

EXPLORING MUSLIM SOCIETIES IN THE MODERN WORLD

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EXPLORING MUSLIM SOCIETIES IN THE MODERN WORLD

Islam and Politics in the Modern World:
towards Contemporary Islamic 'Theology'

Essential

The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World. Oxford Islamic Studies Online, Islamic Revivalism or Fundamentalism

Lee, Robert D. 'Governance and government', in J. Kenney and E. Moosa, *Islam in the Modern World*, Routledge, 2014.

Other Reading

Armajani, Jon. *Modern Islamist Movements: History, Religion, and Politics* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011)

Halliday, Fred. 'The Politics of the Umma: States and Community in Islamic Movements' chapter in B.A. Roberson, *Shaping the Current Islamic Revolution*, (Portland & London: Frank Cass, 2003)

Johns, Anthony H. and Nelly Lahoud. 'The world of Islam and the challenge of Islamism', chapter in Nelly Lahoud and Anthony H. Johns (editors), *Islam in World Politics* (London: Routledge, 2005)

Mandaville, Peter. *Global Political Islam*, (London & New York: Routledge, 2007).

Tibi, Bassam. *Islam in Global Politics*, (London: Routledge, 2012)

usuliyya

Within specific, Arabic-Islamic contexts there is no immediate equivalent term for 'fundamentalism', although the term '*usuliyya*' has been coined (from *usul* - fundamentals, roots, principles)

Key Issues

- Defining 'reform', 'fundamentalism', 'Islamism' – and their Arabic/Islamic equivalents (if any?)
- Models of Fundamentalism: enlightened, militant, technologist (*after Bassam Tibi*)
- Relationships between religion and politics

Key Issues

“Fundamentalism seemed an appropriate subject of an interdisciplinary public policy study in part because it inspires the effort to create structures and institutions comprehending every aspect of human existence.”

Marty & Appleby, *Fundamentalism Observed*

Sayyid Qutb

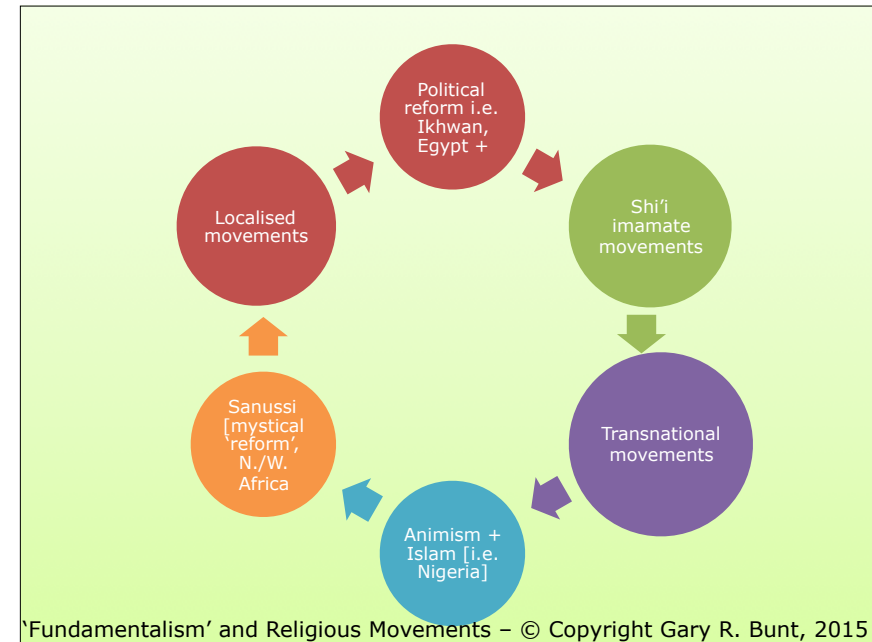
“Islamist political discourse is loath to specify the political system that the Islamic state would create and invigilate. It normally rests content with emphasizing the uniqueness of this society, it being one where God is the sole legislator. Beyond the legal order which re-enacts the primitivist utopia, nothing remains but a savage vitalism: the social order with ‘emerge vitally’ from doctrine, and doctrine becomes ‘the actual and active reality of the group.’”

Gellner

Fundamentalisms may need ‘intermediaries’ to approach all powerful deities, the intermediaries Gellner described as “a hierarchical, specialized class of religious personnel.” Ernest Gellner, *Muslim Society*

Fundamentalisms

- John O. Voll describes fundamentalism as a "complex cluster of movements"
- "Islamic fundamentalism, then, will have to denote the reaffirmation of foundational principles and the effort to reshape society in terms of those reaffirmed fundamentals. This involves, in the words of Muslims who have described Islamic fundamentalism, the effort 'to call Muslims back to the path of Islam,' 'an assertive surge of Islamic feeling' which pervades the Islamic world, and 'the reliance of Islamic fundamental principles to meet the needs and challenges of contemporary times.'"



ikhwan al-muslimiyya

" ... [Hasan] al-Banna defined the [Muslim Brotherhood] movement as 'a Salafiyya message, a Sunni way, a Sufi truth, a political organization, an athletic group, a cultural-education union, an economic company, and a social idea.'" Mitchell, *Society of Muslim Brothers*

'Tajdid' in one Muslim context is not necessarily received warmly in other contexts. Esposito cites the example of the aftermath of the 1979 Revolution in Iran, which resulted in:

Shi'a riots in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province;

the seizure of the Grand mosque in Mecca by Iranian sympathisers (1979);

the execution of Shi'a cleric Muhammad Baqr al-Sadr in Iraq (1980);

a failed coup in Bahrain (1981).

Yvonne Haddad

“Ideal time is past time, and the duty of the Muslim is to avoid new ideas, customs or interpretations since they are simply innovations which act as barriers and impediments to the realization of ideal society.”

"... Verily never will God change the condition of a people until they change it themselves (with their own souls)." Qur'an 13:12 (A)

This is indicative of the need for human endeavour, and responsibility of an Islamic society for forward thinking (*islah*) and 'reform' (*tajdid*, in the sense of renewal and revival).

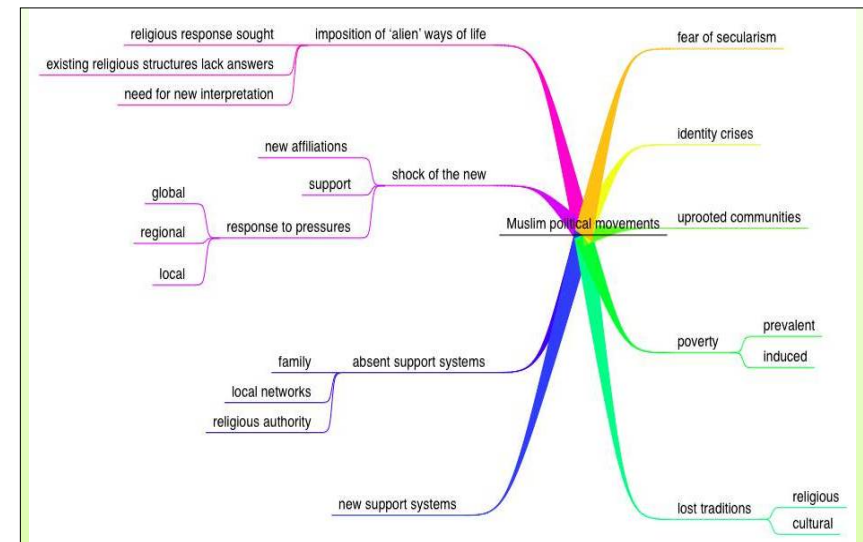
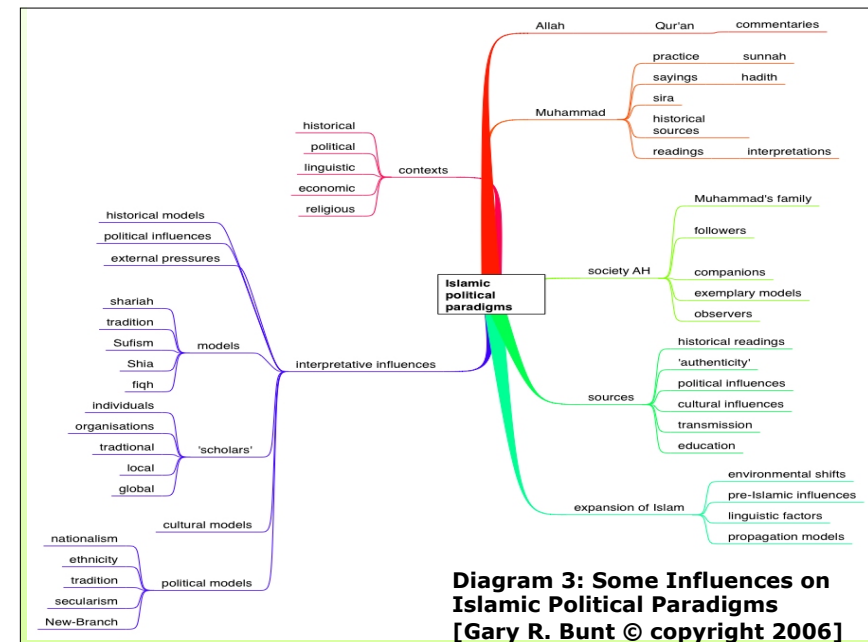
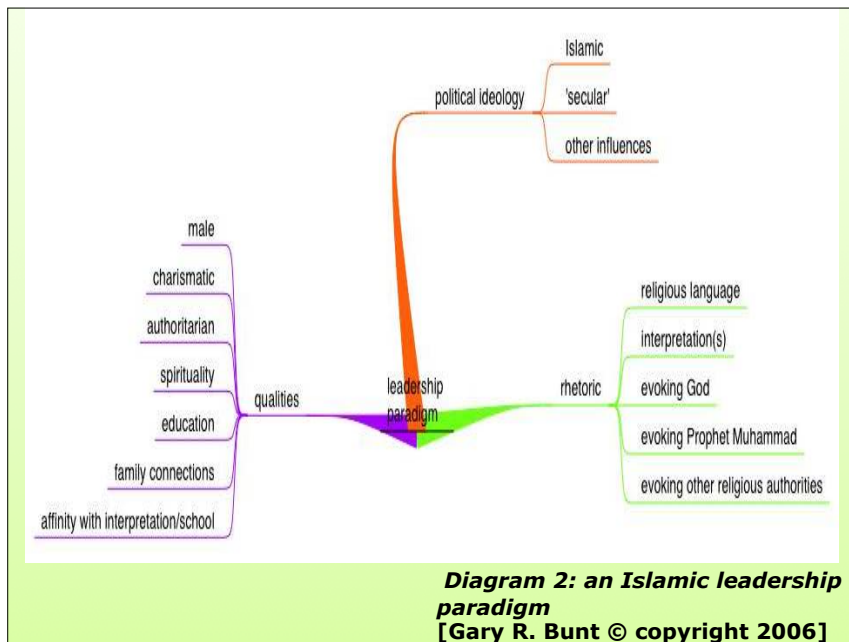


Diagram 1: Influences on creation and participation within Muslim political movements [Gary R. Bunt, ©copyright 2006]



'Reform' and Interpretation in Islamic Contexts

- **Abu Hamid Muhammad at-Tusi al-Ghazali (1058-1111)**
- Born Tabarân-Tûs (N. Iran), worked in Baghdad (court of caliph and Sultan); saw incompatibility with religious life, so travelled and taught - Damascus, Jerusalem – set up Sufi school in Tûs
- al-Ghazali is perceived as a *mujaddid*, who promoted the application of *ijtihad* by properly qualified jurists, whilst condemning *taqlid*, defined as 'blind adherence' to the Qur'an in this context.
- al-Ghazali emphasised the application of *shari'ah* as a way of life, in works on *kalam*, *fiqh*, *falasfa*, and Sufism. He advocated the pragmatic interpretation of Islam, stressing the Qur'an and Hadith, rather than 'non-Muslim' sciences.

al-Ghazali had studied Ash'arite philosophy, and in *Nasihat al-muluk* (*Mirror for Princes*) constructed a model of the qualities he perceived a Caliph or other worldly ruler should possess:

"The quality which kings most need is correct religion, because monarchy and religion are like brothers. (The King) needs it equally whether he is healthy or sick. He must be diligent in matters of religion, performing the duties at the proper times, avoiding eccentricity and (heretical) innovation, and shunning unjust and immoral actions. If he hears that any person in his territory is suspect as regards religion, he must summon him and interrogate him until he repents, or else punish him or exile him from the territory; in this way the kingdom will be purged of eccentrics and (heretical) innovators, and Islam will be strong."

Rulers could make decisions on religious matters (there being theoretically no division between religion and the state). Rulers did not have to be *mujtahids*, but would consult the *'ulama*. al-Ghazali determined that a ruler should be adult, male, sane, a Qurayshite descendant with *najdah* (military prowess), *kifayah* (administrative competence), *wara'* (piety) and *'ilm* (knowledge) of Islam

Taqi al-Din Ahmad Ibn Taymiyya (661-728 AH/1263-1328CE)

- born in Harran, Syria, the son of a *madrasah* teacher - whom he eventually succeeded.
- In 1258, five years before Ibn Taymiyya was born, the Mughals had occupied Baghdad, a traditional centre of learning as well as the 'Abbasid capital. This event, the virtual conclusion of six hundred years of the 'Abbasid caliphate, was seen as catastrophic by inhabitants of nearby Syria, who themselves were threatened by the Mughals.
- The work of Ibn Taymiyya stresses the need for a *jihad* against these alien forces, which to him were analogous to the forces of *kufr* and the *shaitan*. He personally participated in battles against the Mughals, and also against Shi'ia he accused of aiding the enemy. An 'Abbasid caliphate continued in Cairo, maintained by Mamluk sultans, but was not generally recognized.

Taqi al-Din Ahmad Ibn Taymiyya (661-728 AH/1263-1328CE)

Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq (1325-1351) of Delhi drew on Ibn Taymiyya's work; implemented *shari'ah* law, promoting *usul* principles such as obligatory prayers and observation of *sawm*; he refused to divide religious and political obligations, whilst recognising the *khilafa*, to whom he gave allegiance (to the Abbasid caliphate in Cairo). Muhammad bin Tughluq emphasised the importance of *Hadith*, and the role of *ijtihad* in dealing with new problems and situations .

Taqi al-Din Ahmad Ibn Taymiyya (661-728 AH/1263-1328CE)

- Although Ibn Taymiyya's was not the only voice seeking a re-evaluation of Islamic practice centred on Qur'an and Hadith, his influence pervades many subsequent interpretations of Islam.
- For example, the Ottoman Empire, the Hijaz, the Maghreb, Egypt, South Asia, and South East Asia have all been permeated with Ibn Taymiyya's thought.
- In contemporary Muslim societies, Ibn Taymiyya is seen as a focal point in the struggle for a pragmatic understanding of Islam in the face of purportedly hostile influences.
- Ibn Taymiyya's work has been reappraised by many subsequent reformers, and reform-centred movements, and has informed political processes ('positively' and 'negatively').

Shah Wali Allah (1703-1762)

- Shah Wali Allah (1703-1762), from Delhi, was educated in Islamic sciences, and sought to build new foundations in *fiqh* in response to what he saw as dangers to Islam.
- He was a *hajji*, and studied in Mecca. He had been initiated into a Sufi order, and succeeded his father in heading a *madrasah*.
- Shah Wali Allah wrote on the differences between *al-madhab al-fiqhiyya*, and on the characteristics of *ijtihad*.

Shah Wali Allah

- Like Ibn Taymiyya, Shah Wali Allah feared foreign invaders, and felt that his interpretation of Islamic life was threatened by 'un-orthodox behaviour', such as particular forms of Sufism, and the influence of philosophy (*falsafa*).
- Although approving of many of Ibn Taymiyya's views, Shah Wali Allah disagreed with his attacks on Muhri al-Din Ibn 'Arabi (1160-1240), understandable given Shah Wali Allah's own Sufi practices.

Shah Wali Allah

- Shah Wali Allah strongly believed in literal interpretation of the Qur'an as the basis for understanding Islam.
- Although a scholar himself, he did not believe that to reach a comprehension of the Qur'an a detailed metaphysical or intellectual approach was necessary.
- Through reading, reciting and hearing the Qur'an, the truth should be made plain to anybody.
- Knowledge was not the domain of scholars alone.
- Shah Wali Allah's Sufi background again proves influential, emphatic in its assertion of the Qur'an's Divine nature.
- Shah Wali Allah indicated that Muhammad's *practice* was often corrected or completed by God.
- In a valuation of different works on *hadith*, Shah Wali Allah believed the *Muwatta'* of Malik Ibn Anas to be superior, together with the *Sahih* of al-Bukhari and Muslim

Shah Wali Allah

When examining *tajdid*, it is useful to précis the points made on this issue by Shah Wali Allah:

- Teachings should be placed in their historical setting
- people have different angles of looking at things
- different phraseologies cause incongruities
- balance is sought between extreme points of view
- ritual varieties should be tolerated.

This demonstrates the variety of approaches in reassessment of Islam, especially ideals of tolerance and the understanding that diversity should be accepted. .

Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab (1703-92)

- Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab (1703-92) came from a family of jurists in Najd, and spent time in al-Basra, Baghdad and Isfahan.
- He met *hadith* experts on *haji*, which developed his interest in the Islamic sciences of interpretation.
- Within the diverse and insecure tribal fractures of Arabia, al-Wahhab believed that a common understanding and application of orthodox Islam would promote political and religious unity.
- Particularly relevant was Ibn Taymiyya's understanding of Ibn Hanbal, centred on strict interpretations of the Qur'an and Hadith.
- Unlike Ibn Taymiyya, al-Wahhab held less sympathy for Sufis.

Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab

- Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab experienced practical application of his work, through an alliance with Muhammad Ibn Sa'ud of Dir'iyya which commenced in 1745.
- By Ibn Wahhab's death, the Saudis controlled Najd, and were threatening the Hijaz.
- In 1803, the Sa'ud's supporters had seized Mecca from the Ottomans, reducing the Ottoman Empire's status as religious protector of Islam (as well as damaging the Ottomans strategically and financially).
- Through the intervention of Muhammad Ali, Mecca was restored to the Ottomans in 1813 - and the last Saudi stronghold was overcome five years later.
- The fortunes of the Sa'ud family revived in 1924, and by 1926 'Abd al-Aziz Ibn Sa'ud was proclaimed King.

Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab

- al-Wahhab was confronted with 'foreign' domination (in the form of the Ottoman Turks) and an erosion of what was perceived as orthodox Islamic values through syncretism and innovation.
- The lack of unity might have been determined as a punishment from God, for failure to adhere to the principles of Islam.
- al-Wahhab and his followers - the *muwahhidun* - were critical of saint-cults and pilgrimages to tombs. These included the tombs of Muhammad, members of his family, and the Companions.
- Sufism was linked with the development of these practices.

Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab

- al-Wahhab promoted 'strict monotheism', especially the *kitab al-Tawhid* with its principles of *da'wa*, 'patience' to stop persecution, the practicalities of Islam, and the science for understanding God and Islam.
- The diversity in Islam - which the *muwahhidun* indicated were caused by *kalam*, *shirk*, *sufism*, and absence of *tauid* within the *'ummah* - are themes which have common currency in some reform-centred movements today.
- The ultimate creation of a state based on an interpretation of *shari'ah* was critical: Muslims who saw similar situations in their own contexts would act upon the interpretation of al-Wahhab, stimulated by Ibn Taymiyya and others.

Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab

- Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab's influence was significant, not just in Arabia, but because his ideas were and have been transmitted via connection with the physical focus or *qutb* of Islam: the *ka'bah*. *Hajjis* and other visitors to Mecca were exposed to his theories, which were circulated, (re-)interpreted and applied throughout the Islamic world.
- The presence of diverse communities in Mecca - centred on attendance at *hajj* and *madrassahs* for the attainment of *ijaza* - meant that influential individuals were themselves affected by al-Wahhab's interpretation of Islam.

- The effects can be seen in many examples, including the Deoband School in India, al-Shawkani in Yemen, the Muhammadiyyah movement in Indonesia, and the development of Syrian and Egyptian schools of 'reform'.
- The prestige of Mecca in the Islamic world, and the Sa'ud family as its custodians, has continued to promote Wahhabi to this day - even though the Sa'ud family itself has come into criticism by other groups of 'reformers' of Islam, for example through their spending programmes of 'petrodollars'.

EXPLORING MUSLIM SOCIETIES IN THE MODERN WORLD

SALAFISM

Salafiyya

- The *Salafi* are not a rigid organisation, rather several different 'movements' in different locations and contexts taking their inspiration from "the 'pious ancestors' (*al-salaf al-salih*)" and Muhammad.
- The persona of the Prophet, through actions and aphorisms, provides a template for interpreting the Qur'an.

Salafiyya

- Evidently there is a level of dissatisfaction, especially from those who seek the ideals of a 'golden age' without paying due attention to the modern realities.
- Muhammad Iqbal suggested that the lack of awareness about the history of Muslims played a crucial role in this.

Salafiyya

- There is the creation of a mythical space in interpretations, a desire to imitate ancestors rather than innovate.
- There is a variance in the preoccupation with Islamic values, dependent on whether it is on a personal interpretation or part of a community understanding.
- The desire to pacify peer pressure, and become part of a collective voice with a religious motivation, would seem to play an important role in transferring the theoretical ideals into some form of reality.

Salafiyya

- The 'Salafiyya' movement had a basis in particular in Egypt and Syria.
- The pressures of 'outside' non-Islamic influences play a critical role in stimulating a re-assessment of Islamic ways of life.
- Clutching Islamic values, battered by invasion and with further intrusions on the horizon, there is awareness that the so-called reformers themselves were conscious they were living in a critical period of change - articulated in the responsibility reformers felt for future generations, as well as their own.

Salafiyya

- Closer communications with the rest of the Islamic world, and an awareness of shared problems, heightened the urgency to combat external influences.
- A general theme is the linkage of declining religious values with the problems associated with being colonised, and association with erosion of religious values and the introduction of new technologies.

Salafiyya

- Radical shifts in society, including industrialisation and new agricultural methods, distorted traditional society rhythms and practices.
- The growth in new ideas and introduction of western-influenced philosophies and ideologies placed pressures upon interpretations of 'Islamic' ways of life (however they might be defined).

Salafiyya

- To deal with the disturbances, the familiar call for a return to the Qur'an and *Hadith* was made.
- "*Every Muslim is sick, and his only remedy is in the Qur'an.*" Jamal al-Din al-Afghani al-Husayni
- This was in the face of increasing 'westernization' in the nineteenth century in Egypt, ranging from the introduction of military technology and education systems by Muhammad Ali to the introduction of western legal codes to replace *shari'ah* under Khedive Isma'il.



EXPLORING MUSLIM SOCIETIES
Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839-97)

Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839-97)

- Through a process initiated by Jamal al-din al-Afghani (1839-97), and passed onto Muhammad 'Abduh and then Rashid Ridha, it is possible to document subtle changes in the aspirations of reform during the nineteenth century.



Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839-97)

- Raised as a Shi'i – born in Iran; called himself 'al-Afghan' to present as a Sunni
- Widely travelled: Mecca, Europe, Egypt, Ottoman Empire, Iran.
- Evicted from Iran for opposing the Shah (1891).
- Went to Istanbul, under Ottoman Turkish Caliph Abdul Hamid II (1892)



Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839-97)

- *Ijtihad* was central, and by association the rejection of adherence to *taqlid*.
- Proposals for these theoretical principles to be implemented in practice were not made clear by al-Afghani.
- He promoted Islamic unity whilst recognising diversity, and sought to break down the barriers preventing Muslims from learning about science and technology.
- In this way, Islamic society would be strengthened against the West.



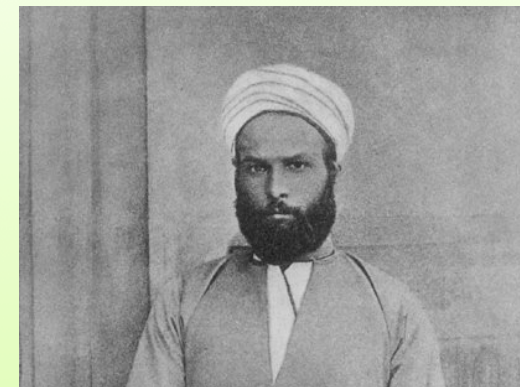
Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839-97)

- In advocating *ijtihad*, al-Afghani emphasising the role of the Qur'an and *Hadith* in interpreting Islam with a reform-centred outlook



Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839-97)

- "In advocating a new Ijtihad, al-Afghani hit at the base of nineteenth century Islam and the general concept of Muslims of themselves. He could no longer accept the position current in his time of fatalism and the inevitable deterioration of mankind. He rejected most firmly the concept of man as a feather in the wind and insisted that he is capable of influencing events and deciding his destiny. He also advocated the idea that man can strive for perfection, and claimed that Islam provides him with the social system best suited to help him achieve this task." Zaki Badawi



EXPLORING MUSLIM SOCIETIES
Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905)

Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905)

- al-Afghani's principles were passed onto Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905)
- He sought reform in education and social organisation in Egyptian society, applying new concepts to strengthen Islam in the modern world.



Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905)

- Islam compatible with modern science and reason
- Trained at al-Azhar.
- Opposed European powers in Urabi Rebellion (1879-82)
- Exiled to Lebanon
- 1882: accepted British occupation, returned to Cairo
- 1899: Grand Mufti of Egypt



Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905)

- Focuses on contemporary issues
- Interest in theology and ideas of 'destiny and fate' (al-qada wa al-qadar)
- Founds a journal to discuss these issues
- Seeks liberation from taqlid (tradition)
- Human reason created by God
- Religion as a 'friend to science'
- Revival and 'independent reasoning'



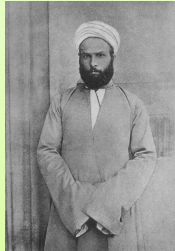
Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905)

- Human reason created by God
- Religion as a 'friend to science'
- Revival and 'independent reasoning' (ijtihad) significant
- Return to original sources, and move away from centuries of accumulated interpretation
- Back to original sources + early Muslim community (salaf) for welfare or *maslaha* of society



Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905)

- The influence of Ibn Hanbal, Ibn Taymiyya and their respective schools is apparent.
- Sufi influences, however, permeate 'Abduh's later life.



Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905)

'Abduh intended, according to his follower Rashid Ridha:

"...to liberate thought from the shackles of imitation [taqlid] and understand religion as it was understood by the community before dissension appeared; to return, in the acquisition of religious knowledge, to its first sources, and to weigh them in the scale of human reason, which God has created in order to prevent excess or adulteration in religion, so that God's wisdom may be fulfilled and the order of the human world preserved, and to prove that, seen in this light, religion must be accounted a friend to science, pushing man to investigate the secrets of existence, summoning him to respect established truths and to depend on them in his moral life and conduct."



Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905)

- 'Abduh wanted Muslims to educate themselves in modern science
- to equip themselves for the changes Islamic society was going through
- to take advantage of new technology and ideas from Western Europe



Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905)

- "As Muhammad 'Abduh stated, freedom of thought should not be 'denied to the people', although he stressed that **the people must be educated** in order to enjoy fully this privilege. He continued that there should be 'an *ijtihad* based on both religion and the free mind in order to face new situations in the modern world.'"



Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905)

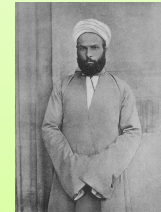
- 'Abduh emphasises seeing Islam as *al-fitra* (religion of nature), in which *ijtihad* could be applied, utilising the opinions of more than one *madhhab* if necessary - offering a flexibility in judgement:

"The Islamic Shari'a is universal and eternal. A corollary of this is that the Shari'a suits the interests of humanity at every time and in any place whatever the nature of the civilisation. A Shari'a of such a nature, its specific items cannot be limited because it deals with the affairs of the people wherever they are."



Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905)

- The application of personal judgement on issues - apart from those on which there was no doubt within the Qur'an and *Hadith* - was suggested, particularly if it was within *maslahah* or public interest.



Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905)

- Whilst advocating Islamic unity, 'Abduh associated with Egypt's British administration, including Lord Cromer.
- Had edited state newspaper al-Waḳā'i' al-Miṣriyya prior to exile in 1879
- During travels met European intellectuals at Cambridge and Oxford
- Published anti-British journal The Firmest Bond (with al-Afghani) while exiled in Paris in 1884
- 'Abduh was strongly influenced by *Mu'tazilite* thinking, which sees all God's actions as good, whilst all evil is caused by humanity.



Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905)

'Abduh had no consistent principle, drawing on a combination of:

- Ibn Taymiyya's 'fundamentalist' views
- al-Ghazali's ethical values
- modern science.

The unity 'Abduh sought was not achieved, rather a new school was added to the equation. ' .



*I went to the West and saw Islam,
but no Muslims; I got back to the
East and saw Muslims, but not
Islam.*



EXPLORING MUSLIM SOCIETIES
Rashid Ridha (1865-1935)

Rashid Ridha (1865-1935)

- Rashid Ridha (1865-1935) and educated as an '*alim*' (scholar) in Syria
- he moved to Egypt and joined Muhammad 'Abduh.
- Published *The Beacon (al-Manar)* journal as a way to promote 'reform'
- Sees '*salaf*' strictly as Muhammad and his companions generation – promotes '*Salafiyya*' school
- Pro-Sunni Hanbali school; seeks return to caliphate
- Rejects mysticism
- Ibn Taymiyya's school was important to Ridha, especially in its emphasis against *bid'ah* '*innovation*'), and the desire for emphasis on the Qur'an.



Rashid Ridha (1865-1935)

- Parallels can be drawn with al-Wahhab
- Ridha did not seek to implement aspects such as anti-saint worship with the same rigidity - perhaps for fear of alienating the '*ummah*'.
- He supported the concept of a Caliph, who was advised by qualified *mujjadid* and *mujtahid* whom could offer advice and *ijtihad*.



Rashid Ridha (1865-1935)

- The *madhabib al-fiqhiyya* lost their authority in Ridha's interpretation, which sought *ijtihad* on issues which contained ambivalence or lacked rigidity.
- Ridha has a tendency to give rigid pronouncements on things that were normally ambiguous
- He was isolated from the mainstream of Egyptian society.



Rashid Ridha (1865-1935)

- Emphasis was on a continuous *ijtihad* on issues of uncertainty, based on the traditions and consensus of the authentic *Hadith* of the Prophet and the Medina Companions.



Rashid Ridha (1865-1935)

- "Ridha, like 'Abduh and al-Afghani, emphasised the need for a continuous *ijtihad*, but unlike them he was less tolerant of differences.
- With his extensive knowledge of the Tradition he was able (in his mind) to discount as untrue the famous *Hadith*: 'Differences among my 'ummah is a source of mercy.'"



Rashid Ridha (1865-1935)

This contradicts Ridha's assertion that:

"We should support each other in what we agree upon and tolerate each other on what we differ."



Rashid Ridha (1865-1935)

- Ridha's call for **toleration** here is backed up by his assessment that Muslims should study their situation, and each other.
- **Education** was seen as a key to improving understanding, both in Islam and in 'secular' sciences.
- This was important the acceptance of Ridha's work by diverse groups of Muslims, for example in **Indonesia and Malaysia**, with their elements (in some cases) of syncretic and/or Sufi-influenced practice



Rashid Ridha (1865-1935)

Ridha's work is important for transmitting the ideas of al-Afghani and 'Abduh, as well as his own.

The key issues have currency with earlier centuries:

- foreign oppression,
- *bid'ah*,
- stagnation in Islamic society which failed to fully accommodate contemporaneous circumstances,
- a feeling that innovations in Islamic thought from diverse sources had clouded the Divine Revelation received by Muhammad, and the laws and actions of the Prophet and the early Medina community.



EXPLORING MUSLIM SOCIETIES

Sheikh Hassan Ahmed Abdel Rahman
Muhammed al-Banna (Hassan al-Banna)

Hassan al-Banna (1906-49)

- Ridha's work became one framework of reference for later reformers/activists, including Hassan al-Banna (1906-49) - the founder of the **Society of Muslim Brothers or Muslim Brotherhood** (*Ikhwan al-Muslimiyya*).
- This also responds to post WW1 politics in Middle East, including failed social reform and oppression in Palestine



Hassan al-Banna (1906-49)

- al-Banna emphasised the need for *ijtihad*, to counter the influence of the West and the erosion of Islamic values - pressures similar to those described above in relation to al-Afghani, 'Abduh, and Ridha.
- This would be linked to the utilisation of *shari'a* for Egypt, which would become an Islamic state.



Hassan al-Banna (1906-49)

- The return to Qur'anic values was not simply theoretical, but put into practice in Egypt through the creation of social services and networks - which play a contemporary role in demonstrating the practicalities of Islam as a way of life.



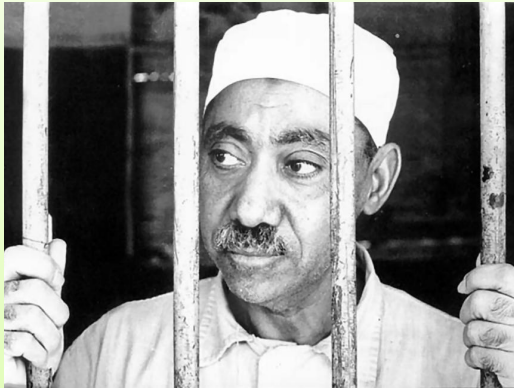
Hassan al-Banna (1906-49)

- al-Banna's definition of Islam was, and has been, resisted by many in Egypt.
- The *Ikhwan al-Muslimiyya* utilised many of the ideas and themes discussed earlier, and their views have had significant impact throughout the Muslim world(s)
- Concepts of political reform have been shaped and focused within this highly organized movement.



Hassan al-Banna

- Established military wing in secret
- Promoted forms of Jihad
- Prolific writer (from teens on)
- Assassinated by Egyptian authorities in 1949
- Said Ramadan becomes leader
- 400,000 members in 1940s
- Welfare groups, businesses, schools, healthcare
- Promotes Palestinian causes
- Funded heavily by Germany

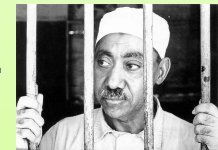


EXPLORING MUSLIM SOCIETIES

Sayyid Qutb (1906-66)

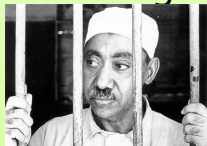
Sayyid Qutb (1906-66)

- emphasised the centrality of the Qur'an and *Hadith* in every Muslim and Islamic action.
- Any society that did not follow this particular interpretation of the *shari'ah* was condemned by Qutb
- He sought a *jihad* to fight the *jahilliya* 'ignorance' within Egypt and throughout the Islamic world.



Sayyid Qutb (1906-66)

- Qutb's exhortation had resonance elsewhere. It is very different from earlier generations of reformers, challenging erosion of Islamic values through less-confrontational methods.
- It is indicative of a sense of anger and frustration, that violence if necessary should implement revolution and change.



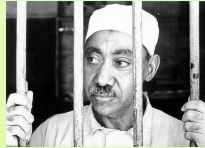
Sayyid Qutb (1906-66)

- . This view fuelled ill feeling towards Islam and reform-centred movements, especially in 'the West', and affected many Muslims who did not seek change by radical methods.



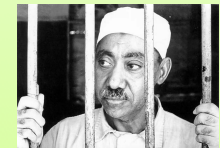
Sayyid Qutb (1906-66)

- One attitude was to withdraw from modern society, to live 'Islamically' within a microcosm, surrounded by what was perceived as 'jahilliya' or an 'ignorant' society.
- This fuelled the foundation of support systems - medical, educational, financial, and social - run upon (perceived) Qur'anic lines.



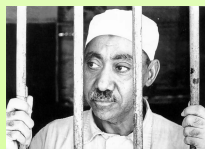
Sayyid Qutb (1906-66)

- Critical of religious educational institutions in Egypt
- Teacher, novelist
- 1948-50: scholarship in USA (as educational administrator), where he wrote '*Social Justice in Islam*'
- On return to Egypt, wrote about US experiences (negatively)



Sayyid Qutb (1906-66)

- Wrote numerous books, including a commentary on the Qur'an and *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq* (Signs along the Road)
- Strongly anti-'western' (especially USA)
- Left Civil Service, joined Ikhwan
- 1952: Free Officers led by Nasser overtake Egypt.



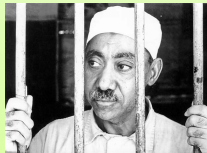
Sayyid Qutb (1906-66)

- Has numerous conversations with Nasser, who seeks to bring him into authority. Qutb refused, as Free Officers didn't seek an Islamic system of government.
- Jailed in 1954 (continued to write).
- Released in 1964 – rearrested.
- Convicted of plotting the assassination of President Nasser
- Executed by hanging in 1966



Sayyid Qutb (1906-66)

- Salaf as ideal community
- Divine Law as key in a state
- No difference between religious and political identity
- Shari'ah without question – avoid man-made law
- Two civilisation types: jahiliyya (ignorance) and Islam
- Influence of Ash'arite school.

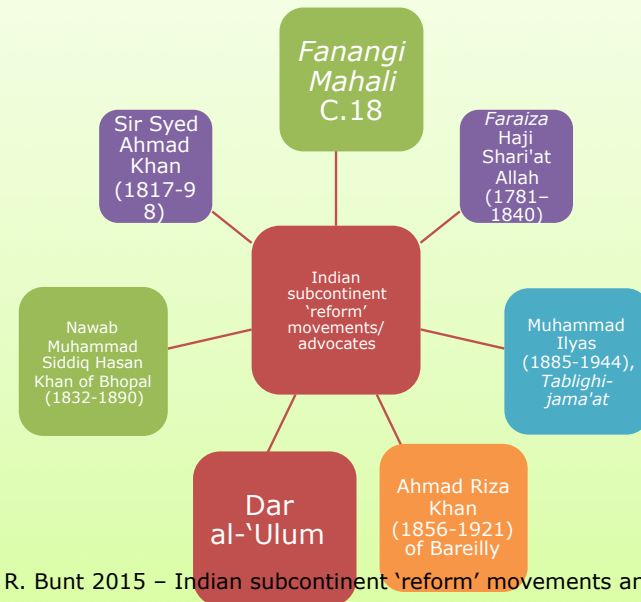


Salafiyya

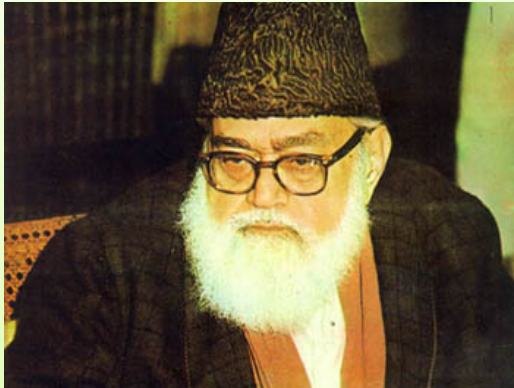
- South Asia provided a source of values and ideologies linked with the re-appraisal of Islam, indicative of the diversity within Islamic thought, whilst at the same time drawing upon historical heritage and close links with the rest of the Islamic world.
- It demonstrates some of the political-religious influences that have gone on to permeate contemporary societies.
- Specific themes have continuity, giving motivation and inspiration for contemporary 'reform' movements.
- There is the sense of historical continuity, linking to illustrious predecessors, and ultimately back to the *madhabib al-fiqhiyya* and the *Salafi* themselves.

Islam, Politics and 'Reform'

OTHER ZONES



© Gary R. Bunt 2015 – Indian subcontinent 'reform' movements and advocates



EXPLORING MUSLIM SOCIETIES

Abu al-a'la Mawdudi (1903-79)

Abu al-a'la Mawdudi (1903-79)

- Abu al-a'la Mawdudi (1903-79), founded the Jama'at-e-Islami in India in 1941, emphasising the need for an Islamic state, and a return to the ideals of seventh century Medina.
- These were seen as tools against foreign influence, both before and after Indian independence and the foundation of Pakistan.
- Mawdudi's significant corpus of publications demonstrates his attitudes in full, including reliance on returning to Qur'an and *Hadith*, and what he saw as the erosion of orthodoxy in the face of syncretic practices.



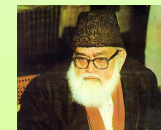
Abu al-a'la Mawdudi (1903-79)

- Mawdudi sought to guide Muslims in asserting their Islamic identity, and in their understanding of the Qur'an.
- Mawdudi reflects the influence of Ibn Taymiyya and al-Wahhab, and as the product of South Asia, reformers such as Shah Wali Allah and Siddiq Hasan Khan would have played a significant role in influencing Mawdudi.



Abu al-a'la Mawdudi (1903-79)

- Jamaat-e-Islami differs from many of its reform-centred predecessors, because of its direct political agenda, which in different forms has permeated several Muslim societies.
- It has significance in the U.K. context, as providing a religious focus and source of ideological reference for organisations including The Islamic Foundation, Muslim Educational Trust, and UK Islamic Mission.



Jamaat-e-Islami

- Jamaat-e-Islami provides a good example of the continuity of thought in the *tajdid* paradigm, linking with many of the reformers cited earlier.

Common issues include:

- the erosion of Islamic beliefs;
- fear of - and a need to counteract - 'foreign' domination or influence;
- the desire for an Islamic state and/or the implementation of *shari'ah*;
- how to react to a changing environment;
- the need to undertake a fresh appraisal of the Qur'an and *Hadith*, with reference to *al-Madhab al-Fiqhiyya*;
- opposition to non-Sunni Islam, including Shi'ism; and rejection to perceived syncretic practices associated with Sufism.

OTHER THEMES

State invocation of religion

- Allegiance to religious law
- Special religious status for leadership
- Representative of community/ communities
- No single pattern for use of Islam
- No single model of Islamic government

Types of Muslim majority states

- Liberal democracies: Turkey, Indonesia
- Monarchies: Middle East, North Africa
- 'Islamic states': Iran, Pakistan

Q. How can 'Islamic' state be defined?

Use of religion

- Law reflects religious norms (i.e. Family law, with separate religious courts)
- Religion as foundation of legislation – 'Shariah'; government control of religion
- 'Divine' leadership i.e. Genealogical descent (Jordan, Morocco); designated descendants (Iran)
- Religious defenders: Saudi Arabia, Iran
- Solidarity with Islam, 'Commander of Faithful'

Regional variants

- Turkey: Ataturk abolishes caliphate, turns ulama into state employees, develops state education, abolishes Sufi brotherhoods
 - Indonesia: initial rejection of Islamic political parties was overturned in 1967 by Suharto, and parties were encouraged to participate as part of a liberalism agenda.
- Both these will be discussed in case studies.*

Key concepts

- *Ulama*: religious scholars
- *Fiqh*: jurisprudence
- *Mufti*: legal specialist
- *Qadi*: judge
- Caliph: 'successor' to Prophet Muhammad (d.632)
- *Umma* – community (of Muslims)
- *Kalam* – lit. talking, 'dialectical reasoning; debate (not a direct equivalent for 'theology'); *'ilm al-kalam* = science or study of kalam

kalam

- Responses to the big questions associated with interpretation, argumentation about Islam, law, language.
- Key figure: Hasan al-Basri (642-748) – Sufi, theologian: focused on concept of human behaviour based on free will (explains Judgement Day), which was discussed with Caliph Abd al-Malik.

Mu'tazilites

- Develop al-Basri's work
- Focus on withdrawal (i'tizal = to withdraw)
- Interpreted Qur'an based on human reason and intellect
- Although Qur'an was seen as Word of God, "it was separate from the eternal God and thus was created in human space and time"
- However, majority see Qur'an as eternal and 'uncreated'
- Mu'tazilites critiques by al-Ash'ari (d.936), who saw reason and intellect as subservient to Revelation.

Recommended reading

Anthony R. Byrd and Richard C. Martin, 'From Isfahan to the internet: Islamic theology in the global village' in *Islam in the Modern World*, J. Kenney & E. Moosa (eds.). (Routledge)

Laith Saud, 'Islamic Political Theology', in *An Introduction to Islam in the 21st Century*, Aminah Beverley McCloud, Scott W. Hibbard & Laith Saud (eds.). (Wiley-Blackwell)