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TRANSNATIONALISM IN ISLAMIST POLITICAL THOUGHT: THE CASE OF THE
MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD (EGYPT) AND HEZBOLLAH

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ABSTRACT

Islamism today is an integral aspect of the global political arena. Islamist entities play a key role in the political, social and cultural realms of many Muslim societies. Often this has seen violent manifestation in the form of suicide bombings, skirmishes and kidnappings. While the rhetoric of the global war on terror has been quick to simplify these acts by denoting them broadly as terrorism, it fails to take into account the ideological framework that lies behind such acts. This study therefore attempts to study Islamist political thought but through the narrow framework of the role of transnationalism in it. Doing so it is able to establish a dual realm within the Islamist ideological framework where transnational concerns regarding the broader Muslim world coexists with specific national aspirations and contexts within which such entities operate. What is then displayed is a significant correlation that exists between these two seemingly alternate frameworks (i.e. the transnational and the domestic). With this theoretical understanding in place, it is operationalized through a study of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Hezbollah in Lebanon; both entities being deeply rooted in both the national and the transnational.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

As the present financial crisis sweeps the world, it proves to us the truly transnational character of the international system. Whether the credit crunch is felt by the shipping industry in Singapore, the poor street vendor in downtown Cairo or the auto industry in Japan, this recent economic crisis has proven more than ever the intricate and far-reaching interconnectedness of global community. While our economic transnationalism has been quite apparent in a rapidly globalizing world, one could also claim that the international community has increasingly adopted transnationalism as a framework for establishing cross-border connections based on secular values, culture, nationality, ethnicity and religion. This study will specifically focus on the role of transnationalism in Islamist political thought and ask what role it plays in the political and ideological framework of Islamist groups *vis-à-vis* concrete domestic crises (that are often seen as at the core of their political stance). While it is recognized that there remains a wide spectrum of Islamist groups that differ significantly in character, this study will focus on the Muslim Brotherhood¹ (Egypt) and Hezbollah (Lebanon) to account for both unarmed and armed entities.

1.1 Significance

Transnational processes ingrained in the international system are widely reflected in academic analysis. Primarily focused on migration studies, the majority of literature on the subject has chosen to focus on human migration and its effect on the social and political

¹ Throughout this paper the Muslim Brotherhood will also be referred to as ‘the Brotherhood’ and ‘MB’

dynamics of both the ‘sending country’ and the ‘receiving country’.² For example, Larissa Ruiz Baia, critiques the ‘push-pull theory’, which claims that certain factors push migrants to leave their country while other factors ‘pull’ them to other countries. She attempts to explain the true motivations behind the timing, locations and means of migration beyond the initial economic incentives as explained by this theoretical framework.³

While migration studies have dealt with the subject in great depth, it has not discouraged other disciplines within the social sciences from delving into the issue, especially in relation to critical studies that engage with the notion that transnationalism has the ability to challenge some of the basic assumptions and institutions of international relations. The likes of Muhittin Ataman have embarked on similar studies that have focused on the growth of transnational non-state actors and how they challenge state-centrism of traditional international relations. Pries makes a similar claim when he states that “...thinking social living in terms of *nation-state-bounded containers* will result as a short episode in the development of the social-spatial practices of humanity – even if we do not know yet the kinds of social bindings that will replace them. [While it cannot be denied that in the]...anti-colonial process of nation-building in Africa, Asia and Latin America...[the notion of]...*geographic spaces* as territorial ‘containers’ for the sovereign regulation of *social spaces* was not questioned,...[in the face of rapidly growing] international flows of goods and capital,”⁴ the nation as a ‘socio-spatial container’ is increasingly becoming “‘perforated’ and ‘punctured’.”⁵ With these realities in place the author posits that world system theories need to transform themselves from focusing on “demarcation

² The expressions ‘sending country’ and ‘receiving country’ have been adopted from Eva Ostergaard-Nielsen’s *Transnational Politics. Turks and Kurds in Germany*

³ Larissa Ruiz Baia, “Rethinking Transnationalism: Reconstructing National Identities among Peruvian Catholics in New Jersey,” *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 41.4 (1999): 105

⁴ Ludger Pries. “The approach of transnational social spaces” in *New Transnational Social Spaces* ed. Ludger Pries (New York: Routledge, 2001): 3-5

⁵ Pries, 4

to....interlacing mechanism, overlapping regions, integration by exchange and the external driving forces of a holistic system that influences individual regions.”⁶

What we have thus seen is that our understanding of transnationalism is often rooted in the dynamics of globalization. It is hinged on the transnational movement of people, goods, services and knowledge. While this is the reality, any study of transnationalism centered on these tangible processes does nothing but demonstrate a character of world that has developed over centuries. Whether this includes the trading routes of ancient periods, colonization or globalization as we know it today, transnationality has grown to be an integral aspect of human society. Moreover, it exhibits that transnationalism is nothing but a ‘natural’ dynamic rooted in specific developments that have articulated a certain character of the world today. Specific to the case of migrants, Levitt validates this when he states that migrants “...do not shift their loyalties and participatory energies from one country to another. Instead, they are integrated, to varying degrees, into the countries that receive them, at the same time that they remain connected to the countries they leave behind”⁷ So, if transnationalism is ingrained in the character of the world today, it is quite natural then that this feature is reflected in Islamist political thought. Like many other religious movements (see Chapter 2) it is often rooted in a religious and ideological brotherhood that is seen as essentially transcending and far superior to the authority of national borders and boundaries. It remains an *imagined*⁸ bond that frequently uses the notions of suffering, discrimination and oppression, besides religion, as a basis of commonality. While this may often seem as simply rhetorical, it has come to have significant political repercussions. These consequences were demonstrated clearly during the fall of Yugoslavia. The ICTY’s

⁶ Pries, 11

⁷ Peggy Levitt. *The Transnational Villagers* (London: University of California Press, 2001): 5

⁸ Using the term in a way similar to Benedict Anderson in *Imagine Communities*.

judgment for Enver Hadžihasanović and Amir Kubura claimed the *Mujahedin* to have played a key role in the conflict. According to it,

[t]he evidence shows that foreign Mujahedin arrived in central Bosnia in the second half of 1992 with the aim of helping their "Muslim brothers" against the Serbian aggressors. Mostly they came from North Africa, the Near East and the Middle East. The foreign Mujahedin differed considerably from the local population, not only because of their physical appearance and the language they spoke, but also because of their fighting methods. Initially, the foreign Mujahedin gave food and other basic necessities to the local Muslim population. Once hostilities broke out between the ABiH⁹ and the HVO¹⁰, they also participated in battles against the HVO alongside ABiH units.¹¹

What this statement of the ICTY shows is that, during the Bosnian war, the *Mujahedin*'s presence went beyond national, racial and linguistic barriers. Fighting for their Bosnian 'Muslim brothers', they established a transnational allegiance that solely had religion at its core. Presence of similar transnational fighters has also been claimed in Afghanistan and Iraq. What is key, although, is the ideological framework that drives these fighters. The *Mujahedin* are a violent manifestation of the politicization and radicalization of the Islamist ideology thus making a critical study of Islamist ideology and the role of transnationality in it as critical for both, having a clearer understanding of the dynamics of such groups and a coherent theoretical basis for policy-making with regards to Islamist political entities around the world.

1.2 Transnationalism and Muslim Politics

With the already established political manifestations of the transnationalism of the Islamist ideology, there has been a significant amount of literature focused on this specific topic. Fuller claims that political Islam has conjured itself into a global force. Instead of "...operating in grand theatrical isolation... [it is] striking parallel to other globalizing forces in the world."¹²

⁹ *Armija Bosne I Hercegovine* or Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina

¹⁰ *Hrvatsko Vijeće Obrane* or Croatian Council of Defense

¹¹ ICTY, "Summary of the Judgement of Enver Hadžihasanovic and Amir Kubura" 15 March 2006

¹² Graham E. Fuller. *The Future of Political Islam* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004): 67

Similar to this macro-level analysis Tibi sees the transnational element associated with Political Islam limited to a violent manifestation of the ideology. For him it is closely associated with Sayyid Qub's call for an "Islamic world revolution"...[that] has given birth to a real political movement based on transnational religion."¹³ While elaborating on the phenomenon Tibi claims that this ideological framework (for him 'Jihadism') targets "...the international order of secular states known as the Westphalian order...[and intends to replace it with]....a global Islamicate, in which...God's rule is enhanced to map the entire globe."¹⁴

Madawi al-Rasheed, focusing on transnationalism in the Arab gulf sees this phenomenon to be a two fold process that includes 'Localizing the transnational' and 'Transnationalizing the local'. The former involves "Gulf societies...[absorbing] outside networks, agencies and traditions within their local historical, economic, political, cultural and social settings."¹⁵ 'Transnationalizing the local' involves "...processes whereby local traditions within specific Gulf historical contexts are exported to the outside world."¹⁶ While this engages several facets, it does centrally entail the "religious outreach...[using Gulf capital catering to]...Arab and Muslim diasporas [that] remain eager to maintain links with a pan-Arab and pan-Islamic culture."¹⁷ Mandaville sees transnationalism in Muslim politics as part of its "experience of globalization."¹⁸ Furthermore it is the technological innovations of this new age, according to the author, that allows for the spread of this "new Islamist project."¹⁹ Mandaville states that "[t]he communication medium serves as a form of *authority* (modern, post-traditional) through which

¹³ Bassam Tibi. *Political Islam, World Politics and Europe* (New York: Routledge, 2008): 101

¹⁴ Tibi, 102

¹⁵ Madawi Al-Rasheed. "Introduction. Localizing the transnational and transnationalizing the local" in Madawi Al-Rasheed ed. *Transnational Connection and the Arab Gulf* (New York: Routledge, 2005): 7

¹⁶ Al-Rasheed, 9

¹⁷ Al-Rasheed, 10

¹⁸ Peter Mandaville. *Transnational Muslim Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2001): 2

¹⁹ Mandaville 177

an *authentic* message (Islam, ethnicity) is transmitted.”²⁰ While this discourse attempts to comprehend transnationality in Muslim politics and thinking and provides for a comprehensive analysis at the macro-level, there remains a significant gap in the literature. As the broad processes behind transnationality remain important it doesn’t provide for an understanding of how Islamist transnationality becomes a relevant political force in a domestic setting. What it fails to thus do is provide for a holistic understanding that establishes a clear correlation between a macro-level phenomenon and its micro-level relevance. Simply put, the question remains as to how the transnational vision of Islamism become relevant to the average Muslim?

In this study the attempt will be to establish how the transnationalism becomes significant in a domestic context. The second chapter will delve into a general study of religion and transnationalism. The third chapter will provide for a theoretical understanding of Islamist political thought that delves into the roots of its ideological transnationalism while also delving into the domestic political and social crises that contextualize Islamist politics. It will then claim a correlation between the transnational and the local rooted in the understanding that through the domestic political elite and institutions the ills of the global order (as seen by the Islamist and related to Muslims around the world) is manifested in the local realm thus establishing both spheres as complementary. This would further explain why the individual Muslim finds the transnational vision as relevant to his/her domestic plight. The final chapter will then verify the theoretical outline provided in the previous chapter to explain the workings of The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Hezbollah in Lebanon. While there remains a plethora of Islamist groups, these entities, besides being two of the most important of their kind (unarmed and armed, respectively), have strong transnational and domestic roots that make them important case-

²⁰ Mandaville, 177

studies when attempting to follow the flow of correlation between these two facets (transnational and the local) of the Islamist political thought.

CHAPTER 2 - RELIGION AND TRANSNATIONALISM

Before one is able to engage in a study of the role of transnationalism in Islamist political thought, it is pertinent to provide a theoretical understanding of the critical interaction between religion and transnational trends.

The events of 9/11 challenged some of our foundational understandings and assumptions about international relations and the role of religion. It disproved the claim that *modern* International Relations is devoid of religion. Furthermore, it contradicted the assertion that modernization marginalizes the role of religion in society and politics. Known as the secularization thesis one of its first proponents was "...Thomas Woolston who...set a date by which time modernity would have triumphed over faith."²¹ He claimed that Christianity would disappear by 1900. For Frederick the Great this process would be much quicker than envisioned by Woolston, while Voltaire saw 'the end' coming by the 1800s.²² On the contrary, in recent years, religiously-based entities, in particular contexts are no longer marginalized forces but key actors that are significant determinants of global political processes. In this reference, many, including Hurd²³ and Philpott,²⁴ would posit that it was a critical flaw to assume that modern international relations would be devoid of religion, when in fact religious traditions and values (namely Judeo-Christian) often remain at the core of the international system and its institutions (namely the sovereign nation-state). But then, the question remains, as to what role and function religion plays in order to remain eternally relevant to every societal context.

²¹ Rodney Stark. "Secularization, R.I.P." *Sociology of Religion* 60.3 (1999): 249

²² Stark, 249

²³ see Elizabeth Shakman Hurd. "The Political Authority of Secularism in International Relations," *European Journal of International Relations* 10 (2004): 235-262

²⁴ see Daniel Philpott. "The Religious Roots of Modern International Relations," *World Politics* 52 (January 2000): 206-245

This question about religion and its social context was comprehensively answered by Durkheim, who, in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, saw religion as a critical agent providing for ‘social cohesion’. In this work Durkheim attempts to better comprehend the ‘Religious phenomenon’. The author categorizes it into two separate elements, namely, “beliefs and rites.”²⁵ While the ‘beliefs’ “...are states of opinion and consist of representations,... [‘rites’ signify]...particular modes of action.”²⁶ For Durkheim, between ‘beliefs’ and ‘rites’ lies “all that separates thinking from doing.”²⁷ What we are thus seeing here is that religion, as a phenomenon, is being translated as a significant societal force. Further elaborating this Durkheim claims that “[r]eligious beliefs proper are always shared by a definite group that professes them and that practices the corresponding rites.”²⁸ This would mean that while these beliefs and rites are “accepted by all members of that group...they also belong to the group and unify it.”²⁹ So, as the individual adherent enjoys a longitudinal relationship with the beliefs and rites, there also exists a latitudinal bond that exists between all individuals in the group (based on common beliefs).³⁰ A “...society whose members are united because they imagine the sacred world and its relations with the profane world in the same way, and because they translate this common representation into identical practices, is what is called a Church.”³¹ Based on this analysis, Durkheim defines religion as a “...unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden – beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them.”³² What we are thus seeing here is that religion goes beyond the understanding that it is simply “the notion of the

²⁵ Emile Durkheim. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (New York: Free Press, 1995): 34

²⁶ Durkheim, 34

²⁷ Durkheim, 41

²⁸ *Ibid*, 41

²⁹ *Ibid*, 41

³⁰ Durkheim, 41

³¹ *Ibid*, 41

³² Durkheim, 44

supernatural.”³³ Religion here is a social phenomenon that is often responsible for societal cohesion. This analysis by Durkheim could be seen as central to our understanding of the role of transnationalism in religion. While it is true that it has been applied to social cohesion often in a national/domestic framework, its dynamics could be expected to be similar in a transnational environment as well. In such a scenario, cross-border allegiance is established between those that belong to the same religious group thus, supposedly, governed by similar morals and values.

In recent years transnationalism has been closely associated with Islam. The experience of the 9/11 in the United States and 7/11 in the UK have convinced many that Islamic fundamentalism and its violent proponents operate through a global network of terror that undermines national boundaries and functions based purely on notions of religious allegiance and adherence. While the extent of this network remains obscure, it would be naïve to assume that such transnational religious networks are unique to Islam.

2.1 Transnationalism: Hinduism, Christianity, Judaism and Islam

One of the most recent visible manifestations of transnationalism in religion has been in Hinduism. As its primary agent in India, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad has been key in establishing a relationship with Hindus abroad, especially in the US. Assisting Indians that long to maintain the Hindu culture while in overseas, VHP provides tools such as “internet chat groups and youth camps...[that allow]...Hinduism...[to be kept] alive among young Indians in the USA.”³⁴ The BJP or the Bharatiya Janata Party too has attempted to establish similar relationships but with greater political undertones. While introducing the PIO (person of Indian origin) card “with a number of benefits attached to it”³⁵ as the ruling party in India, it has garnered support for

³³ Durkheim, 22

³⁴ Peter Van Der Veer. “Transnational religion: Hindu and Muslim movements” *Global Networks* 2.2 (2002): 100

³⁵ *Ibid*, 98

policies like the 1998 nuclear test, while successfully fundraise in the US following “international sanctions against India [thus demonstrating that]...[t]ransnational investment, global politics and the cultural capital of ‘belonging’ go hand in hand here.”³⁶

As transnationalism in Hinduism has been stimulated by the growing size of (Hindu) Indian communities abroad in recent years, in Christianity it is all but a new phenomenon. Driven often by a missionary objective, Christian clergy have played a critical role in humanitarian endeavors, human rights initiatives and colonial civilizing missions (where Christianization was seen as synonymous with being civilized). As a root for activism, the American Evangelicals have often been seen at the forefront of religious transnationalism. This was quite distinctly displayed through *Statement of Conscience* produced by the National Association of Evangelicals in January 1996 on “...religious persecution around the globe....”³⁷ Having incited a plethora of local and regional initiatives addressing the issues, this reaction could be seen as only a reflection of the “ideals of ‘Americanness’ and American exceptionalism...grounded in...traditional liberal ideas of tolerance and freedom...[but the themes of]...Christian identity politics, Christian internationalism”³⁸ remain underlying features of this *brand* of activism, thus being basis for claiming it to be a manifestation of religious transnationalism in Christianity.

Contrary to transnationalism in Christianity and Hinduism, in Judaism it is often rooted in historical experiences of the community. One of the key elements of this has been the State of Israel. Israel itself played a critical role in maintaining transnational links for Jewish communities abroad. Along with this, one also cannot deny the key importance of tradition and

³⁶ *Ibid*, 98

³⁷ Elizabeth A. Castelli. “Praying for the Persecuted Church: US Christian Activism in Global Arena,” *Journal Human Rights* 4 (2005): 321

³⁸ Castelli, 322

shared experiences in doing the same. Wald and Martinez claim that notwithstanding the scattered nature of its followers, "...the Talmud³⁹ sets outer limits on the permissible interpretation of Jewish scriptures and thus imposes a considerable degree of cohesiveness on how the faith is understood."⁴⁰ This meant that while "...scattered around the world [Jewish communities] partook of a common heritage."⁴¹ Furthermore, religious holidays invoked memory of "...historical calamities [thus] reinforced a sense of shared experience regardless of locale."⁴² Furthermore, the Holocaust "...further linked Jews to a bond of suffering that transcended national borders."⁴³

Finally no study of religious transnationalism would be complete without Islam. While this will be discussed later in depth (see Chapter 3), a clear manifestation of this transnational phenomenon was the proclamation of the Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam (CDHRI) by the member states of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, on the 5th of August, 1990. While the CDHRI was declared as an Islamic alternative to the (claimed secular and western) Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), similar to the latter, it provides for a framework for moral social organization. Just like the UDHR, it too claims a level of universality, but this is limited to the Muslim world. Nevertheless, its clear transnational character cannot be ignored. Unlike its counterpart that was adopted in the UN, CDHRI could be seen as reflecting a cultural and religious *brand* of transnationality, which has Islam and its adherents in the Muslim world at its core.

³⁹ The word "Talmud" most commonly denotes "...the bodies of teaching consisting largely of the traditions and discussions of the *amoraim* organized around the text of the *Mishnah of R. *Judah ha-Nasi." Eliezer Berkovits and Stephen G. Wald in Fred Skolnik and Michael Berenbaum eds. *Encyclopedia Judaica Vol. 19* (New York: Thomson Gale, 2007): 470

⁴⁰ Kenneth D. Wald and Michael D. Martinez. "Jewish Religiosity and Political Attitudes in the United States and Israel," *Political Behavior* 23.4 (Dec., 2001): 380

⁴¹ Wald and Martinez, 380

⁴² *Ibid*, 380

⁴³ *Ibid*, 380

What we have thus analyzed here is the presence of transnational elements in some of the major religions of the world. Through Durkheim's understanding of religion as a provider of social cohesion, we see that whether it is through a frame of values (Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam), human migration (Hindu nationalism and Vishwa Hindu Parishad), human rights advocacy ('persecuted churches' and US evangelicals) or historical experiences and tragedies (Jewish national identity), religion has frequently been critical in providing for cross-border/transnational social cohesion. It could be claimed that often this cohesion is based on 'imagined' relationships. Besides religion there seldom is a tangible connection between individuals or communities across national boundaries.⁴⁴ But, this in no way undermines the strength and (primarily political) significance of these transnational relationships. Moreover, it is its strength, despite being *imagined*, that makes religious transnationality a significant phenomenon worth analyzing. Like globalization it is a key dynamic in the world and is a significant determinant in matters of political, social and cultural significance.

Having thus established a broad understanding of religious transnationality, it is now imperative to further explore the subject through a study of the importance of transnationalism in Islamist political thought.

⁴⁴ Based on Benedict Anderson's study of the concept of 'nation' in *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991)

CHAPTER 3 – ISLAM, ISLAMIST POLITICAL THOUGHT AND TRANSNATIONALISM

Before we attempt to explore the role of transnationalism in Islamist political thought it is critical that we clearly define the key concepts that are involved. With the wide variety of political, social and cultural realities of Muslim societies in the world, this heterogeneity is further reflected in the Islamist groups that take root in these contexts. Defining some of these concepts would articulate the broad theoretical frameworks within which this study will be carried out. Having delved into the phenomenon of ‘transnationalism’, we need to delineate the terms Islamism, Political Islam and Islamist political thought.

According to Fuller, **Islamism**, used as synonymous to **political Islam** in this study, is the belief “...that Islam as a body of faith has something important to say about how politics and society should be ordered in contemporary Muslim World...”⁴⁵ Demant in *Islam vs. Islamism* sees Political Islam as the “affirmation of politics as the central axis of combat for the Islamization of society.”⁴⁶ While Fuller and Demant articulate somewhat linear definitions of political Islam (as a political response to issues of concern in the Muslim world based on Islamic principles and all-encompassing Islamic alternatives), Gaffney sees this phenomenon as being far more multifaceted. He claims that it

...suggests a variety of meaning across different fields of discourse. Most generally, it occurs as a term of contrast. It describes one set of phenomena presumably associated with the populace or the masses over against another set joined to the elite. On another level, however, as a unit of analysis, popular Islam also serves as a symbolic index for the assertion of authority. It is evoked with respect to such contested areas as orthodoxy, authenticity, legitimacy, social justice, modernity, alignment, popularity, and accountability.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Fuller, XI

⁴⁶ Peter R. Demant. *Islam vs. Islamism: The Muslim Dilemma of the Muslim World* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006): 31

⁴⁷ Patrick D. Gaffney. “Popular Islam” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 524 (November, 1992): 39

What we see here is that Political Islam as a concept remains multifaceted in its interpretation and understanding. While Fuller and Demant see it as simply an Islamic response in a political crisis, the likes of Gaffney see it as a two-fold response that is against the elite while also claiming to have the ‘right answers’ in relation to controversial contemporary issues that affect Muslim societies in general. These three attempts to define Political Islam further reflect the versatile nature of the Islamist ideology as manifested through Islamist groups around the world. Therefore, in order to provide for a general framework for understanding Political Islam or Islamism it should be defined as *representing the use of Islamic terms, theories and concept in a response to any specific contemporary political or social crisis pertaining specifically to Muslims or Muslim societies*.⁴⁸ Based on this, **Islamist political thought** represents *a brand of political philosophy that attempts to provide for an Islamic alternative to all questions regarding society (including societal culture, ethics and morality), government, politics, law, justice and property*. What these broad definitions thus provide for is a framework broad enough to incorporate a wide variety of Islamist groups that represent a multiplicity of social, political and cultural contexts.

At this juncture, as a political movement, it is important to recognize that at the core of Islamism lay the religious concepts and frameworks around which its ideology is structured. Therefore, if one is to explore the function of transnationalism in Islamist political thought, it may be analytically beneficial to first explore the significance of transnationalism in the early history of the religion and its manifestation in the foundations of Islam itself.

⁴⁸ While this remains a broad definition generally drawing from the above-mentioned frameworks it is analytically beneficial as it allows the incorporation of a wider variety of Islamist groups.

3. 1 Islamic History and Transnationalism

As one delves into the depth of Islamic history one would notice that transnationalism is a core feature of the beginning of the religion.⁴⁹ As Muhammad preached "...faith in the single God and [articulated] to his followers God's revelations to him"⁵⁰ he also managed to disgruntle the pagan leaders of Mecca.⁵¹ Owing to this Muhammad and his followers had to flee to Yathrib (Medina⁵²) in the year 622. This 200 mile journey, known as the *hijra*⁵³, enabled Muhammed to establish the "...first Muslim *umma* or 'community'."⁵⁴ While this remains one of the most important events in early Islamic history, it is further critical to this study as it represents transnationality lying at the root of Islam and its expansion.⁵⁵ Following Muhammad's death in 632 a process of expansion was embarked on which "...gradually brought the inhabitants of virtually the whole of the Arabian Peninsula to embrace Islam and to acknowledge the political supremacy of his *umma*"^{56,57} Under the second caliph "...Muslim's captured Jerusalem...and Islam spread into Syria, Persia, and North Africa"⁵⁸. Under Umayyad⁵⁹, Islamic rule extended

⁴⁹ Transnationality in early Islamic history will be analyzed under different terms than those used for the contemporary international system. Since the Westphalian state structures were not established at the time, the venturing outside of one's clan/community could be considered as demonstrating transnationalism. As states are often seen as the primary orientation around which the international system operates, a similar claim could be made about pre-Islam societies and their allegiance to the clan or tribe.

⁵⁰ Jonathan P. Berkey. *The Formation of Islam: Religion and Society in the Near East, 600-1800* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003): 61

⁵¹ Mecca or Makka "...is the most sacred city of Islam, where the Prophet Muhammad was born and lived about 50 years and where the Ka'ba is situated." (D.A. King. "Makka" in C.E. Bosworth, E. Van Donzel, B. Lewis and Ch. Pellat eds. *Encyclopedia of Islam Volume VI* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986): 144)

⁵² Medina is "...town in Saudi Arabia" where the first Islamic community was established. ("Medina" in C.E. Bosworth, E. Van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs and Ch. Pellat eds. *Encyclopedia of Islam Volume VI* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986): 969)

⁵³ *Hijra* or *Hidjra* is "...emigration of Muhammad from Mecca to Medina in September 622". (W. Montgomery Watt. "Hidjra" in B. Lewis, V.L. Menage, Ch. Pellat and J. Schacht eds. *Encyclopedia of Islam Volume III* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986): 366)

⁵⁴ Berkey, 61

⁵⁵ At the time Mecca was ruled by the Quraysh tribe while in Medina was under the influence of the Aus and Khazraj.

⁵⁶ community

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 61

⁵⁸ Seyyed Hossein Nasr. *Islam*. (Harper Collins e-books, 2003): 116

“...from Central Asia to Spain and France...”⁶⁰ After this, owing to the Abbasids⁶¹ and the Ottomans, Islam further spread to Africa, Balkans, South Asia and more recently, southeast Asia. While often through conquest, this vast global expansion of Islam represents the truly transnational character of its early roots and its historical development as a world religion. Moreover, while it may seem that particular national contexts (especially in the period following the Peace of Westphalia) may have had a significant affect on Islam’s transnational relevance; this has been maintained by a bond based on the basic principles and traditions of the religion.

3.2 Qur’an, Hadith and Transnationalism

As Islam’s past demonstrated clear transnational elements through migration and conquests, such trends have also been prevalent in the world today. Whether it is the case of European Muslims protesting against the Israeli occupation of Palestine, Muslims in the Middle East and around the world expressing outrage over the Danish cartoons or the presence of Afghani *Mujahedin* in Bosnia-Herzegovina supporting the Muslim population; they all demonstrate a cross-border allegiance based on their adherence to the same religious community. The question therefore is, ‘what is the key feature that is common between Muslims of India, Pakistan, South Africa, Egypt, UK and Canada?’ The answer lies in the Qur’an⁶² and the

⁵⁹ Umayyad is “...the dynasty of caliphs which, from its centre in Syria, ruled the whole of the Arab Islamic territories from 41/661 to 132/750.” (G.R. Hawting “Umayyad” in P.J. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. Van. Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs eds. *Encyclopedia of Islam Volume X* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986): 840)

⁶⁰ Nasr, 119

⁶¹ Abbasids is “the dynasty of the Caliphs from 132/75 to 656/1258. The dynasty takes its name from its ancestor, al-A’bbas b. ‘Abd al-Muttalib b. Hashim, the uncle of the Prophet.” (B. Lewis. “Abbasids” in H.A.R. Gibb, J.H. Kramers, E. Levi-Provencal and J.Schacht eds. *Encyclopedia of Islam Volume I* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986): 15)

⁶² Qur’an or al-Kuran is “...the Muslim scripture, containing the revelations recited by Muhammad and preserved in a fixed, written form.” (J.D.Pearson. “Al-Kur’an” in C.E. Bosworth, E. Van Donzei, B. Lewis and Ch. Pellat eds. *Encyclopedia of Islam Volume V* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986): 400)

*Hadith*⁶³. The universality of the Qur'an was clearly expressed in a translation of the text by Abdullah Yusuf Ali. Ali claims that,

The Qur'an has essentially three qualities that make it universal. Firstly, it is a masterpiece of immense literary value. Secondly, though its message is a continuation of that contained in the earlier Revelations made to Abraham, Moses, David and Jesus, yet this message has a sense of fulfillment and originality that attracts toward it Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike. Finally, it has a wealth of information – both worldly wisdom and intellectually conceptions – which provides the code of life for mankind.⁶⁴

While the reasons for the Qur'an's universality may be contested, it is the belief in it that ensures a transnational relationship between Muslims around the world. Furthermore, the principles laid by the book are deemed valid irrespective of specific social, political, cultural, linguistic or national contexts. Hans Kung attempts to demonstrate this by articulating some of the “fundamental principles laid down by the Qur'an.”⁶⁵ These include:

...the principle of God's oneness and uniqueness, of His being the originator and fosterer of the universe, the fount of all life-giving grace; the One to whom man is ultimately responsible, the only power that can really guide and help; the call to righteous action in the life of this world; the principle of life after death and of the organic consequences of man's actions and behavior; the principle of guidance through God's message-bearers and, flowing from it, the principle of the continuity of all true religions; and, finally the need for voluntary self-surrender to the will of the Supreme Being and, thus, for worshipping him alone.⁶⁶

As these are some of the key principle of Islam laid down in the Qur'an, it remains critical that none of them allude to specific nations, communities or kinship. They are addressed to the believer irrespective of these specific demarcations thus inherently encouraging transnationality in a Westphalian world political organization where nation-state remains the primary unit

⁶³ Hadith “...with the definite article is used for Tradition, being an account of what the Prophet said or did or of his tacit approval of something said or done in his presence.” (J. Robson. “Hidjra” in B. Lews, V.L. Menage, Ch. Pellat and J. Schacht eds. *Encyclopedia of Islam Volume III* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986): 23)

⁶⁴ This endorsement was made by Abdullah Yusuf Ali in his translation of *The Quran* (Abdullah Yusuf Ali (trans.) *The Qur'an* (New York: Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, Inc., 2001))

⁶⁵ Hans Kung. *Islam. Past, Present & Future* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2007): 60

⁶⁶ Kung, 60

providing meaning and belonging.⁶⁷ These Islamic principles, being universal, then connect Muslims around the world based on their allegiance to the religion of Islam rather than their particular nationalities or citizenship.

Similar to the Qur'an, the *Hadith* too attempts to provide for universality. While it provides for the traditions drawn from the life and actions of the Prophet Muhammad, it is its contribution to Islamic jurisprudence that is of critical importance to this study. Notwithstanding the existence of several versions of it, the *Hadith* gives a framework through which the norms of a good Muslim society are articulated. This in itself has the potential of establishing correlation between communities across national borders that adhere to similar understandings of proper societal norms. While far more contested as a religious text than the Qur'an, *Hadith* too somewhat provides for a prospect of transnationality based on Islamic traditions.

What we have thus established here is that both Islamic history and its key texts reflect transnationality to be at its core. Historically, the religion and its adherents have spread from being limited to small communities in the Arabian Peninsula to the far corners of the world. Its claims a significant level of universality which, some would maintain, undermines and ignores particular national contexts. With Political Islam and Islamist Political Thought deeply rooted in the Islam's key principles, traditions and history, it would be easy to then claim the centrality of transnationalism to them. But, doing so, one would then ignore an area of further contention. If one assumes transnationality to be at the core of Islam, it still fails to explicate how it translates in Islamist political thought, especially because most Islamist groups claim to be a reaction to particular domestic (not transnational/global) political and social crises. The question thus lies in

⁶⁷ The Qur'an was written for a form of political organization that is vastly different from the state-centric approach rooted in the Peace of Westphalia. There were no state structures that provided for territorial divisions and constrains as we know today. But, having established this it still displays elements of transnationalism that challenges the clan-centric/tribe-centric modes of political organization of the time.

the way the transnational rhetoric of Islamism affects the character and actions of the Islamists in the domestic or national sphere.

To further explore this subject we must first articulate and outline the key arguments of some the foundational ideologues of Islamist political thought. Then we can delve into socio-political conditions that allow for the relevance of such a brand of political thinking, following which we would attempt to conjure how Islamism (as a political philosophy) translates in Muslim societies i.e. the *umma*.

3.3 The Foundations of Islamist Political Thought and Transnationalism

While there are several key ideologues that have taken root in a variety of socio-economic and political contexts, here the study will attempt to focus on a few specific Islamist thinkers who can be seen as having had a critical role in shaping Islamist politics today. Since these thinkers were responding to specific societal, economic and political crises, this study will organize these ideologues under themes (namely, ‘Social Order’, ‘Political System’ and ‘World Order’) that would provide for a more holistic view of Islamist political thought. Under these themes this *brand* of political thought claims to provide for an alternative that is rooted in principles and traditions of the religion.

3.3.1 Social Order: The proponents of an alternative social order include the likes of Gamal al-Afghani (1838-1897), Sayyid Abul A’la Maududi (1903-1979) and Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966). Afghani was a clear proponent of “religious patriotism”⁶⁸ and Panislamism. Keddie sees Afghani’s conversion to Panislamism as inextricable linked to him being “...genuinely distressed at the European political, intellectual, and economic attacks on the Muslim world that seemed to

⁶⁸ P.J. Vatikiotis. “Muhammad ‘Abduh and the quest for a Muslim Humanism,” *Arabica* T.4. Fasc. 1 (Jan, 1957): 63

threaten the latter with total disintegration.”⁶⁹ Therefore, for Afghani, Panislamism would prove as a political and ideological resistance to this crisis of Muslim communities. Afghani’s writings on this subject clearly articulate this perspective. In an article titled ‘Why Has Islam Become Weak?’ Afghani appeals to “...Muslim unity.”⁷⁰ Presenting himself “...as a devoted Muslim, with a sound of universal religious view, [he claims] Islam as the highest religion and the Qur’an as the revealed and perpetual guide to mankind.”⁷¹ Therefore, for Afghani, Islam stands above all else, including nationality and ethnicity; thus clearly proposing Islam and adherents to be part of a transnational community where religion remains the primary bond. Afghani here could be seen as one of foremost proponents of transnationalism in Islamism.

Maududi’s reflects similar views of Islam and its role in society as Afghani. In “Self-Destructiveness of Western Civilization” he is primarily concerned with the cycle that many civilization have engaged in where they have been at the pinnacle of world economic and political order but have since collapsed due to their own corrupt and decadent ways. By saying this Maududi, in a way, refers to the West, which according to him is bound to collapse due to its own self-destructive features. He then articulates two key facets namely, birth-control and nationalism. While birth-control (seen as destroying future generations) has faced similar opposition in other parts of the world, its nationalism that is the most interesting aspect of Maududi’s critique. For him, it is an ideology driven by a sense of allegiance to a man made construct, namely nation, instead of what matters the most i.e. the divine way. The author claims that nationalism “...has deprived their [West’s] top-ranking statesmen and army generals of the instinct of sound thinking and fair judgment. This evil developed venomous feelings of

⁶⁹ Nikkie R. Keddie. “The Pan-Islamic Appeal: Afghani and Abdulhamid II,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 3.1 (October, 1966): 48

⁷⁰ Sayid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Abdul-Hadi Hairi. “Afghani on the Decline of Islam,” *Die Welt des Islams* 13.1/2 (1971):

⁷¹ al-Afghani and Hairi, 121

selfishness, rivalry, hatred, bigotry, avarice, and greed. It is dividing them into hostile and warring factions, who have daggers drawn against each other.”⁷² Therefore, relating Maududi to this study, it would be reasonable to claim that through his criticism of nationalism (i.e. allegiance to man-made norms) and providing allegiance to the divine way as the alternative, he presents a transnational ideological framework that undermines national divisions, borders and boundaries.

While Afghani and Maududi attempt to articulate an Islamic alternative to the social order of Muslim societies, Sayyid Qutb has often been seen as the most radical proponent of an alternative Islamic social order. In doing so, he too reflects a degree of transnationalism in Islamist political thought. In his writings, Qutb rejected “all forms of existent governments that did not follow the *shari’a*”⁷³ or subscribed to the belief in *al-hakimiyyah* (sovereignty of God) and *al-jahiliyya* (decadence of society).⁷⁴ According to him, *hakimiyyah* symbolizes “the highest political and legal authority and that authority [belonged] to none but God.”⁷⁵ While, *Jahiliyyah*, which is derived from the Islamist description of “the Arab pagan culture as immoral and ignorant,”⁷⁶ is referred to by Qutb as “modern pagan immorality including the prevailing way of life found in most so-called Muslim countries.”⁷⁷ Thus, in this ideological framework, what Qutb proposed is not only the revival of religious law (*shari’a*) but also the purification of the Muslim society through the identification and eventual purging of the decadent (*jahil*). Furthermore,

⁷² Sayyid Abul A’la Maududi. “Self-Destructiveness of Western Civilization,” in Moaddel, Mansoor and Kamran Talattof, eds *Modernist and Fundamentalist Debates in Islam: A Reader* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002): 329

⁷³ Islamic law

⁷⁴ Lamia Rustum Shehadeh. “Women in the Discourse of Sayyid Qutb.” *Arab Studies Quarterly* 22.3 (Summer 2000): 47

⁷⁵ Sayeh Khatab. “*Hakimiyyah* and *Jahiliyyah* in the Thought of Sayyid Qutb.” *Middle Eastern Studies* 38.3 (July 2002): 145

⁷⁶ Shehadeh, 48

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 48

Qutb used the expression *takfir* (“act of declaring another Muslim an apostate”⁷⁸) as means of categorizing those that were responsible for the demise of Egyptian society. The primacy of the divine and its overwhelming authority was clearly articulated throughout Qutb’s classical work, *Milestones*. In it he claims “...human beings should recognize that their true Sustainer and Lord is One God, that they should submit to Him Alone, and that lordship of man be eliminated.”⁷⁹ Qutb further posits that the “...purpose is ‘Islam’, which means to bring human beings into submission to God, to free them from servitude to other human beings.”⁸⁰ . What Qutb thus proposes is the removal of all man made social and political shackles on individuals as he saw them as constraints against the prevalence of free-will and that subjugation should be only towards god (which is seen as a natural transformation that is bound to happen once these shackles are removed). Furthermore, man is to abide by only one law, namely divine law (*Sharia*). Finally, for Qutb, it is *Jahiliyyah* that represents “...one man’s lordship over another, and in this it is against the system of the universe and brings the involuntary aspect of human life into conflict with its voluntary aspect.”⁸¹ What Qutb too is proposing here is a sense of allegiance to none but the religion of Islam. Furthermore, by undermining man-made norms centered on nationalism and citizenship, his views can be seen as essentially transnational as well.

3.3.2 Political Order: While the Islamist proposition of a political order based on Islamic principles is concerned with specific national contexts and spheres of governance, it too presents a transnational aspect. The primary proponent of an Islamic political order can be seen to be Ayatollah Khomeini (1902-1989), the leader of the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Characterizing the

⁷⁸ Leiken and Brooke, 110

⁷⁹ Sayyid Qutb. *Milestones* (USA: SIME journal, 2005): 39

⁸⁰ Qutb, 39

⁸¹ Qutb, 40

Islamic State, Khomeini states that it "...is neither the parliamentary form of government in which the people elect a group of people who enact laws and impose them upon the people elect a president who, along with his other colleagues, makes laws and imposes them upon the people."⁸² Furthermore, for Khomeini, the Islamic state would be bounded by a legal system that "...is neither made by man nor by a group of men but it is made by their creator, Almighty Allah. This law is equally applicable to the head of State; members of parliament, the executive branch, the judiciary branch and the people."⁸³ While the legal stature outlined by Khomeini applies to creation of a state, the fact that it is governed by divine law, which is universal, he too alludes to a level of cross-border allegiance to all *true* Islamic states based on the religious values that govern them. Leaders in particular national contexts are no more than mere caretakers, and Muslims are bound together by only legitimate authority, God, and *his* legal stature.

3.3.3 Global Order: The primary Islamist critique of the global order draws from the writings of Jalal Al-i-Ahmad (1923-1969) and Ali Shariati (1933-1977). Calling it *Gharbzadegi* or 'Westitis', Ahmad claims that the world is plagued by a political and economic order that is driven by the West. This for him, has led to the creation of a divide in world, where the East is represented by the "hungry countries...[while the West signifies]...the well-fed."⁸⁴ While features of the former category include economic, social and political backwardness, the latter displays a significantly higher level of development. This could quite easily be interpreted as a criticism of modernization, but Ahmad is actually criticizing the *brand* of modernization that is seen in the world. Global standards of economic growth and development are primarily seen as driven by the west and its institutions, which according to him invariable marginalizes the rest of

⁸² Imam Ruhullah Khomeini. "The Pillars of An Islamic State," in Moaddel, Mansoor and Kamran Talattof, eds *Modernist and Fundamentalist Debates in Islam: A Reader* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002): 247

⁸³ Khomeini, 247-248

⁸⁴ Jalal Al-i Ahmad. "Westoxification," in Moaddel, Mansoor and Kamran Talattof, eds *Modernist and Fundamentalist Debates in Islam: A Reader* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002): 344

the world. Although he does allude to a global order that is conducive to the development of the east, Ahmad does identify some key aspects of the Islamic world that could be the *last bastion* against ‘Westitis’ i.e. “Islamic totality”⁸⁵. For Africa, South America and India, according to Ahmad, it was their heterogeneity that caused them being engulfed by the West.⁸⁶ Therefore, while critical of the Global order, for Ahmad, Islamic unity is what represents the ideal. Furthermore, underlying this notion of ‘Islamic totality’ lies a sense of allegiance that once again demonstrates transnationalism.

Shariati, in his writings, provides for a critical perspective of the global order as well. In “Critical Attitude Toward the West” he follows a study that is heavily influenced by Marxism. While criticizing every great religion and economic order (communism and capitalism), he sees the primarily fault in consumerism and, more importantly, the lack of humanism. For the author every international order has eventually led human beings to becoming mere economic pawns and so proposes a system that is driven by the notion of humanism that would be the most conducive in ensuring justice and development for all. Nevertheless, Shariati does conclude that Islam would play a key role in this new global order. He claims that “...it offers a profound spiritual interpretation of the universe, one that is as noble and idealistic as it’s logical and intelligible.”⁸⁷ Shariati further posits that “...Islam reveals in its humanism the conception of a free, independent, noble essence but one that is as fully attuned to earthly reality as it is divine and idealistic.”⁸⁸ Shariati’s Islamic alternative therefore is not only geared at infusing humanism to the global order but also “...strives to realize the world-view of *tauhid*⁸⁹ and of human

⁸⁵ Ahmad, 348

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 348

⁸⁷ Ali Shariati. “Critical Attitude Toward The West and The Idea of Western Decadence,” in Moaddel, Mansoor and Kamran Talattof, eds *Modernist and Fundamentalist Debates in Islam: A Reader* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002): 315

⁸⁸ Shariati, 322

⁸⁹ Islamic monotheism

primacy within real life.”⁹⁰ Thus Islam functions “...both as a religion and a nation.”⁹¹ As this Islamist understanding of the global order is merely critique of it, Islam and its principles as the basis of an alternative, in it itself provides for transnationalism at the core of a new global order (based on a common understanding of the international system, at least among its Muslim adherents).

What we have thus outlined here is the specific worldview prescribed by the Islamist thinkers. Categorized under three distinct topics, they provide for an Islamist critique of the status quo and an alternative for every aspect of human life, society and organization. Furthermore we have seen that at the ideological state it prescribes for an alternative that is governed primarily by the divine. Since Islamic totality is often at the core of Islamist political thought, which in turn undermines man-made law, societal and national boundaries, it inherently prescribes a connection based primarily on religion, thus demonstrating transnationality in Islamist political thought. As transnationalism is displayed in some of the foundational elements of Islamist political thought, it is important to realize that it fails to have meaning if the particular socio-political contexts of its origins are not addressed. While these conditions may vary, it remains important to provide for a general study that outlines Political Islam in the context that it takes root.

3.4 Political Islam and its context

It is often claimed that “... [t]he moment religion finds some resonance among the public on political issues, it is a sure sign that some need is not otherwise being met effectively by existing political means.”⁹² In relation to Islam, Ayoob claims that through Political Islam or

⁹⁰ Shariati, 322

⁹¹ *Ibid*, 322

⁹² Fuller, 13

Islamism, the religion is manifested as a “...political ideology rather than as a religious or theological construct.”⁹³ Guilain Denoeux claims that “Islamism...is a form of instrumentalization of Islam by individual, groups, and organizations that pursuer political objectives.”⁹⁴ Furthermore, Islam is seen as providing “...political responses to today’s societal challenges by imagining a future, the foundation for which rest on reappropriated, reinvented concepts borrowed Islamic tradition.”⁹⁵ Therefore, for Denoeux, Political Islam and Islamist groups get their meaning and relevance primarily from the political and social context in which they function.

Echoing Denoeux’s claim, Butko posits that besides the “Islamists’ primary target [remaining] the domestic regimes of individual Muslim countries...their success is rooted in their appropriation of religious symbols, discourse, and language to express socio-economic grievances, utilizing them as instruments to enact radical internal political change.”⁹⁶ For supporters of such entities, religion as a factor is often marginalized. Instead, “...they desire a radical restructuring of the current order, a change they believe can only be provided by contemporary Islamist movements.”⁹⁷ Moreover it is in the face of “...oppression, repression and humiliation...”⁹⁸ that Islamism has flourished.⁹⁹ Abootalebi, posits that Islamist movements “urge active use of original religious doctrine to better the temporal and political lives in a

⁹³ Mohammed Ayoob. “Political Islam: Image and Reality,” *World Policy Journal* (Fall, 2004): 1

⁹⁴ Guilain Denoeux. “The Forgotten Swamp: Navigating Political Islam,” *Middle East Policy* Vol. IX No. 2 (June, 2002): 61

⁹⁵ Denoeux, 61

⁹⁶ Thomas Butko. “Unity Through Opposition: Islam as an Instrument of Radical Political Change,” *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 8.4 (December, 2004): 33

⁹⁷ Butko, 34

⁹⁸ Sayed Katab and Gary D. Bouma. *Democracy in Islam* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 174

⁹⁹ It is important recognize that writings of Islamist ideologues discussed earlier were all responses to specific social, political and economic crises as well.

modern world”¹⁰⁰. Furthermore, according to the author, “Islamist or Islamism more accurately describes forward looking, interpretive and often even innovative attempts to reconstruct the social order.”¹⁰¹ Finally, Mary-Anne Deeb articulates five conditions that gave rise to Islamist groups. She articulates them as “political stagnation and the weakening of central authority,... economic stagnation and decline and/or a growing gap between the haves and the have-nots,...deterioration security situation,...the insidious invasion of the region by Western culture and values,...[and] finally, the governments in power were perceived as encouraging this cultural change and as being themselves secular or paying only lip service to Islam.”¹⁰² With these conditions in place, Islamist groups did not claim to create a new society but rather “portray themselves...as saviors trying to save the old society from self-destruction.”¹⁰³

With these social, political and economic realities in place Political Islam and Islamism attracts specific societal groups as its adherents. Demant in *Islam vs. Islamism: The Dilemma of the Muslim World* identifies these groups¹⁰⁴ as follows:

(1) the traditionalist-conservative block of premodern merchants (*bazaris*) and *mullas*; (2) the *mustadh'afun*, or newly urbanized, unemployed, or informally employed groups (equivalent to the *Lumpenproletariat* that have been the backbone of the Far Right in interwar Europe), who became the revolution's foot soldiers; and (3) the “*Lumpen-intelligentsia*,” who were its officers: radicalized, half-modernized, and frustrated youth, still close enough to their ancestral religion to allow for a return to their roots, yet too educated to return to their parents' traditionalism, and too smart not to see through the failure of Westernization in their countries.¹⁰⁵

What we have thus established is that Islamism fails to have meaning without the social, political and economic contexts of its origins. These conditions not only inspire Islamism but provide for

¹⁰⁰ Ali R. Abootalebi, “Islam, Islamists, and Democracy” *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 3.1 (March, 1999): 14

¹⁰¹ Abootalebi, 14

¹⁰² Mary-Jane Deeb “Militant Islam and the Politics of Redemption” *Annals of the American Academic of Political and Social Science* 524 (Nov, 1992): 53-54

¹⁰³ Deeb, 55

¹⁰⁴ While Demant here was primarily concerned with the following of Iranian Revolution in 1979, this scheme of adherents of Islamism could be applied to Islamism in general.

¹⁰⁵ Demant, 182

an adequate environment for legitimacy for Islamists to be relevant actors in the political arena. Furthermore, Demant's analysis demonstrates that Islamism's close association with its particular contexts is able to attract those members of society that are marginalized by the dynamics of their society.

In this chapter, what we have thus far carried out is an in-depth study of Political Islam at the following levels. First, we have provided for a general framework for the key terms, namely, Islamism and Islamist political thought. Second, we have explored and determined the presence of transnational elements in both early Islamic history and Islam's foundational texts. Third, the ideological framework behind Islamism was explored and traces of transnationalism were identified owing to Islamist thinkers' insistence on allegiance to the divine and its legal system instead of man-made notions (such as nationality and citizenship). Finally, having identified transnationalism at the foundations of Islamist political thought, we explored the socio-political conditions that give Islamism meaning while identifying the particular social groups that it is of particular relevance to. What this study so far has attempted to do, is provide for a comprehensive study of Political Islam by identifying its transnational roots while recognizing the socio-political conditions that make it relevant. But, there still remains a significant gap in the narrative in that it fails to demonstrate what role transnationalism plays in the way Political Islam gains political and societal relevance. What thus lacks is a clear understanding of how Islamist political thought with its transnational roots is operationalized in a domestic context.

3.5 Domesticating the Transnational

As there remains a gap between the two realms of political thought it is often difficult to establish correlation between the transnational and the domestic. The grand vision rooted in the transnational realm could be seen as completely disconnected from the lives of individual

Muslims who are still embedded in the social and political crises in which Islamist groups have come into being. But, the often popular support of Islamists (and their transnational visions) proves that there remains a correlation that is able to domesticate the transnational realm. To understand this it is important to return to the Islamist critique of the status quo social, political and global order. While organized in these categories by the author, they are of specific relevance. What they establish is an Islamist critique of the status quo that is not only present in the broad transnational scale but is able to trickle down to the societal level. Specific to the issue of Western hegemony, which besides corrupting the global order by favoring a few and marginalizing the rest (see 3.3.3), is further manifested at the societal level (see 3.3.1) where, in lieu of Western cultural hegemony, it causes the loss of morality and values that lie at the core of a good society. For the individual that is marginalized (political, socially or economically) this correlation then becomes evident. It provides for a broader reasoning for a particular socio-political environment. Furthermore, it portrays the political elite and the status quo political system as channels through which this global decadence is able to seep into the individual society. Therefore, moving away from the critique, when the Islamist provides for an alternative at the transnational level, it too then could be assumed to be seen by the individual Muslim as having the potential of seeping in from the transnational to domestic level. What this potential process further indicates is the specific relevance of the global and transnational to the individual. It also instills the assumption at the societal level that the achievement of the transnational ideal is a central aspect of realizing the domestic vision.

We have thus established a clear correlation that establishes a distinct flow of logic between the transnational and its relevance in the domestic context. Having thus articulated what

gives Political Islam meaning, it is critical that this theoretical analysis is applied to cases of The Muslim Brotherhood and Hezbollah.

CHAPTER 4-TRANSNATIONALISM IN ISLAMIST POLITICAL THOUGHT: THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD AND HEZBOLLAH

Theoretically establishing Islamist Political Thought, with its transnational elements is domesticated to the particular social context, it is impossible to make a convincing argument without engaging in an empirical exercise that attempts to elaborate this through concrete case-studies. For this purpose this chapter will analyze the Muslim Brotherhood (Egypt) and Hezbollah (Lebanon), both being noteworthy Islamist actors in the world today. While not comprehensively, the former will represent unarmed entities while Hezbollah will symbolize armed groups.

4.1 CASE STUDY #1: THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD

4.1.1 The Muslim Brotherhood (MB) and Historical Context: In 1928 Hassan-Al-Banna established the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Many would say that the Brotherhood could be considered the pioneer of modern-day Political Islam. Today the group has branches (besides Egypt) in France, Jordan, Spain, Syria, Tunisia and the United Kingdom.¹⁰⁶ In Egypt, while the Brotherhood remains a potent political (opposition) force, it is also seen as the epitome of modern moderate Islamic activism. But, irrespective of this, many remain highly critical of the group. *Jihadists* have criticized the MB “for rejecting the global jihad and embracing democracy.”¹⁰⁷ Ironically, even though this aspect of the Brotherhood may seem encouraging to many in the West, especially in the United States¹⁰⁸, the group remains severely critical of U.S. foreign policy, “especially Washington’s support for Israel.”¹⁰⁹ Today, the Muslim Brotherhood

¹⁰⁶ Robert S. Leiken and Steven Brooke. “The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood,” *Foreign Affairs* (March/April, 2007): 107

¹⁰⁷ Leiken and Brooke, 107

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 107

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 107

not only advocates the renewal of Islam in Egyptian society, but is also the primary driving force behind the quest for democratization in the country.¹¹⁰

Over the years, the changes in the structure and ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood can be said to have a direct correlation with the changing political and social dynamics of Egypt. For this reason, British occupation and years of authoritarian leaderships have prompted several changes within the group. For this study the ideological transformations can be divided into three broad phases.

The founder, Hassan al-Banna, and the earliest members of the Brotherhood inspired the first ideological phase (1928-late 1940s). Having created the Muslim Brotherhood when Egypt was facing “alien military, economic, and cultural domination,”¹¹¹ the members at the time did not want the MB to become “a political party or a charitable, reformist society.”¹¹² Instead, they were keen on it being categorized as a “spiritual worldwide organization that is...(1) a *da’wa*¹¹³ (call) from the Qur’an and the *Sunna*¹¹⁴ (tradition and example) of the Prophet Muhammed; (2) a method that adheres to the *Sunna*; (3) a reality whose core is the purity of the soul; (4) a political association; (5) an athletic association; (6) an educational and cultural organization; (7) an

¹¹⁰ While chapters of the Muslim Brotherhood have sprung up all over the world, this study is specifically concerned with the MB in Egypt as it was one of the first Islamist entities of its kind and is seen as one of the pioneers of Islamist politics.

¹¹¹ Carl L. Brown. *Religion and State: The Muslim Approach to Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000): 143

¹¹² Sana Abed-Kotob. “The Accommodationists Speak: Goal and Strategies of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 27.3 (August, 1995): 323

¹¹³ *Da’wa* “...from the root *da’a*, to call, invite, has the primary meaning call or invitation...In the religious sense, the *da’wa* is the invitation, addressed to men by God and the prophets, to believe in the true religion, Islam: Kur’an, XIV, 46.” (M. Canard. “*Da’wa*” in B. Lewis, Ch. Pellat and J. Schacht eds. *Encyclopedia of Islam Volume II* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986): 170)

¹¹⁴ *Sunnah* has come to be understood as the “...generally approved standard of or practice introduced by the Prophet as well as the pious Muslims of olden days, and at the instigation of al-Shafi’I, the *sunna* of the Prophet was awarded the position of the second root (*asl*) of Islamic law, the *shari’a*, after the Koran.” (D. W. Brown. “*Sunna*” in C.E. Bosworth, E. Van Donzel, W. P. Heinrichs and the late G. Lecomte eds. *Encyclopedia of Islam Volume IX* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986): 878)

economic enterprise; and (8) a social concept.”¹¹⁵ While the members of the group proclaimed it as a ‘spiritual organization’, what it also represents is a quest to socially, politically and economically re-vitalize Egyptian society.

The second ideological phase (1950s-early 1970s) of the MB was heavily influenced by Sayyid Qutb. As a member of the group since 1951, he was able to articulate a particularly radical Islamist ideology. Qutb rejected “all forms of existent governments that did not follow the *shari’a*¹¹⁶ or subscribed to the belief in *al-hakimiyyah* (sovereignty of God) and *al-jahiliyya* (decadence of society).”¹¹⁷ Thus, in this ideological framework, what he proposed is not only the revival of religious law (*shari’a*) but also the purification of the Muslim society through the identification and eventual purging of the decadent (*jahil*).

The third and final ideological phase (1970s-present) is the one that is personified by the Muslim Brotherhood of today. Even though the basic views of the early (period right after its creation) Brotherhood remains at its core, the group is now ideologically transformed into a character that reflects its role as being the primary force behind democratization in Egypt. On March 28th 2008, published on *Ikhwanweb*¹¹⁸, the Muslim Brotherhood Chairman Mahdi Akef highlighted the goals of the Muslim Brotherhood in his weekly statement. The Chairman cited Hassan al-Banna when he said that:

The people’s reaction to the Muslim Brotherhood will be one of four kinds: One who believes the same as we believe, so we will invite him to work closely with us hand in hand, since a belief without action is meaningless. The second kind of people, according to al-Banna, a person who is still hesitant and has some suspicions about our path, so we maintain our relation with him and advise him to be in touch with us and read our books

¹¹⁵ Abed-Kotob, 323

¹¹⁶ *Shari’a* is “...derived from the root *shara’a*, having a primary range of meaning in relation to religion and religious law...Within Muslim discourse, *shari’a* designates the rules and regulations governing the lives of Muslims, derived in principal from the Kur’an and *hadith*.” (M.B Hooker. “Shari’a” in C.E. Bosworth, E. Van Donzel, W. P. Heinrichs and the late G. Lecomte eds. *Encyclopedia of Islam Volume IX* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986): 321)

¹¹⁷ Shehadeh, 47

¹¹⁸ Official English website of the Muslim Brotherhood

and ask until he makes sure of our Call. The third kind of people is one, who seeks to join us only to achieve personal interests, and for such a kind we say that we have nothing to give people; rather, we offer ourselves and all that we have for the cause of God. The fourth kind of people is one who takes the MB as adversaries and only sees them through black glasses and speaks ill of them. The MB reaction to this kind is that they pray for him that God guides him to the right path and helps him to follow it, and helps him to identify the right and the wrong¹¹⁹.

While there remains a sense of piety and inherent-superiority in the ideology and mission of the Muslim Brotherhood, what this statement proposes is an extremely moderate and accommodating approach to those who do not agree to the beliefs and actions of the Brotherhood. This, of course, is quite distinctly opposed to the approach prescribed by Sayyid Qutb that required declaring a society, its culture and way of life as *jahil*¹²⁰ (if need be). Chairman Akef's statement further declared that the goal of the Brotherhood is to ensure the "full reform of the universe...under the umbrella of Islam."¹²¹ While mainstream Islamic values form the mainstay of the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood, Akef claimed that "The MB methodology not only provides protection to the Muslim's heart and mind but it also teaches him/her how to distinguish between the right and the false ideas, in addition that it trains a Muslim to devotion for Islam and habituate him/her to giving and sacrifice, faithfulness and self confidence."¹²² Thus, as part of their goal what the MB is proposing is an all-encompassing reformation of Egyptian society based on Islamic values. This seems to be their approach for bringing "happiness and comfort to the people."¹²³

Clearly the Muslim Brotherhood has had a multi-faceted history. Being one of the foremost Islamist groups in history it has transformed itself since its creation by responding to the changing political and social dynamics of the Muslim world in general and Egypt in

¹¹⁹ "MB Goals Highlighted In Its Chairman's Weekly" *IkhwanWeb.com* (Cairo, Egypt), March 28, 2008

¹²⁰ See 3.3.1

¹²¹ "MB Goals Highlighted In Its Chairman's Weekly"

¹²² "MB Goals Highlighted In Its Chairman's Weekly"

¹²³ "MB Goals Highlighted In Its Chairman's Weekly"

particular. With these facts in place there remains two points of contention. First, what role does transnationalism play in the MB's ideological framework? And second, if there is a significant transnational element to the Muslim Brotherhood, how are they able to domesticate it to accommodate the particular national context of Egypt?

4.1.2 The Muslim Brotherhood, its Ideology and Transnationalism: The Muslim Brotherhood when established was not merely responding to the political and social environment in Egypt but to a regional crisis that its founding members believed could lead to the eventual decline of Muslim societies everywhere. While the Brotherhood's presence in several countries in the region could be seen as a key marker of its transnational roots, it is its ideological foundations that I would claim, as the driving force behind the MB's transnationality. This can be demonstrated through the biography of the founder of the group, Hasan Al-Banna, as presented on *Ikhwanweb*. The website claims that

...the Muslim Brotherhood became the first mass-based, overtly political movement to oppose the ascendancy of secular and Western ideas in the Middle East. The brotherhood saw in these ideas the root of the decay of Islamic societies in the modern world, and advocated a return to Islam as a solution to the ills that had befallen Muslim societies.¹²⁴

Therefore what we see here is that the official portrayal of the MB is far from being simply an Egyptian group. It is represented as a vanguard against detrimental processes and forces of the modern world that are aimed at causing the social degradation of Muslim societies. Therefore as an Islamist resistance group, the Muslim Brotherhood was not only fighting for the Egyptian cause, but that of the entire Islamic world. These clear transnational trends were further evident in a letter written by Hassan al-Banna to one of his students that contained "...advice...drawn from the perennial values and ethos of Islam."¹²⁵ The letter further goes on to "... [remind] the addressee and indeed all Muslims that the first and foremost goal in a Muslim's life is to please

¹²⁴ "Hasan Al-Banna" *IkhwanWeb.com* (Cairo, Egypt), June 13, 2007

¹²⁵ "Hasan Al-Banna"

God and live in accordance to His sacred law.”¹²⁶ As Hassan al-Banna’s student was living abroad, this letter also provided for a guide for being a good Muslim abroad, thus proclaiming Islamic principles and Islam in itself as transnational (just as the Muslim Brotherhood which has these values at its core).

Clearly, transnationalism as an element was a key aspect in the ideological foundations of the Muslim Brotherhood. While first established in Egypt, the MB addressed a political and social crisis that spanned across the Muslim world. It was thus the primary voice that attempted to prevent the complete downfall of Muslim societies in their stature and standing, especially in the face of Western economic, political, military and cultural domination. Today, though, the Muslim Brotherhood is perceived to be rooted in the Egyptian cause. It is seen as the moderate face of Islamism while leading the quest to democratize Egypt. The question then remains as to the role of transnationalism in the Muslim Brotherhood’s ideological framework today. A senior member of the Brotherhood¹²⁷ sees transnational elements within the group as going far beyond the realms of Islam or the Muslim world. He claimed that the Muslim Brotherhood of course engages in transnational connections but this is often established with leaders of other religions. Therefore the focus, according to him, is not transnational religion but transnational ethics. Within this ideological cooperation, religious leaders fight against immoral societal values, ethics¹²⁸ and ‘the holy spirit secularism.’ This being an important testimony, an analysis of the MB’s political concerns clearly shows a significant level of transnationality between the group today and the larger Muslim world.

¹²⁶ “Hassan Al-Banna”

¹²⁷ This interview was carried out in April, 2009 in Cairo, Egypt. The name of this member has been withheld on request.

¹²⁸ At this juncture, this MB member mentioned abortion and homosexuality as some of critical immoral aspects of modern societies that are instrumental in destroying the family, a central unit around which a society is organized.

While the overwhelming issues dealt by the group deals with concerns of political freedom, democratization and Islam in Egypt, some other issues that the Brotherhood remains deeply committed to include ‘Iran’, ‘Iraq’, ‘Palestine’, ‘Islamic Movements’ and ‘Islamophobia’. Furthermore, a recent articulation of the group’s foundational pillars (in “The Principles of The Muslim Brotherhood”) are as follows:

- 1) The introduction of Islamic Shari’ah as the basis of controlling affairs of state and society.
- 2) Work to achieve unification among Islamic countries and states, mainly among Arab states, and liberating them from foreign imperialism.¹²⁹

The MB’s official testimony released in 1994, was another remarkable example of the group’s often transnational focus. The testimonial claimed to respond to the rapidly changing dynamics of the world by providing their official stance on the role of Muslims in the new environment. In lieu of this transformation the testimony states that “[t]he Muslims, who form a substantial part of the World population, are not isolated from such changes, and cannot detach themselves from the consequences and pretend to be living on a secluded island of their own, ridding themselves of their responsibility at such a historical stage with all its associated risks and challenges.”¹³⁰ At this juncture it is important to recognize that the MB here addresses the concerns of the entire Muslim world and not just Egypt. The statement further recognizes that these ‘new times’, owing to a variety of issues, have also cast a negative image of Muslims and in the face of this the MB believe it is their responsibility to present their stance on issues that concern the entire Muslim world including “...issues such as Shura (Islamic consultation) political pluralism, women’s rights and so on.”¹³¹

¹²⁹ “The Principles of the Muslim Brotherhood” *IkhwanWeb.com* (Cairo, Egypt), June 13, 2007

¹³⁰ “Our Testimony, Issued in 1994” *IkhwanWeb.com* (Cairo, Egypt), May 30, 2006

¹³¹ “Our Testimony, Issued in 1994”

Finally, one of the Brotherhood's most recent statements also reflects the present-day transnational tendencies of the group. Released on May 7, 2009, in an official proclamation entitled "Political Powers Statement on Judaization of Jerusalem", the MB attempts to bring to attention what they term as the Judaization of the holy city which is characterized by "...genocide, desolation in Palestinian territories, besides the suffocating siege against Palestinians in order to subdue, subjugate, humiliate with the aim to enforce surrender."¹³² Furthermore, Israeli acts in Jerusalem are seen as "...targeting our [Muslim] Arab and Islam nation."¹³³ Besides appealing "Muslim scholars and Christian clergy,"¹³⁴ the MB further invites Palestinian, Arabs and Muslims to "...politically,...and legally move, resist all forms and means, including the economic boycott to the Zionist entity and who supports it."¹³⁵ Once again we can see that the Muslim Brotherhood, both in its ideological framework and its political stance demonstrates transnationalism as a key aspect.

Having thus established the presence of transnationalism in the early history of the Muslim Brotherhood and the political stance of the group today, we are thus obliged to explore the dynamic of the way transnational elements of Muslim Brotherhood is domesticated within Egyptian society.

4.1.3 The Muslim Brotherhood. Domesticating the Transnational: Following the theoretical argument made in Chapter 3, we are left with a familiar *problematique* in the case of the MB. As it embodies both the domestic and the transnational it fails to explain why the Egyptian commoner would adhere to the Muslim Brotherhood's transnational vision. For that matter, the daily trials and tribulations of Egyptians should not have any relationship with

¹³² "Political Powers Statement on the Judaization of Jerusalem" *IkhwanWeb.com* (Cairo, Egypt), May 7, 2009

¹³³ "Political Powers Statement on the Judaization of Jerusalem"

¹³⁴ "Political Powers Statement on the Judaization of Jerusalem"

¹³⁵ "Political Powers Statement on the Judaization of Jerusalem"

political dynamics in the rest of the region. But, in reality, the MB's transnational rhetoric is often embraced by its followers. So, re-analyzing the Brotherhood's ideological framework it might better explain how the transnational is made relevant to the domestic. As the MB conjures a critique of status quo at the transnational-level, it through its recommendations provides for an alternative based on the foundational principles of Islam. Now, in the domestic arena, the group is fiercely critical of the political regime and the societal structures imposed by them, especially owing them to their non-Islamic character. Therefore, what the domestic status-quo could be seen as is a manifestation of the transnational crisis. It, through the political elite and its policies, has trickled into Egyptian society thus making it a small-scale replica of the global decadence faced by Muslim societies around the world¹³⁶. So, following the same process then, any vision for the transnational rooted in the Islamist principles of the MB, would also be assumed by the adherents of the group to be able to potentially influence change within Egypt. Here then, through this correlation (of the national being the manifestation of the transnational), the MB is able to (whether consciously or not) domesticate its transnational visions.

Having discussed the case of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hezbollah presents another critical case-study of an Islamist group, that some would claim has transnationalism at the core of its ideological framework. As in the case of the MB, this subsection will first explore the group from a historical perspective before delving into the correlation between the transnational and the domestic.

¹³⁶ The criticism of the regime of Hosni Mubarak, often levied by the Muslim Brotherhood, would be representative of this. While extremely oppressive towards its political opposition this regime is seen as not only paying lip-service to Islam but also aligning themselves with (according to Islamists) the primary agents of global (transnational) decadence, namely, Israel and the United States. Therefore, such a political entity and the institutions established by them therefore allows for aspects of transnational status quo to ultimately seep into the foundations of Egyptian society thus corrupting it at its very foundations.

4.2 CASE STUDY #2: HEZBOLLAH

4.2.1 Hezbollah and Historical Context: Today the often perceived close association between Islam and terror has been provoked by certain key groups that invoke Islam to “...justify acts of guerrilla warfare, assassination, kidnapping, bombing, and skyjacking, usually against their own rulers or foreign oppressors....”¹³⁷ Daniel Byman claims that in 2001, George W. Bush made a “...historical speech to a joint session of Congress...[where he]...famously declared ‘Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found.’”¹³⁸ According to the author, “...[f]ew terrorist organizations meet this standard, but Hezbollah is definitely one of them.”¹³⁹ While Byman goes on to elaborate on the group’s global ‘terror network’, he inadvertently impresses on the geopolitical significance of Hezbollah. Furthermore, the group’s development is also seen as the advancements of “...the foreign policy goals of Iran, Syria, and Lebanon....”¹⁴⁰

At the very outset one should recognize the very multifaceted nature of the group having come into being due to both domestic and regional dynamics. One cannot deny that Hezbollah is quite deeply committed to the Shia cause. Southern Lebanon has always “...been home to Lebanon’s disenfranchised Shia Muslim community.”¹⁴¹ The Shias in the country initially supported the Israeli invasion “...because of their own competition with Palestinian refugees for local resources and their resentment of the PLO’s often heavy-handed rule of the south.”¹⁴² The initial support soon disappeared as many saw Israel “overstaying their welcome.”¹⁴³ As

¹³⁷ Fuller, 88

¹³⁸ Daniel Byman. “Should Hezbollah Be Next?” *Foreign Affairs* 82.6 (Nov-Dec. 1996): 54

¹³⁹ Byman, 54

¹⁴⁰ Judith Palmer Harik. *Hezbollah. The Changing Face of Terrorism* (New York: I.B.Tauras, 2005): 3

¹⁴¹ Trita Parsi. *Treacherous Alliance. The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and The U.S.* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007): 111

¹⁴² Parsi, 111

¹⁴³ Parsi, 111

thousands of Lebanese died in the conflict and in lieu of events like the Sabra and Shatila massacres, Lebanon's Shias were looking to "...quickly mobilized against the 'occupation' forces."¹⁴⁴ At the same juncture, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's "...doctrine of *Velayat-e faqih* (Guardianship of the Jurisconsult)"¹⁴⁵ which was the core ideological bases for the Iranian Revolution in 1979 proved to be a significant factor in the Lebanese crisis, as Iran was looking to export its revolution. Having failed in Iraq and Bahrain, in face of Israeli military incursions of Lebanon, Iran was able to inspire a Shia struggle. Although it was "[i]nitially just a small number of armed groups of young men organized under the banner of Islam and dedicated to fighting the Israeli occupation, over time they banded together – through Iranian help and assistance – into what has proved to be one of Israel's most formidable foes – the Lebanese Hezbollah."¹⁴⁶ Shias, "underrepresented in the country's confessional political system...[they were] convinced...that [an] armed struggle could be a vehicle for achieving political dominance."¹⁴⁷ While it has been consistent in its resistance against Israel and Western/US presence in the Muslim world, Hezbollah is known in the west, primarily due its violent acts that have included "...guerilla attacks on Israeli targets in Southern Lebanon,"¹⁴⁸ several "suicide bombings and kidnappings, [including] a suicide bombing attack that killed 241 US marines in Beirut."¹⁴⁹ Most recently Hezbollah was engaged in a violent conflict with Israel in 2006 that was of particular political significance. In this 34-day conflict, even though only 161 casualties were recorded by Israel, it was seen as having suffered a "far-reaching effect."¹⁵⁰ Amos Harel noted that:

¹⁴⁴ Robert G. Rabil. "Hezbollah: Lebanon's Power Broker," *The Journal of International Security Affairs* 15 (2008):

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¹⁴⁵ Rabil, 1

¹⁴⁶ Pars, 111

¹⁴⁷ Rabil, 1

¹⁴⁸ Kathryn Westcott. "Who are Hezbollah?" *BBC News*. 4 April 2002

¹⁴⁹ "Who are Hezbollah?"

¹⁵⁰ Amos Harel. *34 Days. Israel, Hezbollah, and the War in Lebanon* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008): VII

More than 4,000 rockets were fired at the northern towns and villages; this was the first time the Israeli home front was under constant attack for so long. The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) failed in its attempts to stop the bombing, and the end of the war did not leave Israel in a controlling position. Israel's achievements – which included the removal of Hezbollah from the border and the arrival of a multinational force (whose efficiency remains controversial) – were nowhere near the level of expectations defined by the prime minister Ehud Olmert and minister of defense Amir Peretz at the beginning of the war. Israel was badly scalded by the war, which had an adverse effect on the way in which Israelis view their leaders, their army, and even the future of the state within the hostile region that surrounds it.¹⁵¹

What this conflict proved was the significant tactical and military capabilities of Hezbollah and its ability to challenge the political dynamics of the region, as it continues to support the Palestinian cause. Besides Hezbollah's militant activities it is also a key actor in Lebanon's political arena. In 2005 it was successful in acquiring 14 seats (out of 128) in the Lebanese Parliament. In 2008 following the group's "...takeover of West Beirut,...[after] which a government-ordered shutdown of Hezbollah's communications network."¹⁵² A peace was achieved "...[and] Hezbollah was granted veto power in Lebanon's parliament, and now controls eleven of thirty seats in the cabinet."¹⁵³ With these successes Hezbollah is now the strongest opposition force in Lebanon.

What we have thus established is that Hezbollah as an entity is historically rooted in both national and transnational trends. While they represent the Shia cause in Lebanon, their ideological inspirations are rooted in Iran. While the group's initial cause was to end Israeli occupation in Lebanon, its mission has been broadened to include the Palestinian cause as well. Therefore, what we have is an understanding of Hezbollah's history as complex and multivariate. We are able to recognize the presence of both transnational and domestic elements but the correlation between the two realms remain blurry. For this reason it is then key that we discuss Hezbollah's transnationality through its ideological foundations.

¹⁵¹ Harel, VII

¹⁵² "Hezbollah," *Council on Foreign Relations*. 13 August, 2008

¹⁵³ "Hezbollah"

4.2.2 Hezbollah and Transnationalism: Hezbollah as an entity is imbedded in a tumultuous period in Middle Eastern history. Harik claims that the period of crisis (particularly the 1970s) was characterized by “...the crisis of secularism,...government misrule and corruption, economic mismanagement,...uneven manifestations of modernization, [and]...the failure of Middle Eastern governments to eliminate Israel – the country considered the usurper of holy Muslim lands and the latest manifestation western imperialism in the region.”¹⁵⁴ With these crises in place it was the ideological basis of the Iranian Revolution that was the primary inspiration behind the creation of Hezbollah.

The ideological foundations of the 1979 revolution could be seen as rooted in what is known as doctrine of *Velayat-e faqih* articulated by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. According to this doctrine “...as deputies of the Hidden Imam (the twelfth Imam who went into occultation in A.D. 873), the boundaries of authority of the ‘ulama’ during the Imam’s *gheibat* (absence) included absolute over the believers.”¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, for Khomeini, the “...various hadiths had established the jurists as the *vali-ye amr* (guardian of affairs) who possessed the qualifications necessary to serve as deputies during the absence of the Hidden Imam.”¹⁵⁶ Finally, the doctrine claimed the authority of the *fuqaha*’ (those learned in jurisprudence) did not solely “[encompass] judicial and spiritual authority, but also...over political, economic and social matters.”¹⁵⁷

Hezbollah’s interpretation of Ayatollah Khomeini’s doctrine is then further reflected in *Nass al-Risala al-Maftuha allati wajahaha Hizballah ila-l-Mustad’afin fi Lubnan wa-l-Alam* (An Open Letter. The Hizballah Program) published in *al-Safir* on February 16, 1985. Many would

¹⁵⁴ Harik, 9

¹⁵⁵ Said Saffari. “The Legitimation of the Clergy’s Right to Rule in the Iranian Constitution of 1979,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 20.1 (1993): 65

¹⁵⁶ Saffari, 65

¹⁵⁷ Saffari, 65

also claim that it was inspired by Sheikh Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah's book *Ma'maal-Quwma fi-l-Islam*.¹⁵⁸ Being one of the first official statements of the group it provides for a critical insight into Hezbollah's foundational characteristics. While at the very onset the letter claims its allegiance to the ideology that incited the Iranian Revolution and its ideological head Ruhollah Muasawi Khomeini, it is from the second paragraph that the group's broader vision is clearly expressed. It claims that Hezbollah does not "...constitute an organized and closed party in Lebanon."¹⁵⁹ Furthermore, it posits that Hezbollah:

...are an *umma* linked to the Muslims of the whole world by the solid doctrinal and religious connection of Islam, whose message God wanted to be fulfilled by the Seal of the Prophets, i.e., Muhammad. This is why whatever touches or strikes the Muslims in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Philippines and elsewhere reverberates throughout the whole Muslim *umma* of which...[Hezbollah]...are an integral part. Our behavior is dictated to us by legal principles laid down by the light of an overall political conception defined by the leading jurist (*wilayat al-faqih*).¹⁶⁰

The letter further claims the cultural bases of Hezbollah to be in the "Holy Koran, the Sunna and the legal rulings of the *faqih*."¹⁶¹ Finally, identifying its main enemies as being the "Phalanges, Israel, France and the US" its objects are as follows:

- (a) to expel the Americans, the French and their allies definitely from Lebanon, putting an end to nay colonialist entity on our land;
- (b) to submit the Phalanges to a just power and bring them all to justice for the crimes they have perpetrated against Muslims and Christians;
- (c) to permit all the sons of our people to determine their future and to choose in all the liberty the form of government they desire. We call upon all of them to pick the option of Islamic government which, alone, is capable of guaranteeing justice and liberty for all. Only an Islamic regime can stop any further tentative attempts of imperialistic infiltration into our country.¹⁶²

Finally on March 20, 1998, the Hezbollah Press Office released a statement of purpose which claimed that,

¹⁵⁸ Taken from *The Jerusalem Quarterly* 44 (Fall, 2008)

¹⁵⁹ "An Open Letter. The Hezbollah Program" *The Jerusalem Quarterly* 44 (Fall, 2008): 1

¹⁶⁰ "An Open Letter. The Hezbollah Program", 1

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*, 1

¹⁶² "An Open Letter. The Hezbollah Program", 3

Hizbullah is concerned about Presenting Islam that is confident of its fundamentals, its highly civilized understanding of Man, life and the universe, Islam as being self-assured about its capability to achieve the basis of right and justice. We [Hezbollah] are anxious to present Islam as being open hearted to all nations their various political and cultural trends and their numerous experiences, away from subjection or bewilderment. We are anxious to present Islam as being the guardian for human rights defining choices, adopting convictions and expressing them, socially.¹⁶³

We have already established that the founding of Hezbollah was owed to a multiplicity of factors that were rooted in both domestic matters and concerns that were entrenched beyond the borders of Lebanon. While the plight of the traditionally marginalized Shias had its origins in the mobilization of the Shia community, many, including Hezbollah see the invasion of Lebanon by Israel as a primary motive behind the creation such as entity. This duplicity of the entity has been further reflected in Hezbollah's activities as well. On the one hand it has, throughout its history, been engaged in a continuous military offensive against Israel while also building itself as a 'credible' political entity in Lebanon. Ideologically though Hezbollah's transnationality is quite clearly a central facet. Its ideological foundations lay in the Iranian Revolution, which was meant to be exported to other parts of the Middle East. By its own admission, Hezbollah denies being a purely Lebanese entity and deeply concerned with the happenings of the entire Muslim world. With Koran and the *Sunna* at its cultural roots Hezbollah is able to further establish a transnational relationship with the larger Muslim world on the basis religious universality. With this understanding in place we arrive at a similar juncture as with the Muslim Brotherhood. It is important to further articulate how Hezbollah is able to domesticate its transnational ideals for its Lebanese audience.

4.2.3 Hezbollah. Domesticating the transnational: As in the case of the Muslim Brotherhood, we have now been able to explicate two critical realms of the *brand* of Islamist

¹⁶³ "Statement of Purpose" <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/statement01.html>

thought adhered to by Hezbollah. With clear domestic and transnational aspirations, these aspects of the group's ideology could be seen as operating in two completely alternate and disconnected realms. But as with the MB, Hezbollah's growing popularity in the domestic arena makes one wonder as to why the average Lebanese would be lured in by the group's transnational aspirations. To understand this one must re-evaluate what aspects of the national and the transnational that Hezbollah is critiquing. While in the transnational frame it critiques the western domination of the region, within Lebanon it is several critical of the non-Islamic social and secular political order. In lieu of this, there is a correlation between the transnational crisis and the domestic issues in Lebanon. The political elite who are said to have "...derived their political authority from familial, confessional and locations sources and maintained their influences by distributing to their constituents the resources available to them through government connections,"¹⁶⁴ are seen as agents of the transnational status quo. As the Christians dominate the Muslims in the transnational sense, they do the same within Lebanese society. Therefore, the transnational, in this sense, is not in fact disconnected from the nation but is seen to have manifested in the national frame. Conversely, Hezbollah's vision for the transnational then too could be seen as inextricable linked with its national aspirations, as the latter is nothing but a materialization of the former in the domestic arena. With this correlation in place for Hezbollah, we can then understand how an ordinary Lebanese suffering the consequence of the domestic status quo of the country sees a distinct relationship between his/her dilemma and that of the larger Muslim world. The individual here is thus directly connected with not only the national question of Lebanon but that of the entire *umma*.

¹⁶⁴ Harik, 18

In this chapter we have thus discussed two of the most influential Islamist groups in the Middle East. Ideologically the Muslim Brotherhood is seen as a pioneer of Political Islam, while Hezbollah is seen as a unique and significant contemporary example of an armed Islamist entity. Both groups have taken root in widely different socio-political contexts and operate under significantly different constraints today as well. With such core differences in place, one could still identify a certain level of similarity between the two groups. They both remain rooted in a national context while simultaneously addressing issues of wider concern to the Muslim world. Furthermore, it is the process in which they are able to domesticate the transnational that makes this study essential for understanding the Islamist ideology. In the face of corruption, poverty and marginalization, the domestic realm is seen as nothing but a manifestation of the crisis faced by Muslims beyond the national boundaries. Furthermore, the agents of domination in the global arena are seen as manifested in the domestic realm through the status quo political elite and institutions. With these mutually reinforcing realms of domination and societal decadence in place, it then explains the co-habitation of the transnational and the national in the Islamist ideological framework. These two realms thus not only share a critical relationship but are complementary to each other.

CHAPTER 5-CONCLUSION

Over the last decade, the notion of the 'War of Terror' has gained significant political relevance around the world. The expression is now an integral part of the global political rhetoric. Furthermore, it is seen to be of particular consequence as terrorism and its ideological frameworks operate beyond the national settings, thus rendering them as transnational. Specifically, though, religious transnationalism is seen as having the greatest political significance. Not unique to any particular religious community, in a rapidly globalizing world religious transnationalism is nothing but a key feature of the dynamics of the world today. But, especially in lieu of particular political global events, it is often seen as closely related to Islam. Focusing specifically on this, in this study, we have been establish that transnationalism has been an integral aspect of the history Islam and further manifested in the key texts of the religion. Although, it is the politicization Islam, namely Islamism or Political Islam that makes this phenomenon particularly relevant to the global political arena. Delving specifically into the ideological frameworks of Islamism, transnationalism, once again, proves to be an integral aspect of it. Islamist ideologues often respond to political, social and cultural crises face by *all* Muslims and not just those relevant to their particular national context. Doing so they critique and provide an alternative for the status quo social, political and global order based solely on the principles of Islam. Having established this it is further critical to recognize that Islamism fails to have meaning without the specific political and social environments within which they take root. Thus we are left with two realms of Islamism; one that addresses the transnational while the other being limited to the specific social and political context of a particular country. These two realms were then seen as present distinctly within the political rhetoric of both the Muslim Brotherhood and Hezbollah. While the MB addresses the Egyptian political and social concerns,

it too focuses on issues that relate to a broader regional context (primarily Muslim countries). Similarly, Hezbollah, while clearly proclaims a transnational Islamic concern, does have a domestic agenda for Lebanon as well. While both realms are crucial there remains a gap in the analysis as to why/how the transnational realm becomes relevant in the particular domestic arena. This is seen happening through an analysis of the Islamist understanding of the relationship of transnational and the national. As the Islamists critique the status quo of the transnational and the domestic, the former is seen to be manifested in the latter through the particular political elite and institutions of that national context; therefore effectively domesticating the transnational as directly influencing the domestic arena and the lives of the individual Muslims. Furthermore, any change then proposed for the transnational would also be assumed to have the potential to trickle down into the domestic realm.

So, what we have here is a comprehensive understanding of Islamist thinking while also establishing a clear flow of logic that establishes its multifaceted political relevance. It explains to us how there remains a transnational allegiance between adherents of Islamist entities and the reasons why their domestic concerns become closely related to the entire *umma*. With this understanding in place it is important to realize that it is of significant relevance, especially in relation to policy-making and political communication. It allows us to understand the multifaceted nature of the Islamist concerns and thus encourages policies that recognize this reality. Failure to do so will limit us to the particular political deadlock we are in now, where the Islamist and non-Islamist political thinking operates on completely alternate frameworks of reality, logic and rationality. This then essentially sustains the political divide that makes diplomacy and cooperation between all parties involved an unattainable aspiration.

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