealing with local and global challenges[289]

In post-apartheid South Africa, Muslims face precisely the same kind of challenges faced by Muslim communities elsewhere, as regards the issue of bridging the divide between the principles of secularism and dictates of the Islamic faith, and the emerging ordeals of defending Islam against its critics, in a twenty-first century framework. [290] In a post September 11 (2001) environment, the onslaught against Muslims globally, that has very often conflated the religion with advancing a political agenda that advocates violence and terrorism, has not spared South African Muslims. This has led to the Muslim community reacting to these many criticisms in a variety of ways.

It is noteworthy that SA Muslims have been very vocal on global matters affecting Muslims elsewhere, particularly around issues in the Middle East, including Palestine and the war in Iraq, as well as conflicts in Asia, such as factional violence in Kashmir and the US bombings of Afghanistan (2001) and invasion of Iraq (2003).[291] What has however arguably been problematic in the nature of these responses to global issues, is that they have primarily been shaped by religious and reactionary approaches, without substantial strategic thinking and mobilizing around these matters.[292] Further, since religious leadership of mosques and other religious bodies has in some instances led such initiatives, the process of formulating responses has arguably been devoid of substantial political analysis and strategic intellectual engagement; rather, it has been informed by a predominantly religious discourse. Much of what eventually serves as a "strategy" is the interpretations of Muslim religious leaders, proffered within a religious

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[289] This issue will also be unpacked and examined in greater detail in Chapter Five.

[290] Omid Safi and others, articulate some of these challenges in *Progressive Muslims*, reflecting on the many questions that face the Muslim *Ummah* globally. See O. Safi. ed.,. *Progressive Muslims* (Oxford : Oneworld Publications, 2003).

[291] Vahed and Jeppie refer to an organised effort on the part of SA Muslims to respond to the issues of conflict in the Middle East, and the global situation post 9/11, through protests and demonstrations, 272 – 276.

[292] Several undocumented reports stated that SA Muslims were being mobilised to go and become part of military campaigns in the Middle East, effectively as foreign recruits to guerrilla and insurgent movements, fighting against occupation forces, as part of a religious exercise. While at one level, such notions may appeal to a radicalised mindset, such actions effectively only exacerbate an already heightened military situation.

framework.[293] This, it may be argued, is a problem throughout the Arab and Muslim world, where there is a distinct tension between religious and non-religious or progressive approaches to issues that affect Muslims. Some of the options chosen by these religious leaders, it will be argued, are often counter-productive to the (political/social/economic) interests of the collective *Ummah*. This challenge will be addressed in a more comprehensive manner in the following Chapters.

The past fifteen years of democracy in South Africa have often highlighted such tensions, given the struggle by new and progressive Muslim formations to emerge in a post-apartheid context as alternatives to what might be regarded as the somewhat conservative mainstream Islamic theological bodies. This has often led to long drawn out campaigns between the conservative establishments and newer progressive bodies trying to define themselves in a hostile (Muslim) terrain.[294] For many years the MYM was seen as the progressive political space for Muslims in South Africa to contest the views of the conservative Muslim religious establishment, most visibly represented by the Deobandi ideological tradition, in terms of encouraging greater involvement in national political life, creating an active role for women, greater participation by African Muslims in the organization, and developing the youth in particular.[295]

While the MYM continues in this vein, and has taken on more challenging development oriented projects in post-apartheid South Africa, new spaces and organizations have emerged in the past few years, shaped and defined by post-apartheid dynamics, unlike those faced by the MYM which was born during the apartheid era. These new spaces have come to symbolize what could be referred to as part of the new era of "progressive" Islam in South Africa. An example has been the struggle by a fairly

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[293] A. Tayob in *Islam in South Africa. Mosques, Imams, and Sermons* (Gainesville : University Press of Florida, 1999), reflects on the significance and impact of the sermon in South African mosque spaces, calling it a "platform for a leader to make a weekly statement", and "more than an occasion for propaganda, it calls for greater consideration", 1.

[294] Newsletters such as the Majlis (http://themajlis.net/index.html) and the publications of the Jamiat Ulema (based in the KZN, Gauteng and the Cape), are very often regarded as representing the very conservative voice of the Muslim community in South Africa, and as such very often frowning upon any expressions of the religious faith that seek to display a more liberal or progressive slant.

[295] Tayob. *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 106 – 130.

new movement in Durban in the province of Kwa-Zulu Natal called Taking Islam to the People (TIP), to become an "alternative" Islamic voice to that of the more conservative establishment and provide opportunities for liberal-minded Muslims to express themselves religiously. It is evident from these newly emerging spaces that there is a desire and certainly a demand for such spaces to be created and maintained. Indeed this alludes to the significant growth of a mindset within the post-apartheid Muslim community which embraces the idea of a more progressive religious framework that does not abandon obligatory religious observances, yet allows a more flexible expression of Muslim faith. The work being done by Taking Islam to the People (TIP) as an example of progressive Islamic discourse will be examined in greater detail in Chapter Five.[296]

Alternative Approaches for Muslim South Africans: The Necessity of Reformulating Strategy

While this area of discussion will be tackled more comprehensively in Chapters Four, Five and Six, it is useful to briefly allude here, to some of the critical approaches informing the process of ideological transformation among South African Muslims, and how they are engaging in the political life in the country. It has become almost standard now in Muslim societies, whether they are minority communities in a secular environment or the majority population in a country, for there to be contestation between those who subscribe to a conservative notion of Islamic theological belief and those who subscribe to the core beliefs of the faith, yet have assimilated a degree of secularism or liberalism into their belief system. Such contestations have come to represent the hallmark of the struggle of Islam as a faith to redefine itself in a twenty-first century setting.

In post-apartheid South Africa, Muslims are clearly a political minority, with minority status on matters of grave political import such as municipal spending and poverty alleviation. Muslims tend to compound their numerical marginality by often choosing to not participate in these issues, relegating them to the "secular" arena of

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[296] See Interview with Rassool Snyman, TIP.

engagement.[297] While many Muslims stood firm in their political convictions against apartheid as an unjust political system, they arguably find it difficult to articulate a singular unity in a post-apartheid context, and particularly more so because of the historical segregations of race, class, ethnicity and language that had been enforced, and informally observed in some instances, during the apartheid era. The dominant discourse advanced by the majority of orthodox *ulema*, privileges a conservative agenda that still primarily believes that the only legitimate political leadership for Muslims is religious leadership, because they have the Islamic knowledge required to lead Muslims.[298] According to such a perspective, any other course of action would "mislead" Muslims into the arena of the "*kuffaar*" or non-believers.

The few progressive *ulema* who have transcended the divide between engaging on purely religious grounds or within a secular political framework, have argued the necessity of combining (a moderate secular) political strategy with divine injunctions as advocated in the Quran.[299] Together with these individuals, groups such as TIP are breaking the mould in terms of advancing a progressive approach to issues relating to the observing of core religious beliefs and practices while ensuring that broader socio-economic issues are not left by the wayside.

Such progressive thinking however, has not as yet, become part of mainstream Muslim ideology. In fact, there is very often confusion and indecision between Muslim religious authorities on numerous matters, whether religious or political. This can be evidenced by ongoing fractious debates that continue to play themselves out between the various authorities. A clear recent example of such confusion was the differing

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[297] When the public is called upon to engage in various formal institutional forms of public participation like input into civic matters, the nature of local municipal budgets, etc, the Muslim community is often noticeable by its absence.

[298] This is the predominant discourse on the website of Mujlisul Ulama, considered as one of the most orthodox spaces in the SA Muslim community.
http://www.inkofscholars.com/inkofscholars.php?file=mujlis/mu_about.php. It is important to clarify here though, that the author of this thesis is not arguing that religious leadership is not important, however the assertion is being made that leadership has to come from all sectors of the Muslim community, even those that have not had formal religious training in Islam.

[299] Imam Fuzail Sufi is one such religious leader. The late Imam Essa El-Seppe also advocated such a position.

pronouncements (*fatwahs*) issued by the KZN and Gauteng branches of the same religious authority, the Jamiatul Ulema, over whether Muslims should boycott the *Sunday Times* newspaper, after it had considered publishing replications of the cartoons of the Prophet Muhammed, originally published in a Danish newspaper in 2005, which Muslims found offensive.[300] While one branch (Gauteng) gave Muslims the go-ahead to continue purchasing the paper after it had obtained assurances from the editors that they would not publish the cartoons, the KZN branch urged Muslims to maintain the boycott.[301] These contradictory stances within a supposedly single religious body do not lend themselves to providing clear and resolute guidance on matters that have complex religious and political undertones, and certainly do not instill confidence that the religious authorities are able to lead the *Ummah* in such instances.

Similar contestations and controversies have emerged within the *Halaal* certification and *Hajj* travel industries, within South Africa, which have created a degree of confusion amongst Muslim consumers and clients, who often do not have recourse to arbitration other than perhaps resorting to the secular constitutional legal mechanisms to resolve emerging disputes around such matters.[302] These kinds of issues are emerging within similar contexts around the world where Muslims, particularly as minorities, are forced to deal with the inability of religious authorities to provide clear and often contextual guidance relating to contemporary dilemmas.

However, within the South African context there is a specific set of historical factors that render these dilemmas somewhat unique, given the complex range of social and economic considerations that shape them. These include the multi-layered identity constructions that are a legacy of both the early migration of Muslims to South Africa, as well as the dynamics that emerged during apartheid segregation. In this context the ideological contestation between the conservative / orthodox establishment and

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[300] See "Cartoon Row : Sunday Times Gagged," *Mail and Guardian Online*, February 4, 2006, http://www.mg.co.za/articlePage.aspx?articleid=263325&area=/breaking_news/breaking_news__national/.

[301] See Chapter Five for more detailed discussion on this issue.

[302] There is currently an ongoing debate in the SA Muslim community, around whether Rainbow Chickens, which has been certified halaal by SANHA, is indeed halaal, as there have been questions raised around SANHA's certification processes. See http://www.sanha.org.za/.

progressive forces, provides for a fascinating array of diversity within South African Muslims, who could more appropriately be called multiple communities within a minority.

This chapter has attempted to provide a broad overview of the political and socio-economic fabric that constitutes the South African Muslim community in a post-apartheid context within a transition phase. The next chapter will focus on the empirical observations that have been articulated for the purposes of this study in an attempt to locate some of the concerns and criticisms raised in the above discussion. Chapter Four undertakes a quantitative study, documenting the views of South African Muslims in key leadership positions, with regards to the broader research questions raised in this thesis.

Thereafter, Chapter Five will attempt a more comprehensive analysis of the spaces in which South African Muslims have been most active and are engaging more vigorously, in relation to some of the key issues that have been identified as important and necessary areas of participation for this community.

<center>Chapter Four</center>

<center>Methodology Review and Summary of Qualitative Data : South African Muslims and Political Participation</center>

Methodology, Fieldwork and Research Constraints

This chapter summarizes the findings of the fieldwork research carried out as outlined in the methodology section below.

The fieldwork and research components of this study comprised of four main methodological approaches, viz, structured and unstructured interviews; surveys, archival material, and an examination of websites of key organizations and individuals. The primary methodology consisted of interviews based on a set of ten standard structured questions.[303] The interview format, however, made provision for participants to present their opinions on a range of issues related to the main questions. In effect the interview consisted of structured questions, which appear below, being posed, and the occasional unstructured questions as a follow-up to further clarify or probe certain issues. Interviews were recorded in audio format and transcribed into written text.

Thirty persons from across three urban centres in South Africa, Durban, Johannesburg and Cape Town, were identified as interviewees for the study, based on their involvement and expertise in the area of Islamic activity in South Africa.[304] Of these original thirty, twenty were available for interviews which were conducted over a period of eight months during 2006 and 2007. An additional four interviews were conducted with individuals not on the original list, due to problems experienced in tracking down prospective interviewees.

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[303] This was in an attempt to ensure that all interviewees were asked the same questions. There were also opportunities for interviewees to elaborate on specific points, which allowed for greater insight on certain areas.

[304] This involvement would basically have been in the area of civil society participation, government, religious activity, humanitarian / relief / charity work and international linkages.

Several difficulties were encountered in carrying out the fieldwork. Interviewees sometimes re-scheduled confirmed appointments, and there were occasions where persons who had agreed to be interviewed later declined, citing various reasons. Importantly, and disappointingly, most of those who constitute the formal religious 'leadership' (*ulema*) were reluctant or outright refused to participate. Several who were approached, interrogated the intellectual terms of reference for the study, notwithstanding the fact that full ethical clearance had been granted by the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. A few were suspicious and questioned whether there were "hidden agendas." It would have been a huge bonus to have had the opportunity to probe their perspectives firsthand, but their attitude is understandable as it is related in part to genuine security concerns in the post 9/11 world.[305]

Below is a list of the persons interviewed for this study.

Table 4.1 : Interviewees

Name	Organisation
Mohammed Amra (Director)	WAMY
Mymoena Arnold (Media activist)	Independent/ Media
Ebrahim Bofelo (Secretary General)	MYM / AMYC
Masood Boomgaard (Editor)	Al-Ummah
Imraan Buccus (Editor / Researcher)	Al-Qalam / CPP
Suleman Dangor (Academic)	UKZN
Abie Dawjee (Media Activist)	RAIN / Independent Media
Mohammed Groenewald (Deputy President)	MYM
Fuad Hendricks (Director)	Muslim Vision 1440 / 2020
Rafeek Hassan (Former Director)	IPCI
Riaz Jamal (Director)	Al-Ansaar Foundation

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[305] There is growing suspicion amongst Muslim spaces, of social scientists wanting to conduct research on Muslims, as some feel that this is a way of monitoring them. In light of the policies adopted by the US government, where it detains Muslims, simply because they have a Muslim name, this suspicion is understandable.

Iqbal Jhazbhai (Academic)	UNISA
Zeinoul Kajee (Director)	Awqaf SA
Ayesha Mall (Editor / Lecturer)	Africa Perspectives / DUT
Don Matterra (Poet / Activist)	Independent
Fatima Meer (Academic / Activist)	IBR / Independent
Yasien Mohamed (Academic)	UWC
Maryam Patel (Student Activist)	MSA
Tahir Sitoto (Academic)	UKZN
Rassool Snyman (Activist and Businessman)	PSC / TIP
Imtiaaz Sooliman (Chairperson)	Gift of the Givers
Fuzail Sufi (Imam and religious leader)	Soofie Mosque Westville
Solly Suleman (Businessman)	Minara
Abdulkader Tayob (Academic)	UCT

Brief Organizational Profiles

The Islamic organizations that some of these individuals are based at, are significant for the purposes of the study, as they reflect the institutional spaces within which Islam and its various ideological trajectories were able to develop historically, and therefore brief organizational profiles are provided below in order to contextualize these organizational affiliations. The organizations that have not been profiled either have academic or other non-Islamic affiliations, and their histories are not considered central to this study.[306]

Al-Ansaar

Al-Ansaar was founded in 1993 with the primary objective of promoting Islamic education and *tarbiyyah*. In 1994 premises were acquired at the Mariam Bee Sultan

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[306] While these profiles may be more appropriate as an appendix attachment, it was felt that they provide a convenient reference point to this chapter, in terms of locating the viewpoints of the various interviewees.

Islamic Centre where a pre-school, nursery and Madrasah were established. Since 1995, Al-Ansaar has embarked upon a number of other educational projects such as the Hajj Seminars, Qur'an School, and the Islamic Library. Al-Ansaar is focussed on the view that the revival and renaissance of the *Ummah* can only be realised by education, *tarbiyah* and *dawah*. Al-Ansaar believes that for Muslims to re-assert their civilizational role, education and knowledge must be given the highest priorities. Al-Ansaar's activities and projects are designed to create awareness, revive beliefs and enforce Islamic practices and family values. Projects of the Al-Ansaar Foundation include Radio Al-Ansaar and the Al-Ummah Newspaper.[307]

Al-Qalam Newspaper

Al-Qalam started off as a newsletter supplement in the *Indian Views* newspaper, in 1971, produced by the Muslim Youth Movement. In 1974, it became a fully fledged newspaper, with a national circulation and was considered during the seventies and eighties as the voice of the politically engaged Muslim community, often critical of the apartheid government, which led to its banning.[308] Former editors have included the only woman editor, the late Shamima Shaikh and Fuad Hendricks, who were both active in the anti-apartheid struggle. It is today a vibrant and thriving newspaper, edited by Imraan Buccus, and publishes a KZN edition, apart from the national edition. It is however not looked upon favourably by the conservative theological bodies, because it continues to tackle controversial issues. It is therefore an important political space for SA Muslims.

Al-Ummah Newspaper

The Al-Ummah is an Al-Ansaar monthly publication which focuses on promoting unity amongst the Ummah. Al-Ummah provides a medium through which Muslims can interact with each other, exchange ideas and information about themselves, and importantly, serve as a means by which *Dawah* is fostered. Primarily the objective of the

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[307] See the Al-Ansaar website, http://www.alansaar.co.za/foundation-about.php.
[308] See A. Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa : The Muslim Youth Movement* (Cape Town : UCT Press, 1995), 113.

paper is the dissemination of news about Islam and Muslims aimed at engendering a spirit of brotherhood in Islam. It is however considered as a paper that does not necessarily always tackle the same controversial issues that Al-Qalam, may for example, cover. Presently 20,000 copies are being distributed in KZN in areas as far as Stanger in the North, Port Shepstone in the South and Ladysmith / Newcastle.[309] The paper is seen as primarily a KZN project, and is not distributed nationally.

Awqaf SA

Awqaf SA was established through the setting up of a steering committee in 2001, whose mandate it was to set up the National Awqaf Foundation and the SA Islamic Development Agency. Awqaf is an independent inclusive community based trust providing a range of developmental and financial services designed to empower communities. Its mission is to mobilize community awqaf capital, to re-invest in community development and to encourage every Muslim to become a waqif.[310] It is based in Johannesburg, but has a national presence. Awqaf can be considered as a collective project of all SA Muslims, wanting to donate a legacy, which can contribute towards improving the socio-economic situation of the country. It therefore has a very important social role to play in the Muslim community.

Gift of the Givers

The Gift of the Givers was established in August 1992, and is primarily a humanitarian relief organization. The Foundation has delivered 200 Million Rand of aid in a 14 year period to 23 countries, South Africa inclusive. Millions of people have benefited. In 1993 they designed and developed the world's first and largest containerised mobile hospital; deployed in Bosnia; a product of South African technology, described by CNN as comparable to any of the best in Europe. In 1995, they designed and developed the

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[309] See the Al-Ummah website, http://www.alansaar.co.za/alummah-about.php.
[310] Awqaf SA Information Leaflet. Waqf (plural, Awqaf), refers to the act of a Muslim permanently transferring a portion of one's property into a collective Trust, for the pleasure of Allah. The trust is then meant to disburse the income from the property for a community's benefit.

world's first Containerised Primary Health Care Unit; again a product of South African technology. Twenty units were deployed in South Africa and collectively three million patients have been treated in these clinics. They have a project in partnership with the Department of Health. Clinics currently treat 40 000 per month. Several of their projects have been carried out in partnership with the South African Government with whom they have an excellent working relationship. They have also been the guests of several governments in the course of fulfilling their humanitarian responsibility, and received several awards.[311] Gift of the Givers is seen as an example of a Muslim organization that is able to transcend religious, racial and class boundaries and work for social upliftment and development in South Africa.

Islamic Propagation Centre International (IPCI)

The IPCI was set up by Ahmed Deedat and two of his close friends in Durban in 1957.[312] It has become internationally renowned for its *dawah* work, and for spreading the message of Islam. The organization has also been closely linked to the charismatic personality of its founder, Sheikh Deedat, whose lectures and writings have become well known globally. The IPCI today is seen as a place where international visitors can go to, if they want to learn more about Islam in Durban and SA, and it conducts tours of special Islamic sites. While its role has been largely about promoting the religion, it has also played an important role politically by hosting seminars and offering a variety of courses which deal with political issues, since 1994. It therefore has a significant presence in the SA Muslim community.

Minara

The Minara Chamber of Commerce is a formally constituted organization formed in May 2000 to represent and assist South African Muslim businesses and entrepreneurs. The

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[311] See Gift of the Givers website, http://www.giftofthegivers.org/about-us/milestones.html.
[312] See F. Asmal, "Sheikh Ahmed Deedat - How It All Began," *Islamic Voice*, http://www.islamicvoice.com/September2005/Tribute/, 2005 and http://www.islamicvoice.com/September2005/Tribute/ and http://www.ipci.co.za/frameset.asp.

Chamber's activities and objectives are based on the need to provide a formal voice and guiding vision for Muslim Business. The constitution and workings are based on an adherence to an Islamic Code of Conduct and Ethics as contained in the Holy Quran. The Chamber was formed after much deliberation on the need for a Chamber and in consultation with a broad spectrum of the business community. Membership is open to Muslim business owners, professionals, entrepreneurs, organizations and students and there is no discrimination on the basis of race, colour, sex, creed, language or cultural caste. Membership extends across South Africa. The Chamber has received official recognition from the South African government and trade organizations and has established formal relationships with other Chambers of Commerce. [313] It is seen as an organisation that brings together the Muslim business community of South Africa, and links them with other communities, and is therefore an important and significant networking space.

Muslim Students Association (MSA)

The MSA in South Africa, was established in 1974, and has branches on many tertiary campuses. The first National MSA Conference since 1994 was held in Durban in January 2004.[314] While the MSA spaces continue to be active across campuses in the country, there is some concern around whether young Muslims are able to use this space effectively to mobilize politically, and whether MSAs are indeed politically active generally. They are however important and significant spaces, where young Muslims can meet and organize themselves.

Muslim Vision 1440 / 2020

Muslim Vision was founded in 1999. At a "*shura*" conference held at UDW (Durban) in July 1999, a set of principles and a plan of action was established, which outlined a way forward for Muslim participation in national life. This vision included various themes,

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[313] See the Minara website, http://www.minara.org.za/Profile/Who/who.html.
[314] See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_in_South_Africa.

such as religious, political, economics, education and media.[315] The founders included prominent Durban based Muslims such as Mohamed Amra, Suleman Dangor and Riaz Jamal.

Muslim Youth Movement (MYM)

The MYM was founded in 1970 in Durban, by three individuals, viz, Ebrahim Jadwat, Mohammed Moosa and Advocate A.B. Mohammed. The group was later joined by members from the then region of the Transvaal, where branches were established. Chapters were later established in the Cape as well. The key purpose of the MYM included unifying Muslims, intensifying Islamic education and integrating women as part of the group's programme. Via its structures, it was also very involved in the anti-apartheid struggle. Current activities include an Islamic education and Tarbiyyah programme, and political and outreach seminars.[316] It has historically been involved with various political struggles and has made important contributions to the social justice agenda in South Africa, since its inception. It is therefore, a very politically important space for SA Muslims, given its history.

Soofie Mosque Westville

In 1904 Hazrath Soofie Saheb visited the Westville area and after meeting the local Muslim inhabitants purchased two pieces of ground from a Shaik Ally, which were put into a Trust by Hazrath Soofie Saheb. He built a mosque and madressah, and a cemetery was opened. At the entrance to the institution a wood and iron house was built for the Imam and Muezzin. He placed one of his six khulafas, Hazrath Yusuf Ali Shah here.[317] Since then various Imams have served as the Imams and trustees of the mosque. The Westville Soofie mosque is seen as a space which is very tolerant to all ideological

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[315] H. Essof, *Muslim Vision 1440 / 2020 Conference Proceedings* (Durban : Muslim Vision 1440, 1999).
[316] A. Tayob. *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa : The Muslim Youth Movement* (Cape Town : UCT Press, 1995), 106 – 133.
[317] See http://www.soofie.saheb.org.za/westville.htm.

perspectives and the current Imam is Fuzail Sufi. The other famous mosque in Durban, started by Hazrath Soofie Saheb, is the Riverside Mosque.

Taking Islam to the People (TIP)

TIP was established in 2003 when a group of Muslim activists held the first ever family Eidgah in Durban at North Beach, which became a point of contestation between itself and the conservative Muslim theological establishment in KZN, who were critical of its ideological orientation. The organization subsequently established itself as a group for "progressive" thinking Muslims, wanting a space to express themselves outside of the existing theologically conservative framework. TIP also hosts monthly Friday Jummah prayers at the Durban City Hall. TIP's initial founders included prominent KZN Muslim activists such as Rassool Snyman, Rumana Mahomed and Ismail Mahomed.

World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY)

WAMY established the headquarters of the Southern Africa Office in January 2001 in Durban. The objective of WAMY's programme in South Africa is to be involved in the areas of dawah, women and youth. Since January 2001, a wide range of programmes were rolled out in pursuance of its objectives. WAMY has adopted a very strong partnership approach with local organisations or communities for the establishment of projects and programmes. This is in keeping with a strategy of empowerment of local communities, working with grassroots based organisations. WAMY-SA's headquarters is based at the historical Rajab Residence in Clare Estate in Durban, which will be converted into a community centre with emphasis on facilities for youth and women.[318] WAMY is an important community based organisation because of its presence in low income and township communities, doing significant outreach and development work.

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[318] See the WAMY website, http://www.wamy.org.za/.

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Table 4.2 : National Demographics of all Interviewees

Gender		Race				Total
M	F	Indian	African	Coloured	White	
20	4	19	2	3	0	24

Table 4.3 : Durban (KZN) Interviewees

Gender		Race				Total
M	F	Indian	African	Coloured	White	
14	3	14	2	1	0	17

Table 4.4 : Cape Town (Western Cape) Interviewees

Gender		Race				Total
M	F	Indian	African	Coloured / Malay	White	
3	1	3		1		4

Table 4.5 : Johannesburg (Gauteng) Interviewees

Gender		Race				Total
M	F	Indian	African	Coloured	White	
3		2		1		3

Breakdown by Gender and Geography

The twenty-four interviewees included twenty men and four women; racially, there were nineteen Indian, two African and three Coloured Muslims; in terms of provincial break-down, seventeen interviewees were from KwaZulu-Natal; three from Gauteng and four from the Western Cape.

The geographical bias towards KwaZulu Natal (KZN) is due to several factors. The first is that the researcher was only able to travel once to Gauteng and the Western Cape and several scheduled interviews were cancelled during this visit. This added to the larger proportion of interviews in KwaZulu Natal. This is not regarded as a significant shortcoming because most of the central organizations and individuals identified for the study are primarily located in KZN. Second, some institutions selected for closer scrutiny in terms of their political engagement, such as the Muslim Youth Movement (MYM), World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY), Islamic Propagation Centre International (IPCI), and Muslim Vision 1440/ 2020, while Durban-based, have a visible national profile, and the perspectives of their directors / chairpersons is significant for this study.

Third, and importantly, as discussed in Chapter Two, an excellent body of knowledge already exists on Islam in the Cape, partly because some of our most productive and outstanding scholars of Islam are / were located in the Cape, like Achmat Davids, Shamil Jeppie, Mohamed Haron, Sa'adiya Shaikh, Farid Esack, Ebrahim Moosa, and Abdul Kader Tayob, and partly because the activities of the organization People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD), largely attracted scholars and doctoral students from around the world, to focus on the Cape. Thus, two recent studies by S. Bangstad and H. Matthee covered much of the ground in the Cape that this study would have had to cover. They focused on political participation by Cape based Muslims and have provided significant insight into the area of study which this thesis concerns

itself.[319] This study can draw upon this established and new body of work and it is therefore not necessary to duplicate it in this thesis.

The gender imbalance can be explained by several factors. Some of the cancelled interviews were to have been with women, which added to the gender imbalance in the sample. Another factor contributing to the gender imbalance is that men continue to dominate leadership positions in organizations. In sourcing Islamic organizations with a political dynamic, significant to this study, as outlined in the original proposal, it was found that most had male directors, chairpersons or co-ordinators. This is largely a result of the historical trend of fewer women entering Muslim activism / civil society spaces until recently.[320] Overall, few "African" and "Coloured" Muslims were interviewed, although an effort was made to locate suitable persons. This also reflects the numerical and economic dominance of Indian Muslims in KZN. Most interviews focused on organizations in KZN which are dominated by Indians.

Virtually all of the interviewees were in positions of authority and older than forty.[321] Their perspectives do not necessarily represent the position of their institutions and this thesis therefore attempts to provide an analysis of their views which factors in personal histories, as well as draws on the institutional framework of their organizations.

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[319] See S. Bangstad, *Global Flows, Local Appropriations : Facets of Secularization and Islamization among Contemporary Cape Muslims* (Cape Town : UCT / Radboud University, 2008) and H. Matthee, *Muslim Identities and Political Strategies : A Case Study of Muslims in the Greater Cape Town Area of South Africa*, 1994 – 2000 (Kassel : Kassel University Press, 2008).

[320] Shireen Hassim in a seminal work, describes the development of women's movements in South Africa during the period of anti-apartheid struggle and its evolution in a post-apartheid era. While there isn't a focus on Muslim women per se, she argues that women as a political constituency really began emerging in the 1970s. From this one can extrapolate that Muslim women, while having a significant role to play in the anti-apartheid movement, were only really becoming part of organised political spaces very much later, than their male counter-parts. See S. Hassim, *Women's Organisations and Democracy in South Africa : Contesting Authority* (Scottsville : UKZN Press, 2006).

[321] While age, income levels and other biographical data were not used as measuring instruments, much of these could be extrapolated from the personal interviews and ascertaining interviewee's length of involvement and experience in their respective fields. The only two categories used for biographical data purposes are gender and race.

Fieldwork : Surveys and Interviews

It had been hoped to supplement the interviews with surveys. Unfortunately, the response to the request to fill out surveys, was poor and this has been extremely frustrating. It had been anticipated that the survey, containing a standard set of questions with respondents remaining anonymous, would form part of the fieldwork. This endeavor was a failure. Only two of the fifty survey questionnaires distributed electronically and in hard copy were returned despite contacting the fifty recipients via e-mail. The survey was therefore abandoned, and the methodology refined to focus on interviews, newspapers, pamphlets, websites of various organizations, newsletters, and archival material. The survey form is, nevertheless, included as Appendix A.

The same set of ten questions was used to initiate discussion with all the interviewees to ensure that they responded to the same set of issues. The questions were deliberately wide and open-ended so as to yield a range of responses. This presented opportunities for interviewees to elaborate on specific points, which allowed for greater insight on certain issues and for the conversation to cover a range of subject matters. It was not limiting in any way. The interview questions and methodology approach in general were subjected to an ethical review and were granted clearance, by the relevant university higher degrees committees. In addition to the questions, an attempt was made to gather some biographical information on individuals and their organisations and how they saw themselves fitting into the broader South Africa Muslim context. The questions were as follows:

1. Could you please provide your name and organizational details, including your experience / involvement in Islamic activities?

2. What is your perception of the state of affairs in the Muslim World today?

3. What is your understanding of Political Islam as a broad field, and do you believe that it is a factor shaping the realities of life within the global Muslim community?

4. How would you characterize the various ideological Schools of Thought that exist within Global Islam today ? [322] Are you familiar with the terms Progressive Islam and Militant Islam? How would you characterize these?

5. Which school of thought do you think is most influential across the globe today in terms of inspiring Muslims as regards their politics and way of life in general?[323]

6. Do you think that South African Muslims are politically active in a post-apartheid context? In what ways do you think they are expressing themselves politically? Do you think that they need to engage politically in a more systematic way? Why?

7. Which school of thought do you believe inspires and motivates South African Muslims as regards their involvement in political and social life? Is it Progressive Islam, Militant Islam, or any other ideology that does not fall into either of these categories? Why do you think this ideology has appeal?

8. What challenges do you think face South African Muslims in a contemporary context, and how do you think these can best be addressed?

9. How can South African Muslims contribute towards the realization of a more unified *Ummah* in South Africa and globally?

10. Is there anything else you would like to add in terms of your understanding of the state of either the Global or South African Muslim community ?

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[322] This question was further qualified by asking about the four *madhabs* in the Sunni tradition, and followed up by questions relating to Militant and Progressive ideologies.
[323] This question was again qualified by asking about whether the *madhabs* themselves were influential in shaping political activity, or the more broader categories of progressive and militant ideologies.

In order to make sense of the responses, the information obtained in the interviews was collated into the following five categories: (i) state of the broader Muslim world; (ii) understanding of / attitude towards / views on Political Islam; (iii) impact of various schools of thought on Muslim engagement on political issues; (iv) level of South African Muslim participation in national / international issues; and (v) shaping of Muslim identity in post-apartheid South Africa in relation to political engagement. The responses to questions eight , nine and ten were collapsed into these five broad areas, which were used as a measure of the general attitudes towards the research topic, how various schools of Islamic thought are shaping political discourse within the South African Muslim community, and the nature, frequency, efficacy, and outcome of political engagement by South African Muslims. In discussing these responses, in some instances, interviewees have been quoted directly, while in other cases their comments have been paraphrased, but kept as close as possible to the original, for purposes of brevity. What follows below is a summary of the five areas of analysis. A summary of the interview schedule is attached as Appendix B.

i)   State of the broader Muslim world

There was an interesting range of responses to the broad question of the "State of the Muslim World." This was a deliberately open-ended question as the intention was to gauge what was uppermost in respondents' minds and from this, ascertain whether there was any similarity in how they viewed the contemporary situation. Virtually all interviewees felt that there was a visible economic, social, and political "crisis" within the broader Muslim world, and certainly between the Muslim and Western worlds.[324] There were nuanced positions on what this crisis was, why there was a crisis, and how it may be possible to address the problems. One of the more significant perspectives was that the

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[324] There is a general perception in the global psyche (in part created by the media), that there are distinct "worlds" where Muslims reside and other spaces where westerners are located, which are "separate" from each other. This is however not an accurate portrayal, as the phenomenon of globalisation has meant that there are Muslim minorities present in the west, and western minorities living within Muslim states. For the purposes of this thesis though, worlds is used to refer to ideological and cultural differences, which set Muslim value systems and western values apart from each other.

greater crisis was at an "internal" level (within the Muslim world), and that it was due to an intellectual crisis (or one that focused around identity).[325]

Abdulkader Tayob argued that there appeared to be a trend where many Muslims were moving towards a more "individualistic" expression of Islam or other forms of expression such as Sufism. He felt that there were many who were turning to Islam at a very "personal" level, because of the complications that were arising around defining what a "collective" understanding of Islam meant.[326] The Muslim experience in the contemporary moment, in other words, goes beyond violence to encompass things like acts of piety at the level of personal experience, such as veiling, modesty, rituals, pilgrimage, charity, and prayer.

Those who identified the crisis as being internal, pointed to the lack of strong and decisive leadership within the Muslim world, a lack of intellectual and technological capacity within Muslim societies to respond to challenges posed from the outside and from within, as well as the crisis resulting from an inability by Muslims to accept diversity amongst themselves, and a failure to reconcile Islamic ideas and western thought.[327] Sociologist Fatima Meer opined that there was "a crisis, but the Muslim world is not really conscious of this crisis. Islam is in a sort of dormant state, a pacifist state", a position which lends credence to the idea that there was possibly a state of denial among Muslims globally, and that they were unable to actually identify where the crisis lies, or if they could, then they may not know how to respond to it. For this reason, they tended to attribute all the problems and tensions within Islam and their countries to "the West."[328] This is compounded by divisions, a view articulated by Suleman Dangor, who said that there was a "dilemma, because we are not of one mind in terms of how to deal with our problems. There are many differences and divisions amongst Muslim countries."[329] The

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[325] See interviews with Tahir Sitoto and Abdulkader Tayob.
[326] See interview with AK Tayob.
[327] See interviews with Mohammed Amra, Ebrahim Bofelo, Suleman Dangor, Imtiaaz Sooliman, Fuzail Sufi and Zeinoul Kajee.
[328] See interview with Fatima Meer.
[329] See interview with Suleman Dangor.

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crisis among Muslims, it was felt, would not be resolved until parochialism ended and there was deep introspection.

Masood Boomgaard and Iqbal Jhazbhai, among others, suggested that the rise of militancy within the Muslim world was a "manifestation" of this crisis.[330] Boomgaard, editor of the *Al-Ummah* newspaper, posited the view that "there were different challenges faced domestically and internationally. There is a rise of militancy because there are people who feel that governments are inadequate." The absence of decisive leadership was clearly seen as a crucial factor in the "crisis" in the Muslim world, and as causing pockets of individuals to find their own solution in view of what is regarded as a lack of a clear vision by leaders in Muslim countries, who are often seen, as one interviewee put it, as "lackeys" of the West.

While conceding that talk of a restoration of the Caliphate was a flight of fancy, having a strong Muslim country or bloc of countries with a common vision, akin to the United States and Western Europe, may be a starting point. None of the interviewees was naïve enough to think in terms of imposing a common Islamic belief and practice system; rather they were thinking in terms of sustainable and democratic political and economic systems that allowed for the development of moral and ethical selves within an Islamic ethos.

This ran counter to perspectives which identified the crisis as being primarily external, resulting from challenges posed from outside of the Muslim world.[331] A particularly significant idea was that Islam as an ideology was seen as a threat by the West to its way of life, and therefore the contestations between these "worlds" was what led to the crisis.[332] Imraan Buccus, editor of *Al-Qalam* newspaper, identified this as "a difficult point in Islamic history, where Islam is seen as an ideological threat because it refuses to succumb to the Western way." [333] The threat therefore, is not only perceived as

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[330] See interviews with Masood Boomgaard and Iqbal Jhazbhai.
[331] See interviews with Rafeek Hassen and Yasien Mohamed.
[332] See interviews with Imraan Buccus and Solly Suleman.
[333] See interviews with Imraan Buccus.

being political, but Muslims are also seen as cultural adversaries. In this framework, the veiled women and bearded men are signs of a civilization that continues to resist and one that needs to be rectified.

In sum, then, virtually all the interviewees opined that there was a crisis between the Islamic world and the West, not in the sense of an irreconcilable "Clash of Civilizations" thesis posited by Samuel Huntington, or that of Orientalists who divide the world into essentially two broad "civilizational" blocs, one rational and modernized, the other irrational and traditional, but a crisis that emanated from contemporary socio-economic and political factors. Respondents emphasized that this should not be taken as a sign that Muslims were incapable of fostering democratic leaders or institutions. The current crisis, most felt, was related to colonialism and imperialism over the past few centuries and disillusionment with secularization and modernization over the past half century. Islamization, viewed in this context, was an attempt by Muslims to define their own political and cultural identity.

ii) Attitude / views on Political Islam

While most interviewees were familiar with the concept "Political Islam", there were differing interpretations though of what it implied or meant and its historical lineage. One view was that Islam was inherently political and had always been so from the time of the Prophet.[334] Tahir Sitoto, for example, pointed out that "classical understandings of Islam do not distinguish between the political and non-political. The prophetic message and mission was a radical and political one." [335] Traditional political concepts in Islam included leadership by successors to the Prophet (Caliphs), Shariah and duty of rulers to consult with their subjects (shura). MYM activist Muhammed Groenewald likewise suggested that "Politics and Islam have always been there, but perhaps the terminologies have not been developed." [336]

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[334] See interviews with Masood Boomgaard, Ayesha Mall, Fatima Meer, Maryam Patel, Tahir Sitoto, Rassool Snyman, Fuzail Sufi, Mymoena Arnold and Mohammed Groenewald.
[335] See interview with Tahir Sitoto.
[336] See interview with Muhammed Groenewald.

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Another perspective was that while this was indeed the case, Political Islam, as it is understood today, is a more recent phenomenon, emerging largely as a response to the colonization of Muslim lands, and more particularly the political context which has evolved since the beginning of the twentieth century.[337] This position was expressed very clearly by Rafeek Hassen, director of the Islamic Interfaith Research Institute (former director of the IPCI), who said that "the political agenda of Muslims is a reaction to the Western aggression against Islam. The colonization of Muslim lands has politicized Muslims." Hassen sees the genesis of Political Islam in the nineteenth and twentieth-century as a resistance to Western imperialism and colonialism.[338]

AK Tayob traces the lineage of Political Islam to an even more recent period. He, in fact, provides a more specific historical context to the emergence of Political Islam by pointing out that the term was only coined in the 1990's, "emerging from the Islamist project. There is a problem in Muslim societies because political power is not evenly distributed." [339] Tayob is pointing to the successive defeats of Arab armies by Israel and particularly the collapse of communism as a viable alternative to the West, which has increased the appeal of Islamism, in the context of undemocratic and corrupt Muslim regimes, often buffeted by Western powers. Democratic governance makes nation-states accountable to their citizens and helps foster civil society, which is important to make governments accountable.

As we have seen in the first two chapters, many consider Political Islam to be a phenomenon rooted in the post-1970s era, a period that witnessed its rise as a social movement, and considerable electoral gains were made in countries where Political Islam was organized through political parties. Consequently, much of the current political violence within the Muslim world can be traced as having emerged out of these very specific sets of political events.

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[337] See interviews with Suleman Dangor, Fuad Hendricks, Rafeek Hassen, Abdulkader Tayob, Iqbal Jhazbhai.
[338] See interview with Rafeek Hassen.
[339] See interview with AK Tayob.

Fuad Hendricks, a former director of Muslim Vision 1440 / 2020, disagrees with the notion that Political Islam was simply a reaction to Western invasion with little positive contribution to make. He sees it "almost like a historical genesis in terms of ideas. It would be an injustice to define the Muslim political space as a violent reaction to western domination. Muslim political thought has a role to play in the 21st century." [340] Imraan Buccus too argued that Political Islam was an intellectual space shaped and defined by various scholars of political thought such as Iranian sociologist Ali Shariati and is an idea that has potential to be refined in coming years.[341] As to what the term "Political Islam" implied, some saw it as that space which existed to encourage democratic civic participation by Muslims.[342] Parallel to this, yet not necessarily antagonistic, was the view that Political Islam was about expressing political positions, which required defending the Islamic faith in various ways, including armed struggle, and that this process should not be seen as contradictory to civic processes.[343]

Despite the seemingly contradictory ideas about Political Islam, including its historical lineage and whether it included a militant agenda, what is common in these positions is the idea that Islam is not confined to the spaces defined by mosques, but that it entails participation in political processes, including governance, and hence constitutes a civic agenda. As one interviewee pointed out, leaders like Mawdudi and Qutb argued that the main purpose of human activity was to worship God and that worldly activities that were not directed to this end should be shunned.[344] However, even Mawdudi, who initially rejected politics and Pakistan, took refuge there and later participated in its politics. Mawdudi, of course, by arguing that sovereignty belonged to God, defined the political in terms of the sacred. [345] While none of the interviewees spoke of an Islamic state in South Africa, there was consensus among the respondents that politics had to be engaged.

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[340] See interview with Fuad Hendricks.
[341] See interview with Imraan Buccus.
[342] See interviews with Mohammed Amra, Riaz Jamal, Ayesha Mall, Zeinoul Kajee, Don Matterra.
[343] See interviews with Abie Dawjee, Fuad Hendricks, Fathima Meer, Yasien Mohamed.
[344] See interview with Imraan Buccus.
[345] K. McDonald, "Globalization, Civil Imagination and Islamic Movements," in *Muslim Modernities : Expressions of the Civil Imagination*, ed. A.B. Sajoo, 192 (London: I.B. Taurus, 2008).

iii) Impact of Various Schools of Thought on Muslim Engagement on Political Issues [346]

This area of investigation provided complex insights into the relationship between various schools of thought within Islam and whether these are shaping political expressions amongst Muslims. For the purposes of this thesis, schools of thought refer to the broad ideological frameworks which are shaping how South African Muslims think and how their thoughts impact on their political expressions. On one level, these refer, in a very strict sense, to the four *madhabs* or bodies of thought within the Sunni tradition, which are followed by the majority of Sunni Muslims, viz. Hanbali, Hanafi, Maliki and Shafi. However, the questions also probed how the ideological trajectory of the *madhabs* was shaping either progressive or militant "manifestations" of Political Islam in relation to these schools of thought.[347]

Most respondents felt that the *madhabs* were actually dividing the Muslim Ummah at certain levels. The question posed to the interviewees was specifically about the four *madhabs*, and was followed-up by questions relating to progressive and militant ideologies. Some interviewees perceived the existence of the various schools of thought as adding to the challenges that Muslims face. Media activist Abie Dawjee articulated the view that the "differing ideologies don't really help because there are those outside Islam who exploit this. There are different interpretations of the scriptures and these different interpretations mean divisions." [348] MSA youth activist Maryam Patel concurred that while "it is good to have diversity, we are also being divided." [349] However, Mohammed Groenewald posited the view that in the contemporary period, while the "concept of Islam being peace-loving is what seems to be very clear, ... there seems to be a pluralistic

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[346] The impact of the various schools of thought (*madhabs*) on how SA Muslims choose to engage politically is considered as being an important indicator of the way in which their particular religious inclination shapes their actions. While the *madhabs* themselves have not been interrogated, as this is not the central focus of the study, it does nevertheless constitute a useful area of enquiry to contextualize the broader research questions.

[347] These schools of thought refer to the schools of jurisprudence (within the Sunni tradition) that were founded by Islamic scholars, ibn Hanbal, abu Hanifa, Malek, and el-Shafei, respectively who researched and taught between the 9 – 11th centuries.

[348] See interview with Abie Dawjee.

[349] See interview with Maryam Patel.

kind of Islam that is emerging." One could argue that these pluralist ideas are in keeping with the broad framework of progressive Islam, as articulated in previous chapters and that this pluralism is in fact an overt manifestation of progressive expressions of political activity.[350]

While Dawjee felt that divisions were having a negative impact, other respondents felt that such ideological divisions were inescapable; Islam was inherently about pluralism and that the Muslim *Ummah's* urgent task was to learn to accommodate diversity and plurality amongst its ranks.[351] In fact, a number of interviewees felt that it was healthy to have diversity of thought within the house of Islam, as opposed to any one school of thought dominating Islamic discourse.[352] One striking view was that because there wasn't a single leader in the contemporary Muslim world, there will never really be consensus on matters relating to the Muslim world and that there was little point striving for this.[353]

Masood Boomgaard felt that *madhabs* did not play a role in the political reaction of Muslims, that in fact, "people don't really know the history of the *madhabs*." He pointed rather to differences among traditions like Deobandis, Barelwis, and Sufism. Deobandi's, he said, were "less inclined to engage politically, whereas others such as those that follow the Sufi tradition for example, are more engaged. The Jummah platforms are used to encourage theological issues, instead of dealing with current affairs." [354] Reference to Sufism as an inspiration for greater political engagement is

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[350] While it could be argued that there has always been a degree of plurality within Islam made up of the following various components, ie Sunni and Shia, the various *madhabs*, traditionalist, orthodox, etc, the plurality that is being referred to here is the egalitarian idea of co-existence and tolerance of difference, which has historically been a contested issue within Islamic communities, where divergence from what was seen as the hegemonic, established way of doing things was frowned upon. This kind of plurality includes the ability of women to speak at a mosque, attend eid-gah prayers, or for African Muslims to chair mosque boards, etc. This plurality is about co-existing within a gender neutral, non-racist, tolerant and socially just environment.

[351] See interviews with Tahir Sitoto, Rassool Snyman, Imtiaz Sooliman, Mohammed Groenewald and Fuzail Sufi.

[352] See interview with Fuad Hendricks, Ayesha Mall, Maryam Patel, Imtiaaz Sooliman, Fuzail Sufi.

[353] See interview with Don Matterra.

[354] Deobandi refers to a scholarly tradition of theological training in an Islamic seminary environment, which emerged out of the Indo-pak subcontinent. The first Deobandi school was established in a town called Deoband in India, in 1867. Deobandism is a scholarly approach which prefers to distance itself from

intriguing, as it implied that the Sufi tradition, which is generally considered the most spiritual of all the ideological trends within Islam, is somehow more effective in persuading its adherents to take on political issues, as opposed to the Deobandis. This flies in the face of the Rand Report.

Others felt that there was essentially a "fossilizing" of Islamic thought in relation to the political challenges that were emerging around the 1970s, and that Islam somehow took on a more "dogmatic" character.[355] In keeping with this idea, Iqbal Jhazbhai argued that "the four schools of thought were respected up to around the 1970s. After this a kind of fossilizing took place and a dogma emerged."[356] If one reflects on the arguments presented in Chapter One, where the emergence of Political Islam is considered by many to have originated in the 1970s, and that the political events of 1967 in the Middle East (Arab-Israeli War), brought about an Islamist revival, one can perhaps locate these comments within this context, that is, the emergence of a more rigid Islamic politics attempting to grapple with the harsh realities of a changing Middle East.

Several respondents felt that the Muslim religious leadership was using various institutional and non-institutional structures within Islam, such as the mosque pulpits and especially the Friday *Khutbah* sermons, but also the internet, radio stations, CDs, and, increasingly, newsletters to engage in theological sermonizing aimed at cultivating their brand of "piety", rather than presenting more concrete solutions to contemporary political problems. In other words, there was a preference by this leadership to remain largely apolitical, and that the differences in terms of the *madhabs* and their interpretation, tended to sustain the inclination to remain away from political engagement.[357] Suleman Dangor, for example, stresses on the point that "some sectors such as the Jamiat are just

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any deep engagement with political activism or the state. South African expressions of the Deobandi tradition according to Tayob, "generally accepted the particular political relations established by the mosque committees". See A. Tayob, *Islam in South Africa : Mosques, Imams and Sermons* (Gainesville : University Press of Florida, 1999), 70-71.
[355] See interview with Iqbal Jhazbhai .
[356] Here he is referring to the idea that the *madhabs* became the ideological spaces which entrenched certain ways of doing things within Islam (depending on the madhab one followed), and that modification of the *madhab* or debate around these issues, was seen as undesirable.
[357] See interviews with Masood Boomgaard and Suleman Dangor.

apolitical and don't get involved in politics at all. Political involvement and the impact of schools of thought differ (however), from country to country." In the South African context it would appear that the Hanafi and Shafi traditions are most popular, with the Cape Muslims being primarily Shafi in their orientation and KZN Muslims being primarily Hanafi.[358] What is interesting to note however, is that there has been something of a shift in the Jamiat's recent thinking with regard to political engagement, as will became evident in the discussion in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

Engagement in this area revealed two very clear sets of views. The first articulated the position that the various religious schools of thought (in particular the *madhabs*) were actually creating ideological divisions at different levels, and did not really facilitate much consensus around political engagement. The second view was that the diversity created by these differences of opinion, was actually healthy, even though there may not be much agreement. With regard to whether the *madhabs* had any impact on formulating a broader worldview around militant or progressive ways of engaging, what emerges is a complex range of views, which suggests that political engagement amongst South African Muslims, while taking place in some respects, is very often constrained by the complexities of religious debate amongst followers of the various religious schools of thought. While the overall view is that there are no overt ideologically militant expressions of Islam in the South African context (post-PAGAD), progressive political expressions, where they are taking place, are often subject to the peculiar vagaries of a conservative theological establishment.

iv) South African Muslim Participation in National / International Issues

The overwhelming response to the question of whether Muslims are participating actively in post-apartheid South African politics was "No." Fuad Hendricks found the absence of political engagement irreconcilable with being Muslim. He linked the sphere of political activism to the notion of how one may be able to understand the concept of

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[358] See A. Tayob, *Islam in South Africa : Mosques, Imams and Sermons* (Gainesville : University Press of Florida), 33. A more detailed study on the impact of *madhabs* in shaping political participation in a contemporary environment, would be a useful study to carry out in a Muslim minority context.

Islamic identity, by arguing that "although having an Islamic identity means that by extension there should be an awareness of almost every sphere of life, so many people are still apolitical. There were people who were active before but now there is a political vacuum."

Rafeek Hassen articulated this perspective most clearly when he insisted that Muslims were "not involved. The student body is an example. While under apartheid, students were active, today's students are less active in politics. There is no struggle for us." More specifically, there was a clear sense among interviewees that there was widespread Muslim apathy regarding politics as compared to the apartheid era where many Muslims like I.C. Meer, Dawood Seedat, R.A.M. Saloojee and many others actively engaged in the struggle against apartheid, with the likes of Ahmed Timol and Imam Haron paying the ultimate price in giving their lives to the struggle.

Imraan Buccus agrees that while Muslims were active in the apartheid context, in the post-apartheid period "there's a huge debate, even amongst progressive Muslims, about where they locate themselves." Buccus believes that Muslims should "participate at various levels, such as going to imbizos, supporting social movements, as well as engaging the ANC." There were various nuanced and qualified statements which accompanied this perspective. Some felt that while the level of participation was not ideal, it was nevertheless taking place, through lobby groups, progressive organizational spaces such as the MYM and interest in what was happening in the Middle East and in Muslim countries elsewhere.[359] On this point, Ayesha Mall stressed that Muslims seem to be "more interested in issues affecting Muslims outside South Africa rather than those issues affecting people in the country", a trend that does not sit well with the majority African population, she stressed.

There was striking consensus amongst interviewees that there was no new political leadership emerging amongst South African Muslims, and that it was mainly those from the "old school" like Kader Asmal, Ebrahim Rasool, and others who had a

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[359] See interviews with Ebrahim Bofelo, Masood Boomgaard, Tahir Sitoto and Mohammed Groenewald.

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presence during the apartheid era, who remain the most visible face of Islam in the post-apartheid era. [360] Imam Fuzail Sufi pointed out that, "Muslims are not being engaged, but we need to ensure that in the next five to ten years we have solid leaders come out of the Muslim community." There were varying degrees of agreement on whether there was some engagement in government structures by Muslims, such as the presence of Muslim MPs, and politicians at other levels.[361]

One other conspicuous criticism of Muslims in the post-apartheid era was the high levels of consumption and materialism. Iqbal Jhazbhai argued that most Muslim involvement was "at the economic level, and at government level. The Jamiats have aligned themselves to the power bases", implying that there was the emergence of something resembling a patron client relationship between the religious leadership and government structures or political figures who are in positions of influence. Mohammed Groenewald suggests likewise that Muslims were "engaging politically but not in a constructive manner. There is no "critical" engagement, but a "suck up" engagement." Chapter Two of this thesis also made brief mention of this patron client relationship, in relation to the issue of electoral politics and campaigning by Muslims, in the post-apartheid period.

And yet, several interviewees underscored that Muslims were, by aligning themselves with economic interests, achieving a growing commercial influence which was important to fund the many projects, like schools and Old Age Homes, that are required by Muslims. There was also reference to a growing affluent sector among Muslims who opted to concern themselves primarily with material benefits in a post-apartheid context.[362] Don Mattera, for example, points out that "the liberation has led to the rise of the middle class, and materialism is on the rise. There are some Muslims who do good charity work, but they are not in the mainstream." Imtiaaz Sooliman, who is directly involved in philanthropy through the "Gift of the Givers" organization, concurred

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[360] See interviews with Suleman Dangor, Abie Dawjee, Fuad Hendricks, Rafeek Hassen, Fuzail Sufi and Zeinoul Kajee.
[361] See interviews with Masood Boomgaard, Suleman Dangor, Maryam Patel and Iqbal Jhazbhai.
[362] See interviews with Imtiaaz Sooliman, Solly Suleman, Iqbal Jhazbhai, Don Matterra.

when he observed that Muslim "participation is less compared to what it was before. There is more interest in material things like cars, cellphones, etc." Whether this is perception or fact is hard to establish. While there are unprecedented levels of consumption openly displayed, it is also apparent that the number of organizations involved in the field of social welfare has multiplied over the past two decades and the money is being more widely distributed.[363]

In this respect, it may also be argued that both the Muslim consumerism and apolitical behaviour is not very different from other segments of South African society. In fact, it is the increasing levels of poverty and social stress among the majority African population, and perceived lack of delivery of social services, that has ushered in increased levels of protest across South African townships, and even xenophobic attacks against African foreign migrants and refugees, during March 2008. While the "comfort levels" of most Muslims remain satisfactory and their rights as Muslims are not directly threatened, there seems to be little need for them to engage politically. We have seen that over issues that they believe affect them, such as the Anti-terrorism Bill, Palestinian questions, and the "War on Terror." Muslims are prepared to engage government, but this is sporadic and un-sustained.

As the respondents in this study have stressed, the current situation of Muslims, as the "other", remains precarious. Aside from being Muslim, many also additionally carry the tag "Indian" or "Coloured" and this is a second level of vulnerability, in light of recent tensions, and an even more important reason to embrace and engage with the broader African population across a host of spaces.

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[363] See also B. Maharaj and others, "Religion and Development" *in Giving and Solidarity : Resource Flows for Poverty Alleviation and Development in South Africa*, eds. A. Habib and B. Maharaj, 79 – 119, (Cape Town : HSRC Press, 2008).

v) **Shaping of Muslim Identity in post-apartheid SA in relation to Political Engagement**

The responses to the previous four areas of analysis were collated in a manner which attempted to facilitate the formulation of an overall understanding of whether there is a distinct trend that one can ascertain in relation to how South African Muslims are engaging politically in a post-apartheid context and what the implications of this are for the broader arena of Political Islam in a 21st century context. In an effort to assess whether political engagement was geared towards employing progressive methodology or militant strategies, or responses that did not fit neatly into either category and call these categories into question, the questions were specifically structured to gauge the nature, as well as the frequency, efficacy and outcome of political engagement.

There were significant and constructive observations regarding how South African Muslim identity is being shaped in relation to political engagement. These can be divided into two broad areas, viz. spaces where political engagement is taking place and making a constructive contribution, and spaces where this is absent. The majority of comments alluded to the general conclusion that there were far more challenges for Muslims than accomplishments, as far as politics was concerned. These comments however do not necessarily reflect on the broader set of accomplishments as outlined in Chapters Three and Five, using archival material which documents some of these accomplishments. Some of the challenges and gaps in engagement outlined by the interviewees were:

- "Muslims are not engaging in social issues affecting others in society, such as non-Muslims and the poor": Mohammed Amra.

- "There is no synergy between Muslimness and South Africanness. The working class don't have 'working class' expressions of Islam and depend on people who have 'elitist' expressions of Islam to inform their practice": Ebrahim Bofelo.

- "The challenge amongst South African Muslims is their mindset, there is a resistance to new ideas and there is a history of conflict amongst Muslims": Masood Boomgaard.

- "In struggle, people's Islamic identity becomes reinforced; however, all that has disappeared and the younger generation of Muslims are cast adrift": Abie Dawjee.

- "There is a lack of education amongst average Muslims. There is ignorance about how to choose our leaders, and if we can't choose leaders for the mosques, how are we going to find leaders in a political context"?: Rafeek Hassen.

- "Muslims must have control in areas such as the broader media. We need to have influence through Islamic universities, schools, etc": Riaz Jamal.

- "We don't have leadership and our religious leaders are ignorant and conservative. The Friday *Khutbah*'s are very conservative. In the Western Cape though, the Jamiats are more progressive but in KZN and Gauteng, they are reactionary": Fatima Meer.

- "We need to involve more Black Muslims in key areas. We also need to find ways to unite our community": Solly Suleman.

- "South African Muslims have inherited an enslavement mentality, and together with that a lot of racial constructs, cultural biases, ethnic prejudices, etc": Mymoena Arnold.

- "Muslims express themselves in an emotional way, and cannot give academic responses, such as for example with the cartoon incident": Mohammed Groenewald.

- "Muslims don't want to confront issues of violence, they switch off and ignore it": Abdulkader Tayob.

- "We need to establish a movement for people with compassion": Don Matterra.

On the basis of the responses of interviewees, we can reach a few elementary conclusions, which will be further unpacked in Chapter Six, with regard to how Muslim identity is being shaped in relation to political engagement in South Africa. Some of the broad observations gleaned from the interviews, and which the above comments attest to, were that South African Muslims are not engaging sufficiently in broader social issues affecting both them and non-Muslims, such as poverty alleviation and lack of social delivery, and that there was an absence of a "working class expressions" of Islam with Muslims dependant on "elite" interpretations of the faith.[364] There was also, no real synergy between "Muslimness" and South "Africanness";[365] there was an "intellectual" resistance to new ideas amongst South African Muslims, and that the challenge amongst them, is their mindset.[366] There was a lack of appropriate and adequate (political) leadership among South African Muslims, as well as a lack of political literacy;[367] and that unnecessary "distractions" prevented South African Muslims from tackling issues that they should be tackling to fulfill their mandate as Muslims, which is to contribute to the betterment of society as a whole. These "distractions" included arguing over "theological" issues like how one should dress, how one should stand in prayer, etc.

While these conclusions are subject to varying degrees of interpretation, it becomes clear that the concern of many of the interviewees really lies with arguing for a far more effective civic space for engagement by Muslims. While most of the interviewees expressed dissatisfaction with the current (international) status quo, there

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[364] See interviews with Mohammed Amra, Ebrahim Bofelo, Imraan Buccus, Fuad Hendricks, Don Matterra and Imtiaaz Sooliman. Working class expressions of Islam refer to the discourse that is shaped by a social reality, such as one's class status, and the various forms of inclusion / exclusion that that brings with it. The dominant discourse within the SA Muslim community has historically been shaped by the merchant classes. See Chapter Three for more discussion on the history of Islam in South Africa.
[365] See interviews with Ebrahim Bofelo and Tahir Sitoto.
[366] See interviews with Masood Boomgaard and Abdulkader Tayob.
[367] See interviews with Rafeek Hassen, Fathima Meer, Fuzail Sufi.

was no indication that they would prefer South African Muslims to engage in any kind of militant forms of political expression. Rather there is a general preference for democratic public participation, where substantive socio-political issues such as poverty alleviation are addressed, a greater degree of 'synergy' between Muslimness and South Africanness is established, and a more serious effort is made to create and grow new leadership among younger Muslim South Africans to replace the likes of Ebrahim Rassool, Naledi Pandor, Enver Surtee, Kader Asmal, Vally Moosa, and others.

While most of the interviewees, by virtue of the nature of their work in civic spaces, would opt for more progressive political engagement by South African Muslims, what is missing in this analysis is the perspective of the theological establishment, which represents an important component of this study. As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, one of the major constraints faced by this study was the failure to secure an interview with members of the more "orthodox" Muslim religious councils. Initial exploratory requests for interviews resulted in an attempt by such individuals to "interrogate" the parameters of the study and "question" the purpose and need for such a study.[368] No interviews could be secured with religious leaders, apart from the Imam of the Westville Soofie Mosque, Fuzail Sufi, who subscribes to both a religious and egalitarian worldview, and stressed on the importance of Muslims participating politically and tackling social issues such as HIV Aids.

However, substantive use was made of archival material which is produced on a regular basis by these religious councils in the form of electronic or printed newsletters and publications, to ascertain their perspectives and commentary on political engagement on relevant issues. In particular, two sources of information were accessed viz. the online websites of the Jamiatul Ulama (Council of Muslim Theologians) of South Africa and The Majlis.net newsletter (produced by the Majlisul Ulama of South Africa).[369] Information from these sources will be used to frame the final conclusions of this study in Chapter Six.

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[368] The religious establishment is however profiled in Chapter Six, through the use of archival sources.
[369] See http://www.jamiat.co.za/ and http://themajlis.net/index.html.

The next chapter will through the use of archival material (printed and electronic / digital) attempt to provide a descriptive picture of political engagement by South African Muslims since 1994. This discussion will be framed to some degree by earlier chapters, commenting on the kinds of engagement that Muslims are participating in, and what the implications are, in respect of the nature, frequency and efficacy of the engagement. This discussion will also link with what has been examined in this chapter with respect to the perspectives expressed by the interviews.

Chapter Five

Post-Apartheid Period – Insular or participating citizens?

Introduction

The history of how Islam was established in South Africa and the ways in which Muslims made this their adopted country, and lived as part of a broader multi-religious and multi-racial community has already been documented in this dissertation.[370] Democracy and the demands of a new dispensation have presented a new set of social, economic, cultural, and political conditions in the post-apartheid period, giving rise to new challenges. Muslims have faced critical questions around the emerging politics of class, race, culture, and of course, religion. These are no doubt similar to issues faced by other minority and even majority communities in South Africa.

However, Muslims are in a somewhat unique position, given the context that they are part of a global faith group, Islam, which has come under intense scrutiny over the last decade, largely because of the emergence of political violence, which is seen as being predominantly perpetrated by Muslims from various parts of the globe, as well as the fact that Muslims are seen as a threat to the Enlightenment heritage in many parts of the Western world. The reality that this political violence may be a response to what Muslims regard as state terror and a range of structural oppressions imposed by western nations, or that only a minority is resorting to violent forms of political expression, is often ignored.

There has been huge domestic contestation over how Muslims should react to these political issues, including disputes over whether violence is a justifiable response to such challenges. South African Muslims, this thesis contends, have struggled to find a common and constructive position on many of these challenges. The race and class divisions entrenched during the apartheid era, coupled with differences of culture and religious traditions, means that it is unreasonable to expect the forging of a homogenous

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[370] R. Shell, "Islam in Southern Africa : 1652-1998," in *The History of Islam in Africa*, eds. N. Levtzion and R. Pouwells, 327-348 (Oxford: James Currey, 2000). See also Chapter Three of this thesis.

Muslim community to articulate common positions on issues.[371] However, despite continuing racial and ethnic divisions, Islam plays a significant role in the lives of many Muslims. While it does create a common space for Muslims to engage each other, there are many issues over which Muslims are, as alluded to earlier, unable to find common ground.

Given that the last decade has given space to religious leadership to emerge as a strong force among Muslims, alternative radical, secular and progressive approaches to politics and socio-economic concerns have often been frowned upon by the religious bodies because they are seen as a threat to the established hegemony of religious leaders and their followers. While the *ulema* (religious leaders) are considered an important part of the social and religious fabric of the Muslim community, until now very few have articulated, or are able to articulate, a constructive political position on many issues, either domestic or international. One of the concerns around the lack of a clear political vision has been that because Muslims are still evolving in a post-apartheid context, the ability to unite outside of a religious framework to, for example, tackle social-economic issues such as HIV Aids, poverty, etc, is seriously hampered.

Non-racial democracy has brought about numerous changes and reforms in South African society at large. The plethora of newly democratized institutions at various levels, the establishment of an independent judiciary, and a burgeoning civil society, amongst other developments, are all indications of a society engaged in transformation and nation-building.[372] Despite the progress over the past decade, the legacy of apartheid has not disappeared with the introduction of democratic reform.[373] From the outset, the challenge of transition has arguably been largely informed by an over-arching paradigm of race. What defined South Africa during its apartheid years, viz, the racial and ethnic profiling of its citizens, has effectively also served to entrench these categories within a

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[371] G. Vahed and S.Jeppie, "Multiple Communities: Muslims in post-apartheid South Africa,". in *State of the Nation : 2004 – 2005*, eds. J. Daniel and others, 252 (Cape Town : HSRC Press, 2005).

[372] See J. Barber, *South Africa in the 20th Century* (Oxford : Blackwell, 1999).

[373] See P. Bond, *Elite Transition : From Apartheid to Neo-liberalism in South Africa* (London : Pluto Press 2002); A. Desai, *We are the Poors: Community Struggles in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2002) and N. Gibson, ed. *Challenging Hegemony : Social Movements and the Quest for a New Humanism in Post-Apartheid South Africa.*(Trenton : Africa World Press, 2006).

post-apartheid context, such that South Africans continue to use these as a frame of reference. They have become part of the historical legacy and lexicon.[374]

This is evident when examining statistical data relating to all groups that constitute the South African demographic. Nevertheless, it may be argued that while the labels "African", "Coloured" (or "Malay"), "White" and "Indian" are still used to identify communities officially and in popular usage, the 1996 constitution protects communities against all types of discrimination, unlike the status quo under apartheid.[375] This has meant that post-1994 developments have created the space for communities to transform, not just within a racial context but within the context of a range of other significant demographic categories, such as religion, language, class, rituals, tradition, culture and caste in some instances.

These categories have also been part of the defining framework of South Africans, particularly minority communities, in both the apartheid and post-apartheid context. What began as a political exercise for separate development under apartheid has become the foundation for what defines the major race groups in South Africa today. In some cases, this has meant the development of what one might term a minority sub-culture that exercises its own particular brand of identification of particular sub-groups and religious / cultural imperatives, based on a range of defining characteristics, which might in some instances be peculiar to that community. In other words, the broad racialising of identity formation in South Africa has led to various (religious / ethnic / language) groupings articulating their identities in relation to these demographic markers of difference, regardless of the over-arching paradigm of race. This is arguably the case for the approximately 600,000 to 1 million Muslim South Africans.[376] While the majority of Muslims are of Malay / Coloured ancestry, the race groups officially termed Indian / Asian, Africans and, to a lesser extent, White, make-up a fair chunk of this community.[377]

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[374] See M. Macdonald, *Why Race Matters in South Africa*.(Scottsville : UKZN Press, 2006).

[375] South African Constitution, 1996.

[376] The estimate ranges from between 600 000 to 1 million. The last comprehensive South African national census was conducted in 2001, and this paper uses this data as a framework for the arguments presented.

[377] While this might be the general description used to identify a particular ethnic group, ie, Indian, within a larger religious grouping, there are a number of other sub-identities within this category, eg, language and

Muslims of the Western Cape region, consisting largely of Coloured and Malay ancestry, have played a huge role in creating a particular discursive space in Islamic thought within the country, one that has arguably been the most progressive in terms of political engagement, and has sometimes even been militant, as was evidenced by the rise of PAGAD in the mid-1990s.[378]

Despite the historical legacy of race as an over-arching paradigm, religion continues to play an important role in the lives of South African Muslims. This can be explained by an understanding of the role of the global Islamic Resurgence movement in locating the social identities of Muslims since the turn of the twentieth century. Tayob, in a study tracing the influence of Islamic resurgence in South Africa, argues that the rise of a class of educated elites among politically marginalized South African Muslims was influential in ensuring that Muslim civic organizations had a central role in Muslim public life, despite being denied crucial political rights.[379] These civic groups were constituted by teacher's associations, trading associations, burial societies, youth groups such as the Muslim Youth Movement, and a host of other civic bodies. Global events such as the Iranian revolution of 1979 lent ideological vigour to energizing the project of ensuring that Islam as a religious ideology remained central to the lives of South African Muslims.

There was a parallel development of Muslim religious councils that maintained theological hegemony over large numbers of Muslims, such as the Jamiats in the then Natal and Transvaal. Inevitably, this led to an ideological contestation between those educated elites who were seeking a more progressive understanding of Islam as an anti-imperialist agent that could challenge an oppressive apartheid dispensation, and those traditional sectors who feared that this might lead to further political marginalisation.

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caste. See also G. Vahed, "Indian Islam and the meaning of South African Citizenship - A Question of Identities,".Transformation 43 (2000), 25-51.

[378] The Western Cape is notorious for giving rise to militant groups such as PAGAD (People against Gangsterism and Drugs). This group has also been implicated in certain past terrorist activities such as the bombing of public places in Cape Town. The group is currently inactive, as a result of police vigilance of its activities.

[379] A. Tayob, Islamic Resurgence in South Africa. The Muslim Youth Movement (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 1995).

Islamic resurgence, in effect, became a contested terrain between what could be referred to as a progressive political movement and a conservative religious establishment. Each was bound to an exclusivist interpretation of what constituted Islam and Islamic practice. There were however nuanced spaces within the religious establishment, where progressive Islamic leaders such as Imam Haron and Molvi Cachalia, broke with their more traditionally minded peers, and sought to use the religious spaces for mobilizing against apartheid.[380] In many ways this contestation between the traditional / conservative space and progressive space, has spilled over into the post-apartheid context, raising perhaps the central dilemma faced by Muslims in South Africa.

The conflation of Islamic theological injunctions, as a means to tackle broader socio-political challenges, with more secular notions of political strategy, has to some degree resulted in the Muslim community being left in a somewhat disadvantaged position in a post 1994 context. In other words, conventional political strategy has often been shaped by injunctions issued by the religious leadership that generally do not equip Muslims to deal with the substantive nature of the contemporary challenges that they face. The realities of post-apartheid South Africa have brought about in particular, debates relating to the relationship between religious and secular spaces, participation in public spaces, civic engagement, the nature of state – civil society relationships and the interfaces between the inequalities brought about historically as a result of race, class, gender and other differences. These complex dilemmas are often reduced to religious pronouncements (*fatwahs*) on whether or not Muslims can, for example, participate in elections in a secular democracy, whether they should only vote for Muslim politicians, and so on.[381] Indeed, this oft-repeated tendency is a phenomenon that pervades many parts of the Muslim world. The lack of articulation of a lucid and resolute political will and set of strategies as separate from, even if influenced by religious dictates in order to address contemporary challenges, is a common criticism leveled at Muslim societies

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[380] M. Haron, *Iman A Haron*. Unpublished E-mail correspondence to SAHO (University of Botswana, 2003). See also Chapter Three for more detailed discussion on these figures.

[381] There are various Muslim theological councils, such as the Sunni Jamiatul Ulema (with branches across the country, such as in KZN and Gauteng), that have become the spaces and institutions which issue on a regular basis, *fatwahs* or pronouncements on religious matters, either as a response to questions from the Muslim public or as part of their ongoing educational programmes.

globally, very often from within its own ranks, and has come to represent the hallmark of an ever-increasing fragmentation of such societies.[382] While the Quran provides broad guidelines around social justice and redress concerns, these can, and often are, narrowly interpreted theologically, and such interpretations are often not reflective of the substantial application of the essence of the Quran.[383]

Since the advent of a non-racial democratic dispensation in South Africa, the minority Muslim community has struggled to define itself politically and ideologically, as can be evidenced by the many schools of thought that have emerged within the various theological councils set up to serve the religious needs of Muslims.[384] Decades of racial denigration and political exclusion have undoubtedly impacted on the conceptual and ideological framework of Muslims generally, and their difficulty in finding their political space. Another area of concern is the way in which the *dawah*-centric approach to the development of Islam has shaped Muslim public spaces. The nature of this discourse, it is suggested, is insufficient to tackle the emerging challenges in a post-apartheid period, where greater involvement is required outside of merely a religio-social framework, for reasons outlined below.[385] In other words, simply paying the obligatory *zakaat*, or performing the other "*farz*" duties of a Muslim, are not necessarily substantively addressing the key social needs of broader society.[386]

The disclaimer here is that if Muslims are interested only in self-preservation, that is, they will engage civic spaces only in so far as their immediate interests are affected, then one can understand the lack of participation. However, what is striking when

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[382] See a collection of Ziauddin Sardar's critical writings, edited by S. Inayatullah and G. Boxwell, *Islam, Postmodernism and Other Futures : A Ziauddin Sardar Reader* (London : Pluto Press, 2003).

[383] The Quran has various verses where it enjoins it followers to be actively engaged in social change, for example, verse 13: 11, which reads, "God will not change the condition of a people until they change it themselves", or verse 4: 135, "O you who believe, be upholders of justice, bearing witness for God alone, even against yourselves or your parents and relatives".

[384] These include the Muslim Judicial Council, the Sunni Jamiatul Ulama, the Jamiatul Ulama KZN, Majlisul Ulama amongst others.

[385] *Dawah*, which refers to the practice of taking the message of Islam to non-Muslims, has in the South African context arguably been primarily religious and theologically conservative, in terms of its outreach strategy. It has therefore not necessarily transcended the boundaries of a strict orthodox understanding of the Islamic faith and practice.

[386] Farz refers to the obligatory duties that a Muslim must discharge as part of fulfilling the requirements of their faith.

reflecting on the Muslim discourses emerging in a post-apartheid context, particularly from the conservative religious establishment, is the emphasis on being "Muslim", and following to the letter the mandate of the Quranic revelations. As alluded to earlier, Quranic revelations are clear and unambiguous with regard to the importance of pursuing social justice and actively participating in civic activities. What seems to be at issue here however, is the interpretation of exactly what it means to be Muslim in the current context, and how these interpretations are being expressed and articulated in broader society?

Given the turn of global events post 9-11, South African Muslims, like other Muslim communities elsewhere, have been faced with an increasing number of socio-political dilemmas. In some instances they have managed to engage with these in a constructive, well articulated manner. A good example is around the issue of the anti-terrorism legislation proposed by the ANC government.[387] But on other issues, domestic and global, Muslims remain deeply divided, strategically unprepared to meet the challenges, and often-times politically obtuse, which is a matter of great concern to many Muslim social activists. This does not mean that the resources to rectify these gaps do not exist; rather, there needs to be a constructive and progressive harnessing of such resources to create the space for mature and reasoned dialogue and responses to those issues that affect Muslims.

While the new South African dispensation promotes a non-sectarian, non-racial ethos, many members of minority groups do nevertheless want to exercise their right to express their unique identities. Indeed, this is the strength of the country's growing democracy which advances equality, unity and diversity as essential components for nation-building. South African Muslims, diverse as they are, constitute a crucial component of this democracy. The challenges they face, as outlined above, require radically alternative approaches to those that have defined their responses to date, in order that they do not become denuded as a community.

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[387] I. Buccus and L. Nadvi, "The Role of (Muslim) Civil Society in Resisting the Ant-Terrorism Bill," *Annual Review of Islam in South Africa* 8 (2005), 45 – 49.

Developing a Post-Apartheid Political Culture among South African Muslims

The political landscape of South Africa changed dramatically in 1994 as its citizens were thrust into a new historical epoch, one that would be shaped not only by a new set of political realities, which included a non-racial post-apartheid dispensation, but also the more exacting demands of a globalizing world order.[388] Muslim South Africans, along with the rest of the country, had to acclimatize themselves to the numerous changes that the nation was going through and in so doing embarked on a new chapter in their collective history. This meant responding to a variety of political, social, economic and cultural transformations which in some instances required entering previously un-chartered territory. This following section analyses some of this engagement and attempts to provide an overall summary of the key political issues that South African Muslims have engaged with since 1994.

What is documented below is largely from archival resources, but does in some instances draw from interviews and field research conducted for this study.

i) *Political Campaigning and Participation in Elections*

The prospect of a new non-racial democratic government in 1994 led to some South African Muslims mobilizing along religious lines to create a political party to contest the national elections and have a voice in parliament to address issues relating to Muslims. The Africa Muslim Party was created with the express purpose of contesting the 1994 elections. It failed to gain representation in parliament, possibly because it did not have a track record which voters could identify with or because Muslims were not interested in religious insularity. Interestingly, virtually all the Muslim politicians and MPs who gained seats in Parliament in the first democratic election, belonged to the ANC, which won the national election with a 63 % majority.[389] Muslim Ministers have held key

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[388] See Barber, *South Africa in the 20th Century*, 312 and T. Lodge, *Politics in South Africa : From Mandela to Mbeki* (Cape Town : David Philip, 2002).
[389] See Barber, *South Africa in the 20th Century*, 312 and Lodge, *Politics in South Africa : From Mandela to Mbeki*.

positions in the Cabinet and National Assembly since 1994.[390] The fact that a political party that articulated itself along secular lines, viz the ANC, brought into power more Muslims than a Muslim political party, sent a significant political message; that appealing to religious sentiment would not necessarily secure political support. It was precisely the ANC's guarantee of freedom of religious expression that made it arguably more popular amongst even Muslim voters.

Ten years after the first national election, the ANC in 2004, realizing that Indians, including the Muslim component, constituted an important minority vote, campaigned heavily within this community, with President Mbeki meeting with various Muslim business and religious leaders in an attempt to secure their vote. In Durban, a meeting with the President was set up, inviting in particular, prominent members of the middle class Muslim elite to a gathering at the City Hall.[391] In the weeks leading up to the 2004 elections, the ANC vigorously courted the religious, business and community leaders of minority groups nationally. This included Muslim organisations, some of whom subsequently paid for advertisements in local newspapers calling on all Muslims to vote for the ANC.[392] They argued that because Muslims could freely practice their religion under an ANC government, and because this government had sent a representative to the International Court of Justice to make a presentation on the security wall (also referred to as the "apartheid wall") in Israel / Palestine, Muslims should vote to keep this party in power.[393]

What was noteworthy was that there was virtually no critical debate within the Muslim middle class a decade into democracy around the failures of the ruling party to address key socio-economic issues, which affected the poorer, historically disadvantaged communities. The major opposition party in the country, the Democratic Alliance (DA),

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[390] These included Dullah Omar and Valli Moosa. Currently, one of the most important ministerial portfolios, ie, Education, is held by a Muslim, viz, Naledi Pandor whose deputy was another Muslim, Enver Surtee. After the recall of former President Thabo Mbeki and resultant changes in cabinet positions, Enver Surtee was appointed Minister of Justice, the second Muslim to hold this position since 1994.

[391] This meeting was held on the 20 March 2004, to which primarily the Muslim middle class and religious leaders were invited.

[392] This included organisations such as the Islamic Forum, based in Durban.

[393] These adverts appeared in newspapers such as Al Qalam, leading up to the elections.

was not seen as a viable alternative as its party leader at that time, Tony Leon, was Jewish, and married to an Israeli woman who had served in the Israeli army. It was not his being Jewish per se that was a problem, as there were Jewish members in the ANC (Ronnie Kasrils for example): rather it was Leon's assumed political connection to and support of Israel that was problematic. Palestine remains a political issue close to the hearts of many Muslims. This suggests that most Muslims chose to support the ruling party in order to engage in national political life, primarily as an exercise in self-preservation.[394]

The key question is: would Muslims have voted for the ANC if there had not been a call by some religious leaders to do so, and if there had been a range of other parties who had directly addressed issues relating to Muslims, and had therefore endeared themselves to a Muslim electorate? The tactic of the ruling party engaging with religious and racial minorities as an electoral block suggests a somewhat innovative trend, one that allows for the (dangerous) development of a patron-client relationship between the moderate Muslim religious leadership and middle class, and the ANC. This suggests that Muslims have, for the foreseeable future, given up on the earlier tentative strategy of creating Muslim political parties to represent Muslim concerns, however there are regionally based parties who are mobilizing in their areas. The ANC strategy paid-off. With the help of the minority vote, the ruling party captured nearly 70 percent of the votes in the 2004 national elections.

A recent study of the Muslim vote in Durban in the 2006 local government elections suggests a similar pattern.[395] An analysis of five wards in the Durban metro region, with the highest Muslim demographic percentage, indicates that the ANC continues to remain the party of choice among Muslims, with the DA, IFP and MF trailing significantly. At local level, some of this popularity may be related to the fact that several ANC ward councillors, such as Fawzia Peer and Yakoob Baig, were Muslims. The ruling party has

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[394] Although the DA even recruited prominent Muslim religious leaders such as Maulana Rafeek Shah, this did not get them extra Muslim votes.
[395] I. Buccus and L.Nadvi, "Muslims, Participation and Local Government Elections in Durban," *Critical Dialogue* 3, no. 1 (2007) 38 – 46.

clearly found a loyal constituency among Muslims, both in Durban and more broadly. For the foreseeable future it seems that Muslim voters would continue to support the ANC.

However, it remains to be seen what impact the recall of President Thabo Mbeki in September 2008, as well as the subsequent appointment of President Motlanthe and a new cabinet, will have on Muslim voting patterns.[396] While there was no time to investigate the impact of this development in any systematic way, a cursory examination of recent letters to the press does suggest some concern about the seemingly contradictory tendencies of strong Africanist and communist influences within the ANC, as well as the specter of corruption. Before the split in the ANC and the breakaway by "Terror" Lekota and Sam Shilowa to form the Congress of the People (Cope), concerns that Indians, including Muslims, may shift away from the ANC led to calls from the likes of Fatima Meer to reconstitute the NIC as an alliance partner of the ANC. These calls have however been tempered to some degree with the argument that it would be inappropriate to revive the NIC, given current political dynamics.[397] This idea has been replaced by calls for a new lobby group which will represent Indian interests, but also work with all racial groupings to respond to critical issues, that affect all South Africans.[398] It also remains to be seen what effect the replacement of Ebrahim Rasool as Premier of the Western Cape will have on the behaviour of Muslim voters in the region. The "breakaway" ANC faction, Cope, is campaigning as a party that will represent all South Africans. Whether Muslims will be drawn to this party as an alternative option to the ANC, also remains to be seen.

In preparing for the 2009 national elections, there have been two recent developments within the Muslim community that are worth mentioning. The first was the launch of a new Muslim political party, the Al-Jamah party, which while being primarily Cape based, has been hosting rallies and meetings in other parts of the country.[399] Al-Jamah fashions itself as campaigning on a moral platform, which it hopes will also attract people from

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[396] See Political Bureau, "Its all over," *Sunday Tribune*, September 21, 2008.
[397] See J. Naran, "NIC Proposal making way for Lobby," *Tribune Herald*, August 31, 2008.
[398] Naran, "NIC Proposal making way for Lobby".
[399] Al – Jamah website http://www.aljama.co.za/ . The party was launched in 2007.

other faith backgrounds. Second, there has been an intensified call by the Islamic religious councils for Muslims to participate in the elections, which seems to be a slight departure from earlier uncertainty among some of the *ulema* bodies on whether they should endorse a call for Muslims to vote.[400] Both of these developments signal the fact that the Muslim religious bodies (even the conservative ones) are actually realizing the importance of participating more intensely in the national political arena.

ii)   *Social Activism and the Emergence of New Progressive Forces*

The Muslim leadership that government met with in 2004 was overwhelmingly middle class, and this dynamic has clearly played a role at the level of class politics, with emerging criticism among Muslims in poorer communities that their issues have not been addressed by the state, nor is the Muslim leadership, either religious or political, taking up their causes in any sustained manner, other than through relief and charitable support.[401] Low-income Muslim residents in townships like Chatsworth and Phoenix, and indeed in other areas throughout South Africa, have become increasingly involved in social movement activities that are challenging the state regarding the delivery of social services and homes, as well as job creation.[402] This is clearly in response to growing disparities over the last decade in the living standards between those living along or below the poverty line and the middle classes. [403]

This social activism is conducted largely along class lines without distinction of race and religion, as common concerns force alliances that transcend such barriers. While the majority of communities engaging the state around issues of social delivery are not

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[400] The SA Muslim Network (SAMNET) sent out a mass mail to Muslims in November 2008, encouraging them to register to vote, having consulted with leading ulema who endorsed this. See e-mail by SAMNET, *Public Announcement : Muslim Participation in Political and Community Structures*, November 6, 2008. Also, Darul Ihsan, considered a conservative religious body, sent out an e-mail to Muslims, encouraging them to register to vote. E-mail by Darul Ihsan, *Register to Vote*, November 6, 2008.

[401] Groups like Gift of the Givers, Africa Muslims Agency and Islamic Relief do work in low income Muslim communities, but this is mostly humanitarian as opposed to activist oriented.

[402] This emerged during interviews with key Muslim activists such as Rassool Snyman, Ebrahim Bofelo and Mohamed Amra. See also, A. Desai, *The Poors of Chatsworth*.(Durban : Madiba Publishers, 2000).

[403] See P. Bond, *Elite Transition : From Apartheid to Neo-liberalism in South Africa* (London : Pluto Press, 2002) and P. Bond, *Looting Africa : The Economics of Exploitation* (Scottsville : UKZN Press, 2006), 6.

Muslims, there are individual Muslims who are outspoken on these issues. They include individuals from the academic, business or professional sector, such as Rassool Snyman, Naeem Jeenah and Ebrahim Mphutlane Bofelo, who have joined national activist movements such as the Social Movements Indaba, as well as low-income or unemployed Muslims who have chosen to become fully active on issues around which their livelihood depends, such as members from the KZN Subsistence Fishermen's Coalition and the Street Traders Associations in Durban, whose 2007 struggles have been well documented in the national press.[404]

Vahed and Jeppie reflect that there are significant numbers of unemployed Muslims countrywide.[405] This remains an issue which is part of a broader national question around social welfare and poverty alleviation. Durban's Muslims have yet to become more fully involved in the campaign to address social disparities in broader South African society. There are exceptions of course. A small number of Muslim welfare organizations are engaging in relief and humanitarian work, rather than just "dawah". Notable among these is the KZN-based Gift of the Givers, which was started in 1992, by a Muslim medical doctor, Dr. Imtiaaz Sooliman, and has become internationally renowned as an organization that does not just respond to natural disasters but has sustainable poverty alleviation and social upliftment schemes which benefit all religious and race communities.[406] In interviewing Sooliman for this study, it became evident that he is deeply inspired by his faith. He refers to the Sufi Tariqa that he follows, which has been according to him, the main driving force for his work. Sooliman draws a clear link between his religious beliefs and his social outreach work and argues that while he will never work for government, he will engage with them in order to benefit mankind, which

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[404] See, K. Ganpath, J. Wicks & Sapa, "Durban police arrest 500 street traders," *Mercury*, June 20, 2007; KZN Subsistence Fishermen's Coalition, 2007, Notice of Protest Flyer; Notes / Transcript from interview conducted with KZN Subsistence Fishermen representative Max Magnussen, 26 May 2007. See also interviews with E. Bofelo and R. Snyman.

[405] Vahed and Jeppie, "Multiple Communities: Muslims in post-apartheid South Africa"

[406] Based on an Interview conducted with Dr. I. Sooliman on 14 November 2006. See also http://www.giftofthegivers.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=72&Itemid=79 . While Dr. Sooliman originally started doing relief work in Muslim nations such as Bosnia, this focus has eventually shifted to the Gift of the Givers operating in all conflict areas, regardless of the demographics of the region.

is the key philosophy of Gift of the Givers.[407] Another notable group which works among township and shack settlement youth is the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY), which has taken on the challenge of sustainable development programs targeting low income communities, primarily from the indigenous African community.[408] Mohammed Amra, the director of WAMY, who was interviewed for this study, felt that Muslims need to use financial resources more effectively, and instead of simply feeding people on certain occasions (which he does not necessarily oppose), monies should be used to invest in schools and other institutions which will continue to sustain communities on an ongoing basis.[409] Both Gift of the Givers and WAMY stand out as exceptions among the plethora of Muslim relief organizations that have a transformative activist agenda as central to their outreach strategy.

The post-apartheid period has also been witness to the rise of newly emerging civic groups, who have roots in minority religious communities and cater to local needs. In the case of Muslims, these civil society groups reflect the plight of "progressive" Muslim formations struggling to emerge in a post-apartheid context as alternatives to what might be regarded as conservative mainstream theological bodies.[410] This has often led to long, drawn-out campaigns between conservative establishments and younger bodies trying to define themselves in a "hostile" (Muslim) terrain. An example of this contestation has been the struggle by a fairly new movement in Durban called Taking Islam to the People (TIP), formed in 2003 to challenge the existing conservative and rigid interpretation of Islam. One of the key challenges faced by TIP centered around its efforts to hold a family *Eidgah* prayer on the beachfront.[411] Women have generally been barred from this public practice, whereas their counterparts in the Cape are able to attend. In the preparations leading up to the first such *Eidgah*, the conservative theological establishment in KZN

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[407] See interview with I. Sooliman, 11 November 2006.

[408] Based on an Interview conducted with Mohammed Amra on 8 November 2006.

[409] See Interview with M. Amra, 8 November 2006.

[410] Progressive Islam has emerged as a fairly recent school of thought within the broader global Muslim community, over the last decade, and its primary focus is on embracing "pluralist" understandings of Islam. Scholars of this school of thought include Omid Safi and Farid Esack. See also, O. Safi, *Progressive Muslims : On Justice, Gender and Pluralism* (Oxford : Oneworld, 2003).

[411] The Eidgah is a mass prayer usually held on an open field on the morning of the Eid festival (Eid ul-Fitr and Eid ul-Adha).

issued pamphlets against the event and its organisers, describing it as the "Naked / Topless *Eidgah*," given that it was being held near the beach.[412] While this generated a huge controversy, the *Eidgah* was held, with a successful outcome in that it had both male and female speakers, and has now become a regular feature in the city calendar with numbers of participants increasing. TIP organisers felt that in accomplishing this, the group had won both a religious as well as a political victory. More recently, another newly launched Islamic group, ILM SA, organized a family *Eidgah* at Essenwood Park in Durban, during the *Eid* festival in September 2008.[413] The organizer too was subjected to a barrage of criticism.

TIP has also held open air midday prayers on the last Friday of each month outside the Durban City Hall, inviting progressive speakers to address the congregation. Given that the prayers are held outside the usual confines of a mosque (under an open tent), this has meant that passersby of all backgrounds can observe Muslims praying, as well as listening to the religious sermons in both English and Arabic. This has had the effect of demystifying the performing of the prayer to non-Muslims, some of them being homeless people who live in the city centre, while both Muslims and non-Muslims who choose to listen have access to progressive speakers and social activists addressing issues of social justice, poverty alleviation and job creation, which are very close to the hearts of the city's many indigent people.

This group is one of a small number of groups emerging nationally, who are trying to tackle key socio-political issues from an alternative activist platform, which they see as very central to their Islamic faith.[414] While they are slowly gaining a following among those Muslims who have grown weary of the one-dimensional rhetoric of traditional theological institutions, they continue to face an ongoing battle with the conservative

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[412] *Majlis* Newsletter, 2003.
[413] ILM SA, is the Institute for Learning and Motivation, SA, a recently launched organisation, which organises Islamic oriented events, and hosts international Islamic scholars at public lectures.
[414] Other groups such as the Interfaith Foundation of South Africa (Durban based), Women United in Islam (Johannesburg based) and ILM SA (Durban) are attempting to create alternative spaces and platforms for Muslims to engage with each other.

elements who control most of the institutions of power and regularly pillory these progressives as "modernists", which is the ultimate "crime."[415]

It is also important to note that there are a variety of new lobbying and civic aligned Muslim groups that have emerged recently, which are attempting to organize Muslims politically through civil society structures. Two such organizations are i) Durban Central Islamic Forum (DCIF) and ii) South African Muslim Network (SAMNET).[416] Both have emerged on the political landscape in 2007 / 2008, and while it has not been possible to examine their activities in any substantial detail, it is necessary to make brief mention of the context within which they have emerged and what purpose they hope to serve.

The DCIF has largely been an initiative of eThekwini municipality's Chief Whip of the ANC, Fawzia Peer, who has been actively trying to mobilize Muslim civic organizations in eThekwini (Durban) to structure themselves under an umbrella body, where they will have a formal voice in the eThekwini Council and municipality structures. The purpose of setting up the DCIF has been to facilitate Muslim bodies located in the broader eThekwini region having; a) official recognition with the Council and b) the ability to make input and representation into Council matters, which affect Muslims in particular, as well as other residents in the city. The constitution of the DCIF states that its objectives will include the following;

a) To create a forum for Muslim organisations representing the broader Muslim community (Muslim civil society) of Durban (eThekwini) so that they can collectively and in a unified way, represent the concerns of the Durban Muslim community at Local Government level in an official capacity

b) The Forum and its appointed members in whatever capacity shall not be used to promote any party political agenda

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[415] See for example the *The Majlis* websites http://themajlis.net/name-Slkkllk.html and http://themajlis.net/Sections-article221-p1.html , which contains various condemnations of "modernist" thought and views.
[416] See SAMNET Conceptual Discussion Document, April 2008 and DCIF Notices of Meeting, June, October and November 2007 / DCIF Constitution, August 2008.

c) The Forum shall be inclusive and non-sectarian and will also work with other religious and civil society groups for the greater good of all citizens of eThekwini and South Africa

d) The Forum shall address all civic and social issues that affect the Durban Muslim community in particular, and the broader community in general as decided by the Executive Committee

e) The Forum's work will be geared towards ensuring that principles of social justice, harmonious community relations and advancing the interests of the poor, marginalised and vulnerable sectors of the community, will inform and guide its actions

f) The Executive Committee will nominate relevant experts to serve on its Shura Committee when such a need arises. [417]

It becomes clear from these stated objectives that the body intends to adopt a very broad set of resolutions, however these are also very clearly framed within an Islamic / Muslim community context, as is evidenced by (a), (d) and (f). The DCIF has been making initial inroads into developing an agenda and action plan, trying to address issues such as the plight of street beggars in eThekwini.[418] The umbrella structure is still very new, and it remains to be seen, what impact it will have in mobilizing Muslim bodies in eThekwini to participate more actively in local politics. There is some skepticism among Muslims around whether the DCIF will degenerate into a front for the ANC.

SAMNET was launched in 2008, and it is still developing its final vision and mission statements. However a brief summary of its exploratory vision and mission is as follows;

Vision
- Internally : A community that is united on core issues, having a sense of direction, purpose, self-esteem – a community that is committed to its duties towards the CREATOR and towards CREATION

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[417] See DCIF Constitution.
[418] See E-mail invitation, 9 May 2008 to discuss 'begging" issue.

- Externally : as a community to stand out as benefactors of mankind, patriotic and law-abiding[419]

Mission

- To obtain Social, Economic. Spiritual and Educational excellence within the framework of Islam, to establish a flourishing, integrated, empowered society through selfless service as reflected by the principles of Ubuntu, Ujima and Ukhuwwah. The Mission attempts to be all inclusive and moves beyond the boundaries – to some extent of the nation state. The intention is for the Muslim community to play a pivotal role not only in South Africa but to extend its influence and profile within the region and further afield.[420]

It is conceptualized as a national networking platform for South African Muslims, focusing around, five basic focal areas:

i) Leadership
ii) Politics
iii) Media
iv) Youth, women, indigenous Muslim empowerment
v) Community social responsibility[421]

Some of the key concerns that SAMNET highlights as being the driving force behind its establishment are:

i) The fragmentation and lack of co-ordination of activities between different groupings within the community
ii) The community is currently REACTIVE and needs to be more PROACTIVE
iii) Absence of volunteerism in the community
iv) Insufficient political representation

[419] See SAMNET Conceptual Discussion Document, April 2008, 2.
[420] SAMNET Conceptual Discussion Document, April 2008, 2.
[421] SAMNET Conceptual Discussion Document, April 2008, 3.

v) Lack of political engagement with centres of power

vi) Dawah approaches need reviewing

vii) Lack of empowerment and leadership within the community

viii)   Lack of women empowerment

ix) Lack of reading, writing, research and intellectual poverty

x) Lack of identification of potentially influential Muslim human resources within various power sources

xi) Lack of optimal usage of resources (human and financial)

xii) Absence of well-knit and well organized leadership

xiii)   Lack of inter-community dialogue[422]

SAMNET seems to constitute on the surface at least, an ideal vehicle for facilitating greater participation by Muslims in a variety of areas, particularly politics. Given the areas of concern highlighted above, it would appear to have its pulse on the core ailments and issues affecting the South African Muslim community. In that respect it is a highly commendable initiative. However in perusing its early discussion documents, it becomes evident that much of the steering committee driving this process in its initial stages is not necessarily representative of all sectors of the Muslim community, in terms of gender, race and class. Given the stated goals of the network, it therefore becomes imperative that it attempts to recruit as widely as possible from within the Muslim community, to become truly representative of all voices.[423]

iii)   Muslim Personal Law

One of the most intensely debated issues within both the Muslim community as well as the broader legal fraternity has been the possible implementation of Muslim Personal Law (MPL) as part of institutionalized customary law that would only apply to members of the Muslim community. This law would be based on compliancy and implementation

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[422] SAMNET Conceptual Discussion Document, April 2008, 1 – 2.
[423] Virtually all of the members of the steering committee are of Indian Muslim background. This observation is not intended as a criticism of the initiative, rather it signals concern around how to best achieve the vision and mission as articulated by the network .

according to *Shariah* (Islamic) Law. In effect this would mean the establishment of *Shariah* courts or similar institutions that would hear cases related to common personal law issues such as marriages, divorce and inheritance. MPL has become highly politicized, with Durban's Muslims central to many of the debates around this as yet unresolved matter.

In May 2000, a discussion paper produced by the South African Law Commission, titled "Issue Paper 15: Islamic Marriages and Related Matters" was put out into the public domain for discussion.[424] This was essentially a legal paper examining the merits of recognizing Muslim marriages, in accordance with *Shariah* Law. It comprised a set of proposals that requested public participation and responses regarding the feasibility of introducing a Bill that would legislate the functioning of matters related to marriages contracted under traditional Islamic custom (*Nikah*). The motivation was essentially to provide benefits for Muslims (especially female spouses and their children) that many were denied where Islamic law was applied on a de facto basis. The two main proposals were that couples contemplating marriage should have the right to choose a marital system (MPL or secular law) that was compatible with their religious beliefs and with the Constitution, and that such legislation could provide for both new and existing marriages.[425]

The most contentious issues were polygamous marriages and divorce, where there were differences between Islamic and secular law. After considering various responses, a second discussion paper (Discussion Paper 101: Islamic Marriages and Related Matters) was circulated for further comment in December 2001.[426] After intense consultation and debate, a report was presented by the Law Commission to Justice Minister Penuell Maduna in July 2003.[427] The report proposed a set of recommendations for a statute to be effected into law that would legislate all matters relating to Islamic marriages and related

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[424] See SA Law Commission, 2000, Issue Paper No 15, http://www.law.wits.ac.za/salc/issue/ip15.pdf . The issue paper is available in full.
[425] SA Law Commission, 2000, Issue Paper No 15, v.
[426] See SA Law Commission, 2001, Discussion Paper 101 http://wwwserver.law.wits.ac.za/salc/discussn/dp101.pdf.
[427] See SA Law Commission Report, 2003, http://wwwserver.law.wits.ac.za/salc/report/pr59report.pdf.

issues such as divorce, marital support and maintenance, child custody, and so on. The report, popularly known as the Draft Bill on Islamic Marriages, is yet to be ratified because of the high number of emotive and complex responses to it. Durban-based lawyers and academics like Saber Jazhbay and Suleman Dangor, were central players in some of these debates. The engagement around this draft bill exposed major fault lines within the Muslim community.

Engagement around Muslim Personal Law is of critical import as regards the Muslim community's relationship with the state post-1994. It was clearly evident throughout the process that the state took the religious beliefs of its Muslim citizens seriously given that the courts were being faced with cases that had arisen largely as a result of disputes emerging out of agreements or marriages contracted according to Islamic Law, which was technically not recognized by the South African judicial system. A case considered a precedent was *Amod & Another v Multilateral Motor Vehicle Accidents Fund*, in which the court gave legal recognition to a Muslim marriage for purposes of the duty of support.[428] Customary practice cannot be ignored in a diverse society like South Africa. Debates around MPL paralleled those around customary practices within traditional African communities that contracted marriages according to specific cultural rituals, which while not religious per se, had a similar rationale in their execution. What is interesting about MPL is that Muslims, can choose to marry under secular or Muslim Personal Law. Clearly, there can be no legal compunction on Muslim women to force compliance with MPL though social pressures may exist.

Muslims remain deeply divided over MPL. The *ulema* consider it too liberal, while women's rights groups feel that it gives too much leeway to men. However, this debate illustrated some fundamental principles related to the new democratic dispensation, particularly within the context of participation by Muslims. It suggested that freedom of religious belief needs to be protected through state institutional support in the form of legislation, that freedom of expression means that choices offered to citizens must allow them to follow either their own religio-cultural system or a secular legal system, and that

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[428] SA Law Commission, 2000, vi.

where an issue concerned conservative elements directly, they were prepared to participate in the political process.

iv) The Anti-Terrorism Bill

After 9/11, many governments across the globe came under increased pressure, some applied by the United States, to introduce extra anti-terrorism legislation as part of a global "war on terror". The South African government introduced a draft Anti-Terrorism Bill in September 2002. Many human rights organizations such as the Freedom of Expression Institute initially opposed the bill arguing that it would significantly curtail civil liberties guaranteed by the constitution. Government showed little sign of relenting. Detractors of the bill next sought to change technical aspects of the draft text of the bill. Muslims in particular would have preferred the bill to be completely abandoned as opposed to being revised.

Given that similar anti-terror legislation had been used elsewhere to detain Muslims without charging them or allowing them a trial, even subjecting some to torture in prison, South African Muslims were extremely nervous about the bill as it had been originally introduced. Muslims, instead of hoping that the bill would go away, sought to organize as part of a national lobby that made presentations to parliamentary committees regarding their objections. A key argument was that the state already had 22 pieces of legislation to deal with terrorism.[429]

Muslim representation constituted the involvement of a number of Muslim organizations, both religious and professional bodies who provided resources and capacity to engage with the bill. These included the Islamic Medical Association (IMA), Jamiatul Ulama (KZN), Muslim Judicial Council, Muslim Youth Movement (MYM), Association of Muslim Accountants and Lawyers (AMAL), Al Ansaar Foundation, South African National Zakaah Fund (SANZAF), Islamic Dawah Movement (IDM), Red Crescent Society of South Africa, and Media Review Network (MRN). Engagement was

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[429] Written Submission made by Saber Jhazbhay, a human rights lawyer based in Durban, and COSATU.

primarily driven by the perception that Muslim South Africans would be first in line as "targets", given their involvement and support for resistance struggles and movements throughout the Muslim world, which could be construed as support of terrorist organizations. The secretariat for organizing a comprehensive Muslim community response to the proposed bill was based in Durban under the auspices of the Association of Muslim Accountants and Lawyers (AMAL), which provided its offices and logistical infrastructure to ensure a well coordinated infrastructure. Their 2003 submission to President Thabo Mbeki noted:

> Our government should be the first to OPPOSE a bill of this type because it goes against everything that the freedom struggle stood for. If the liberation movements, during the apartheid days, were judged today under this bill all would be condemned as terrorist organizations. If the ATB is passed here, no South African will be able to support in ANY way ANY of the liberation struggles presently being waged in many parts of the world. This is hugely ironical because virtually the entire world supported the South African freedom struggle. We are told that the ATB is needed here in order to deal with groups like Pagad and the Boeremag. Both these groups have been apprehended without the bill. It took good police work, not new laws to achieve this. However, we must emphasize that if measures are contemplated to tighten up domestic security we will certainly be supportive of such moves provided they don't infringe on civil liberties. [430]

It is significant that while the Muslim community's input was powerful, the submissions made by other sectors of civil society, particularly trade unions such as COSATU, was arguably the crucial factor that forced the government to revisit aspects of the bill. While a revised bill, taking into account COSATU's concerns, was eventually passed in November 2004, this foray by the Durban (and national) Muslim community into organised lobbying and participation over a national issue, albeit one that was of

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[430] This was part of a letter submitted to President Mbeki, in November 2003, authored by Mr. A. Dawjee, a media personality based in Durban and written on behalf of the signatories.

direct concern to Muslims, marked an important political shift in a post-apartheid context.[431] Even though the issue was largely based along group interest, it reflected the fact that Muslims were willing to seek a political voice on matters of concern to their broader interests, and were prepared to make this voice heard through civic structures. The challenge, of course, is to extend that participation into other aspects of life.

v) *International Solidarity Campaigns*

From around 2000 there was renewed interest within Muslim civil society, but also segments of the public at large, in political solidarity with international campaigns, initially in the Middle East region but subsequently within the Muslim world in general. The breaking out of the second Palestinian Intifada in September 2000 was in many ways the catalyst for sustained involvement by Muslims, albeit by a small number of Muslims working in conjunction with broader based civil society. The events of 11 September, 2001, and the subsequent invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq by the United States and its coalition partners led to increased anger among Muslims locally, resulting in protests, marches and demonstrations. An Anti-war Coalition movement was launched, with the most intense activity concentrated in three main urban areas, viz, Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban.

What was intriguing about the engagement of Muslim activists around these issues was that they were essentially divided into two discrete camps, a conservative element motivated primarily by religious factors, and including the religious leadership, and progressive liberal minded activists whose activism, while partly inspired by their faith, was not bound by constraining religious injunctions issued by the religious leadership around how the campaigns should be conducted. An example of religious conservatism in Durban was a declaration by the Muslim clergy that men and women were to march separately during one of the public marches organized by groups such as

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[431] I. Buccus and L. Nadvi, "Resisting the Anti-Terrorism Bill : The role of Civil Society in Legislative Reform," *Critical Dialogue* 2, no 1 (2006), 18-23.

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People Against War and the Palestine Support Committee in 2003.[432] This meant in effect that non-Muslim activists who wanted to participate would be forced to protest separately or accept gender segregation. The intervention of more liberal Muslim activists led to a choice being offered to men and women to either march separately or together. Most Muslim women, it should be noted, chose to march in a women's only section.

These dynamics were clearly indicative of a community struggling to define the nature of its engagement with international solidarity campaigns. While many Muslims were arguing for constructive engagement with the state regarding its foreign policy stance on the Middle East, some religious leaders advocated for the recruitment of Muslims to engage in military campaigns against the occupation armies of the United States. They also criticized individual activists for not being "Muslim" enough in terms of how they conducted their activism.[433] These kinds of tensions detracted from building a unified coalition with broad based civil society in some instances, to take on the issues at a national level.

There were, however, various forms of activism that galvanized Muslims broadly into committing acts of solidarity that were recognized by the state as immensely courageous and worthy of national accolades. In early 2003, a group of 32 Muslims from across the country left South Africa to go to Iraq as human shields, and monitor and document the initial bombing campaign launched against Iraq by the United States government and its allies. This group was co-ordinated by a Durban based media activist, Abie Dawjee. While they performed an important task by providing first hand accounts of the bombings and its impact on ordinary Iraqis to media agencies back home, they were eventually pressured to return by families concerned about their safety, as they were

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[432] Vahed and Jeppie, "Multiple Communities: Muslims in post-apartheid South Africa", 273.
[433] Very often the mosque pulpits became a space where the Imams of the mosque would in their sermons, refer to the ongoing war in Afghanistan and Iraq and argue for the necessity of SA Muslims becoming involved in various ways such as sending money to the region or even considering going to fight in the wars. Also, in the wake of an op-ed article entitled, *Enemies of the faith* (M&G, 6-12 August 2004) written by the author of this thesis,,which ran in both the Mail and Guardian and Al-Qalam Newspapers, a heated public debate erupted around what was appropriate Muslim behaviour and response to these ongoing issues affecting Muslims in the Middle East. I became the subject of severe criticism for daring to argue that random militant approaches (such as the beheading of innocent civilians) to dealing with these issues was not the only route to follow, and was criticised for "not being Muslim enough.".

clearly not in a position to stop the war. They returned to South Africa to a hero's welcome from the community and acknowledgement by the South African government.[434]

Political pressure was placed on the South African government, by a broad based coalition of activists which included a significant number of Muslims, in the form of petitions and memoranda that demanded that the government cease trade agreements with countries engaging in activities that broke international law. This was considered by many across the spectrum necessary to force the government into complying with measures that would ultimately make a powerful political statement. In addition, as a result of ongoing lobbying and advocacy around international solidarity, parliament engaged in a debate on the issue of its foreign policy towards Israel. The South African government was one of a handful of governments that delivered a presentation against the Security Wall being built by Israel, in support of an International Court of Justice ruling which had declared the wall illegal.[435]

It is significant that despite heightened emotional sentiments by local Muslims towards the United States and its allies, there have been no major incidences of political violence or terrorism directed at foreign embassies or public facilities to express anger. The exception has been those of isolated armed attacks by a fringe militant group in the Western Cape called People Against Gangterism and Drugs (PAGAD) in the late 1990s.[436] This group pre-dated 9/11 and is now dormant and no longer active. The only major terrorist attack in post-apartheid South Africa was the work of right wing Afrikaner nationalists who attacked railway lines and mosques in Soweto in 2002 as an expression of dissent against the government.[437] The relatively peaceful approach of Muslims is significant in light of more militant engagement by Muslim groups elsewhere. It affirms

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[434] Vahed and Jeppie, "Multiple Communities: Muslims in post-apartheid South Africa", 274.
[435] See the text version of the SA Government's submission on the Apartheid Wall to the ICJ, at; http://212.153.43.18/icjwww/idocket/imwp/imwpstatements/iWrittenStatement_26_RepublicofSouthAfrica .pdf .
[436] See S. Jeppie, "Introduction," in *Drugs, Gangs and People's Power : Exploring the Pagad Phenomenon,* eds. R. Galant and F. Gamaldien (Cape Town : Claremont Main Road Masjid, 1996).
[437] See B. Phillips, "Blast on South African Bridge," *BBC Online,* November 28, 2002 http://newswww.bbc.net.uk/1/hi/world/africa/2522579.stm.

the idea that South African Muslims have opted to exercise primarily civic modes of public protest and dissent.

It is important to note that the broader South African solidarity movement, that has historically been rallying around causes such as Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan, and which has a significant Muslim membership, continues with its work in various ways in the contemporary context. Organisations such as the Palestine Solidarity Committee and the Anti-War Coalition continue to mobilize nationally and organize events that advance these various political struggles.[438] Significant campaigns marking forty years of the occupation of the Palestinian territories (2007) and sixty years since the creation of Israel (2008), as well as the five year anniversary of the Iraq war (2008) have been observed, where both SA Muslims and the broader national activist fraternity have participated. However the involvement by Muslims has been limited.

vi)   Foreign Policy Engagement

The focus of South Africa's foreign policy in the immediate aftermath of the 1994 elections, and under the guidance of Nelson Mandela's presidency, was a commitment to advance and protect human rights.[439] Roland Henwood points out that the early foreign policy agenda after April 1994 was representative of the perspective of the Government of National Unity (GNU), with the ANC having greater influence on foreign policy after the exit of the National Party from the GNU, and despite the continued presence of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP).[440] Henwood further argues that in the initial stages there was a strong link between the Reconstruction and Development programme (RDP) and the foreign policy agenda in light of a broader identification by the GNU of its

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[438] See the online sites of these groups, AWC, http://groups.yahoo.com/group/AWC-SA/ , PSC http://groups.yahoo.com/group/psc-sa/.

[439] R. Henwood, "South Africa's Foreign Policy : Principles and Problems, " in *Fairy Godmother, Hegemon or Partner : In search of a South African Foreign Policy*, ed. H. Solomon, 6.(Pretoria : ISS Monograph Series 13, 1997).

[440] Henwood.,"South Africa's Foreign Policy : Principles and Problems", 6.

responsibilities to its domestic economic context as well as the regional Southern African political context. [441]

It could be argued that the new South African government was defining a foreign policy agenda literally from scratch. Mandela's stature was in many ways the stabilizing factor in creating deeper ties with the rest of the world, as has been argued by many analysts, and this is also clearly evident in the formal diplomatic relationships that the "new" South Africa opted to pursue with nations that were deemed "problematic" by the United States, such as Cuba, Libya, Iran, Syria and China.[442] This points to the very clear political position that South Africa was adopting from the beginning, which was to act in its own interests, and not be influenced by the US, which was no doubt keeping a very close eye on developments in this fledgling democracy. It was also Mandela's way of acknowledging the political support that these nations had provided to the ANC and the broader anti-apartheid movement during the most difficult years of its struggle against the former racist regime. The establishment of relationships with Muslim nations such as Iran and Libya was arguably the stimulus for nascent interaction between the country's Muslims and the government's foreign policy agenda.

During the early years of democratic rule, Muslims were beginning to adjust to a transitional mode on two levels. They were, in the first instance, seeking to contextualize their own role within the new South Africa, and, secondly, trying to come to terms with the high levels of diversity within their own ranks. This heterogeneity meant that they could not speak with a single voice.[443] This latter dimension has since been the cause of divisions largely due to sectarian disputes, theological differences, as well as differing political views between conservative sectors of the community and a growing group of moderates and progressive thinkers.[444] In addition, while there had been a whole sector of

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[441] Henwood. "South Africa's Foreign Policy : Principles and Problems", 8.

[442] Henwood, "South Africa's Foreign Policy : Principles and Problems", 12 – 14.

[443] Vahed and Jeppie, "Multiple Communities: Muslims in post-apartheid South Africa", 252 – 286.

[444] There are a number of theological councils, including the Muslim Judicial Council, The Jamiatul Ulama (Johannesburg and Durban) and the Sunni Jamiatul Ulama, that are tasked with offering religious advice to the broader Muslim community on a number of levels. While they often agree on a number of theological questions, there are also differing sets of advice offered on a single issue, a recent example being whether

Muslims active in the anti-apartheid struggle, and indeed very central to many of its campaigns, the post-apartheid context raised a number of questions around the political role of Muslims in this new dispensation, both at domestic as well as foreign policy level.

Given also that some quarters of the religious leadership within South Africa had objected to Muslims participating in national political life, during the anti-apartheid struggle, and the fact that religious political parties had done very poorly in the election, a debate began among Muslims as to how they should participate within a predominantly secular political system that guaranteed rights to all, including those of a homosexual orientation, and permitted liquor and gambling, all of these aspects of the South African constitution being an anathema to Muslims in general.[445]

This debate was not necessarily centralized nor was it controlled by any one faction or grouping within the community, and was scattered across various sectors. Some of it occurred within intellectual and academic circles, while other aspects such as the NGO and *dawah* sectors formulated strategies to create greater awareness of the Islamic faith through outreach and charity work.[446] In the first GNU, there was a reliance by Muslim citizens on Muslim members of parliament (MPs) to take care of "Muslim" interests.[447] However, there was soon a realization that these MPs were not primarily advancing a religious agenda but were focused on secular party political concerns. They toed the party political line and were not able to do much to influence policy processes. This raised questions as to where Muslim allegiance as a faith-based citizenry lay, and what options they could develop to take their collective interests forward within civil society circles in relation to a predominantly secular government.

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the *Sunday Times* newspaper should be boycotted or not for running controversial cartoons of the Prophet Muhammed.

[445] See A. Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa : The Muslim Youth Movement* (Cape Town : UCT Press, 1995), 125, 154. Given that the Muslim Youth Movement was one of the driving forces behind advocating for political participation by Muslims, in the fight against apartheid, it became the target for attacks, particularly by the Deobandi ulema fraternity.

[446] A number of prominent intellectuals such as Ebrahim Moosa, Abdulkader Tayob and Farid Esack were engaging in academic work advancing both a general Islamic scholarship as well as contributing to the debates on Muslim identity in South Africa, while NGOs and *Dawah* agencies like the IPCI and IDM in Durban were increasing their outreach activities to try and increase conversions to Islam.

[447] There was an assumption in the Muslim public discourse that MPs such as Kader Asmal, Dullah Omar and others would ensure that the "Muslim" voice would be heard in parliament.

The Mandela (1994-98) years were a period of transition on many levels. Internationally, South Africa was seeking a foothold within the international community as the newest member of the democratic family of nations.[448] Domestically, South Africans, including Muslims, were coming to terms with the country's racial past, within the context of national processes such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), and the move from the RDP to a new macro economic policy, viz Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR). Muslim influence on foreign policy making from 1994 to 1999 was minimal, almost negligible, apart from occasional interactions between community leadership (religious and civic) and government figures on broader issues relating to overlapping domestic / foreign matters such as the *Hajj* (pilgrimage) period, which required occasional diplomatic intervention between the South African and Saudi authorities to secure South African travelers' interests to the region.[449]

Given also the influx of immigrants from Muslim countries such as Pakistan and Bangladesh to South Africa for economic opportunities, there was an increasing focus on dealing with the occasionally illegal status of some of these immigrants. This raised minimal debate among Muslims and it was left to the Department of Home Affairs and Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) to resolve. However, the growing Muslim immigrant population, both from within Africa and externally, is not only a challenge for the government, but this injection of new Muslims is changing the Muslim demographic and will become a broader issue for South African Muslims to address more comprehensively in coming years, particularly over issues of resources, marriage, and so on.

The election of Thabo Mbeki in 1999 ushered a new era of governance marked by a clear shift in both economic and foreign policy prescriptions, with the South African government coming to play a greater role in global affairs.[450] South Africa was beginning to solidify its diplomatic ties with many more nations in the world, in particular the

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[448] See Lodge, *Politics in South Africa : From Mandela to Mbeki.*
[449] This usually meant liasing with the Saudi embassy in South Africa around visa concerns.
[450] See M. Gevisser, *The Dream Deferred : Thabo Mbeki.*(Johanesburg : Jonathan Ball, 2007) and W.M. Gumede, *Thabo Mbeki and the Battle for the Soul of the ANC* (Cape Town : Zebra Press, 2007).

Middle East and the broader Muslim world, which in many ways created greater impetus for Muslims to become more involved in foreign policy issues.

The more urgent task for Muslims, however, was to craft a cogent political agenda and vision, given their minority status. The experiment of getting Muslim political parties to contest elections having failed, as did reliance of Muslim MPs, there remained a need to identify a clearer political role by creating a structure that could operate both within and outside the parameters of government. In other words it became clear to many Muslims that a strong independent lobby group had to be created to lobby or exert pressure on government around issues affecting Muslims. To this end, a conference was hosted in 1999, by a Durban-based organization Vision 2020 / 1440, whose stated purpose was to encourage Muslims to be an "integral part of and contribute to the development of the nation as a whole".[451] Out of this and other processes emerged the beginnings of a more concerted effort by some Muslims to become involved in both domestic and foreign policy matters. Vision 2020 set up permanent offices to act as a conduit for engagement between Muslims, government and other stakeholders.

Organizations like the Muslim Youth Movement (MYM) and Islamic Propagation Centre International (IPCI) continued to promote the Islamic faith within the broader community through a variety of socio-political, cultural and educational programs, which were both faith based as well as outreach oriented. The challenge of articulating a vision that would capture the imagination of all South African Muslims, given their diverse positions, was difficult, and remains unresolved. Debates continue over acceptable modes of political engagement within a secular society. While Muslim Vision has tried to create a space for Muslims to craft a collective response to ongoing national issues, especially as regards politics, it has not necessarily been able to mobilize a broader sector of the community (with some exceptions). The reasons for this are varied, and complex. Clearly these tasks remain a challenge, which perhaps newly emerging groups like SAMNET can begin to address.

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[451] See Conference Proceedings, Vision 2020, Durban, 1999, 2.

The impetus for Muslims to play a greater role in foreign policy affairs arguably began in 2000 with the second Palestinian Intifada. This, as pointed out, re-energized Muslim protest as well as that of the broader political left movement to revisit solidarity initiatives with Palestine. The 2001 World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) in Durban intensified mobilization around Palestine, given that many sectors of the conference were arguing that Israel was a racist apartheid state.[452] The NGO segment of the conference became the platform for an organic process of organizing a number of protest actions, including a march against racism both generally as well as the plight of Palestinians specifically. This protest action became one of the largest marches in the history of the city, and included massive participation from Muslims.[453] Within the formal segment of the conference, the South African government faced considerable local and international pressure to take a firmer stance towards Israel. Some of this pressure came from South African Muslim delegates at the conference who were already long term veterans of the anti-apartheid struggle, as well as a variety of other NGO representatives. In some ways this was part of the burgeoning culture of engagement with government structures by the Muslim activist fraternity, around issues of foreign policy, particularly South Africa's relationship with Israel and its support for Palestine.[454]

WCAR had barely ended when one of the most momentous political events of the current century, the attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001, took place. Many commentators have argued that this marked a shift in attitude and treatment of the global Muslim community, which has since become the focus of much world attention.[455] South African Muslims are no exception. After the United States invaded Afghanistan in late 2001, Muslims in South Africa were galvanized into action in protest. While it did not

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[452] See also M. Bishara, *Palestine / Israel : Peace or Apartheid.*(London : Zed Books, 2002).

[453] This march was held in August 2001, and was organised by a coalition of Durban based organisations and individuals, which included the religious leadership, academics, civic bodies and social movement formations. The march was led by anti-apartheid stalwarts such as Fathima Meer and Dennis Brutus.

[454] The author of this article was a delegate at the conference and is able to provide first hand accounts of the proceedings.

[455] Intellectuals such as Tariq Ali, Mahmood Mamdani together with journalists such as John Pilger have all commented extensively on how there has been a shift in the way that Muslims are being viewed in the international community. See T. Ali, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms : Crusades, Jihads and Modernity* (London : Verso, 2002); M. Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim* (Johannesburg : Jacana, 2004) and J. Pilger, *Freedom Next Time* (London : Bantam Press, 2006).

have many political leaders amongst its ranks, it was arguably the Muslim activist fraternity that initially provided the political direction for much of the strategic vision during the campaigning and protest action. This eventually led to the emergence of the religious leadership, with Imams of mosques and seminary teachers (*Alims* and *Maulanas*) stepping in, perhaps to assume some control over how Muslims should respond , given that they were expected to provide guidance in all respects of the faith.[456]

Critics have argued that religious leadership which is not schooled in the methodology of political engagement and international relations should not be providing strategic guidance to a vulnerable faith-based community, who is itself not generally *au fait* with matters relating to international politics, however there are heated debates around this.[457]

Some of the criticism arises out of the observation that mosque spaces were during these early days of the US invasion of Muslim states such as Afghanistan, often being used by fiery religious clerics to mobilize for a military jihad, and to encourage ordinary community members to engage in military training to fight against the US army as part of their religious duty.[458] This was happening in mosques across the globe and signalled growing anger at what was unfolding in Afghanistan and subsequently in other Muslim countries. While this sort of mobilising did not necessarily take place actively in South African mosque spaces, there were certainly discussions around these issues. Of course the concern here is, that apart from the moral questions this raises, clearly there are legal implications that present themselves if South African nationals, however pious

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[456] In Durban for example, the Imam of the West Street Mosque, Maulana Essa, took a leading role in the protest activities.

[457] Islamic scholars such as Ziauddin Sardar have written extensively on the failings within the global Muslim community, in particular the religious leadership to be able to articulate clear political strategies for a way forward. See Z. Sardar, *Islamic Futures : The Shape of Ideas to Come*.(London : Mansell Publishing Ltd, 1985). Some of these debates have also taken place on online discussion sites such as the SA based Political Islam list. http://groups.yahoo.com/group/politicalislam.

[458] Debates in various public spaces were engaging with the call by some Imams to take a more active role in the militant campaigns in the Middle East.

and well intentioned, start engaging in mercenary activities outside the framework of the government's official position and indeed political mandate.[459]

The 2003 US led invasion of Iraq triggered global opposition as unprecedented numbers of protestors came out in their millions on the streets of major cities in protest. South Africa's major urban centers also saw many Muslims and non-Muslims, come out in significantly large numbers to protest, although this was nowhere near that of the figures in the United States and Europe. Activists and religious leaders combined to mobilize Muslims and the broader South African community. Letters of protest and petitions were sent by a range of groupings within South Africa to both the government as well as to the US Embassy and its consulates. The South African government's position was that it would not be part of the "Coalition of the Willing" which US president George W Bush was trying to create across the globe to join both this war and the Global War Against Terror (GWAT). The decision by the SA government not to join the Iraq war was considered by the majority of South Africans as the principled position to take and they applauded the government for its stance.

Another aspect of GWAT which was raising the ire of South African Muslims was the policy of "extraordinary renditions" employed by the United States government to effectively outsource interrogation and torture of abducted suspects of terrorist activities to third parties.[460] Muslims formally questioned the complicity of the South African government in this practice through government channels and the media. One particular case that caught the public headlines was the government's role in the apparent extraordinary rendition of Pakistani national Khalid Rashid, who was resident in Estcourt

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[459] The Prohibition of Mercenary Activities and Regulation of Certain Activities in Country of Armed Conflict Act, 2006 (Act No. 27, 2006) was, after a considerable delay, assented to and signed by President Thabo Mbeki on 12 November 2007. The intent of the Act is to prohibit mercenary activity, to regulate the provision of assistance or service of a military or military-related nature in a country of armed conflict, to regulate the enlistment of South African citizens or permanent residents in other armed forces, and to regulate the provision of humanitarian aid in a country of armed conflict. It provides for extra-territorial jurisdiction for the courts of the Republic with regards to certain offences and it provide for penalties for offences related to the Act.
http://www.iss.co.za/index.php?link_id=5&slink_id=5421&link_type=12&slink_type=12&tmpl_id=3.
[460] See D. Strumpf and N. Dawes, "Khalid Rashid: Govt's cover is blown," *.Mail and Guardian*. June 9, 2006. http://www.mg.co.za/articlePage.aspx?articleid=274024&area=/insight/insight__national/.

when he was arrested and handed over to Pakistani authorities in 2005, disappeared for two years, and resurfaced in a Pakistani court in 2007, where he was cleared of all charges.[461] The practice of renditions has been widely condemned in the international community as inhuman and against international law. There has been a similarly intense condemnation of the high security facility run by the US government at Guantanamo Bay. This issue remains an ongoing focus for lobbying by South African Muslims who have been demanding answers of their government around this most controversial of practices.[462] Unfortunately, some South African Muslims have become victims of the United States' increased monitoring of foreign nationals entering its territory, as have Muslim nationals from other countries. Even well respected academics are not immune from having faced the now notorious deportation or interrogation by US officials. An example here is that of a prominent SA Muslim academic, Adam Habib, who in 2006, was deported back to South Africa, from the US. Although being on official business representing his research based organization, the Human Sciences Research Council, he was still considered a threat to US Security.[463]

South African Muslims, it may be argued, have become increasingly more politically conscientised and acclimatized to global concerns; however, their focus has arguably remained on Muslim regions such as the Middle East, Kashmir and Chechnya. While many other parts of the world competed for attention, such as the conflict in the DRC, the continuing repression in Myanmar and Chinese occupation of Tibet, these concerns have not really featured actively within the political radar of the Muslim community. This may be a result of ignorance of other conflicts, but more likely reflects a

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[461] D. Strumpf and N. Dawes, "Khalid Rashid: Govt's cover is blown," *Mail and Guardian.* June 9, 2006. http://www.mg.co.za/articlePage.aspx?articleid=274024&area=/insight/insight__national/ and J. Naran, "Has Rashid disappeared again?," *IOL Online*, July 8, 2007, ,http://www.iol.co.za/index.phpset_id=1&click_id=15&art_id=vn20070708094504945C663650.

[462] At a meeting of Muslim civil society leaders in 2006, addressed by ANC MP Essop Pahad, academics such as Prof. Suleman Dangor engaged Mr. Pahad around the question of the South African government's involvement in extra-ordinary renditions. The response to these questions resulted in the government setting up a series of meetings with Muslim leaders and themselves to alleviate any concerns amongst SA Muslims, that the SA government supported such activities.

[463] See SAPA, "US embassy probing SA academic's deportation," *IOL Online*, October 25, 2006, http://www.iol.co.za/?art_id=qw1161766982976B224.

preference for their activism and lobbying in regions where primarily Muslims are affected.

This tendency to concentrate on Muslim regions of conflict may serve to advantage certain foreign policy questions which Muslims were continuously lobbying government on. As pointed out, in 2004, South Africa was one of the few governments to deliver an argument against the 'Apartheid / Security Wall' at the International Court of Justice at the Hague. The court's ruling that the wall was illegal according to international law was considered a victory within global and South African Palestinian solidarity circles. However contradictions have emerged in the government's foreign policy on Palestine over the past few years which has led to increased lobbying by South African Muslims and the broader Palestine solidarity movement.[464] The first discrepancy was government encouragement of South African - Israeli businesses ties. This policy initiative was announced not long after the moral high ground that the government had won with its position on the wall. To this end trade and political delegations from Israel visited South Africa and vice versa.[465]

This sparked strong protests among the broader SA Palestine solidarity movement, expressed primarily through discussions and debates held within the movement and through engagement with government, and created greater impetus among Muslims to engage in direct discussions with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with an urgent demand for South Africa to cut off all diplomatic and trade ties with Israel, through both formal lobbying and popular protests and demonstrations.[466] This was met with a flat refusal by the government which argued that it wanted to keep channels of communication open between South Africa, Israel and Palestine in an effort to continue

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[464] Much of this mobilizing has been taking place through the national Palestine solidarity movement, and its discussion list : psc-sa@yahoogroups.com.
[465] In 2004, Ehud Olmert, the then Israeli Minister for Trade led a business delegation to South Africa to explore bilateral trade relations, between the 2 countries. The following year South Africa took a trade delegation to Israel. See http://www.zionism-israel.com/israel_news/2007/05/ronnie-kasrils-leads-south-african.html and M. Kransdorff and S. Magid, "Why Jewish S. African minister forms friendships with Israel's enemies," May 30, 2007, http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3405940,00.html.
[466] The movement space consists of activists, both Muslim and non-Muslim who are concerned about the Palestinian issue.

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dialogue.[467] The 2006 war between Israel and the Lebanese-based Hezbollah once again brought into sharp focus the campaign by South Africans, in particular Muslims, to insist on the ending of diplomatic ties between South Africa and Israel. The campaign has taken on new sustenance through intensifying its call for a boycott, sanctions and divestment strategy to be implemented against Israel, which is currently being implemented.[468]

Other issues too continue to anger and mobilize local Muslims. They include the publication of derogatory cartoons of the Prophet Muhammed in a Danish newspaper, replicated in some South African papers; comments about Islam considered controversial by Pope Benedict XVI at the University of Regensburg in Germany in September 2006; questions raised by British politician Jack Straw around the wearing of the veil by Muslim women; and the recent arrest of a British teacher in Sudan for naming a classroom teddy bear Muhammed.[469] While these issues do not relate directly to foreign policy engagement strategies, they are nevertheless significant because each in their own way caused a reaction among Muslims globally in response to international events and merit a brief discussion.

In South Africa, and especially in urban centers such as Durban, the cartoons sparked protest marches attended primarily by Muslims. The participation of Muslims, we should note, far outnumbered their attendance at protest marches against the Iraq war or invasion of Afghanistan. Also of note is that certain sectors of the Muslim community

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[467] The former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Aziz Pahad, has often been quoted in the press, expressing this sentiment.

[468] The various branches of the Palestine Solidarity Coalition in South Africa, as well as the SA Anti-war coalition has through its various networks, been advocating for an ongoing consumer boycott of Israeli and even US products.

[469] The *Sunday Times* and *Mail and Guardian* came under severe attack for wanting to publish selected cartoons from the original Danish paper *Jyllands-Posten* in 2006. See "Cartoon Row : Sunday Times Gagged," *Mail and Guardian Online*, February 4, 2006, http://www.mg.co.za/articlePage.aspx?articleid=263325&area=/breaking_news/breaking_news__national/ . Pope Benedict's comments were seen as controversial as they alluded to the idea that Islam was somehow a violent religion, spread through the sword; See http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/content/news_syndication/article_060916pope.shtml for his original speech and comments. British MP Jack Straw's comments on the question of whether Muslim women should wear the veil particularly in Britain, while engaging in civic consultations with local government officials caused a huge uproar globally, "Straw's veil Comments spark anger," *BBC Online*, October 5, 2006, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/5410472.stm. See also "Teddy bear' teacher leaves Sudan after pardon," *MSNBC*, December 3, 2007, http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/22076390/.

called for the boycotting of Danish products as well as the South African newspapers that had published some of the cartoons.[470] This call was not consistent in that some religious authorities called for the boycott of the *Sunday Times* while others did not.[471] The Pope's comments about Islam and its history, and British MP, Jack Straw's views on the wearing of the veil by Muslim women, were received with varying levels of rage, but this soon settled into an exasperated acceptance among most Muslims that such comments would continue to be made, and that not much could be done apart from engaging in a popular discourse around these issues through the print and electronic media.[472]

South African Muslims' engagement around political issues since the inception of a non-racial democratic regime has been very selective. As alluded to in this chapter, much of the focus, domestic and foreign, has been on issues directly relating to Muslims. As regards foreign policy, it has become clear that international questions that do not rest on immediate South African Muslim concerns, such as political repression in China or Zimbabwe, do not really feature widely in Muslim popular discourse, either in relation to community discussions or more broad questions of international relations. Muslim participation has largely focused on Muslim regions; however, this involvement has not been consistent nor without contradictions. For example, the Darfur region in Sudan is home to a significant Muslim population and is experiencing an enormous humanitarian catastrophe, mostly at the hands of fellow Sudanese Muslims.[473] However, this issue has rarely been discussed within Muslim circles apart from the occasional op-ed article or letter to the press by Muslims who are aware of the gravity of the situation. It is clearly not seen as deserving of a major protest action in the same way that tensions in the Middle East have generated mass public sympathy and anger among South African Muslims. This tendency amongst Muslims to align themselves with regions where fellow

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[470] The *Mail and Guardian* published one cartoon, which led to fierce criticism of the paper's editor Ferial Haffejee.
[471] The KZN branch of the Jamiatul Ulema was advocating the continued boycott of the *Sunday Times*, however the Gauteng branch of the same organization lifted the boycott, after consultations with the paper's editors.
[472] Some of this debate was taking place on the SA based online discussion list, Political Islam, http://groups.yahoo.com/group/politicalislam.
[473] See M. Mamdani, "The Politics of Naming : Genocide, Civil War, Insurgency,".*London Review of Books* 29, no. 5 (2007) http://www.lrb.co.uk/v29/n05/mamd01_.html.

believers are facing challenges, is however not necessarily a phenomenon that is unique to this community, and therefore must be seen in perspective. For example the struggles going on in Sri Lanka, are of concern to the South African Tamil community, and people of Jewish ancestry are similarly concerned about Israel, and so on.

South African Muslims are a minority community of around two percent of the national population and cannot be expected to focus on every single national and international issue. But there is arguably an almost insular approach in dealing with broader political questions and relegating to the margins what is not directly related to Muslims. It could be argued that Muslims are part of a still burgeoning democratic dispensation that is just over a decade old, and have yet to develop a rigorous political culture of engagement. Awareness of issues connected to the Muslim world suggests however that Muslims can be aware when they want to, and are deliberately ignoring more general questions of global security and welfare.

The failure to engage with the Darfur issue arguably also points to race, in addition to religion, as a crucial determining factor in the choices that Muslims make. Several of the "progressive" individuals interviewed for the study, argued that if community survival and self-preservation were goals of Muslim South Africans, as one may presume they are, then it is imperative for Muslims to become more involved in engaging government on both global and indeed domestic affairs in a more holistic and comprehensive manner. This would translate then, into setting up some kind of formal lobbying space, where Muslims have a direct relationship with the South African state, and will be heard on matters both of concern to them, as well as those issues that affect broader society (as opposed to the somewhat informal engagement that currently takes place via various other formations).

What has, however, come to occupy the South African Muslim community's attention far more in the contemporary period is the broader debate around whether Muslims globally are becoming the target for a generalized attack from Western imperialist domination that implies greater persecution of Muslims, even beyond what

they may be experiencing currently. If this trend becomes more entrenched than it currently is, this is arguably signaling a very worrying trend, namely, that instead of expending energies in creating structurally viable modes of engagement with government, the primary mode then becomes a knee-jerk reactionary one, and does not provide sustainable alternatives.[474]

Muslims must by all means remain engaged around questions that affect their wellbeing and security. However the kind of siege mentality that has become characteristic of Muslim spaces for some time now, is exactly what needs to be avoided. A holistic framework for engagement must be accompanied by an acknowledgement, that while Muslims are under attack at certain levels (and this is evident through various Islamophobic tendencies in some spaces), Muslims cannot afford to abandon their broader responsibilities as citizens and members of society. While in the South African context, they constitute less than 2% of the national population, this is a community that has demonstrated its ability to make a significant impact in certain areas, and it needs to continue harnessing this potential to benefit society more broadly.

An overview of the foreign policy issues that South African Muslims have engaged their government on, reveals that the most significant areas have been the crises in Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan and Lebanon. The most successful engagement has arguably been around the issue of Palestine, which has led to greater government focus on this region, including parliamentary debates as well as bilateral meetings and initiatives.[475] Here too, the jury is out because Muslims will consider success as nothing short of the actual severing of political and economic ties with Israel or a mutually acceptable political solution on Israel / Palestine.

It could be argued that the South African government's focus on Palestine and the Middle East region in general has remained relatively consistent, largely because of

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[474] The group SAMNET has pointed to this phenomenon of reactionary responses, amongst Muslims in its discussion document.

[475] Palestine is a very personal issue for many Muslims globally, because of its links to Islam's third holiest site, the Al Aqsa mosque. It is particularly significant for SA Muslims, because of the links that have been drawn between apartheid in South Africa and the current situation in Palestine.

lobbying pressure (both formal and informal) by Muslims. Despite some advances around foreign policy engagement, South African Muslims have a long way to go in terms of developing more nuanced mechanisms and approaches for liaising with government, which remain largely informal. Muslims have arguably not yet fully developed the capacity and skills to have formal lobbies to engage with government on a regular basis. While engagement does take place between "Muslim" interest groups (like the religious councils) and the government, this still needs to be developed into a proper political lobbying structure. A process of deeper reflection and introspection to ascertain how this could best be achieved is of paramount importance. What is significant to note however, is that as a result of various internal differences among Muslims (which is not, as has already been established, a homogenous community), there are certain areas of engagement, which have proven to be far more successful than others. For example the failure of the resolution of the Muslim Personal Law issue, is a reflection of the deeply divergent views of the community, whereas on the question of Palestine / Iraq, etc, the community tends to speak with a broadly unified voice, despite differing views on how to respond on certain issues.[476]

Regardless of their minority status, they have nevertheless evolved into a powerful social and indeed political force which, if organized in a more structured way, could make greater input into national issues. The nature of this community's engagement with the South African state and broader political issues, as articulated in this chapter, has served to illustrate that such engagement is effectively taking place. Strong identification with the faith of Islam tends to inform most political and social activity. Indeed even the state has acknowledged the important role that faith plays in communal life in Muslim society, through its deliberation on Muslim Personal Law.

Despite the clear separation between religion and state in South Africa, religion clearly still plays a very significant role in political life in the country. This is arguably the case for not just Muslims, but for other faith groups as well, such as Christians, Jews

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[476] During the public marches in 2003 around Iraq for example, the religious leadership differed from more progressive Muslims, on the issue of women marching separately.

and Hindus amongst others. As many Muslims have articulated, they believe that they are fortunate to be living in a country that is sympathetic to Muslims, one that has provided a safe place for them to practice their religion without fear of prosecution and harassment. Given this, it may be argued that South Africa is in many ways an ideal society for Muslims to develop a stronger political identity, secure in the knowledge that both their political and religious rights will be protected.

The following chapter will reflect on the implications of the findings of the previous chapters for the future of South African Muslims, summarise these findings, and articulate a way forward.

Chapter Six

Conclusions – In pursuit of a way forward

Summary of Study and Broad Research Findings

This thesis has engaged the area of Political Islam, which has come under intense scrutiny, particularly since the events of September 11, 2001. The focus on the global Muslim World over the past decade (discussed in detail in Chapters One and Two) has meant that the factors which shape and impact on how Muslims express themselves politically, has become an important and, in many ways, a central aspect of contemporary world politics.

While this study has conducted both a historical and political analysis of the key research questions, it has focused far more rigorously on i) the political dynamics that have been pivotal in fore-grounding the acts of political violence committed by Muslim militants in various parts of the world in a contemporary context, resulting in the emergence of "Militant" Islam; ii) engaging in debates over whether these acts are appropriate and actually effective in achieving the desired and stated objectives of militants; iii) analyzing global responses to these acts of militancy and the various manifestations of Islamophobia; iv) exploring alternative civic approaches to dealing with challenges faced within the Muslim world, such as "Progressive" Islam; v) conducting a quantitative study of the viewpoints of South African Muslims and examining how they have chosen to express themselves politically in a post-apartheid context; and vi) establishing to what extent Progressive Islam is the preferred ideological space within which South African Muslims are choosing to engage.

Chapter One laid the foundation for the conceptual and historical framework within which Political Islam emerged as a discursive space of engagement, particularly in response to the increase in Western focus on the Muslim world, greater interaction between Islam and globalised society, as well as growing Islamophobic tendencies that have become far more acute in their manifestation since the events of September 11,

2001. What emerged as particularly significant in this discussion is the observation that there is a tendency within western academic circles to document and discuss Islam as an "anthropological" subject of study, which this thesis has argued is reminiscent of Orientalist thought and practice, which first emerged in the aftermath of Western colonial exploration and expansion several centuries ago.

A typical example of this "orientalising" of Islamic thought in a contemporary context is Cheryl Benard's reduction of the complex global Muslim population into four 'types' "Fundamentalist", "Traditionalist", "Modernist", and "Secularist", with suggestions on how the United States in particular and the West in general, should relate to each. To reiterate the discussion in chapter one, Fundamentalists, according to Benard, reject democratic values and contemporary Western culture in pursuit of an authoritarian, puritanical state that will implement their extreme view of Islamic law and morality; Traditionalists want a "conservative" society and are suspicious of modernity, innovation, and change; Modernists want the Islamic world to become part of global modernity, and to this end want to reform Islam to bring it in line with the contemporary age in every respect; finally, Secularists want the Islamic world to accept a division of church and state in the manner of Western industrial democracies, with religion relegated to the private sphere.[477]

While this perspective may appear to some policy analysts and scholars (especially in neo-conservative ideological circles in the United States) as extremely useful and relevant in terms of how one should "manage" and "contain" the problematic elements within the Muslim world, this thesis suggests that it is precisely this "anthropological" approach within the non-Muslim world and an inability or refusal to recognise Western complicity and culpability in creating "militant" and extremist pockets within Islam, that continues to fuel the ongoing project of Militant Islam. Such perspectives also ignore the vast majority of Muslims who occupy what some have described as a "middle ground" between fundamentalist/secularist polarities, that is,

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[477] C. Benard, *Civil Democratic Islam : Partners, Resources, Strategies* (Santa Monica : The Rand Corporation, 2003), x.

Muslims, particularly in minority situations like South Africa, who are willing to engage with civic mainstreams, while "drawing on traditional bonds of faith as well as modern communicative action in creating social capital."[478]

One of the consequences of the European project of colonization and the subsequent phenomena of globalization has been the emergence of particular ideological trajectories amongst some Muslim groups who have adopted militancy as a way of responding to the effects of ongoing exploitation and oppression, often drawing on religious sources to justify the militant nature of their engagement.[479] A. Sajoo reminds us, for example, that the "persistent failure of the international community to attend to issues of social and distributive justice, and of political self-determination (as in Palestine, Chechnya, Kashmir) will exacerbate the tendency to feed single /exclusionary identities at the expense of civic ones."[480]

It is important to point out though that the arguments in this thesis do not attempt to attach a precise normative framework to whether Militant Islam is in fact an appropriate and acceptable expression of Islamic thought. There is however acknowledgement of the fact that militancy expressed by Muslims in certain contexts, such as self-defense in cases of invasions and occupations of Muslim lands and oppression of Muslim societies is deemed as most appropriate, in fact considered as necessary to uphold values of human self-determination and preservation entrenched in universal charters of human rights.[481] There is also a distinction drawn between various forms of conservative expressions of Islamic thought which Olivier Roy refers to as neo-fundamentalism, all of which do not necessarily always manifest as militancy, but do nevertheless act as an ideological framework within which militant acts are condoned and indeed encouraged.

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[478] A. B. Sajoo, "Reimagining the Civil: Pluralism and Its Discontents," in *Muslim Modernities : Expressions of the Civil Imagination,* ed. A.B. Sajoo, 211 (London: I.B. Taurus, 2008).

[479] See Ch 2.

[480] Sajoo, "Reimagining the Civil", 225.

[481] Prominent writers and journalists such as John Pilger have made the argument that contemporary forms of imperialism and its effects have forced many to take up arms against western nations and powers. See J. Pilger, *Freedom Next Time* (London : Bantam, 2006).

The rise of militancy within global Islam was discussed in detail in Chapter One, in relation to the growing emergence of a more recent ideological phenomenon within Islam, viz, Progressive Islam. Some may argue that Progressive Islam is diametrically opposed to Militant Islam in its ideological influences and forms of expression. This thesis does not, however, attempt to make any such absolutist assertions. While many of the proponents of Progressive Islam such as, Omid Safi, would argue that it is primarily about "striving to realize a just and pluralistic society through a critical engagement with Islam, a relentless pursuit of social justice, an emphasis on gender equality as a foundation of human rights, and a vision of religious and ethnic pluralism", others argue that Progressive Islam is not necessarily opposed to militant engagement, especially where it involves anti-war agendas and a critique of western imperialist expansion.[482] It is here that there is something of a grey area with regard to whether one can actually class militant expressions of Islam as being Progressive Islam or not. This thesis has not sufficiently illustrated the differences in ideological thought and practice between Militant and Progressive Islam to present them as distinct categories of thought, which constitute the theoretical basis for the broader arguments presented in this study.

This thesis has also interrogated the ways in which political engagement by Muslims has been shaped and impacted upon by religious ideology which, as argued earlier, has particular genealogies and trajectories, arising out of the broader global discourse of Political Islam.[483] To this end this study has engaged in an investigation of what the primary modes and methods of political engagement have been and whether these have articulated themselves within the ideological framework of either "Militant Islam" or "Progressive Islam." Chapter One defined Militant Islam as broadly referring to (for the purposes of this thesis) those ideas and actions that emerged from the tradition of the Islamic Brotherhood Movement (al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun) which gave rise to various militant factions in the Middle East, such as Islamic Jihad and Hamas in Palestine, Hezbollah in Lebanon and Gama'at (or Jemmah) al-Islamiyya in Egypt, in the latter half of the 20th century, but became a school of thought that evolved beyond the original

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[482] O. Safi, "What is Progressive Islam". *ISIM* Newsletter 48 (2003,13).
[483] See Chapter One.

Islamist conception of what the Brotherhood was meant to represent, as originally articulated by its founding thinkers such as Hasan al-Banna (1906 – 49) and Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966).[484]

Our discussion also reflected on whether the idea of Militant Islam as it was manifesting itself in a contemporary context through the method of political violence being undertaken by militant groupings throughout the Muslim world, was indeed reflective of what Olivier Roy calls "neo-fundamentalism", "a closed, scripturalist and conservative view of Islam that rejects the national and statist dimension in favor of the Ummah, based on Sharia." Chapter One argued that contemporary Militant Islam (as an eventual offshoot of the Muslim brotherhood) is effectively a limiting and conservative discourse, without providing the space for a sustainable and constructive agenda of engagement and praxis. A distinction was drawn, however, between the armed liberation struggles that are currently unfolding in regions such as Palestine, Afghanistan, and Iraq, which are effectively under occupation and which many Muslims believe justify militant strategies to achieve satisfactory political outcomes.

Progressive Islam, on the other hand, was defined for the purposes of this thesis as that school of thought which had a particular origin rooted in the intellectual discourse of Iranian scholars such as Suroosh Irfani and Ali Shariati (1933-1975) and earlier Islamic scholars like Sayyid Ahmed Khan (1817–98) and Jamal al-Din Al-Afghani (1838–97).[485] The ideas expressed by Khan, Al-Afghani and later by Irfani and Shariati have come to be regarded as the inspiration for the evolution of a contemporary mode of thought within Islam, referred to as Progressive Islam, which while also having several trajectories, has come to broadly refer to an understanding of Islam, which is best encapsulated by the following articulation;

Progressive Islam is that understanding of Islam and its sources that comes from and is shaped within a commitment to transform society from an unjust

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[484] See Chapters One and Two of this thesis.
[485] See Chapter One of this thesis.

one where people are mere objects of exploitation by governments, socio-economic institutions and unequal relations. The new society will be a just one where people are the subjects of history, the shapers of their own destiny, in the full awareness that all of humankind is in a state of returning to God and that the universe was created as a sign of God's presence. [486]

Diasporic Muslim communities of Europe, North America, and Australasia, as well as Muslim minorities elsewhere, have witnessed the emergence of individuals and organizations who are seeking to combine "particularist and universalist readings of the texts", who are willing to accept "gender and minority inclusion", and who are committed "to ethics beyond traditional rule-bound understandings." They are seeking to engage in civic citizenship rather than embrace isolation.[487] We will return to this point in the next section.

Chapter Two engaged in a discussion around the emergence and development of Orientalist thought, within the context of the encounter between Islam and the project of Western colonial expansion. What is critical in this chapter is the argument that locates the roots of the contemporary political violence manifesting itself as "Militant" Islam, within the context of a resurgence of Orientalist thought and action, which is described in Chapter Two as being not "just about prejudices; but also about relationships of power." These relationships of power are articulated (amongst other means) through "modern technologies of representation and with methods of research, collection, and presentation of data, which constructed a particular body of knowledge that hegemonised the colonizer and the colonized." Chapter Two emphasized that this particular form of "knowledge" effectively produced Europe's *Other*, who according to the colonial / Orientalist model, lacked "rationality, history, modernity, and the powers of self-transformation", qualities that made up the European.[488]

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[486] From the Progressive Muslim Network website http://www.progressivemuslims.com/index2html.
[487] Sajoo, "Reimagining the Civil", 211.
[488] See V. Kaiwar and S. Mazumdar, "Race, Orient, Nation in the Time-Space of Modernity," in *Antinomies of modernity : Essays on Race, Orient, Nation* (London: Duke University Press, 2003), 270.

It is this very European notion of the "other", best described in the writings of philosophers such as Jean Paul Sartre, as a "construction" of "slave" and "master", that the Orientalist paradigm has arguably relied on, to pursue an ideological, political and socio-economic domination of those societies located within the "Orient", as elaborated upon by Said and Sardar, in their analysis of the thought and practice of orientalism.[489] We are witnessing the reemergence of what Edward Said described as the problem of "discourses of power, ideological fictions – mind-forg'd manacles – too easily made, applied and guarded."[490]

Through documenting the history of the evolution of Islamic thought and practice, and the ways in which Islam has responded to external dynamics, such as its encounter with the west, Chapter Two highlighted the very real crises that has emerged as a result of this encounter and the subsequent manner in which the project of the expansion of western "empire", has impacted on the relationship between Islam and a latter day Orientalist agenda. This crisis is effectively the context within which contemporary militancy within Islam finds a home, and is further fuelled by the kind of discourses espoused by Cheryl Benard, Samuel Huntington and Bernard Lewis, among others.[491] Chapter Two also focused on the emergence of Islamic studies in the South African context, by briefly looking at the key authors and thinkers who have recorded and written about Islam in South Africa, both in a historical and contemporary context. They include the likes of Achmat Davids, Farid Esack, Ebrahim Moosa, Shamil Jeppie, Abdulkader Tayob, and Mahomed Haron whose works serve as the theoretical and historical framework within which the empirical study of South African Muslims and how they are engaging politically in a post-apartheid context, unfolds.

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[489] See J.P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*. Translated by H.E. Barnes (London : Routledge, 1958, 2003);E Said, *Orientalism* and Z. Sardar, *Orientalism* (Buckingham : Open University Press, 1999).
[490] E. Said, *Orientalism*. (London : Penguin, 1978), 328.
[491] See also S.P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York : Simon and Schuster, 1996) and B. Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam* (Chicago : The University of Chicago Press, 1991); B. Lewis, *What Went Wrong : Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response* (London : Phoenix Books, 2004).

Chapter Three constitutes a critical part of the study as it records the history of the political development of South African Muslims, largely from a post World War Two context, a period which coincided with critical developments in the broader global Muslim world, such as the creation of the state of Israel on historical Palestine (1948), the evolution of oil politics in the Middle East (especially in the 1970s), the Iranian revolution (1979), and the Afghani resistance against Russian occupation (1980s), all of which were shaping and impacting on Muslim thinking across the globe, and also impacted to a significant degree on the emergence of militant and progress expressions of Islam.

These historical events are documented in Chapters One and Two; however the links between them and the South African Muslim responses are more clearly articulated in Chapter Three. What is of particular significance in this chapter is a deeper reflection of the project of Islamic resurgence, which arguably had a profound effect on the formation of what this thesis will refer to as progressive Islamic spaces and organizations in South Africa, beginning with the Muslim Youth Movement in the 1970s and including latter-day organizations such as Taking Islam to the People (TIP).[492]

Resurgence ideas may have, according to critics, had an impact to some degree, on the emergence of overtly Islamic militant groups such as People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD), in terms of shaping the visible "Muslim" identity of the group. However, this notion was contested by Shamil Jeppie who linked the group's emergence to drugs and gang wars in the Cape. At the same time there is nothing that suggests that the resurgence movement has inspired or is inspiring a broadly rabid militant ideology within the South African Muslim space.[493] Chapter Three does allude though to the

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[492] See A. Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa : The Muslim Youth Movement* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 1995) and Chapter Three for a more detailed understanding of the Islamic resurgence phenomenon.

[493] Chapter Five speaks briefly about the emergence of PAGAD as a militant group, based in the Cape Flats from 1996 onwards. However the lifespan of PAGAD was very short and the organisation was effectively neutralised by 2000. See G. Vahed and S. Jeppie, "Multiple Communities : Muslims in Post-Apartheid South Africa," in *State of the Nation : South Africa, 2004 – 2005*, ed. J. Daniel and others (Cape Town : HSRC Press, 2005).

resurgence movement having had some impact on the emergence of groups such as Qibla and Call of Islam in the 1980s, which were oriented to a more radical praxis, as compared to the agenda of the MYM.

While there was brief discussion about the ideological contestation taking place within the Muslim religious leadership fraternity in Chapter Three, this debate was not fully explored there, as it is re-articulated in Chapters Four and Five as a central question in terms of how it is that various trajectories of religious ideology (such as the four main Sunni schools of thought) shape and impact on political engagement. The question of the role of Islamic theology and philosophy (as alluded to in Chapter One), is one that is conceptualized as being central to understanding whether any, much or most of the political engagement by South African Muslims is shaped primarily by religious thought and practice, which in turn frames the broad ideological categories of Militant Islam and Progressive Islam.

Chapter Four provided the empirical component of this study (largely qualitative), which examined the views of key participants and subjects of the study sample that were identified as being central to the project of political engagement in post-apartheid South Africa. Ten central questions were posed to the interviewees, which attempted to interrogate in particular the state of political participation by South African Muslims and more broadly the ways in which this participation is shaped by a range of factors such as the various *madhabs* within the Sunni tradition, as well as whether participation was ideologically motivated by militant or progressive trends. The overall results of the qualitative study point to five very specific things;

i.   There is a crisis within the contemporary global Muslim community, largely because of religious ideological differences, between the various schools of thought (*madhabs*), traditions (eg. Deobandi, Barelwi, etc) and ideological approaches (militant vs progressive);

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ii.   There is a lack of political engagement by South African Muslims, especially around social issues such as service delivery, poverty and HIV Aids, but there was acknowledgment that there are pockets / spaces in the Muslim community where this engagement is taking place, such as Gift of the Givers, WAMY and MYM;

iii.   There is a lack of adequate "qualified" leadership within the South African Muslim community to guide Muslims on political questions;

iv.   There is no overt militancy within the South African Muslim community;

v.   There is a preference to engage within the paradigm of progressive expressions of Islam, through civic participation and political engagement, among many Muslims.

These five broad conclusions thus represent the core findings of the empirical (qualitative) component of this study. They cannot be seen in isolation from the discussion in Chapter Five which, through the use of archival material, documents areas where there has actually been political engagement by Muslims since 1994. Chapter Five categorised this involvement in six broad areas, viz,:

i)   Political Campaigning and Participation in Elections
ii)   Social Activism and the Emergence of New Progressive Forces
iii)   Muslim Personal Law
iv)   The Anti-Terrorism Bill
v)   International Solidarity Campaigns
vi)   Foreign Policy Engagement

What is striking about these six areas of involvement is that in examining the nature and frequency of engagement, it becomes clear that Muslims have opted to participate in political issues where they are directly affected as a community; there is a religious dynamic; there is frustration in pockets, with old ways of thinking and a desire

for change in the local context and / or where there is identification with the plight of Muslims elsewhere in the world. What is also significant to note is that the participation, where it happens, is broadly articulated within the framework of the state's provisions for religious participation as well as the various civic / civil society structures that cater to the needs of the community.

This then foregrounds the broad ideological trend that appears to be dominant within the South African context, viz, Muslims are generally willing to engage within a civic framework which, while making space for more radical and conservative religious expressions, is one which is broadly progressive in the manner articulated by the earlier definitions of Progressive Islam provided in Chapter One. While the nature and substance of the participation may often fall short of the precise definition of Progressive Islam, as articulated by Farid Esack and others as being "the struggle for justice – or praxis - rather than the arenas of critical thinking for its own sake.....", it is clear that the broader paradigm of participation is inclined towards attempting to embrace justice and plurality, two of the hallmarks of progressive expressions of Islam.[494]

It is also important to make the point that those Muslims who do not participate in politics, are usually not inclined towards either a progressive or militant approach; they simply prefer to focus on religious and spiritual aspects of the Islamic faith. The Tablighi Jamaat in South Africa is one such group in the local context. It has not been discussed in any detail in this dissertation simply because of its broader absence from the political arena.[495] In this regard, this thesis disagrees with the assertion of Benard et al. that that

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[494] F. Esack, "In Search of Progressive Islam beyond 9/11," in *Progressive Muslims : On Justice, Gender and Pluralism*, ed. O. Safi 80 (Oxford : Oneworld Publications, 2003). This is cited from the declaration of an online discussion list, called Network of Progressive Muslims http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NPMuslims/?yguid=127854211.

[495] See G. Vahed, who argues that the main purpose of the Tablighi Jamaat is to propagate Islam, according to the Prophetic model, and aims to bring about transformation of society, without political mediation. Tablighi's remain deliberately apolitical, as this allows them access into countries, without coming into conflict with the authorities. G. Vahed, "Contesting Orthodoxy : The Tablighi – Sunni Conflict among South African Muslims in the 1970s and 1980s," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 23, no. 2 (2003), 319. See also Z. McDonald, "Constructing a Conservative Identity : The Tabligh Jama'at in Johannesburg," in *Globalisation and New Identities : A View from the Middle*, ed. P. Alexander and others (Johanesburg : Jacana Media, 2006).

the Tablighi Jamaat is only "outwardly benign ... violent anti-Western Islamic behaviour is manifested ... by a sector of its adherents."[496]

There are however religious formations that have a primarily theological identity and function, who have been engaging politics, albeit in a somewhat inconsistent and ad hoc manner. These are the organized bodies of the Islamic religious leadership (*ulema* bodies), in South Africa, who merit a brief detailed discussion here, although they do not necessarily incline themselves to either an overtly progressive or militant approach to political engagement. While this study concerns itself broadly with spaces where *political* engagement is happening, and not *theological* engagement per se, which is the domain of the *ulema* bodies, it is critical to locate the political engagement within the framework of how the religious leadership are impacting on this participation. Brief references to this influence by the *ulema* was made in Chapters Three, Four and Five; however it is important to expand on this debate here, to some degree, before making recommendations on the way forward.

Muslim Religious Leadership in South Africa and Political Engagement: Brief Overview

As mentioned in Chapter Four, attempts to interview members of the South African Muslim religious leadership were not very successful, and with the exception of one religious leader, there was no formal input into this study by this sector.[497] In the absence of this, archival material from the various formally constituted bodies representing the religious leadership was perused and utilized to obtain a clearer picture of their position. These organizations include a wide cross section of the Muslim community such as Darul Ihsan, Jamiat KZN, Jamiatul Ulama (or Jamiat SA), Majlisul Ulama, Muslim Judicial Council and the Sunni Jamiat.

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[496] A. Rabasa, C. Benard, P. Chalk, C. C. Fair, T. W. Karasik, R. Lal, I. O. Lesser, D. E. Thaler, *The Muslim World after 9/11*, Rand Foundation Report, 447.

[497] One of the potential interviewees (Imam) contacted with regard to filling out the survey, argued in an e-mail that, "It is my humble suggestion that the questionnaire be revisited as the three questions in section B are extremely vague and ambiguous. The questions on political Islam, religious militancy and progressive Islam could be addressed from many dimensions," (August 2006). However, an interview with Imam Fuzail Sufi of the Westville Soofie Mosque was conducted.

Arguably the most prominent voices amongst the organized *ulema* bodies in South Africa, with regard to political participation, are those of the Jamiatul Ulama (JU) (Gauteng / National – formerly Transvaal), Jamiat KZN (KZN) and the Muslim Judicial Council (Cape). They have the longest histories, and have effectively been more actively involved around issues that required political guidance, such as participation in elections and responding to international issues, such as Palestine, the Iraq War, and the Danish cartoon crisis amongst others.[498]

The Jamiat's also have a history of having engaged the nationalist government around the question of the location of mosques during the apartheid era, when mosques were under threat of demolition under the Group Areas Act, and successfully preventing their demolition.[499] The Gauteng Jamiat has also been involved in discussions around the introduction of Muslim Personal Law (discussed in Chapter Five). While the key function of the JU remains Islamic education and training, and imparting advice through the issuing of *fatwahs*, it has in recent times become more deeply involved in political issues. It issues a regular online newsletter, which has become its most effective form of disseminating information and commentary, mostly around religious matters, but also political issues.[500] Recent issues of the newsletter include commentary on the civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the November 2008 presidential elections in the United States, global financial meltdown and upsurge of Taliban resistance in Afghanistan.[501] While it is often the case that the newsletter focuses on foreign issues, past issues have included discussions on political developments relating to South Africa. This has included the economic policies of the ruling ANC party not benefiting the poor, controversial comments by ANC Youth League President Julius Malema in support of

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[498] The MJC was formed in 1945, Jamiatul Ulama in 1923 (http://www.jamiat.co.za/profile/history.htm) and the Jamiat KZN in 1955 (http://www.jamiat.org.za/history.html.).
[499] See http://www.jamiat.co.za/profile/history.htm.
[500] See http://www.jamiat.co.za/newsletter/online_newsletter.
[501] See http://www.jamiat.co.za/newsletter/online_newsletter_0343.htm; http://www.jamiat.co.za/newsletter/online_newsletter_0344.htm and http://www.jamiat.co.za/newsletter/online_newsletter_0345.htm.

Jacob Zuma, and the detention of two South African Muslims in Uganda in August 2008.[502] The Jamiat also publishes a quarterly magazine called *Ar-Rasheed*.[503]

Similarly, the Jamiat KZN has historically engaged the former nationalist government around mosque locations in what was formerly Natal, and has in more recent times been involved in debates around recognition of Muslim marriages and settling of estates in the Islamic tradition, all issues pertaining to Muslim Personal Law.[504] Its original mission was to set up a sustainable and flourishing *madressah* programme for the province, which it oversees. The membership of the Jamiat KZN currently stands at around 450 *ulema*.

The history of the Muslim (formerly Moslem) Judicial Council (MJC) has been briefly discussed in Chapter Three.[505] It is the most vocal voice of religious leaders in the Cape region. An earlier observation records that when it was first established, it was considered very conservative by the younger generation, who were later attracted to the likes of youth organizations such as the MYM and MSA.[506] The aims and objectives of the MJC, stated at the time of its founding, were to strengthen the spirit of unity amongst the *ulema* and to help the Muslim community attain its spiritual, educational, intellectual, moral, social, cultural and economic aspirations.[507]

While the MJC was regarded as a politically conservative space, certain individual members were exceptions. The likes of Imam Haron, Sheikh Nazeem Mohamed and Sheikh Abubakr Najjar voiced their opinions against racial and discriminatory legislation in the country. The MJC had affiliated itself to the United Democratic Front (UDF) but had to withdraw because of criticism within the Muslim

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[502] See Newsletter Vol 3, No 29 : http://www.jamiat.co.za/newsletter/online_newsletter_0329.htm; Newsletter Vol 3 No 31 : http://www.jamiat.co.za/newsletter/online_newsletter_0331.htm; Newsletter Vol 3 No 34 : http://www.jamiat.co.za/newsletter/online_newsletter_0334.htm.
[503] See http://www.jamiat.co.za/arrasheed/ar0308/arrasheed_online_3.08.htm.
[504] See http://www.jamiat.org.za/history.html.
[505] See Chapter Three, 8.
[506] See Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 82.
[507] See http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/library-resources/online%20books/history-muslims/1930-40s.htm.

community of the UDF, and its liberal supporters who they suspected of having Zionist affiliations and leanings.[508] During the countrywide upheavals in 1985, when the then government of P.W. Botha was forced to declare a state of emergency, and also during the 1986 Crossroads crisis, the MJC played a leading role in providing the economic and material assistance to the Black community at large. Sheikh Achmat Behardien and Sheikh Ismail Ganief (Hanif) Edwards were among the founder members of the Muslim Judicial Council.[509]

The MJC remains involved in political affairs. During 2008 for example, it presented its findings on South African Muslim approaches and attitudes to politics at an event hosted by the Institute for the Study of Current Islam. The MJC focused on the strategies underlying its approach to political engagement in South Africa and South Africa's constitutional democracy in light of Islamic legal principles.[510] This workshop was preceded by another entitled "South African Muslims and political involvement: thinking in the long term." That workshop drew criticism from Professor Abdulkader Tayob, Director of the Center for Contemporary Islam, who argued that the *ulema* "themselves enjoy the fruits of the secular if they are wealthy enough. Or they mobilize the secular aspirations of the downtrodden, in promise of a fabulous utopia called the Islamic state. The secular is part of the religious and Muslim leadership lives on its fruits and promises."[511] This commentary has resulted in some deeper reflection around the question of the role of Islam in what is very much a secular space, ie, politics, in various subsequent discussions.

While the Jamiat (Gauteng), Jamiat KZN and MJC are seen to be more overtly involved in political questions and activities, other religious bodies such as the Mujlisul

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[508] See http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/library-resources/online%20books/history-muslims/1930-40s.htm.
[509] See http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/library-resources/online%20books/history-muslims/1930-40s.htm.
[510] See http://www.ipsauniversity.com/ .
[511] See http://www.ipsauniversity.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=118:isci-to-host-seminar-on-south-african-muslims-and-political-involvement-&catid=1:2008&Itemid=86 and A. Tayob's commentary on the workshop, http://www.ipsauniversity.com/index.php?option=com_fireboard&Itemid=114&func=view&catid=12&id=7#7.

Ulama and Darul Ihsaan, seem to be less so. Their focus revolves primarily around the issuing of fatwahs, and responding to the various religious questions that Muslims pose either through online websites or via e-mail or telephonically.[512] The Majlisul Ulama is considered particularly conservative and issues a regular newspaper called the *Majlis*, which has been critical of "modernity" and modern modes of thought.[513]

What is intriguing, however, in a more recent context, is that some of the historically more conservative religious bodies, such as Darul Ihsan, have been sending out e-mails to its mailing list encouraging Muslims to register to vote for the 2009 national elections.[514] In addition, religious leaders speaking at the Eid-ul-Fitr prayers in October 2008, at some of the best attended sites, like Orient School in Durban and the MJC Hall in Overport, which together catered for around 10,000 worshippers, urged Muslims to register and vote, and without recommending any parties or candidates, implored them to vote for candidates who will address the needs of the poor. Muslims were also urged to participate in society generally. As the *Maulana* at Orient explained, by spending all their time in worship within the confines of a mosque, Muslims will not have an impact on the wider society. But they can have a great effect by upholding "Islamic values" and interacting with non-Muslims in a range of settings.[515] This is a fairly radical departure in the outlook of these *ulema*. Recently, Mufti Ebrahim Desai of the Darul Iftaa Madrassah In'aamiyyah was asked whether Muslims can vote, given that Shaikh Awlakhi of Yemen ruled that it was *haraam* (forbidden) for Muslims to vote in a non-Muslim state. Maulana A. Yahya and Mufti Desai, responded in the following manner;

> We have read the comments made by Sheikh Anwar al-Awlaki and do not
> concur with [his] approach. Firstly, all the arguments the Shaikh has raised
> are based on the rationale that our participation in voting is a tacit acceptance
> on our behalf to play by the rules of the democratic system. This rationale is

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[512] See the Majlisul Ulama site, http://www.inkofscholars.com/inkofscholars.php?file=mujlis/mu_about.php and Darul Ihsan http://www.darulihsan.com/.
[513] See http://themajlis.net/index.html.
[514] E-mail correspondence, 6 November 2008, Register to vote, Darul Ihsan enews@darulihsan.com.
[515] These lectures are available on CDs in audio format.

incorrect, as we have clarified in our former response that if we go by this rationale, then our living in the country and paying of taxes to the government will also mean that we support the evils of the country. Hence, we will be left with no option but to leave the country for another country that does not incorporate such evils. However, if we do not accept this rationale and justify our staying in the country, then we will have to abide by their existing system. Secondly, once we have opted to reside in the country, then we would rather vote for such members that will advance our views and help the course of Islam and minimize harm on ourselves. If we opt not to vote, then we are in fact benefiting the party we do not wish to be elected. For example, if 2 million Muslims were to vote for party A, but were discouraged to do so; then party A would lose out 2 million votes which would benefit party B, who would otherwise be lagging by 2 million votes. Hence, by voting we are actually selecting a party that would be less harmful to Islam; and by not voting we are giving preference to the party that would be more detrimental to Islam. Moreover, what we have mentioned is also in accordance with the principle of Islam which states that if we are faced with a situation in which we have to choose from one of the two evils, then we should choose the lesser evil. [516]

It becomes clear from these statements that despite whatever their motivations may be, these conservative spaces within the SA Muslim community are beginning to slowly realize the necessity of political engagement in a contemporary context. The question that this raises is whether there has been a major ideological shift in the thinking of the conservative religious leadership, in the post-apartheid period, whereas there was previously something of a historical reluctance (albeit contextualized within an apartheid history) to be involved in mainstream politics. It would appear that the shifts are becoming more clearly evident over the past year to eighteen months. While the significance of the Muslim religious leadership becoming more politically active requires

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[516] A. Yahya, (Student, Darul Iftaa) and Mufti Ebrahim Desai."Ruling on Voting and the Current comments from Sh. Anwar Awlaki," (Darul Iftaa, Camperdown : November 19, 2008).

further study to fully understand the broader ramifications of these developments, it would appear cursorily, that this is related to recent developments such as the post-election violence in Kenya, ongoing turmoil in Zimbabwe, xenophobic violence against African migrants and refugees in March 2008, perceptions that crime and violence are spiraling out of control in South Africa, and especially the recall of Thabo Mbeki by the ANC. The growing influence of the Jacob Zuma faction within the ANC, and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) have, from observation and informal discussions, shaken many Muslims out of their comfort zones and is forcing them to reconsider the country's future and their own wellbeing. This is certainly a change from the past decade or more when many Muslims (in South Africa and elsewhere) constituted what Turner has referred to as an "enclave society." [517]

The participation by religious leaders in mainstream politics has not necessarily always been under the auspices on an organized *ulema* body. There are examples such as Maulana Rafiq Shah who joined the Democratic Alliance (DA), albeit under a cloud of controversy, as the DA was at the time considered as being sympathetic to the plight of Israel, and was considered very unpopular amongst Muslims, especially under the former party leader Tony Leon. Maulana Shah was subjected to huge criticism for his decision to join the DA, and was even shunned in some quarters especially by his former organization the MYM, for his decision. [518] The criticisms have however lessened over the years, especially since the party leadership was taken over by Helen Zille, who is not regarded as demonstrating overt support for Israel. There is also the example of religious leader Ismail Vadi, who through the ANC, has represented Muslim interests in parliament. As these two examples illustrate, religious leaders have voiced Muslim concerns in the national structures, quite apart from the formal *ulema* bodies.

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[517] "The call to return to a primary identity represents the creation of spiritual enclaves," writes Turner. "This enclave allows the believer to follow dress, dietary and sexual codes without secular interference." See B. S. Turner, "Revivalism and the Enclave Society," in *Muslim Modernities. Expressions of the civil Imagination*, ed. A. B. Sajoo, 156 (London: I.B. Taurus. 2008).

[518] Maulana Shah was interviewed on various radio stations, such as Al-Ansaar and interrogated for his decision to join the DA.

It is important to stress that this thesis has not focused on religious leaders as a specific category, but rather considered the *ulema* as one component of the broader sample of Muslim South Africans engaging in the political realm. Nevertheless it becomes obvious as one examines this community, that religious factors play an integral role in shaping and impacting on the actions of large numbers of Muslims, be it the influence of religious leadership or religious ideologies that manifest in various ways, and their perspective is consequently, very important.

Concluding Remarks – Charting A Way Forward

This study asked a number of questions, which can basically be summarized into two specific areas of enquiry:

i) What is Progressive Islam and Militant Islam and how do they manifest themselves within the arena of Political Islam?

ii) How are South African Muslims expressing themselves politically? Are the majority inclined towards either progressive or militant expressions of Islam?

The previous section summarized the key findings of both the qualitative study and the analysis of the archival documentation, which pointed to five specific conclusions. This final section of the thesis reflects on these broad findings and charts a way forward. It is important to emphasise that while this thesis has attempted to focus on Islam as a central ideological framework which grounds and locates the political participation of most South African Muslims, it has not explored in any detail the tendencies among those who opt to participate in a secular manner, without using Islam as a frame of reference. This study limited itself, for precise research purposes, to very specific questions, which produced a specific set of conclusions, as outlined above. However the secular dynamics within this community, which cursorily seems small, remains a largely unexplored question, which merits further study and is certainly an area that this researcher will undertake for further interrogation. There is no doubt that some Muslims do not

necessarily wish to foreground their "Muslimness" when participating in the public domain and it would be valuable to establish the nature and scope of this section of the Muslim demographic, in post-apartheid South Africa.

Conclusion 1: There is a crisis within the contemporary global Muslim community, and it is in part due to religious ideological differences between the various schools of thought (madhabs), traditions (eg. Deobandi, Barelwi, etc) and ideological approaches (militant vs progressive)

This conclusion seems to affirm much of the scholarship on political Islam which has been perused and examined for the purposes of this study.[519] While it reflects the view that the crisis exists at a global level, it is also present in particular ways in localized contexts. In the South African context, the crisis among Muslims seems to be located largely around the fact that there are serious theological differences among Muslims, as well as traditions and political leanings, which often results in no clear strategies being available from an Islamic perspective, as to how to respond to political issues that are unique to the national context. All religions have these divisions, and differences per se do not equate to a crisis. In fact, it may even be argued that without division it would be difficult for a religion to respond to new conditions. Where would the impulse come from?

In Christianity for example, there are stark and growing divisions between the old traditional churches and new Pentecostal churches. In Islam, however, it may be argued that the division has come to constitute a crisis because of broader issues like Islamophobia and how these divisions get exploited by the United States, for example, as well as the fact that Muslims are constantly judged as "Muslim" irrespective of their positions on a range of issues. The need to present a coherent response becomes urgent

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[519] See in particular G. Kepel, *Jihad : The Trail of Political Islam* (London : IB Tauris, 2004), O. Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1996) and O. Roy, *Globalised Islam : The Search for a New Ummah* (London : Hurst and Company, 2004).

under these circumstances. While Chapter Five did reflect on the fact that there had been evidence of systematic organizing around some of these issues such as the ATB, these methodologies were not consistently applied throughout, as was evident in the lack of a clear programme of action in terms of how to respond to the issue of electoral politics and the government's complex foreign policy agenda.

It therefore becomes evident that a key area for South African Muslims to focus on is to identify a clear strategy with regard to how they wish to address the broader ideological crisis, as well as a methodology to deal with the lack of action plans for responding to local issues and national political questions. Whether the ideological differences will ever be resolved, remains an open question. The view of many of the interviewees seemed to suggest that it would be better for Muslims to forge ahead with political engagement despite theological differences. Given the differences among Muslims there remains a mountain to climb, and a path strewn with minefields, but it is one worth climbing.

The consensus among the interviewees seemed to be that Muslims could be motivated by their faith to engage politics, and indeed are doing so in many instances, but that they have to articulate a new way of doing things, one that dwells less on religious differences, and focuses on the very real social issues facing all South Africans. This may require setting up new formations to take such an agenda forward. The task will be onerous given that how one gets involved in social issues is influenced by one's beliefs. Ideology cannot simply be erased. Members will not give up on their ideological loyalties and we can expect tension as the envisaged formation will not simply be a space disembodied of social relations.

In the post-apartheid period, Muslims have pushed for many of their demands to be recognized, such as permission to build mosques in formerly white areas, facilitate travel for pilgrimage (*Hajj*) to Makkah, build Islamic schools, provide Islamic finance, and see to the needs of Muslim prisoners. This has contributed to an emerging sense of Muslim identity, notwithstanding the differences. And in the performance of pilgrimage

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(Hajj), the payment of *zakaat*, dietary prohibitions, and the rendering of five daily prayers, the primacy of the *ummah* prevails.[520] The lure of the *ummah* has a powerful emotional pull.

The South African constitution allows for Muslim differences and requires others to respect their rights (and those of others). Muslims have not been under pressure to assimilate, as is the case in some Western countries where the assertion of Muslim political agency has led to the emergence of exclusive (national / racist) nationalism on the part of the majority populations and the questioning of the efficacy of multiculturalism.[521] One way forward, as pointed out, may be to constitute a body to represent Muslims. It should be inclusive of the variety of Muslim perspectives. Currently Muslims rely on a myriad of bodies or individual Imams for guidance on various matters. The envisaged / proposed body should constitute a federation of Muslim organizations and include persons from the religious fraternity as well as ordinary persons from the professional and other leadership backgrounds adept at representing the needs of the community and comfortable in operating in various state and civil society structures. Working examples that come to mind include the Muslim Reference Group (MRG) in Australia and Muslim Council of Britain (MCB).[522] However, these organizations are often forced to play the "game" according to the rules of their respective governments and compromise their independent voice as they seek to show an acceptable face of Islam in return for recognition. In the South African context, any organization should be concerned about social redress and service delivery, and this may require it to question the policies of the government of the day, and even be assertive and confrontational in its approach.

Conclusion 2 : There is a lack of political engagement by South African Muslims, especially around social issues, such as service delivery, poverty and HIV Aids (but

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[520] Sajoo, "Reimagining the Civil", 212.

[521] T. Modood, "Muslims, equality and secularism," in *Religion, Spirituality and the Social Sciences. Challenging Marginalisation*, eds. B. Spalek and A. Imtoul, 47 (Bristol: Polity Press, 2008).

[522] See Modood, "Muslims, equality and secularism," 47-48, for a discussion of the MCB.

there was acknowledgment that there are pockets / spaces in the Muslim community where this engagement is taking place, such as WAMY and MYM)

In recent times, there appears to have been greater movement among Muslims to try and develop a sustained program of action to address the arena of politics. While the focus of most political engagement between 1994 and 1999 was primarily around electoral politics and foreign policy issues, it would appear that the post-2000 phase has brought about something of a shift in focus towards questions of social justice and redress. 1999 saw the launch of Muslim Vision 1440 / 2020, which was meant to have been a national lobbying / advocacy space for Muslims to respond to various issues such as education, media, *dawah*, and politics. While the organization continues to exist, it has faced various challenges in terms of sustainability and outreach, but continues to have a presence, particularly in Durban.

Similarly, other organizations such as the MYM, Al-Ansaar Foundation, Awqaaf South Africa, and WAMY continue to engage social and political questions through various programmes, outreach facilities, seminars and conferences, all geared towards creating spaces for engagement, debate, discussion and even critique. The question though is whether these organizations represent a minority within the Muslim community (given the perception that most Muslims are not engaging politically), or whether they are actually reaching a broad spectrum of Muslims in order to draw in as many people as possible to become politically aware and active. There are also groups such as the Islamic Dawah Movement (IDM) and Islamic Medical Association of South Africa (IMA), which have not been discussed in any great detail in this thesis, that have also gone beyond their traditional areas of activity, viz. *dawah* and medical services, to engage politics at various levels.[523] This does indicate that Muslim organizations at least are engaging, even if the broader public is not.

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[523] The IDM has a bookshop and information centre where a variety of literature is available on political issues. Until recently (2008), it also published a newspaper called *Africa Perspectives* which focused heavily on politics. The IMA has always been ready to assist Muslim advocacy groups in providing medical services during political rallies and marches in support of causes such as Palestine and Iraq.

The point has been made earlier in this chapter that there are sectors of the Muslim community that do not participate actively in politics, such as the Tabligh Jamaat, and do not feel compelled to do so. The question this raises then, is whether political participation is something that Muslims generally feel is necessary / an integral part of their identity as followers of the Islamic faith? While this thesis did not ask this specific question, interviews with various individuals pointed to a desire for greater Muslim involvement in politics as well as civil society more broadly. The recent pronouncement by Darul Ifta on Muslims and the vote, quoted earlier in this chapter, points to tangible recognition that Muslims cannot remain aloof from political participation.

Despite the apparent lack of active participation by Muslims more broadly, there have been attempts in the past year to establish lobbying and networking groups to create spaces wherein Muslims can engage. The Durban Central Islamic Forum (DCIF) and South African Muslim Network (SAMNET) have been cited as two such bodies.[524] Both seem to represent newly emerging spaces where the project of a Muslim politics is being re-energised and re-evaluated. The DCIF while being a local eThekwini based forum, states that it wants to work for the greater good of all South Africans.[525] Clearly it recognizes the link between localized dynamics and the national space. While the project has been driven by the Chief Whip of the ANC in KZN, Fawzia Peer, the DCIF has clearly articulated its position as being one that does not support any one political party.[526] Critics, however may see DCIF as a front for the ANC.

SAMNET also represents the newly evolving face of Muslim politics in recent times in that it articulates very clearly what the problems are within the South African Muslim community.[527] In so doing, it is able to pin point exactly what the key gaps are in terms of taking Muslims forward, not just in the arena of politics, but more broadly. While these problems have been detailed to some degree in Chapter Five, it is useful to

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[524] See Chapter Five for more detailed discussion.
[525] See DCIF Constitution, 3.
[526] DCIF Constitution, 3.
[527] See Chapter Five.

reiterate at least a few here to underscore the point that there is an understanding and recognition of the main issues. Some of the problems that the SAMNET discussion document points to, include the following:

xiv)   Fragmentation and lack of co-ordination of activities among Muslims;

xv)   Muslims are REACTIVE rather than PROACTIVE;

xvi)   Absence of volunteerism in the community;

xvii)   Insufficient political representation;

xviii)   Lack of political engagement with the "centres" of power;

xix)   Lack of empowerment and leadership within the community[528]

These problem areas (amongst others outlined by SAMNET) confirm the key findings of this study as well as the sentiments expressed by many of the interviewees, and affirm the importance of creating and entrenching a more pervasive culture of civic engagement amongst Muslims, and indeed doing so within the framework of a Progressive Islam. It may however be prudent to ask why it was considered necessary for Muslims for participate at all in politics and civil society structures.

Social theorists like Cornelius Castoriadis and Charles Taylor have utilized the concept of the "social imaginary" to challenge deterministic structural theories of social change.[529] They argue that it is not only reason but also imagination that is important in constructing the central social institutions and practices of society. As Sajoo points out, both "stress the agency of ordinary men and women [in] shap[ing] a social imaginary and its moral order.... The imaginary is grounded in the ordinary, rather than belonging to elites who create theory and doctrine."[530] Imaginaries are consequently pluralist and it would appear that interviewees in this study, felt that Muslims should contribute in shaping the economic, popular sovereignty, and public sphere social imaginaries to

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[528] See Chapter Five, SAMNET Conceptual Discussion Document, April 2008, 1- 2.

[529] See C. Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society* (Boston : MIT University Press, 1987) and C. Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Duke University Press, 2004).

[530] Sajoo, "Reimagining the Civil", 215.

reflect some of their values and beliefs, even though they do not expect or advocate implementation of *shariah* law.

Some of the interviewees also stressed that Islam places great emphasis on social justice and that this is emphasized in numerous verses in the Quran and in the example of the life of the Prophet. Islam implores Muslims to work towards establishing social justice not only for Muslims but for non-Muslims as well. This means both engaging in activities towards the attainment of social justice as well as keeping an eye on whether the state is fulfilling its mandate. Eva Schubert cites Pericles, the fourth century Athenian orator who said that "a man who takes no interest in politics does not mind his own business but he has no business", to implore citizens to participate in public activities and debates. Applying this to Muslims in South Africa, Schubert's point is that citizenship gives them the rights to certain entitlements but it also places responsibilities on them. Citizens must ensure that the state is protecting human rights and working for the social good of its citizens through active engagement in civil society and vigilant perusal of the actions of the state.[531] Given both the obligations of citizenship in the modern world and Islam's own call for Muslims to strive to achieve social justice, interviewees opined that civic engagement was an important part of being Muslim.

The xenophobic attacks against foreign African migrants in March 2008, this study would suggest, further underscores the need for Muslims to emerge from their "enclaves" and participate in various civil society structures. On closer examination, it emerges that there was an element of anti-Muslim sentiment in the attacks. To cite one example, the National African Federated Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Nafcoc) in the Western Cape sent letters to Somali traders in Khayelitsha to leave their shops by 21 September 2008 or they would be subject to physical violence. Mandise Njoli, Nafcoc's Western Cape secretary, said that Somali's "are Arabs and they're in our country illegally. Why can't they be kept in refugee camps? The Somalis are Arabs and Muslims...." Another Nafcoc member, Sydwell Citwa, said that they had "done our research and we know that

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[531] See E, Schubert, "Modern Citizenship, Multiple Identities," in *Muslim Modernities : Expressions of the Civil Imagination*, ed. A. B. Sajoo (London: I.B. Taurus Publishers, 2008).

the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC) is helping them because they're Muslim...." MJC deputy chairperson Shaikh Achmat Sedick was forced to issue a denial that they only helped Muslims. He pointed out that they helped all "victims of xenophobic attacks.... We opened the mosques to everybody. The food parcels have gone to everybody."[532] Similar sentiments have been expressed in other parts of the country as well and raise the question of whether SA Muslims could become vulnerable to violence, in a context of extreme poverty and inadequate service delivery.

Clearly, what is important in charting a way forward is to acknowledge that there is a dearth of both participation and indeed leadership on political questions. However, the picture is not entirely bleak and the following discussion will suggest possibilities for generating and developing leadership to address the emerging challenges.

Conclusion 3 : There is a lack of adequate qualified leadership within the South African Muslim community to guide Muslims on political questions

This is one of the most significant findings of the study, and it is arguably one of the key areas that requires urgent attention in terms of strategic methodology that must be developed to address the failures with regard to how Muslims are engaging politics. Leadership within the Muslim community, not just locally, but internationally is usually conceptualized as being religious leadership, that is, the *ulema*, because of their understanding of *Shariah* and *Fiqh* matters. It is occasionally the case that the community looks up to Muslim politicians (like Yusuf Bhamjee in KZN) to provide leadership on certain issues or even academic scholars of Islam, who are not *aalims* per se.

While these may be the traditional spaces from which leadership is sought, these are not necessarily the most effective or ideal, as most religious leaders are often unfamiliar with political forms of literacy, which would capacitate them to provide

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[532] P. Joubert, "Nafcoc calls for Somali purge," *Mail&Guardian online*, September 5, 2008, http://www.mg.co.za/article/2008-09-05-nafcoc-calls-for-somali-purge.

adequate guidance to the *ummah* within the framework of contemporary international relations. Many are also from an elite socio-economic group and in a position to live a certain kind of life that may not be possible or in the best interests of the majority of Muslims. What is actually required is the development of a generation of Muslim leaders who are trained in the importance of political and civic participation from a young age, as being central to their Muslim identity.[533] Whether this training is imparted within the *madressah* environment or within the regular secular curriculum is perhaps a pedagogical question, but one that must be addressed in order to insure that the educational system adequately meets this need.

Most of the Muslim political leadership that emerged in the pre and apartheid period in South Africa, evolved in response to the harsh conditions on the ground, which forged a Muslim politics of resistance, out of necessity.[534] The post-apartheid period has not necessarily provided the material conditions for Muslims to be involved in politics, apart from those that have entered government structures, or transitioned into political life after the demise of apartheid.[535] Where Muslims are entering politics post 1994, such involvement is often limited to electoral politics, such as the formation of Muslim parties or joining existing parties. More recently there has been the emergence of Muslim "activist" formations, which are attempting to take on both religious and political issues. TIP has been cited as one such group. The challenge of training Muslims to respond to political, economic and social issues, must, as this study stresses, be embraced with conviction.

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[533] Ziauddin Sardar in *Islamic Futures : The Shape of Ideas to Come*, 323, speaks about a new generation of Muslim intellectuals who stand apart from the traditionalists and the modernists, and are a group of Muslims that "are deeply committed to Islam and appreciative of Muslim history and tradition... He is neither afraid of the West or Marx, nor does he regard them as a panacea for all ills. He is ready to see good in other systems of thought and action, and even ready to borrow these ideas which he can synthesize within the world view of Islam. But his main concern is to develop a contemporary, integrated Islamic system of thought and action that presents a genuine alternative to the dominant system."

[534] See Chapter Three which details the conditions under which Muslim South Africans found themselves drawn into politics; largely as a consequence of political oppression and social injustice.

[535] People such as Kader Asmal, Vallie Moosa and the Pahad brothers are examples of Muslims who were involved in the anti-apartheid struggle, and were given posts in government in a post-apartheid context.

The question of Muslim leadership, especially political leadership, remains a vexed one, and one way to address this is through actively investing in educational programmes, or outreach schemes where political training is a core focal activity. "Conclusion 2" above, alluded to the formation of a federal body, notwithstanding that it will be difficult to accomplish. Not only will Muslims have to overcome differences of personalities and interpretations of what constitutes "correct" beliefs and practices, there is also little consensus over the place of Muslims in a minority situation, the relationship between Islam and the state, and even whether contact between Muslims and non-Muslims is permissible. Yet, as already pointed out, we can speak of Muslim identity politics and there are occasions and issues when Muslims do come together. It is however naïve to seek to bring everyone on board, and this must be accepted. Certain Muslim organizations will not participate under any conditions. Under these circumstances, the way forward would be to establish clear minimum principles and bring together those who are willing to abide by these in order to achieve some form of hegemony.

Conclusion 4 : There is no overt militancy within the South African Muslim community

While the study has shown that there are conservative spaces within the South African Muslim public that are resistant to more liberal and constructive ways of engaging with the broader political community, by no means can one argue that there is any serious preference for militancy among South African Muslims in a post-apartheid period. Apart from the brief period between 1996 and 2000, when PAGAD exerted a reign of terror which was localized primarily in the Western Cape, there has been minimal if any expression of overt militancy within the broader Muslim community.[536] This is clearly an indication that the moderate forces of democratic transition and pluralism have held sway over this minority community, as it evolved from being part of an apartheid society to a post-apartheid one.

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[536] Vahed and Jeppie, "Multiple Communities: Muslims in post-apartheid South Africa", 256 – 260.

There has however been some controversy around whether there are still pockets of militancy among South Africa's Muslims post PAGAD, which is important to mention. Some of this controversy has revolved around arguments by University of Pretoria academic Hussein Solomon who has come under fire in recent times for his writings on what he claims are the existence of terrorist and extremist elements within the South African Muslim community.[537] In a paper delivered at the 7th International Conference of the International Institute for Counter Terrorism (2007), Solomons was quoted as saying that Muslim schools in South Africa were a breeding ground for terrorism, and that the Muslim media was psychologically preparing local Muslims for terrorism.[538] This resulted in considerable debate among South African Muslims around the veracity of his statements; in fact the broader South African Muslim community rejected the claims in totality.[539]

A Pretoria based advocacy group, Media Review Network, has been monitoring the writings of Solomon (in addition to monitoring literature being produced from other sources), and challenged the arguments that he was presenting by engaging him directly as well as disseminating information within the Muslim community, regarding the statements.[540] In addition, an attorney acting on behalf of the Lajnatul Madaarisil Islamiyyah (Association of Islamic Madressahs), Zehir Omar, instituted legal action against Solomon and the University of Pretoria, and asked that he either retract the statements or provide solid evidence of his claims.[541]

Solomon however argued in e-mail correspondence that he had provided sources in his article to back up his statements, and made the power-point presentation of his speech available for public distribution.[542] The Media Review Network nevertheless felt

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[537] See a recent paper by H. Solmon, *South Africa's Ambiguous Response to Terrorism*. CIPS Electronic Briefing paper 55 (Pretoria : CIPS, 2008).
[538] Media Review Network E-mail entitled, *Help Stop the Lies of Prof. Hussein Solomon*, 24 April 2008
[539] See J. Naran, "Muslims unite against claims by professor," *Sunday Tribune*, March 23, 2008.
[540] See E-mail correspondence, I. Jassat, "Solomon's Truth Abuse Reveals Mushrooming Industry in the Camp of Security Expertise, "25 March 2008.
[541] J. Naran, "Muslims unite against claims by professor."
[542] See the archives of discussions at the Political Islam online discussion list, http://groups.yahoo.com/group/politicalislam, where much of the debate around Prof. Solomon's debate

that these sources were not credible, as they were seen to be advancing a neo-conservative anti Muslim agenda.[543] The legal case against Solomon demanded that the University of Pretoria take action against him, however the University dealt with the situation, by claiming that academics have the right to academic freedom, but asked that there be far more rigorous attention to detail with regard to backing up statements with concrete evidence, when making such arguments in future.

Brief mention has been made in Chapter Five of various incidences where South African Muslims have been detained on suspicion of involvement with militancy and terrorism, and have subsequently been released, as there was no solid evidence against them.[544] However, this dissertation argues that none of these instances make the case for the presence of any kind of widespread and sustained militancy within the Muslim community. In fact, the prevailing view is that the US led war on terrorism has been responsible for much of the unnecessary detention of Muslims globally, who have often turned out to be completely innocent. While there is considerable anger (seemingly abating in recent years) at the high-handed approach of the US in its treatment of Muslims and uneven attitude to foreign policy issues involving Muslim countries, anger too at what is seen as Western cultural and economic imperialism, there are no signs of any coordinated militancy against this perceived hostility. With certain exceptions (Palestine being one), the local *ulema* have condemned things like suicide bombings and random killing of civilians. Many have publicly rejected armed *jihad* and terrorist attacks, however one chooses to define that term. Instead, their focus has largely been on personal piety.

It may be argued that the attitude of the South African state has been important in this respect. Whatever the allegations of the likes of Solomon, it is conspicuous that while in many parts of the world Muslims are associated with terrorism and through their

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unfolded. Many of the contributors to the debate rejected the arguments he was making, but asked to see evidence that would back up the statements.

[543] Media Review Network E-mail, *Help Stop the Lies of Prof. Hussein Solomon.*

[544] See Chapter Five, where references have been made to the recent detention of two South African Muslims in Uganda on suspicion of terrorism, and a South African academic, Prof. Adam Habib was deported from the US back to South Africa in 2007.

"barbaric" acts are seen to threaten the Enlightenment heritage of the West, this negativity has been largely absent against South African Muslims in public discourse. Further, while Muslims in many European countries, North America and even Australia, are seen by other segments of the population as making unreasonable claims on the state, the South African constitution has been flexible enough to accommodate the needs of Muslims thus far. This is in spite of the fact that South Africa is largely a Christian oriented country. This has been important in making Muslims feel that they have a stake in the country as they are treated as equal and inclusive citizens.

Conclusion 5: There is a preference to engage within the paradigm of progressive expressions of Islam, through civic participation and political engagement

The study has shown that in the sectors of the Muslim community where political engagement is actually taking place it is peaceful, non-militant (perhaps occasionally politically radical) and largely civic oriented.[545] Even where there have been protest actions, such as in the cases of solidarity rallies, or anti-war demonstrations, where one may expect expressions of militancy, the participation of Muslims has been within the confines of the law. In particular the engagement inclines towards the model of Progressive Islam articulated by the likes of Esack, Moosa, and others.[546] In the final analysis, what becomes evident is that the hypothesis which this study began with, viz,

> *"Progressive Islam, as an ideology within Political Islam inspired by Quranic text and Islamic political thought, represents an ideological alternative to militant post-colonial Islamic movements and provides a viable model for political engagement within a 21st century context",*

has in fact been affirmed in the South African context. The qualitative study combined with an analysis of archival material has revealed that civic modes of participation have

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[545] See summary of findings in Chapter Four.
[546] See Chapter One on Progressive Islam, and Chapter Two on the scholarship produced by Esack and Moosa.

been the primary model of political engagement for South African Muslims in the post-apartheid period.

While this study suggests that there is a perception amongst interviewees that South African Muslims are not participating actively in politics, this is in fact qualified by the finding that the nature and form of political engagement exists but is limited to certain spaces, where Muslims feel compelled to participate as the issues impact on them directly. They do not however participate actively around issues which they deem to be of no direct concern to them. This position is, as the thesis has suggested elsewhere, a very problematic one as it assumes that the nature of Muslim politics in South Africa is primarily about self-preservation.

Nevertheless, the emergence of groups such as TIP, the ongoing political activism of the MYM and MSA, and the formation of lobbying spaces such as Muslim Vision 1440 / 2020 and the more recent SAMNET, suggest that the future of Muslim political engagement in South Africa is sustainable. This is not to say that Muslims should only engage politically through Muslim organizations. The likes of Ebrahim Rasool, Ismail Vadi, Yusuf Bhamjee, new Minister of Justice Enver Surtee, Maulana Rafiq Shah, whom we have already mentioned, and others are excellent examples of practicing Muslims who have chosen to operate outside of any overt Muslim organization. This study also does not seek to underestimate the extent of Muslim participation in civil society through various relief and charitable organisations. But much of it is uncoordinated. What needs to happen is that more aggressive strategies need to be pursued in order to ensure that the politics of Muslims evolve and become part of national engagement around the key questions of the day. Progressive Islam provides the best ideological framework for Muslims who aspire to be religiously observant while assuming a central role as responsible citizens advocating for social justice and egalitarian ideals, but who do not wish to become part of any mainstream political organisation.

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Al-Jama Party, http://www.aljama.co.za/.

Ali Shariati, http://www.shariati.com/.

Al Ummah Newspaper, http://www.alansaar.co.za/alummah-about.php.

African National Congress, www.anc.org.za/.

Centre for Contemporary Islam in South Africa,
 http://web.uct.ac.za/depts/religion/Institutes/cci.php.

Creedopedia, http://www.creedopedia.com/home.php .

Darul Ihsan http://www.darulihsan.com/.

Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf (USA), http://asmasociety.org/articles.

Institute of Contemporary Islamic Thought, http://www.islamicthought.org/icit2.html .

International Institute for the study of Islam in the Modern World, http://www.isim.nl/.

IPSA University, http://www.ipsauniversity.com/.

Islam in South Africa, http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=57338698.

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Jamiat KZN, http://www.jamiat.org.za/.

Jamiat SA, http://www.jamiat.co.za/.

Khan, F. (USA), http://www.mujca.com/.

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Majlis, http://themajlis.net/index.html.

Media Review Network, www.mediareviewnet.com.

Middle East Online, http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/.

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Minara Chamber of Commerce, http://www.minara.org.za/Profile/Who/who.html.

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Muslim Brotherhood, http://www.ummah.net/ikhwan/.

Muslim Directory, http://muslim.co.za/.

Muslim Judicial Council, www.mjc.org.za.

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http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NPMuslims/?yguid=127854211.

Palestine Support Committee, http://psc.za.org/.

Political Islam Online, http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/polislam.htm.

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Qutb, S, http://www.nmhschool.org/tthornton/sayyid_qutb.htm

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SA History, http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/libraryresources/online%20books/history-
muslims/1930-40s.htm

SA Muslims, http://www.samuslims.com/.

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Sardar. Z, http://www.riseofthewest.net/thinkers/sardar.

Sunni Jamiat, http://www.sju.co.za/.

Wikipedia - Islam in SA, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_in_South_Africa.

World Assembly of Muslim Youth, http://www.wamy.org.za/.

Media Resources

Newspapers

Al-Jamiat

Al-Qalaam

Al-Ummah

Ar-Rasheed

Business Day

Cape Argus

Daily News

Mail and Guardian

Majlis

Mercury

Post

Star

Sunday Times

Sunday Tribune

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The Leader

Radio Stations

Channel Islam International

Radio Al-Ansaar

Radio Islam

Radio 786

Voice of the Cape

APPENDIX A : SURVEY QUESTIONAIRE

Political Islam in the 21ˢᵗ Century
Survey Questionnaire

Section A : Biographical Details

Name: (Optional) _____

Age : _____   Gender : _____

Race : _____ Income (pa in $ / ZAR) : _____

Level of Education : _____

Job Description : _____

Organisation : _____

Religion : _____ Region (Country / City) : _____

How would you categorise your political views ?

Conservative _____ Moderate _____ Liberal _____ Socialist _____

Section B : Perceptions of Political Islam / Militant and Progressive Islam

1)   What is your understanding of the term "Political Islam ?

_____

_____

_____

2)   What is your understanding of the term "Religious Militancy" and / or "Militant Islam" ?

_____

_____

_____

3)   What is your understanding of the term "Progressive Islam" ?

_____

_____

_____

4)   What form of political expression within the Muslim world, are you involved in / familiar with ?

        i)   Militant Activity   _____
        ii)   Civic Participation   _____
        iii)   Both   _____
        iv)   Other (Specify) eg. Religious

_____

5)
                a) What forms of political expression do you think are most effective /
                    prevalent / within the global Muslim community?

_____

Please provide reasons for your answer.

_____

_____

_____

                b) b) What forms of political expression do you think are most effective /
                    prevalent / within the South African Muslim community?

_____

Please provide reasons for your answer.

_____

_____

_____

6)   Do you believe that Islam as a religion preaches violence / militancy to achieve political objectives ?

Yes _____   No _____

Please provide reasons for your answer.

_____

_____

_____

7)   Do you believe that religiously extremist / militant ideas have shaped and impacted on interpretations of
Islam and the way it is practiced globally in a contemporary context ? If yes, how, and what have the consequences of
this impact been?

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_____

_____

_____

8)   What is your understanding of Jihad ?

_____

_____

_____

9)   Do you believe that Progressive Islam as an ideological movement, is compatible with modern democracy and provides a viable alternative to religious militancy ?

Yes _____ No _____

Please provide reasons for your answer.

_____

_____

_____

10)   Do you believe that Progressive Islam as a movement can provide opportunities / a model, for modes of constructive engagement within the context of a 21st century democracy ?

Yes _____ No _____

Please provide reasons for your answer.

_____

_____

_____

11)

        a) Which of the following ideologies would you say are most influential in the Muslim world today ?

Neo-fundamentalism (Wahabbism, Tablighi, Salafi, Muslim Brotherhood) _____

Progressive Islam _____

Other _____

Please provide reasons for your answer.

_____

_____

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b) Which of the following ideologies would you say are most influential in South Africa today ?

Neo-fundamentalism (Wahabbism, Tablighi, Salafi, Muslim Brotherhood) _____

Progressive Islam _____

Other _____

Please provide reasons for your answer.

_____

_____

_____

12)

a) What in your opinion, are the most critical challenges facing the Muslim world today ?

_____

_____

_____

_____

b) What in your opinion, are the most critical challenges facing the South African Muslim community today ?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please feel free to add anything else you would like to, on an attached sheet.

Thank you / Shukran for taking the time to complete this survey. Your participation is very much appreciated.

Appendix B : List of Interviewees

Name	Organisation	Date of Interview
Mohammed Amra (Director)	WAMY	8 November 2006
Mymoena Arnold (Media activist)	Independent/ Media	13 June 2007
Ebrahim Bofelo (Secretary General)	MYM / AMYC	16 November 2006
Masood Boomgaard (Editor)	Al-Ummah	16 March 2007
Imraan Buccus (Editor / Researcher)	Al-Qalam / CPP	3 November 2006
Suleman Dangor (Academic)	UKZN	17 November 2006
Abie Dawjee (Media Activist)	RAIN / Independent Media	8 November 2006
Mohammed Groenewald (Deputy President)	MYM	13 June 2007
Fuad Hendricks (Director)	Muslim Vision 1440 / 2020	24 April 2007
Rafeek Hassan (Former Director)	IPCI	17 November 2006
Riaz Jamal (Director)	Al-Ansaar Foundation	7 November 2006
Iqbal Jhazbhai (Academic)	UNISA	27 July 2007
Zeinoul Kajee (Director)	Awqaf SA	25 July 2007
Ayesha Mall (Editor / Lecturer)	Africa Perspectives / DUT	13 November 2006
Don Matterra (Poet / Activist)	Independent	26 July 2007
Fathima Meer (Academic / Activist)	IBR / Independent	17 November 2006
Yasien Mohamed (Academic)	UWC	28 February 2007
Maryam Patel (Student Activist)	MSA	8 December 2006
Tahir Sitoto (Academic)	UKZN	14 November 2006
Rassool Snyman (Activist and Businessman)	PSC / TIP	6 November 2006
Imtiaaz Sooliman (Chairperson)	Gift of the Givers	14 November 2006
Fuzail Sufi (Imam and religious leader)	Soofie Mosque Westville	17 November 2006
Solly Suleman (Businessman)	Minara	13 November 2006
Abdulkader Tayob (Academic)	UCT	12 June 2006