

## The Ideological Dynamics of Pan-Islamism and Its Political Impact on Transnational Movements in the Contemporary Muslim World

\*Saleh Hassan<sup>1</sup>, Fatima Abubakar<sup>2</sup>, Ikilima Abubakar Sheriff<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia, Indonesia

<sup>23</sup>Gombe State University, Nigeria

Corresponding author: [saleh.hassan@uiii.ac.id](mailto:saleh.hassan@uiii.ac.id)

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### Abstract

Pan-Islamism is a movement that emerged as a response to European imperial annexation of Muslim territories and the decline of the Ottoman Empire, driven by a desire to restore unity, morals, and political legitimacy of the Muslim territories. Its transnational orientation has evolved and motivated ideologically diverse movements across the world, ranging from the politically reformist Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood to radical groups like Boko Haram in Nigeria and non-political Jama'at Tabligh. Few studies have examined how Islamist ideologies have shape the trajectories, tactics, and recruitment mechanisms of Pan-Islamism in the contemporary era of digital advancement and geopolitical shifts. Utilizing a constructivist political theory and informed by Islamic political morality as a normative framework, this study adopts a comparative discourse analysis to investigate situations from Nigeria, Egypt, and others. Findings of the study reveal that state responses have shaped the prospects of political Islamist struggles, and ideological volatility often exacerbates the trends of radicalization. The study recommends that the government should logically distinguish between peaceful and extreme Islamists through constructive engagement to avert further radicalization of moderate groups.

**Keywords:** Pan-Islamism, Transnational Movement, Ideological Fluidity, State Repression, Radicalization.



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### Abstrak

Pan-Islamisme merupakan sebuah gerakan yang muncul sebagai respons terhadap aneksasi imperialis Eropa atas wilayah-wilayah Muslim serta kemunduran Kekaisaran Ottoman, yang didorong oleh keinginan untuk memulihkan kesatuan, moralitas, dan legitimasi politik dunia Islam. Orientasi transnasionalnya telah berkembang dan mengilhami berbagai gerakan dengan latar ideologis yang beragam di seluruh dunia, mulai dari gerakan reformis politik seperti Ikhwanul Muslimin di Mesir, kelompok radikal seperti Boko Haram di Nigeria, hingga gerakan non-politis Jama'at Tabligh. Namun, masih sedikit penelitian yang menelaah bagaimana ideologi Islamisme membentuk arah gerakan, taktik, dan mekanisme rekrutmen Pan-Islamisme dalam era kontemporer yang ditandai oleh kemajuan digital dan perubahan geopolitik. Dengan menggunakan teori politik konstruktivis dan berlandaskan moralitas politik Islam sebagai kerangka normatif, penelitian ini menerapkan analisis wacana komparatif untuk mengkaji situasi di Nigeria, Mesir, dan beberapa negara lainnya. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa respons negara berperan besar dalam membentuk prospek perjuangan Islamisme politik, sementara ketidakstabilan ideologis sering kali memperburuk kecenderungan radikalisasi. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan agar pemerintah mampu membedakan secara rasional antara kelompok Islamis yang damai dan yang ekstrem melalui pendekatan dialogis dan konstruktif guna mencegah radikalisasi lebih lanjut di kalangan kelompok moderat.

**Kata Kunci:** Pan-Islamisme, Gerakan Transnasional, Fluiditas Ideologis, Represi Negara, Radikalisasi.

### Introduction

In the contemporary globalized world, Muslim nations have been grappling with the proliferation of many Islamic ideological movements for over a century. They are championing a cause for restoring the socio-political glory of Islam and re-establishing the Islamic state, particularly after the fall of the Ottoman Empire<sup>1</sup>. Thus, the downfall of the Muslim Empires was coupled with the domination and annexation of Muslim territories by imperialists, who subjected Islamic canons to Western perceptions. Also, the ironic postulations of

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ottoman Empire Is an Islamic Empire That Was Established in 1299 by Osman I in Northwestern Anatolia. It Attained Magnificent Zenith around the 17th Century. It Frontiers Span across Europe, Asia, and Africa with Capital at Constantinople (Istanbul). Its Administrative System Depicts Governance under Islamic Law. the Empire Declined at the Tail End of 19th Century and Early 20th Century as a Result of Rising Nationalism. See Wikipedia The Free Encyclopedia "Ottoman Empire", n.d.

some Islamic states, particularly Muslim leaders influenced by Western orientations, allowing their personal or political interests to outsmart the provisions of the Islamic primary books of *Shari'ah* (Islamic Law), have triggered concern. The aftermath of this situation has enkindled the interest of the revivalists to seek a means to reawaken the Muslims to return to the real teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah (Prophetic tradition) as the basis of their economic, social, judicial, and political life. As such, Muslim figures such as Jamal al-Din Al-Afghani believed that resistance to colonial powers could be achieved through the unity of the Muslim *Ummah* (community). The idea, supported by Muhammad Abdu and Rashid Rida, sought to mobilize Muslims' solidarity on Islamic ways instead of ethnic or national identities against the tricks of imperial powers.<sup>2</sup>

This movement is known to be Pan-Islamism, an intellectual and institutional struggle to solidify a united *Ummah* (Muslim community)<sup>3</sup> and inculcate Islamic orthodoxy in the Muslim world through re-institutionalizing the Islamic canons, missionary preaching, and socio-political activities. In general terms, Pan-Islamism continues to take the shape of political Islam in global politics and is reinvented to refer to Islamism, Islamic revival, Islamic movement, Islamicate, globalized Islam, Islamic modernism, etc.<sup>4</sup> This term, therefore, is sometimes used interchangeably with Islamism. Thus, through Islamism, Pan-Islamists would achieve their goals.

Islamism is regarded as a global political Islam or Islamic revival which encompasses a broad geographical scope and occupies every part of the Muslim world from North Africa to South-East Asia. The goal of Islamism was said to have been to revive Islam to its purest state as a solution to immoral acts in society.<sup>5</sup> While pan-Islamism is within a narrow scope, which is less than Islamism, and focuses more on the socio-political solidarity of Muslims under a single tent, with an established Islamic caliph whom Muslims all over the world pay allegiance to.<sup>6</sup> It is pertinent to argue that, despite the effort of scholars to differentiate these movements, the core idea is to establish an Islamic state, which encompasses various processes, strategies, efforts, actions, participation, and ideological dynamics relating to political settings. The mission's crux is ensuring the reinstatement of *shari'ah* (Islamic law) as the fundamental principle governing the state. This has manifested in the activism of the revivalist, such that some felt

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<sup>2</sup> Ali Rahnema, ed., *Pioneers of Islamic Revival*, Studies in Islamic Society (London Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Zed Books, 1994,3, 11 ).

<sup>3</sup> Hossein Alizadeh, 'Pan-Islamism. Attempt of Political Islam in the Restoration of Caliphate a Century after Its Abolition in 1924', *Journal of Mediterranean Knowledge*, no. 3 (2) (December 2018, 206), <https://doi.org/10.26409/2018JMK3.2.06>.

<sup>4</sup> Alizadeh, 'Pan-Islamism. Attempt of Political Islam in the Restoration of Caliphate a Century after Its Abolition in 1924'. P. 208

<sup>5</sup> Alizadeh, 'Pan-Islamism. Attempt of Political Islam in the Restoration of Caliphate a Century after Its Abolition in 1924'. P. 207-208

<sup>6</sup> Alizadeh, 'Pan-Islamism. Attempt of Political Islam in the Restoration of Caliphate a Century after Its Abolition in 1924'. P. 207-208

they would achieve their target when society became intellectually wise. In contrast, others believed that the only feasible way was to frustrate the established authority till it surrendered and handed over power to them.

Moreover, pan-Islamism is initially regarded as a political and moral response to imperial domination of the West, which transformed into different ideological manifestations during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the first quarter of the 20th century, the Muslim Brotherhood emerged in Egypt, the Middle East, under the leadership of Hasan al-Banna around 1928 CE as a religious and charitable organization with the motive of instilling Islamic values and invigorating the moral etiquette of the Muslim society. Hasan al-Bannah was concerned about secular ideas and the influence of Western approaches in analyzing Islamic issues by many scholars in Egypt, particularly at Azhar.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, Hizb at-Tahrir emerged in Jordan as a pro-caliphate Islamic party established in 1953 with the ultimate vision of restoring Islam's glory under Sheikh Taqiuddin an-Nabhani. Tablighi Jama'at of the Indian subcontinent decided to remain apolitical and focus on intellectual reform.<sup>8</sup> The movements have one central goal: ensuring the entrenchment of justice vested in Islamic traditions and restoring the declining ethical norms of Islam. In addition, their approaches demonstrate divergent readings of modernity and governance.

Furthermore, their trends transcend from local to international levels through connections with Middle Eastern radical groups such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS. It is believed that all these are the metamorphic phase of pan-Islamism and their diverse ideological strategies across transnational borders. Some Muslim countries seek international collaboration through strong alliances with the United States, Russia, or China to strengthen their diplomatic, economic, political, or military position and gain support in their fight against intra- and inter-country conflicts.<sup>9</sup> In reciprocation, these imperial powers have tactically taken away the sovereignty and autonomy of many Muslim territories through the manipulation of the politics and ideologies of the state.<sup>10</sup> The question to ask is why there has been a surge of violent pan-Islamist movements in the contemporary world despite government policies to counter these for decades. The question of whether Pan-Islamism shares a different ideology from mainstream Islamism is still contentious; even Islamist like the Muslim Brotherhood also struggles to establish the state under Shari'ah. What are the impacts of their trends on

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<sup>7</sup> Jan Ashik Ali and Elisa Orofino, 'Islamic Revivalist Movements in the Modern World: An Analysis of Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun, Tablighi Jama'at, and Hizb Ut-Tahrir', *Journal for the Academic Study of Religion* 31, no. 1 (2018): 27–54, <https://doi.org/10.1558/jasr.35051>.

<sup>8</sup> Alwaqiyah TV, *The Departure of the Caravan of Hizb Ut Tahrir 'The Blessed Light That Originated from Masjid al Aqsa'*, 4 November 2015, <https://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.info/en/index.php/latest-articles/8806.html>.

<sup>9</sup> Yahdi Qolbi et al., 'Geopolitics and Muslim Countries: Navigating Challenges and Opportunities in Contemporary International Political Dynamics', *MILRev: Metro Islamic Law Review* 3, no. 2 (2024): 217–35, <https://doi.org/10.32332/milrev.v3i2.9910>.

<sup>10</sup> Ali and Orofino, 'Islamic Revivalist Movements in the Modern World'.

contemporary global security? And what the future trajectory of the movements will be. This study examines the ideological dynamics of Pan-Islamism in shaping the strategies of transnational Islamist movements and how government response influences their proliferation.

This study employed qualitative methods, combining comparative, historical, and discourse analysis approaches to investigate the ideological dynamics of Pan-Islamism and its impacts on transnational movements. The aim is to expound the contemporary manifestations of Pan-Islamism across diverse socio-political contexts by synthesizing primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include analysis of some policy documents, speeches of Pan-Islamist movements (where necessary), and organizations of Islamic cooperation. It will also synthesize newspaper reports, organizations, and other digital statements. The secondary sources include a literature review from scholarly articles and books that analyze the trajectory of Pan-Islamism. In addition, the analytical discourse of ideological dynamics would be engaged, employing some political theories to explore how Pan-Islamist movements conceptualize governance, sovereignty, and resistance. The comparative analysis of some case studies of Pan-Islamist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood, Hizb at-Tahrir, Tabligh, and Boko Haram and their diverse approaches, transnational networks, and strategic alliances will be examined, and government responses, covering the Middle East, Asia, and Africa, will be reviewed. The study would not cover the spectrum but focus on some selected movements of pan-Islamist ideology, ensuring a balanced approach and perspectives.

## **Discussion**

### **Evolution of Pan-Islamism**

The term Pan-Islamism was argued to have been used for the first time around the 1880s. Scholars like Gabriel Charms described it as a reaction of Muslims to France's annexation of Tunisia and official Ottoman activities to mobilize Muslims to unite against Christian power. This act has been tagged as Pan-Islam.<sup>11</sup> Pan-Islamism evolved in varied historical phases that adapted to the contexts of the socio-political milieu of Muslim societies. The movements' struggle continues in the sense that was mainly attributed to the 18th-century reform efforts of notable figures like Shah Wali Allah in the Indian sub-continent, the Arabian ibn Abdulwahab, and the West African Sheikh Usman bin Fodio (of Sokoto caliphate) and his lieutenants. These are mostly regional Islamic revivalist movements, mainly puritanical, focused on moral and spiritual renewal, advocating for less or no unified political entity for the Muslim Society. However, it depicts more politics and stresses Islam as a unified force to counter colonial aberration in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century through the efforts of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani.

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<sup>11</sup> Jacob M Landau. *The Politics of Pan-Islam Ideology and Organization* (New York: Oxford University Press., 1990).

His idea was reinforced by his contemporaries, such as Muhammad Abduh, who later emphasized intellectual reform over political activism. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Ottoman Empire under Sultan Abdulhamid II employed Pan-Islamism to reestablish the legitimacy of the caliphate to protect Muslims.

In addition, it further inspired the rise of other movements advocating for the revitalization of the caliphate and implementation of *Shariah* (Islamic law), headed by figures like Rashid Rida, and followed by the emergence of the Muslim Brotherhood under Hasan al-Banna in Egypt. The intellectual dynamism of Egypt and Arabia reverberates across Asia, transmitted through publications or travel.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, the aftermath of World War II led Pan-Islamism to encounter challenges from secular nationalist ideologies. This has started to change the shape of the movements to a revolutionary course. For instance, the Iranian 1979 revolution and the Afghan Jihad against soviet forces around the 1980s transitioned their ideological sentiments, signifying a transnational mobilization for religious solidarity. Contemporarily, these transnational moves continue to flourish, manifesting transitional, ideological, and radical approaches.

### **Diverse Ideological Spectrum of Pan-Islamism**

It is beyond doubt that the primary idea of Pan-Islamism is to mend the fragmented cracks and holes bedeviling the Muslim communities of the world under the tent of Shari'ah. Thus, their ideological foundations revolves around three distinct pieces including, solidarity (on Islamic bases) other than national sentiments; resistance and resentment, and freedom from imperial domination;<sup>13</sup> and re-establishment of the caliphate (Islamic state), conversely in some instances, scholars back the idea of loose cooperation in the critique of Pan-Islamic and Pan-Arabism for Muslim majority states. Contemporary scholars emphasize collaboration across diverse Muslim-majority states, even without conspiring as a single entity to ensure that justice prevails and society turns to a divine legal system. On this background, Pan-Islamism has undertaken three major ideological spectrums denoting diverse perspectives based on change in time, geopolitics, and doctrinal orientations. These strands could be seen to include;

### **Political/Islamist Pan-Islamism**

This aspect depicts the activities of Pan-Islam championed by the 20th-century reformist movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood under Hasan al-Bannah, Hizb at-Taḥrīr, and their sub-groups across Africa and Asia, emphasizing reform through political activism under the existing state-based structures. This is followed by other Theo-democratic movements like Jama'at Islami in Pakistan and the AKP in Turkey, which also employ party-based politics for the gradual unification of Muslims. The backdrop of their activism is centered on realizing

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<sup>12</sup> Chiara Formichi, *Islam and Asia: A History*, 1st edn (Cambridge University Press, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316226803>.

<sup>13</sup> Mandaville, *Islam and Politics*.

and entrenching the Shari'ah-based system without total disregard for the nation-state. They also used to be harsh and employ rhetorical approaches towards Western influence and manipulations of Islamic affairs. This portrays their gradual ideological position to achieve their long-term goal of an Islamic state.

### **Moderate Pan-Islamist**

This aspect of Pan-Islam groups represents a conglomeration of Muslim nations stressing unity and cooperation across borders, but without antithesis to modern nation-state structures. They usually employed the intellectual revolution. They have multi-national membership across Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, for example, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Moreover, Pan-Islamists struggle to reconcile Islamic unity with globalization through promoting Muslim internal negotiation.<sup>14</sup> This Pan-Islamic group's ideology is centered more on inter-Muslim alliances for socio-economic development and restoring the ideal of Islam in the global world. Modern economic transformation, such as the Islamic banking system, has been established through this effort. Ideologically, they seldom engage in violent acts, but instead advocate for dialogue and institutional alliances internationally while maintaining their Islamic identity. Indeed, this intellectual reform is worthwhile in the contemporary advanced world.

### **Extremist/Jihadist Pan-Islamism**

This group denotes transnational mobilization movements barely employing violent approaches, utilizing digital/social media handles to mobilize, recruit members, and spread global propaganda. They mainly were agitating for the defense of Islam and calling for a return to a pure Islamic state, re-establishment of the caliphate (Islamic state) through global jihad; they reject secular ideologies. Some of these movements include al-Qaeda, ISIS, and Boko Haram. Contemporarily, in the globalization era of widespread digital media, the political mindset of Pan-Islamism has been shifted to enable decentralized efforts for mobilization beyond state control. This sectarian division undermines and diverts the attention of many Pan-Islamists to struggle for internal relevance, promoting their ideology for blaming and denunciation. This aligns with Haddad's views, which highlight the sectarian role in undermining Pan-Islamism by giving priority to denominational loyalty over unity and solidarity of Muslims.<sup>15</sup> This is precisely what is happening when we look at countries like Nigeria, where the Sunni-Shi'ah ideological divides dominate the initial Pan-Islamic struggles by the Islamist groups such as Izala and other Salafi movements.

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<sup>14</sup> John Obert Voll, *Islam* (Routledge, 2019).

<sup>15</sup> Fanar Haddad, 'Sectarian Identity in the Era of the Nation-State', in *Understanding 'Sectarianism'*, by Fanar Haddad (Oxford University Press, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197510629.003.0005>.

Some Muslim-majority states were able to use Pan-Islamism to promote foreign policy. For instance, Saudi Arabia's Muslim Alliance, exemplified by the Riyadh attempt at persuading Pan-Islamic security plans, reflecting the Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition (IMCTC).<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the ideological spectrum of Pan-Islamism has taken dynamic efforts for many decades, from the struggle for Muslim unity to national and transnational progression. Consequently, it is pertinent to submit that the ideological spectrum of Pan-Islamism has continued to remain diverse, ranging from moderate institutionalism to radical jihadism.

### **Pan-Islam's Transnational Expansion Dynamics**

As movements flourish through centuries and adapt to changes across geopolitical borders, the mechanism for spreading pan-Islamism has materialized in diverse ways, particularly through digital channels, formal and informal networks, mobilization, and grievances across geographical settings.

Many Pan-Islamic movements utilize digital technology to mobilize followers and transcend borders. Some Jihadists, such as al-Qaeda and ISIL, pointed out by Jytte Klausen, have been allegedly exploiting some media platforms like Twitter (X) and Telegram to share propaganda, plan and strategize attacks, and recruit members, and other encrypted software such as TOR to hide their location while interacting with journalists.<sup>17</sup> For instance, a renowned human rights advocate in Nigeria, Audu Bulama Bakarti, has allegedly pointed out while sharing a video clip that, currently, Boko Haram fighters were exploiting platforms like TikTok, interacting with journalists, and sometimes promoting their ideologies and counter-narratives in countries like Nigeria.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, these movements promote ideology through media by obscuring their identity to some extent and exchanging information with each other without hitches. This is the reason that extremism continues to become so intense and increasing, particularly in countries with democratic freedom of expression. This gives an easy way to promote their motives, reconnect across borders, and become influencers to weak-minded youths. This study reiterates that, though groups like Boko Haram sought to establish an Islamic state violently, their physical acts diverge from the ideal of Pan-Islamism, who believe in the Islamic moral tradition of ensuring peace and legitimate leadership.

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<sup>16</sup> The Embassy of The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, *Joint Statement on the Formation of the Islamic Military Alliance* (2015), [https://www.saudiembassy.net/statements/joint-statement-formation-islamic-military-alliance?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.saudiembassy.net/statements/joint-statement-formation-islamic-military-alliance?utm_source=chatgpt.com).

<sup>17</sup> Jytte Klausen, 'Tweeting the *Jihad*: Social Media Networks of Western Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 38, no. 1 (2015): 1–22, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2014.974948>.

<sup>18</sup> Audu Bulama Bukarti, 'Karnukan Shekau Sun Fara Biyoni Da Haushi', *Facebook*, 15 April 2025, <https://www.facebook.com/share/r/1AXtgxVRGT/>.

Furthermore, digital technology is not only used by radical or jihadists; instead, moderate political reformists such as the Muslim Brotherhood and their associates were using digital platforms to lobby Muslims and invite and mobilize a united *Ummah* (community). In another vein, these digital media work as a tool for manipulation and deception. These deceptive ideas usually attract attention, divulge the mindset of people, become argumentative topics, and sometimes, reverberate societal sectarian divisions.

Some non-state actors, like al-Qaeda and ISIS in the Middle East, were said to have established regional alliances with movements like Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, and ISWAP in Africa, and Islamic State Khorasan (IS-Khorasan) operating mainly in Afghanistan and Pakistan in Asia, demonstrating ideological inter-relations and having turned from centralized into complete transnational networks. These non-state actors were mostly extreme and actionable militants and decisively proclaimed autonomy in their struggles at the local levels.<sup>19</sup> It is crystal clear that not all non-state actors demonstrate violent approaches in their activism. For instance, if we take a look at a movement like *Ḥizb at-Taḥrīr* as a significant Pan-Islamist movement that was described as non-violent with their struggles for the restoration of a total Islamic identity based on Shari'ah and the global salvage of the dying caliphate.<sup>20</sup> Thus, its inflexible transnational ideology resists local adaptation. Therefore, the ideological dynamics of Pan-Islamism differ according to their approaches. Mainly, non-violent used to be more progressive and less threatening than violent.

Some Islamist activists gained support from the government to promote their activities of disseminating Salafist or other non-Salafi ideology through charities and establishing schools to influence Muslims across the world, such as Saudi Arabia's Muslim World League.<sup>21</sup> Others, like Dinayet Turkey, also sponsored Islamic education and supported mosques and other religious activities in Europe as a move to extend neo-Ottoman Islamic identity.<sup>22</sup> This ideology is usually non-violent, and to some extent, the actors are involved in governmental and political administration of the state. It is hard to find anti-government people of such a kind; instead, they used their closeness and influence to influence policies. However, this group implies that sometimes, the government uses them as a tool to achieve political gain. Despite that, they achieve more progress than the violent ones.

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<sup>19</sup> Fawaz A. Gerges, *ISIS: A History* (Princeton University Press, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvc77bfb>.

<sup>20</sup> Shahram Akbarzadeh and Fethi Mansouri, *Islam and Political Violence: Muslim Diaspora and Radicalism in the West*, Library of International Relations 34 (Tauris academic studies, 2007).

<sup>21</sup> Madawi Al-Rasheed, ed., *Salman's Legacy: The Dilemmas of a New Era in Saudi Arabia* (Oxford University Press, 2018).

<sup>22</sup> M. Hakan Yavuz, *Nostalgia for the Empire: The Politics of Neo-Ottomanism*, 1st edn (Oxford University Press New York, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197512289.001.0001>.

Modern-day expansion of Pan-Islamism is influenced by competing strands of ideology, including Salafi jihadism in one way and Islamist political Islam in the other, sectarian fragmentation, particularly the dichotomy between Sunni-Shi'a dissensions, among other factors. Salafi-jihadism includes groups like ISIS, ISWAP, and Boko Haram, which intensely reject any form of nation-state and struggle for a borderless Islamic state. The major loggerhead to their actions is the way they employed a violent approach. Unlike political Islamist groups like the Muslim Brotherhood, Turkey's AKP, and Hizb at-Tahrir pursue their cause of re-establishing the Islamic system of governance within the established political structures and promoting transnational solidarity.

When we look at sectarian fragmentation, it is the primary internal obstacle that obstructs the struggle of Pan-Islamism since Pan-Islamists' main goal is to achieve a united *ummah* (community) with fragmentation and theological witch-hunt across Sunni and Shi'ah. The geopolitical contest between the Muslim sects has turned into a battleground of ideology, which has become a significant challenge to Pan-Islam. But sometimes the agitation of some sects may entail little advancements, for instance, the extent to which Hezbollah and Iran support Shi'ah militias has expressly and logically framed their resistance in Pan-Islamic strands, appealing to Shia minorities across the globe.

Following a challenge for territorial defeat in Syria and Iraq, ISIS was found to have shifted grounds to a decentralized uprising model, creating alliances in other areas such as Africa's ISWAP, Afghanistan's IS-Khorasan, and Southeast Asia (Philippines and Indonesia). For instance, Boko Haram was said to have openly declared its loyalty to ISIL and extended its mission to other West African countries around 2015.<sup>23</sup> At this juncture, I would like to explain Boko Haram and its transnational connections briefly.

### **Boko Haram's Transnational Networks**

Like many other movements, Boko Haram started from the initial phase as a domestic extreme group championed by its leader, Muhammad Yusuf, and his deputy and lieutenant, Abubakar Shekau, in the Northeast region of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, as a non-compromising movement since 2002. Their confrontational acts with security forces heightened around 2009.<sup>24</sup> During the early stage of their Da'awa, they expressed their rejection of the constitution, national anthem, and secular democracy, which they seem to consider *ṭāghūt* (devilish) and irreligious. They believed Western education masterminded governance failure, leading to corrupt practices, poverty, injustice,

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<sup>23</sup> Dimas Garba, 'Transnational Insurgency: Boko Haram and Regional Insecurity in Africa', *FUDMA Journal of Politics and International Affairs (FUJOPLA)* 1, no. 1 (2018): 82–98.

<sup>24</sup> Freedom C Onuoha and Samuel Oyewole, 'Anatomy of Boko Haram: The Rise and Decline of a Violent Group in Nigeria', *Aljazeera Center for Studies*, 22 April 2018, <https://studies.aljazeera.net/en/reports/2018/04/anatomy-boko-haram-rise-decline-violent-group-nigeria-180422110920231.html>. accessed 01/05/2025

underdevelopment, etc. At this stage, from 2002 to 2009, their active rebellion was at the national level. Later, from 2009 to date, it metamorphosed into transnational or trans-border threats, leading to hundreds of thousands of deaths and the destruction of properties worth billions of dollars. They spread to Southern Niger, Northern Cameroun, and Southern Chad, and this opened the way to declare themselves in full support of al-Qaeda in 2010 and ISIS in 2015.<sup>25</sup> Their international connection has been said to be with AQIM (Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb), which operates in areas like Mauritania, Mali, Algeria, Niger, and Morocco. On some occasions, the group was claiming support and training from foreign countries like Afghanistan, Somalia, and Yemen.<sup>26</sup> This international affiliation was re-echoed by the then foreign affairs Ministers of Niger, Mohammed Bazoum, and Algeria in the year 2011, as well as Boko Haram spokesman Abu Qaqa.<sup>27</sup>

The primary factor that exacerbates Boko Haram is the earlier military repression, the Nigerian government employing an army approach with a belief that such acts could be suppressed by force once and for all, without a soft or mutual approach. Particularly, when one considers the event that ignited the Boko Haram crisis, the government's imposition of helmets.<sup>28</sup> Going back to the nitty-gritty of ideological dynamics, it is pertinent to state that the goal of Boko Haram and ISWAP is mainly to use a radical approach to Islamize the institutions of government and establish an Islamic state across the West African region, which has led to turbulence. Another controversial claim going around the media nowadays, by some Nigerian lawmakers from Borno state, is that they suspect that Boko Haram and ISWAP are using armed drones to advance their security attacks. However, the current minister of defense, Mohammed Badaru, described it as “guerrilla” warfare aided by informants.<sup>29</sup> This has shown how these groups' transnational alliances have advanced to a high level and create serious threats to the government.

### **Tablighi Jama'at – Ideology**

This movement is apolitical and centers its ideology on rejuvenating and revitalizing the aspects of *taubid* (monotheism) and morality (ethics) among the *Ummah* (Muslim community). It was founded by Muhammad Ilyas al-Khandalawi

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<sup>25</sup> Onuoha and Oyewole, ‘Anatomy of Boko Haram: The Rise and Decline of a Violent Group in Nigeria’. accessed 01/05/2025

<sup>26</sup> International Crisis Group, ‘Bombing in Abuja: On Nigeria’s Boko Haram’, Austrian Red Cross Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD), n.d., accessed 1 May 2025, <https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/1102184.html>.

<sup>27</sup> Garba, ‘Transnational Insurgency: Boko Haram and Regional Insecurity in Africa’.

<sup>28</sup> Garba, ‘Transnational Insurgency: Boko Haram and Regional Insecurity in Africa’.

<sup>29</sup> Yakubu Mohammed, ‘Nigeria’s Defence Minister Speaks on Use of Drones by Boko Haram’, *Premium Times* (Nigeria), 8 May 2025, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/793013-nigerias-defence-minister-speaks-on-use-of-drones-by-boko-haram.html>. accessed 17/06/2025

(d. 1944) in 1920 in India. They focus more on preaching tours, lectures, and emphasizing obedience to leaders, respecting elders, being submissive to Islamic precepts, and cautioning Muslims from criticizing, discriminating, humiliating, and debating against each other. They expanded worldwide, covering India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and other Asian and African countries.<sup>30</sup> When we examine the efforts of this movement, we see that they focus on reviving society from traditional practices to pure Islamic ways. They ignore establishing a state. However, they demand Muslim unity under the tenets of Islam and have an opposite ideology to the radical groups. This movement has members in different countries, such as Nigeria in West Africa, Indonesia in Southeast Asia, and other parts of the world. This group is mentioned to show that not all Islamist groups are pan-Islamist. Some remain apolitical and focus on religious invitations, maintaining transnational connections across continents.

### **Ideological Counter-Narratives**

In this aspect, some governments employed engaging religious rulers who maintain a moderate status to modify religious police or paramilitary forces. This practice was said to be used as a tactic to counter any extreme narratives from radical groups. Yes, this may have a positive impact, but the implications are that it might lead to the re-emergence of other ideologies from the existing ones. In countries like Nigeria that are already secular, these religious organizations maintain close relations with the state and counter any efforts towards demonstrations or protests against the established authority. In addition, Turkey's Justice and Development Party (AKP), particularly under Erdogan, was the earliest supporter of the Middle East Brotherhood's political activism to broaden its political influence, particularly during Muhammad Mursi, but later stripped itself of pragmatic geopolitics.<sup>31</sup> Erdogan's initial backing for the Brotherhood was related to ideological alignment and tactical ambition. Repression is not a new phenomenon to Pan-Islamist activism, particularly in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. The Muslim Brotherhood was the major victim, though a driver of many Islamist movements. It is beyond doubt that crackdowns on Pan-Islamists exacerbate their anti-state strategy rather than deterring sentiment.

### **Conclusion**

This study theoretically bridges constructivist political theory with Islamic political morality. It demonstrates how public welfare and social justice would influence or mediate Islamist claims of legitimacy. These findings emphasize that sustainable engagement with Islamists necessitates that governments distinguish between moderate, moral, and extremist to pursue

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<sup>30</sup> Sukron Ma'mun, 'Tablighi Jamaat: An Islamic Revivalist Movement and Radicalism Issues', *ISLAM REALITAS: Journal of Islamic & Social Studies* 5, no. 2 (2019): 146–52.

<sup>31</sup> Anchal Vohra, 'The Muslim Brotherhood's Survival Is Now in Question Turkey Has Turned Its Back on the Islamist Group, Eliminating One of Its Last Safe Havens.', *Foreign Policy Magazine*, 7 August 2023, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/08/07/muslim-brotherhood-turkey-survival/> accessed 17/06/2025

dialogue in a mutually amicable and ethically best manner. Therefore, it is recommended that the government institutionalize the teaching of Islamic moderation and engage the service of Muslim clerics and local community residents as a strategic counterterrorism measure. This will enhance public harmony and entrench peaceful coexistence. Finally, there is a need to invest robustly in digital counter-terrorism measures to monitor and promote alternative peaceful narratives.

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