LIMITS OF ISLAMISM:
IDEOLOGICAL ARTICULATIONS OF JAMAAT-E-ISLAMI
IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA AND BANGLADESH

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To My Parents
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Maidul Islam
Abstract

My doctoral thesis analyses the political ideology of Islamism by taking the case study of a major Islamist organization, namely the Jamaat-e-Islami in contemporary India and Bangladesh. In doing so, I try to understand the similarities and differences of the ideological articulations of Islamism in a Muslim minority context of India and in a Muslim majority context of Bangladesh. The thesis is written from a political theory perspective in general and within the realm of ideology studies in particular. The study analyses how and why the Jamaat is responding to the economic and cultural issues of neoliberal India and Bangladesh. One cannot possibly ignore the neoliberal context within which Islamists are generating markedly new kinds of political articulations with an unprecedented set of political demands, never seen before in the history of Islamist movements. The ideological articulations of Jamaat have been studied by analyzing various primary sources—organisational literature, the party constitution, policy resolutions, press releases, election manifestos and political pamphlets of Jamaat-e-Islami. In addition, this dissertation has also relied on field interviews with the Jamaat leadership in India and Bangladesh. Magazines and internet sources have been also helpful for this study. My thesis analyses Islamist responses to neoliberalism by discussing the contrasting conditions of contemporary India and Bangladesh. In doing so, I conclude that in India, Jamaat is opposed to neoliberalism whereas in Bangladesh, it has a ambiguous character vis-à-vis neoliberalism. However, Islamists in both these countries are opposed to cultural issues like atheism, ‘blasphemous’ views, live-in relationships and homosexuality, which they construe as the products of ‘western cultural globalization’. In this respect, I try to analyse why the Islamists are opposed to ‘western cultural globalization’. Finally, I also explain how Islamism, as a politico-ideological project of populist mobilization is facing a crisis in contemporary India and Bangladesh.
Introduction

Islamism(s) of Academics and Islamists

My doctoral thesis focuses on Islamism as a political ideology by taking up the case study of Jamaat-e-Islami in contemporary India and Bangladesh. In this regard, I use Laclau’s ideology and discourse analysis method in conceptually grasping and analyzing the rhetoric of Jamaat. Therefore, primarily, the study will be in the theoretical framework of Ernesto Laclau in ideology studies. In this respect, this research elaborates the underlying politics of Islamism with reference to Laclau’s theoretical insights into ideology and discourse analysis, particularly with regard to identification of the enemy/antagonistic frontier and the construction of populist political discourses as a strategy of political mobilization. That is to say, the thesis will address how, in a contemporary globalized world, Islamism constructs an antagonistic frontier and how it mobilizes/rallies ‘people’ behind its political project. Secondly, the thesis examines the dynamics from formation of Islamist politics for struggle for hegemony to a failure to become a hegemonic force in Bangladesh. Thirdly, the contradiction between Islamic universalism/Islamist populism, on one hand, and a politics of Muslim particularism in India, on the other, is revealed in this study. Fourthly, the thesis also deals with Islamist cultural critique of atheism, blasphemy, live-in relationships and homosexuality, which the (Jamaati) Islamists construe as products of ‘western cultural globalization’. In this respect, I try to analyse why Islamists are antagonistic to such issues. Finally, this thesis traces the contemporary crisis of Islamist populism in providing an alternative to neoliberalism.
Today, neoliberal capitalism is passing through a global crisis.\textsuperscript{1} In this context, the study tries to answer a core question: can Islamism articulate a ‘politics of alternative’ in a world marked by capitalist globalization and neoliberal consensus? Further questions, related to the major theme, are also addressed as follows: after the failure of 20\textsuperscript{th} century socialism, what happens to the ‘promise’ and ‘goal’ of Islamism in providing an alternative to capitalism? Can religious ideologies like Islamism represent a politics of alternative/social transformation or can they only limit themselves as a peculiar politics of resistance and critique to neoliberal capitalism?

Before analyzing the political ideology of Islamism, it is helpful to first survey the academic literature on Islamism, particularly Islamism as presented by Islamists and then re-presented by academics. In studying Islamism, first one should question those assumptions that treat Islamism as a coherent and homogenous entity. The diversity of Islamisms in varied spatio-cultural contexts is not only restricted to different genres of Islamist movements, but has also produced extensive debates over a range of analytical categories around which academics have studied Islamism. In this respect, I focus upon the major themes and the logic that has been provided to explain the existence of Islamism. But before surveying the academic literature, let me first clarify the terms and concepts that I have often used in this thesis.

\textsuperscript{1} Today, the ‘global capitalist system’ is grappling with the ‘ecological crisis, the consequences of the biogenetic revolution, imbalances within the system itself (problems with intellectual property; forthcoming struggles over raw materials, food and water), and the explosive growth of social divisions and exclusions’. See Slavoj Žižek, \textit{Living in the End Times} (London: Verso, 2010), p. x. However, in this thesis, we would see how the Islamist party, Jamaat-e-Islami is responding more to the ecological issues, the big capital’s control over land and water, and the problems of economic inequality and social exclusion.
Clarifying Terminologies

Fundamentalism or Islamism: There are scholars, who have used ‘fundamentalism’ as an analytical category.² Now, the coinage and usage of a loaded term like ‘fundamentalism’ in a Muslim context seems to be immensely contestable and unacceptable for many.³ Most informed academics know that ‘fundamentalism’ is not specific to Islam and in fact, ‘has surfaced in most religions and seems to be a world-wide response to the peculiar strain of late-twentieth century life.’⁴ Experts point out that at the beginning of the twentieth century, fundamentalism first surfaced in the United States—‘the showcase of modernity’, and in this respect, both Christianity and Judaism had a much early experience of fundamentalist movements and thus Islam was among the last of three monotheistic religions to develop a fundamentalist strand during late 1960s and 1970s when modernity began to take root in the Muslim world.⁵ However, irrespective of the origins of the term, ‘fundamentalism’ in any particular context or religion, a fascinating debate over using the term as an analytical category can be seen in the works of Sahgal and Yuval-Davis and the response by Sayyid.

By using ‘fundamentalism’ as an analytical category, Sahgal and Yuval-Davis argue that fundamentalism generally has three main features: (a) it is a political project that practices rejection of pluralism with a return to the holy text (b) it is a movement that deliberately combines religion and politics to further its goals and (c) it is a programme of

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controlling women. In response, Sayyid’s theoretically sophisticated work from a broad ‘anti-essentialist’ and ‘anti-foundationalist’ epistemological framework convincingly object and problematize each of the features being labeled to describe the phenomena of ‘fundamentalism’ in general and Islamism in particular.

In this respect, I would argue that the theoretical debate between Sahgal and Yuval-Davis on one hand and Sayyid on the other repeats the binary construction of essentialist versus anti-essentialist representation of Islam(ism). While Sahgal and Yuval-Davis make broad generalizations and often stereotyped formulations about religious ideologies, Sayyid, on the other hand, avoids discussing certain core problems of gender inequality within Islamist discourses like unequal property rights for women, unequal political rights for women and rights to use contraception to control reproduction. However, in agreement with Sayyid, in exploring the use of Islam for political protest and mobilization, conceptually, the term ‘Islamism’ is preferable because the terminology of ‘Islamic fundamentalism’ is problematic and using the term ‘political Islam’ is rather vague.

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9 Sayyid, A Fundamental Fear, p. vii.
Most academic works on Islamism regard it more as an identity oriented political movement, even that of Sayyid, and less as an ideology. Although varied interpretations of the term exist, I would use *Islamism* as a form of totalistic ideology that wishes to organize society, polity and economy around the centrality of Islamic religion. For the Islamists, Islam has something *positive* to offer and a metaphor of something *better* than any other existing ideological discourses. Islamists are those people who use the Islamic metaphoric language to think in terms of political destinies and who see their political future through the prism of Islam.\(^{10}\) In this respect, as Sayyid argues, an Islamist is someone ‘who places her or his Muslim identity at the centre of her or his political practice’, while Islamism ‘is a discourse that attempts to centre Islam within the political order… [and] can range from the assertion of a Muslim subjectivity’ to a serious attempt ‘to reconstruct society on Islamic principles.’\(^{11}\) I agree with Sayyid on these counts with a caveat that I would replace ‘Muslim identity’ and ‘Muslim subjectivity’ with ‘Islamic identity’ and ‘Islamic subjectivity’ as I fundamentally distinguish between the terms: ‘Muslim’ and ‘Islamic’.

**Muslim, Islamic and Islamist:** In this study, I differentiate between three distinct terms: (a) ‘Muslim’ or ‘Muslim identity’ (b) ‘Islamic’ or ‘Islamic identity’ and (c) ‘Islamist’ or ‘Islamist identity’. For this differentiation, I rely on how the Islamists have defined Islam as a combination of *din* (faith/religion), *dunya* (life), and *dawla* (state).\(^{12}\) I argue that the term, ‘Muslim’ is a broad general category where both religious and non-religious persons can belong or *identify* with that category. In other words, those people who do not practice Islamic religion in their everyday life but has *faith* in Islamic religion can be Muslims. Thus,

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\(^{10}\) Ibid., p. 17.

\(^{11}\) Ibid.

‘Muslim world’ in this study is used to represent the collective of those societies and countries, where the majority of the population has faith in Islamic religion but does not view Islam as a complete way of life or initiate political struggles to establish an Islamic political order. Whereas, people belonging to the second category of ‘Islamic’ are those who practise Islamic religion in their everyday life and might also believe that Islam is way of life but does not have a political agenda to establish a Sharia based Islamic state. However, ‘Islamists’ are those who not only believe that Islam is ‘a way of life’, but also claims that it is ‘a complete way of life’ and claim that it is an ideal holistic religion with a political agenda of building a Sharia-centric Islamic state. Therefore, the general formula according to my categorization in the thesis is that all ‘Muslims’ are not necessarily ‘Islamic’ or ‘Islamists’, whereas all ‘Islamic’ people are definitely ‘Muslims’ but not necessarily ‘Islamists’, and all ‘Islamists’ are certainly both ‘Muslims’ and ‘Islamic’. The examples of Islamic organizations are Tablighi Jamaat, Jamiat-Ulema-i-Hind etc. while Jamaat-e-Islami, Al-Qaeda, Taliban, Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Muslim Brotherhood etc. can be categorized as Islamist organizations.

However, Islamist organizations form a broad political spectrum, and we can differentiate them into three distinct groups in terms of operational strategies and attendant tactical questions related to the modes of capturing political power: 1) Moderate Islamists 2) Mainstream Islamists and 3) Extremist Islamists. The moderate Islamists generally use and choose parliamentary democratic methods like participation in elections and mass mobilisations, like the Jamaat-e Islami in South Asia, Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Refah Party in Turkey etc. Mainstream Islamists use both parliamentary methods and armed violence like Hamas in Palestine and Hezbollah in Lebanon. Extremist Islamists however,
use only violent and terroristic methods like Al-Qaeda network, Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan and militant groups like the Lashkar-e-Taiba which are based in Pakistan and operate in Kashmir. However, in this research, I am not only interested in the specific tactics and strategies of an Islamist party like the Jamaat in India and Bangladesh but also to look at its ideological articulations. To do such an exercise, I need to clarify, what I mean by political ideology.

**Islamism as Political Ideology:** The term ‘political ideology’ in this study is employed in the same sense that Freeden defines it as ‘complex combinations and clusters of political concepts in sustainable patterns’ and ‘a wide-ranging structural arrangement that attributes decontested meanings to a range of mutually defining political concepts.’¹³ Since, ‘ideologies are configurations of decontested meanings of political concepts’¹⁴ any ideology would try to fix a definitive meaning to a particular concept that is essential for the subscribers of that particular ideology. For example, a particular ideology might assert that this is what ‘justice’ means or that is what ‘equality’ means or such a society might be ideal. In this respect, decontestation is the process of ending an ‘inevitable contention over concepts…by removing their meanings from contest.’¹⁵ Thus, decontestation helps to provide a consensus of meanings or fixation of meanings about a political concept or a particular set of political concepts for those who subscribe to a particular ideology. It is thus opposed to deconstruction, by which multiple meanings of any particular concept can be revealed. By such acts of decontestation, ideologies make truth claims and ‘closure of

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debate’\textsuperscript{16} to arrive at certain conclusive decisions. Since, \textit{decision} is an ‘expression of finality (real or manufactured) signaling the closure of discussion’, ideologies generally ‘strive to provide the certainty that underpins such finality.’\textsuperscript{17} In doing such acts of \textit{decontestation}, the ideologues “claim to champion the ‘correct’ meanings of the political concepts to which they refer.”\textsuperscript{18} Now, while \textit{decontestation} of political concepts might close the debate \textit{within} a particular ideological tradition, competing ideological discourses can certainly \textit{challengen/contest} such \textit{decontestation} of several political concepts. For example, distinct ideologies like Liberalism, Marxism and Islamism might have quiet different or varied notions of \textit{justice}, \textit{equality} or \textit{ideal society} and would then \textit{disagree} with each other on the ‘true’ or ‘correct’ meaning of those political concepts. Hence, ‘control of political language’ is a ‘necessary feature of ideological act’, which precisely is ‘the decontestation of the essentially contestable.’\textsuperscript{19}

It is this problematic of ‘closure’ or fixation of meaning via \textit{decontestation} that brings Freeden close to Laclau’s concept of ideology as ‘the representational, metaphorical and precarious closure that stabilizes meaning within specific contexts.’\textsuperscript{20} As Laclau proclaims, “[t]he ideological would consist of those discursive forms through which a society tries to institute itself as such on the basis of closure, of the fixation of meaning…The ideological would be the will to ‘totality’ of any totalizing discourse.”\textsuperscript{21} However, at the same time, Freeden argues that ‘Decontestation, though central to political

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., p. 68.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., p. 55.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.
argument, is never conclusive\textsuperscript{22} which Laclau and Mouffe had previously argued about such ‘impossibility of an ultimate fixity of meaning’ implying that there would always be ‘partial fixations.’\textsuperscript{23} Thus, both ‘ambiguity’ and ‘certainty’ are two necessary features of any ideology.\textsuperscript{24} The tendency of cementing, closure, fixation and decontestation of meanings within any ideological discourse represents the \textit{certainty} of ideological ‘truths’ or ‘correctness’ while ‘inconclusiveness’, ‘indeterminacy’ and ‘vagueness’ of meaning and decisions,\textsuperscript{25} on one hand, and the existence of ‘ideological dissent’, on the other, might add to the \textit{ambiguity} of ideology, thus making ‘reasonable ideological disagreement’ possible.\textsuperscript{26}

Thus, ideologies are not \textit{monolithic static belief systems}, but like languages, contain certain concepts, whose meaning(s) might change or evolve over time. The \textit{relative political success} of an ideology depends on its ability to impose the belief that its own conceptual definitions are the ‘correct ones’.

By following the meaning of ‘ideology’ and ‘ideological’ in both Freeden and Laclau, the term—\textit{Islamism} is primarily used in this research to connote a modern political ideology, quite distinct from Islamic theology, with its universalistic appeal, and a particularistic ‘ideologisation’ of Islamic religion around certain key decontested concepts, whose meanings are generally fixed by the prominent Islamist ideologues, while closing down ideological dissent over the use of accepted definitions of any particular political concept. Nonetheless, over time, such fixation of meanings can change/vary under specific contexts. I would show in this thesis, how Islamist discourses can also reinterpret and

\textsuperscript{22} Freeden, “What Should ‘Political’ in Political Theory Explore”, p. 119.
\textsuperscript{24} Freeden, \textit{Ideology}, p. 57.
\textsuperscript{26} Freeden, \textit{Ideology}, p. 126.
reformulate meanings of specific political concepts within its ideological repertoire. By ‘ideologisation’ of Islamic religion, I mean treating Islam not simply as a ritualistic religion in the private realm but assigning political responsibility and duties for its core audience/constituency of Muslims to achieve distinct political goals, based on specific political concepts and rhetoric, where both private and public domains converge in constructing Islam as a complete way of life. This ideologisation of religion, as argued later is possible since religion itself gives that scope to ideologise and politicize by particular political actors.

Thus, Islamism can be defined as assigning political overtone to the religion of Islam, where Islam is regarded not simply as a religion but a political ideology comprising a set of political concepts with distinct political goals like the establishment of an Islamic state. Hence, for the Islamists, the religion of Islam in itself is a political ideology and a guide to programmatic political action. Thus, Islamism is the ideologisation of Islam while presenting Islam as a totality by constructing it as a ‘holistic way of life’ which has socio-economic, political, moral and spiritual goals while giving Islamic justifications for its specific modes of political thinking and action. So, when Islamists urge adherence to Islam in its totality they hardly make any distinction between an ideological worldview and fundamental tenets of religion. In fact, they see Islam not as a religion but as an ideology. It

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28 The JIH policy and programme claims that it ‘has been striving to establish Islam in its totality, in all aspects of human life—individual as well as collective—related to the inner self as well as the external world.’ See JIH Policy and Programme, p. 3. The same argument can be also found in the pamphlet of Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi, The Islamic Way of Life, 2nd edn. (Lahore: Markazi Maktaba Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, 1955).
is interesting to note that what scholars describe as ‘Islamism’, the Islamists describe as ‘Islam’. That is to say, the ideological articulations of Islamism by Islamists are justified in the name of Islam. Thus, for academicians, Islamism is an ideology whereas for Islamists, Islam is the ideology. For scholars, Islamism is only a particular interpretation of Islam whereas, for Islamists, their interpretation of Islam as a complete way of life is the only correct form of Islam and hence all other interpretations where Islam is not presented as a totality violates the very spirit of Islam. In this study, I would describe the Islamist ideology of Jamaat-e-Islami as Jamaati Islamism. However, my thesis deals with the ideological articulations of Jamaat-e-Islami. In this respect, let me clarify how I have used articulation in this thesis.

Articulation: I have used ‘articulation’ in the Laclau and Mouffe’s sense of the term where it is regarded as any practice that establishes a relationship ‘among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice’\(^{29}\) (emphasis mine). Thus, articulation as a concept is related to practice within Laclau and Mouffe’s theoretical framework.\(^{30}\) In this thesis, we would see how Jamaat-e-Islami articulates its ideological positions by its specific politico-ideological practices. The concept of articulation however, leads to the concept of discourse. As Laclau and Mouffe points out that ‘the structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice’ can be called discourse.\(^{31}\) But a discourse has to be available in order to be a discourse. In this respect, let me clarify how I have used

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\(^{29}\) Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, p. 105.


\(^{31}\) Laclau and Mouffe take the concept of discourse from Foucault apart from complementing with analytical philosophy of Wittgenstein, the phenomenology of Heidegger and Lacanian theory. See *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, pp. x-xi, pp. 105-113. However, a Foucauldian framework or taking recourse to analytical philosophy of both early and later Wittgenstein, or the ‘existential analytic’ of Heidegger or Lacanian theory is beyond the scope of my research.
the category of ‘available’/‘availability’ in this study. I have used the concept of ‘available’/‘availability’ in Laclauian sense of the term. As Laclau argues, ‘[M]ere availability is on occasion enough to ensure the victory of a particular discourse…The discourse of a ‘new order’ is often accepted by several sectors, not because they particularly like its content but because it is the discourse of an order, of something that is presented as a credible alternative to a crisis and a generalized dislocation. This does not mean, of course, that any discourse putting itself forward as the embodiment of fullness will be accepted. The acceptance of a discourse depends on its credibility, and this will not be granted if its proposals clash with the basic principles informing the organization of a group.’

Therefore, Laclau uses the concept of availability which is related to the category of credibility within a given set of population. In this thesis, I would precisely try to show how neoliberalism and Islamism, which are both ‘available’ to a given population contests each other to become credible within such a population. Besides such a contestation between neoliberalism and Islamism in contemporary India and Bangladesh, we would also see a contestation between Islamism and secular-nationalism in Bangladesh. In this regard, I have argued in this thesis that Islamism as a politico-ideological movement came to prominence and continues to exist in the Muslim world by challenging the varied forms of secular-nationalist political models which were governed by the logic of Eurocentrism. In this respect, let me first clarify the term ‘Eurocentrism’.

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Eurocentrism: Samir Amin argues that ‘Eurocentrism’, as a ‘dominant social phenomena’ is similar to the ‘analogous Orientalist construct’, which portrays a racist historiography.\(^\text{33}\) Amin argues that Eurocentrism basically identifies the ‘European superiority’ in the form of ‘free enterprise and the market, secularism, and pluralist electoral democracy’ as exclusive inventions of Europe/West.\(^\text{34}\) The Eurocentric discourse according to Amin, describes ‘progressive westernization’ as the ‘expression of the triumph of the humanist universalism invented by Europe’, which assumes ‘the superiority of the capitalist system.’\(^\text{35}\) Sayyid succinctly summarizes Amin’s thesis that “eurocentrism is best understood as a cultural phenomenon based on the principle that ‘the West knows best’ and which projects progressive westernization as the destiny of the world.”\(^\text{36}\)

While agreeing with Amin that Eurocentrism is currently hegemonic,\(^\text{37}\) Sayyid criticizes Amin’s description of Eurocentrism as ‘primarily a culturalist phenomenon’, which in effect, turns the ‘problem of eurocentrism into a sub-species of the general problem of capitalism.’\(^\text{38}\) This happens, as Sayyid argues, because of Amin’s theoretical framework of ‘historical materialism’.\(^\text{39}\) As a result, Amin locates ‘Islamic fundamentalism’ as a “rejection of ‘eurocentrism and imperialist universalism’ based on affirmation of ‘Arab-Islamic specificity’.”\(^\text{40}\) In this regard, the problem with Amin’s thesis is that he is ‘totally within the discourse of modernity’ without recognizing how ‘modernity itself projects its


\(^{34}\) Ibid., p. 180.

\(^{35}\) Ibid.


\(^{37}\) Ibid., p. 129.

\(^{38}\) Ibid., p. 127.

\(^{39}\) Ibid.

\(^{40}\) Ibid., p. 128.
identity as a reflection of its western genealogy."\textsuperscript{41} By contrast, Sayyid defines Eurocentrism as a project when the centrality and universality of the West has been questioned and problematized.\textsuperscript{42}

I would argue that while Amin’s critique of Eurocentrism is Marxist, Sayyid’s critique of Amin’s thesis is an ontological one by locating the conditions of possibility for Eurocentrism in the context of a crisis of western universality along with a crisis of the centrality of the project of western modernity. However, it must be also acknowledged that Amin describes Marxism as a critique within the West as well as a critique to the dominant ideology of western liberalism and the economic system of capitalism. Therefore, Sayyid misreads Amin by not focusing on the internal antagonism posited by Marxism within western modernity. By not looking at the internal contradictions within the tradition of European modernity, Sayyid oversimplifies and generalizes the ‘West’ and ‘western modernity’ as homogenous concepts. As Sayyid argues that ‘the West cannot be separated from modernity’\textsuperscript{43} since ‘Modernity can be described as a discourse which formed and consolidated Europe.’\textsuperscript{44} This is almost an essentialist reading of the ‘West’ and ‘modernity’, despite Sayyid being critical of essentialism. If we do not see modernity, specifically arising from the geographical location of West/Europe as Sayyid seems to argue then Islamist discourses can be also regarded as ‘modern’. There are authoritative works on the subject, which argues the case that although Islamism is opposed to ‘Western civilization’ and claims to match the system of capitalism or socialism, it “is in its way a profoundly ‘modern’ movement, concerned to chart an Islamically-based path of progress for Muslim

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., pp. 128-129.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., p. 104.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., p. 107.
societies.”

In fact, Islamism has been seen as much closer to the modern ideology of totalitarianism. Thus, Islamism can make sense in the context of modernity as the emergence of Islamism does not ‘represent the triumph of traditionalism over modernity’ because it is a ‘distinctly modern phenomenon which has historical analogues but no parallels.’ Thus, there are only certain discourses of modernity that constructs its ‘Other’ as the ‘traditional’. In fact, Islam was identified with ‘primitivism’, ‘tradition’ and ‘anti-modernity’ by the Eurocentric Kemalists in Turkey much akin to the stereotyping of Islam by several narratives of orientalism.

Since, I broadly agree with both Amin and Sayyid that Eurocentrism is currently ‘hegemonic’, in this study, by ‘Eurocentrism’, I mean an ultimate acceptance if not always an uncritical acceptance of western forms of ideological and developmental paradigms that had its genealogical roots in Euro-American world. I am emphasising ‘ultimate acceptance’ instead of ‘uncritical acceptance’ because several post-colonial regimes, which are nonetheless Eurocentric by mimicking the politico-ideological and developmental models of Euro-American societies have a history of strong critique against western colonialism and shares the legacy of anti-colonial struggle like Kemalism, Nasserism, Baathism etc. Moreover, there can be two possible Eurocentrism. One, which is located inside the Euro-American world and carries forward the legacy of Orientalism and racist historiography as pointed out by Amin or those discourses interested in recentering the West during the

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50 Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear*, p. 73.
contemporary crisis of western universality as argued by Sayyid. Second, which is located outside the Euro-American zone, particularly in the post-colonial world, which mimics the Euro-American world from a distance and which ultimately accepts Euro-American superiority. Both forms of Eurocentrism eulogize the West/Euro-Americans but the former is a position of assertion, while the latter is a position of mimicry and thus represents the unequal power relationship between the western metropolitan centre and third-world periphery, between the Euro-American cultural colonizer and the Oriental colonized and between the hegemonic position of the former and the hegemonized position of the latter.

By western ideological and developmental paradigms, I mean those ideological traditions and developmental discourses that have incidentally originated in the geographical territory known as Europe and America. Here, by ‘incidental’, I mean an occurrence of an event whose objectivity is unquestionable. In other words, it is an objective fact that certain ideological traditions and development paradigms as distinct and antagonistic to each other like liberal-capitalism, state-socialism and neoliberalism have incidentally originated either in Europe or North America. Whether such ideological and developmental paradigms could have emerged in the non-Western world or why such ideologies and developmental discourses could not emerge in the Oriental/Muslim world is beyond the scope of my research. Also, I am not making a value judgment about whether western or the Islamic/Orient is the best way forward for the destiny of humanity. Rather, as a student of political theory, I am treating the issue with the concept of hegemony.

In a simple Gramscian sense, I mean ‘hegemony’ as a rule with consent where the ‘spontaneous’ consent of the ruled is earned by the ruling power bloc by either superior position and function of the rulers (often prestige and confidence historically enjoyed by the
rulers) on one hand or coercion/direct domination/command by the power bloc in ‘legally’ enforcing discipline on those (ruled) who do not give ‘consent’ either actively or passively. In this respect, the structure of hegemonic power is a complex relationship between ‘dominance’ of the elite and the ‘subordination’ of the subaltern. However, dominance is again a complex of ‘persuasion’ and ‘coercion’, while the complex of subordination includes as its elements ‘collaboration’ and ‘resistance’. Thus, hegemony is maintained through either persuasion or coercion by the ruler over the ruled or collaboration of the ruled with the ruling power bloc. It is only the element of ‘resistance’ within the subaltern that foregrounds the possibility of counter-hegemony. Nonetheless, hegemony of the power bloc is never complete since any dominant discourse is necessarily incomplete, which means that any form of hegemony would be always contingent and momentary and thus hegemony ‘epitomises the elite’s dream.’ It is the inability of the hegemon to fully hegemonize a given political field that gives scope for a counter-hegemonic movement or resistance by the dominated/ruled against the hegemon.

Therefore, I am interested in looking at whether Eurocentrism or Islamism is hegemonic in contemporary India and Bangladesh or whether the hegemony of one is challenged by the other, and if one’s hegemony is challenged by the other then how it is being challenged. In this respect, I argue that Eurocentric approaches range from mimicking the western secularist model of segregation of religion from politics, the recognition of sovereignty of ethno-linguistic nation-states and by that logic—the celebration of

54 Ibid.
55 For an elaborate theoretical analysis of hegemony, its limits and incompleteness see Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*.
nationalism, the infrastructural modernization by either liberal-capitalist or state-socialist models of development, and accepting either dictatorial or democratic forms of government like ‘enlightened despotism’, military dictatorships or representative government. Thus, I argue that the Eurocentric model implemented in several Muslim countries is actually a mimicry of the Western world and an ultimate acceptance of the proposition that the way forward to progress and development is the Western path, while affirming the Eurocentric assertion that ‘there is nothing outside the Western project.’57 Islamism precisely opposes such a logic and argues that ‘progress’ and ‘development’ can be made without borrowing the ideas from outside the Islamic tradition, and without taking refuge in any ‘man-made’ laws, ideologies and systems irrespective of its western or non-western origins.58 In the specific context of the Muslim world, Islamism challenged such a Eurocentric vision, namely Kemalism.

**Kemalism:** The Eurocentric model of secular-nationalism propagated by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in Turkey of 1920s, popularly known as Kemalism was later on introduced by the Westernized and modernizing political leadership (the Kemalist elites) in many parts of the Muslim world in the post-war international scenario, who regarded Islam as peripheral to the concerns of the state.59 In this respect, ‘Kemalism’ can be described as a ‘metaphor’ for various ‘Muslim regimes that emerged following decolonization.’60 Although, variations of Kemalism might exist in different Muslim countries, the term has been used by Sayyid to

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60 Ibid., p. 52.
read a ‘wider Muslim political context.’ In agreement with Sayyid, I would argue that the secular-nationalist model adopted by Sheikh Mujib in Bangladesh had close parallels with Kemalism. Thus, in chapter 4 of this thesis, I would elaborate on the politico-ideological project of Mujibism in Bangladesh as a specific variant of Kemalism. But let me first elaborate the term: Kemalism.

According to Laclau, ‘six key words of the programme of the Turkish Republic which were represented as six arrows on the emblem of the Republican People’s Party at the beginning of the 1930s: republicanism, nationalism, populism, revolutionism, secularism and etatism…supposed to be pillars of Kemalist ideology.’ Similarly, before Laclau’s commentary on the subject, Sayyid had identified four guiding principles of Kemalism: (a) Secularism (b) Nationalism (c) Modernization and (d) Westernization. Çelik, also points out how Kemalism gives priority to ‘secularisation, modernisation and the rationalisation of society.’ For Mustafa Kemal, secularism is a ‘necessary component of modernization and social change.’ The official attitude of the Kemalist government towards Islam was Laicism (Layiklik, meaning secularism in Turkish), a policy of separating religion from the matters of the state and the nation. Thus, the Kemalist discourse was based on the exclusion of Islamic religion from the public domain. However, Turkish secularization under the Kemalist project differed from its European counterpart in two respects. First, it was forced through as a ‘political measure under the control of an autocratic and statist

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61 Ibid., p. 53.
63 Sayyid, A Fundamental Fear, pp. 63-69.
65 Sayyid, A Fundamental Fear, p. 64.
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
68 Ibid., p. 78.
government’ in which secularization did not spring ‘automatically from economic modernization’ and secondly, it was ‘consciously mimetic in that it took Europe as its specific model of adaptation.’  

In this respect, it should be borne in mind that the discourse of secularism is neither a European monopoly nor did it originate during the period of European Renaissance and Enlightenment. There were varied strands of secularism in the oriental world right from the prominent atheistic philosophy of Cārvāka that denied the existence of God and the afterlife to the skeptic-materialist philosophy of Lokāyata and various forms of agnosticism and ideas of Godlessness like Buddhism and Jainism in ancient India. All of them including Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, Sāmkhya and Nyāya Vaisheshika were ‘philosophies of committed atheism’. Then, there were ideas of tolerance for religious diversity like in ancient Indian emperor Ashoka or medieval Indian emperor Akbar. Also, the medieval Muslim thinkers, Abu Bakr al-Rāzī (Rhazes), Ibn al-Rawandī and al-Warraq’s radical doubt and criticism on the legitimacy of prophet-hood, prophetic religions and the Quran and the ‘freethinker’, al-Ma’ari’s thoughts on similar grounds were distinctively secular ideas. Thus, secularism

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need not be learnt and mimicked from the West by the post-colonial societies, unless it is committed or subservient to Eurocentrism.

The Kemalists regarded the Westphalian system of nation-states as the only ‘legitimate and scientific form of a political community.’ In adopting nationalism as a guiding principle of Kemalist project, it systematically constructed a ‘collective memory’ by the means of promoting the ‘Turkish history thesis’, which tried to overcome the multinational character of the Ottoman Empire that Kemalism replaced with the abolition of the caliphate in favour of a ‘homogenous’ nation-state as the only credible form of political community. Similarly, ‘modernization’ and ‘westernization’ was almost similar in Kemalist discourses for they believed that for ‘being modern meant being like the Europeans.’

The Kemalist programme also influenced other Muslim regimes as well like Reza Shah’s modernization project (the ‘Pahlavist strategy’) in Iran, Nasserism in Egypt, some of anti-FIS groups in Algeria, and the Baathist regime of Iraq. For Kemalists, to be ‘truly modernized’ one must ‘reproduce’ European culture, and the process of such reproduction could not simply be an ‘inspiration’ but the ‘European miracle’ could only be ‘imitated, duplicated and doubled.’ This process of ‘imitation’ and ‘duplication’ of the West by the Eurocentric Kemalist regimes is what I have previously called *mimicry*.

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76 Ibid., p. 66, p. 78.
77 Ibid., p. 67.
78 Ibid., pp. 69-71.
79 Ibid.
80 Ibid., p. 72.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid., p. 68.
In this regard, I would argue that mimicking the West by the post-colonial Kemalist discourses actually distorts the Western project. In the process of such mimicking it cannot fully achieve its goal to be like the West. Therefore, Kemalism produces a difference between being Western and being Westernized. The latter is represented by the Kemalists, while the former is synonymous to the West. In mimicking the West, Kemalism cannot retain the originality of the Western project although it inherits certain qualities and elements of the Western project. Thus, Kemalist post-colonial regimes, established after the formal exit of European colonialists from the Muslim world actually carry the imprint of ‘western colonialism’ via its Eurocentric vision, which ultimately accepts the superiority of the West.

Therefore, such post-colonial regimes actually carry the legacy of colonialism but without a colonizer or in other words, (post)colonialism without a colonizer, where the colonizer is hidden behind the veil of postcolonial hegemony.\^84 Thus, I have used Kemalism as a post-colonial variant of Eurocentrism in the Muslim world that mimics the Euro-American world by ultimately accepting the superiority of western ideological and developmental paradigms in resolving the various problems of any given set of population within a particular territory of the nation-state. In the specific context of Bangladesh as a nation-state, Mujibism eventually turned out to be mimicry of Kemalism by celebrating (Bengali) nationalism on one hand and secularism on the other apart from forcefully displacing the religious parties from mainstream politics. In this respect, Islamism can be seen as a critique of ideas like nation-state, nationalism and secularism which according to

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Bhabha has also elaborated on Lacan’s concept of mimicry. See Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 86-90. However, the psychoanalytical approach is beyond the scope of my research.

the Islamists carry the imprint of western politico-ideological epistemology. In this respect, one needs to theoretically understand the problematic relationship between Islamism and the nation-state.

**Islamism and Nation-State:** Generally, Islamists believe in the Universalist concept of *Ummah* (Muslim community of believers), which is conceptually a supranational or transnational union. The Islamist call for unity of the *Ummah* is based on the belief that Muslims throughout the world should have a certain sense of solidarity among them cutting across the borders of the nation-state. In this respect, Islamism has justifications to oppose the concept of nation-state. In the specific case of *Jamaati Islamism*, Maududi was himself opposed to the idea of nation-state and nationalism. However, after the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924 by the Kemalist policies, there is hardly any symbolic global theo-political authority among the Muslims. Therefore, in a post-colonial and post-Khilafat world, the Universalist idea of the Muslim *Ummah* encounters the particularist entity of new and emerging nation-states. Now, what should an Islamist party do when it has to operate within the geographical confines of the nation-state? Should it altogether discard the Universalist concept of *Ummah* from its ideological vocabulary or should it just rhetorically appeal to the *Ummah* to stand up against what they call the ‘evil’ politico-ideological influences of the ‘West’ despite the fact that it has to operate within the particular territory of a given nation-state. In this thesis, we would notice how *Jamaati Islamism* has to take into account of the specific political context of the nation-state in India and Bangladesh.

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In this thesis, we would also notice that in contemporary India and Bangladesh, where neoliberal globalization has facilitated the increasing role of multi-national actors in the realm of both political economy and culture, the Jamaat has almost given a nationalist response to such globalization of economy and culture in opposing the ventures of multi-national corporations and what they call ‘western cultural globalization’. Moreover, as we would later notice in this thesis that since the Jamaat operates within the distinct political contexts of the nation-states in India and Bangladesh, it makes tactical adjustments with the nation-state. For example, it includes the distinct Indian and Bangladeshi identity in its name (Jamaat-e-Islami Hind in India and Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami). Secondly, it accepts the idea of Indian secularism on one hand and of late, accepts the glory of Bangladesh Liberation Movement despite its initial opposition to the idea of a separate independent Bangladesh from Pakistan right from 1950s onwards. Recently, Arshin Adib-Moghaddam has argued that by and large, myriad Islamist movements have accepted the nation-state ‘as an organisational principle of the international system which re-inscribes the authority of national governments into the global order.’

However, Talal Asad offers a caveat that although Islamism has always ‘addressed itself directly to the nation-state, it should not be regarded as a form of nationalism.’ This is precisely because ‘Islamic umma’ is not ‘an imagined community’ equivalent of any nation-state and it “is ideologically not ‘a society’ onto which state, economy, religion can be mapped’ as it is ‘neither limited nor sovereign’, and ‘can eventually should embrace all

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of humanity." However, as Adib-Moghaddam suggests that in the presence of the nation-states, Islamism can certainly be ‘not an emblem of the political uniformity of the umma.’ In this respect, in Chapters 3, 4, 6 and Conclusion, I would discuss how the Jamaat faces an ideological contradiction while choosing the Universalist concept of *Ummah* as a collective political actor within the specific political context of the nation-state that in effect, *limits* the idea of the *Ummah*. But before doing such an exercise it is important to define Neoliberalism, which according to the Islamists is one of their adversaries as we would notice later in this thesis.

**Islamism and Neoliberalism:** The specific focus of my enquiry into Islamist political ideology is the complex relationship between neoliberalism and Islamism by unraveling the distinct nature of politico-ideological articulations of Islamism in a neoliberal policy regime. Hence, it will analyze the nature of Islamist response to neoliberalism by discussing the contrasting conditions of India and Bangladesh. In particular, I would show under what conditions, Islamism opposes or critique neoliberalism and under what situations, it remains mute in critiquing neoliberalism. But let me first discuss the concept of neoliberalism in order to clarify how I have used it in this study.

Harveys’s definition of neoliberalism as a theory of political economic practices in promoting individual entrepreneurial freedoms within an institutional set up characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade is an evocative one. Harvey further adds that neoliberalism adheres to ‘free market principles of neo-classical economics that had emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century’ and ‘deeply opposed to state

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88 Ibid., pp. 197-198.
interventionist theories’ of Keynes, which were responding to the Great Depression of 1930s.

Experts argue that neoliberal ideology believes that ‘open, competitive, and unregulated markets, liberated from all forms of state interference, represent the optimal mechanism for economic development.’ Similarly, Moody has concisely described neoliberalism as ‘a mixture of neoclassical economic fundamentalism, market regulation in place of state guidance, economic redistribution in favor of capital (known as supply-side economics), moral authoritarianism with an idealized family at its center, international free trade principles (sometimes inconsistently applied), and a thorough intolerance of trade unionism.’

Neoliberalism generally promotes privatization and liberalization in the public sector and deregulation in the private sector with a ‘juridicopolitical framework’ that passively supports for market solutions apart from supporting free trade and capital mobility.

However, neoliberalism as an ideology took decades ‘to emerge in force…germinated from the 1940s until it flowered in the 1980s.’ As Freeden points out, neoliberalism consolidated under conservative governments and prioritizes libertarianism over any other liberal core concepts. From the early 1970s, the global capitalist system became increasingly neoliberalized due to the crisis of the ‘Fordist-Keynesian accumulation regime’ and the collapse of the Bretton Woods monetary system. However, neoliberalism,
both as theory and practice, have been transformed from the ‘abstract intellectualism of Hayek and Friedman’, a philosophical project of the early 1970s, primarily focused on restoring ‘free-market thinking within economics profession and its subsequent [re]constitution as the theoretical high ground’ to the ‘state-authored restructuring projects of Thatcher and Reagan’, in the 1980s became a form of ‘neoliberal conviction politics’ with state power being mobilized for ‘marketization and deregulation projects, aimed particularly at the central institutions of the Keynesian-welfarist settlement.’

Such a neoliberal project was justified in the context of macroeconomic crisis of the 1970s, which was entirely blamed upon ‘Keynesian financial regulation, unions, corporatist planning, state ownership, and “overregulated” labor markets.’ By mid-1980s, neoliberalism became the ‘dominant political and ideological form of capitalist globalization.’

Harvey argues that neoliberal doctrine emphasized ‘anti-inflationary fiscal responsibility’ and adopted monetarist policies instead of ‘Keynesian orthodoxy’ which led the government to deregulate economy, tax cuts, budget cuts, and ‘an all-out assault on the powers of organized labour.’ From such a policy vantage point, a neoliberal state, according to Harvey, treats ‘labour and the environment as mere commodities’ and in moments of conflict, the neoliberal state tends to side with the logic of ‘good business or investment climate for capitalistic endeavours’ than ‘the collective rights (and quality of life) of labour or the capacity of the environment to regenerate itself.’

In this regard, Bob Jessop classifies three forms of neoliberalism: 1) a project for \textit{radical system transformation} from state socialism to market capitalism 2) a basic \textit{regime shift} within capitalism,

\footnotesize{Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell, ‘Neoliberalizing Space’, \textit{Antipode}, Vol. 34, No. 3 (2002), p. 388.}
\footnotesize{Ibid.}
\footnotesize{Brenner and Nik Theodore, ‘Cities and the Geographies of “Actually Existing Neoliberalism”’, p. 350.}
\footnotesize{Harvey, \textit{A Brief History of Neoliberalism}, pp. 24-25.}
\footnotesize{Ibid., p. 70.}
particularly in relation to paradigm shift in accumulation and regulation by introducing new economic and political principles and 3) *policy adjustments* intended to maintain or improve performance of another type of accumulation regime and its mode of regulation.\(^{103}\)

Neoliberalism imposes ‘unmediated value relations and class discipline, fragmenting labour and capital and fostering depoliticisation.’\(^{104}\) Thus, Neoliberal strategy is concerned with depoliticising economy and society by weakening worker’s collective organizations.\(^{105}\)

Now, the above definitions and features of neoliberalism is an ideal one and there is hardly any sole neoliberal model that follows such prescriptions, which signals that there is a gap between neoliberal theory and practice. In fact, most states, according to Harvey, which took the ‘neoliberal turn’, have done so only partially\(^{106}\) and the effects of neoliberalization in several states have resulted into ‘uneven geographical developments.’\(^{107}\) Although, successive Anglo-American governments have pursued various neoliberal policies right from 1970s and early 1980s, they could not implement neoliberalism in its totality as certain sectors remained ‘immune’ to neoliberalization.\(^{108}\) Besides the Anglo-American model, other models of neoliberalism came to prominence like the Chinese,\(^{109}\) West German and Japanese, which were emulated by several East and South-East Asian states followed by massive financial crises.\(^{110}\) Then there are other examples of neoliberalism in practice that


\(^{105}\) Ibid., p. 410.

\(^{106}\) Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, p. 87.

\(^{107}\) Ibid., pp. 87-119.

\(^{108}\) Ibid., p. 88.

\(^{109}\) Ibid., pp. 120-151.

\(^{110}\) Ibid., pp. 87-98.
got negatively affected by financial crises like Mexico, Argentina, South Korea, Sweden, Brazil, Estonia, Russia, Australia, New Zealand and Turkey.\textsuperscript{111}

However, by mid-1990s, several strands of neoliberalism in practice merged together in the ‘Washington Consensus’, where the US and UK models of neoliberalism were defined ‘as the answer to global problems.’\textsuperscript{112} From late 1990s, the then US President, Bill Clinton and the then British Prime Minister, Tony Blair consolidated neoliberalism both internationally and in the Anglo-American territory.\textsuperscript{113} The formation of World Trade Organization (WTO) was the high point of institutional thrust of the Washington Consensus, which set neoliberal guidelines for global economic interaction with ‘unhindered capital flow’, while safeguarding ‘national interests’ that effectively facilitated the advanced capitalist economies of Euro-American world and Japan to ‘exact tribute from the rest of the world.’\textsuperscript{114} In fact, none of these are consistent with neoliberal theory except for the ‘emphasis on budgetary restraints’ and the fight against ‘inflation’.\textsuperscript{115}

However, by 1990s the neoliberal project gradually metamorphosed into more ‘socially interventionist and ameliorative forms, epitomized by the Third-Way contortions of the Clinton and Blair administrations.’\textsuperscript{116} This recent phase of neoliberalism justified ‘new forms of institution-building and governmental intervention’ without having only a narrow concern with the ‘mobilization and extension of markets (and market logics).’\textsuperscript{117} Rather, neoliberalism is increasingly associated with the ‘political foregrounding of new modes of “social” and penal policymaking, concerned specifically with the aggressive reregulation,
disciplining, and containment of those marginalized or dispossessed by the neoliberalization of the 1980s.\footnote{Ibid.} Thus, the same political formations favouring neoliberalization, which were arguing for ‘less government’ in late 1970s and throughout 1980s were arguing about ‘more government’ by 1990s ‘to mask and contain the deleterious social consequences, in the lower regions of social space, of the deregulation of wage labor and the deterioration of social protection.’\footnote{Loïc Wacquant, ‘How Penal Common Sense Comes to Europeans: Notes on the Transatlantic Diffusion of the Neoliberal Doxa’, \textit{European Societies}, Vol. 1, No. 3 (1999), p. 323.} Thus, neoliberalism today is not exclusively marked by the retreat of the state as was originally thought in the philosophical treatise of Hayek\footnote{Friedrich August von Hayek, \textit{The Constitution of Liberty} [1960] with a new introduction by Irwin M. Stelzer (London: Routledge Classics, 2006).} and Friedman\footnote{Milton Friedman, \textit{Capitalism and Freedom}, [1962 with the assistance of Rose D. Friedman] 40th Anniversary ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002).} or practiced as an ‘orthodox, radically antistatist neoliberalisms of Reagan and Thatcher in the 1980s’\footnote{Brenner and Theodore, ‘Cities and the Geographies of “Actually Existing Neoliberalism”’, p. 362.} but it is being currently pursued under the lines of ‘socially moderate neoliberalisms’\footnote{Ibid.} of UK, US and Germany during the 1990s with different mechanisms of state/governmental regulations and a deeply ‘interventionist agenda’ with new discourses of ‘reform’ or ‘welfare dependency’.\footnote{Ibid.} However, while neoliberalism was a deregulatory project in 1970s as a response to the crisis conditions ‘external’ to the project itself, its recent shifts towards a ‘regulatory project’ from 1990s onwards “were substantially triggered by ‘internal’ contradictions and tensions in the project.”\footnote{Peck and Tickell, ‘Neoliberalizing Space’, p. 389.} Now, while the centralized planning of erstwhile communist regimes and the bureaucratic forms accompanied with the capitalist societies in the West were both discredited, the conservative and free market-ideological proposal for deregulated market is also problematic. As Laclau
argues that ‘the automatism of market mechanisms is largely a myth—indeed, state intervention in the regulation of the economy has been greater under neo-conservative regimes than during the period of the welfare state.’\textsuperscript{126} In fact, in recent times, market economy under a neoliberal policy regime has witnessed global financial crisis\textsuperscript{127} responded with active state support for corporate bailouts\textsuperscript{128} corresponded by high degree of unemployment\textsuperscript{129} and state budget cuts or austerity drive affecting the people, leading to massive protests in the West.\textsuperscript{130}

A critical and genealogical analysis of neoliberalism by engaging with the academic discourses of 18\textsuperscript{th} century classical liberalism, classical political economy, German ordoliberalism (Freiburg School), Chicago school neoliberals in America, and other forms of neoliberalism in Britain and France is offered by Foucault from his analyses of the interrelationships between power, governmentality and political economy that reconstituted together to form, what he calls ‘biopolitics’.\textsuperscript{131} By following Foucault’s concept of neoliberal governmentality as a new art of government, Aihwa Ong does not look at neoliberalism, merely as an economic doctrine that seeks to limit the scope of government and expands the scope of market with the policy recommendations by various western governments and international agencies to follow a path of predatory capitalism having adverse effects on the Global South. Rather she tries to offer an alternative view of

\textsuperscript{129} Julia Kollewe and Ashley Seager, ‘Sharp rise in unemployment as financial crisis hits jobs market’, \textit{The Guardian}, 16\textsuperscript{th} October, 2008.
\textsuperscript{130} ‘Europe strikes out in austerity drive’, \textit{The Economic Times}, 27\textsuperscript{th} September, 2010.
neoliberalism as a novel and malleable technology of governing that has been adopted by different regimes as distinct as authoritarian, democratic, or communist in East and Southeast Asian states. By adopting neoliberalism in varied ways these regimes make exceptions to their usual practices of governing in order to compete in the global economy.132

If we combine the political economy, historical and geographical approaches on the Left by Harvey, Moody, Brenner and Theodore, Peck and Tickell, Jessop and Gough, the conceptual framework of Freeden and the genealogical perspective of Foucault, then we can sum up the following: 1) Neoliberalism, as a contemporary politico-ideological cum continuous politico-economic process known as neoliberalization prefers expansion of global capitalism as a new mode of capitalist accumulation regime often facilitated by state intervention/registration of markets, consumer choice and laws. 2) Neoliberalism, built around the core principles of libertarianism is certainly a break/watershed from the ideological discourses of classical liberalism and conservatism in distinct ways. 3) Neoliberal state generally prioritizes private property rights and tends to favour capital over labour and natural resources. 4) Thus, Neoliberalism is a class biased political economy model in favour of capital that seeks to discipline the working class by thorough intolerance towards trade unionism. 5) Neoliberalism depoliticizes economy and society by primarily weakening worker’s collective rights and organizations along with fragmenting labour and capital. 6) Thus, it is a biopolitical project to control bodies/citizens and a project of producing self-centred entrepreneurial individuals. 7) Neoliberalism prefers commoditization of several welfare sectors like education, health and social security on one

hand and natural resources on the other and thus seeks to reduce most objects in the world as mere calculable commodities. 8) Neoliberalism is an economic growth centric project, primarily concerned with fiscal management without a proper redistribution strategy. 9) Rather than exclusively relying on state planning, Neoliberalism prefers a capitalist market economy where individual firms would compete (like in a game) with each other within a set of rules determined by law/state. 10) Neoliberalism is a project of universalization of capitalism, but when capital is put in difficulty or crisis, it prescribes the strategy of state intervention to bail out capital.

By following the above literature on neoliberalism, I would argue that neoliberalism(s) in India and Bangladesh resembles the Western models although they are not perfect copies of such western neoliberalism(s), extensively based on the experience of neoliberal academic and politico-economic practice in the Euro-American world. I would briefly show such peculiar characteristics of neoliberalism in practice in India and Bangladesh (which also have nuanced differences among them) besides the Islamist responses to such neoliberalization. For now, I would argue that although neoliberalism in India and Bangladesh is elite driven it has become a consensual practice, enjoying hegemony within the governmental policy framework. I would also argue that Neoliberalization in India and Bangladesh is a form of Eurocentrism since it tries to mimic the Euro-American neoliberalism and thus ultimately accept the superiority of a Western model of development. This is not to forget that successive Indo-Bangladeshi governments during the ongoing period of neoliberal reforms actually wanted to be like the Euro-American neoliberalism. The desire to be like the Euro-American neoliberalism is an acknowledgement by successive Indo-Bangladeshi governments that the Euro-American
model is the ‘best’/‘ideal’, otherwise there is no question of mimicry. Thus, Indo-Bangladeshi establishment in the contemporary phase of neoliberal reforms would argue that it would have been better to completely follow the Euro-American neoliberalism to resolve many problems in the society. However, such a desire remains unachievable due to localized post-colonial distortion of the Euro-American model.

Later in this thesis, I would elaborate upon Neoliberalism in India and Bangladesh, which have its own peculiarities and thus not entirely like the Euro-American model of neoliberalism. Thus, while Kemalism was a Eurocentric discourse that mimicked the western socio-economic, political and cultural models, similarly, Neoliberalism in India and Bangladesh is another Eurocentric discourse that only mimics the western model in the sphere of political economy. Besides adopting neoliberalism as a dominant paradigm in economic policy making, cultural westernization at an increasing pace has been witnessed during the phase of neoliberalization from 1990s onwards in India and Bangladesh with Euro-American brands dominating the economy, increasing reliance on English education over vernaculars, popularization of globalized media, and emergence of a consumerist lifestyle. Apart from economic liberalization and cultural westernization, pro-western foreign policies have been also witnessed during the phase of neoliberal reforms in both India and Bangladesh as we would notice later in this thesis. The decade of 1990s saw massive anti-capitalist popular resistance movements in many parts of the globe targeting ‘neoliberalism’ as the major rallying point for oppositional mobilization.

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we would notice in subsequent chapters, how neoliberalism in India and Bangladesh have also negatively affected the people and how an Islamist party like Jamaat has taken refuge to populism as a strategy of political mobilization in rallying varied sections of the people against governments, corporations and institutions who are in favour of such neoliberal policies. This academic exercise cannot be done without clarifying the notion of people and populism.

**People and Populism:** In this study, I am interested to examine and investigate how far Islamism has been able to mobilize people behind its political project. The term ‘people’ is used in this research as a theoretical concept and is different from the usual meaning in the dominant political discourses that equate it with the ‘population’ as a whole. The political discourses in India and Bangladesh generally equate ‘people’ with the notion of ‘population’. That is why, a special category of ‘common people’ (*aam aadmi* or *shadharon manush* or *jonogon*) within the political discourses in India and Bangladesh is designated for deprived and disadvantaged citizens. In this study, I have used ‘people’ in the Laclauian sense of ‘plebs’ or underprivileged.136 Thus ‘populist claims’, ‘populism’ or ‘popular demands’ as modes of political articulations by the *people* is not used pejoratively. It is used here as a strategy of political mobilization in which political alliances are constructed ‘not along class lines but beyond class lines in a constant effort to hegemonize a larger universal task’,137 where the universal task is to challenge the hegemony of the power bloc with a (counter)hegemonic vision of an alternative politico-ideological order. In this study, we would begin with Laclau’s incisive proposal to theoretically deal with the concept of

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‘populism’ more than three decades ago: “[P]opular resistance exerts itself against a power external and opposed to ‘the people’, that is to say, against the very form of the State, the resolution of the ‘the people’/power bloc contradiction can only consist in the suppression of the State as an antagonistic force with respect to the people.” I would further elaborate the concepts of ‘people’ and ‘populism’ developed through Laclau’s recent writings while discussing the case studies of Jamaat in India and Bangladesh in this thesis. For now, I argue that Islamist populism is a strategy of political mobilization with a vision of ‘Islamic Alternative’ against variants of Eurocentrism, namely: post-colonial Eurocentric Kemalism and subsequently, third-world Neoliberalism, which tries to mimic the hegemonic Euro-American model of neoliberalism. But before explicitly doing such an exercise, it is important to first trace the genealogical debate by the pundits on the rise of Islamism as an influential politico-ideological movement in the Muslim world.

**Genealogical Debate on the Rise of Islamism**

In the middle decades of the last century, several strands of secular-nationalist, progressive and even socialist and communist political currents were widely prevalent in significant parts of the Muslim world. These politico-ideological movements as variants of Kemalism came to prominence in an era of third world national liberation movements and decolonization, when the European empires started retreating from various parts of the Muslim world. In fact, Samir Amin argues that barring the Arabian Peninsula and Pakistan, large parts of the Muslim world were strongly marked by political traditions informed by the ‘radical currents of modernity’ such as the ideas of European Enlightenment, the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution, and the communism of the Third International than the

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parliamentarianism of Westminster. These radical political currents influenced the ruling classes of several Muslim countries to introduce secular-nationalism as a guiding principle of governance. Such process of modernization in the Muslim world was first introduced under the rule of Mohammed Ali or Khedive Ismail in Egypt, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in Turkey and the Shah of Iran, whose political regimes can be best described as forms of ‘enlightened despotism’. Thus, ‘national populism’ in the Muslim world in post-war period belongs to the same family of ‘modernist political projects’, whose variants range from the anti-colonialist Algerian National Liberation Front, to Tunisian Bourguibism, Egyptian Nasserism, the Baathism of Syria and Iraq as well as the communist regimes of Afghanistan and South Yemen. This trend of westernized secular-nationalism or Kemalism, whose secular credentials remain unimpeachable to this day was a dominant political discourse in many parts of the Muslim world until it was challenged by the rise of Islamism roughly around 1970s.

The contemporary histories of several Muslim countries show how the erstwhile liberal, anti-imperialist, nationalist-secularist, and in some cases socialist governments and movements were either replaced or strongly challenged by Islamist forces. The central Asian region, previously under the influence of the former Soviet Union, is affected by Islamist extremism. Similarly, Iraq had a strong communist party in 1950s and early 1960s as a prominent opposition force followed by the rule of secular Ba’th party from late 1960s.

140 Ibid.
141 Ibid., p. 7.
142 Ibid.
onwards for the next three and a half decades.\textsuperscript{145} After the American invasion of Iraq, followed by the installation of a puppet government, the only prominent opposition is the Islamist mobilization behind Moqtada Al-Sadr.\textsuperscript{146} In South Asia, Pakistan also had a nationalist-populist and socialist agenda under the leadership of its former executed Prime Minister—Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto’s Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) in the decade of 1970s.\textsuperscript{147} However, under the tutelage of Zia-ul-Haq’s decade long military regime from late 1970s to late 1980s characterized with campaign for Islamisation, several Islamist parties including the Jamaat-e-Islami came to prominence in Pakistani politics.\textsuperscript{148} While some Islamist parties, like Jamaat-e-Islami and Muslim Brotherhood were active during 1940s and 1950s, it was only from late 1970s and 1980s onwards that Islamist organisations like Jamaat in South Asia, Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Islamic Salvation Front of Algeria, Hamas of Palestine, the Refah (Welfare Party) of Turkey, Taliban in Afghanistan and Hezbollah in Lebanon became prominent in the political scene of the Muslim world.\textsuperscript{149}

In this regard, it is important to note that there is a shared history in the Muslim world of secular-nationalism in the middle decades of twentieth century, followed by the rise of Islamism from late 1970s. Then the question arises that how can we explain the transformation of a secular-nationalist or Kemalist political discourse to the rise of Islamism in significant parts of the Muslim world. However, before directly addressing such a fundamental question, let us first look at how the existing literature has tried to account for the emergence of Islamism in this respect.

\textsuperscript{146} Patrick Cockburn, \textit{Muqtada al-Sadr and the Fall of Iraq} (London: Faber, 2008).
\textsuperscript{149} Robinson, \textit{Islam, South Asia, and the West}, p. 200.
Marxist Accounts of Entente between Imperialism and Islamism: Marxists and other scholars on the Left generally argue that the ascendancy of Islamism is either directly or indirectly linked to imperialism. The Islamists were, in some cases, directly used by American imperialism to crush the progressive regimes in the Muslim world, such as the support given to the Taliban and other Islamist forces by the CIA in Afghanistan. Similarly, the Muslim Brotherhood was literally created in the 1920s by the British colonialist and the Egyptian monarchy to block the secular and moderately anti-imperialist Wafd Party, who were in favour of introducing electoral democracy in Egypt in the first half of the 20th century. The mass return of the Muslim Brotherhood from their refuge in Saudi Arabia after Nasser’s death was organized by the CIA and the then pro-American Egyptian President, Anwar Sadat. Then, the Israelis support to Hamas at the beginning to weaken the secular-democratic nature of Palestinian resistance by the PLO is well known. In Iran, progressive forces like Mossadegh’s National alliance with the Communists (Tudeh Party) that nationalized Iran’s oil resources were replaced by the installation of Shah of Iran with a CIA sponsored coup. Subsequent decimation of Iranian communists and other progressives by Shah’s secret police actually created a political void, which was captured by the Islamists in the popular anti-Shah movement, resulting in the overthrow of the American

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153 Ibid., pp. 7-8.
154 Ibid., p. 8.
sponsored monarchy in Iran.\textsuperscript{156} In other cases, the US directly imposed CIA sponsored military coups to eliminate the communists, as in Indonesia and Sudan.\textsuperscript{157} In fact, US initiative to break the ‘united front of Asian and African states’ set up at the Bandung Conference (1955) to create an ‘Islamic Conference’, immediately promoted by its allies: Saudi Arabia and Pakistan from 1957 also helped the Islamists to penetrate the political scene of the Muslim world.\textsuperscript{158} Similarly, Mahmood Mamdani demonstrates how Islamism emerged from a modern encounter with western power, and how the terrorist movement within it arose out of the USA’s post-Vietnam proxy wars. His analysis ranges from the 1960s to the Reaganite-Thatcherite regimes of 1970s, when a simplistic ideological positioning of the politics of ‘good versus evil’ began to be espoused.\textsuperscript{159}

**Failure of the Secular-Nationalist Project in the Muslim World:** Another set of arguments compliment the abovementioned Marxist analysis on the rise of Islamism by replacing the causality of imperialism with the causality of the failure of secular-nationalism in the Muslim world. Thus, it argues that Anglo-American imperialism alone was not responsible for the rise of Islamism and therefore, one cannot locate the emergence of Islamism merely as fallout of the Cold war strategy of the United States.\textsuperscript{160} Rather, the limits of westernized secular-nationalist political projects in addressing the developmental issues of poverty, inequality and unemployment have created the possible conditions in which Islamism grew as a significant politico-ideological movement. Thus, the frustration of hopes

\textsuperscript{156} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{157} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{158} Amin, ‘Political Islam in the Service of Imperialism’, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{159} Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: Islam, the USA, and the Global War Against Terror* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2005).
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid., p. 14.
and aspirations of the people in the Muslim world by the secular elites along with the failure of both liberal and socialist paths to development strengthened the appeal of Islamists. As Mumtaz Ahmad observes, ‘by the middle of the twentieth century, secular and modernist thinkers found themselves surpassed by Islamists, at least in terms of the ability to articulate and respond intellectually to popular concerns.’

Islamist Response to Authoritarianism in the Muslim World: The secular-nationalist projects promoted by several post-colonial regimes in the Muslim world also took recourse to authoritarianism, despotism and repression with a strong state. As a result, there was lack of democratic political participation in the Muslim world with a corresponding absence of civil society, where the state has intruded into people’s lives in systematic and unpredictable ways. The personality cult of several secular-nationalist regimes, the expansion of disciplinary techniques by both civilian and military means by those regimes, the question of legitimacy of those regimes, the socio-economic inequalities under those regimes and foreign dependence of those regimes have created conditions in which the mosque emerged as the sole arena of civil society, which the state could not fully control. The Islamic

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162 Ibid., p. 461.

163 Although such intrusions of the state in people’s lives were common in the Muslim world, the most notable case was perhaps Baathist Iraq. See Samir al-Khalil, Republic of Fear: Saddam's Iraq (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1989), pp. 46-72.

gatherings in the mosques and in several such Islamic institutions became increasingly organized to respond the authoritarian state.165

**Result of Class Contradictions:** There are studies, which favour a class analysis of Islamism by demonstrating how Islamism is espoused by only particular classes.166 Such analyses range from noting the actual class backgrounds of the Islamists to the peculiar support base of Islamist parties to how Islamist movements have used the contradictory class interests in the society. Although varied studies have concluded different class base of Islamism, one notable tendency among such a class analysis is to link Islamism either with the ‘crisis of petty bourgeoisie’ or an ideology of urban lower middle classes167 who have not been benefited by the domination of ruling elites in successive post-colonial regimes in the Muslim world.

Migration and Petro-Dollar Financing: Islamism also is seen as a legitimate response to the economic crises of modern times.\textsuperscript{168} Thus, a common set of arguments put forward the logic of uneven economic development due to integration of the Muslim world with world capitalist economy, which led to the migration of poor social groups from rural sites to urban localities facing unemployment, underemployment and exploitation.\textsuperscript{169} Islamism could capture the imagination of these displaced groups because the internal migrants were already familiar with the values and vocabularies of ‘folk Islam’. Thus, while encountering ‘corruption’ or ‘evil’ in a new urban setting, they could politicize the Islamic metaphors in ‘folk Islam’ through their lived experiences and consequently helped to strengthen the politico-ideological formation of Islamism.\textsuperscript{170} Secondly, due to integration of the Muslim world with world capitalist economy, another set of labour migration took place from poor and populous labour exporting countries in South Asia and North Africa to oil rich Muslim states. The spiraling oil prices by OPEC increased the influence of several Muslim oil exporting countries to finance Muslim institutions in order to revive the confidence and pride of the ummah that ultimately began to promote Islamist projects.\textsuperscript{171} Another source of income for the Muslim institutions in the poor labour exporting countries came from the foreign remittances of the migrant labour, based in oil exporting Muslim countries. Moreover, fluctuations in the world economy expose the vulnerability of traditional economic enterprises in the Muslim world, who have been supporters of traditional religious


networks and it is their opposition to such developments of the global economy and their opposition to integrate with the world economy that takes the shape of Islamism.

**Islamist Response to Cultural Erosion:** A number of academic and journalistic accounts have put forward the argument that how Islamism is an assertive nativist response to the Islamic cultural erosion as a result of integration of the Muslim world in a West-led global capitalist system.\(^{172}\) By following Marx’s phrase ‘time-worn disguises’, Fischer argues that Islamism is a reaction against cultural erosion.\(^{173}\) Some authors make repeated references to argue how the erosion of Islamic cultural identities creates the possible conditions for the rise of Islamism.\(^{174}\) In fact, the Islamists themselves have assertively responded to the incursions of western cultural and ideological influences on Muslim societies\(^{175}\) as we would later see in this thesis.

**Islamist Response to Colonial and Post-Colonial Modernity:** Another set of arguments locate Islamism as a response/reaction to western modernity imposed under colonial and post-colonial regimes. As Mumtaz Ahmad argues that the rise of Islamism is often described ‘as a reaction against the kind of modernizing policies pursued by the secular-minded political elite of Muslim societies in the recent past.’\(^{176}\) This anti-modernism of Islamism is often overlapped with anti-Westernism. Thus, Islamist organisations ‘became popular because they offered an authentic Islamic cultural identity during a period of Muslim

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176 Ahmad, ‘Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia’, p. 509.
identity crisis and they effectively articulated in Islamic idioms the socioeconomic and political concerns of social strata that fared poorly in the newly emerging world of modernity.\textsuperscript{177} Therefore, Mamdani points out that Islamism ‘is more a domestic product than a foreign import. But neither was bred in isolation; both were produced in the encounter with Western power. Political Islam was born in the colonial period. But it did not give rise to a terrorist movement until the Cold War.’\textsuperscript{178} A similar trajectory of Islamism with its genealogy rooted in the colonial period can be traced throughout Youssef M. Choueiri’s work that portrays a historical and analytical survey of 18\textsuperscript{th}, 19\textsuperscript{th} and 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries within the folds of three distinctive movements namely \textit{Islamic Revivalism, Islamic Reformism} (Islamic modernism) and \textit{Islamic Radicalism}.\textsuperscript{179}

Choueiri’s study treated each movement ‘as a distinct entity with its own historical genesis, socio-economic environment and conceptual frame of reference.’\textsuperscript{180} According to Choueiri, Islamic revivalism was confined to peripheral areas lying beyond the reach of central authorities, while its social basis had a predominant tribal formation. The movement’s first and perhaps most celebrated manifestation occurred under the guidance of religious leaders and local chiefs like it did in the case of Wahabi movement. Farazi movement in Bengal and Barelvi movement in North-West India are in the same league of revivalist Islam. These movements coincided with colonial struggle against the \textit{foreign infidels} while the mass mobilization against colonial exploitation and domination was made in the name of Islam. The eighteenth century witnessed a proliferation of Muslim revivalist movements responding quiet distinctively to various financial, demographic and agricultural

\textsuperscript{177} Ibid., p. 462.
\textsuperscript{178} Mamdani, \textit{Good Muslim, Bad Muslim}, p. 14.
\textsuperscript{180} Ibid., p. 9.
crises. Some of these movements were internal, but they were complicated by European intrusions/colonization/control of most of the Muslim world. Thus, Islamic revivalist movements were very much a reaction/response/protest against European colonialism. According to Choueiri, Mahdist uprising in Sudan, Umar Tal’s movement in Nigeria that later on spread to Guinea, Senegal, Mali, Chad etc. and Padri puritanical movement in Sumatra are also examples of Islamic revitalism.\textsuperscript{181}

Islamic reformism was by contrast, argues Choueiri, an urbane movement that came into being in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century and lasted well into the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. Its leaders were state officials, intellectuals or those ulama that were fiercely opposed to traditional interpretations of Islam. It conducted an open dialogue with the European cultures and philosophies in an attempt to grapple with what it perceived to be an intolerable state of Islamic decline.\textsuperscript{182} The period of external challenges of European colonialism and imperialism and a reaction to colonialism and internal disintegration were followed by a peculiar form of secular nationalism in the Muslim societies particularly in the first half of the twentieth century up till the middle decades of the last century in the form of Islamic reformism. This was a period of western adaptation where Muslim societies sought a place in the emerging modern world by adapting to western concepts and institutions often imposed by the westernized Muslim political elites such as independent nation state, western education and modern political structures. Therefore, the Muslim world during this phase not only endorsed the processes of modernity but also became the subject to the ideology of modernism.\textsuperscript{183}

Choueiri further argues that by the middle of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, both revivalism and reformism were superseded by the emergence of sovereign nation-states throughout the

\textsuperscript{181} Ibid., Chapter 1.
\textsuperscript{182} Ibid., p. 9.
\textsuperscript{183} Ibid., Chapters 2, 3 & 4.
Islamic world. These states carried out varied programmes of development and relegated Islam to a personal sphere or subordinated its fundamental tenets to the requirements of politico-economic interests. The course of this new phenomena covers the phase of Islamic radicalism to a post-Islamic and post-Khilafat history. Therefore, Islamic radicalism is primarily seen by Choueiri as a direct reaction to the growth of the nation-state and its peculiar problems and closely related to the anxieties and ambitions of particular constituencies like recent rural migrants to urban centres and the social strata of small merchants, small shopkeepers, middle traders, artisans, students, teachers and state employees.¹⁸⁴

However, 19th and 20th century Islamic modernism/reformism that tried to catch up with the west through a synthesis of Islamic symbolism and borrowed western ideas of Enlightenment and European rationality, later on converged with the elitist project of western modernity in the shape of Kemalism in the post-colonial period. Such a Kemalist project eventually failed to address certain fundamental issues of the Muslim societies. As a result, a sense of alienation towards Kemalist experiments among the Muslim masses was noticed. The disillusionment of the Muslim societies with secular-nationalist-socialist regimes was followed by an Islamist reaction producing hatred towards western modernity that was being mimicked by the erstwhile Kemalist elites. Thus, Sayyid argues that Kemalism as a metaphor of Eurocentrism encountered a political crisis of western modernity in the Muslim world, while Islamism emerged in this particular context of such a crisis of Eurocentrism.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., pp. 10, 12 and Chapters 5 & 6.
¹⁸⁵ Sayyid, A Fundamental Fear.
Rise of Islamism in the Muslim World: A Critical Evaluation

If we critically examine the existing literature that has been so far narrated then it specifically argues the following points. First, the rise of Islamism in the Muslim world is due to U.S. funded counter-revolutions, orchestrated by military coups in some countries and Islamists in other cases. Secondly, the limits of secular-nationalist political projects under the auspices of Kemalism in resolving the socio-economic and political crises of the Muslim world led to Islamism. Thirdly, Islamism arose as a reaction to the authoritative structures in the Muslim world due to lack of democratic political participation of the people in the political process. Fourthly, Islamism emerged as a political discourse by specifically appealing to certain segments of the population, particularly the petty-bourgeoisie. Fifthly, Islamism is a discontented response to the uneven economic development in an increasingly integrating world economy, in which the funding of Islamist movements came via petrodollar regimes. Sixthly, Islamism is a nativist cultural response to the ‘cultural erosion’ identified by the Islamists as a result of western led global capitalist system. Finally, Islamism first rose as a reaction to colonial modernity and later as a response to post-colonial modernity. However, all these happened when the credibility and legitimacy of several Kemalist regimes were questioned.

Thus, the summing up of the abovementioned narratives accounting for the rise of Islamism within the logic of the failure of Kemalism can be the following. The Kemalist experiment in the Muslim world with westernized models of development like market-capitalism or socialism failed to adequately address the democratic demands of the people, which were of socio-economic and political nature. The Kemalist project was more a fantasy of the ruling elites that was imposed from above than a hegemonic formation with popular
support from below. Thus, the *people* in the Muslim world eventually became disillusioned with Kemalism and by 1970s the attraction towards Islamism as an ideology of political protest against westernized elites in Muslim societies became evident. Apart from such narratives, one can also add that the emergence of Islamism in the contemporary world also converged with the emergence of identity based movements, the rise of neoliberalism and the retreat of the welfare state, the starting point of crisis for socialism and secularism in the Muslim world, and a decline of organized working class politics in most parts of the world.

But can all these sufficiently explain the rise of Islamism? I would argue that the abovementioned narratives certainly can explain the crisis of Kemalism in the Muslim world. The various events that marked such a crisis of Kemalism also created the condition of possibilities for alternative political articulation as a protest discourse against the ruling power bloc. But why such a protest discourse as a counter-hegemonic political discourse turned out to be Islamist and not any other political discourses like liberalism or Marxism or social-democracy in the Muslim world? The abovementioned narratives on the genealogical debate about the rise of Islamism in the Muslim world thus offer us only a negative logic for accounting Islamism. However, I would argue that for a winning political discourse, it has to be also positive, offering/promising something *better* than the existing political discourses. Kemalism as a hybrid of Eurocentrism and localized distortions in mimicking the Euro-American world, besides being discredited, has already articulated varied strands of liberalism, Marxism and social-democracy. Thus, any exclusive liberal, Marxist and social-democratic project would have faced difficulty in articulating the discontents emerging out of such a discredited Kemalist project although such exclusive experiments were not impossible in a post-Kemalist Muslim world. Thus, how can one explain the emergence of
Islamism as a result of crisis of Eurocentrism/Kemalism? To this question, one argues that Islamism could emerge only at the expense of the erosion of Eurocentrism/Kemalism but to be successful as a counter-hegemonic discourse against repetitions of Kemalist projects, it has to construct Islam as a ‘master signifier’ of a new political order. Secondly, it had to adopt a Khomeinian strategy of complete disengagement with the western projects by ignoring the West while providing a non-western political project along with rejecting the Muslim apologist discourses, which were defensive in their attitudes by trying to reinscribe the achievements of western modernity as being originally found in Islam. By contrast to the emergence of Islamism as a counter-hegemonic force against Kemalism, in this thesis, I am going to tell the story about why and how Islamism could not benefit from the problems of Euro-American model of neoliberalism that is being mimicked in both India and Bangladesh and the Mujibist mimicry of Kemalism in Bangladesh. This inability of the Islamist project to become a counter-hegemonic force in India and Bangladesh precisely exposes its limits in offering an ‘alternative’ politico-ideological order.

Therefore, in this thesis, I would try to explain why and how Islamism responds in a peculiar fashion to the hybrid model of neoliberalism in both India and Bangladesh. Secondly, I would demonstrate why and how Islamism is unable to become a counter-hegemonic force in resisting such projects in India and Bangladesh. Thirdly, I would show why and how Islamism reacts in a particular way to Mujibism in Bangladesh. Fourthly, I am also interested to see the nature of difficulties that Islamism faces in responding to neoliberalism and Mujibism and how it remains just another critical discourse among many against such projects. Finally, by specifically studying the ideological articulations of

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186 Sayyid, A Fundamental Fear, pp. 45-49.
Jamaat-e-Islami in India and Bangladesh, I would look at the nature of decontestation and what I call recontestation in the ongoing process of fixing and changing the meanings of certain important political concepts within the ideological vocabulary of Jamaati Islamism.

Existing Categories of Analysis

Orientalism, Anti-Orientalism and Western (post)modernity: Apart from the abovementioned themes that have studied Islamism in quite different ways, an important conflict is between two major camps of Orientalists and anti-Orientalists to study Islamism in relation to ‘western’ modernity and postmodernity. The Orientalist view regards Islam(ism) as fundamentally opposed to the West and treats it as a demon or a ‘threat’ to the West. In this respect, Esposito demonstrates that the mythical notion of an ‘Islamic threat’ in the West is a continuation of an old form of Orientalism that was prevalent in the West. He argues that Islamism as a new threat to the West in 1990s replaced communism as an enemy of the West during Cold War within the discourses of mainstream western academia and policymakers that constructs a new myth of an impending confrontation between Islam and the West by presenting a historical pattern of Muslim belligerency and aggression while referring to crusades and fourteen centuries of warfare between Islam and West. Both the Orientalist and neo-Orientalist construction of Islamism as incompatible with ‘modernity’, package and label Islamism into a single, homogenous, essentialist and unitary category of a


‘fundamentalist’ phenomenon without acknowledging the multiplicity of Islamist groups in their varied contexts, diverse ideological articulations and political actions. Now, the Orientalist discourses, which were describing the medieval dominance of Islamic world as ‘dark ages’ also produced a visible phenomena of ‘Islamophobia’ right from the 19th century and continuously reproduced in the 20th and 21st century articulations in media caricatures and stereotyped political cartoons.190

In response to the Orientalist discourses on Islam, scholars who are opposed to the very Orientalist formulations of ‘Islamic threat’, describe the dominant western characterizations of Islam itself, as a form of threat, particularly, how mainstream western strategic and political commentators perceive modern-day Islam or, at least, how they present it and how the popular western perception about Islam is misleading.191 In this regard, the notion of Islamism in the postcolonial era ‘is continuous with previous colonial constructions of a Muslim Other, which works to legitimize unequal relations between different geopolitical locations. The prejudicial view of Muslims as backward and fanatical is complicit with the old colonial discourses and the new global regimes of power and knowledge.’192 As a result, for both Orientalist and neo-Orientalist discourses, the singular, essentialist and unchanging Islamism ‘appear as a natural threat to the so-called modern West.’193 Said has argued how the Orientalist characterization of Islamism as a threat to the West is largely a product of a discourse that was produced by the mainstream American academia and journalism in search of a new ‘manufactured enemy’ in the post-Soviet new

193 Ibid., p. 197.
world order to suit the imperial interests of American establishment in the post-Cold War period.\textsuperscript{194}

The anti-Orientalist view regards Islamism as a ‘protest ideology’ that articulates political resistance to the postcolonial order.\textsuperscript{195} In formulating Islamism as a protest ideology we find a group of scholars within the theoretical framework of postmodernism/poststructuralism, who highlight the Islamist challenge to the ‘West’, as an ethico-political critique of post-Enlightenment political projects of liberalism, nationalism, socialism and Marxism that were founded on the principles of Western rationalism and segregation of religious authority from the realm of politics.\textsuperscript{196} Here, I am not generalizing that all postmoderns/poststructuralists hail Islamism as a protest ideology, but it is fair to say that much of this literature treats Islamism as a protest ideology.

There are however, some scholars who posit a much nuanced and complex relationship between Islamism, modernity and postmodernity. Some regard Islamism ‘as a reaction against modernity, but more profoundly an expression of modernity’\textsuperscript{197} while others argue that it is a product of modernization than a reaction against it.\textsuperscript{198} In this regard, Bruce Lawrence argues that ‘antimodernism’ is not the sole motive of ‘fundamentalist groups’ rather ‘the core contest is between two incommensurate ways of viewing the world, one which locates values in timeless scriptures, inviolate laws, and unchanging mores, the other

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\textsuperscript{196} For example: Sayyid, A Fundamental Fear; Euben, Enemy in the Mirror; Buck-Morss, Thinking Past Terror.  
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which sees in the expansion of scientific knowledge a technological transformation of society that pluralizes options both for learning and for living.\textsuper199

Like Islamism, since postmodernism is also opposed to the instrumental rationalism of both capitalism and communism, there could be an alliance between Islam and postmodernism according to Akbar Ahmed. But at the same time, Ahmed proposes that Islamism is also a reaction against post-modernity due to the cultural threats of the postmodern icons of Madonna, Tina Turner, Coca-Cola and McDonald’s, a thesis which is also shared by a host of other scholars.\textsuper200 In this regard, Islamism is viewed as attempts to carve out a strategy of living in a postmodern world of radical doubt that questions the very basis of belief systems.\textsuper201 In putting forward the arguments of Muslim responses to the age of postmodernity across the Islamic world, scholars have particularly given more importance to the global media, new technologies like Television and VCR that influenced the traditional Muslim beliefs and culture and subsequently with the rise of ‘Muslim issues’ that led to a polarization between radical Islam and the West, both in Islamic and western societies.\textsuper202 From an anti-orientalist viewpoint, scholars are also interested in the biased western discursive formulations effectively expressed in the mythical and stereotypical representations of Islam in the western media.\textsuper203

\textsuperscript{199} Lawrence, \textit{Defenders of God}, p. 232.
\textsuperscript{201} Ahmed, \textit{Postmodernism and Islam}, p. 13.
The success of many Islamist movements in opposing the West has in fact, been quiet encouraging for the postmoderns themselves. Michel Foucault’s defence of Iran’s Islamic revolt can be seen as one of the most prominent postmodern enthusiasms for Shiite variety of Islamism. From the reference point of western modernity, a poststructuralist reading of Islamism is seen not as an anti-modern movement; rather it is an effort to displace the West from the position of centrality that it claims while being able to articulate the ‘deconstructionist logic’ of the ‘postmodern critique of modernity.’ Thus, some postmoderns/poststructuralists hail Islamism as a culturally authentic critique of the ‘west’ from a non-western location. Much of the critical readings within western academia in line with postmodernism, labels the modernist discourse of the West as a meta-narrative asserting western hegemony and the anti-western position of Islamism is regarded as a negation of western hegemony and the meta-narrative that sustains such hegemony.

A poststructuralist/postmodern reading of Islamism argue that the rise of Islamism is the result of the ‘limits’/‘crisis’ of the Eurocentric/westernized ‘Kemalist’ project/discourses in the post-colonial Muslim world. By relying on Sayyid’s work, Susan Buck-Morss argues that Islamism ‘as a counter-hegemonic discursive field became a vehicle through which secular demands of dissatisfied classes is expressed.’ As Sayyid argues that Islam

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205 Sayyid, A Fundamental Fear, p. 120.
207 Sayyid, A Fundamental Fear, pp. 116-118.
208 Sayyid, A Fundamental Fear.
209 Buck-Morss, Thinking Past Terror, p. 45.
as an ideological vocabulary ‘is also the condition of possibility by which a set of demands can be constructed…Islam is not just the way in which deep structural interests are masked, it is also the means by which interests and identities are formed.’\textsuperscript{210} In this respect, it is interesting to note that in theoretical tone and tenor as well as in rhetoric, how Islamists pose Islam as a challenge to or an alternative to both liberal capitalism and state socialism.\textsuperscript{211}

Although the literature on modernity, Islamism and postmodernity is put into scrutiny for its projection of an essential Islam and essential Islamism,\textsuperscript{212} it shares a common view that Islamism is a critique and challenge to the ‘west’, either in the form of opposition to the western modernist projects of secularism, liberalism, socialism and nationalism or a response to the hyper-consumerism of postmodern societies of the west. Thus, in most discussions, Islamism is seen in relation to ‘west’ either as a negative portrayal of ‘threat’ to western values and civilization in the Orientalist formulations or a positive connotation of resistance, protest, challenge and critique to the hegemony of the west in some anti-Orientalist and postmodern analysis. In fact, the ‘West’ becomes a common reference point for both Orientalist and anti-Orientalist analysis of Islamism.

On commenting upon Islamism, the centrality of the West is however not entirely peculiar to academic and journalistic exercises. The political ideology of contemporary Islamism and its everyday political practices in fact, reassures that Islamism cannot exist without the ‘West’ as an antagonistic frontier. As Amartya Sen suggests that Islamist movements ‘carve out for themselves a particular territory which involves a social vision and a political outlook in which the West has a powerfully negative but central role. If

\textsuperscript{210} Sayyid, A Fundamental Fear, p. 39.
\textsuperscript{211} Maududi, West versus Islam; Maududi, The Economic Problem of Man and its Islamic Solution; Ali Shariati, Marxism and Other Western Fallacies: An Islamic Critique [1980], trans. R. Campbell (New Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami Publishers, 2008).
contemporary Islamic fundamentalism is, in this sense, parasitic on the West, the terrorism aimed at America or Europe that sometimes goes with it is even more so. To dedicate one’s life to undermining the West and to blowing up prominent edifices that have practical or symbolic importance in the West reflects an obsession with the West that overwhelms all other priorities and values. It is one of the preoccupations that can be much encouraged by the dialectics of the colonized mind.

In celebrating Islamism as an effective and viable critique of western modernity, postmodern academics have often given similar arguments like Islamists themselves. As Haideh Moghissi asserts that postmodernism in giving ‘voice to those constructed as Other…have entrapped [itself] in the headlong pursuit of the ‘exotic’ and ‘native’. ...In the end, the postmodern relativists collude with the fundamentalists’ culturalist solutions to crises of modernity and of modernization.” This is because both postmodern relativism and Islamism share a common ground of unremitting hostility to western modernity, rejection of western project for the reforms of gender relations, ‘their enthusiastic appreciation of everything non-Western, and their semi-critique of capitalism—neither rejecting capitalism altogether nor envisioning a socialist society as a viable alternative.’ Other commonalities between postmodernism and Islamism include their emphasis on localism, opposition to secularism and rejection of excessive western consumerism.

Furthermore, Turner observes yet another similarity between the academic discourse of postmodernism and political discourse of Islamism—their preference for ‘the authenticity of

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215 Ibid.
216 Ibid., p. 75.
tradition’ as compared with ‘inherited, imported or alien knowledge.’  

Hardt and Negri argue that ‘[c]onsidered simply in cultural terms, Islamic fundamentalism is a paradoxical kind of postmodernist theory—postmodern only because it chronologically follows and opposes Islamic modernism. It is more properly postmodernist, however, when considered in geopolitical terms’ because “powerful segments of Islam have been in some sense ‘anti-Western’ since the religion’s inception.”  

The novelty of contemporary resurgence of ‘fundamentalism’ however, lies in its refusal of emerging powers in the new imperial order.  

However, Hardt and Negri problematize such similarities between ‘postmodernism’ and ‘fundamentalism’ while arguing that ‘postmodernist and fundamentalist discourses stand in most respects in polar opposition: hybridity versus purity, difference versus identity, mobility versus stasis…postmodernists and the current wave of fundamentalists have arisen not only at the same time but also in response to the same situation, only at opposite poles of the global hierarchy…postmodernist discourses appeal primarily to the winners in the process of globalization and fundamentalist discourses to the losers.’  

In this regard, Patnaik argues that not all forms of religious ‘fundamentalism’ are losers of globalization as Hindutva is certainly a beneficiary of such process of globalization with its capitulation and genuflection before imperialism, while ‘Islamic fundamentalism’ represents a ‘protest’ against imperialism.  

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217 Turner, Orientalism, Postmodernism and Globalism, p. 7.  
219 Ibid.  
220 Ibid., pp., 149-150.  
Complex Relationship between Imperialism and Islamism: It is this logic of seeing Islamism as an ideology of the losers of globalization that a few Marxists like Patnaik find it as a protest movement but not against the ‘West’ as the postmoderns argue. Rather he labels Islamism as ‘anti-imperialist’ and ‘anti-consumerist’ in the contemporary world, although it was originally nurtured by imperialism.\(^\text{222}\) Such anti-imperialism of contemporary Islamism is a function of its peculiar feudal-mercantile class character threatened by the imperialist penetration in the current phase of globalization.\(^\text{223}\) Marxist analysis of the rise of Islamism draw attention to the structures of imperialism itself, with accentuating unemployment and recession out of global economic order and the imperialist policies vis-à-vis Muslim societies, destabilizing the erstwhile nationalist, secular, progressive-democratic and in some cases socialist regimes\(^\text{224}\) in the Muslim world as narrated before. Hence, the present tussle between ‘west’ and ‘Islamism’ as portrayed by substantial academic and journalistic literature in a way, is not a ‘clash of civilizations’, but more a ‘clash’ between two varied forms of ‘fundamentalisms’—one between ‘imperialist fundamentalists’ and ‘Islamic fundamentalists’, where the latter—the erstwhile subjects and collaborators of American empire had struck back on its master.\(^\text{225}\)

Without arguing in terms of such complex relationship between Imperialism and Islamism, Amin argues that even today, Islamism serves the interests of imperialism.\(^\text{226}\) This is because on real social issues, Islamism aligns itself with the camp of ‘dependent capitalism’ and ‘dominant imperialism’ by defending the ‘sacred character of property’,

\(^{\text{222}}\) Ibid.  
\(^{\text{223}}\) Ibid., p. 83.  
legitimizing ‘inequality and all the requirements to capitalist reproduction.’ Moreover, Islamists have hardly opposed any reactionary law promoted in any Muslim country and from the very beginning, it got active support from the ruling classes of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, whose local comprador bourgeoisie, the nouveaux riches and the beneficiaries of current ‘imperialist globalization’ have generously promoted Islamism. Thus, Islamism is basically an ‘anti-Western’ (almost ‘anti-Christian’) than an ‘anti-imperialist’ movement. As Amin argues that except Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Palestine, who are involved in anti-imperialist struggles due to local conjunctures, Islamism in general, is perfectly complementary to global liberal capitalism. This is due to its communitarian project, which replaces social consciousness and struggle with supposed collective identities like American-style communitarianism that are indifferent to such struggles.

However, in the present context of Islamist opposition to globalization, there are intellectual confusions among scholars in either separating or unifying the ideologies of ‘Islamic fundamentalism’ and ‘anti-globalization’. Islamism is currently regarded as an ideology of ‘anti-Americanism’ like many other secular varieties of anti-Americanism, of Marxist, Latin American or Asian origin. The only difference between anti-Americanism of Islamism with its secular counterparts is the Islamist emphasis on religio-cultural flavour of their political language.

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227 Ibid., p. 2.
228 Ibid.
229 Ibid.
230 Amin, Eurocentrism, pp. 82-83.
231 Ibid.
234 Ibid.
Assessing the Academic Debates on Islamism

The problem of academic discourses commenting upon Islamism is its emphasis on binary discursive constructions between Orientalism on one hand and Anti-Orientalism and Islamism on the other. We have seen how the two major camps of Orientalists and anti-Orientalists to study Islamism in relation to ‘western modernity’ take extreme positions. The Orientalist approach end up in almost racist arguments while vilifying the Muslim world as a potential ‘enemy’ or ‘threat’ to the West, while the Anti-Orientalist position almost justify Islamism and its attendant assertions as a ‘protest discourse’ against western modernity celebrating the ‘Islamist authenticity’ and ‘resistance’. However, I would agree with Fred Halliday who argues that in reading the problematic of West versus Islam, we need to be cautious about oversimplified stereotypes of Eurocentric Orientalism, postmodern celebration of Islamism and the self-assertions of Islamism, all of which assume almost a unitary and homogenous identity for the West and for all Muslims/Islam without deeply understanding the diverse and often rival traditions both within the West and Islam.235

The so-called conflict between Islam versus West is premised upon the fundamental Orientalist notion of a tussle between ‘the West and the Rest’.236 The construction of Islamism as an ‘enemy’ of the West eventually fits into the expansionist policies of Euro-American imperialism and thus marked by an ideological justification through the rhetoric of ‘just war’. The ideological manifestation of an Orientalist discourse is thus founded on the basic proposition that Islamic civilization in general is incompatible with ‘democracy’,

‘peace’, ‘freedom’ and ‘justice’ and hence the West effectively represented by Euro-American powers have to export those normative ideals in the Muslim world.

However, Islamism as a political discourse has been seen by experts as a “critique of the way ‘modernity’ has been experienced” in the Muslim world. So, the rise of Islamism can be conceptualized as a product of the discontents of Euro-American modernity in the Muslim societies. This critical stance of Islamism vis-à-vis Euro-American modernity often overlaps with a general critique of the West in Islamist discourses as we would notice in several chapters of this thesis. The Islamist critique of the West is fundamentally based on the premise that the ills of the Muslim world is a result of imitating the ‘evil west’ and it is the failure of western socio-economic and political models to deliver true justice, equality and democracy. Islamism claims to offer an alternative version of justice, equality and democracy that becomes the cornerstone of normative political ideals of Islamism. In this respect, Islamism becomes a source of identity formation and a tool of political action that can rebuild a confident and combatant identity in accordance with the Islamic ideal of egalitarianism and community service, which would also enable Muslims in organizing and controlling their own communities on the one hand while resisting the western policies of cultural assimilation and economic and political domination.

However, the Islamist ideology as expressed by the ideologues of Islamism(s) is a negation of western socio-economic and political models. In this regard, I would argue that Islamism cannot independently exist without constructing an antagonistic frontier, represented by the Occident. It is the construction of the ‘evil’ and ‘ignorant’ Occident in the

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238 Moallem, ‘Cultural Nationalism and Islamic Fundamentalism’, p. 207.
name of ‘Occidentalism’ implying a rejection of everything to do with the West and an implicit rejection of the legacy of European modernity and Enlightenment that becomes one of the important features of Islamism. This ultra-critical discourse by a section of postmodern academics and Islamists while questioning the Orientalist discourse of ‘west is best’, eventually replaces it with ‘Islam is best’. The radical critique of the western modernist project is justified by the construction of an ‘oppressive’, ‘pervert’ and ‘nude’ \textit{west} within the Islamist discourses. The Occidentalist discourse of Islamism is an inversion and mirror image of the Orientalist stereotype and thus constructs a notion of a dehumanized \textit{west}.

It should be remembered that Said was himself not in favour of an Occidentalist response to Orientalism. Experts argue that while the Orientalist discourse produces an ‘Islamophobia’—a symptom of ‘Occidentosis’, the Occidentalist discourse constructs an ‘Islamophilia’—a symptom of ‘Orientitis’, which celebrates the sanctity of popular Islamic beliefs and rejects modernization/westernization and secularization process in the Muslim countries since the Islamist discourses label them as elitist and aggressive cultural imposition of the dominant \textit{west}. Islamism reverses the Orientalist argument to its justification of critiquing the West and in essence produces a similar discourse of Islam versus West as we have seen in Orientalism. As a counterpart of Orientalism, the image of ‘west’ in the Occidentalist nature of Islamist discourses is thus associated with the construction of a ‘western Other’, and in effect promotes an inverted racism, albeit countering the Orientalist racism. I am not interested in trapping myself into such racist

\textsuperscript{240} The term was popularized by Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit, \textit{Occidentalism: A Short History of Anti-Westernism} (London: Atlantic, 2004).
discourses that sustain both Orientalism and Occidentalism. Rather, the motivation behind my research project is to take the challenge of bypassing such racist discourses. Therefore, I would now turn to justify such a project while explaining the specific case studies and my theoretical and methodological framework in the next chapter. But before going straight into the next chapter, let me provide a brief outline of the chapterisation of the thesis.

**Chapter Plan**

My doctoral thesis is divided into six chapters besides ‘Introduction’ and a brief conclusion, which in turn are subdivided into several subsections. In the ‘Introduction’, I have already clarified the terminologies that have been often used in this thesis and have also critically examined the existing literature on Islamism in general. Chapter 1 discusses the research problems and existing categories of analysis in studying Islamism in general. The ‘Introduction’ and Chapter 1 act as joint anchors for the rest of the thesis by describing the analytical, methodological, ontological and ontical issues on the topic of the research project. Chapter 2 outlines the background of contemporary India, where Islamism operates both as a political ideology and as a political movement. It also engages with the specific rhetoric of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH). Chapter 3 discusses the ideological articulations of the Indian Jamaat in the contemporary phase of neoliberalism. Chapter 4 sets out the background of Bangladeshi context, where Islamism articulates its politics and ideology. Chapter 5 discusses the ideological articulations of Jamaat-e-Islami in Bangladesh. After analyzing the specific context and ideological articulations of Jamaat in Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5, Chapter 6 makes a comparative analysis of the ideological articulations of Jamaat in contemporary India and Bangladesh. Finally, the concluding chapter summarizes the major arguments of the thesis.
Chapter 1
Research Problems and Categories of Analysis

Justifying the Research Project

The study of Islamism is important in the context of contemporary globalization precisely because of the prime contradictions that Islamism poses before us. Its critique of the ‘imperialist Western powers’ by challenging the Eurocentric discourses while being historically nurtured by the western power bloc is a classic contradiction in itself. The contradictions of its totalistic ideology are exposed in defying the project of western enlightenment and modernity by describing it as a ‘rule of ignorance’ (Nizam-e-Jahiliya) on one hand, while taking refuge in a particular form of Islamist totalism whose construction would not have been possible without taking recourse to the (re)interpretations of western knowledge systems in an Islamic context, on the other.

This research is important, particularly in the context of current debates on the study of ideologies that question the previous assumption that ideologies by nature are ‘secular’ and thus are ‘disentangled from religious faiths.’ Scholars have pointed out serious limitations of conventional studies on ideology that make ‘sharp demarcations between ideologies (which are defined as political, action-orientated and intimately tied to modernity) and religions (which are dismissed as otherworldly, conservative and anti-

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In this respect, recent literature on ideology suggests that Islamism as a comprehensive worldview can be regarded as a modern political ideology since it meets the accepted definitions of a modern ideology with a universal morphology and a structured pattern of core, adjacent and peripheral concepts.\(^5\)

However, it is not enough merely to acknowledge Islamism as a modern ideology with a morphological character of its own. Rather in considering on Islamism in India and Bangladesh, I tend to reject the general tendency of the literature on Islamism in privileging the ‘Greater Middle-Eastern’\(^7\) specificity that simply cannot represent the globality, heterogeneity and plurality of the Muslim world. Moreover, India and Bangladesh is home of the third and fourth largest concentration of Muslims in the world after Indonesia and Pakistan and the Indo-Bangladeshi Muslims together constitute around 20\% of world’s total Muslim population.\(^8\) Therefore, any serious study on contemporary Islamist ideology cannot perhaps overlook both India and Bangladesh with such huge concentration of Muslims—the prime constituency of Islamism. Thus, in this study, a set of questions is important to ask: what are the specific ideological articulations of Islamism in a Muslim minority country like India and a Muslim majority country like Bangladesh? What are the political and strategic visions of Islamism in contemporary India and Bangladesh? How far has Islamism been successful in mobilizing people in India and Bangladesh to attain its specific political goals?

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\(^6\) See Browers, ‘The Secular Bias in Ideology Studies and the Case of Islamism’, pp. 75-93.

\(^7\) The term ‘Greater Middle-East’ is used by the American establishment under Bush administration to include ‘all Muslim nations, from countries of North Africa bordering the Mediterranean Sea to Pakistan, including Turkey and Israel.’ See Safa Haeri, “Concocting a ‘Greater Middle East' brew”, *Asia Times Online* (March 4, 2004): available at http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/FC04Ak06.html accessed on 31/05/2011.

In the context of limited literature on non-western ideologies, the study would be an important contribution to this unexplored area, as ‘the presence of extra-Western ideologies is still in an embryonic state of study.’\(^9\) Although the study of Islamic political thought is a well-established field, research on the subject of Islamism is very recent in ideology studies. This is because it is only in the past three decades that Islamism has emerged as a prominent ideological movement. This study would address the complexities and problems of Islamism with reference to a particular Islamist organization in India and Bangladesh, namely the Jamaat-e-Islami. In comparing the Jamaat-e-Islami across South Asia, the study would try to point out the similarities and differences of Islamist ideological articulations in a minority context (India, where Muslims—the main constituency of Islamism is a minority group) and in a majority context (Bangladesh, where Muslims are in a majority). Therefore, the study would look into varied forms of Islamist ideological expressions in different contexts even if both are sister organizations. In India, Jamaat-e-Islami is a small organization and does not even contest elections. By contrast, in Bangladesh, the Jamaat was a prominent member of the national government from 2001-06 and has been an important player in contemporary Bangladeshi politics. The question of differentiation in Islamist ideological expressions in varied contexts is important to investigate, given the fact that a section of media and academia often presents ‘Islamism’ as a homogenous category.\(^{10}\) Moreover, the ideological manifestations of Jamaat-e-Islami are important to study because it is believed that the founder of Jamaat—Maududi, attempted to ideologise and reinterpret Islamic texts, history

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\(^9\) Freeden, ‘Confronting the Chimera of a “Post-ideological” Age’, p. 144.  
and tradition, which had tremendous influence on a number of twentieth century Islamist movements.\textsuperscript{11}

But what are the justifications for comparing Islamism in contemporary India and Bangladesh? In India, secularism is a state policy with no state religion and equal treatment and recognition of all religions. But at the same time India has witnessed several violations of certain secularist principles in its recent history. In this thesis, I would try to unravel how Islamism responds to Indian secularism and whether Islamism at all poses a threat/challenge to Indian secularism. On the other hand, I would try to narrate the tussle for hegemony between secularism and Islamism in Bangladesh right from the emergence of Bangladesh in early 1970s as a secular state, to compromising the secular principles from mid-1970s, to the formal constitutional negation of secularism from late 1980s onwards, and finally the renewed assertion of secularism in present Bangladeshi politics after the 2008 Bangladesh general elections. In this respect, a contemporary history of Islamist response to secularism in India and Bangladesh from the vantage point of political theory would be a contribution to the extant academic literature on the subject. In this regard, it would be prudent to first discuss the existing literature on Jamaati Islamism in India and Bangladesh.

\textit{Existence of Jamaati Islamism in India and Bangladesh}

The review of academic literature on Islamism that I have so far discussed in the ‘Introduction’ is more focussed upon either the general commentaries on Islamism or theoretical analysis based on Islamist movements in West Asia, North Africa and Pakistan.

\textsuperscript{11} John L. Esposito, \textit{The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality}, 3\textsuperscript{rd} edn., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 131. Sayyid Abul A’la Maududi has been spelt by various authors and publishers in numerous ways. Sayyid has been often spelt as Sayyed or Syed. Abul A’la has been spelt sometimes as Abu-l-‘Ala’ and Maududi has been often spelt as Mawdudi or Maudoodi. Moreover, before Maududi without Sayyid Abul A’la, sometimes a prefix term ‘Mawlana’ or ‘Maulana’ is used, signifying leader or a learned man in Islamic tradition.
By contrast, my thesis looks into a relatively under-researched territory of Islamism in India and Bangladesh. However, this is not to overlook the theoretical and analytical insights of the academic literature that I have so far reviewed. In this doctoral thesis, I would rather engage and elaborate the academic literature on Islamism that deals with the Islamist ‘challenge’, ‘critique’ and ‘rejection’ of the ‘West’ as reviewed previously. In the following chapters, I would suggest that the Islamist critique/challenge/rejection of the West is context and issue specific. It is not always simply a challenge/critique/rejection of the Western and ‘un-Islamic’ economic, political and cultural projects but sometimes, it can positively engage and welcome these projects and might make an alliance with some of the ‘un-Islamic’ political actors. In this respect, I would argue that Islamism in India and Bangladesh has very different approaches in conceptualising and dealing with the ‘un-Islamic other’, which it promises to fight against for winning the hegemonic battle for Islamisation. However, to show this difference of approach of Islamism in two different contexts of India and Bangladesh, one cannot ignore the existing literature on Islamism in India and Bangladesh. Therefore, I would now briefly discuss the existence of Islamism of the Jamaat-e-Islami variety with specific reference to India and Bangladesh. By doing so, I would also briefly point out my engagement and differences with the existing literature on Islamism in India and Bangladesh, working within a set of analytical frameworks and the key research questions that I am interested to address in this thesis.

There is no denying the fact that Jamaat-e-Islami is one of the most important Islamist organizations in South Asia and its brand of Islamism, which I call ‘Jamaati Islamism’, is a significant politico-ideological movement in the region. In fact, what makes the Jamaat distinct from other major Muslim outfits like Jamiat-I-Ulema, Tablighi Jamaat
and Muslim League is that it is perhaps the only moderate Islamist organization, which aspires to restructure the prevalent socio-political system in line with Islamist precepts with a political goal of establishing an Islamic state. However, the political project of Islamism in post-colonial India and Bangladesh has so far remained, largely unexplored. In this respect, the dearth of literature on Islamism in India and Bangladesh is important to keep in mind. Whatever research has been done on Islamism in South Asia in general and Jamaat-e-Islami in particular has been Pakistan centric with less academic coverage given to the Islamist project of Jamaat in India and Bangladesh as evident from the works of Vali Nasr, Kalim Bahadur, Mumtaz Ahmad, and Frederic Grare and Humeira Iqtidar. Furthermore, the academic literature that deals with Islamism and Jamaat in South Asia is more of descriptive, journalistic, narrative nature and this is not exceptional even with studies specifically on India by M.S. Agwani or in the case of Bangladesh by Kabir, Banu and Riaz.

Except Iqtidar’s ethnographic work, most of these studies end up discussing the writings of Maududi—the founder of Jamaat-e-Islami, giving information about the numbers of Jamaat members, activists and supporters while criticizing the Jamaat, albeit from their respective ideological perspectives. More often than not, they offer a rigid orthodox class

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13 Bahadur, The Jama’at-i-Islami of Pakistan.
17 M.S. Agwani, Islamic Fundamentalism in India (Chandigarh: Twenty-First Century India Society, 1986).
reductionism by just pointing towards the class backgrounds of its members and supporters without sufficiently explaining how people coming from different class backgrounds rally behind Islamism or how Islamism organizes varied sets of population under its political programme. This kind of literature also cannot sufficiently explain why only a certain fraction of any particular class comes to the fold of Islamism while the rest is not satisfied with the appeal of its political project. Neither can it explain why it is the Islamists and not any other political discourse like secular liberalism or communist politics or social democracy could attract a section among the Muslims in India and Bangladesh nor can it explain that even with the presence of an Islamist discourse among a section of Muslims in India and Bangladesh, why the project of Islamism has failed to emerge as a hegemonic discourse among the Muslim community in these countries. By contrast, I would try to address these questions by showing how Islamism tries to articulate a politics of ‘populism’ by appealing to different sections of population against a common antagonistic frontier, but at the same time how it fails to successfully construct the populist political project while limiting itself to a particularist political entity. Furthermore, the existing academic literature on Islamism in India and Bangladesh tries to make an ethical condemnation of Islamism rather than explaining how it comes to the forefront in influencing a section of Muslims in India and Bangladesh.

Of late, Irfan Ahmad’s anthropological work has engaged with some conceptual issues of Islamism under a democratic set up in India by taking up the case study of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (henceforth JIH). Although there is merit in some assessment of Ahmad coupled with rigorous anthropological analysis of Islamist movement of Jamaat-e-Islami, it

has its limits in understanding the political ontology of Islamism. Ahmad’s thesis argues that when secularism and democracy are responsive to the traditions and aspirations of its Muslim citizens in India, Muslim minorities in turn embrace pluralism and democracy. However, when democracy becomes majoritarian and exclusionary, Indian Muslims turn radical. Furthermore, Ahmad argues that ‘secular democracy played a key role in the moderation of the Jamaat’, whereas, radicalization of SIMI ‘was a response to the rise of Hindu nationalism that was targeting Muslims.’

However, I would argue that even if democracy and secularism is relatively more responsive to the traditions and aspirations of Muslims and even if India is not ruled by Hindu nationalism as evident during the Congress regime in sharp contrast to the BJP led NDA regime (1998-2004) when Indian democracy became more ‘majoritarian’ and ‘exclusionary’, a section of Indian Muslims even turn towards Islamist assertion. In fact, a space of Islamist political articulation is always present among a section of Indian Muslims. On the question of Ahmad’s case study of ‘radical Islamism’ of SIMI, the current JIH President, Syed Jalaluddin Umri in an interview argued that it is precisely because of the ‘immature’, ‘intemperate’ and ‘impractical’ approach of SIMI that Jamaat fundamentally differed and parted away from them. The JIH President in fact thinks that there can be some Muslims ‘who could engage in disruptive activities.’ Jamaat’s political secretary, Mujtaba Farooque recently said, ‘angry voices could still occasionally be heard among frustrated Muslim youth.’ In fact, journalists claim that ‘[a] spate of terror attacks on

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22 Ibid., p. 8.  
23 Ibid., p. 9.  
25 Ibid.  
Indian cities by Indian Mujahideen, a radical Islamist group formed after the ban of SIMI also had further plans to launch more terror strikes on Indian soil. Now, given Ahmad’s argument about ‘changed nature of secular democracy from the 1980s…led to the radicalization of SIMI’ as ‘[i]n the 1990s SIMI called for jihad and caliphate’ even hold true today, as evident from the current militancy of Indian Mujahideen. In this respect, Ahmad’s thesis could not convincingly explain why political systems of either secular democracy or strong influence of Hindu nationalism produced two different results of ‘moderate Jamaat’ and ‘radical SIMI’. That is to say, while Indian democracy was becoming more exclusionary and majoritarian with post-Babri riots in 1990s and under BJP led NDA rule from 1998-2004, why Jamaat became ‘moderate’ and SIMI became ‘radical’? Moreover, the Islamist assertion in Shah Bano case (1986), Salman Rushdie (1989) and Taslima Nasrin controversies (1993 onwards), Delhi’s Batla house police encounter (2008), the Jamaat’s pressure tactics in Kerala text book controversy (2008), the staunch Islamist opposition to gay rights after the 2009 Delhi High Court’s judgment to scrap Article 377 of Indian Penal Code etc. are glaring examples of the fact that even if Indian democracy seems to be relatively more responsive to the traditions and aspirations of its Muslim citizens under successive secular democratic formation of Congress led governments than a majoritarian commmunal political formation of BJP led government, a section of Muslims in turn do not necessarily and automatically embrace secularism, pluralism and democracy.

It would be an oversimplification to argue that the political attitudes of Indian Muslims just change due to a regime change from majoritarian and exclusionary system to a plural democracy given the fact that an overwhelming majority of Indian Muslims have

28 Ahmad, *Islamism and Democracy in India*, p. 9.
historically and still oppose both the Hindu and Muslim communalist forces and indeed support relatively mainstream secular parties. Moreover, Ahmad’s two case studies with Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH) and Student’s Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) are insufficient to draw conclusions about generalized political orientations of a large and fragmented community of Indian Muslims whose political orientations just cannot be divided into a binary construction of ‘moderate’ versus ‘radical’ politics. Also, what Ahmad means by ‘Muslim radical’ is unclear and might be confusing since in the dominant academic and political discourses, Muslim radicalism is much peripheral in contrast with Leftwing radicalism in India and the two versions of radicalism are fundamentally different. Generalized claims about the political attitudes of a large community like ‘Indian Muslims’ like that of Ahmad cannot be made via a study of just JIH and SIMI because the space of the representative of Indian Muslims is contested between several organizations. In fact, in chapter 3, I would show how the JIH has not been able to become a vanguard of Indian Muslims. Methodologically speaking, Ahmad tries to project a particularism of Islamist variant (which is also a marginalized political entity) as a representative of a wider Universalist community of Indian Muslims. On the contrary, in this thesis, I am interested to locate the particularism of Islamism within the different strands of political articulations among Indian Muslims. By looking at Jamaat-e-Islami, I do not want to claim that it is a study of ‘Indian Muslims’ as a whole. Rather my thesis is a study of ideological articulations among a section of Indian Muslims. In this context, it would be an interesting question to pose: even if the majority of Indian Muslims rally behind secular forces then why does a minority section of Muslims in India turn towards Islamism?
In this respect, another important question to pose is that whether the lack of a credible anti-establishment discourse among Indian Muslims creates the condition of possibilities for an audience to espouse Islamism as a protest discourse? Can we argue that since, Muslims are excluded from the realm of political power in India; resistance to political power is articulated by a section of Muslims via Islamism? In the following chapters, we would see how Islamism opposes the power bloc and at the same time places particularist demands before the power bloc.

Finally, the prevalent academic literature on South Asian Islamism does not take into account the neoliberal policy regime of last two decades within which Islamism operates. By contrast, my research will analyze the character of Islamism in an age of neoliberal policy regime and focus upon the nature of Islamist support and opposition to neoliberalism by discussing the contrasting conditions of India and Bangladesh. It would try to unravel the complex relationship between neoliberalism and Islamism by narrating, under what conditions, Islamism opposes or critique neoliberalism and under what situations, it remains mute in critiquing neoliberalism. A theoretical analysis of Islamist response to neoliberalism is important in the midst of ‘neoliberal consensus’ that has been the ‘hegemonic horizon’ of world politics in the last three decades.29 In such a context, the research is significant when the Islamists claim to challenge and ‘criticize the un-Islamic ideologies’30 in search of an ‘Islamic alternative’.31 In this thesis, I would discuss how the existence of neoliberalism creates the conditions for Islamist opposition and negotiation with the neoliberal project depending upon the specific and varied context of India and Bangladesh. Today, no serious

30 JIH Policy and Programme, p. 9.
31 Ibid., p. 8.
The study can ignore this neoliberal context, under which Islamism makes a markedly different political articulation with a new set of political demands, which was never heard before in the history of Islamist movements. Therefore, today, the ontological question of Islamism is not simply related to the re-articulation of religion in political terms, but also how it creates a chain of new antagonistic frontiers and a new set of political demands in an era of neoliberal hegemony. I will discuss this in the following chapters.

The existing academic research on Islamism in India and Bangladesh cannot convincingly explain how Islamism as a political force came into being or exists in Bangladesh or why Islamism is still a marginal political discourse among Indian Muslims? In other words, the existing literature on South Asian Islamism does not deal with the ‘ontological’ question, with which I would be dealing in this study. In this regard, most academic literature that I have discussed above can be called ontic studies or ontical research on Islamism, largely concerned with empirico-factual analysis rather than engaging with broader ontological issues regarding the very existence of the (political) being and (id)entity of Islamism. In this sense, my thesis reflects upon both ‘politics’ and ‘the political’: the former ‘deals with the empirical field’ and refers to the ‘ontic level’, where ‘the set of practices and institutions through which an order is created, organizing human coexistence in the context of conflictuality provided by the political’ while the latter is the domain of political theory and philosophy largely concerned with ‘ontological’ questions and the ‘space of power, conflict and antagonism…constitutive of human societies.’

Since, I am more interested in ontological research I would try to explain why and how Islamism as a political ideology exists and the attendant problems of its existence. This is not to say that I have ignored the ‘ontic’ content of the present research. Surely, the

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qualitative data gathered from several interviews and the textual content of organizational literature, press statements etc. of the case study of Jamaat have helped to analyse the dynamics of Islamism while unearthing its universal and particular claims and its abstract and concrete demands. Indeed, the empirical materials have helped to better understand the very existence of Islamism in India and Bangladesh and have provided a firm ground upon which an ontological study becomes more comprehensible. Since, my thesis engages with both ontological and ontical issues of Islamism in general and Jamaati Islamism in particular, let me first make an assessment of the existing theoretical and methodological frameworks of the extant research on Islamism.

**Existing Theoretical and Methodological Frameworks: A Critical Assessment**

In the ‘Introduction’, I have already discussed the Marxist and postmodern theorisations on Islamism. Although both the Marxist and postmodern theorisations hold some merit in understanding the rise of Islamist movements in contemporary world, this research would further investigate the complexity of Islamism by studying the phenomena with conceptual tools like ‘hegemony’, ‘political articulation’, ‘(un)availability of political discourses’, ‘antagonistic frontier’, and ‘political mobilization’ within the discipline of political theory from Laclau-Mouffe’s perspective of post-Marxism complemented with glimpses of political philosophy.

Islamism is a burning topic in modern scholarship and contemporary world affairs. In this respect, I will try to resist both the orientalist interpretation as well as some postmodern/poststructuralist celebration of Islamism while critically evaluating the Islamist ideology of Jamaat-e-Islami. Therefore, a meaningful study of Islamism needs to be
distanced both from Orientalist discourses as well as from some postmodern celebration of Islamism, for analyzing Islamist politics, scholars have pointed out the need to ‘overcome the obscurantist limits of both Orientalism and anti-orientalism.’\textsuperscript{33} The limits of poststructuralist/postmodern analysis of Islamism are manifold. In the first place, the celebration of indigenous and local authenticity by some poststructuralist/postmodern theories is questionable. As Christopher Norris argues, “in truth, there is no such pure ‘authenticity’ as Lévi-Strauss (like Rousseau) imagines to have been destroyed by the advent of writing in this narrow senses.”\textsuperscript{34} Secondly, the construction of Islamist ideology was only possible with the borrowing of concepts by the Islamist ideologues from the ideologies of the West like fascism and communism\textsuperscript{35} and western socio-economic models like capitalism and socialism, even while they sought to construct an Islamic resistance to the West. By putting the prefix term ‘Islamic’ with distinct western concepts like ‘state’, ‘ideology’ and ‘revolution’ the Islamists try to make them appear different from the western concepts.\textsuperscript{36} As Tibi argues, modern Islam is not a pure autochthonous entity but an expression of the continuing argument of several secular ideologies in the Muslim world like pan-Arabism and socialism that critique the penetration of colonial-industrial West.\textsuperscript{37} Thus, Islamism is in fact a derivative ideology that could have been possible to construct only with an engagement with western modernity. Islamism can be also characterized as an ideology of convenience, because Islamism manipulates and misrepresents the religion of Islam as a convenient tool for critiquing the West, even if the conceptual foundations of Islamism are

\textsuperscript{34} Christopher Norris, \textit{Deconstruction: Theory and Practice} (London: Methuen, 1982), p. 34.
\textsuperscript{36} Nasr, ‘Mawdudi and the Jama’at-i-Islami’, p. 105.
borrowed from the West. In fact, a scholar has recently argued that the inseparability of religion and politics and the centrality of the Islamic state in the discourses of Islamism in general and that of Maududi and his Jamaat-e-Islami in particular cannot be validated with original Islamic theology but is only constructed with a particular interpretation of Islam in responding to the colonial state.\textsuperscript{38}

Similarly, other scholars have argued how the Jamaat founder, Maududi’s economic views were influenced ‘by the economic theories of men like Marx, Hobson and Major Douglas, but he makes no acknowledgment of them.’\textsuperscript{39} Islamist ideology is thus not exclusively ‘Islamic’ but hybrid in nature by mixing Islamic concepts with twentieth-century western ideas of both liberal and totalitarian variety.\textsuperscript{40} Therefore, Islamism as an ideology cannot be simply regarded ‘as a matter of cultural authenticity’, that the postmoderns eulogize but it is ‘more a question of political agenda and choice.’\textsuperscript{41} In fact, the postmodern and Islamist assertion of a ‘culturally indigenous authenticity’ is misplaced because there is no purist worldview of Islamism, as it has gone through a process of hybridization with an engagement with the West.

In the process of critiquing the project of western modernity, Islamism targets both the ‘macro-ideologies’ of liberalism and socialism as well as ‘thin/micro-ideologies’ like nationalism and secularism.\textsuperscript{42} A helpful approach to the study of ideologies is to concentrate on the peculiar rhetoric that is being used within a particular ideological discourse. While analyzing Jamaati Islamism, I would argue that its critique of western modernity is more rhetorical than a substantial engagement with different political concepts that shape the

\textsuperscript{39} Sayeed, ‘The Jama’at-i-Islami Movement in Pakistan’, p. 67.
\textsuperscript{40} Ruthven, \textit{Islam}, pp. 5-6.
\textsuperscript{41} Sidahmed and Ehteshami, ‘Introduction’, p. 14
\textsuperscript{42} For an analysis of macro and thin/micro-ideologies see Freeden, \textit{Ideology}. 

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macro-ideologies of liberalism, conservatism and socialism as well as the micro-ideologies of nationalism and secularism. However, this is not to deny the peculiar rhetoric that Jamaati Islamists use for political mobilization. In this respect, I would argue that Jamaati Islamism cannot be simply regarded as a ‘protest ideology’ against the ideologies of the West just because it has a challenging rhetoric against the West with specific Islamic concepts. I would show in this doctoral thesis, how the ‘protest’ of Jamaati Islamism against ‘western ideologies’ is selective and context specific.

However, Islamism does not only confine itself to an anti-western polemic. Rather, it poses an opposition to any ideology that is not Islamic. In the case of its opposition to Hindutva (a non-western phenomena), the concept of ‘ignorance of non-Islam’ (un-Islamic jahiliya) is employed to justify Islamic opposition to Hindutva as well. The central principle of Islamism is thus based on the notion that ‘man made ideologies’ and any other religious traditions are bound to fail as these have not so far resolved the fundamental problems of humanity (inequality and injustice) as argued by the Islamists.\(^{43}\) In this context, Islam is projected by the Islamists as an emancipatory ideology for all of humanity.\(^{44}\) So, the basis of opposition for Islamists to any political order and ideology is that of fighting an un-Islamic ‘other’. Here, the concept of ‘ignorance of non-Islam’ (jahiliya) is of central importance for making an antagonistic frontier against any form of non-Islam.

In celebrating the exotic ‘Islamic other’ that is opposed to the ‘West’, postmodern academicians simply overlook the universal truth claims of Islam, and the totalistic meta-

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\(^{43}\) See Maududi, *Towards Understanding Islam.*

narrative of Islamism, a ‘meta-narrative’ that postmoderns themselves negate.⁴⁵ They also fail to see the problem of what Arkoun calls ‘the dogmatic closure of Islamic thought.’⁴⁶ In fact, this ‘dogmatic closure’ of Islamism justifies its refusal to open dialogue and engage with any ideological tradition other than Islam and thus make it a self-congratulatory discourse. Similarly, the abhorrent and unapologetic view of Islamists on the issue of non-Muslims, subjugation of women and sexual minorities within Islamist discourses as we would later notice in this thesis is also another point of silence or complicity on the part of postmodern academicians that celebrates the Islamist opposition to the West.

In this doctoral thesis, I would argue that the ideological articulations of Jamaati Islamism are not similar across South Asia but it is contextual as it varies from a majority context in Bangladesh with that of minority context in India. Thus, contrary to the Universalist claims of Islamism, the political praxis of Islamist parties like Jamaat actually shows that its ideological articulations are particularistic with contextual specificities. I will investigate how such particularist ideological articulations of Jamaati Islamism in India and Bangladesh affect varied modes of political and strategic visions of Islamism in these countries. Finally, I would argue that the limits of Islamism are exposed by its failure to politically mobilize people behind its political project and its subsequent failure to realize an Islamic state, a state that would be an ‘alternative’ to both capitalism and communism that it claims to establish. Thus, we can observe a ‘gap between the rhetoric of Islamic activists and the reality of Muslim polities.’⁴⁷ However, despite its inability to hegemonize the political field of contemporary India and Bangladesh, its political significance in the contemporary

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⁴⁵ The epistemological skepticism of postmodernism hold that ‘the assertion of truth claims is dogmatic and potentially totalitarian.’ See Colin Hay, Political Analysis (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), p. 227.
⁴⁷ Lawrence, Defenders of God, p. 189.
affairs of these countries lie in its staunch ideological critique to western powers and what they call ‘western culture’, consumerist lifestyles, its opposition to certain capitalist development projects and the neoliberal policy regime, as we shall see in this thesis. In analysing the Islamist ideological articulations, I would also show the complex nuances of Islamist positions on varied issues that have been discussed in this thesis. In this regard, let me first briefly point out the peculiarities of two case studies: the Jamaat in India and Bangladesh as well as outline the modes of data gathering and methodological overview of this study.

Case Selection, Data Gathering and Methodological Overview

The subtitle of my thesis, Ideological Articulations of Jamaat-e-Islami in Contemporary India and Bangladesh is intended to point out the similarities and differences between the Indian and Bangladeshi Jamaat’s position on different politico-ideological issues such as neoliberalism, imperialism, secularism, Islamic state and democracy, cultural globalization etc. For example, the Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami is opposed to the very notion of secularism while the Indian Jamaat is more sympathetic to secularism. Secondly, the Bangladeshi Jamaat has a vision to establish an Islamic State while the Indian Jamaat deleted all references to Islamic state from its constitution. In addition to the existing literature, in this thesis, I would show how the Indian Jamaat thinks that Hindutva is a greater ‘enemy’ to fight than neoliberalism whereas, for Bangladeshi Jamaat, secularism is a greater ‘enemy’ to fight than neoliberalism. However, in both cases of India and

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49 For major points of differences between the Indian and Bangladeshi Jamaat-e-Islami, see Ahmad, ‘Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia’, pp. 501-506; Grare, Political Islam in the Indian Subcontinent.
Bangladesh, Islamism is opposed to ‘western cultural globalization’, which according to them, is expressed in propagating ‘consumerism’, ‘atheism’, ‘blasphemy’, ‘homosexuality’, ‘unrestricted sexual freedom’, ‘pornography’ etc.

Then, Bangladesh Jamaat is a political party that takes part in the parliamentary democratic politics whereas the Indian Jamaat restricts itself to what it calls ‘religious’ and ‘cultural’ activities, concentrating mainly on publishing and disseminating literature on Islam, promoting Islamic awareness and Muslim interests and attempting to reach out to non-Muslims with the message of Islam. In this regard, implicit in my comparison is the thought that the Jamaat will respond to national political contexts and regional specificities within a country, and thus its ideological expressions might change accordingly.

In writing the present thesis, valuable information and qualitative data has been collected from primary sources that include the Jamaat-e-Islami Constitution, Jamaat policy and programme, press statements, election manifestos, organizational literature, political documents like policy resolutions of Jamaat and Press releases of Jamaat in both India and Bangladesh. Secondly, secondary literature comprising of academic books and journal articles have been helpful for this study. Some information has been collected from internet sources and online newspaper archives of dailies and magazines to know about organizational activities of Jamaat in the recent past. Selected interviews of members and leadership of Jamaat-e-Islami in India and Bangladesh have been conducted for this research. Interviews have been conducted in the Indian cities of Delhi, Lucknow, Kolkata and Kozhikode and places like Dhaka and Chittagong in Bangladesh. The above mentioned cities are chosen for conducting field interviews and collecting other important information sources like Jamaat pamphlets and organizational posters because of relatively easy access
and organizational presence of Jamaat in these places. The particular cities in India and Bangladesh have also been chosen in order to give proper balance between national and regional perspectives of Jamaat-e-Islami leadership, activists and ordinary members.

The national leadership of the JIH, based in Delhi, allowed me to take video interviews and spoke in English, Urdu and Hindi. On the other hand, the state leadership of Jamaat in Kerala, based in Kozhikode spoke in English and a couple of interviews were translated in English from Malayalam by a Jamaat activist. The state leadership of Jamaat in West Bengal, based in Kolkata, spoke in Bengali. Both in Kozhikode and Kolkata, the Jamaat leadership and activists allowed me to take handwritten notes during interviews. The state leadership of Jamaat in Uttar Pradesh, based in Lucknow, only allowed me to collect organisational literature and selective Jamaat pamphlets and posters. Similarly, the Bangladesh Jamaat leadership and Bangladesh Jamaat intellectuals in the cities of Dhaka and Chittagong only allowed me to take handwritten interview notes instead of any video recording. Apart from giving a few interviews, both the Indian and Bangladesh Jamaat leadership allowed me to collect organisational literature, election manifestos and pamphlets.

I believe that in order to comprehensively understand the ideological articulations of any political formation or group, one need to have an eclectic approach. Moreover, from a normative standpoint, one can argue that politics in general and political ideologies in particular should be studied from multiple perspectives to get a comprehensive overview of the subject of study. Thus, in this research, I favour a triangulation or hybridization of approaches by combining various methods for a comprehensive study. Let us take one by one. The present research is surely a case study in the first place, related to the specificity
and complexity of the particular case of *Jamaat-e-Islami*, its ideological articulations, and its mode of politics with reference to space (India and Bangladesh) and time (contemporary period of neoliberalism, particularly from late 1970s onwards in Bangladesh and early 1990s onwards in India).

Secondly, I undertake both textual and content analysis of primary sources. The content analysis method helps to identify and distinguish the specific concepts that are of primary concern to the Islamists. With regard to textual analysis of the primary sources, it is important to keep in mind that Jamaat disseminates English and several regional language translations of some Urdu texts in India and Bengali translations of the same in Bangladesh given the fact that a large number of its members are not versed in Urdu. So, I primarily rely on English and Bengali translations of Urdu texts apart from the original English and Bengali literature of Jamaat. Since, the English and Bengali texts are themselves translated by the publishing houses owned by the Jamaat and are sold and distributed as organizational literature, so I would consider them as authentic translations. Besides these, analysis of selected interviews of Jamaat leadership, activists and common members has been also done to look at the current discourses within the organization on a range of ideological and political issues of both national and international importance. The interviews also helped to look at new ideological positions/shifts on a particular issue that is not yet documented in the organizational literature and thus have complemented the textual analysis.

Thirdly, my research concentrates on the *comparative* study of Islamist ideological expressions as it contrasts the ideological positions of Jamaat-e-Islami in India and Bangladesh. In comparing the ideological articulations of Jamaat I rely upon conceptual and discourse analysis than merely descriptive narration or a class analysis. The advantages of
conceptual analysis in the study of ideologies is that it focuses on the peculiar mode of ‘thinking encapsulated in ideologies…not merely for what it masks’ as we find in the Marxisant schools.\(^{50}\) The overemphasis on urban lower middle classes as the core class base of Islamism by Marxisant and political economy approaches as we have seen earlier in the ‘Introduction’, actually ignore the mobilization of various other strata of population joining the Islamist movement. In fact, the Marxisant and political economy approaches cannot convincingly explain how people coming from various class and regional backgrounds join Islamist parties apart from the urban lower middle classes. This is precisely because of their extreme focus to see Islamism as a ‘class ideology’ while ignoring its mass appeal and populist connotations. Therefore, the theoretical framework of ‘populism’ alá Laclau is more helpful to address many of the questions that Marxisant and political economy schools fail to answer about Islamism.

Thus, without taking refuge in a class-reductionist approach, conceptual and discourse analysis helps to understand the nature of thinking and key political concepts shaping a particular ideology, its mobilizational strategies, its peculiar political rhetoric and the varied nature of political issues, which a particular ideological articulation like Islamism engages with in the contemporary globalized world. Furthermore, political mobilization is not necessarily a function of class determinism but a combination of both class and non-class factors on one hand and an equivalential relation between different democratic demands against a common antagonistic frontier, which we would see in the case of Islamist populism in India and Bangladesh. Thus, studying Islamism from a framework of conceptual and discourse analysis would help to unravel the key concepts and the use of peculiar rhetoric around which the Islamist ideology is organized and strives to mobilize

people behind its political project. Conceptual and discourse analysis in this respect, also helps to make us understand why a particular political programme is initiated by a given ideological formation to achieve certain political goals.

By this time, it must be clear that I am trying to engage with several theoretical formulations and research concerns. But there has to be some ‘anchor’ around which the treatment with various methods and approaches would give some meaning to the questions that I have tried to ask in this research. Thus, my research concern is to unearth the ideological articulations of Islamism in the context of neoliberal India and Bangladesh with two conceptual formulations of ‘Islamic universalism’ and ‘Muslim particularism’ as foci of the study. However, to become popular among its political constituency, and in order to mobilize people for its Islamic Universalist agenda, the Islamists need to identify the political enemy/antagonistic frontier. Without identifying the antagonistic frontier, political mobilization is difficult since the people can be mobilized either against somebody (state, capital, government, bureaucracy, rival groups/religions/community etc.) or in favour somebody (a political agenda/project). In this respect, we would see in this thesis, how the Islamists construct an antagonistic frontier against western models of economic development, the political agents that carry forward such developmental projects and against what they call ‘western’ cultural incursions. In this respect, we would also see how the Islamists construct the ‘West’ as the non-Islamic ‘other’ via the Islamic concept of jahiliya.

In this regard, we would also see how the Islamist party like Jamaat tries to combine its Islamic Universalist appeal and particularist demands for its core (Muslim) constituency. However, before discussing the issues of Islamic universalism and Muslim particularism in subsequent chapters let me first delineate some conceptual issues on the overlap of (Islamic)
religion and politics, besides identifying the categories of analysis with which the political ontology of Islamism in contemporary India and Bangladesh can be possibly understood.

**Ontological Engagements with Islam(ism): Identifying the Categories of Analysis**

In this research, my difference and parting of ways with most existing literature on Islamism in general and Jamaat-e-Islami in India and Bangladesh in particular is linked to the ‘ontological’ enquiries about the overlapping boundaries of religion and politics. I believe most disciplines have a focal point or central pole of attention with Psychology being primarily concerned with the *mind*, History with *time*, Geography with *space*, Economics with *exchange*, Sociology with *organization/institutions/groups*, Biological Sciences with *living organisms*, Physical Sciences with *matter*, Linguistics with *grammar*, *language* and *rhetoric*, Anthropology with *human societies*, Law with *rules*, Philosophy with the *good life* and the existential question of *being*, and Politics with *power* and *ideological worldview* and so on. Aristotle taught us that ‘man is by nature a political animal.’\(^51\) In this regard, religious community and religious institution constituted by human association can also be a political association. As Robert Dahl suggests, a citizen encounters politics in every humanly made organization including the church as ‘politics is an unavoidable fact of human existence.’\(^52\) In this respect, the dimensions and boundaries of politics and religion seems to me a fuzzy and artificial one as the western modernist enlightenment tried to bifurcate between church and the state/politics. Moreover, if politics

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is primarily concerned with ‘good for man’,\textsuperscript{53} or a political system is defined in terms of ‘control, influence, power, or authority’\textsuperscript{54} or the space of the ‘political’ is ‘antagonism’,\textsuperscript{55} then the meaning of religion certainly can be expanded. In the following chapters, we would see how Islamism by rearticulating the political dimensions of Islamic religion seeks to promise ‘good’ life and prescribes what is ‘good for man’, strives for political ‘power’, tries to ‘control’/‘influence’ human subjects, enjoys ‘authority’ and constructs ‘antagonistic frontiers’ by grounding its politics on the basis of an ideological worldview.

As far as the political dimensions of religion are concerned, I would argue that the very notion of organized religion in general is essentially ‘political’. That is to say, the possibilities and potentialities of the ‘political’ are embedded within organized religion in general. Most organized religions have a sense of ‘good’ and ‘bad’, the concept of ‘evil’ and ‘devil’ as opposed to ‘virtues’ and ‘purity’, the demarcation between morally and ethically correct and incorrect and so on. In other words, the duality of ‘inclusivity’ and ‘exclusivity’ is the characteristic of most organized religions. Thus, most organized religions create an internal frontier of antagonism or have multiple forms of antagonisms with the constructions of ‘enemies’ and the ‘other(s)’. These constructions of antagonistic frontiers lead to the conditions of possibilities for an emergent conflict, which is basically the starting point of ‘politics’. So, political manipulation or manoeuvring religion politically is always open because there is already/always a political space embedded within the very idea of organized religion. In this sense, then the separation between religion and politics and demarcating the boundaries of religious versus political realms is contestable. Islam is not exceptional to this

\textsuperscript{54} Dahl, \textit{Modern Political Analysis}, p. 10.
peculiar characteristic of internal frontier of antagonism embedded within religion. Thus, Islamist ideology or Islamism asserts forms of political thinking and political opinions by re-articulating Islamic traditions by extending/expanding the political frontiers and political space of antagonism within the religion of Islam. Therefore, the arguments of ‘politicization’ and ‘ideologisation’ of religion in most academic, journalistic and polemical literature dealing with Islam(ism) is naïve and unimpressive, precisely because from the very beginning, the constitution of most organized religions is political. This political element within organized religion gets support by the missionary aspect of organized religion to grow further, to spread religion across the world, and hence enhance the number of its members belonging to its own ‘authentic community’.

The ‘missionary aspect’ of preaching religion to include more people inside its fold while struggling with ‘other’ competing ideological worldviews including other religions is related to the question of empowerment and relative strength of religion, which are political questions, connected to the very concept of power and the desire of a religion to be more powerful than any ‘other’ entity. In that case the normative question of how religion ‘ought’ to be or whether religion should be ‘political’ might encounter an ontological question: whether the existence of religion is essentially political or whether the political (id)entity is constitutive of religion, making it difficult to segregate politics from religion. To ignore the political identity of religion and to distinguish between religion and politics by equating religion with the private sphere and politics with the public sphere is therefore a futile task and would be a continuation of the erroneous construct of the mainstream of the western

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56 Such distinction between ‘private’ and ‘public’ was also challenged by Feminism. See Freeden, ‘Feminism: The Recasting of Political Language’, in Ideologies and Political Theory, pp. 488-525.
Enlightenment.\textsuperscript{57} This Enlightenment separation between religion and politics has in fact shown its limits with the return/re-turn of religion haunting the political spheres of even modern western countries and certainly in contemporary Muslim societies. So, if religion exists in society, then the possibilities of political challenge of religion also exist as well.

In a pre-modern world, religion seemed to be a worldview and in that sense played its role as a political ideology and interestingly, it is still an ideology for a significant section of the world population with the emergence of ‘religious fundamentalism’ among most organized religions.\textsuperscript{58} From here, we can ask, why religion is still regarded as a political ideology, even if there are competing modern ideologies and even if the dominance of western modernity has tried to vilify it as an ‘anti-modern’, ‘backward’, ‘regressive’ entity? Is this because religion always offers certain political visions so that it can be used by a political agency whenever it needs/fits to do so? Thus, it depends exclusively on the particular political actors, how and whether it is using the space of the ‘political’ that is inherent in most organized religions. In the particular case of Islamism, which is the prime focus of this research study, we would see how it is only an expansion of those political fronts embedded in the religion of Islam. To be precise, how Islamism organizes different sectors of population under the banner or in the name of Islam by expanding the political frontiers of Islamic religion against an antagonistic frontier and what are the limits of such a project of Islamist mobilization, which I call the project of ‘Islamist populism’ in our times, would be my focal concern in this doctoral thesis.

\textsuperscript{57} For Mulhall, the negation of religion, god or any other external being influencing or controlling human actions is discarded by the mainstream project of Enlightenment. See Stephen Mulhall, \textit{Philosophical Myths of the Fall} (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 9.

\textsuperscript{58} The five volumes of \textit{Fundamentalism Project} referred earlier is a detailed study of religious fundamentalism among Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists.
Now, how can we account for the existence of ‘pre-modern’/‘anti-modern’ religion in modern and post-modern contexts of incredible advancement of scientific and technological revolution and in an age of ‘human rationality’, ‘secular values’ and ‘anthropocentric society’? That is to say, how can we explain the existence of religion and by extension, religious ideologies in a world of globalized capitalism, when ‘seminal social thinkers of the nineteenth century—Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, Émile Durkheim, Max Weber, Karl Marx, and Sigmund Freud—all believed that religion would gradually fade in importance and cease to be significant with the advent of industrial society.’

This story can be told in various ways. One can be the psychoanalytical explanation of the ‘return of the repressed,’ religion taking revenge against its repressor: the modernist enlightenment project of secularism. But before widely using the (psycho-)analytical explanation of religion as ‘return of the repressed’, there is an important caveat to keep in mind about the nature of repression of religion in both western and Muslim societies. As Dipesh Chakrabarty argues, “[o]ne empirically knows of no society in which humans have existed without gods and spirits accompanying them. Although the God of monotheism may have taken a few knocks—if not actually ‘died’—in the nineteenth-century European story of ‘the disenchantment of the world,’ the gods and other agents inhabiting practices of so-called ‘superstition’ have never died anywhere.”

Thus, when I use religion being ‘repressed’, I mean religion relegated to private sphere and not complete abolition or death of religion. As C. Wright Mills has argued that ‘[o]nce the world was filled with the sacred—in thought, practice, and institutional form. After the Reformation and the Renaissance, the forces of

modernization swept across the globe and secularization, a corollary historical process, loosened the dominance of the sacred. In due course, the sacred shall disappear altogether except, possibly, *in the private realm*.\(^{61}\) Religion was certainly an acknowledged political ideology and in many cases a hegemonic political ideology in a pre-modern world and still continues to be a political ideology. With the advent of European capitalist modernity, religion was increasingly ghettoized to private sphere and the secularist project dominated the political/public sphere. Therefore, slowly religion became marginalized as an influential political ideology and was unable to express itself as an ideological guide to the secular modernist political project and thus became repressed within the boundary of private religious freedom that secularism often out of sympathy gives it or makes some concessions/provisions for it. This *humiliation* of religion by modern secularism had its own limits when the secularist project itself became exhausted to accommodate the democratic socio-economic and political demands of the *people*. It is at this crisis moment of secularism, when religious ideologies saw its chance to challenge the secular political order as a ‘return of the repressed’. In this global context of ‘crisis of political secularism’\(^{62}\) that Islamism has been described as a ‘return of the repressed’.\(^{63}\) In this research, we would see the Islamist project as ‘disenchantment with the secular’ and its simultaneous limits in resisting the *secular*.

Secondly, I would argue that the return of the ‘political religion’ can be explained in socio-historical terms and dynamics of global politics where a political void is created after the collapse of socialism as a protest discourse against capitalism, while religion became an

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‘available’ candidate to fill up that *vacant space of protest* against capitalist status quo. Thus, when the internal contradiction between capitalism and socialism within the discourses of western modernity has temporarily resulted into a capitalist status quo as a monopoly winner at least in the present conjuncture, religion comes from ‘outside’ the realm of modernity as a pre-modern entity to articulate the discontents of modernity with a new protest discourse against the capitalist power bloc. In this regard, Islamism has been described not as a ‘religious discourse, but a political one’ to ‘struggle [against] inequities of modern life…to fight with full moral force for economic justice, equality, and social harmony’ and “to seriously challenge the orthodoxy of a ‘free’ market” and ‘to the hegemony of neo-liberalism within the global economy.’ In this respect, Islamism has been seen as a ‘protest ideology’ that articulates ‘political resistance to the postcolonial order.’ Those who construe Islamism as a ‘protest ideology’, view it as ‘a creative space for political articulations of protest against present inequities of power’ at the international level. Whereas within Muslim states, it is seen ‘as a discourse of political opposition (against the regimes of) corrupt power elites, nominally Muslim but ardently Western-materialist in their personal consumption, catering to foreign interests over domestic needs.’ In many academic works, Islamism has often been portrayed as a ‘resistance in an ideological age’, for Muslims consider it as ‘a third world ideology of protest.’ Thus, Islamic identity based movements often emerged as an assertion and violent revolt ‘against the destructive effects of really existing capitalism and the unfinished, truncated, and

64 Buck-Morss, *Thinking Past Terror*, p. 43.
65 Ibid., p. 50.
66 Ibid., p. 45.
67 Ibid., pp. 50-51.
68 Ibid., p. 47.
70 Lawrence, *Defenders of God*, p. 229.
deceptive modernity that goes along with it.’

This aspect of ‘Islamist protest’ against existing status-quo also leads to the Islamist rejection of western ideologies as pointed out earlier by the academic literature discussed so far. Thus, in this study, we would notice that when Islamism articulates itself as a protest discourse, at the same time it also asserts to reject both neoliberal and leftwing projects while using the rhetoric of an Islamic ‘alternative’. We would also see how the ‘protest discourse’ of Islamism is used as a political tactic to negotiate with the power bloc in order to achieve certain political demands.

Thirdly, the existence of Islamism can be explained by the logic of a new hegemonic politics of neoliberal capitalism where religion first becomes a protest discourse and then after securing itself in the power bloc, it serves the interests of neoliberalism. The discontents of current phase of neoliberal capitalism has exposed its limits with a new crisis owing much to an economic agenda of the global power elites incapable of fulfilling the democratic demands of vast sections of population and is thus facing a new challenge of legitimacy. Now, religious articulation as a form of politico-ideological articulation can itself be a tool of both political mobilization and legitimacy for sustaining the neoliberal status quo, when a crisis in the neoliberal power bloc with secular political orientations occur due to its inability to represent the interests of vast majority of population. We have seen such a politico-ideological articulation of religious politics in the form of Hindutva in India as a tool of both political mobilization and legitimacy for sustaining the neoliberal status quo.

I would argue how Islamism, at times, also carries forward a neoliberal agenda in Bangladesh. Thus, I would argue that when a pro-secular neoliberalism is unable to

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71 Amin, Eurocentrism, p. 71.
justify the existing socio-economic and political order under capitalism, religion became the source of refuge for neoliberal power bloc to play its game of hegemony. Since neoliberalism in India and Bangladesh is characterized with a number of unresolved problems of poverty, inequality and unemployment, it has the tendency to overcome its crisis by mobilizing ‘people’ behind its project with a religious rhetoric. Thus, neoliberalism itself can give legitimacy to religion in the political sphere. On the other hand, religion can be accommodated within the structural logic of neoliberalism while being able to articulate itself in the language that serves the interests of neoliberalism. Thus, it is not surprising why the ideology of Hindutva, Islamism in certain contexts, Christian and Jewish fundamentalism do not essentially have problems with free-market led economic policies while all of them have strong opposition to the concepts of collectivization, socialist principles, and state intervention in major socio-economic activities.73 In this regard, I would argue how Islamism in Bangladesh has been at times, a facilitator of neoliberalism where religious and ‘neoliberal market fundamentalism’ has complimentary interests. As Pasha argues that although Islamism seeks to provide an ‘alternative’ it ‘fits nicely into the neoliberal worldview…as [t]he attitude of Islamists toward neoliberalism…[with] the actual practice of reliance on a market-based civil society in the areas of self-help, welfare, education, and banking suggests few political contradictions between Islamism and neoliberalism.’74

From the above discussion, we can identify three analytical frameworks for an ontological explanation of Islamism: a) the psychoanalytical explanation that Islamism exists today as ‘return of the repressed’ b) the socio-historical explanation that Islamism

73 Marty and Appleby (eds.), Fundamentalism Project Vol. 1-5.
exists today as a ‘protest ideology’ against global capitalism after the collapse of anti-capitalist discourse of 20th century state socialism c) the socio-political explanation that Islamism exists today as part of the new hegemonic politics/policies of neoliberalism. If we follow the last two interpretations, then in a way, Islamism can articulate the politics of both the neoliberal power bloc and its oppressed and exploited subjects. This is because, religion in general and Islam(ism) in particular as a discursive tradition has space for both the power bloc and the plebs or underprivileged/underdogs. While trying to overcome its own crisis of legitimacy, the neoliberal power bloc needs ethical justifications in the name of religion to maintain its hegemony, whereas the plebian subjects also find a new emancipatory politics of resistance in religion by ventilating the angst emerging out of the current neoliberal dispensation. Thus, it is not unsurprising that from 1970s onwards—which effectively represents the introductory decade of neoliberalism⁷⁵ actually converged with the emergence of political religion in general and Islamism in particular in the Muslim world. The decade of 1970s was also the starting points of crisis for both secularism and socialism in the global political scene in general and the Muslim world in particular and thus gave religion to occupy an available political space in the mainstream politico-ideological discourses. In analyzing the emergence and existence of Islamism in Bangladesh, some of the above three explanations might be useful. But are all of these explanations valid for Islamism in a neoliberal India where Indian Muslims—the core constituency of Islamism forms a religious minority and a subaltern group? This would be my subject of enquiry in the next chapter.

⁷⁵ Harvey, A Brief History of Neoliberalism.
Chapter 2

Islamism in ‘Neoliberal’ India

It is amply clear from the title of my doctoral thesis that it deals with Islamism in *contemporary India*. But how should one define *contemporary India*? Can it be defined in terms of time period from a particular date onwards, or within a larger structural problematic, which signifies a radical break, a kind of watershed that clearly marks a distinct departure from the ‘past’ and indeed identified with our contemporary present. I would identify the ‘neoliberal dispensation’ in India as marker of ‘contemporary India’, which can be clearly distinguishable from the pre-neoliberal phase of Indian history and politics. The major politico-ideological currents that precedes the making of contemporary neoliberal India are the Nehruvian model of state-capitalism, secularism\(^1\) and the Congress system in 1950s and 1960s,\(^2\) the fragmentation of the Congress system with a gradual transition to regionalisation from late 1960s till mid-1980s and subsequently the rise of Mandir, Mandal and Market from late 1980s onwards: symbolically expressing the politics of majoritarian communalism, the politics of backward and lower castes and the policies of neoliberal economic reforms.\(^3\)

The neoliberal policy regime in India\(^4\) is generally agreed to mark a departure from the earlier Nehruvian vision of nation building. The Nehruvian model of economic development was mimicry of some socialist and liberal welfarist agenda in economic

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policies, emphasising the public sector, and the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) in the realm of foreign policy. The advent of neoliberalism in India has been marked by the processes of liberalization, privatization and globalization with market led economic policies, deregulation of the economy for foreign direct investment, retreat of the state from major economic activities and greater alignment with United States in foreign policy. The neoliberal policy regime in India roughly from 1990s onwards were characterised by disinvestment of the public sector, inadequate public expenditure in social sectors and commercialisation of health and higher education, withdrawal of subsidies from agriculture, collapse of the public distribution system and increasing private corporate control over natural resources including large scale land acquisition by the entente of state and big private capital, often followed by either forced displacement of existing inhabitants or resistance by them.

Some commentators and government reports claim that neoliberal phenomena in India is characterized by agrarian crisis, growing poverty, inequality and unemployment along with a further worsening of the living conditions of marginalized and excluded groups

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of poor people constituting of working classes, peasantry, Dalits, Tribals, Muslims and Women. Other commentators have very different views to argue that neoliberal economic reforms facilitated Indian economy to come out of its phase of stagnation and (s)low economic growth from 1950s-1980s to overcome the balance of payments crisis in early 1990s and making the system simple, transparent and efficient while putting the economy on a high and steady growth trajectory from late 1990s onwards, which inevitably benefits the common people and helps poverty reduction, since ‘the accelerated growth [is] required to banish structural mass poverty’ and ‘massive failure to achieve rapid growth…is the root cause…to eliminate poverty.’

Neoliberalism in India is however different from the Euro-American model that has been discussed in the ‘Introduction’ with its own peculiarities. Successive Indian governments from early 1990s have definitely moved towards the policies of liberalisation.

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and globalisation of Indian economy as well as privatisation of the public sector, retreat of
the state from certain welfare measures like withdrawal of subsidies in agriculture and
initiatives for privatisation and commercialisation of health and education. However, one
cannot simply argue that there is a withdrawal of the Indian state from welfarism in general.
Instead, there are new forms of social policy interventions, sometimes towards targeted
groups within the given population. Such targeted initiatives of the Indian government range
from National Rural Employment Guarantee Act [2005] (NREGA) projects for the poor in
the countryside,\textsuperscript{15} Right to Education Act (2009) for free and compulsory education to all
children between the age of 6-14 years,\textsuperscript{16} expanding the net of reservation in higher
education for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) via the Central Educational Institutions
(Reservation in Admission) Act, 2006,\textsuperscript{17} the recognition of the rights of scheduled tribes and
other forest dwellers by the relevant act in 2006,\textsuperscript{18} and providing space for access to
information under public authorities for transparency and governmental accountability by
the Right to Information Act (2005)\textsuperscript{19} etc. Thus, on one hand, successive Indian
governments have pursued neoliberal economic policies that lopsidedly favour big capital
apart from anti-labour policies like labour market reforms, and anti-people verdicts by the
judiciary\textsuperscript{20} while on the other hand it gives doles to specific sectors of the Indian population.
As Partha Chatterjee incisively argues that the \textit{management} of marginalised groups
(comprising the peasantry, artisans and petty producers in the informal sector) by the ‘Indian
ruling classes’ through doles like anti-poverty programmes under conditions of electoral

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{16} The Gazette of India, Extraordinary (New Delhi: Ministry of Law and Justice, 27\textsuperscript{th} August, 2009).
\textsuperscript{17} The Gazette of India, Extraordinary (New Delhi: Ministry of Law and Justice, 4\textsuperscript{th} January 2007).
\textsuperscript{18} The Gazette of India, Extraordinary (New Delhi: Ministry of Law and Justice, 2\textsuperscript{nd} January 2007).
\textsuperscript{19} The Gazette of India, Extraordinary (New Delhi: Ministry of Law and Justice, 21\textsuperscript{st} June, 2005).
\end{footnotes}
democracy is a given reality in contemporary India, for such doles may prevent the marginalized groups from becoming ‘dangerous classes’ against the state.\textsuperscript{21} I would argue that if we closely follow the Indian experience for the last two decades, then India cannot be simply categorised as a classic case of what Harvey would call ‘neoliberalism’ in theory. Rather, neoliberal model in India is \textit{mimicry} of Euro-American model of neoliberalism as I have argued in the ‘Introduction’. Neoliberalism in India is therefore ‘not quite/white’ like the Euro-American model although the \textit{desire} of the governmental and policy making establishment in India is to be \textit{like} the Euro-American form of neoliberal states.

However, a comprehensive evaluation of neoliberal policies is beyond the scope of this study. Instead, in the present and the following chapter, I would be rather interested to show how Islamism perceives neoliberalism and how it responds to major politico-ideological issues under a neoliberal policy regime in India. In the backdrop of a neoliberal context, this chapter will seek to locate Islamism as a specific politico-ideological discourse of critique of neoliberalism, only among a \textit{section} of Indian Muslims and not among the entire Muslim community in India. Muslims—the core constituency of Islamism is a religious minority in India. Thus, before looking at the politico-ideological articulations of Islamism in India, it would be relevant to first briefly discuss the peculiarities and specificities of the Muslim question in India today and the politico-ideological discourses among Indian Muslims.

Contemporary Muslim Situation in Neoliberal India

Researchers have pointed out that historically, the rights of the religious minorities have been ignored by India’s constitutional makers, which was amply evident from the Constituent Assembly debates. As argued by commentators on minority rights:

‘[t]here was no principled defence in the nationalist vocabulary for safeguards in the case of religious minorities. This marked a crucial shift from the colonial framework where the entitlement of minority groups to special representation and other forms of safeguards had been an established principle. The illegitimacy of safeguards for religious minorities within a broadly shared normative vocabulary was a crucial factor that facilitated their abolition during constitution making.’

Therefore, the policy of affirmative action for religious minorities in the form of ‘special representation’ in the field of politics, education and employment in the colonial administrative system was replaced with a negation of affirmative action policy for religious minorities in post-colonial India. As a result, the little benefits that the Indian Muslims were getting out of ‘special representation’ were denied in the successive post-colonial regimes. Instead, the focus on the policy of affirmative action in the name of ‘positive discrimination’ shifted towards ‘other’ excluded groups like Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes.

If we follow education, poverty, income and employment statistics then Indian Muslims are comparably more deprived than other religious communities along with Dalits and Tribals as observed by the recent Sachar Report. Although the Sachar Report has limitations, for not looking at Muslim landholding and representation in local panchayats,

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the Report observes that “while there is considerable variation in the conditions of Muslims across states, the Community exhibits deficits and deprivation in practically all dimensions of development.”²⁵ In fact, a central government appointed expert committee report has recently shown that Muslims along with Dalits and Tribals are the poorest communities in India, and poverty has increased among the Muslims since economic reforms were launched. 84.5% of Indian Muslim households spend not more than Rs. 20 per day and Rs. 609 per month, and they have been categorised under ‘extremely poor, poor, marginal and vulnerable’ sections. If we also take the middle income group as per the parameters set up by the above report then 13.3% of Indian Muslim households only spend Rs. 1098 per month or Rs. 37 as daily per capita consumption expenditure (DPCE) which is also low given the high persistence of inflation in the economy. This means 97.8% of Indian Muslim households cannot spend more than Rs. 1098 per month or Rs. 37 as daily per capita consumption expenditure (DPCE). Only 2.2% of Indian Muslims, regarded as high income category by the report spends Rs. 2,776 per month or Rs. 93 per day.²⁶ Now given this above mentioned statistics which claims only a meagre 2.2% (2.5% by detailed consumer expenditure survey) of Indian Muslims belong to high income category, it is difficult to argue that Indian Muslims are an affluent community. Clearly, an overwhelming majority of Indian Muslims are poor. Obviously, there are few exceptions like Muslim film stars and sports personalities or a business tycoon like Azim Premji who belong to the upper class elite Indian Muslims. But this minute Muslim elite is not a representative sample for the entire Muslim community in India.

The Muslim political elite are almost negligible, as Muslims do not provide the economic and political leadership in the national mainstream with gross under-representation of Muslims in various legislatures of the states and at the centre.\(^{27}\) Now, if there are few Muslim political leaders at the State and Central legislatures in India, then it also affects the socio-economic development of the community, as the grievances of Muslim constituency are not addressed properly. The Sachar Report conclusively proved that the bulk of Indian Muslims suffer from grave deprivation in social, economic and educational opportunities lacking access to education, health care, employment and other public services. The level of deprivation had gone to such an extent that in certain sectors, Muslims are lagging behind Dalits. So, deprivation affects Muslims more than any other socio-religious groups that have been the conclusion of many previous studies.\(^{28}\) Before these studies on Muslim deprivation, there were very few research studies that present a critique of the current debates on minority rights, ‘which has not adequately addressed the problem of the social and economic deprivation suffered by large sections of Muslims, and in so doing, confined the debate to such issues as preserving the secular and plural character of India, discussing the cultural rights of Muslims, preventing anti-minority violence and holding the state accountable for violent attacks on Muslims.’\(^{29}\) Thus, both the Indian state


and civil society has failed to address the ‘socio-economic rights of Muslims’, and ‘prioritise cultural rights over the social and economic needs of the community.’

The plight of Indian Muslims in neoliberal India according to the Sachar Committee’s findings shatters the myth of ‘Muslim appeasement’, generally propagated by the rightwing and communal organisations like Sangh Parivar and their political outfits like the BJP. A survey of available data and literature on Indian Muslims amply state that Muslims are not only poor but also doubly marginalised in terms of socio-economic backwardness and political marginalisation. The above mentioned research studies and government reports, also show that the Indian Muslims are less figured within ‘regular salaried white or blue collar personnel’ under the tag of ‘organised proletariat’. Rather the Muslim minorities in India are more concentrated within unorganised labour force in the informal sector. As unorganised and informal sector labour force, it is also denied of several rights that an ‘organised labour’ used to get. In this context, the majority of the Muslim population due to its limited base in the country’s upper-middle and middle classes (comprised of public and private sector officials, professionals etc.) in addition, a corresponding absence in the organised working population makes it the ‘other’ in the country’s working class itself. Therefore, if the organised working class constitutes the periphery or margin of the society, the major sections of Indian Muslims definitely constitute a periphery within a periphery.

In this respect, the majority of Indian Muslims are lower and lower-middle classes. The socio-economic situation of Indian Muslims disable them from getting certain rights

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30 Ibid.
and benefits due to their unorganised status as casual workers or among the small and landless peasants in some parts of rural India or as a self-employed group in both urban and rural sectors whereas their educational backwardness hinders them from upward social mobility by preventing access to certain infrastructural benefits. This form of dual hindrances is again reinforced by the communal problem, which further aggravates the (under)development of Indian Muslims. Therefore, Indian Muslims today is an excluded community: exclusion from mainstream general education and employment due to lack of affirmative action and absence of an effective governmental policy for Muslims.

Now, even if the socio-economic backwardness of Indian Muslims is an empirical reality, the Muslim question in India has been traditionally caught up in and around the debates on secularism and communalism. Researchers have pointed out that “an important factor contributing to the nature of the current debate on minority rights is the fact that the Indian state has fallen short of recognising and actively addressing the issue of the socio-economic rights of Muslims.”32 Largely, the Muslim question in India has been trapped into the issues of identity and security with less attention being paid to the aspect of equity by the dominant governmental discourse of policymaking. The importance of socio-economic demands in addressing the Muslim question in India has been also missing within academic circles. While all the aspects of identity, security and equity of the Muslims are interlinked, the historical experience of the post-colonial Indian state has been that of addressing the Muslim question within the ambit of a binary opposition of secular/communal divide. Both the Marxists and Subaltern Studies collective, representing a significant section of progressive academia in India, somehow overlooked the class aspects of the Muslim

question. Instead, they (re)constructed theories on secularism and communalism largely connected to the agenda of a secular project of the Indian state in tackling the issues related to the rights of Indian Muslims.

The issues of *identity* and *security* of Muslims have so far characterized the secular-communal debates and the autonomy of distinct religio-cultural rights for Muslims (eg. Muslim Personal Law, minority institutions etc.), associated with the very spirit of Indian secularism are the major political discourses on the Muslim question in post-colonial India. Rarely do we find the issues of socio-economic deprivation and political marginality of Indian Muslims affecting the contours of political debates in India. In fact, religious fundamentalist discourses around censorship debates of banning the texts of controversial writers, or protests against religious blasphemy and homosexuality or sticking to the demand for applying Sharia law in denying alimony to divorced women like the Shah Bano case\(^{33}\) have traditionally been more audible in public discourses of Indian Muslims than demanding the basic livelihood questions of education and employment from the state.

The Sachar Report’s comment: “[d]espite economic boom Muslims have to bear the brunt of the so called ‘competitive’ forces unleashed by liberalization”\(^{34}\) and “displacement from traditional occupations has contributed to Muslims being deprived of their means of livelihood”\(^{35}\) acknowledges the increasing socio-economic marginalization of the community under neoliberal globalization. Now, it is interesting to note that the political


\(^{34}\) Sachar Report, p. 21.

\(^{35}\) Ibid.
system in India has often tried to address the issues of marginality, exclusion, deprivation and backwardness of weaker sections like Dalits, Tribals, OBCs and women through the mechanisms of varied forms of affirmative action or positive discrimination with a core focus on reservation in education and jobs. In the case of Muslims too, a policy of affirmative action is often repeated within policy debates in neoliberal India. The evidence of a policy of affirmative action towards Muslims is visible in the recommendations and policy suggestions of Sachar Committee Report and a plea for 10% Muslim reservation in education and jobs in Ranganath Misra Commission Report (2007). In India, one must note that the policy of affirmative action including reservation is just a relief and not a transformative change in the affairs of excluded and marginalized groups like Dalits, Tribals, OBCs, Women and Muslims. Therefore, critics of neoliberalism might argue that even if affirmative actions continue, the simultaneous persistence of neoliberal regime in India might just hinder the socio-economic development of the ‘people’ primarily comprising of all marginalized and excluded groups with increasing poverty, inequality, unemployment, deprivation etc. as mentioned earlier in this chapter.

I would argue that in India, more often than not, various excluded groups became content with sops like affirmative action while the status quo of ruling power bloc becomes secured without greater challenge/threat from a popular demand of changing/transforming the system. In such a situation, the hegemonic politics of neoliberalism along with its ruling power bloc interests become dominant and the counter-hegemonic politics of the ‘people’ becomes weaker in offering a simultaneous politics of resistance and social transformation. But how can a politics of the ‘people’ challenge neoliberalism, if the ‘people’ are not able to identify it as an antagonistic frontier, if the ‘people’ are fragmented into several particularist
demands and if the ‘people’ are not conceptualized as a wider equivalential construction accommodating varied particularist demands into a collective political actor. In this respect, I am interested to explore such a ‘politics of particularism’ and its several particularist demands in the shape of Islamism and its challenge/critique/opposition to the neoliberal status-quo on one hand and also would like to expose the limits of Islamist populism under a neoliberal policy regime in India. But before explicitly doing that, I will briefly analyze the major politico-ideological articulations among Indian Muslims within which the politico-ideological discourses of Islamism often expressed as a ‘politics of Muslim particularism’ can be located.

**Politico-Ideological Articulations among Indian Muslims**

As discussed in the ‘Introduction’ that till 1970s, a significant part of the Muslim world was governed by progressive and secular forces. By contrast, a progressive secularist discourse was historically, never a dominant political discourse among Indian Muslims.\(^{36}\) There were, however, a few exceptions, like a small section of Leftwing Muslims associated with the formative stages of Communist Party of India and Leftwing cultural fronts like Progressive Writer’s movement during pre-independence period.\(^{37}\) Then there was a sense of ‘Islamic egalitarianism, nationalism and socialism’ among a section of North-Indian Muslims.\(^{38}\) A few Muslim moderates like Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Mohammad Mujeeb, M.A. Ansari and Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani supported ‘composite nationalism’ with

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\(^{36}\) For a theoretical assessment on the lack of a progressive political articulation among Indian Muslims in the post-colonial political discourses, see Maidul Islam, ‘Posing the Muslim Question in India: A Leftwing Perspective’, *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, Annual No. 6 (September 2009), pp. 66-79.


an agenda of a multicultural and multi-religious secular India, clearly distinct from the Muslim League’s demand for Pakistan as a separate nation-state based on ‘Muslim nationalism’.

However, it should be borne in mind that although Indian Muslims never had a dominant progressive Leftwing political articulation within the community throughout post-independent India’s political history, yet it has always favoured secular political formations while maintaining distance from the communal political forces of both majoritarian and minority variety. But the limits of secularism in an Indian context seem to be exposing its weaknesses in ensuring socio-economic and political justice for Muslims. The political reality for Muslims in India is represented by the concurrence of communal riots with Muslims being the greatest victims and then the denial of justice to Muslims. The political system fails to punish the riot criminals due to non-implementation of officially appointed investigation committee reports like the Sri Krishna Commission Report (1998) regarding the Mumbai riots of 1992-93 or the clean chit given to Narendra Modi on his involvement in the state-sponsored Gujarat genocide in 2002 by the Nanavati Commission Report (2008) and ignoring the Liberhan Commision Report (2009) to book top BJP leadership, guilty of Babri mosque demolition. The problem of communal discrimination is only reinforced by the worsening socio-economic conditions of an overwhelming majority of Indian Muslims.

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under neoliberalism. As a result of the peculiar and complex political circumstances, where an overwhelming majority of Indian Muslims are situated only as alienated and persecuted victims of the political system, the presence of an Islamist political articulation as an assertive political choice can be noticed among a minute section of Muslims in India. Recently, we have noticed protests against Bush’s visit to India in 2006 and in the aftermath of Saddam’s execution in early 2007 among Indian Muslims. The core mobilizations of these protest rallies were from several Muslim organisations featuring Islamist political appeals and Islamic symbolisms. These are only glimpses of an Islamist political articulation among Indian Muslims that are organized around a community identification of Muslim victimhood represented by Saddam’s execution by Bush led ‘American imperialism’.

In this context, a significant section of Indian Muslims identify with the position of what Akeel Bilgrami would call ‘moderate Muslims’, for whom Islam gives them ‘a sense of autonomy and identity’. However, these moderate Muslims have ‘uncritically and indiscriminately embraced’ Islam ‘out of demoralization and defeat’ in the face of western dominance during colonial history and in recent times. Such uncritical acceptance of Islam, argues Bilgrami has often dominated the political actions of moderate Muslims that has not taken them anywhere. Moreover, complicity on the part of moderate Muslims in assessing ‘the relative merits’ of Islam’s ‘diverse doctrinal commitments’, or working ‘towards its reform’, or to ‘oppose the inviolability of the Sharia’ has created conditions where ‘a depoliticized Islam’ with its appeal and relevance that are ‘spiritualist and universalist rather than to the polity’ could not be constructed. In such a situation, Islam remains ‘perpetually

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exploitable by the fundamentalist political factions’, whom the moderate Muslims should ideally ‘oppose’.\footnote{All quotes in the paragraph are from Akeel Bilgrami, ‘What Is a Muslim? Fundamental Commitment and Cultural Identity’, in Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (eds.), \textit{Identities} (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 215.} Therefore, by following Bilgrami we can argue that the ‘moderate Muslims’ by being complicit in uncritically accepting Islam have created conditions of possibilities for the appeal of Islamism as an ‘available political discourse’ among Indian Muslims.

In a neoliberal policy regime, I would classify three possible strands of Muslim political leadership, corroborated with three distinct politico-ideological articulations within the community. \textit{The first group is the token representation of Muslim leadership in those mainstream political parties who run political affairs with an agenda of neoliberal consensus}. However, in most cases, this political leadership among Muslims come from secular political parties than the communal BJP, although BJP also has some minority faces including members of parliament and even ministers during the BJP led NDA government at the centre during 1998-2004. The political leadership emerging out of this kind of collaborationist group with neoliberalism is the representative of power bloc and its political articulation can be called a \textit{power bloc articulation} arguing either in favour of neoliberal status quo or at best not fundamentally opposed to neoliberalism with a protest politics. So, the dominant political tendency both within and outside the Muslim community is to either support neoliberalism or just remain indifferent to it.

\textit{The second group has an agenda of ‘Muslim particularism’ with only community specific demands}. In this respect, the politics of Islamism is also nothing short of a \textit{politics of particularism} with specific narrow political interests for its constituency. Since, the politics of Islamism and Muslim particularism is enmeshed into theological discourses we
can call it a *theo-political articulation* among Indian Muslims. This theo-political articulation is a broad spectrum of several small Muslim political parties expressing Muslim sectarianism like IUML (Indian Union Muslim League, active in Kerala), AIMIM (All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimin, active in Hyderabad) and United Democratic Front (UDF) in Assam or small pressure groups like Majlis-e-Mushawarat, Muslim Personal Law Board, Babri Masjid Action Committee, etc. or religious organisations with political overtones like Jamiat-Ulama-i-Hind or Islamism of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH).

This politics of Islamism among a small section of Indian Muslims are nonetheless fringe elements but it has the potentiality of creating massive impact over the political discourses with their sensationalism, anti-imperialist rhetoric and Islamist appeal to find its niche audience among the Muslim community after each terrorist attacks corresponded with the diabolic rightwing *Hindutva* assertion raising alarm over ‘Islamic terrorism’, vilifying and targeting the whole Muslim community as anti-national. On the other hand, vast sections of Indian Muslims feel alienated by the overwhelming suspicion towards minorities as potential terrorists. In this case, the political strategy of terrorism which is mostly backed and funded by outside agencies like Islamist extremists based in neighbouring countries has no concrete demands unlike the first group of *Muslim particularists* which raises community specific demands related to various issues of socio-religious and political importance for Indian Muslims through democratic means. The terrorists often have abstract justifications and represent a ‘politics of revenge’ with no clear objective of uplift of socio-economic conditions or betterment of livelihood prospects for Indian Muslims.

We can call the politics of Islamism/Muslim particularism as ‘anti-hegemonic’ and not ‘counter-hegemonic’ to neoliberal consensus since I would argue that anti-hegemonic
politics only articulates a politics of resistance/opposition/challenge to an existing order of status quo while counter-hegemonic politics represents a ‘politics of alternative/ transformation’. The politics of particularism is a marginal political discourse in India in general and among Indian Muslims in particular. This politics of particularism can be best described as a politics of exclusion which wants to include itself in the power bloc by attacking it from outside without having an agenda of social revolution in the Marxist sense of the term. This kind of politics celebrates its own marginality and generally tries to negotiate with the power bloc. This politics of Muslim particularism often celebrates the conditions of excluded nature of its Muslim constituents while sitting on the margins and then attack the power bloc from ‘outside’ but without having a radical agenda of social transformation. This politico-ideological position may be called as politics of altered status-quo (representing a mirror image of neoliberal status-quo) that vacillates between collaboration and opposition to the dominant power-bloc.

In the present and the following chapter, I would discuss how the available political vocabulary provided by Islamism against neoliberalism, imperialism and communalism have been adopted by a section of Muslims as a tool of protest in the midst of a political void due to an absent progressive leadership among the Muslim community. I would address the issue of Islamism as a variant of politics of Muslim particularism by taking up the case study of JIH in the next chapter. This Islamist political articulation relies on a scriptural-dogmatic understanding of Islamic religion and cultural practices. In certain contexts, Islamism also becomes an anti-establishment protest ideology as pointed out in the previous chapter in a world of ‘imperialist globalization’. In this chapter, I would demonstrate the particular anti-establishment rhetoric of Jamaati Islamism in India.
Thirdly, there can be a possibility of constructing *progressive political articulations* among Indian Muslims that is currently missing in the dominant political discourses of the country. Various issues of Muslim minorities have not been prominent enough within the progressive political discourses of the Indian Left. That is to say, a Leftwing political agenda which also incorporates the democratic demands of socio-economic and political nature of the Muslim community apart from its core commitments of anti-imperialism, anti-communalism and socialist ideals is currently *unavailable* in India in a Laclauian sense. Both the Leftwing political articulation among Indian Muslims and *serious engagement* with Muslim issues within the Left has been so far missing in the post-colonial political discourses in India. In other words, the ‘Left’ within the ‘Muslim community’ and the ‘Muslim question’ within the ‘Left’ are *absent political discourses*.

Similarly, one can also notice the absence of a strong rightwing political discourse among Indian Muslims which is evident from the weak organizational strength of communal and Islamist groups like Muslim League, Jamaat-e-Islami etc. That is to say, both the Leftwing and the rightwing political discourses among Muslims in India are either absent or at best have scanty presence.

A prominent progressive political discourse could have been constructed by the initiatives of secular-democratic, liberal and progressive sections among Indian Muslims on the one hand and initiatives of Leftwing politics of India in trying to address various problems of Muslim minorities. Furthermore, the dual and combined effort of both the progressive Muslims and the Indian Left could have constructed a counter-hegemonic Universalist political project in order to rally not only Muslims but all ‘other’ excluded groups like Dalits, Tribals, women and Muslims besides the core support base of the Left:
workers and peasants, all of whom are victims of neoliberal policy regime in India. Today, we can notice a crisis of leftwing progressive political articulation among the Muslims in India. The liberal-secular Muslims have been silent in terms of articulation and intervention in politics in general. One can hardly hear them in the public discourse talking about a progressive politics that would organize Muslims around class lines or at least that would try to address the socio-economic concerns of the community.

This is not to say that Indian Muslims have been largely mobilized by the Islamist ideology. As pointed out earlier, an overwhelming majority of Muslims in India neither support majoritarian nor minority communalism nor Islamism. But, the *conditions of possibilities* for Islamist political articulations as a dominant political discourse can become a reality if the democratic demands of Indian Muslims are not fulfilled by the political system. In this context, Islamism has an appeal for a section of Indian Muslims with its rhetoric for ‘justice’ and ‘equality’ and its critique to the present policy regime of neoliberal capitalism. In the following subsection of this chapter, I would narrate such Islamist rhetoric against neoliberal capitalism and how Islamism in India tries to construct an antagonistic frontier against neoliberalism.

*Against (Neoliberal) Capitalist Globalization, Imperialism and Indian State: The Rhetoric of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH)*

In the recent past, the JIH has been staunchly opposed to the neoliberal economic policies of the government and argues against economic liberalization, which it equates with ‘anti-people measures’. In this regard, its rhetoric is targeted very much against both neoliberalism and the State as an agency to carry forward such a policy framework. This is amply clear from the declaration of Jamaat’s latest policy and programme:
‘The Jamaat would point out the ill effects of globalization and oppose its offshoots, i.e. government’s anti-
people measures like FDI, SEZ, abolition of subsidies and the privatization of health care, education and other
services. It would emphasize that it is the responsibility of the government to provide the citizens with basic
necessities of life. It would oppose anti labour legislation. Interest based loans and wrong policies of
government have compelled the farmers to commit suicides.’

It must be noted that now the Jamaat is not arguing only for its ‘Muslim constituency’ but expressing concerns for both labour and peasants, which the prevalent
literature on JIH has ignored. In a Resolution at its All India Members Meet on 28th October
2002, the JIH expressed concern over ‘worsening economic condition of the country as
consequences of the government’s recent unsatisfactory economic policy.’ The Jamaat
identifies the economic policies of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation concretely
expressed in terms of ‘foreign direct investment’ (FDI), ‘special economic zones’ (SEZ),
‘abolition of subsidies’, ‘disinvestment’ of public sector and ‘privatisation’ of health and
education as ‘anti-people’. It also protests against what it calls ‘anti-labour legislation’. It
also criticizes the policy of ‘free economy’ to foreign multinationals to which it describes as
‘neo-colonialism’. The Jamaat clearly argues that such policies have a negative impact on
the economy resulting into ‘farmer suicides’ and closure of indigenous small scale
industries. It further argues that the present government policy is compromising the ‘national
interest’ with the import of ‘foreign’, ‘luxury’ and ‘unnecessary goods’. In this context, the
Jamaat criticizes the government policy of privatization of public sectors with the
‘disinvestments policy.’ Finally, blaming ‘the Government’s indifference to the values of
equity and justice’ the Jamaat prescribes that the government should address the values of

42 JIH Policy and Programme, p. 18.
‘equality’ and ‘justice’, which the ‘economic principles of Islam’ try to articulate by promoting ‘equilibrium’ and ‘moderation’.\(^{44}\)

The Jamaat has identified ‘imperialism’ in general and ‘American imperialism’ in particular as the main cause of the miseries of the world and that of the Indian people. In fact, the Jamaat classifies four different strategies by which imperialism dominates, exploits and maintains its hegemony in the world. Such strategies of imperialism according to Jamaat are of the following: a) Economic globalization within the structure of capitalist system b) Direct and indirect military interventions c) Unjust use of international economic and political forums and d) cultural invasion through materialism and consumerism. The peculiar nature of such anti-imperialist and anti-American overtone can be noticed in the latest policy and programme of Jamaat-e-Islami in India.\(^{45}\)

Traditionally, Jamaat is characterized with an absence of a critique to the capitalist system in general and imperialist plunder of developing economies and the pervasive economic impact of imperialism in particular. In the past, neither has it made any significant criticism of big capital and private property nor has it accepted the socialist model as an alternative to the maladies of the prevalent socio-economic system. What Maududi’s Jamaat proposes is that of a ‘middle path’ that neither follows capitalism nor socialism.\(^{46}\) Moreover, Jamaat is only critical to the direct imperialist interventions in the Muslim world and thus maintained a silence when similar imperialist aggression takes place in any non-Muslim country. The political ideology of Islamism, constructed by Jamaat’s founder—Maududi was more based on cultural orientation rather than directly addressing socio-economic

\(^{44}\) Ibid.
\(^{45}\) JIH Policy and Programme, pp. 4-8. See Appendix 1.
\(^{46}\) Maududi, The Economic Problem of Man and Its Islamic Solution; Ahmad, ‘Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia’, p. 489.
issues. Furthermore, Maududi’s rhetoric of God’s sovereignty in an ideal Islamic state was more argued from administrative point of view rather than a deeper philosophical and political engagement with the concept of ‘god’s sovereignty’ over its subjects—the living beings. As Faisal Devji rightly points out that '[t]he founder of the Jamaat-e-Islami...was dedicated to displacing sovereignty altogether by handing it over to God and turning politics into a merely administrative matter.'

Thus, instead of critiquing British colonialism as a political economy project that led to disastrous economic impact on India, Maududi was more interested in highlighting the ‘moral’ and ‘ethical evils’ like women’s liberation, secularism and nationalism that according to him were products of European colonialism. According to him, the alienation of Muslims from Islamic religio-cultural practices has resulted in economic and political marginalization of Indian Muslims.

However, the latest policy resolution of Jamaat signifies a significant shift from Maududi where it makes a substantial critique of the ‘capitalist system’ and addressing economic issues of the day besides its regular emphasis on cultural issues like ‘nudity’ and ‘consumerism’. Moreover, in the contemporary unipolar world dominated by the imperialist hegemony of United States—the most aggressive western power, Islamism can be characterized as an ideology of anti-Americanism as evident from the policy resolutions of Jamaat. However, the ‘anti-globalization’, ‘anti-imperialist’ and ‘anti-American’ position of the Jamaat with its emphasis on critiquing the West is not a radical break but consistent with an anti-western polemic that Jamaat has maintained right from its early days of 1940s and 1950s.

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The present critique of globalization in the Islamist discourse of JJH is actually a continuation of its original anti-western position while commenting on secularism, capitalism, socialism, nationalism and consumerist materialism. Thus, one cannot simply put the Islamist discourse as a particular kind of an ‘anti-imperialist’ politics but rather an ‘anti-western’ politics that seeks to challenge the hegemonic models of western modernity: ‘globalized modernity’ in the current context being only one of them. This particular form of anti-western politico-ideological manifestation of Jamaat simply negates western modernity as *jahiliya* (ignorance) and argues in favour of an alternative Islamic modernity that would emancipate humanity as a whole.49 This tension between a liberal version of Islam often informed and indebted to western modernity with an Islamist assertion for Puritanism is an important feature of the making of recent Muslim history. As Faisal Devji has put it succinctly, ‘[i]f an eminent liberal like Sayyid Ahmad Khan had made a pastoral ideal of the disordered mystical landscape, seeing it as a kind of playground for Islam turned into a purely religious identity, fundamentalist eminences like the Pakistani Mawdudi and the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb made it a landscape of exile from an urban order now identified with ideological corruption, or of the new *jahiliyya* (a period of ignorance historically identified with pre-Islamic Arabia), as they called it.’50 Thus, important continuity and discontinuity of Jamaat can be noticed from say its ideological articulations in the middle decades of the 20th century (when it was primarily responding to the nation-state)51 and its contemporary opposition to global capitalism under a neoliberal policy regime in India.

49 Maududi, *Islam and Ignorance*. The argument about imagining multiple modernities in the world with western and Islamic versions with its incommensurable views can be found in Euben, *Enemy in the Mirror*.


51 Ahmad, *Islamism and Democracy in India*; Agwani, *Islamic Fundamentalism in India*; Ahmad, ‘Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia’, pp. 503-506
The rhetoric against ‘neoliberalism’ and ‘imperialism’ can be also noticed in the ‘observations’ and ‘resolutions’ of a one day seminar organised by Jamaat titled as ‘India’s Foreign Policy: Past, Present and Future’ on 10th March 2007 at New Delhi, with participants from several Muslim organisations including JIH, Jamiat-I-Ulema-i-Hind, Alhle-e-Hadees, Shia organizations and Ibnae Qadeem Deoband represented by Maulana Muzammilull Haq. According to a JIH press statement, the seminar observed that in matters of India’s economic policy in the ‘first four decades of independence’, how the ‘principles of self-reliance’ helped India to acquire ‘a degree of manoeuvrability in foreign policy based on principle of non-alignment.’ In this respect, the JIH’s understanding of contemporary international situation is that of unipolar world dominated by US supremacy and ‘Islamophobia’ and how India has shifted from its previously held non-aligned foreign policy to bandwagon with the US.52

It is important to recognize here that the JIH tries to make a link between domestic economic policy and foreign policy as it believes that foreign policy is ‘a reflection and outcome of the policies pursued by government at home and thus has a direct impact on the daily lives of citizens [which] must be rooted in the democratic aspirations of citizens.’ According to Jamaat, foreign policy ‘must be rooted in building a society that is based on economic, social and political equality and is free from all forms of discrimination where people are free to chart their own destinies without internal or external force or coercion. Such a policy must seek to defend and advance the right to independence and self-determination of nations and towards this end promote a multi-polar world order.’53 It critiques the Indian foreign policy for being ‘out of sync with these aspirations’ and to

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52 See Appendix 2.
‘successfully evolve strategies for struggles for a people’s foreign policy.’ In this respect, the Jamaat calls ‘for an honest debate within the political parties and civil society as it is apparent that the foreign policy cannot be determined by the Indian elite who are willing to collaborate with the American Imperial project.’ It also appeals ‘to the people of India to awaken to the dangers inherent in this paradigm shift and launch a struggle to safeguard the sovereignty and independence of the Indian nation.’

Under these circumstances, the JIH proposes that ‘India’s policy in South Asia should be to strengthen SAARC and build [its] neighbourhood as a bastion of peace and prosperity [which] will prove to be of immense mutual benefit for all the South Asian people.’ The seminar also hailed ‘[t]he historic victory against Israeli aggression in Lebanon by the Hezbollah led Lebanese National resistance, the strengthening of the National resistance in Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan and the world wide opposition and protests against war and occupation’ which according to JIH ‘is forcing US imperialism into a defensive position’ while supporting ‘the National Liberation movements and Struggles of Peoples’ against aggression by the US-Israel and their allies and by other expansionist powers.’

With regard to major oppositions to the current nature of Indian foreign policy, the JIH demands that the Indian government should enunciate a ‘sovereign independent foreign policy’ and which should be ‘part of the anti-colonial legacy of freedom struggle’ since ‘[t]he present tilt with US Imperialism will prove detrimental to the cause of the Indian nation.’ However, the Jamaat identifies India as ‘an emerging Economic power’. In this respect, it argues that ‘India should resolve to go ahead with the Indo-Pak-Iran Oil and Gas pipeline in spite of opposition from USA’ since it would essentially resolve the ‘energy

54 Ibid.
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid.
needs’ of a ‘growing economy’ like India. The Jamaat also asks for a foreign policy which would strive for ‘[b]uilding equality of nations and respect for human dignity within countries that eliminates all forms of racism, xenophobia, religious and social prejudices and demonisation of all peoples.’ It also demands that ‘[a]ll states [should] sign and ratify the Rome Treaty of the International Criminal Court, especially the USA and Israel…for a genuine and just settlement of the Palestinian peoples’ right to self-determination…[and] securing the early, complete and permanent withdrawal of US and NATO forces from Iraq and Afghanistan.’ The Jamaat also forthrightly opposes ‘the US war designs on Iran’ and demands that ‘the Indian government should not abide by the US led sanctions on Iran.’ It specifically describes Israel as ‘an Occupying Colonizing power in defiance of the laws and the will of the International community’ and therefore demands that the Indian government should end ‘all Defence-Military ties with Israel as it is an Apartheid-Zionist State which discriminates on the basis of Race and Religion.’ It further advises the Indian government to ‘[w]ork towards Alternative Economic Policies based on peoples’ economies for prosperity and increased co-operation and socialisation, and rejecting those that are anti-people and neo-liberal led market policies, which enrich a few corporations and countries.’

The JIH has recently organised an ‘Anti Capitalist Imperialism Campaign’. On this occasion, in its pamphlet, it has been critical to the new economic policies after 1991, which ‘neglects the rural economy’, ‘reduces public spending on social welfare sectors’, ‘privatises the public sector’, ‘creates unemployment’, and serves the interests of wealthy elites instead of the poor. According to the same pamphlet of Jamaat, such an economic policy of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation is having negative impacts in the country with

57 Ibid.
58 See Appendix 3.
‘growing inequality’, rural distress and ‘farmer suicides’. Similarly, in the same pamphlet, the JIH views that the policies of ‘economic liberalisation’ also contributed to the crisis of public health and education in India. In the same pamphlet, the JIH also argues that under such an economic policy regime, ‘displacement’ of ordinary citizens is a grave reality in India. It specifically targets the special economic zones as the prime reason for displacement and exploitation of poor, tribals, rural folk and workers in contemporary India. It also asserts that such economic policies have also resulted into ‘environmental crises’.

The JIH held the current economic policies in contemporary India responsible for ‘western cultural aggression’ under the auspices of ‘imperialism’, which affected Indian ‘lifestyles’ and ‘morality’ along with the ‘exploitation’ of ‘female bodies for commercial gains’ while increasing ‘atrocities on women’.

Finally, the Jamaat suggests that India’s ‘surrender to capitalist empire’ has resulted into a shift in foreign policy which is described by the Jamaat pamphlet in the following words: “Our surrender to the Capitalist Empire has forced us to withdraw from our traditional policy of non alignment and the consequent leadership role. We are forced to support the tyrannies and atrocities of big powers which are against our dignity and sovereignty and against the moral standing rooted in our great historical traditions.”

In the light of all these understandings on varied issues of contemporary India, the Jamaat proposes an ‘Islamic alternative’ to ensure ‘justice’, ‘moderation’, ‘freedom’, ‘growth’, ‘equitable distribution’ and wellbeing of Indian people in general. It also suggests

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59 See Appendix 4.
60 See Appendix 5.
61 See Appendix 6.
63 Ibid.
that Islamic teachings would resolve ‘poverty’, ‘inequality’, ‘starvation’, ‘misery’ and ‘environmental crises’. But what is the nature of this ‘Islamic Alternative’? The Jamaat argues that ‘Capitalism puts economic growth and capital in front and human being is given a back-seat while in Islam, Human and Humanity is the top priority. Growth and Capital are for the service to Humanity. So the Human concern should always take the top position and all concerns including the concerns of Growth and Development should be secondary.’ The Islamic alternative that JIH proposes is close to the scheme of welfare state where the state has a major role to play in the collective well being of its citizens taking care of basic necessities of food, clothing, shelter, education and health.

The JIH also justifies an interest free Islamic society by arguing that interest ‘helps in concentration of wealth and stops the flow of wealth from rich to poor’. According to Jamaat, ‘Islam prohibits illicit speculation since it engages the capital in unproductive activities and discourages the employment generating productive activities.’ Whether such a society based on what Islamists call ‘Islamic economics’ would be viable or not is a matter of debate. However, the vision of such an ‘Islamic alternative’ is discussed here briefly to understand what kind of alternative economic arrangements are being envisioned by Jamaati Islamism. The JIH also claims that the prophetic teachings of Islam would resolve the ‘problems of consumerism and environmental crisis.’

The JIH urges the ‘people of India to ponder over the teachings of Islam’ as it thinks that Islam ‘is the name of the will and desire of [the] Creator and Sustainer’ besides being

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64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
68 Ibid.
part of India’s ‘national heritage.’ The Jamaat also wishes that ‘the noble teachings of Islam are considered while formulating the policies of the country; so that the fruits of progress reach to everyone’ while ‘poverty, starvation, miseries and ignorance are vanished’ and the ‘country becomes the focal point of equity and justice along with growth and development.’ In this respect, the Jamaat hopes that by following the teachings of Islam, the country grows ‘into a perfect model of welfare and wellbeing for the whole world to follow.’

Assertive rhetorical critique against ‘capitalistic-imperialist looting and plunder’, ‘Indian ruling class’ and ‘wealthy and elites’ can be noticed in a pamphlet of Solidarity Youth Movement (SYM), the youth wing of JIH in the Indian state of Kerala. According to this pamphlet, both Desi (local/national) and foreign ‘exploitative sections are flagrantly violating fundamental human rights’ whereas ‘[t]he living conditions of the overwhelming majority of people are extremely pathetic.’ It claims that the ‘entire society has turned out to become the victim of an oppressive state controlled by vested interests of wealthy and elite.’ In this regard, Solidarity believes that ‘the resources usurped by the powerful and monopolistic rightfully belong to the victims, the people alone.’ The pamphlet further asserts that ‘[i]t is meaningless to call a society free, if it’s basic and just needs like fresh air, fresh water, food, clothes, shelter, medication, education etc. are not fulfilled.’ But what according to SYM is freedom and what is its politico-ideological vision of a ‘free society’? For SYM, the notion of ‘freedom’ is inherently related to freedom from ‘imperial exploitation’ and ‘capitalism’.69

69 Ibid.
70 Excerpts from SYM pamphlet: ‘Oceans without waves, are they beautiful and captivating? What about youths without a revolutionary zeal?’ collected from JIH National Headquarters in Delhi on 02/12/2008. See Appendix 7.
The SYM believes that India ‘has not yet realized freedom in its genuine sense’ despite the fact that ‘the colonial rule of British had been disbanded.’ Thus, the post-independent India has failed to fulfil ‘aspirations and hopes’ of the common man. It further points out that the government has proved to be an ‘utter failure’ to protect ‘the fundamental rights and interests of common man upheld by the Constitution’. It argues, ‘[e]ven after kicking out the British, we could never see the Indian government adopting socio-economic policies grounded in the realities of our land. We are still running after failed ideologies and perspectives engendering exploitation…[T]he Indian ruling class is deviating from its stated objectives day by day…Solidarity views with grave concern the contemporary scenario of global, monopolistic corporations taking over the reigns of governments. In this regard, Solidarity [is] trying to play a pioneering role as a social force capable of moving the government to act according to the interests of the people.’

It is interesting to note that even today, the SYM does not see a fundamental change of common people’s everyday lived experiences from a ‘British colonial India’ to an independent/post-colonial India as described in its pamphlet. In this sense, it believes that there is not a fundamental difference between the conditions of colonialism and post-colonialism, where the latter is continuing the same policies of the former with ‘neo-colonial’ interventions of ‘multinational corporations’ and ‘imperialism’ in India. The SYM claims that its political strategy ‘synthesizes struggle against injustice with constructive efforts to uplift the downtrodden and to provide the poor with basic amenities of life’. Moreover, it believes in the ‘philosophy’ of ‘struggle’ when ‘acquiescence to cultural imperialism and neo-colonialism has become the norm in social life.’ It further claims that

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71 Excerpts from SYM pamphlet: ‘Oceans without waves’. 
while undertaking a number of political campaigns and initiatives it has been able ‘to enlighten people about the predicament of contemporary life, [which] no doubt raised important questions regarding governance, morality and development, thus inaugurating a new era of enlightened civic consciousness.’ The Solidarity claims that many of its activities have ‘infuriated the ruling-elitist classes’ but none can ignore the questions raised by it. It also claims that the issues and events of ‘international, national and local relevance’ engaged by it ‘will have important bearings upon the future of Kerala.’ M. Sajid, former secretary of SYM in Kerala is an ideologue associated with JIH. He was temporarily stationed in Jamaat’s national headquarters in Delhi for organising an ‘anti-imperialist campaign’ when I first met him. In my field interview, he was critical about ‘neoliberalism’ in India and ‘capitalist model of development’, which, according to him is fundamentally political in nature, class-centric, ‘displaces’ people and is ‘anti-poor’.

In the context of 2009 parliamentary elections in India, the JIH came out with its own ‘people’s manifesto.’ Although it did not contest the election, yet it came out with such a manifesto to put forward their views and demands before the political mainstream of India. In this manifesto it says that “[t]he Jamaat believes in a political system that is based on ethical values. It envisages a system of governance wherein every citizen enjoys equal opportunities and justice which is free and easily accessible. Jamaat believes that peace and justice are interdependent. So for a peaceful society we need to have our systems strongly founded in the values of justice. The measures enlisted in this manifesto, formulate a small step towards the realization of Jamaat’s vision of a value-based welfare state. In the coming

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72 Ibid.
73 Interview with M. Sajid in Delhi, 02/12/2008. See Appendix 8.
elections Jamaat-e-Islami Hind will support those alliances or fronts, parties and candidates who commit to implement these demands.”

In the same manifesto, under the plank of ‘Development’, the JIH argues in favour of ‘just distribution of resources among all sections of society’. Moreover, it also argued for amending the Land Acquisition Act and mandatory ‘compensation’ for land losers, modification of SEZ Act including the labour laws and introduction of cheap and interest free housing for poor and middle classes. On ‘Economy’, the Jamaat manifesto argues for zero percent interest for farmers and poor entrepreneurs, minimal dependence on IMF-World Bank and interest free banking. On the issue of ‘health’, the Jamaat manifesto argues for enacting Right to Healthcare Act, increasing budgetary allocation for health, enacting a Health Regulation Act to check ‘malpractices’ by ‘corporate hospitals’. It also argues against ‘privatization’ of healthcare in India. On ‘Education’, the Jamaat manifesto argues for more government spending in education, free education and compulsory education for all in mother tongue, regulation of fee structure in self-financing institutions, benefits for minority institutions and infrastructural development for Urdu medium schools. It also argues against Foreign Direct Investment [FDI] in education. In the field of ‘Agriculture’, the JIH manifesto argues for promoting the agrarian sector, interest free loans to needy farmers, ban on Future Trading and Forwarding in agriculture, and increase the budgetary allocation in agriculture. It also argues for revoking the Indo-US knowledge

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75 Ibid. See Appendix 9.
76 Ibid.
77 Ibid.
78 Ibid.
initiative on agriculture apart from regulating ‘contract farming by corporate groups.’ On ‘Industries’, the Jamaat manifesto demands for subsidizing cottage industries, checks for pollution control and bailout packages for certain ‘sinking’ industries. Besides such demands, the Jamaat is strongly opposed to privatisation of public sector and FDI in retail.

It is evident from the above rhetoric of the JIH so far discussed in this chapter, that it believes that the neoliberal regime is currently enjoying hegemony in the governmental affairs of the country. It also suggests that the neoliberal regime after 1991 had a negative impact on the Indian ‘people’ and thus recognizes the chain of antagonistic frontiers as enemies of the ‘people’ in ‘neoliberal capitalism’, ‘American imperialism’, ‘corporate multinationals’, ‘Indian state’ and ‘Indian ruling class’. In this respect, it is interesting to note that the rhetoric of JIH uses the victimhood of the ‘people’ in general under a neoliberal policy regime and not simply arguing in terms of ‘Muslim victimhood’. Thus, it harps on the fact that it is not simply articulating a protest politics on the part of Indian Muslims but also on behalf of working class, peasantry, Tribals, women etc. In other words, it tries to articulate a politics of universalism against the chain of antagonistic frontiers in the name of ‘people’ than merely arguing for a narrow sectarian politics, which I have previously termed as ‘Muslim particularism’. Now, its particular identification of the chain of antagonistic frontiers as enemy of the ‘people’ is the condition of possibility for larger political mobilisation. As Laclau points out, “[t]he presence of a frontier separating the oppressive regime from the rest of society is the very condition of the universalization of the demands via equivalences (in Marx’s words: a social sector has to become a general ‘crime’ for the

79 Ibid.
80 Ibid.
aims of society as a whole to emerge).”\textsuperscript{81} In this respect, the JIH clearly identifies neoliberalism, imperialism, Indian state and ruling classes as the ‘general crime’, which is responsible for the ‘misery’ of the ‘people’.

However, Islamist assertion in India with the rhetoric of ‘deprivation’, ‘dispossession’ and ‘dislocation’ of Muslims is not new. Before the emergence of Jamaat-e-Islami in 1941, Gooptu discovered the traces of ‘resurgent Islam’ with its rhetoric of ‘religious assertion’ and ‘religious identity’ as the metaphor of ‘Muslim decline’ and ‘victimhood’ among the Muslim urban poor and Muslim artisans right from late nineteenth century until 1930s.\textsuperscript{82} In the post-colonial context, what actually changed from those Islamist rhetoric and ‘anti-colonialism’ of Khilafat movement\textsuperscript{83} and the identification of local indigenous ruling classes as the target of Muslim politics is the change of antagonistic frontiers from ‘colonialism’ to ‘neoliberal capitalism’, ‘American imperialism’ and the ‘Indian State’ as evident from the rhetoric of Jamaat. In this respect, Jamaati Islamism is articulating a new set of political demands that was never heard before in the history of Islamist movements in India. Therefore, today, the ontological question of Islamism is not simply related to re-articulation of religion in political terms but how it exists by creating a chain of new antagonistic frontiers in an era of neoliberal hegemony.

Now, Laclau and Mouffe argue that the ‘resistances to the transnational corporations’ and ‘tyranny of market forces’ needs to first ‘establish a frontier and define an adversary’, which the JIH has clearly done by identifying a chain of antagonistic frontiers as mentioned above. But Laclau and Mouffe also suggest that ‘this is not enough. One also needs to know for what one is fighting, what kind of society one wants to establish’, which

\textsuperscript{81} Laclau, ‘Constructing Universality’, p. 302.
\textsuperscript{82} Gooptu, \textit{The Politics of the Urban Poor in Early Twentieth-Century India}, pp. 244-277.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., p. 278
we have not yet seen clearly in the rhetoric of JIH even if it briefly points to the idea of an ‘Islamic alternative’ based on ‘equity’ and ‘justice’. As we have learnt from Laclau and Mouffe that ‘without a vision about what could be a different way of organizing social relations’, anti-establishment political movements ‘will remain of a defensive nature.’ 84 But in India, Islamism is a protest ideology without a replacing vision of an ‘Islamic State’ like in Bangladeshi Islamism (as we would notice in the following chapters). In this respect, I would call Islamism in India as an anti-hegemonic politics, where politics of resistance and negotiations with the power bloc for some alternative policies are present but politics of social transformation in the form of their cherished vision of an Islamic state is absent. Whereas in Bangladesh, I would argue that it is counter-hegemonic to Kemalists/secularists like old national-populism of Awami League and the Bangladeshi Left with an agenda of Islamic social transformation as we would see in Chapters 4 and 5. But does ‘anti-hegemonic politics’ of Islamism in India necessarily be ‘defensive’ in character? In this respect, I would focus upon Jamaati Islamism with its further identification of antagonistic frontiers, its search for an alternative political formation and its peculiar politico-ideological contradictions between Islamic universalism, Islamist populism and Muslim particularism in neoliberal India in the following chapter.

Chapter 3

Islamic Universalism and Muslim Particularism:
Ideological Articulations of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind

Antagonistic Frontiers and Rhetoric of ‘Islamic Alternative’

In the previous chapter, I have shown how JIH identifies ‘neoliberal capitalism’, ‘American imperialism’, ‘Indian State’ and the ‘ruling classes’ as a chain of antagonistic frontiers. In this chapter I would show how the Indian Jamaat further constructs its antagonistic frontiers against what it calls ‘non-Islamic ideologies’. The identification of antagonistic frontiers is very clear from its programmatic agenda on varied national and international issues, press statements and local political activities that the JIH has been able to lodge. In this respect, the JIH also claims to provide an ‘Islamic alternative’ to ‘non-Islamic ideologies’.

The latest policy and programme of JIH while criticizing the non-Islamic political and economic systems argues that “[i]n the context of the national situation, Jamaat seeks to present ‘Islam as the only alternative’ before the country and its masses.”1 The JIH programme further states that “[t]he objective of the Jamaat-e-Islami Hind is establishment of the Deen (the divinely ordained way of life known as Islam) [which] reforms individuals—both their inward and outward selves, and solves all problems of the human society in the best manner’ and argues that this Deen ‘also provides to all sections of society the best means for equity and justice, welfare and reform, and progress and prosperity irrespective of race or colour, region or language.”2 The Jamaat is therefore of the ‘firm conviction that Islam alone offers the best and most suitable solution to the problems’ that

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1 JIH Policy and Programme, p. 8.
2 Ibid., p. 3.
the country is faced with, ‘including the crises of thought and action’ that the fellow citizens ‘are passing in their moral, social, economic and political spheres of life.’ According to the JIH programme, ‘[t]he Jamaat is striving for the establishment of this Islam in the country. For the attainment of its objective, the Jamaat stands firmly committed to the Holy Qur’an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him). In the light of their guidance, the Jamaat employs ethical, constructive, peaceful, democratic and constitutional means, and refrains from all such activities which are opposed to truth and honesty, or are likely to provoke communal hatred, class conflict or social disorder.’

As a cadre based ideological organization, the JIH sets its targets for every four years of its policy and programme and hence Jamaat planned to achieve the following targets in the four year term from 2007–2011 on ‘national issues’: i) The Islamic view regarding the current wrong policies and false ideologies would be presented to the extent that Islamic view may become a topic of debate in academic circles and in mass media, as an alternative to the existing policies, ideologies and value systems. ii) Opinion in the policy making bodies and in the general masses would be mobilized in favour of Islamic banking to pave the way for establishment of Islamic banks. iii) Islamic economic system would be introduced to the extent that it emerges as a viable alternative to the existing capitalist imperialist system.

A Student’s Islamic Organisation (JIH’s student wing) leader and JIH activist in a field interview told me about his analysis of global financial crisis and the potentiality of Islam to offer an alternative and the priorities of an ‘Islamic system’. He argues that ‘Global financial crisis is the result of interest and finance based capitalist system’ whereas the

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3 Ibid., p. 3.
Jamaat believes ‘in Islamic order as an alternative to capitalism.’ According to him, ‘[t]o overcome this present crisis, state intervention is necessary but capitalist system is a faulty system because it creates widespread inequalities.’ For him, ‘Marxism-Leninism became an alternative to capitalism for some time’ despite the fact that ‘it had no history when compared to the long and rich history of Islam.’ He further asserts, ‘[n]ow, if Marxism can become an alternative, why not Islam can become an alternative since Islam has a history of an alternative to prevalent modes of socio-economic and political structures.’ His further criticism to contemporary capitalism is related to the intrinsic ‘inflation’, which according to him ‘is due to hoarding and black markets [while] Islam forbids hoarding of commodities for long and black marketing.’ He argues that ‘Islam encourages investment and enterprises on the basis of profit and loss and not on interest-run economy’ and thus, ‘Islam is for real economy, real investment [and] devoid of virtual economy which we find in capitalism.’ He claims that ‘Islam is for resolving the basic livelihood issues of food, clothes and shelter, which are the priorities of Islamic system and Islamic economics than the virtual economy of stock markets and financial markets.’

Recently a resolution of the central advisory council [CAC], the top policymaking body of JIH has expressed concern over economic inflation in India by blaming not only the ‘faulty economic policies’ of the government but also asked the government, not to ‘succumb’ to the pressures of ‘imperialist capitalism’, multinationals, the World Bank and IMF. From the above rhetoric, it is clear that the JIH seeks and promise to give an ‘Islamic alternative’ to the contemporary socio-economic and political system in India. However, it also strives to resist the pitfalls of what it calls ‘imperialism’ and ‘capitalism’.

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5 Interview with Shahnawaz Ali Raihan in Delhi on 03/12/2008.
6 See Appendix 10.
JIH and Politics of Resistance

It is clear from our discussion in last and the present chapter so far that the JIH identifies ‘imperialism’ and ‘capitalism’ as antagonistic frontiers. Now, the JIH programme argues that ‘[s]afeguarding human rights, promoting democratic values, opposing political and economic colonization, and containing the upsurge of fascist tendencies shall form part of the priorities of the Jamaat.’ 7 But is JIH simply rhetorical to fight ‘imperialism’ and ‘capitalism’ or has it really tried to launch an anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist resistance, wherever it was possible? The JIH took part in the Anti-Bush protests in New Delhi on 1st March, 2006 and on 2nd March, 2006 in Mumbai during the three day visit of US President George Bush. 8 In this respect, Dr. S.Q.R. Illiyas, a senior Jamaat leader thinks that the Indian government ‘has become vulnerable for America and Israel’. He remarks, ‘[u]nfortunately the rulers of this country either have become puppets of America or they are collaborating or agents because the way they are moving is not in the interest of the country [but] it is hundred percent in the interest of America, Israel and the corporate groups in India. The strategic relations with America and Israel show the policy shift of Indian state.’ 9 In this respect, the Jamaat leader argues that ‘apart from the Left, we i.e. the Muslim community have raised the issue of foreign policy shift towards America and Israel, the way diplomatic relations were established in 1992 with Israel and later on turned to a strategic relations with Israel. So, we are protesting, the Muslims are protesting on this foreign policy shift.’ This Muslim protest according to him was evident during the visit of American President George Bush in India in 2006:

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7 JIH Policy and Programme, p. 9.  
8 ‘Muslims stage massive protest in Mumbai,’ The Hindu, Friday, 3 March, 2006, p. 12.  
9 Interview with Dr. S.Q.R. Illiyas, 03/12/2008.
“When Bush came to India the biggest protest rally was organized by Muslims. One was in Delhi’s Ramlila grounds organized by Jamiat Ulema-I Hind and Jamaat with more than two lakhs people and another big rally was in Bombay’s Azad Maidan with five lakhs people mobilized by various Muslim organizations including us. So America knows that the potential threat to American interests as far as India is concerned is the Muslims.”10

Similarly, the Jamaat along with some small Muslim and small Left groups organized a protest meeting against the visit of U.S. President, Barack Obama to India in 2010, since according to Jamaat the Obama administration has not fundamentally changed its foreign policy in West Asia, Iraq and Afghanistan.11 It is interesting to note that in the above field interview, the JIH leader tries to project that his organization represents the Indian Muslims as he utters ‘we i.e. the Muslim community’ and further used ‘we are protesting, the Muslims are protesting’ as if any mobilization of JIH on the issue of ‘anti-imperialism’ is reflective of the sentiments and protest aspirations of entire Muslim community in India. In the later part of this chapter, I would show how the JIH in fact fails to become the representative voice of Indian Muslims even if it tries to rhetorically claim that it represents the Muslim community.

In August 2008, the JIH organized a convention on ‘Dangerous Indo-US Strategic Alliance under the garb of the nuclear deal’. The JIH press statement issued from New Delhi, dated 26 August, 2008 clarifies that this convention was participated by 14 more organizations including many Left parties like CPI(M), CPI, RSP, Forward Bloc and secular parties like JD(S), BSP and some Muslim organizations and NGOs “which are working together against Indo-US Strategic Alliance with the name—‘Campaign against Imperialism’…lambasting the UPA government for Indo-US nuclear deal and becoming US

10 Ibid.
partner.” The convention also criticized the central government for being ‘part of the ruling elite’s bid to become a strategic partner of American imperialism’ and unanimously adopted a resolution which condemned ‘attempts’ by the government and corporate houses for trying to get the ‘dubious status of some kind of a nuclear weapons state, which did not mean anything for the masses.’ In this convention, JIH General Secretary Nusrat Ali, slammed the US ‘for its military aggression in various parts of the world’ and ‘lashed out at both the Congress and the BJP for working towards a permanent alliance with America.’ He said ‘it would be in the best interest of the country that a suitable ideological alternative against Capitalism or Imperialism is presented to the people’ and added that in his opinion, ‘if any one has best alternate ideology to run the earthly system should discuss it openly, other wise Islamic system is the most applicable alternative for the people.’

The JIH Programme states that ‘familiar strategies would be adopted to implement the policy’ which includes revival of ‘Study and Research Centre’ and preparation of ‘Literature on the following themes: (a) Capitalism—analysis and Islamic alternative (b) Globalization—an Islamic view (c) Islamic movement through various stages (d) Characteristics of Islamic culture (e) Progress, international trade and new technology in the light of Islam (f) Islamic stance on environment and a nationwide campaign would be launched against the capitalist imperialism.’

The JIH people’s manifesto before 2009 Lok Sabha elections, urged the Indian government to condemn ‘imperialist design’ of USA apart from giving a call to ‘revive’ non-aligned foreign policy. It also asked for strengthening good relations among SAARC countries. Moreover, it asked for abolition of Indo-US and Indo-Israel strategic alliance and

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called the Indian government to recognize Hamas led Palestinian government. Finally, it
demanded withdrawal of NATO forces from Iraq and Afghanistan.\footnote{See Appendix 11.}

Similarly, the SYM VCDs and brochure with a number of photographs suggests that it
organized several agitations, protest demonstrations, rallies and seminars on several issues
which range from picketing in front of a grama panchayath (local village council) office
which indulged in corruption in distributing the Adivasi welfare funds to agitations against
Petrol-diesel price hike, Karipur airport march against unwarranted fare hike of Indian
Airlines and Air India, Human chain and oath-taking against WTO and protesting the Indian
vote in IAEA against Iran. SYM also engages with local momentary protests like ‘protesting
the high-handedness and exploitation of passenger by the airport officials at Calicut airport.’
Similarly, the SYM also conducts seminars and symposiums on topical issues. One such
‘open reassessment was conducted at Trichur, participating important intellectuals to discuss
‘Development, Imperialism and the Left.’\footnote{Excerpts from SYM brochure collected on 02/12/2008. The description of some SYM agitations and initiatives marked with catchy slogans can be seen in Appendix 12.}

The SYM pamphlet emphasizes that ‘anti-imperialist resistance’ is a part and parcel
of prophetic traditions.\footnote{Excerpts from SYM pamphlet: ‘Oceans without waves’ collected on 02/12/2008. See Appendix 13.} In a field interview, M. Sajid, former secretary of SYM elaborates
about the legacy of prophetic traditions. He argues that if one closely follows the lives of the
Prophets then ‘socio-political issues are very important for the Prophets of Islam like
Abraham, Moses and Jesus’.\footnote{According to Islamic belief, all previous prophets mentioned in Torah and Bible came to deliver the message of Islam.} Also, he argues that Prophet Muhammad ‘himself was for the
voice of the poor.’ Similarly, he argues that the duty of Muslims is to participate in concrete
‘anti-imperialist struggles’. He points out that the prophets were actually addressing ‘the
major issue of their time.’ Now, in line with this prophetic tradition, the SYM identifies ‘imperialism in its all dimensions’ as ‘major issue of the day’ by analyzing the human history ‘with tools of Quran’. The SYM thinks that ‘imperialism is a major threat to humanity’ and thus it ‘started to bring the issue of development into the political discourse of Kerala’ while campaigning among the people that ‘development is not delinked from the discourse of capitalistic-imperialism.’

According to Sajid, the Coca Cola plant of Plachimada in Kerala’s Palakkad district was such ‘an imperialist project, which wanted to produce millions of litres of Coca Cola per day’ with the help of ‘very big wells’ that extracted ‘millions of litres of ground water daily.’ Now, once the plant started, the local Adivasis were experiencing water shortage. Secondly, the carbonated water components produce hazardous chemical wastes, which have to be dumped. Now, according to Sajid, ‘the Coca Cola authorities lied to the ordinary Adivasis that these wastes are useful fertilizers, which were not even donated free but sold to Adivasis with an amount.’ The poor Adivasis believed that ‘the Americans must be giving good fertilizers’ but ‘everything in the agricultural field was devastated when those harmful chemical wastes were applied.’ In this context, Sajid argues, ‘majority of tribal population became alien in their own place.’ Sajid further asserts: ‘what we felt that the Coca Cola is a universal emblem, a typical model or a symbol of American imperialism. In Plachimada, we felt that it is not merely a symbol but directly acting in our land against the marginalized tribal people. Thus, it is our Quranic or Islamic duty to come forward for this people.’ In this context, the SYM initiated a ‘resistance movement’ against the Coca Cola plant, which at the beginning ‘was a low profile struggle by the local people on this issue’. Later on, with the statewide campaign of SYM, ‘it became a great struggle’. Sajid says, “we informed the

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18 Interview with M. Sajid, 02/12/2008.
people about what is actually happening in Plachimada among our poverty stricken Adivasi Brethren. We urged the people that ‘you have two duties’. One is to agitate and protest along with them but we also need to help them, to give them something, otherwise they will die. So, we collected food items throughout the state and marched towards Plachimada with hundreds of vehicles carrying rice, vegetables etc. going towards the Cola plant.” The SYM brochure describes this movement in a rhetorical style: ‘Solidarity activists lead the popular struggle against the black magic or brewing poison cola from the life blood of people.’ Now, the issue of ‘Coca Cola resistance’ and solidarity with the affected Adivasi people was more important for SYM than ‘the issue of pesticides in Coca Cola drink’ which was ‘taken up by Centre for Science and Environment activists like Sunita Narain.’ As Sajid points out:

“For us, the pesticide issue is secondary, because most people know that Cola is harmful and not a healthy drink. For us, the issue of Tribals is more important since the Cola plant is directly hitting the poor Adivasis, who are not the prime consumers of Coke.”19

The tactics of resistance that was adopted by the SYM was interestingly the Gandhian form of campaigning among the people to boycott Cola as a soft drink. The movement of boycotting Cola in villages tasted momentary success as the Cola was temporarily banned by the Kerala government. Later, the anti-Pepsi-Cola agitation with nearly 30 political parties and organizations of different shades under the banner of the Anti-Pepsi Cola Agitation Committee, took out a march to the Pepsi unit at Wise Park, Kanjikode, demanding its closure for what they called ‘water piracy’.20 Thus, Sajid claims that apart from the Coca Cola boycott movement, the SYM was also agitating against water privatization along with noted environmentalist, Vandana Shiva.21 The Coca Cola agitation by the SYM was reported in the print media in India, which claims that it’s ‘anti-imperialist

19 Ibid.
20 ‘Organisations seek closure of Pepsi unit’, The Hindu (Delhi), Wednesday, May 04, 2005.
21 Interview with M. Sajid, 02/12/2008. See Appendix 14.
and anti-globalisation war’ has the support of other organizations like the Swatantra Matsyathozhilali Federation (Independent Fishworkers Federation). After the Communist Party of India (Marxist) led Left Democratic Front government of Kerala formally banned Coca Cola in the state, a procession was taken out by the Anti-Cola Agitation Committee and the Solidarity Youth Movement at Plachimada in Palakkad by hailing the state government.

Apart from the Coca Cola agitation, Sajid told me how the SYM has successfully resisted an Asian Development Bank (ADB) funded express highway in Kerala and implementation of Coastal Management Zone Act, both of which he calls an ‘imperialist project under the garb of development’. The Express Highway planned by the Congress led UDF government in Kerala before 2006 might have caused large scale displacement since it proposed to have a flyover of hundred meters width, ten meters in height running through the entire state from north to south Kerala with several hundred kilometers dividing the state into two halves. Now, in official terms it was not called ‘Access Control Corridor Project.’ With this bridge, Kerala would have been divided into left and right halves for access control. So, free movement of people from one part of the sate to the other would have been restricted. There would have been some in-between roads only in very few entry-points, but the express highway zone was covered with ‘heavy toll tax.’ Now, the SYM first started an agitation against this project and they claim that because of their agitation, later on, many political parties came to join them and eventually, ‘the project was abandoned.’ The SYM launched an agitation against this project on three planks: a) possibility of large-scale displacement throughout the state b) the project is unviable to the development requirements

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22 John Mary, “Kerala village says ‘no’ to cola”, The Telegraph (Kolkata), Monday, September 19, 2005.
of Kerala’s common people and c) environmental questions like destruction of several small hillocks.24 The Express Highway agitation was reported in the print media showing how both the pro-Left Kerala Sahitya Parishad and pro-Jamaat SYM were opposed to such a project on grounds of ‘anti-environment’ and ‘lopsided development’.25

As pointed out earlier that the project was stalled and in this sense it was a successful resistance movement from the agitators like the SYM. Sajid describes the success of this resistance and the role it played in popularizing the SYM in Kerala in following words:

“This project was funded by Asian Development Bank and ironically the portfolio was under the Muslim League minister. Solidarity took the issue of Express highway as the first major issue in Kerala and by the grace of God, from that issue we became a vibrant mass movement. People felt that even if the government supports an ADB funded project, a popular struggle can resist it.”

In the recent past, SYM took a major issue of coastal people, which Sajid describes as ‘closely related to imperialism and neoliberal policies.’ Sajid argues that ‘there is a Coastal Regulation Zone Act (CRZ Act) according to which one cannot make any big development in the beach area, which started from Indira Gandhi’s time. But the UPA government appointed a Committee under the noted agricultural scientist, M.S. Swaminathan. His committee was appointed to re-look into the CRZ Act. Rather than reviewing it, he completely re-modified the CRZ Act. His committee proposed a new legislation called the Coastal Management Zone Act (CMZ Act), in which every big development projects in the beach is allowed. If it is implemented then the fishermen living in the coastal areas would be displaced and devastated. So, we studied this issue in great detail and organized two massive rallies, one from north, and another from south through the coastal belt of Kerala. We had conducted several meetings on this issue and tried to educate

24 Interview with M. Sajid, 02/12/2008. For detailed interview see Appendix 15.
25 John Mary, ‘Road Warriors: A freeway to hell or heaven, Malayalees can’t decide’, Outlook, September 06, 2004.
the people by raising awareness about the harmful impact of CMZ Act. As a result, throughout the Kerala coast, there were huge agitations.26

However, this was not only a Kerala specific issue but a central legislation. Sajid claims that because of SYM’s agitation, ‘the Left front government also took a strong position against the implementation of CMZ Act.’ According to Sajid, the SYM approached the Congress leaders and told them directly with an assertive tone. Very interestingly, the Congress in Kerala later took a stand against the central legislation. Sajid claims that the success of stalling the CMZ Act was only limited to the state of Kerala since it is a central legislation.27

An exhibition organized by Solidarity in Tirur town actually threw light on all of these issues which a journalist has claimed as ‘the burning problems that the people of the State witnessed in the recent past.’28 All of these above issues taken up by Solidarity became popular. According to Sajid, ‘[b]ecause of all these issues, which the SYM took seriously in Kerala, it could make a good penetration among the Adivasi people and fisher folk.’ Now, besides the agitations against Coca Cola, Express highway, Indo-US nuclear deal and CMZ Act, the SYM has also taken ‘a very serious issue of corporatisation of retail sector, particularly against intrusion of Reliance and Walmart into India’s retail sector.’ Throughout Kerala, ‘SYM has led this movement both ideologically and practically and a number of organizations joined the movement for which social activist, Vandana Shiva came.’ In fact, ‘she made a National Forum for which SYM is a part of representing Kerala.’29

26 Interview with M. Sajid, 02/12/2008.
27 Ibid.
The introductory pamphlet of SYM argues that despite unwarranted accusations of ‘anti-developmentalism’ from mainstream media and some political parties, it strongly advocates ‘a genuine development paradigm which gives due consideration to earth and man’ while vehemently opposing ‘colonial development visions’ and successfully ‘interrogating the imperial forces and their native brokers’. The SYM pamphlet also suggests that its resistance and solidarity with the victims of capitalist developmental projects ‘has helped regain the culture of dissent which was fast fading in the contemporary milieu of Kerala.’

The SYM under the guidance of JIH was also instrumental in earning a better compensation deal for the affected people in a couple of cases. Recently, the SYM has taken up an Endosulfan rehabilitation programme. In Kerala’s northernmost district of Kasaragod, there is a huge cashew plantation. From 1980s onwards, there was spraying of endosulfan, a deadly chemical pesticide, banned in all developed countries, but still used in India. It is a highly cancer producing chemical. According to Sajid, from Kasaragod, SYM got several reports about victims of this endosulfan spray. Many people got cancer, many died and many newborns were affected with congenital deformities like big heads, mental retardation, etc. Almost 5-12 villages were affected by this spray. Sajid says, ‘[s]o, we felt that it was an onslaught of capitalistic developmental model because here the motive is profit at any cost.’ This harmful chemical was sprayed from the helicopters to the cashew plantation fields. Now, by wind and water, this harmful chemical was carried to a number of villages besides the cashew plantation fields. It was government’s own cashew plantation and the government itself used such a mechanism of spraying Endosulfan from the helicopters. The SYM tried to bring this issue in the forefront of the public and the government. According to

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30 Excerpts from SYM pamphlet: ‘Oceans without waves’ collected on 02/12/2008.
Sajid, ‘[t]he last Congress government did nothing. The Left government in 2006 came and said that those who have died would get Rs. 50,000 as compensation and they did it. It was actually the personal interest of our Kerala chief minister [CM], who is now regarded as a Green CM. So, it was a good gesture from the government, but for those who are still surviving with severe diseases, both the government and the panchayat [local rural body] did nothing.’ In this regard, the SYM approached the people by making a documentary of what is actually happening in the Endosulfan affected area and printed leaflets for awareness campaign. At the same time, the SYM also collected money by bucket collections by going to houses, shops, schools, churches, mosques and temples. In this way, by Sajid’s own admission, the SYM was able to collect nearly Rs. 50 lakhs. With this money, the SYM charted out ‘a correct rehabilitation programme at the grassroots level of five villages that the SYM have selected after doing an extensive survey. In this current rehabilitation programme, provisions of medical assistance, building of homes, educational loans and rationing of food are there for the affected people of Endosulfan.’ So, in this way, Sajid points out, ‘our services are struggles and in many cases our struggles are services too.’

Recently, the Jamaat has in fact completed the first phase of Endosulfan rehabilitation programme.

In the same field interview, Sajid says, ‘since Solidarity’s motto is struggle and service, I can give you an example of our service cum struggle and struggle complementing and leading to our service in a colony called 3/4th cent colony in Kollam district.’ Eighteen years ago, some 91 families were displaced from the sides of a national highway for road widening project. The government promised them about rehabilitation with enough housing

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31 Interview with M. Sajid, 02/12/2008.  
32 ‘Solidarity Completes First Phase of Rehabilitation for Endosulfan Victims’, Radiance Viewsweekly, June 06, 2010.
space. But even after eighteen years, Sajid says, “they were not even offered one cent of land and instead given only 3/4th cent of land to each family, to be lived in small huts. For the last eighteen years they were trusting the Congress and CPI(M) parties in vain as nothing progressed on this issue. Two years ago, they approached our people. We have a very small organization there. We said that ‘we can try’. Then we studied the whole issue. We approached the district collector and the local MLA (Member of Legislative Assembly). The MLA told us that ‘why are you intervening, this is not your issue’. So, we told him that ‘it is our issue. If it is people’s issue then it is our issue.’ Then the MLA challenged us that ‘if you can do something then you show what you can do, I am not going to help you since many years, I and my party workers are doing something for them and now at the last moment, you are coming here and trying to take the whole credit. So, I won’t do anything.’ Only two of our representatives had gone to meet the MLA. We told him that ‘we will give you only one month time. Within this one month, if you don’t do anything, we are going to sit in front of your home with the whole colony people.’ So, within one month everything was ok and now those displaced families got three and a half cents of land each, some five times more of what they were originally given by the government. Now, we handed over the whole file about this movement to Jamaat-e-Islami. Now, Jamaat is building homes for them. So, it was our positive initiative in the form of struggle but turned into service for the displaced people.”

33 On 10th January, 2009 Solidarity took out a mass rally in the streets of Kozhikode city on the day of its district conference. I witnessed the rally marked by anti-fascism, anti-American and anti-Israel slogans. The entire rally was under police surveillance for security reasons. The police informed me that there were around ten thousand participants in the rally

33 Interview with M. Sajid, 02/12/2008.
according to their official estimates. I was also informed by a Solidarity leader that George Galloway of RESPECT Party (UK) who was going to speak at the Solidarity open public meeting cancelled his trip at the last moment because of his wife’s illness. The kind of slogans written in placards and posters of the Solidarity rally are of the following: “Law should be to maintain peace not to terrorise people”, “Gaza needs our voice now, Free Gaza, Free Palestine”, “Youth for Struggle”, “Human rights are not charity, it is the birth right of every individual”, “Support people of Gaza, Break ties with Israel”, “Chavez, Nejad, Castro—Carry On, We are with you”, “Solidarity Speaks for the Abandons”, “Stop war against innocent people, Down with Israel’s terrorism”, “Solidarity motto: Today pain, Tomorrow gain” etc. Apart from the posters and placards in the rally, there were mocking symbols and street shows representing police atrocities against Muslims, Bush-Manmohan nuclear deal and strategic alliance, severe conditions of rubber plantation workers in Kerala, dying situation of fisherman, consumerist western culture of the youth today as opposed to the threat that it posed for old native Kerala culture. A young solidarity member-activist Irshad studying in Class XII said, ‘we don’t want western culture, we have our own Islamic culture.’ After the rally reached the Kozhikode sea beach for the open public meeting, on the dais a group of solidarity activists were continuously chanting the following slogans: “Develop Justice”, “State Conference Zindabad”, and “Condemn Israel Attack in Gaza”, “No food, no water, no shelter, no fuel, and no medicines in Palestine, Starvation from each blood of individuals, but Palestine would rise.”

So far, it is evident from the above narration that the JIH with its youth wing SYM in Kerala has been successful in resisting certain developmental projects which it calls

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34 Translated to me from Malayalam to English by an SYM activist.
‘capitalistic and imperialistic model of development’ in the cases of Plachimada Coca Cola plant, Express Highway and CMZ Act. In other cases like the Endosulfan rehabilitation programme and 3/4\textsuperscript{th} cent colony, it has been able to only earn a better compensation deal for the affected people. In both these cases, it has also contributed to the compensation of the affected people. However, the JIH has not been successful to stall the Indo-US nuclear deal or policy level change either in the case of what it calls ‘neoliberal economic policies’ or ‘Anti-NAM, pro-American and pro-Israeli foreign policy’. At best, it has mobilized people in various protest rallies against ‘imperialism’ and ‘neoliberalism’. In fact, the Indian Left with similar demands also failed to change the fundamental policy shifts of the Indian government on economic and international matters even with its presence in the Parliament unlike the Jamaat, which is not even a parliamentary political party and merely acts as a pressure group. Now, here we can see three different results of politics of resistance under neoliberalism in India: 1) Successful local resistance to a ‘capitalistic developmental project’ resulting into the abandonment of such a project 2) ‘Capitalistic developmental project’ is successfully implemented but resistant politics can only earn some better compensation package and 3) Failure of resistant politics to change macro-level policies of the government. Now, in certain cases, the JIH achieved result 1 & 2 by making a liaison with some human rights organizations, NGOs and the Left. But to achieve result 3 in positive terms unlike the present condition of negativity, it gives the call for a broader platform of ‘anti-imperialist struggle’. This leads to the question of JIH’s anti-imperialist alliances and its nature of relationship with its anti-imperialist allies, which I would be discussing in the next subsection.
Political Alliances of Jamaat

It is clear that the Jamaat has taken issues of displacement and rehabilitation, which are linked to what they call ‘capitalistic mode of imperialism’. Now, the issue of ‘anti-imperialism’ is common with the Indian Left. Similarly, issues of displacement, rehabilitation and environment are also common with several secular NGOs and civil society movements. In fact, the Jamaat has joined hands and shared platforms with the Left on certain issues. Since, there is overlapping and commonality of issues taken by both Jamaat and the Left, particularly, the issue of ‘imperialism’, it is important to analyse the relationship between the Left and the JIH.

In recent times, the Jamaat has been close to the Left and various secular and human rights organizations for a broader ‘anti-imperialist resistance’ and ‘anti-capitalist campaign’ as pointed out earlier. In such a context and just months before 2009 Lok Sabha elections, Syed Jalaluddin Umari, the current President of JIH opined that both the Congress and the BJP are mostly responsible for various problems of Muslims. He pointed out that “as far as Muslim issues are concerned there is little difference between the Congress and the BJP…[I]n states where there is a realistic alternative available to both the Congress and the BJP, Muslims should prefer this alternative, and where there is no such credible alternative they might consider the Congress. This would not be because of any great enthusiasm for that party’s record but simply a matter of compulsion.”35 In the Kerala Assembly elections of 2006, the Jamaat supported the Communist Party of India (Marxist) led Left Democratic Front (LDF)36 precisely because of the LDF’s ‘fight against fascism at the national level, its

35 Syed Jalaluddin Umari interviewed by Yoginder Sikand, available at http://www.jamaateislamihind.org/index.php?do=category&id=37&pageid=381 accessed on 05/03/2010. Similar views were also expressed by Umari with my field interview on 04/12/2008.
36 The Hindu, Thursday, April 13, 2006, p. 7.
firm opposition to the imperialist threat posed by the U.S. and its consistent fight against the globalization and liberalization policies of the UPA Government.\textsuperscript{37} T. Arif Ali, the Kerala amir (President) of Jamaat-e-Islami openly spoke in the media for its support to the Left given the latter’s ‘commitment to secularism and protection of minority rights, its opposition to the exploitative policies of neo-liberalism and its consistent fight against the imperialist designs.’\textsuperscript{38} The same voice of support for the Left on grounds of ‘anti-communalism’ and ‘anti-imperialism’ has been echoed by M. Sajid.\textsuperscript{39}

According to a JIH news feed, the JIH even formed a ‘national alliance against imperialism’ with mainstream parliamentary Left parties and 15 odd Muslim groups. It also invited UNPA allies and BSP to join the ‘national alliance against imperialism’. The news feed further points out that apart from nuclear deal, ‘the Indo-US joint naval exercise is turning out to be yet another rallying point for the Left and the Muslim organizations.’ JIH leader S.Q.R. Illiyas said, ‘[e]veryone who has opposed the nuclear deal will have a space in this National Alliance…We do have serious differences with the Left on several issues but when it comes to opposing imperialism, the Left has always been in the forefront. And we appreciate that.’\textsuperscript{40} This was not different from what Sajid has to say about the issue.\textsuperscript{41}

On political alliances, Mujtaba Farooque, political secretary of JIH briefly expressed how the current strategy of Jamaat shifted after the ‘Gujarat genocide’. He argued that ‘previously, JIH was not interested in elections and its members were not asked to vote.’ Even the Jamaat did not tell the Muslims, whom they should vote. But in recent years, ‘after

\textsuperscript{37} \textit{The Hindu}, Thursday, April 20, 2006, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{38} \textit{The Hindu}, Thursday, April 20, 2006, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{39} Interview with M. Sajid, 02/12/2008. See Appendix 16.
\textsuperscript{40} \url{http://www.jamaateislamihind.org/index.php?do=category&id=37&blockid=&pageid=345} accessed on 05/10/2009; Cithara Paul, “Muslim bodies launch alliance to ‘thwart’ n-deal”, \textit{Indian Express} (New Delhi), July 10, 2008.
\textsuperscript{41} Interview with M. Sajid, 02/12/2008. See Appendix 17.
the dreadful injustices against Muslims on all socio-economic and political fronts, the Jamaat decided to intervene in political matters of the country by placing its demands for both Muslim and non-Muslim community.’ Farooque claims that now, the Jamaat has a ‘clear understanding about whom the Muslims should vote.’ He argues that the ‘Jamaat cannot be now indifferent to India’s parliamentary democratic processes like it did in the past.’ Its understanding is that Islamic movement cannot be just restricted only to Muslims. Thus, it formulated new experimental strategies and platforms like ‘Movement for Peace and Justice’ (MPJ) in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. This movement for ‘peace’ and ‘justice’ takes up both national and international issues like poverty, unemployment, issues of Dalits, Tribals, and human rights violations in other Muslim countries by American forces. According to Farooque, Jamaat’s resistance against both (Hindu-majoritarian) communalism and imperialism made them close to the Left because both communalism and imperialism are common enemies of both the Left and the Islamic movement in India. Farooque claims that in one of Jamaat’s recent programmes, a Left leader said ‘regarding communalism, Jamaat should rally behind the Left since the Left has a better understanding and experience to handle the issue of communalism, while on the question of imperialism, the Left should learn from the Muslim world and Muslim organizations since they have a better understanding of imperialism as they face imperialism in their every day life.’ Farooque complements: ‘we very much share this concern and attitude of the Left to fight communalism and imperialism.’ For him, although JIH have ‘fundamental ideological differences with the Left’, it thinks that ‘the Left today has now become softer on the question of atheism.’ He further points out that at the regional level, the Jamaat played an important role in forming the United Democratic Front in Assam on common issues of
exploitation and discrimination against Muslims and backward castes. Today, Jamaat is working as a pressure group, but it is thinking of floating a political party in the near future to take up issues of justice and exploitation for both Muslims and marginalized groups among non-Muslims.\(^{42}\)

Thus, Jamaat’s political alliance with the Left on certain issues is a tactical one and not based on fundamental ideological affinity as claimed by the Jamaat leadership. In fact, the ideological differences between JIH and any foreign/western ideologies can be seen in a press release proclamation of Jamaat:

‘Capitalism, Communism and Fascism are losing their ideological ground. The economic progress claimed to have achieved through capitalism is confined to a small section of the rich people in the country. Communism has been a fiasco, as admitted by its own leaders. They are saying that socialism is a remote dream and there is no shortcut to materialize it. Fascism is trying to impose its ideals by force. That is impossible in a plural society like India. Modi’s victory in Gujarat was not an approval of the ideals of the BJP. It so happened due to the lack of an alternative for the BJP.’\(^{43}\)

Thus, the relationship between the JIH and the Left is a complex one. The Jamaat favours the Left on issues of ‘communalism’ and ‘imperialism’ but there are serious ideological differences in terms of the nature of *ideal society* in the political imagination of both these formations. Although, the JIH is supportive of the central leadership of the Left and its positions on ‘communalism’, ‘neoliberalism’ and ‘imperialism’, it has not been happy with current Left front regimes in Bengal and Kerala on certain issues. Before the 2009 Indian Parliamentary elections in April-May, T. Arif Ali, the JIH Kerala state President in a field interview told me that ‘Congress is a soft-*Hindutva* party whereas Left parties have a good stand, particularly CPI(M) takes strong position against fascism, communalism and imperialism.’ However, according to Ali, in Kerala, ‘the Congress led United Democratic Front including the Muslim League has been more sympathetic to

\(^{42}\) Interview with Mujtaba Farooque on 30/11/2008.
Muslim issues. But on corruption cases, both UDF and the current government by CPI(M) led Left Democratic Front (LDF) are the same.’ Ali further points out that although there is little possibility of a third front in Kerala in the near future but ‘with a third Front at the centre,’ the Jamaat ‘have more independence and bargaining power regarding larger issues of resisting imperialism and communalism besides placing the demands for Muslim community.’

A Solidarity activist said, ‘look we are more favourable to present CPI(M) led state government but we can’t support them on every issue like that of serving the interests of Harrisons Company. The Centre of Indian Trade Unions [CITU], CPI(M)’s labour wing is in favour of Harrison’s Company, who want to build up a big rubber plantation company and want to take big chunk of land while giving less compensation to the local Adivasis (Vedi community), who own the land. We are in favour of local Adivasi community who are demanding compensation worth 5 acres of land and fifty thousand rupees.’ This was again confirmed by T.K. Hussain, secretary of Jamaat in Kerala in an interview conducted by me, the next day.

The company referred by the Solidarity activist is none other than Harrisons Malayalam Limited, India’s largest rubber producer and is a part of RPG Enterprises, one of the largest business conglomerates in India. Recently, there were reports of clashes between cadres of CPI(M) mass organization DYFI and Solidarity activists on this issue. Similarly, the Jamaat leadership has not been happy with the Left Front government in Bengal on the

44 Interview with T. Arif Ali, 13/01/2009.
45 Field interview with a Solidarity Activist on 10/01/2009.
46 Field interview with T.K. Hussain on 11/01/2009.
issue of land acquisition from a significant section of peasantry including the Muslim peasantry when the state government wanted to set up big private industries in Singur and Nandigram and the deplorable socio-economic situation of Muslims in Bengal recorded by the Sachar Committee Report. But the Jamaat is certainly in favour of supporting the Left at the centre and in other states where both the Left and the Jamaat has some strength like in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. In fact, in the Maharashtra Assembly elections (2009), the Jamaat was open to even support the Left led ‘third front’ although it is more flexible in supporting ‘strong secular candidates in all 288 assembly seats individually, preferably of the alternative secular front or parties.’

Now, how the JIH justifies its tactical political alliances with non-Islamic elements like the Left, several human rights organizations and NGOs with whom it has ‘fundamental ideological differences’? How does JIH ideologically convince its constituency to support those political forces, which it has traditionally described as jahiliya (ignorance of non-Islam) in its organizational literature and constitution? On this question, M. Sajid argued that the concept of jahiliya only arises when one sees Islam as an ‘ideology’ and ‘a comprehensive way of life’. He further argued that the present ‘manifestation of jahiliya’ is in the system of ‘imperialism’. In this respect, he argues that to fight jahiliya, which has a long prophetic tradition in Islamic history, one needs to make practical political alliances with those who are against a given jahil system. In this respect, he recapitulated how the Prophet has made alliances with Christians and Jews against the ‘powerful idolaters of Mecca’. Finally, he asserts that a ‘rigid’ and ‘puritan’ concept of jahiliya is not present in

48 Field interview with JIH Bengal President, Rahmat Ali Khan and ex-President Dr. Raisuddin Ahmed on 17/11/2008.
49 See Appendix 18.
Islam. Thus it is not the case that only Muslims can fight against ‘injustice’ but others might also join them.\textsuperscript{50}

Here, it is interesting to note that how the Jamaat ideologue has reinterpreted the concept of \textit{jahiliya} to justify the contemporary political alliances of JIH in the context of what it calls ‘anti-imperialist resistance’. I would further discuss this reformulation of the concept of \textit{jahiliya} by JIH in chapter 6 while making a comparison between the Bangladeshi Jamaat’s conceptualization of \textit{jahiliya} and how these two conceptualizations are different in terms of seeking political alliances against a common antagonistic frontier. By now, it is amply clear that the JIH has identified both ‘communalism’ and ‘imperialism’ as antagonistic frontiers and those issues are fundamental in seeking a tactical political alliance with the Left. But does JIH equally treat both ‘communalism’ and ‘imperialism’ as major threats to the Indian people at large and the Indian Muslims in particular? Or has it got preferences in terms of identifying and prioritizing either ‘communalism’ or ‘imperialism’ as a greater threat than the other? This is what I would discuss in the next subsection.

\textbf{Anti-Majoritarianism of Jamaat and Priority of Antagonistic Frontier}

From the previous subsections of this chapter, it is clear that the JIH identifies the Hindu majoritarian communalism as an antagonistic frontier. The SYM pamphlet in fact, considers \textit{communalism} as a ‘common evil and enemy of all people.’\textsuperscript{51} In the aftermath of nuclear deal debates, the Jamaat was more interested to have a non-Congress and non-BJP secular alternative at the centre. In this respect, it is interesting to note that while the Jamaat has been consistent enough in recent times to give a call for a non-Congress and non-BJP

\textsuperscript{50} Interview with M. Sajid, 02/12/2008. See Appendix 19.

\textsuperscript{51} SYM pamphlet: ‘Oceans without waves’ collected on 02/12/2008.
third political alternative, in certain cases, they supported the Congress led UPA in the name of electing ‘honest and able Muslim leaders’ by giving the logic of ‘Muslim representation’ in Parliament and state legislatures. For example, in 2009 Lok Sabha elections, out of total 20 seats, Jamaat supported the CPI(M) led Left Democratic Front in 18 parliamentary seats of Kerala while it supported the Congress candidate in Wayanad and Muslim League candidate in Ponnani (both the candidates won). In fact, when it actually comes close to voting for 2009 Lok Sabha polls in India, the important factor of resisting ‘communal fascism of BJP led NDA’ in Jamaat’s terminology became more dominant than resisting ‘imperialism and neoliberalism’. In this context, in several states, the Jamaat openly gave a call to support Congress led UPA to strengthen a credible stable secular government at the centre even where BJP is politically and organizationally weak. For example, in Andhra Pradesh, out of total 42 seats, Jamaat supported 37 Congress candidates, 2 CPI(M) candidates, 2 TDP candidates and 1 TRS candidate. The basis of such a decision of Jamaat ‘has been the commitment of the party to the People’s Manifesto declared by Jamaat, *ability of the candidates to fight fascist forces in the country*, and their personal character and adherence to ethical values’[^52] (Emphasis mine). Similarly, in 2009 Lok Sabha elections in West Bengal, it gave a call for constituency-specific support. In some seats it supported the Left Front candidates, while in others it supported the Trinamul and the Congress candidates. It is also interesting to note that in Kerala, the Jamaat was more favourable in pursuing the national politico-tactical line of non-Congress and non-BJP alternative. By contrast, in states like Andhra and Bengal, the local factors like what it calls ‘anti-Muslim

and anti-peasantry image’ of TDP in Andhra and Left in Bengal and voting for a stable secular formation at the centre was a priority over issues of neoliberalism and imperialism. 53

Despite the fact that the Jamaat was previously keen to support a non-Congress and non-BJP front at the centre during my fieldwork in 2008, the unhappy experiences of unstable third front during 1996-98 period in Indian politics giving way to the BJP led NDA formation of 1998-2004 made several Jamaat supporters to vote for a Congress led UPA government at the centre in 2009 Lok Sabha elections. 54 In 2009, the inability of the Left led-third front to gain credibility among the masses as a stable secular alternative with erstwhile NDA partners like AIDMK, TDP, BJD and JD(S) made the Muslim constituencies of Jamaat to rethink about actually voting for non-Congress and non-BJP third alternative and instead they end up supporting the Congress led UPA in several states. 55 Thus, lack of a credible ‘third front’ in challenging the dominance of both Congress and BJP at the centre and in many states, the tactical question of supporting the ‘strong secular candidate’ always remains open for a ‘politics of Muslim particularism’ represented by Jamaat where the interests of its core Muslim constituency in terms of greater physical threat from communalism becomes dominant than threat from imperialism and neoliberalism.

It is also true that while in many Lok Sabha constituencies, it supported the Left across several states, the Jamaat could not influence much of the voting behaviour of Muslims in favour of the Left due to the prominence of what some Jamaat activists have called the ‘anti-peasantry and anti-Muslim image’ 56 of the Left particularly in the dominant media discourses of Bengal. In Kerala too, it failed to convince the Muslim voters in favour

53 Telephonic interview with M. Sajid on 20/05/2009 and interview with SIO leader and Jamaat activist Shahnawaz Raihan on 21/05/2009.
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid.
of the Left due to a combination of both local factors like disgruntlement with the Kerala state government, text book controversy, issues of land acquisition for industry and displacement, corruption charges against Left leadership in Kerala and national factors like credible stable secular government at the centre. Now from the above analysis, it is clear that the Jamaat due to its limited organizational strength in India is unable to control the public opinion among Muslims. Rather, the limited organizational strength of Jamaat is a function of its limited support base among Indian Muslims. Although the Jamaat is an important Muslim organisation in India, it does not have any overarching influence over Indian Muslims. The Indian Muslims not only dissociate itself to the Islamist project of Jamaat which is evident in its limited mass base, but even in issues like politico-electoral choice of ‘whom to vote’, the Muslims rely less on Jamaat. In other words, it fails to become a hegemonic pressure group among Indian Muslims or something like the ‘vanguard of Indian Muslims’.

From the above analysis, we can also say that the contradiction of Indian Muslims to choose between pro-neoliberal secular force and anti-neoliberal secular force in keeping out the Hindutva forces from power is also reflected within Jamaat’s own organization as well. And with certain populist doles like employment guarantee, farm loan waiver and promise to implement Sachar recommendations, perhaps it does not mind to elect a Congress led secular government which combines the policies of neoliberal agenda with some social responsibilities for poor, marginalized and weaker sections of the population. So, even if the Jamaat leadership has strong opinions about both Congress and BJP as ‘agents of neoliberalism’, when it actually comes to electing a government, the JIH prioritizes the antagonistic frontier of majoritarian communalism than neoliberalism and imperialism.

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57 Telephonic interview with M. Sajid on 20/05/2009.
Jamaat’s priority in identifying *Hindutva* as the prime antagonistic frontier is reflected in its assertion for anti-majoritarianism. In this respect, the limits of Jamaat in opposing neoliberalism are due to its ‘prioritization of *Hindutva*’ as a greater ‘political enemy’ than ‘imperialism’ and ‘neoliberalism’ as evident from Jamaat’s position and voting pattern in Lok Sabha polls of 2009.

This prioritization of *Hindutva* over neoliberalism by Jamaat is a tactical decision because the core constituency of Jamaat—Indian Muslims are far more threatened by the existence of *Hindutva* as a political force. Therefore, Jamaat primarily articulating a politics of ‘Muslim particularism’ is more concerned with the security and identity of Muslims than the questions of equity, which is broadly connected with the questions of poverty, education, employment and health facilities. These issues are however, relatively neglected by successive Indian governments as a part of neoliberal logic of fiscal management and cut in expenditures on social sectors as pointed out earlier in chapter 2. In such a situation, a politics of Muslim particularism, which represent a subaltern group like Indian Muslims, badly affected in the context of neoliberal policy regime with socio-economic deprivation of the community would have a tendency to oppose neoliberalism as such. In this respect, Jamaat’s opposition to neoliberalism is understandable. But the existence of political *Hindutva*, which has a history of persecuting religious minorities in India, only makes Jamaat to think about prioritizing the antagonistic frontier and hence has to choose majoritarianism than neoliberalism as a prime enemy.

However, such prioritization of *Hindutva* majoritarianism than neoliberalism has to do with the changed ideological understanding of Jamaat vis-à-vis its rethinking process of accepting *Indian secularism* as such. In a field interview, a student leader of Jamaat asserted
that theoretically, Islam approves ‘pluralism’ and in a ‘multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural India’ there should be more ‘dialogue and communication’ between various communities rather than ‘dominance’ of any particular political agenda like the ‘Hindutva fascism’. Moreover, a number of Jamaat leadership is admitting that since Islam is for betterment of whole of humankind, Islamic movement and Islamist ideology cannot be just restricted to Muslims only. Globally, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt has Christian members of Parliament and Hezbollah in Lebanon closely works with Christian groups. Likewise, in India, the Jamaat has 25,000 non-Muslim associates and sympathizers, its youth wing in Kerala (Solidarity Youth Movement) has 500 non-Muslim members while its student wing SIO (Student’s Islamic Organisation) has many non-Muslim members and at least 20 Christian and Hindu members in student’s Union posts in various universities of Kerala.\footnote{Interview with ex-SIO President Bishruddin Sharqi on 01/12/2008.}

Furthermore, contrary to SIMI that condemn ‘secularism’ and ‘liberal parliamentary democracy’ as western/foreign ideologies or ‘jahiliya’ (ignorance of non-Islam), the Jamaat today thinks that much of Maududi’s original formulation regarding ‘secularism’ and ‘nationalism’ as equivalent to ‘jahiliya’ in pre-partition days needs to be revised. According to a student leader of Jamaat, Maududi was responding to a version of secularism that totally negates the role of religion in public and political life as was the case in Turkey and in many western countries. Similarly, national chauvinism and deification of nation was replete with various forms of aggressive nationalism as in the case of Hitler’s Germany and Mussolini’s Italy. Instead, Maududi rightly talked about ‘sovereignty of god’. But given the contemporary situation of a globalized world where the concept of nation-state itself has undergone change and a version of secularism as in India gives equal respect and treatment
while guaranteeing religious freedom, the fiercely antagonistic posture adopted with regard to these concepts by certain radical groups is neither appropriate nor realistic.\textsuperscript{59}

The Jamaat argues that Maududi himself revisited and changed some of his positions on secularism, nationalism etc. and advised the Indian Jamaat after Partition to work peacefully by using legal means in a multi-religious country. The Jamaat also believes that since at the global level, Islamic movements are increasingly realizing to revise the traditional Islamic outlook on issues of secularism, democracy, religious pluralism and politics; so Jamaat-e-Islami Hind is no exception to this trend. They argue that no movement can remain obsessed with its founding father and refuse to change as in the case of Marxism, there are forms of neo-Marxism that have sought to move beyond Marx. Therefore, Jamaat also need to move beyond Maududi with a practical approach in the current context.\textsuperscript{60}

A Jamaat leader gave an example of this shift from Maududi. He said that Maududi forbade voting for or participating in elections held under a secular Constitution, while the Indian Jamaat shifted its position on this issue a decade ago. It first allowed its members to vote and then to support certain parties in order to counter BJP. And now, in this age of neo-liberal economics, which according to the Jamaat is playing havoc with the lives of poor citizens, the Jamaat is taking an active role in working with non-Muslim human rights groups and popular political movements. All these are major shift from the earlier approach of the Jamaat and Maududi himself.\textsuperscript{61}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{59} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{60} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{61} Interview with Mujtaba Farooque, Political Secretary of JIH on 30/11/2008.
\end{itemize}
Anti-Terrorism of Jamaat and the Security Question

In the last subsection, I have demonstrated how majoritarian communalism has been a major concern for Jamaat. Precisely, because of its grave concern for majoritarianism, the JIH is also concerned about security of Muslims as riot victims and victims of communal stereotype of witch hunting in terrorism related cases. These two concerns are amply expressed in the political demands of JIH in its people’s manifesto.62

On terrorism, the JIH is more open to criticize and condemn it even in their policy programme, public rallies, press statements etc. A Press statement about a convention of JIH suggests that it “condemned terrorism, but came down heavily on ‘victimisation’ of innocents in the name of curbing terror, especially those belonging to Muslim community, and ‘dividing’ the people on the basis of religion.”63 In a public meeting, T. Arif Ali, President of JIH Kerala State Circle, said that ‘extremist groups operating in various parts of the world should not be associated with the Islamic movements. It is colonialism that stands behind them.’64 A very senior leader of Jamaat, who joined the JIH in 1944 points out that ‘[t]here has been no change in the fundamental principle of Islamic ideology in Jamaat-e-Islami Hind since its inception in 1948 although there were certain elements within Jamaat in the past, who were more interested in extremism.’ He clarifies that this extremist section ‘differed with the majority opinion of Jamaat for a moderate and cautious approach for Islamisation in India and thus defected from the organization.’ He points out that ‘the message of Islam is peace and justice and is thus contradictory to terror.’ He claims that ‘Jamaat’s role in containing terror has been significant as it has been most vehemently expressing its views among the Muslim and non-Muslim community that Islam does not

62 See Appendix 20.
approve terrorism and killing of innocent lives.’ He argues that ‘[t]errorism has no religion, in fact, religion condemns terrorism. The whole humankind is Allah’s creation and Adam and Eve’s children. In that sense, terrorists should stop violence against anybody whether Muslims or non-Muslims and should engage themselves in welfare and relief programmes like Jamaat. Ikamat-e-Deen (establishment of Islam) with Hikmat (caution) and dawa (religious preaching/missionary practice) is the solution to the problems of Indian Muslims.”65 But at the same time, he says, ‘we must acknowledge that denial of human rights and socio-political and economic justice leads to terror.’66

However, JIH leader Illiyas, while condemning terrorism also pointed out about ‘state terrorism’ and how the grand international coalition of non-Islamic religious fundamentalists try to make a stereotypical image of a ‘Muslim terrorist’ which according to him has a political purpose. He argues that ‘Hindu fascists, Zionists and Christian evangelicals form a triangle [which] is basically deciding where India should go’ in terms of domestic and foreign policy matters. According to him, ‘[t]he Hindu fascists are not only restricted within RSS and BJP, even the Congress party has these elements’ as in policy matters, ‘they are all one.’ He asserts that India mimics the American policy of ‘targeting Islam and Muslims by linking them with terrorism.’ In this regard, ‘BJP and RSS openly say about it while Congress does not openly argue on those lines but they have certain prejudice on this matter.’ He then holds that “constructing a stereotypical image of a ‘Muslim terrorist’ is linked to the plan of diverting the Muslims from launching an anti-establishment offensive to defend the community in the first place.”67 He also maintains in the same interview that ‘[w]hen there is a denial of justice, there would not be peace, but this does not

65 Field interview with Maulana Shafi Moonis on 01/12/2008.
66 Ibid.
67 Interview with Dr. S.Q.R. Illiyas, 03/12/2008.
happen in the case of Indian Muslims.’ In other words, he is arguing that Indian Muslims do not take refuge to violent means of terrorism and rather opts for peaceful democratic oppositional protests against denial of justice to the Muslim community.

It is worth mentioning here that Illiyas is actually pondering over the tactics of JIH to agitate in a ‘peaceful democratic way’ and trying to equate Jamaat and Indian Muslims as if Jamaat represents every section of Indian Muslims. In the first subsection of this chapter, we have already noticed this kind of equivalencing between Jamaat and Indian Muslims in Illiyas’ statement about Muslim protests against ‘imperialism’ and the visit of American President George W. Bush. However, the Jamaat leadership recognizes that there are sections among Indian Muslims, who are interested in ‘extremism’ as we have seen in the interview of Shafi Moonis. When I asked Illiyas that is he arguing that there is no trace of terrorist elements among the Indian Muslim community even if it is a minuscule minority, he responded:

“I am not talking about militancy in Jammu & Kashmir. It is a different story. Definitely there is terrorism and we have already condemned it whatever kind of terrorism is happening in India. Who is responsible, God knows. Terrorism by individual, group or by the state has been strongly and vehemently condemned by us. It is definitely un-Islamic and not justified at all.”

On 18th November, 2008 the Jamaat organized a public rally in Kolkata as part of its fortnight long country-wide political programme to organize a ‘Caravan for Peace and Justice’. I attended the public rally to note down the proceedings and later on to chat with some leaders and activists on certain issues. The festoon in the stage says that the caravan was organized (a) ‘for communal harmony’, (b) ‘to hate and condemn terrorist activities’, (c) ‘to condemn yellow journalism’ and (d) ‘for peace and justice for all’. The central and regional Jamaat leadership unequivocally condemned all forms of terrorism as they argued that it is not only un-Islamic to kill people in the name of religion but it also affects the

68 Ibid.
normal health of society. They suggested that the culture of terrorism is opposed to Islamic principles of peace and justice. The then SIO president Bishruddin Sharqi pointed out that Terrorism has its roots in poverty and unemployment and it is not only related to religion but also with secular institutions like state terrorism.

Another important thrust of this public rally is to argue a case for forceful condemnation for relating Islam and Muslims with terrorism and thus giving a bad name for Muslims and Islam. The Jamaat leadership asserted that the Jewish funded international media is already doing this job of tarnishing the image of Muslims and Islam in creating an Islamophobia while campaigning against ‘Islamic terror’ and now the Indian media has also joined this bandwagon. They further argued that on the issue of terrorism, India has now adopted the American model of ‘war on terror’ and it has only benefited the rightwing Hindutva forces. A Jamaat leader said that Muslims are denied justice as nobody has been punished in the case of Babri demolition. Instead, draconian anti-terrorist laws like Prevention of Terrorism Act [POTA] have been selectively used to target Muslims. However, according to Rahmat Ali Khan, the Jamaat president in the state of West Bengal, the injustices and oppression of Muslims in Bengal are not like other states where communal riots, police highhandedness and branding of Muslims as ‘terrorists’ are done. Rather, the injustices and oppression of Muslims in Bengal are of socio-economic nature with massive poverty and unemployment among Muslims. Thus, Muslims in India are victims of both communal and secular political establishments. The Jamaat leadership asserted that there is no justice and peace in the country and the Jamaat stands for justice for every marginalized, backward and weaker sections of population like Muslims, Dalits, Tribals, Christians etc. Moreover, they pointed out that today, the media is making a ghost out of terrorism while
keeping the burning issues of poverty and unemployment out of the public debates. Dr. Raisuddin Ahmed, ex-president of Jamaat in Bengal said that the promise of Indian nationalism with a united India fall apart with the rise of fragmented particular nationalisms soon after independence. Thus, Gandhi became a victim of Hindu nationalism while Indira Gandhi became a victim of Punjab nationalism and Rajiv Gandhi became a victim of Tamil nationalism. The assassinations of Gandhi, Indira and Rajiv were all terrorist activities and were done by non-Muslims and thus it is simply unjust to call that ‘all Muslims are terrorists’. He further comments that currently, India is witnessing the emergence of several sub-nationalisms like Gorkha agitation, Naga rebellions, ULFA activities in Assam and other secessionist groups in several north-eastern states. Thus, he further argued that when various nationalist struggles are not resolved politically and economically then terrorism would inevitably erupt as a social menace. In this context, he concluded by saying that guaranteeing individual liberty, religious freedom and settlement of economic and political grievances of the people are the foundations of justice. Therefore, economic and political grievances of Muslims should also be resolved immediately in order to counter a small minority of fringe groups among Muslim community who like fanatics have used religion in justifying their unjust and un-Islamic terrorist acts.\textsuperscript{69}

According to Jamaat leadership, in today’s national and international context of rising Islamophobia and anti-Muslim prejudice, when even legitimate grievances of Muslims are ignored, there is a pressing need for Muslims to make their presence felt in the political realm as well. According to the JIH President, Muslims should refrain from emotionalism and seek to struggle for their rights using all available peaceful and legal

\textsuperscript{69} Views expressed by the JIH leadership on 18/11/2008 in a public rally in Kolkata. For specific demands of the Jamaat on the issue of terrorism, a campaign folder was distributed among the audience. See Appendix 21.
means. They must desist from any illegal or disruptive activity. In general, they should seek to create avenues of dialogue and build bridges with non-Muslims, including with the people in the media and political circles with genuine commitment to democracy and justice.\footnote{Interview with JIH President Syed Jalaluddin Umari on 04/12/2008.}

It is interesting to note that like a well-knit cadre-based organization there are some common standard answers/versions to certain questions on Islam, Indian Muslims, terrorism etc. The Jamaat leadership and activists have condemned terrorist attacks in the country as ‘un-Islamic’. Besides condemning all forms of terrorism, the Jamaat is also blaming the media of bias in reporting the incidents while making a forced connection of Muslims and Islam with terrorist activities and thus creating a tarnished image of Islam and Muslims to what they call ‘yellow journalism’. The Jamaat is particularly critical about the role of the media to foment mounting suspicion on Muslims as potential terrorists. In fact, they are now highlighting more on Hindutva groups as potential terrorists after the recent arrests of Hindutva activists in relation to Malegaon blasts.\footnote{The JIH public meeting in front of Delhi’s Jama Masjid on 30/11/2008 highlighted more on RSS activities ‘spreading terrorism’.} As JIH leader Illiyas points out, ‘[i]t is only in recent times that we are listening about RSS hand in some bomb blasts in this country, when we raised questions about Nanded bomb blast and then Malegaon case was reinvestigated to find RSS connection. Otherwise, traditionally the terrorism issue was essentially Muslim centric.’\footnote{Interview with Dr. S.Q.R. Illiyas, 03/12/2008.} On the other hand, Jamaat is critical with the extremist approach of some groups including SIMI, and stressed that there is no ‘alternative to peaceful democratic approach’ to gain political success and public acceptance than to take refuge in ‘violent and coercive methods.’\footnote{Syed Jalaluddin Umari interviewed by Yoginder Sikand. Similar views were also expressed by Umari with my field interview on 04/12/2008.} The Jamaat leadership cites examples of
participation in Parliamentary democratic politics by Jamaat-e-Islami in Pakistan and Bangladesh, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Turkish Refah Party in this connection. Given the past experience in the Muslim world, they think that Islamic movement can gain from peaceful democratic politics which is more ‘practical’ than ‘immature’ violent extremism.\textsuperscript{74}

\textit{Against ‘Western’ Cultural Globalization: Positions on Consumerism, Live-in Relationship, Homosexuality, Blasphemy and Atheism}

The JIH is opposed to ‘consumerism’ and ‘materialist culture’ which they believe is an import from the ‘western capitalist world’. A Jamaat pamphlet points out that in contemporary India ‘[c]raze of global brands and shopping mania has promoted unparalleled consumerism [where] People are being pushed to overspending and consumerism, creating burden of debts and psychological and lifestyle related diseases.’\textsuperscript{75}

In this respect, JIH leader Illiyas pointed out that ‘cultural globalization is a matter of concern’ for Jamaat, particularly ‘the way, western culture is promoted by the media and the way our values are changing in the society and the way our new generation youth are getting westernized in their cultural aspects’ which according to him ‘is creating many problems.’ He argues that ‘there are people in the government who want to legitimize gay culture, live-in relationships, nightclubs and bars’ all of which are ‘ruining our culture’. He views that the Jamaat wants the government to check these kinds of permissiveness in society and regulate the ‘broadcast media’ as it is ‘promoting consumerism.’ According to Illiyas, ‘unfortunately both the UPA and NDA governments are unable to check this cultural globalization’ as they are ‘westernized in their thinking and least concerned about this issue.’ He further asserts

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid.
that cultural globalization is not only a concern for Muslims alone ‘but there are people who think that our Eastern culture is at stake’ and thus the Jamaat is trying ‘to initiate a dialogue with other religious groups by involving community leaders of Hindus, Christians and Sikhs to put pressure on the government so that it should stop the kinds of westernized films and TV serials.’ Illiays argues that the Jamaat is ‘concerned with both nakedness or nudity and commodification of women in western culture’ and similarly ‘the present Hindu society as a whole does not permit nudity and obscenity’. He argues that in western culture with ‘no moral bonding and no moral values, the worst sufferer is women particularly with the case of commercialization and commodification of women’ and thus a clear case of ‘violation of women’s rights’ which is equivalent to ‘humiliation and torture of women under such a cultural regime.’ This particular ‘anti-women’ nature of ‘western culture’ according to Illiyas thus cannot be ‘acceptable’ since it has an ‘anti-people nature’ by ‘ruining the women and fundamentally against the interests of women.’

The Jammat’s youth wing in Kerala, SYM however, connects the ‘consumerist hedonist culture’ with capitalism:

“It is high time that the youth of our times who have degenerated to become mere job-seekers, selfish and worshippers of hedonistic pleasures are inspired by an ideology capable of true liberation. Retrogressive capitalistic materialism is a positive hindrance in the path of developing society in the true direction and of retrieving the energy and resources of youth for creative goals.”

A press statement of Student’s Islamic Organisation [SIO], Jamaat’s student wing issued on March 1, 2009 places the demand to block all ‘porn sites’ and ‘vulgar and obscene information’ by introducing ‘a National level backbone-filtering system’ and to check cyber crimes. Another SIO press statement issued from New Delhi on April 17, 2009 was against

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76 Interview with Dr. S.Q.R. Illiyas, 03/12/2008.
77 Excerpts from SYM pamphlet: ‘Oceans without waves’ collected on 02/12/2008.
‘sex education’ by welcoming ‘the report of parliamentary committee that there should be no sex education in schools.’ SIO had previously made a nationwide campaign that ‘the proposed condom education program is unwise and ridiculous to be given to small school going kids and that it will create adverse effect and will instigate uncontrolled sexual relationships in the young generation.’

Similarly, JIH people’s manifesto places the following demands under ‘Culture’: “(a) Introduce back bone filter system to check vulgar and obscene contents in the internet (b) Censuring of all feature films should be made stringent to curb the menace of brazen sex and violence (c) Bring legislation to control broadcast media so that the communal and social fabric of the society should not be disturbed (d) Ban the trade and consumption of alcohol completely (e) Implement the anti ragging law strictly.”

Similarly, the JIH programme argues that ‘[w]estern culture is having a detrimental effect on the family system.’

In my field interviews, live-in relationship and ‘free sex’ was identified with ‘western culture’ and out rightly rejected as ‘un-Islamic’ and impermissible as argued by Jamaat’s ex-President, Abdul Haq Ansari. Regarding live-in relationship as a possible provision within Islam, I asked Illiyas about ‘Muta’ or temporary marriage among the Shia Muslims, which lasts from three days to three years with only a marital tag on it. To my query, Illiyas responded that it is not permitted among Muslims in general and only among Shiites under a specific condition.

On the charge/allegation of ‘blasphemy’ and ‘insult to Prophet’, Islamist political mobilizations took place against Salman Rushdie in 1989 after his book *Satanic Verses* was

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81 *JIH Policy and Programme*, pp. 4-5.
82 Interview with ex-President of JIH, Dr. Muhammad Abdul Haq Ansari on 03/12/2008.
83 Interview with Dr. S.Q.R. Illiyas, 03/12/2008. See Appendix 22.
published. Similarly, Taslima Nasrin often faced the brunt of Islamist protests both in India and Bangladesh after her book *Lajja* (*Shame*, 1993) was published, followed by series of Taslima’s autobiographical writings. In the past, we have also seen the Islamist opposition to alimony laws for divorced Muslim women in the case of Shah Bano (1986), and recently its staunch opposition to legalizing homosexuality in India. Although, all these cases are varied in context and content, one commonality among them is the peculiar Islamist political mobilization often using violence in some cases while using aggressive rhetoric in other cases in placing their demands. In India, the JIH along with a number of Muslim groups, who previously supported a ban on Rushdie’s book were arguing for banning the writings of Taslima Nasrin. They demanded that Ms. Nasrin should leave the country and condemned the Indian government’s permission to issue a visa extension to her.

It was also interesting to note how in my field interviews, many Jamaat leaders described both Rushdie and Nasrin as ‘western agents’. In fact, they do not find any difference among Rushdie, Taslima and the Danish cartoonist. The rage and irritation against Taslima Nasrin has been witnessed not only among the JIH but also among other Indian Muslim groups and community leaders based in various cities of India, who in turn took refuge to violent street demonstrations by damaging public property, tried to physically assault Ms. Nasrin and threatened her life that compelled her to flee from India.

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85 For JIH’s position on Taslima Nasrin controversy see Appendix 23.

86 Manjari Mishra, ‘Muslim group sets Rs 5 lakh on Taslima’, *Times of India* (Lucknow), 17th March 2007; ‘Imam issues Fatwa against Taslima’, *Times of India* (Kolkata), 26th June, 2006; ‘Fatwa to blacken Taslima’s face’, *Hindustan Times* (Kolkata), 25th June, 2006; ‘Taslima roughed up in Hyderabad’, *The Hindu*, 10th August, 2007; ‘Fatwa offers unlimited money to kill Taslima’, *Hindustan Times* (Kolkata), 17th August, 2007;
The JIH was also opposed to some contents of a school-level Kerala text book on the ground that it ‘professes atheism’. This opposition to atheism or any other religious or irreligious belief other than Islam is expressed in the SYM pamphlet:

“Solidarity understands that irreligiosity, fanaticism and the global spiritual trade conducted by the cultic god-men and god-women are the main obstacles in the path of social development. Hence, Solidarity is in the vanguard of the fight against tendencies threatening to extinguish the efforts of social revolution that uphold the interests of people.”

In Kerala text book controversy (2008) some aggressive Islamist rhetoric was noticed demanding that the Kerala government should withdraw its policy of ‘practicing atheism in school text books.’ In the case of Kerala text book controversy, the Jamaat argued that atheism is propagated by a communist government and a communist ideology is discarded by the Islamists as an ‘atheistic, materialist, western ideology’ as eventually expressed by a number of Jamaat leaders in Kerala and Delhi during my fieldwork. In any case, Jamaati Islamism calls for a critique to all ‘un-Islamic ideologies’ and its mission against ‘polytheism, atheism and such other false beliefs and ideologies, like the wrong concept of the unity of religions.’

Like its staunch opposition to the question of blasphemy and atheism in the cases of Rushdie, Taslima and Kerala textbook controversy, the Jamaat is also opposed to homosexuality and live-in relationships as we have previously seen in the interviews of Illiyas regarding ‘cultural globalisation’. The JIH leader Illiyas justifies Jamaat’s ‘opposition to homosexuality’ by arguing that it ‘is definitely not permitted in Islam’ and thus ‘un-

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87 Excerpts from SYM pamphlet: ‘Oceans without waves’ collected on 02/12/2008.
Islamic’ besides being ‘unnatural sex’ and ‘irrational act’ which cannot be ‘legitimized’ even if one gets instances of homosexuals in Muslim history, since JIH is guided by Islamic codes and not precedence of ‘punishable bad acts’ by certain ‘deviated Muslims’. In the wake of Delhi High Court’s verdict to legalize consensual gay sex, a press note of JIH while quoting its Secretary General summarizes its dismissive position on homosexuality.

Another press statement by the Maharashtra state wing of JIH has opposed homosexuality and the Delhi High Court judgment to scrap section 377 that decriminalize homosexuality between two consenting adults. According to this statement, homosexuality is ‘aping the west’ and associated with ‘moral degradation’ which would ‘devastate and destruct [the] nation’ by heading ‘towards anarchy’. It defies the ‘processes of civilization’ and family life between man and woman. A homosexual person is condemned in the Jamaati discourse to ‘commit crimes like spreading AIDS’ and ‘incapable of supporting and sustaining the future generation and thus damages the social system’. Scrapping of section 377 is regarded by the Jamaat as antithetical to the ‘cultural heritage’ and ‘religious values’ of the country and its ‘deeply religious people’. Finally, the Jamaat argues that ‘[t]he reasons upon which the Hon. High Court decriminalized sex between contentious adult of same sex, could as well be applied to decriminalize the crimes such as adultery, pedophilia, Drugs consumption’ and thus ‘contra-views the spirit of constitution and also against the social and moral values of Indian civilization.’ The JIH Maharashtra therefore requested ‘the government to go in appeal in Supreme Court against the Delhi High Court decision and see that 377 remains intact imposing the ban on Homosexuality.’

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90 Interview with Dr. S.Q.R. Illiyas, 03/12/2008.
91 See Appendix 24.
rights is also expressed in a press statement of SIO issued from New Delhi on July 3, 2009 on similar grounds.\footnote{See Appendix 25.}

It is now amply clear that JIH opposes consumerism, homosexuality, live-in relationship, blasphemy and atheism under the rubric of ‘western cultural globalization’. Therefore, by opposing these issues, it actually constructs a wider antagonistic frontier namely the ‘West’. In chapter 6 and in concluding remarks, I would discuss further about the dynamics of Jamaat’s opposition to these issues and about continuous Islamist engagement with the ‘West’ by always posing the West as the enemy and make responsible for the economic and cultural ‘miseries’ of the Muslim societies within the framework of Islamist understanding of jahiliya.

\textit{Jamaat Politics between Islamic Universalism and Muslim Particularism}

In this chapter, I have shown how the JIH along with its youth organization SYM in Kerala, takes up several issues of socio-political importance. Similarly, the JIH with its most active mass organization among students namely the Student’s Islamic Organisation [SIO], generally takes up student and youth issues. A press release of SIO on ‘Nationwide campaign in campuses and universities’ dated 6\textsuperscript{th} July, 2009 states how the SIO is going to campaign for ‘interfaith dialogue’, ‘green campus’, ‘Sanitation Awareness in Slum areas’, ‘Library Establishment in localities’, ‘helping disabled and old age persons’, ‘Orphan Sponsorship’, ‘single child adoption for education’, ‘Medical Check-up Camp’, ‘Eradicating Child Labor’ etc.\footnote{http://sio-india.org/press/sio-launch-massive-campaign-campuses-nation-wide accessed on 26/11/2009.} Another SIO press statement issued on March 1, 2009 argues for anti-
ragging law to be implemented ‘urgently’. The SIO in recent past has been vocal against Foreign Direct Investment [FDI] in education sector in India [See Appendix 26]. Besides the SYM and SIO, the JIH also has a women’s wing which also takes care of a rather small Girl’s Islamic Organisation [GIO]. The issues taken up by JIH’s women’s wing are not fundamentally different from the GIO. JIH leader, K.K. Zuhaira summarizes the viewpoint of women’s wing and GIO by pointing out that its primary concerns are that of divorce, polygamy, women’s education and jobs, security at workplace and women’s reservation in elected bodies.

On the women’s question, the JIH programme says, ‘[w]omen in particular, have been denied their due place in society and they are subjected to victimization and exploitation…The Jamaat shall pay special attention to restoring to women a place of honour and dignity in society, protecting them from injustice and excesses, and enabling them to play an active role in society.’ Regarding the women’s reservation bill, the JIH is however demanding a sub quota for Muslim women and OBCs in the present 33% reservation for women in general. Recently, a resolution was passed in the CAC meeting of JIH:

“The present form of the women reservation Bill, as passed in the Rajya Sabha is not acceptable. The apprehension of Muslim and other underrepresented sections is correct that the bill is its present form will lead to further decrease in their representation in legislative bodies. The CAC regards the demand of sub-quota for these sections as a necessary competent of the envisaged reservation and supports the introduction of such a quota.”

96 For the first time in JIH’s history, a woman was elected as the member of Majlis-e-Shoora [Central Advisory Committee] in 2007. She is the current President of Jamaat’s Women’s wing in Kerala.
97 Field interview with K.K. Zuhaira on 13/01/2009. See Appendix 27.
98 JIH Policy and Programme, p. 4, p. 9.
The brief overview of the JIH programme says that it ‘regards Islam as the authentic way of life revealed by the Creator of the universe; for all human beings. Accordingly the JIH invites all people towards submission to God (which is the literal meaning of Islam).’\(^{100}\)

The JIH website states clearly that ‘Islam is the ideology of the Jamaat. Its structure is based on its belief on the three-fold concept of the Oneness and sovereignty of God (Monotheism), the Concept of Prophethood and the Concept of Life after Death. From these fundamentals of belief follow the concepts of unity of all mankind, the purposefulness of man’s life, and the universality of the way of life taught by the Holy Prophet.’\(^{101}\) It further claims the ‘universality of Islamic way of life’ while claiming that Islam, as an alternative ‘ideology’, is not a way of life only for Muslims, rather it is for whole of mankind [See Appendix 28].

The JIH also argues that Islam is not only a private matter but it deals with public aspects as well and in this sense it is a ‘complete way of life’ by giving answers to ‘man’s fundamental questions.’\(^{102}\) The JIH therefore argues that:

“Islam is not simply a compendium of religious rites and rituals. It is concerned with the overall approach of man to life in all its multiple aspects...Islam desires to convince human beings that only by a proper ordering of the whole of life on this planet in conformity with the Divine Guidance can they hope to realize their spiritual ambitions.”\(^{103}\)

Thus, the Islamist ideology of Jamaat tries to pose itself as a universal ideology for all of humanity and not merely a particularist one claiming the demands of a particularist group of Muslims. Regarding the question of caste among Indian Muslims, the Jamaat does not recognize caste among Muslims and term it un-Islamic and thus conceptualizes Indian Muslims as part of a global homogenous ‘Ummah’ (community of believers) where religion


\(^{102}\) Ibid.

\(^{103}\) Ibid.
and faith becomes the primary identity than any ‘other’ racial, linguistic, class, and caste divisions.\(^{104}\)

However, there are serious limits of such portrayal of universalism of Jamaati Islamism. In fact, its ideological articulations cannot overcome the strong notions of Muslim particularism in India despite its efforts to articulate an ideology of Islamic universalism. In this respect, one can see dual ideological articulations of Jamaat: one which claims to be Universalist by taking up issues of the ‘people’ and varied sections of the population and another being particularist, specifically highlighting the issues related to Muslims. Such a double ideological articulation for ‘people’ and ‘Muslims’ can be noticed in the words of Illiyas in the context of Jamaat’s caravan for justice and peace. He argues that the Jamaat’s approach was to give confidence to the Muslim community so that it should not feel alienated in the wake of countrywide terrorist attacks. Secondly, it wanted to expose the ‘troublemakers’ like RSS and ‘ruling classes’. Thirdly, it wanted to raise the issues of livelihood, illiteracy, Dalits, Tribals, Women and Muslims apart from highlighting the stark difference between ‘shining India’ and the poverty in India.\(^{105}\) The rhetoric of SYM also claims that it fights for different marginalized groups and its initiatives are ‘pro-people’.\(^{106}\) Such a view is echoed in the words of SYM leader:

“In Solidarity, we have a pro-people emphasis in launching social struggles and political movements while taking new initiatives. In the coming years we would concentrate on the issues of Adivasi and fishermen folk. Right now, Solidarity has three to four Adivasi units comprised of purely Adivasi people with no Muslims in those units. Here I must clarify that Solidarity membership is open to all and not only for Muslims.”\(^{107}\)

In this respect, the people’s manifesto of Jamaat before 2009 elections raised several demands for both Indian Muslims and several other particularist social groups on the

\(^{104}\) Interview with ex-President of JIH, Dr. Muhammad Abdul Haq Ansari on 03/12/2008; Interview with JIH President Syed Jalaluddin Umari on 04/12/2008.

\(^{105}\) Interview with Dr. S.Q.R. Illiyas, 03/12/2008. See Appendix 29.

\(^{106}\) SYM pamphlet: ‘Oceans without waves’ collected on 02/12/2008. See Appendix 30.

\(^{107}\) Interview with M. Sajid, 02/12/2008.
questions of ‘social justice’, ‘Muslim reservation’, ‘Anti-terror laws’, issues of backward regions like Jammu & Kashmir and North-East, about proportional representation of various communities in elected bodies, about women’s issues, ‘public accountability’, and waqfs [See Appendix 31]. However, the Universalist claims of Jamaat and its ‘pro-people’ agenda never overlook the particularist issues of Muslim community in general. This specific focus on issues of the Muslim minorities/community in India is what I have already called the ‘politics of Muslim particularism’. The Policy programme of JIH briefly points out the following on ‘community issues’:

“The Jamaat shall strive for Muslim community’s safety and security, protection of its religions and cultural identity and its educational and economic advancement on the basis of Islamic principles. It would persuade Muslims to undertake collective efforts towards these goals.”

Similarly, Article 3 of JIH’s policy implications elaborate on (Muslim) community issues. In this regard, the JIH sets its target for 2007–2011 in its policy and programme saying:

“With the cooperation of other organizations and institutions, efforts would be made to improve the educational and economic status of Muslims to the extent of ten percent with respect to the present level.”

On Muslim community issues, a press statement dated 27th October, 2009 shows how the SIO delegation visited the Ministry of Minority Affairs office to place their demands for Merit-cum-means scholarship, post and pre-Matric scholarships for Muslim students. The reservation and appropriate representation for Muslims in jobs and education was another major issue that was taken up by SYM in Kerala.

109 Ibid., pp. 15-16. See Appendix 32.
110 Ibid., p. 24.
112 Interview with M. Sajid, 02/12/2008. See Appendix 33.
When I was doing my field interviews with the JIH leadership, the Jamaat was thinking of forming a political party in India that can take part in elections as mentioned earlier in this chapter.\textsuperscript{113} At that time the Jamaat leadership maintained that it will continue to present its views and concerns to various secular democratic parties. In this respect, the Jamaat claims to work for the cause of ‘genuine’ democracy, for equal treatment by the state of all citizens, for social justice for all marginalized communities such as Dalits, Tribals, Christians, Sikhs as well as Muslims, and for countering communal fascism.\textsuperscript{114} Finally, in 2011 some prominent members of Jamaat has launched a political party called Welfare Party of India, which would take care of ‘marginalized groups besides Muslims, such as the poor, backwards and SC/STs’\textsuperscript{115} and whose ideological vantage points are ‘value-based politics’, ‘welfare state’ and ‘religious pluralism’.\textsuperscript{116}

The Welfare Party of India has Mujtaba Farooq (a prominent JIH leader) as its President and S.Q.R. Illyas as its secretary.\textsuperscript{117} This is an important shift in the political approach of Jamaat from articulating a narrow sectarian politics of ‘Muslim particularism’ that was more focused on issues and problems related to Indian Muslims till very recently to take up issues of other marginalized groups like backward castes and other victims of communal violence like Christians and Sikhs. Jamaat’s current shift in political attitude in addressing several significant political issues can have far reaching effects in shaping public opinion among Indian Muslims.

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\textsuperscript{113} Known from interviewing Abdul Haq Ansari on 03/12/2008. Also, Syed Jalaaluddin Umari interviewed by Yoginder Sikand. Similar views were also expressed by Umari with my field interview on 04/12/2008.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid.
In the light of Jamaat’s rhetoric and political initiatives that I have discussed so far in the last two chapters, it can be argued that the JIH seems to articulate a politics of (Islamist) ‘populism’ by trying to organize and participate in ‘popular’ movements. The terms ‘popular’ and ‘populism’ is used here in the same sense as Laclau has used in his several evocative works. To summarize: it is a hegemonic formation of the underdogs constructed through an equivalential articulation of various particularist demands challenging an antagonistic frontier of another hegemonic formation of the power bloc. As Laclau observes that “in the case of populism: a frontier of exclusion divides society into two camps. The ‘people’, in that case, is something less than the totality of the members of the community: it is a partial component which nevertheless aspires to be conceived as the only legitimate totality.”

We have noticed how the JIH in most occasions come out with a charter of demands before the power bloc, whatever that nature of power bloc might be, whether it is state government, central government, mainstream political parties or corporate capital. We have also noticed that some of JIH’s demands were fulfilled and some were unfulfilled. Now Laclau argues that a demand initially ‘is perhaps only a request.’ If the demand is satisfied, then ‘that is the end of the matter; but if it is not, people can start to perceive…equally unsatisfied demands.’ According to Laclau, if the situation of unfulfilled demands remain unchanged for some time, then there is a possibility of ‘an accumulation of unfulfilled demands and an increasing inability of the institutional system

118 Ernesto Laclau, On Populist Reason, p. 81.
119 Ibid., p. 73.
120 Ibid.
to absorb them in a *differential* way (each in isolation from others), and an *equivalential* relation is established between them.\textsuperscript{121} This might result into ‘a widening chasm separating the institutional system from the people.’\textsuperscript{122} So in such a context, ‘the formation of an internal frontier, a dichotomization of the local political spectrum through the emergence of an equivalential chain of unsatisfied demands’ might take place.\textsuperscript{123} In such a situation, the ‘requests’ might turn into ‘claims.’\textsuperscript{124} Here, Laclau clarifies that ‘a demand which, satisfied or not, remains isolated [is] a *democratic demand*’ whereas ‘[a] plurality of demands which, through their equivalential articulation, constitute a broader social subjectivity’ can be called ‘*popular demands*’.\textsuperscript{125} ‘Popular demands’ according to Laclau, ‘start, at a very incipient level, to constitute the ‘people’ as a potential historical actor.’\textsuperscript{126} This particular moment of constituting the ‘people’ as a potential historical actor is what Laclau calls the embryonic stage of ‘a populist configuration’.\textsuperscript{127} So, Laclau points out two preconditions of populism: ‘(1) the formation of an internal antagonistic frontier separating the ‘people’ from power; and (2) an equivalential articulation of demands making the emergence of the ‘people’ possible.’\textsuperscript{128} For Laclau, ‘there is a third precondition which does not really arise until the political mobilization has reached a higher level: the unification of these various demands—whose equivalence, up to that point, had not gone beyond a feeling of vague solidarity—into a stable system of signification.’\textsuperscript{129} Now, in our case study of Jamaat, we have to understand the transition and non-transition of ‘democratic demands’ to ‘popular demands’. Here, the

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[121]{Ibid.}
\footnotetext[122]{Ibid., p. 74.}
\footnotetext[123]{Ibid.}
\footnotetext[124]{Ibid.}
\footnotetext[125]{Ibid.}
\footnotetext[126]{Ibid.}
\footnotetext[127]{Ibid.}
\footnotetext[128]{Ibid.}
\footnotetext[129]{Ibid.}
\end{footnotes}
caveat is that *democratic demands* ‘can be accommodated within an expanding hegemonic formation’ while *popular demands* ‘presents a challenge to the hegemonic formation as such.’\(^{130}\) I would later on identify which demands of JIH are ‘democratic’ and how far they are able to transform those democratic demands into ‘popular ones’.

Therefore, from a Laclauian perspective, if a popular politics or a populist configuration has identified an antagonistic frontier of the ‘people’, like the chain of antagonistic frontiers identified by the JIH in ‘imperialism’, ‘neoliberal capitalism’, ‘Hindutva’, ‘Indian state’, ‘ruling/elite classes’, ‘corporate capital’ etc. then the democratic demands of a particularist group like Indian Muslims should ideally be supplemented with an agenda of making an equivalential relation with other democratic demands of oppressed, exploited and excluded groups of Dalits, Tribals, women, working class, peasantry etc. and transform those aggregated demands to popular demand of challenging the current political cum policy regime of neoliberal hegemony. In my case study, it seems that the Indian Jamaat is trying to construct a politics of ‘Islamist populism’ by articulating the democratic demands of different marginalized sections of the population while identifying the antagonistic frontier of ‘neoliberal regime’ and ‘western imperialism’ as *root causes* of most pressing problems for the ‘Indian people’. Now if the democratic demands of one or several particularist groups are unfulfilled then accumulation of those unfulfilled democratic demands of various sectors of population in fact gives opportunity for populist politics to politically articulate a much greater populist demand to challenge the power bloc. As Laclau proclaims that ‘[t]he frustration of a series of social demands makes possible the movement from isolated democratic demands to equivalential popular ones.’\(^{131}\) Now, the first

\(^{130}\) Ibid., p. 82.  
\(^{131}\) Ibid., p. 85.
dimension of such a break from unsatisfied democratic demands to popular ones is that ‘at its root, there is the experience of a lack, a gap which has emerged in the harmonious continuity of the social.’\textsuperscript{132} Laclau suggests that in such a circumstance, ‘[t]here is a fullness of the community which is missing’ and this is ‘decisive’ because ‘the construction of the ‘people’ will be the attempt to give a name to that absent fullness.’\textsuperscript{133} As Laclau argues:

\cite{Laclau1977}

\begin{quote}
\textquotedblleft[w]ithout this initial breakdown of something in the social order—however minimal that something could initially be—there is no possibility of antagonism, frontier, or, ultimately, ‘people’. This initial experience is not only, however, an experience of lack. Lack…is linked to a demand which is not met. But this involves bringing into the picture the power which has not met the demand. A demand is always addressed to somebody. So from the very beginning we are confronted with a dichotomic division between unfulfilled social demands, on the one hand, and an unresponsive power, on the other.\textsuperscript{134}
\end{quote}

Thus, according to Laclau, ‘the movement from democratic to popular demands presupposes a plurality of subject positions: demands, isolated at the beginning, emerge at different points of the social fabric and the transition to a popular subjectivity consists in establishing an equivalential bond between them.’\textsuperscript{135}

However, the challenge for any populist politics emerges when the power bloc is able to satisfy/fulfill/accommodate particularist democratic demands in differential manner, ‘each in isolation from others’. Moreover, as we have learnt from Laclau that if the democratic demand has been met by the power bloc in the first instance, then ‘that is the end of matter’ giving no scope for a populist mobilization out of unsatisfied democratic demand(s) to be transformed into popular one(s) to challenge the power bloc. Recall Laclau’s above observation: ‘democratic demands’ can be ‘accommodated within an expanding hegemonic formation’ whereas ‘popular demands present a challenge to the

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{132}{Ibid.\textsuperscript{\textregistered}}\footnotetext{133}{Ibid.}\footnotetext{134}{Ibid., pp. 85-86.}\footnotetext{135}{Ibid. p. 86.}
\end{footnotes}
hegemonic formation'. In fact, in India, the policy of affirmative action and compensation in many capitalist developmental projects can be seen as such accommodationist strategies of the power bloc to absorb the democratic demands of various particularist groups in differential way, one isolated from the other because the unfulfilment of such democratic demands could open up the possibility of transforming those very democratic demands into popular ones with the help of an equivalent articulation with other democratic demands of various particularist groups that together and unitedly can challenge the hegemonic formation of the contemporary neoliberal power bloc. Much of Indian politics has been what Laclau calls the transformation from ‘requests to claims’ by various particular political actors and the fulfillment of several democratic demands by the ruling power bloc in order to sustain status-quo on the one hand, and the hindrances to the transformation of democratic demands to popular demands by the power bloc on the other hand.

This is why the specific politics of particularist demands for and around affirmative action, and the fulfillment of the same are nothing short of a politics of appropriation and accommodation by the power bloc in order to close down the possibility of a politics of radical alternative that seeks to alter the power relations of the prevalent society in favour of the ‘people’. In this process of articulation of demands by separate and particularist groups like different excluded and marginalized sections of the population, namely Dalits, Tribals,

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136 Laclau’s distinction between democratic and popular demands is based on the Marxist distinction of bourgeois-democratic or liberal-democratic and socialist demands. As Laclau argues, “democratic demands were inherently bourgeois, and essentially linked to the establishment of ‘liberal-democratic’ regimes. Different from the (bourgeois)-democratic demands were the socialist ones, which involved transcending capitalist society and corresponded to a more advanced stage of historical development…So the main distinction was between socialist and democratic demands; the inscription of the latter within bourgeois hegemony and the establishment of a liberal state were taken for granted.” See Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, pp. 125-126. However, the criteria for which Laclau uses the term *democratic demand* are of the following: (1) ‘these demands are formulated to the system by an underdog of sorts—that there is an equalitarian dimension implicit in them; (2) that their very emergence presupposes some kind of exclusion or deprivation’ to what Laclau calls ‘deficient being’. See Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, p. 125.
Women and Muslims and the *fulfillment of those demands in differential manner or in isolation* by the power bloc makes the construction of an equivalential chain of various demands and groups difficult. It is in this context that the politics and policy around affirmative action becomes intimately connected to the politics of power bloc while accommodating/absorbing the democratic demands of various particularist groups like Dalits, Tribals, women, OBCs and Muslims. As a result of the lack of an equivalential chain among the above mentioned marginalized and excluded groups and the absence of an equivalential chain in their articulation of demands, the construction of the ‘people’ and its fight against a common antagonistic frontier also takes a back seat.

The discussions in the last two chapters so far has demonstrated how JIH along with its mass organizations like SYM, SIO and GIO have tried to raise issues of various particularist identities and marginalized groups like farmers, workers, Dalits, Tribals, Muslims, women and other minorities. At the same time, the JIH has been also arguing that ‘imperialism’, ‘neoliberal capitalism’, ‘majoritarian communalism’ and ‘western cultural globalization’ pose great threat to the ‘people’ at large. It is thus interesting to note that the JIH simultaneously tries to articulate concerns and demands for particularist groups like the farmers, workers, students, backward castes, Muslims, etc. and a larger universal category like the ‘people’. It is indeed worth thinking that whether Islamism elaborates the meaning of the *people* in a Laclauian sense of identifying the ‘people’ with ‘plebs’ or ‘underdogs’. As Laclau, incisively points out, ‘traditional terminology—which has been translated into common language—makes this difference clear: the people can be conceived as *populus*, the body of all citizens; or as *plebs*, the underprivileged.’

Laclau’s further clarification regarding ‘people’ and ‘populism’ conceptually differs from the usual meaning in the

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dominant political discourses: “in order to be the ‘people’ of populism,…we need a plebs who claims to be the only legitimate populus—that is, a partiality which wants to function as the totality of the community.”\textsuperscript{138} This is because those sections of the population who are responsible for the underprivileged conditions of the plebs cannot be the legitimate part of the same community (‘people’ in this case) since the plebs are in an antagonistic relationship with a frontier made up by the rest of the population which are part of the power bloc and thus the chasm between them is ‘irretrievable.’\textsuperscript{139}

The ‘people’ as a collective political actor might not play the historic role of representing an emancipatory politics of counter-hegemony without equivalent articulations of various marginalized sections of population as mentioned above. To put in theoretical terms in the words of Laclau, ‘[t]he universal is incommensurable with the particular, but cannot, however, exist without the latter.’\textsuperscript{140} Therefore, the particular is important so far as constructing the universal is concerned. On the other hand, the particular demands can be properly realized when it becomes a part of a larger universal political agenda. As Laclau points out, ‘difference and particularisms are the necessary starting point, but out of it, it is possible to open the way to a relative universalization of values which can be the basis for a popular hegemony…the particular can only fully realize itself if it constantly keeps open, and constantly redefines, its relation to the universal.’\textsuperscript{141} In successfully constructing an agenda of populism, Laclau argues that one should consider ‘the underdog, a plebs claiming to be the populus’ and should not exclude ‘any notion of

\textsuperscript{138} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., p. 86.
\textsuperscript{140} Ernesto Laclau, \textit{Emancipation(s)} (London: Verso, 1996), p. 35.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., p. 65.
antagonism or internal division.\textsuperscript{142} It should not conceive \textit{people} ‘as an a priori homogenous entity postulated from a centre of power which, instead of being the social precipitate of an equivalential interaction of democratic demands, is seen as determining an identical substance that any demand expresses.'\textsuperscript{143} If it conceives ‘people’ as an ‘a priori homogenous entity’ then Laclau warns us that “the internal split inherent in any democratic demand within the equivalential chain collapses; the ‘people’ loses its internal differentiations, and is reduced to a substantial unity. The ‘people’ can still be conceived as a radical force opposed to the existing status quo, but it is no longer an underdog: the essential heterogeneity which is the basis of any populist identity has been surrendered and replaced by a homogenous unity.”\textsuperscript{144} That is to say, the \textit{universality} and \textit{unity} of the \textit{people} cannot be successfully constructed without taking into account of distinct \textit{particularities} embedded within any given set of population.

With this theoretical framework of Laclau in the background, the politico-ideological articulations of Jamaat, as we have seen in the last and present chapter are however, replete with what we can call a 1) ‘politics of Muslim particularism’, 2) ‘politics of resistance’ and 3) ‘politics of the people’. The ‘politics of Muslim particularism’ specifically highlights the issues of Muslim education, security, employment and socio-economic development. The ‘politics of resistance’ against the antagonistic frontier of contemporary neoliberal policy regime in India is expressed in its oppositional voice to SEZ, land grab, FDI, IMF-World Bank dependent economic policies along with anti-US, anti-Israel thrust, a call for reviving NAM, and collaboration with SAARC and other third world countries in foreign policy matters. The ‘politics of the people’ is represented by its focus of overall socio-economic

\begin{thebibliography}{10}
\bibitem{Ibid} Ibid., p. 208.
\bibitem{Ibid} Ibid.
\end{thebibliography}
development, right to livelihood, right to justice, and security and equity issues for varied marginalized sectors of the population like Dalits, Tribals, women, backward classes, other minorities, workers and peasants apart from a call for infrastructural and law and order developments in regional backward pockets like Jammu & Kashmir and North East. The ‘politics of resistance’ and ‘politics of the people’ by Jamaat with an Islamist rhetoric and justification together takes shape of what I call the politics of ‘Islamist populism’.

But Islamism also articulates a ‘politics of Muslim particularism’ with specific narrow political interests for its constituency even if it claims to represent ‘humanity/mankind’ and try to address the injustices faced by several marginalized non-Muslim sections of the population like Dalits, Tribals, women, peasantry, working class and other minorities in India. However, the successful construction of the ‘people’ under the banner of Jamaati Islamism with equivalential relations between particularist groups like Dalits, Tribals, religious minorities etc. has not been possible due to lack of identification of those very constituencies with Islamism, which JIH aspires to rally behind its political project. Furthermore, the JIH, while trying to make an equivalential articulation between various marginalized and excluded groups like Dalits, Tribals, OBCs, women, other religious minorities neglects the ‘class identities’ like working classes and the peasantry into its organizational forum/platform. This is evident from Jamaat’s organizational activities among students, youth, Women and on a minor scale, even among the Muslim middle classes, like among a section of Muslim teachers and professionals with the initiatives of APCR but it has no organizational presence among working classes and the peasantry. The lack of any mass organizations of Jamaat among the working classes and peasantry—

\footnote{145 Association for Protection of Civil Rights, a recently formed human rights organisation backed by JIH.}
arguably the worst sufferers of neoliberal policy regime and significantly a major chunk of population is an empirical reality.

Theoretically speaking, the Indian Jamaat is struggling with its own ideological contradictions between choosing the *Ummah* as the universal emancipatory actor, or the ‘people’ as a universal political actor. The former excludes the non-Muslims whereas the latter ideally includes all the plebian constituencies. Thus, the JIH is puzzled on the issue that who would lead the politics of emancipation for an ‘Islamist alternative’ against its identified chain of antagonistic frontiers/power bloc(s). This is precisely because of its traditional emphasis on the centrality of the *Ummah* and the Islamic party playing the role of a vanguard, with Maududian vision of “*Saleh Jamaat* (a righteous group) or a ‘holy minority’ that would one day capture political power and establish the Islamic system in its entirety.”

This central emphasis on Islamic *Ummah* as the harbinger of Islamic revolution or establishment of Islam while fighting against ‘non-Islamic’ ideologies can be traced in the JIH programme.

Thus, Jamaat’s contradiction can be conceptualized as the contradiction of non-identification and misconstruction of the universal political actor, namely the ‘people’. In an era of various particularist struggles, it is difficult for the ‘Muslim Ummah’ *alone* to become the universal political actor, who can represent and articulate the voice of other marginalized and oppressed sections of population or speak on behalf of entire plebeian society. Since, the ‘people’ in Indian context is a much broader and comprehensive political category, and an inclusive collective political actor which encompasses varied plebeian and underprivileged groups, the Muslim *Ummah* itself has become a form of particularism like other

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146 Ahmad, ‘Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia’, p. 466.
147 *JIH Policy and Programme*, pp. 7-8. See Appendix 34.
marginalized particular socio-political actors like peasantry, Dalits, Tribals, working class and women. Therefore, without shedding its particular religious mission of ‘Islamic alternative’ and a particular religious identity, it would be difficult for Jamaat to become the representative of the ‘people’ against what it calls the ‘onslaught of neoliberalism’. All these factors evidently explain the lack of political mobilization behind Islamism in India and its marginalization in Indian politics. As a result, the JIH has to continuously articulate its politics around the democratic demands for its core Muslim constituency to be only recognized in the political mainstream as a pressure group of the Indian Muslims.

I have already argued that how the power bloc would be rather content with absorbing/accommodating particularist democratic demands and so far, it has tried to play a politics of accommodation by offering affirmative action and reservation to excluded groups and offering compensation to a set of affected people in capitalist developmental projects. Similarly, in a neoliberal India, the Indian government as a power bloc, has also promised different forms of affirmative action for Muslims as I have pointed out in the previous chapter. Now, the JIH as a Muslim pressure group, fighting for mere particularist demands for narrow-sectarian interests of any single community like the Indian Muslims is not going to help in taking forward the agenda of changing the current status-quo of neoliberal dispensation, precisely because ‘a politics of pure particularism is self defeating’\textsuperscript{148} since it cannot assemble ‘other’ particularist demands and therefore unable to articulate a Universalist political project of emancipation. This is the precise limit of Islamist populism in India, where Islamism despite being particularist tries to become Universalist but actually cannot become a Universalist politics of the ‘people’.

However, the limits of Islamist populism does not only end with the lack of political mobilization from varied excluded groups but it is also reflected in terms of Jamaat’s weak organizational presence among Indian Muslims as well, which I have already pointed out earlier in this chapter. So, how can we explain the lack of popularity of Jamaat and its inability to become the vanguard of the Indian Muslims despite its effort to be seen as a ‘Muslim pressure group’? First, since the category of ‘universal’ is ‘a highly unstable figure’ the Islamist concept of Umma as a universal identity for Muslims is difficult to construct because Indian Muslims are divided by several particularist identities like language, caste and gender. As Dipesh Chakrabarty argues that “a ‘community’ based on the loyalties of religion, language, habitat, kinship, and the like could only be ambiguous...because a ‘community’ defined by such loyalties was necessarily a self-contradictory entity. People sharing the same religion, for example, could be divided by language (or habitat) and vice versa.” Indeed, we see the heterogeneous nature of Indian Muslims fragmented on linguistic, cultural, caste lines and having traditional loyalties to various theological and spiritual formations like Deobandis, Barevis, Tablighis and Sufi inclinations.

149 Chakrabarty, Provincializing Europe, p. xiii.
151 Imtiaz Ahmad (ed.), Caste and Social Stratification among Muslims in India (Delhi: Manohar, 1973); Imtiaz Ahmad, Family, Kinship and Marriage among Muslims in India (Delhi: Manohar, 1976); Imtiaz Ahmad, Ritual and Religion among Muslims in India (New Delhi: Manohar, 1981).
Secondly, the JIH has been more rhetorical when arguing for an ‘Islamic alternative’ rather than actually believing in establishing such an Islamic alternative for that would require establishing an Islamic state, which the JIH has dropped from its constitution as the desired political goal while accepting Indian democracy, constitution and secularism way back in 1960s and 1970s. Therefore, there is a gap between Jamaat’s theoretical promise and practical performance in implementing the project of ‘Islamic alternative’. In a Muslim minority context, the JIH operating under a secular constitutional framework, ‘had no option but to abandon the goal of establishing an Islamic state in India’, by deleting ‘all references to the goal of establishing an Islamic state from its program of action’, a goal that is a prime concern for Bangladeshi Jamaat as I would discuss in Chapters 4 and 5. Thus, where establishing an Islamic alternative is a rare possibility, the Indian Jamaat cannot offer any concrete political imagination of an Islamic state, to which its core constituency of Indian Muslims can at least look for a political option to be mobilized. Thirdly, the political space of pressure group politics among the Indian Muslims is in fact competitive and fragmented between rival factions of Indian Muslims showing allegiance to various Muslim groups with political overtones ranging from Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, AIMIM, and IUML, and the Muslim leadership among mainstream political parties as pointed out earlier in chapter 2.

However, beyond the contradictions of Islamist populism it is evident from our discussion in chapters 2 and 3 that the JIH tries to pose a protest politics against various

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156 *The Constitution of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind*, English version from the original in Urdu as Amended up to April 2007 (New Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami, 2009).
158 Ahmad, ‘Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia’, p. 503.
159 Ibid., p. 505.
forms of power bloc. It has also tried to reject non-Islamic ideologies while talking about ‘Islamic alternative’ although it has limits in implanting the ‘Islamic alternative’ in a Muslim minority context. Furthermore, the JIH tries to negotiate with modern forms of development projects and capital-state power bloc. But certainly, there is no case for JIH to call as a ‘return of the repressed’ or being subservient to ‘neoliberal hegemony’. Now, after over viewing the politico-ideological articulations of contemporary JIH against what they call ‘capitalistic-imperialism’, its proximity and tactical alliance with the Left and its similarities in the understanding of ‘neoliberal economic policies’ and ‘foreign policy shift’ of India, can we argue that the JIH is actually trying to champion a class politics similar to the Left? Here, I argue that the matter is more complex than it is apparently seen. I have pointed out earlier that the JIH has no organizational base among the Left’s basic classes of workers and peasants. Moreover, it seems to protest against many issues of contemporary India—effects of ‘American imperialism’ in foreign policy, ‘exploitation of neoliberal capitalism’, ‘environmental hazards’, ‘inequalities between rich and poor’, deprivation and marginalization of varied identitarian social groups including Muslims, Dalits, Tribals, other minorities, women etc. In other words, it tries to construct a political project of ‘Islamist populism’ by trying to mobilize varied plebian sections of population with the call of ‘Islamic way’ rather than emphasizing on ‘class struggle’. In fact, contemporary ‘globalized capitalism’ provides such space and scope for multifarious struggles than simply class based struggle. As Laclau proclaims:

“Capitalist development creates many others: ecological crises, imbalances between different sectors of the economy, imperialist exploitation, etc. In that case, the subjects of an ‘anti-capitalist’ struggle are many and cannot be reduced to a category as simple as that of ‘class’. We are going to have a plurality of struggles. Struggles in our society tend to proliferate the more we move into a globalized era, but they are less and less ‘class’ struggles. Could we argue that, however, there is in capitalist societies—as Marx believed in the 19th century—an inner tendency to the simplification of social structure, so that we are advancing towards a situation in which we would have, as the final showdown of history, a simple confrontation between workers
and capitalists? To take a brief glance at what goes on in contemporary societies is enough to brush aside this objection without further ado.\footnote{Ernesto Laclau, ‘Ideology and post-Marxism’, Journal of Political Ideologies, Vol. 11, No. 2 (June 2006), p. 112.}

But can this anti-capitalist struggle propounded by JIH be present within the Jamaat-e-Islami in Bangladesh? That is precisely the topic of discussion in the next couple of chapters. Therefore, let us now venture out the specific Bangladeshi context in which Islamism became a prominent political force and briefly account its success and failure in hegemonising the political field of India’s neighbouring country.
Chapter 4
Islamism in a Muslim Majority Context: The Case of Bangladesh

In the previous two chapters, I have discussed the ideological articulations of Jamaati Islamism in a Muslim minority context of India. In the following two chapters, I would focus on the ideological articulations of Jamaati Islamism in the Muslim majority country of Bangladesh, a close neighbour of India. But before doing so, it is important to briefly discuss the politico-ideological background under which the rise of Islamist forces like Jamaat in Bangladesh became possible.

Bangladesh had a glorious history of liberation under the leadership of Sheikh Mujib’s Awami League in early 1970s. Despite the fact that a major superpower, United States ‘extended overwhelming support toward Pakistan during the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971’¹ the Bangladeshi people fought a successful liberation war with secular-nationalist vision and emerged as an independent nation by seceding from Pakistan. During the Bangladesh liberation war, both cold war politics and the South Asian regional dynamics came into play when Pakistan got the support of both USA and China, while Sheikh Mujib got help from India, known as a Soviet Union ally at that time.² When Bangladesh faced the famine of 1974, the decision of the US government to call-off food shipments on the pretext that Bangladesh was a ‘communist ally’ led to a grave ‘national tragedy’.³ The US policy to

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³ Ibid., p. 234.
contain ‘socialism’ in Bangladesh partly facilitated the environment for the emergence of ‘anti-US Islamism’ in the country.\textsuperscript{4}

In the recent past, Bangladesh has witnessed an Islamic conservative ascendancy with the rise of \textit{Jamaat-e-Islami} and other Islamist forces.\textsuperscript{5} It is interesting to note that the same \textit{Jamaat-e-Islami}, which opposed the very creation of Bangladesh as a separate nation from Pakistan, till recently enjoyed political power in alliance with a coalition government led by BNP leader Begum Khaleda Zia from 2001-2006. Thus, independent Bangladesh saw a shift of the prominent political discourse of secular-nationalism—the cherished principle of Bangladeshi freedom struggle towards Islamist tendencies in the recent past.\textsuperscript{6}

Therefore in ontical terms, the major politico-ideological debates in Bangladesh can be located first in the Bengali language movement after partition in 1950s followed by the call for regional autonomy of Bangladesh and subsequently liberation war with the rise of Sheikh Mujib from mid-1960s to mid-1970s.\textsuperscript{7} After Mujib’s assassination, the successive military regimes of General Zia-ur-Rahman (1976-81) and General Ershad (1982-1990) transformed Bangladesh from a secular to an Islamic country with changes in the constitution and calling off the ban on religious parties imposed by Mujib. Finally, from 1990s onwards, Bangladesh is groping with conflicts between the restoration of democracy and political intervention of the military in national politics. In this context, it is absolutely necessary to unravel Jamaat’s position in various politico-ideological debates in Bangladesh

\textsuperscript{4} Ibid., 235.
and its role in the major political events like the Language movement, Liberation war and
the present tussle between military and democratic regimes.

But what were the specific conditions under which the emergence of Jamaati Islamism in contemporary Bangladesh was possible? To do so, first, a survey of the existing accounts of the emergence of Islamism in Bangladesh needs to be done.

**The Emergence of Islamism in Contemporary Bangladesh: Existing Accounts**

**Failure of Secular-Nationalist Mujibism:** When the constitution of Bangladesh was adopted in 1972, ‘democracy’, ‘socialism’, ‘secularism’, and ‘nationalism’ were included as four fundamental principles of a new ‘sovereign people’s republic’ of Bangladesh.\(^8\) During the brief secular-nationalist regime of Sheikh Mujib from 1971-1975, Jamaat was widely discredited due to its opposition to the very creation of Bangladesh. In fact, political parties articulating a theo-political discourse by using religious vocabulary and symbols like the Muslim League, Jamaat and Nejame Islam, which had also ‘collaborated with the Pakistan army during the [Bangladesh] liberation war…were outlawed’ by the Mujib regime.\(^9\)

In this respect, the rise of Islamism in contemporary Bangladesh has been often argued in terms of the failure of secular-nationalist Mujibism in addressing the basic livelihood issues of the Bangladeshi people. The prominence of Jamaati Islamism in contemporary Bangladesh has been linked to the inability of both liberal and socialist models of development under secular-nationalist project of Sheikh Mujib to eradicate

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\(^9\) Ibid., p. 42.
poverty after the creation of Bangladesh.\textsuperscript{10} During the first half of 1970s, the Mujib regime could not also check high degree of malnutrition among the populace, and was unable to protect the country’s principal cash crop—jute, upon which much of Bangladeshi economy was dependent.\textsuperscript{11}

During the Mujib regime, the country also witnessed industrial decline, Indian control over Bangladesh’s industry and commerce, fake currency notes scandal, scarcity of food items coupled with falling income of the population and simultaneous soaring of prices due to hyper inflation, subsequently followed by the ‘man-made famine’ of 1974.\textsuperscript{12} Thus, an observer argues that Bangladesh’s economic problems are due to Sheikh Mujib’s failure.\textsuperscript{13} Such massive economic problems were supplemented by the corruption of several noted Awami Leaguers, who were generally close to Mujib, and all these culminated into greater disillusionment among the Bangladeshi people towards the Mujib regime.\textsuperscript{14}

Under extreme difficulty in handling the grave economic problems and a shrinking support base, Mujib resorted to ‘repressive measures’ of governance by amending constitution ‘to make himself president for five years with full executive authority’ and later to outlaw all existing political parties except his newly formed Bangladesh Krishak Sramik

\textsuperscript{10} During Mujib’s rule, urban poverty in 1973-74 was as high as 63.2% and rural poverty was a chronic 71.3%. See Binayak Sen, ‘Growth, Poverty and Human Development’, in Rounaq Jahan (ed.), Bangladesh: Promise and Performance (London: Zed Books, 2000), p. 271.


\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., pp. 99-102.
Awami League (BKSHAL).\(^{15}\) Such authoritarianism of Mujibism is regarded as the ‘constitutional coup’\(^{16}\) of 25\(^{th}\) January, 1975, when the fourth amendment of the Bangladeshi constitution replaced the parliamentary system with presidential form of government, multi-party system with totalitarian control and one-party rule, curtailing the powers of the national assembly while the Judiciary lost much of its independence and the Supreme Court was deprived of its jurisdiction over the protection and enforcement of fundamental rights.\(^{17}\)

Such repressive measures with virtually ‘one man rule’ was accompanied by absolute control of parliament and party, the rule of small coterie of nouveau riche close to Mujib, stifling of political opposition, gagging the press, declaration of emergency as a tool to repress political opponents, abolition of parliamentary democracy and creation of single party system with ‘megalomaniac’ acts and turning family affairs to almost state events.\(^{18}\) Mujib’s paramilitary force, the Rakhi Bahini, almost acted as a private militia\(^{19}\) and became well known for its ‘intimidation tactics’.\(^{20}\)

No wonder, Mujib shortly became unpopular with grave economic crisis in the country and his repressive tactics to handle the crisis.\(^{21}\) In fact, the first public protest against Mujib occurred as early as 17\(^{th}\) September, 1972 just eight months after he became the Prime Minister of the new Bangladesh republic.\(^{22}\) The extreme unpopularity of Mujib due to his failure in improving the economic condition of the Bangladeshi people, appended by an

\(^{15}\) Ibid., pp. 121-122.
\(^{19}\) Ibid., p. 144.
\(^{20}\) Uddin, Constructing Bangladesh, p. 122.
\(^{22}\) Ibid., p. 19.
inefficient administration, authoritarian rule and the corruption of his family and regime\textsuperscript{23} was reflected in the fact that after his assassination by a military coup, there was not an influential mass democratic movement to protest such a ghastly act. Neither there was a prominent mass democratic upsurge against the successive military regimes of Zia and Ershad until late 1980s.

Thus, a commentator has argued that the Awami League’s attempt to develop a set of principles known as ‘Mujibism’ (\textit{Mujibbad} in Bengali) by trying to elevate a cult status, much akin to Maoism in China, in fact, failed to capture the imagination of the Bangladeshi people.\textsuperscript{24} Since the new power holders of Bangladesh were ‘incapable of establishing a more just, equitable and safe society,’ under the political project of Mujibism, their proclamations of ‘nationalism, secularism, socialism and democracy began to ring hollow.’\textsuperscript{25} In other words, Mujibism could not fulfill the promise of Bangladesh liberation with an emancipatory politics and was rather identified by the people as a repressive agency.

From the above accounts, we can argue that the secularization process initiated by the Mujib regime was often imposed from above like banning the religious parties. In the midst of authoritarian imposition from above than a hegemonic formation from below where the consent and participation of the people is necessary for a popular developmental and cultural programme, the limits of Bangladeshi secularists and progressives were exposed to the people that resulted in the dissatisfaction/disillusionment of the people towards the secularist project. The secular-nationalist regime of Mujib took refuge to violent and repressive measures to control and eradicate political opposition and dissent in the midst of

economic crises and often lead to what can be called as messianic authoritarianism and narcissistic leadership. In Bangladesh, the failure of developmental and cultural programmes of the secular-nationalist leadership on one hand and authoritarianism on the other gave the Islamists the chance to vilify the secular-progressives in Bangladesh to identify the miseries of the people as a result of the western model of nationalism, democracy, socialism and secularism. We would see later in this chapter, how these ideas became identified with the ‘conspiracy of the west’ and the root causes of the miseries of Bangladesh as propagated by the Islamists. As Ranabir Samaddar points out that ‘if nationalist euphoria and post independent (post nationalist) misery are locked as binary opposites in the career of nationalism, the old union of ethics and politics is always followed by its break and the emergence of an alternative morality to recapture the lost spirit’\textsuperscript{26} (emphasis original). This new ‘moral politics’ in the shape of Islamism gained popularity ‘among those who were disillusioned with the corruption of public life and the exclusion of so many from the new state.’\textsuperscript{27}

The discredit of Mujibism can be explained by the sustenance of two successive military regimes of Zia and Ershad covering one and a half decades without getting significant challenge from a secularist opposition demanding the restoration of democratic rule until late 1980s. When democratic elections were finally held in 1991, it was not Mujib’s party Awami League that won the election but it was the centre-right Bangladesh Nationalist Party, which became the single largest party in the National Assembly and formed the government with the help of Jamaat-e-Islami. Therefore, the failure of ‘Mujibism’ and the first Awami League government in Bangladesh created conditions for a


\textsuperscript{27} Schendel, ‘Bengalis, Bangladeshis and Others’, p. 69.
couple of military coups in the absence of any other democratic opposition to an authoritarian rule. The successive military regimes of Zia and Ershad patronized the Islamists, which is an account that I shall discuss now.

Military Patronage to Islamism: The post-liberation economic crisis in Bangladesh contributed to the erosion of legitimacy of the Awami League government as noted earlier. It was followed by a pro-US tilt of the successive military establishments, right from late 1970s and early 1980s that tried to legitimize the Islamic parties.\(^{28}\) Thus, an important factor that played a crucial role in revitalizing Islam as a political symbol in Bangladesh is the calculated strategy of successive military regimes of Zia and Ershad, who often in their search for political legitimacy on the one hand and in isolating the mainstream political parties like Awami League on the other hand directly or indirectly prepared the conditions for the rise of Islamism in Bangladesh.\(^{29}\) The successive military dictatorships under Zia and Ershad made compulsory religious education at schools, patronized madrasa education, besides encouraging religious leaders to play active role in politics of the country.\(^{30}\)

After Sheikh Mujib’s brutal assassination by a military coup, and General Ziaur Rahman’s subsequent alteration of the secular fabric of Bangladesh by calling off the ban on religious parties, the Jamaat concentrated in building its organization.\(^{31}\) By assuming the President’s office on 21\(^{st}\) April, 1977, Zia amended the constitution by ‘promulgating a Proclamation Order’, the very next day—adding *Bismillahir Rahmanur Rahim* (In the name

\(^{28}\) Khondker, ‘US Imperialism and Bengali Nationalism’, p. 245.


\(^{30}\) Ibid.

of Allah) at the outset of the Constitution, while “the words ‘liberation struggle’ in the preamble were replaced by ‘war of independence’, ‘secularism’ in the fundamental principles of state policy was replaced by ‘total faith and belief in the Almighty Allah’, socialism was explained as ‘economic and social justice’.”

A new clause was added to Article 25 ‘to the effect that the state shall endeavour to strengthen, consolidate and preserve the fraternal relationship between the Muslim states on the basis of Islamic solidarity.’

This Islamisation of Bangladesh constitution was done under Zia’s martial law when there was limited scope to protest against government measures. It was during Zia’s time that the Jamaat leader Ghulam Azam, ‘who had gained notoriety for collaborating with the Pakistani military regime during 1971 war and was subsequently accused as a war criminal, was allowed to return to Bangladesh.’

After the assassination of Zia in 1981, General Hussain Muhammad Ershad seized power in 1982 in a bloodless coup. In 1987, he faced stiff opposition from a mass movement demanding restoration of democracy. The anti-Ershad movement was simultaneously organized and supported by the Awami League-led eight parties, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)-led seven parties and an amalgamation of five small left-oriented parties and the Jamaat-e-Islami.

Following such a political challenge from the opposition, in 1988, when the BNP was taking credit of ‘having brought Islam back to Bangladesh’ and the Jamaat promoting an agenda of ‘an ideal Islamic state in future’, Ershad put forward the 8th

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32 Anisuzzaman, ‘Religion and Politics in Bangladesh’, p. 44.
32 Ibid.
Constitutional amendment passed by the parliament declaring ‘Islam as the State religion of Bangladesh.’

The successive military regimes of Zia and Ershad in late 1970s and throughout 1980s only helped the Jamaat to grow politically and organizationally, since both used the Jamaat to consolidate a support base for their respective military regimes. Both Zia’s BNP and Ershad’s Jatiyo Party (JP) opted for a balancing act of ‘Bangladeshi nationalism’ (characterized by majoritarianism and giving legitimacy to Islamic religion and religious parties in politics) was distinct from the erstwhile Awami League’s assertion for ‘Bengali nationalism’.

In this regard, Jamaat too used these opportunities to grow further in Bangladesh so that it could influence the politics of the country in future. By 1990s, Jamaat became an important political player in Bangladesh while becoming the fourth largest party in Bangladesh Legislative Assembly and even supported the Khaleda Zia led BNP government in 1991 and 2001 with 18 and 17 seats respectively in the 300 seats Bangladeshi Parliament. Thus, the above accounts show that the story of Islamism in Bangladesh is linked to the transformation of illegitimacy of religious parties and their role in politics in the Mujib regime to the legitimizing processes of the same in the successive military regimes of Zia and Ershad. This re-legitimating process of the religious parties under military regimes culminated to the prominence of an Islamist party like Jamaat in the national political scene of Bangladesh.

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37 Ibid., p. 45.
Failure of the Bangladeshi Left: Apart from the military patronage to Islamism, another account talks about the failure of the Left movement in Bangladesh that created possible conditions for Islamism to grow in the country. The Left in Bangladesh has been historically weak with the migration of a big section of its leadership to West Bengal after the 1947 partition followed by state repression on the Leftwing forces in both West Pakistan and early days of independent Bangladesh under Mujib. In this respect, the historic parallel of the rise of Islamism in Bangladesh is with Egypt where Nasserism violently suppressed both the liberal democratic pole and the communist popular pole, which created a void that facilitated Islamism to emerge as a political opposition to Nasserite regime.

Moreover, the Left movement in Bangladesh was crippled with factionalism of middle class leadership, which could not speak the language of the masses to become a popular party and external dependence on either Moscow or Peking for ideological, strategic and tactical guidance. In such a scenario, the Left movement in Bangladesh with its overtly middle-class character only remained as a mere middle-class intellectual vision with complete disconnect from the vast majority of the people. In such conditions, the disillusionment of the Bangladeshi people with the existing political class represented by Awami League, BNP, JP and the minutely fragmented and marginalized Bangladeshi Left gave a scope to the Islamist politics of Jamaat that could promise an alternative Islamic order free from the evils and corruption of ruling political classes in Bangladesh.

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40 Amin, Eurocentrisim, p. 73.
43 Choudhury, ‘The Left Movement’.
Political Economy Factors: Besides the above mentioned accounts, existing literature also shows that there are also political economy factors behind the rise of Islamism in contemporary Bangladesh. As one commentator argues that Islamism generally became popular in 1980s and 1990s among a section of middle peasants and a squeezed urban middle class, but also among the disgruntled children of the state elite “who were looking for an ideological alternative to the discredited nationalism of their elders and who sought to establish new links with ‘the people’.”

Similarly, external pressures from oil-rich Islamic countries that have been funding Bangladesh over the years in various forms of aid and financial grants also significantly helped to revitalize Islamic symbols in Bangladeshi politics. Furthermore, the ideologically motivated, literate and dedicated cadre based organizational strength, strong networks of Jamaat among various sections of the population and attempts for mass dissemination and circulation of its party literature also contributed to the rebuilding procedures of Islamism in Bangladesh. Finally, international events like the Islamic revolt of Iran in 1979 and the success of Taliban regime in capturing political power in Afghanistan in mid-1990s also rekindled Islamist politics in Bangladesh because these international events only reminded Islamist parties like Jamaat about the revolutionary potential of Islam in contemporary world.

But do all these accounts theoretically explain the prominence of Islamism in contemporary Bangladesh? In the next subsection, I would precisely try to do such an exercise.

46 Ibid.  
47 Ibid., pp. 256-257.
Explaining the Prominence of Islamism in Bangladesh

From the above literature, what we get is that the prominence of Islamism in contemporary Bangladesh was due to the unfulfillment of the democratic demands of the Bangladeshi people by the non-Islamist power bloc. Since the democratic demands of the Bangladeshi people were neither fulfilled by the secular political leadership nor the military rule; the alternative political discourse that could promise a better political order is none but the Islamists in a Muslim country, where any other credible alternative political discourse was absent.

In this regard, it must be noted that the prominence of Islamism with the emergence of Jamaat as a key player in Bangladeshi politics is linked to the availability of Islam as a credible political discourse among a section of Muslims in Bangladesh. As we have learnt from Laclau in the ‘Introduction’ of the thesis that mere availability of a credible political discourse in moments of a general crisis can lead to the acceptance of a particular order. If the democratic demands of the community are not fulfilled by the secular political formation then it is no wonder that an Islamist political articulation can be witnessed among a section of Muslims in the absence of any other alternative credible political discourse. According to Laclau, the question of ‘availability’ and ‘unavailability’ of a credible political discourse is important in gaining its legitimacy within a community. The simultaneous availability of an Islamist political articulation and unavailability of any other credible alternative political articulation in Bangladesh have resulted into the prominence of an Islamist audience among a section of Muslims in Bangladesh. This is not to argue that the Bangladeshi people wholeheartedly agree with the content of Islamism. Since, there was no other alternative political discourse that could challenge the authoritarianism of secular political formation of
Mujibism and could promise a better political order, a *section* of Bangladeshi people got mobilized by Islamism in 1980s and 1990s. This mobilization of a *section* of Muslims in Bangladesh was possible because Islam was available as a dominant practicing religion for the majority of Bengali population. Thus, in Laclau’s terms, the acceptance of a theo-political discourse of Islamism had some ‘credibility’ since its proposals did not *clash with the basic principles informing the organization of a group*, in this case, the Muslim majority community in Bangladesh. So, the possibilities of favourable conditions for Islamism as a political ideology to gain popularity among a section of Bangladeshi people by rearticulating the Islamic religion was always open even before the formal creation of Bangladesh.

Therefore, the rise of Islamism through Jamaat politics in 1990s can be analyzed with the category of ‘availability’. Islamism could not articulate its politics due to the suppression of Islamist politics in the first half of the 1970s under Sheikh Mujib’s regime. But when the Mujib regime was later on questioned and discredited without an alternative credible political discourse, the conditions of possibilities for the emergence of Islamism in Bangladesh became clear with a new opening in the political field. Thus, we see how Islam as a religion took the shape of an organized ideological articulation in Islamism with the replacement of a secular constitution to the formal acknowledgement of Islam as the state religion during the military regimes from late 1970s to 1980s. This shift of political discourse in Bangladesh from secular Bengali nationalism under Mujibism in the first half of the 1970s towards creating conditions for the rise of Islamism with constitutional provisions in late 1970s and 1980s were only possible because of the crisis of secularist project on one hand and consistent pressure of the Islamists in their struggle to hegemonize the political field of Bangladesh on the other. In simple terms, the crisis of secularism in the Muslim
world including Bangladesh in 1970s and the simultaneous assertions of Islamism to mobilize people behind its political project of Sharia based Islamic state only compelled the successive military regimes of Zia and Ershad to make constitutional provisions for the role of religion to play an active part in Bangladeshi politics. In other words, the military regimes took refuge to religious symbols like lifting the ban on Islamist parties, or changing the secular constitution in order to gain legitimacy among a significant section of Bangladeshi people, who were disillusioned with the secular-nationalist project of Mujibism on one hand and to contain the Islamists on the other. In Laclau’s terms, the military power bloc was actually trying to absorb the ‘democratic demand’ in differential manner by such strategies of Islamisation. By such formalistic acceptance and acknowledgment of Islamic religion into the body politic of Bangladesh, the military establishment was able to contain a popular demand of challenging the power bloc by the Islamists. However, such strategies soon exposed its limits when greater equivalence among the opposition parties was witnessed in anti-Ershad mobilizations demanding democratic elections in late 1980s as pointed out earlier in this chapter.

Thus, Islamists were able to create an antagonistic frontier not only against the West but also by equating the secular-progressive and liberal western bred elites as the ‘enemy’ of the people with an alternative morality of Islamic symbols and theo-political articulations.

Thus, cumulative factors regarding questions of economic failure and a series of unfulfilled democratic demands of the Bangladeshi people by the secular-nationalist project had resulted into an equivalential popular political articulation manipulated by the military establishment along with the Islamists, which from late 1970s onwards has successfully constructed a political discourse, where the old-national populism of Awami League and its
The Kemalist Project of Mujibism

I would argue that Mujibism in Bangladesh has strong parallels with Kemalism in Turkey albeit with some nuanced differences. Similar to Kemalism as discussed in the ‘Introduction’, the ideology of ‘Mujibism’ (Mujibbad) had a ‘personality cult’ status and was grounded upon the four principles of ‘nationalism’, ‘democracy’, ‘socialism’ and ‘secularism’, which Mujib claimed to follow.48 Whether or not Mujib at all followed his four principles is indeed a matter of debate, however, his turn towards authoritarianism without

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being able to deliver the promise of a prosperous Bangladesh thoroughly discredited even
the rhetorical value of Mujibism. Nonetheless, we can find similarities on the emphasis over
secular-nationalism in both Kemalism and Mujibism. In this sense, Mujibism can be called
as a specific variety of Kemalism.

However, scholars have argued that ‘the difference between the historical destinies
of Kemalism and Mujibism (if there is any, as some claim) should not be overblown.’ 49 Both
Kemal and Mujib abolished Islam as state religion and banned religious parties. Even then
Islam came back to Turkey as a ‘moderate form in the post war era’ 50 while in Bangladesh,
Islamism as a political ideology emerged as an influential actor in Bangladeshi politics after
the assassination of Mujib and the tutelage of Islamism by successive institutionalization of
military junta. In this respect, I would argue that while Kemalism was constructed as a
political ideology when the Muslim world was experiencing a rising tide of secularism,
Mujibism was trying to mimic that Kemalist experiment when secularism was itself dying
around the Muslim world. As a result, the Kemalist project was at least able to sustain its
hegemony for a few decades. By contrast, Mujibism soon got discredited after it failed to
address the democratic demands of the Bangladeshi people, while losing popular support
and taking refuge in authoritarianism.

The Kemalist project in Turkey, which started in 1920s, as briefly discussed in the
‘Introduction’ of the thesis expanded and consolidated till 1950s. From 1960s onwards it
faced an ‘organic crisis’ or ‘crisis of hegemony’ in Gramscian sense by challenging
discourses as distinct as that of the Marxists and ultra-nationalists in 1960s and 1970s to the

49 Samaddar, ‘Bangladesh Nationalism’, p. 56.
50 Ibid.
rise of Islamist parties from 1970s onwards.\textsuperscript{51} In the Turkish case, the military interventions in 1971 and 1980 rediscovered Kemalism while adopting Kemalist policies and justifying the Kemalist definition of community as ‘secular, rational and modern’ to prove the ‘rationality of Islam’ and thus ‘orthodox Islam became an ideological means in the hands of the state to regain mass support for the Kemalist regime, and to contain the rising tide of Islamism.’\textsuperscript{52} The official Kemalism under the military reconciled with Islam by conceiving it as a part of Turkishness and adopted a model of Turkish-Islam synthesis to sustain an authoritarian regime albeit recognising the ‘power of Islam’.\textsuperscript{53} Like the Turkish case, Bangladesh also had a similar experience. In order to gain popular support and contain the Islamists, successive military regimes adopted such an accommodationist strategy of using Islamic symbols in the governmental affairs of the country. But unlike Turkey, the military regimes in Bangladesh were never a strong defender of the Kemalist project of Mujibism. Rather, they tried to accommodate Islam in order to displace Mujibism from the position of power. In this respect, a break from the secular-nationalist principles of Mujibism to dropping secularism and celebrating Bangladeshi nationalism instead of Bengali nationalism can be witnessed in the politico-ideological discourses of military regimes in Bangladesh. In fact, I would argue that Islam vs Kemalist anti-Islamism in Turkey\textsuperscript{54} is similar with contemporary Bangladesh with a tussle between Mujibism and Islamism.

The erstwhile ‘national elite’ comprising of former freedom fighters, students and intellectuals and their vision of Bengali nationalism got politically challenged by the emergence of successive military regimes, which not only facilitated Islamism to come in

\textsuperscript{51} Çelik, ‘The constitution and dissolution of the Kemalist imaginary’, pp. 193-204.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., pp. 199-200.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., p. 202.
the forefront of Bangladesh politics, but also in their quest for power and links with international capital have manipulated prominent symbols of Bengali nationalism like Language Day (21st February), Independence Day (26th March) and Victory Day (16th December) to a ‘false dichotomy’ between ‘Bengali’ and ‘Bangladeshi’ nationalism. The cherished principle of Bengali nationalism promoted by Awami League was countered by Zia’s version of Bangladeshi nationalism by dropping ‘secularism’ as a constitutional principle, which eventually forced his regime to an excessive reliance on the Islamists. By late 1980s, during the anti-Ershad agitation for democratic elections, a ‘renewal nationalism’ was witnessed which ‘seeks to recover the liberating potential of nationalism, maintain the post-colonial, post-communalist vision which empowered the movement for Bangladesh, and bring the institutions of state and civil society more closely in line with that vision.’ This ‘renewal nationalism’ was not merely a continuation of the ‘old oppositional Bengali nationalism of the Pakistan period’ but is different from that and ‘seeks to redefine Bengali nationalism in opposition to a state elite which claims the very same ideology as its raison d’être.’ Thus, ‘renewal nationalism employs symbols of the old nationalism to new ends’ while asserting the vision of ‘independent, self-reliant, secular and democratic Bangladesh…to discredit the authoritarianism and injustice of the new rulers.’

The repressive policies during the Pakistan era were not abandoned under Mujibism and the replacement of Mujibism was akin to the Pakistani martial law administration during Zia and Ershad regimes until the military order was challenged by the unity of opposition

56 Franda, Bangladesh, p. 225.
57 Schendel, ‘Bengalis, Bangladeshis and Others’, p. 68.
58 Ibid.
59 Ibid., pp. 68-69.
parties demanding democratic elections.\textsuperscript{60} However, the political instability that followed after Mujib under the aegis of successive military coups due to inner factionalism of the Bangladesh army\textsuperscript{61} also could not resolve the basic livelihood issues of the Bangladeshi people while taking repressive measures. In this respect, we can possibly argue that Mujibism is a ‘double mimicry’ as it is mimicry of Kemalism, which is again mimicry of the West in the form of Eurocentrism in the Muslim world. However, apart from Mujibism, what are the broad politico-ideological discourses in contemporary Bangladesh within which Jamaati Islamism operates. This is a topic of discussion in the next subsection.

\textit{Politico-Ideological Discourses in Contemporary Bangladesh}

Samir Amin observes that currently three principal political actors opposed to one another are shaping the contemporary political affairs of several Muslim countries. These are the degenerated and corrupt residues of old national-populist regimes, the Islamists and those who propose ‘economic liberalism’.\textsuperscript{62} I would identify the last group as ‘neoliberals’, who propose to govern their respective countries with market led neoliberal economic policies. According to Amin, the ‘comprador’ class interests affiliated with contemporary ‘imperialist system’ are expressed through these three tendencies in several Muslim countries and US diplomacy uses their mutual conflicts to its own ‘exclusive benefit’.\textsuperscript{63} By following Amin’s classification, in contemporary Bangladesh also, we can identify these three distinct political actors. The Awami League in Bangladesh is certainly an old-national

\textsuperscript{60} Franda, \textit{Bangladesh}, pp. 107-215.
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid.
populist party with some corrupt elements, whereas Jamaat-e-Islami and other Islamist groups in Bangladesh are all various shades of Islamists and successive military regimes and BNP are political elements favouring ‘economic liberalism’.

While locating the genealogical debate on the rise of Islamism, as discussed in the ‘Introduction’ of this thesis, I have discussed the theories commenting upon the complex relationship between the assertion of imperialism, the limits of Kemalism and the rise of Islamism. Now, besides Amin’s thesis and the existing theories of explaining Islamism as discussed in the ‘Introduction’, I would elaborate upon the major politico-ideological discourses in contemporary Bangladesh in relation to politics of exclusion/inclusion that structures the political context under which Islamism operates and articulates its politics. The question of exclusion/inclusion is also important because all the notable political trends in Bangladesh either justify its political action of opposing the power bloc with regard to exclusion from the power bloc or seeking inclusion in the power bloc. In Bangladesh, this power bloc as an antagonistic frontier of a challenging political formation is generally regarded as the local state itself or in the form of ‘imperialism’ during moments, when a close liaison between the Bangladeshi state and such foreign powers are made issues in Bangladeshi politics.

The politics of inclusion and exclusion with respect to Bangladeshi politics has its own peculiarities. Theoretically, one can argue that the politics of exclusion is to assert the voice of the excluded, articulate and struggle for the interests of the excluded within the ambit of power bloc, to sit in the negotiating table, to get more empowerment while seeking inclusion in the power bloc. Thus, politics of exclusion can be seen as politics of inclusion as well. However, the problematic of inclusion may be attached with the problem of co-option,
appropriation and collaboration while having negotiations with the power bloc. In this respect, *politics of exclusion* might offer three possible politico-ideological positions. In the first place, *politics of exclusion* may have its own aspirations for entry into the power bloc with an agenda of discrimination, deprivation and exclusion. That is to say, this kind of position has an inclusive reformist agenda for its own constituency without having an agenda of radical transformation of the existing socio-economic structures and without altering the existing power relationships. So, the first position can be of a direct *collaborationist*, a position of sell-off to the dominant power elite representing the interests of the local ruling classes and the imperialist system. I would argue that the successive military regimes and two major parties in Bangladesh: Awami League and BNP, while implementing the neoliberal consensus in the country during their respective regimes and sometimes formulating economic, trade and bilateral policies serving the interests of foreign countries, can be seen as examples of the first position.

The second position may be to celebrate the situation of *exclusion* itself while sitting on the *margins* and then attack the power bloc from ‘outside’ but without having a radical agenda of social transformation. This position has its very own vested interests by keeping alive the problems of deprivation, inequality, discrimination and exclusion as without these issues it cannot offer its constituency and its representatives a sense of empowerment and recognition with its own politics of opposition to the power bloc. This position can be identified with the position of *safety valve* in maintaining the neoliberal status-quo because it often negotiates with the power bloc and serves its interests if the power bloc gives it a suitable deal, otherwise prefers to oppose the power bloc. This politico-ideological position may be also called a ‘politics of altered status-quo’ that vacillates between collaboration and
opposition to the power-bloc. This politico-ideological position of altered status-quo in the Bangladeshi context is often marked by a peculiar politics, flavoured with theo-political discourses of Islamism. This theo-political discourse of Islamism rhetorically claims to provide an ‘alternative’ to both capitalism and socialism with an ‘Islamic state’ despite the fact that the foundations of an Islamic state is based on private property and re-inscribes much of modern capitalist framework. Jamaat-e-Islami and other Islamist groups in Bangladesh represent such a politics of altered status-quo.

Finally, there can be a third politico-ideological position which represents the politics of social transformation to change the structures of existing power bloc with an alternative to neoliberal capitalism. This position has a progressive agenda to include the ‘excluded’ in its own terms by providing a counter hegemony while replacing and displacing the dominant capitalist socio-economic system and the power structures that sustain it. Here, the excluded want to include themselves in the power structures of the society by occupying the seats of power, not in the terms and conditions of the hegemon like a collaborationist. Neither does it vacillate between opposition and collaboration like the second position, but it seeks to capture political power in its own terms, by providing counter-hegemony. It is an autonomous political space in waging a struggle of resistance against the power bloc without yielding to its strategic mechanisms of co-option/appropriation. A committed and progressive Leftwing movement in Bangladesh with its emphasis on anti-capitalism and anti-ruling class politics can occupy this third position.

In an overall analysis, the aforementioned three broad politico-ideological positions are not static but can replace one another in the course of competitive struggle for hegemony. These three politico-ideological positions have its autonomous space in different
moments and contexts of bargaining, negotiations and contestations with each other. Islamism in Bangladesh operates and articulates its politics in a political environment constituting these three different politico-ideological positions. Thus, Awami League, BNP and military regimes in Bangladesh can be identified as collaborating with the Washington consensus of neoliberalism while the Jamaat-e-Islami in Bangladesh vacillates between cooperation and opposition to neoliberalism and the Leftwing politics is currently weak in Bangladeshi politics to give an alternative to neoliberal capitalism.

There is no denying the fact that the post-Mujib military regime’s identification with Islamic values and symbols ‘to legitimize their rule’ followed by mobilization of a section of Bangladeshi Muslims for an Islamic alternative to ‘Bengali nationalism’ and the simultaneous emergence of Jamaat as a prominent player in national politics ‘resulted in a sharp polarization between Islamic and secular forces.’⁶⁴ In the following subsection and the next chapter, I would discuss this polarity of political forces in Bangladesh and the interventions of Jamaat in creating and maintaining such chasm with a new political language of Islamism and how it identifies and prioritizes secularism as an antagonistic frontier than any other politico-ideological discourse.

Now an important question to ask here is that why Islamism emerges as a third prominent political force in Bangladesh when competing political discourses of Kemalist politics of Mujibism with secular ‘Bengali nationalism’ and a less secular ‘Bangladeshi nationalism’⁶⁵ under the auspices of military regimes were already available? Secondly, how does Jamaat emerges as an important political player in Bangladesh among several Islamist forces? One can address these questions in terms of the limits of existing political discourses.

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⁶⁵ Uddin, Constructing Bangladesh, pp. 117-153.
of both ‘Bengali nationalism’ of Awami League and the ‘Bangladeshi nationalism’ of BNP and JP in the midst of a credible alternative, say genuine Leftwing politics as a protest discourse against the hegemonic political formations in Bangladesh.

However, one cannot just explain the prominence of Jamaati Islamism with a negative logic of unavailability of a certain kind of political discourse. In order to become politically prominent in Bangladesh from the shadow of statist ban and a stigmatized past of collaborating with anti-Bangladesh forces, Jamaati Islamism has to offer something positive/better than the existing political discourses. So what are those promises of Islamic alternative and what are its major allegations against the existing political discourses that it treats them as antagonistic frontiers? This is a topic that I will now discuss in the next subsection.

**Constructing Antagonistic Frontiers and Politics of ‘Islamic Alternative’: Interventions of Bangladesh Jamaat**

As Jamaat was formed in the pre-partition period, so Jamaat’s intervention in partition and post-partition debates is surely not to be overlooked. Since, the contemporary politico-ideological discourses in Bangladesh are linked with its historic past and even now intensely debated, unlike India (where the contemporary politico-ideological discourses hardly focus upon the role of any given political party in the national movement for instance), a discussion on the contemporary politico-ideological articulations of Jamaat can be comprehensively understood by analyzing Jamaat’s past in Bangladesh.

In the partition debates, Maududi—the founder of Jamaat differed from both the Muslim League’s demand for Pakistan and the pro-Congress Muslim *ulema* (religious
scholars) who accepted the Indian version of nationalism. Maududi and his Jamaat-e-Islami opposed the Muslim League’s campaign for Pakistan because Jamaat believed that Pakistan would not be an ‘Islamic state’. Maududi’s proposed settlement for the Hindu-Muslim problem lay in the logic of an undivided India because for him, the creation of Pakistan would substantially weaken the position of those Indian Muslims who would stay in the Muslim minority provinces. Maududi differentiated between the concept of a ‘Muslim identity’ and an ‘Islamic identity’. A Muslim can be just born in a Muslim family without following the religio-political principles of Islam, whereas a ‘true Muslim’ is a person who bears an Islamic identity by practicing and believing Islam as a complete way of life and with a goal of establishing the sovereignty of god on earth. Therefore, for Maududi, ‘being a Muslim was not an inborn characteristic but a state attained by striving for Islamic knowledge.’ That is to say, Maududi believed in the concept of a ‘puritan’ or ‘true Muslim’. As Jalal points out that the Jamaat’s opposition to League’s Pakistan was because Maududi turned ‘cultural difference into an extreme form of bigotry’ by which he ‘execrated Jinnah and the Muslim League and practically excluded the majority of Muslims from his definition of the true community of Islam.

Maududi believed in a homogenous concept of nation based on Islamic faith and practice and thus according to him, there can be only two kinds of nations—Islamic and un-
Islamic. Maududi believed that the ‘composite nationalism’ proposed by the Congress and supported by a significant section of Indian ulema would lead to ‘absorption of Muslims in the Hindu nation’. Similarly, he had been opposing the Muslim League’s two nation theory in the partition debates of 1940s on the following grounds: 1) that the term ‘Muslim’ and ‘nationalism’ were ‘contradictory’, 2) that ‘the top leaders of the Muslim League did not deserve to be the leaders of Muslims’ since they lack an ‘Islamic mentality’ and 3) Pakistan should not be just a Muslim majority state but an ‘Islamic state’ where ‘the system of government will be based on the sovereignty of God’. Historically, the Jamaat had little support in Bengal even before independence and its campaign for Islamic constitution did not make much headway in East Pakistan to organizationally grow till mid-1950s.

During late 1940s and early 1950s, the Jamaat programme made no mention of the important political issues of East Pakistan, namely ‘regional autonomy’ and ‘language movement’, articulated by the Bengali middle class leadership who was disenchanted by the Punjabi-Muhajir combined West Pakistani dominated ruling elite, under whom economic disparities between the East and West Pakistan were growing and the ‘suppression of the Bengali aspirations’ were taking place. The Jamaat was looking at East Pakistan’s alienation and problems through the eyes of Maududi’s Islamic ideology with virtually no sympathy for the demands of East Pakistan. As early as 1952, Maududi’s journal *Tarjuman al Quran* was against recognising Bengali as a national language for it claimed that accepting Bengali as a national language would make Bengalis never learn Urdu and

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74 Ibid., pp. 29-31.
75 Ibid., pp. 32-34.
76 Ibid.
77 Ibid., p. 34.
would make East Bengal Muslims ‘to remain ignorant of Islam’ and thus ‘keep them away from West Pakistan and close to Hindus.’

Following the defeat of an unpopular Muslim League to United Front in the provincial election of 1954, Maududi himself visited East Pakistan in 1955-56 and in a detailed speech, he changed his earlier position by conceding that Bengalis had some ‘genuine grievances’ and demanded for making Bengali the national language along with Urdu without delay. He also suggested that Bengalis should be given jobs in government services and pointed to the general neglect of the socio-economic problems like frequent food shortage, repeated natural calamities and lack of effective relief measures by those in power in West Pakistan. In the same speech, he also argued how the ‘unholy alliance’ of the ‘Communists’ and the ‘Hindus’ were behind the Bengali nationalist movement and trying to take political mileage out of the crisis in East Pakistan. However, he also argued in favour of learning Urdu as according to him ‘it was the only source that could have access to Islamic literature.’ However, by 1956, it condemned the East Pakistani decision to opt for joint electorate system under the 1956 constitution on the ground that it was against the very concept of Pakistani nationhood and would facilitate the champions of Bengali nationalism to capture power. Thus, trying to impose an assertive Urdu superiority over Bengali language, right from 1950s, the Jamaat was constructing antagonistic frontiers against Bengali nationalists, Communists and Hindu minorities. In fact, Badruddin Umar informs us that the Jamaat was also making consistent political attacks on the nationalist

78 Ibid.
79 Ibid., p. 35.
80 Ibid.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid., pp. 35-36.
leader, Maulana Bhasani, while denouncing his political activities as ‘un-Islamic’\(^84\) and labeled him as a ‘\textit{kafir}’ (infidel).\(^85\)

Hence, Maududi declared that the Awami League wants to ‘split Pakistan’\(^86\) and hence, Sheikh Mujib’s call for provincial autonomy for East Pakistan (pre-independent Bangladesh) was rejected by Jamaat as ‘a separatist design’.\(^87\)

After the 1970 general elections, Bhutto’s PPP won 83 seats out of 138 seats in West Pakistan, while Mujib’s Awami League won 160 seats out of 162 seats.\(^88\) In such a situation, Bhutto proposed a formula for ‘the transfer of power’ to ‘two majority parties of East and West Pakistan’, which Jamaat opposed along with a number of Muslim League factions on the ground that ‘transferring power to the PPP in West and to the Awami League in East Pakistan meant the disintegration of Pakistan.’\(^89\)

Jamaat was convinced that Bhutto’s Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) was a frontal organization of the Marxists and its anti-socialism campaign during 1968-1970 was by far the most important event in its recent history.\(^90\) It is interesting to note here that the same Jamaat, which gave the slogan ‘\textit{Sochializm Kufr Hai!}’ (Socialism Is Disbelief) during 1968-1970\(^91\) incorporated ‘Islamic socialism’, a socialism based on Islamic principles in its 1970 election manifesto.\(^92\) On 8\(^{th}\) February, 1970 an Islamic conference was held in Dhaka, in which Golam Azam (the then Jamaat leader in East Pakistan and later became the leader of Bangladesh Jamaat) and Nezam-i-Islami leader Farid Ahmad denounced both secular

\(^84\) Umar, \textit{The Emergence of Bangladesh, Vol. 2}, p. 238.
\(^85\) Ibid., p. 240.
\(^86\) Bahadur, ‘The Emergence of Jamaat-i-Islami in Bangladesh’, p. 36.
\(^87\) Rahim, ‘Bengali Muslims and Islamic Fundamentalism’, p. 243.
\(^89\) Ibid., pp. 298-299.
\(^90\) Ahmad, ‘Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia’, p. 474
\(^91\) Ibid., pp. 474-475.
\(^92\) Umar, \textit{The Emergence of Bangladesh, Vol. 2}, p. 231.
Bengali nationalism and socialism. Later, Golam Azam in a press conference held in Dhaka on 31 May 1970, said that ‘Bengali nationalism’ poses ‘a great threat to the integrity and solidarity of Pakistan.’

A series of Pakistan military’s repression in 1950s and 1960s only reached its zenith after the March 1971 mass massacres. The secular principles of Awami League’s mobilizational strategy around Bengali nationalism came in sharp antagonistic contradiction with Jamaat’s strategy of asserting Islamic identity, which still shapes up the ideological debates between these two parties even in contemporary Bangladesh. There is little doubt about the historical fact that Jamaat collaborated with the Pakistan army. In fact, to counter the guerilla activity of liberation movement of the Bangladesh freedom fighters (Mukti Bahini), it even created ‘several impromptu counter-insurgency armed groups, notably, the al-Badr, the al-Shams and the Razakars, who were trained and equipped with weapons by the Pakistan army to fight against the Bengali nationalists.’ The Jamaat leader, Maududi ‘justified the military action in East Pakistan claiming that no country could allow secessionist activities in any part of its territory’ and that East Pakistani Muslims should ‘destroy the flag bearers of Bangladesh freedom movement, because this movement was sponsored by Hindus, Communists and atheist Bengali nationalists.’

Although there are stark differences between anti-colonial nationalism and Islamic political radicalism on the issue of secularism as a political ideal, one cannot simply deny the commonalities between them as an opposition to western colonial dominance in the

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93 Ibid., p. 232.
94 Ibid.
95 Anthony Mascarenhas, The Rape of Bangladesh (Delhi: Vikas, 1971).
97 Rahim, ‘Bengali Muslims and Islamic Fundamentalism’, p. 245.
98 Bahadur, ‘The Emergence of Jamaat-i-Islami in Bangladesh’, p. 36.
Muslim world. But it is interesting to note that in a post-colonial political scenario, both the Islamists and nationalists that once opposed colonialism would fight each other once colonialism officially exited from the erstwhile colonies. In fact, for the Islamists, the real threat was not the western power but the political culture of secularism that came with the west. The ideology of Islamism poses the western civilization and more importantly the secular modernist elites in Muslim societies as real enemies. In the case of Bangladesh, we see that Islamist parties like Jamaat-e-Islami came in sharp contradiction with secular parties like Awami League and the Left.

In countering Awami League, Jamaat renewed its ‘oft-repeated propaganda campaign, arguing that Bengali ethnic, linguistic, and cultural identities should be subsumed by Islamic identity alone, and urged its student wing to cleanse the college campuses of leftist influences.’ The peculiar ideological cement of Islamism within Jamaat in Bangladesh often led to the targeting and conflicting with secular parties by promoting political violence through its student wings like Islami Chatro Shibir (ICS) with core recruitment from the hopeless, frustrated youth and students in an era of rising unemployment while renewing societal intolerance towards non-Muslims and women. In fact, the ICS ‘is well known for its intimidation tactics…[and] has been implicated in a number of violent attacks, murders, and incidents of torture’ though the Bangladesh Jamaat ‘publicly denounces the use of coercion and violence.’ The antagonism of Bangladesh Jamaat is not merely restricted to secular political parties and ‘un-Islamic women’ but also

99 Asad, Formations of the Secular, p. 196.
100 Robinson, Islam, South Asia, and the West, p. 118.
101 Ibid., p. 200.
103 Ibid., pp. 250-256.
104 Uddin, Constructing Bangladesh, p. 171.
towards Ahmadiyas or Qadiyanis, which according to Jamaat are non-Muslims. As early as 1953, Jamaat founder Maududi ‘instigated a widespread communal riot against the Qadiyanis and killed thousands of them’ which forced the Pakistan administration to employ armed forces ‘to control the situation.’

It is not only the Islamists who identify the secularists as a political enemy, but a process of mutual ‘Othering’ also takes place in the secular nationalist narrative as well. In the Bengali nationalist narrative, Islamism is frequently portrayed as ‘medieval’, ‘antiquated’, ‘fascist’, ‘reactionary’, or ‘incompatible with Bengali culture’, rather than understanding it ‘as a radical and new critique of contemporary conservative nationalism in Bangladesh and the political practices that go under its cover.’ Thus, it has been argued by a commentator that Islamism ‘is rooted locally, in the accumulation practices and ideological justifications of elite which has ensconced itself in an overcentralised state, but attacks these from the high moral ground of transnational Islam.’ In such a situation, it might be ‘preponderantly right-wing, intolerant, anti-democratic and prone to violence, but in that it differs only in degree from dominant forms of establishment nationalism’ and “to many Bangladeshis, its appeal lies exactly in its looking beyond a discredited ‘nation’ for moral inspiration.” Therefore, we can see that Islamism only becomes a counter-discourse to Bengali nationalism with an alternative vision of organizing the people. Although both the Jamaat and ICS have recently backed away from their original position on independence of Bangladesh, their members ‘are noticeably absent at major secular and national celebrations’ and at smaller gatherings, they are often seen to ‘disrupt’ the secular cultural

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106 Uddin, Constructing Bangladesh, p. 97.
107 Ibid.
108 Ibid.
activities.\textsuperscript{109} In fact, many Islamists in Bangladesh are opposed to the celebration of secular holidays and the establishment of monuments associated with those national holidays.\textsuperscript{110}

The Islamist politics of Jamaat not only contest secularism but it also questions and critique the traditional worldview of rural Muslims dominated by spiritualism of \textit{pirs} (pious religious figure/leader), the worship of \textit{dargah} (shrines of religious/spiritual figures) and the reformist agenda of NGO’s whose main concerns are not to present Islam as a ‘complete way of life’ with the goal of establishing an Islamic order as Jamaat professes. Since Bangladesh is seen as a classic case of syncretistic tradition with conflicts within the Muslim community, the Islamic orthodoxy continues ‘to operate in tension with other aspects of the world-view of the people.’\textsuperscript{111}

From the above literature discussed above, what we can see is that Jamaati Islamism has a history of constructing antagonistic frontiers against the secular-nationalists, communists and the Sufi spiritualists. Secondly, I have also discussed the position of Jamaat in historical debates like that of partition in 1940s, the Bengali language movement in 1950s and 1960s, and the national liberation movement of Bangladesh in early 1970s to support the agenda of united Pakistan and opposing the independence movement of Bangladesh to emerge as a separate nation from Pakistan. This particular position of Jamaat, as one can argue, is a result of its allegiance and loyalty towards the Universalist identity of ‘Islamic \textit{ummah}’ (community of Muslim believers) rather than any particularist regional or linguistic identity.

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., p. 171.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid.
The positions of Jamaat intellectuals vis-à-vis India is at best ambivalent without a strong notion of antagonism that we have seen in the past in the official position of Jamaat as a political party. As Prof. A.T.M. Fazlul Haque of Dhaka University Geology Department and a Jamaat intellectual in a field interview points out that ‘there are real aspirations of Bangladeshi people from India. We want true friendship from India, which were missing from the Indian side. India always acted as a big brother, exploiting our economy with their manufactured goods, which we are just acting as a consumer market. Moreover, in matters of water resources, India has not cooperated with us kindly. There were anti-Indian sentiments among a section of Bangladeshi people just after the liberation war and those anti-Indian sentiments have now grown over the years in the country.’

This is an important statement since it articulates the grievances of a section of Jamaat vis-à-vis Indian political establishment. Similar response was articulated by another Jamaat intellectual, Prof. Choudhury Mahmood Hasan of Dhaka University. He argues that both Jamaat and BNP are ‘cold towards India, but not anti-Indian, whereas Awami is pro-Indian.’ He further argues that it is in this context that ‘both Awami and Indian establishment are hostile to Jamaat.’ He confesses that ‘Jamaat supported united Pakistan and that is still an issue for the opposition.’ But at the same time he clarifies that the ‘Jamaat showed allegiance to Bangladesh after the nation is created.’ He further clarifies that ‘Jamaat was only opposed to the Indian support to Bangladesh Liberation movement’ as it was ‘actually skeptical about such a support of a non-Muslim country.’ The Jamaat intellectuals are more defensive about its position on 1971 Bangladesh Liberation Movement although claiming that it was inspired by the Islamic regimes in Iran and Afghanistan. However, they claim that the Jamaat’s contribution in

112 Field Interview with A.T.M. Fazlul Haque on 02/06/2009.
113 Field Interview with Prof. Choudhury Mahmood Hasan, Faculty of Pharmacy, Dhaka University on 04/06/2009.
Bangladesh is that a significant section of population thinks that Islam is a ‘complete code of life’. However, that does not mean that those very same populations feel that Islam should be established as a political order.\textsuperscript{114}

There is also a claim that Jamaat has been victimized on the issue of ‘anti-liberation’ and ‘war criminals’. As Haque points out that “the Jamaat became a victim of opposition propaganda which alleges the Jamaat as ‘anti-liberation’ and ‘war criminals’.\textsuperscript{115} But this is precisely the inability and crisis of Jamaat to become a counter-hegemonic force in Bangladesh, where it has to articulate its grievances in terms of victimhood. The same kind of victimhood has been also articulated by the Jamaat in giving justification to its electoral debacle. As Haque pointed out in a field interview that the 2008 Bangladesh Parliamentary elections were ‘rigged’ and ‘manipulated’. According to him, ‘it was a calculated and coordinated effort by the Election Commission, military backed caretaker government and the western powers.’\textsuperscript{116} However, he also acknowledged that there were genuine grievances against the corrupt MPs of its alliance partner, BNP, which contributed to the poor performance of the BNP-Jamaat four-party alliance.\textsuperscript{117} In his own words, ‘Jamaat is opposed to corruption and thus demanded to replace 82 sitting BNP MPs in 2008 elections because of their bad record of corruption, which was not heard by the BNP leadership.’ Moreover, a section of BNP, ‘including Leftist infiltrators in BNP did not want to align with the Jamaat.’ After all, ‘not many people in the political mainstream of Bangladesh truly support Jamaat.’

\textsuperscript{114} Ibid. See Appendix 35.
\textsuperscript{115} Field Interview with A.T.M. Fazlul Haque on 02/06/2009.
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid. See Appendix 36.
However, he justifies the tactical alliance between BNP and Jamaat on the ground that it is opposed to the Awami League.  

From the above analysis of the field interviews what we can get is that the Jamaat prioritizes the Awami League as the prime antagonistic frontier in Bangladesh. In other words, the secular-nationalist project of Awami League becomes the prime antagonistic frontier for Jamaati Islamism than say any other politico-ideological discourses. However, as pointed out earlier, in order to become a prominent political player in Bangladesh, the Jamaat has to offer and promise something positive and better than the existing politico-ideological discourses. In this respect, the Jamaat relies on and asserts the ‘universality’ of Islamic religion by claiming that how it upholds Islam in its entirety:

“The Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami upholds Islam in its entirety. It aims at bringing about changes in all phases and spheres of human activities on the basis of the guidance revealed by Allah and exemplified by His Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Thus the Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami is at the same time a religious, political, social and cultural movement …Jamaat-e-Islami further believes in the universality of Al Din (The Religion) which Allah revealed to mankind through a succession of Messengers who all contributed to evolving an equitable system of life (Al Din al Haq) until its completion with the arrival of Mohammed (peace and blessings be upon him), the last Prophet, sent by Allah as ‘the seal of the Prophets’.”

However, merely asserting Islamic universality does not necessarily ensure the victory of the Islamist politico-ideological discourse of Jamaat among the people. In this respect, in the next chapter, we would see the crisis of Islamist populism of Jamaat, apart from engaging more with what Jamaat has to positively offer to the Bangladeshi people, and how the Jamaat responds to various issues under neoliberalism in Bangladesh.

118 Ibid.
Islamist Politics of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami: The Crisis of Islamist Populism

Islamism and Neoliberalism: The Case of Bangladesh Jamaat

By contrast to India, independent Bangladesh had an experience of moving away from the dominance of public sector in the economy to private industries and foreign investments as early as in the decade of 1970s with the New Investment Policy of 1974.1 However, there was initially a thrust upon the public sector and economic self-reliance under Mujib with the adoption of socialist and nationalization policies by 1972.2 As soon as Mujib took charge of Bangladesh, almost 85% of all industries were transferred to public sector and only small cottage industry was permitted for private sector.3 However, this thrust upon public sector was coupled with a new policy of private sector and foreign investment as early as 1973 because the public sector was unable to reach even modest levels of production.4 By the fiscal year of 1973-74, private sector grew by 64% and during the period of Zia in late 1970s and Ershad throughout 1980s, economic policies of privatization of industries and denationalization of banks, much akin to neoliberalism gained prominence.5

This privatization was not only limited to the domain of manufacturing units or financial sectors but was also extended to social welfare sectors like education, healthcare and public infrastructure, which had traditionally remained within the preserve of the state

4 O’Donnell, Bangladesh, p. 119.
5 Baxter, Bangladesh, p. 85.
control. In fact, much like divestment of profit making public sector units in India, Bangladesh also witnessed disinvestment of profit making ‘state owned enterprises’. Soon after independence, Bangladesh became dependent on international monetary agencies like the World Bank, International Development Association (IDA) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) for assistance. Much of the assistance however, came with meeting IMF’s monetary and fiscal policies of structural adjustments in mid-1970s. On the advice of World Bank officials, the Zia regime started denationalizing the shipping and jute industries in the second half of 1970s along with the government’s policy of encouraging domestic private and foreign enterprises for investment in Bangladesh. Much like the neoliberal policies in India in 1990s onwards, the Zia regime offered tax exemptions for specific periods to corporate capital of both domestic and foreign origin, and revived the moribund Dhaka stock exchange to encourage private investments. Even in rural development, Bangladesh got funds from World Bank and increasingly became dependent on international aids of western governments and UN agencies for running the economy. The successive pro-US military establishments from late 1970s onwards presided over rapid economic liberalisation and structural adjustment programmes that resulted in increasingly gross inequalities in Bangladesh.

8 Baxter, Bangladesh, pp. 110-111; O’Donnell, Bangladesh, p. 123.
10 O’Donnell, Bangladesh, p. 204.
11 Ibid., p. 204; Lesser, ‘The Economy’, p. 106.
12 O’Donnell, Bangladesh, pp. 205-210; p. 252.
In the first half of the 1970s, the Jamaat was hardly responding to the changing economic policies of the government from nationalization policies to a new policy direction towards private sector and foreign investment. Its lack of response to such economic policies of the Sheikh Mujib government was due to its illegal status as a political party in the country. It could not operate openly to mobilize people in the streets but rather tried to rebuild its organization based on core Islamic teachings centred on ‘local-level Islamic youth circles, mosque councils, and religiously based cultural, social welfare and educational associations.’

Mumtaz Ahmad points out that ‘by the end of 1972, the Jamaat was able to set up 120 local-level units, which held regular weekly meetings and provided institutional resources to the Jamaat workers’ whose main aim was to ‘regroup its scattered forces’, ‘relink Bengali Muslims with their Islamic heritage’ and ‘educate the people against the secular nationalism’ that had been the ideological guidance of the constitution of the new state.

Only after the assassination of Sheikh Mujib, the Jamaat in Bangladesh was formally revived under its own name and the Zia government allowed the Jamaat to operate its student wing in universities and colleges. In 1977, Jamaat’s student wing Islami Chattro Shibir (ICS) was founded in the central mosque of Dhaka University. By 1978-79, the ICS successfully challenged the combined opposition of the Awami League and the communists and had won the student union elections in Rajshahi, Chittagong, and Dhaka universities, where they were extremely unpopular just five years ago. By mid-1970s, the Jamaat also revived its labour organization namely, Bangladesh Sramik Kalyan Federation (Bangladesh

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15 Ibid.
16 Ibid., pp. 501-502.
17 Interview with ICS President Rezaul Karim in Dhaka on 05/06/2009.
Labour Welfare Federation), originally established on 23\textsuperscript{rd} May, 1968.\textsuperscript{19} On 14\textsuperscript{th} June, 1977, the Jamaat established its peasant organization namely, \textit{Bangladesh Chashi Kalyan Samity} (Bangladesh Peasants Welfare Society).\textsuperscript{20} Thus, a commentator has argued that since the mid-1970s, there was an upsurge of organizational activities of the Islamists and it was partly due to the initiatives and funding by the oil-rich Muslim countries to encourage Islamic missionary activities and partly because of the fall-out of the Sheikh Mujib regime like imposed restrictions upon political activities, co-option of the discarded Islamists by the Zia regime who forms its support base, the ‘sagging economy and the consequent acute economic distress’, all of which had driven a section of the masses towards the Islamists.\textsuperscript{21}

With the introduction of Ershad’s New Industrial Policy of 1982 and a comprehensive revision of that policy in 1986, large scale privatization of state-owned enterprises (SoEs), liberalization policies like lowering the import barriers by reducing quantitative import restrictions, liberalization of tariff structures, fiscal and commercial incentives to the multinationals by the state and bilateral investment policies for foreign direct investment were witnessed throughout 1980s.\textsuperscript{22} In higher education too, neoliberal policies of private higher education was followed in Bangladesh much earlier than India. Although the Zia government was open to the idea of private universities in early 1980s, it came to prominence from early 1990s with the Bangladeshi Parliament passing the Private University Act (PRUA) in 1992.\textsuperscript{23} In the decade of 1980s also, the Jamaat was hardly

\textsuperscript{19} Prof. Mujibur Rahman, \textit{Introduction to Bangladesh Sramik Kalyan Federation} (Dhaka: Kalyan Prokasoni, 2008), p. 15.
\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Brochure of Bangladesh Chashi Kalyan Samity} (BCKS) collected on 03/06/2009 from BCKS President, Abdul Kalam Md. Yusuf during fieldtrip.
\textsuperscript{22} Lesser, ‘The Economy’, pp. 107-108.
responding to the economic policies of privatization and liberalization by the Ershad government. Much like its activities of late 1970s, the Jamaat was more interested to build a strong organizational network throughout 1980s with classic Islamist literature, particularly distributing and disseminating the Bengali translation of Maududi’s works. By 1980s, the ICS had branches in more than 60% of the high schools in all 21 districts of Bangladesh and has consistently won 55% of the student union elections in colleges and universities. By 1989, a revitalized Jamaat had 5,000 full members, 50,000 workers, half a million registered supporters, two million unregistered supporters, 68 district branches, 460 sub-district branches, 3,000 union council branches, 5,000 local branches, 500 Jamaat-operated schools and 200 Jamaat-operated hospitals. The political agenda of Jamaat in 1990 during its anti-Ershad campaigns were primarily focused upon (a) forming alliances with like-minded political parties for restoration of democracy (b) resistance to the hegemony of India (c) strengthening relations with ‘Islamic countries’ like Pakistan and (d) active involvement in Muslim world affairs by Bangladesh. Instead of fighting neoliberal economic policies of successive governments in Bangladesh, the Jamaat was persistently opposing to sell natural gas to India and insisted that Bangladesh should take a strong position on the Farakka Dam issue with India.

During the decade of 1990s and in the new millennium, a ‘national consensus’ has been achieved by the successive governments led by two principal parties: Awami League and BNP to follow economic policies according to the guidelines of IMF and World Bank.

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25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid., p. 503.
Such economic policies under structural adjustment programmes and capitalist globalization has made Bangladesh a typical peripheral capitalist country with greater unemployment, increasing poverty on one hand and super rich ruling elite on the other.\textsuperscript{29} Contemporary Bangladesh has also witnessed repression of working classes and peasantry besides increasing their insecurity, the emergence of NGO as a new corporate body, greater participation of private players in welfare sectors like health and education corresponded with diminishing role of the state in this sector, environmental degradation and increasing demands from the multinational companies to have absolute control over natural resources like oil, gas and mineral resources.\textsuperscript{30}

In this respect, Islamist parties in Bangladesh generally remain inimical to the process of globalization as they equate it with western influence in a Muslim country.\textsuperscript{31} However, despite being an Islamist party, the Jamaat has often maintained silence on the process of globalization in Bangladesh and its links with western powers. This silence is due to the tactical compulsions of coalition politics\textsuperscript{32} where major electoral parties like Awami League and BNP has ensured the process of globalization and maintained links with western powers. In such a context, the Bangladesh Jamaat has been unable to become a credible political alternative and rather has remained a junior partner of the two principal parties: the Awami League and the BNP.\textsuperscript{33} Besides, tactical compulsions of coalition politics, the Jamaat has in fact primarily concentrated on addressing political issues than economic ones.

Abul Asad, a member of Majlis-e-Shoora (highest policy and decision making body) of

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., pp. 24-38.
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., pp. 66-162.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.
Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami and editor of Jamaat’s daily, *Sangram* has in fact, admitted that the main issues in Bangladeshi politics is generally related to political agenda and not with economic agenda with anti-military and anti-dictatorship agenda being central to political mobilization.\(^{34}\) He further argued that during the period of 1991-2006, when Bangladesh witnessed periodic elections, every five years, the main issues that dominated the political discourse of Bangladesh were war crimes, parliament boycott, arrests of political leadership etc.\(^{35}\) He pointed out that despite such prominence of burning political issues, the Jamaat has routinely reacted to international issues like war on Muslim countries.\(^{36}\) On the issue of privatization, he argued that a culture against nationalization and in favour of privatization is prevalent in Bangladesh because of the inefficiency of loss-making public sector although the Jamaat, in principle, is against rampant privatization.\(^{37}\)

In my entire field-work of two months in February 2009 and subsequently in June 2009, no Jamaat leader or supporter have ever recalled any significant political mobilization of the Jamaat against neoliberal economic policies of successive Bangladeshi governments. In fact, for party funds and elections, the Jamaat gets financial help from local businessmen, who have benefited from such neoliberal policies of liberalization, privatization and globalization. In this regard, a Jamaat intellectual, Prof. A.T.M. Fazlul Haque of Dhaka University’s Geology department points out that ‘BNP candidate Major M. Abdul Mannan Shaheb, who is a multi-millionaire industrialist and a fund contributor to BNP-Jamaat in elections in giving money to voters, organizing rallies, public meetings, posters, banners, hoardings etc. meant for electoral expenses, stated that in spending money for election

\(^{34}\) Field interview with Abul Asad in Dhaka on 16/02/2009.
\(^{35}\) Ibid.
\(^{36}\) Ibid.
\(^{37}\) Ibid.
purposes, Jamaat organizers and cadres are more honest than the BNP workers.’\textsuperscript{38} Moreover, the Jamaat leadership and intellectuals also confirm that the organization has investments in private schools, colleges, madrasas, universities, clinics, hospitals, diagnostic centres, real estates, Islamic banks etc.\textsuperscript{39} In other words, in a neoliberal policy regime, the culture of privatization, which gives boost to new private enterprises have in fact benefited the Jamaat with its investments in certain sectors of the economy in order to raise revenues for the organization.\textsuperscript{40}

In the 1990s and in the new millennium, the Jamaat was particularly keen about privatization of the public sector enterprises. The election manifesto of Jamaat in 1996 sated that in a phase-wise manner, the existing industries owned by the government would be transferred to private hands by taking into account of the legitimate interests of the people, workers and the staff.\textsuperscript{41} The same proposal of privatization of state owned enterprises was again given in 2001 election manifesto of the Jamaat with the exception being made in case of defence industries and those extremely important for the public.\textsuperscript{42} Similarly, in the 2008 election manifesto of Jamaat the call for development of private sector by modernizing the ‘relevant rules and regulations and increasing the cooperation of the government’ was given.\textsuperscript{43} In this respect, the Bangladeshi Jamaat is ideologically committed to private enterprises.

The 2008 election manifesto of Jamaat also gave a call to encourage ‘foreign investment’ by bringing ‘reforms to the Board of Investment and amending the relevant

\textsuperscript{38} Field Interview with A.T.M. Fazlul Haque in Dhaka on 02/06/2009.
\textsuperscript{39} Field Interviews with ex-Jamaat President Ghulam Azam in Dhaka on 12/02/2009 and Jamaat intellectual, Prof. Abdur Rab (Vice-Chancellor of Mannarat International University, Dhaka) on 07/06/2009.
rules and regulations without marginalizing the interests of the nation.'\(^{44}\) Then it also argued in favour of reducing the ‘interest rates’ of both ‘nationalized and private banks’ and also suggested to reduce ‘the difference between interest rates of savings accounts and loan accounts.’\(^{45}\) In the light of above mentioned economic policies of Jamaat stated in its official election manifestos in the last three elections of Bangladesh, we can argue that there are strong tendencies of Bangladesh Jamaat to follow a neoliberal trajectory of privatization, liberalization and financial reforms in the banking sector. Much akin to the neoliberal policies of privatization and divestment of public sector units, encouraging foreign investments and lowering the interest rates in banks, the Bangladesh Jamaat has in fact argued on similar lines in the last one and a half decades.

Moreover, under neoliberalism, when labour law reforms and a propaganda against strikes are being carried out by sections of industrial, political and media establishments in Bangladesh, the labour wing of Jamaat argues against strikes and *hartals* (a Bengali term for a militant strike like forced closure). Prof. Mujibur Rahman, the president of Jamaat’s labour wing, *Bangladesh Sramik Kalyan Federation* (BSKF) argues:

‘Generally, we differ with other trade unions on the issue of strikes. We don’t call strikes or hartals and do not approve any destructive agitations and demonstrations. We want healthy relations between the owner of factories and the labour. We are always in favour of consultative policies, discussions, dialogue and advisory policies. We prefer to deal labour issues in tripartite talks between the factory owner, trade union and the local administration or the government.’\(^{46}\)

According to Jamaat ideologues, although Islam approves ‘right to form association’ and by that logic ‘right to form trade union’\(^{47}\), there is no scope of right to strike in Islam. According to Ghulam Azam (ex-President of Jamaat in Bangladesh), ‘Islam does not recognize any classification of people on the basis of economic considerations, and so the

\(^{44}\) Ibid., p. 15.
\(^{45}\) Ibid., p. 14.
\(^{46}\) Field Interview with Prof. Mujibur Rahman (President of BSKF) in Dhaka on 16/02/2009.
method of class-struggle is not conducive to a truly Islamic society.'\textsuperscript{48} This is precisely why Jamaat’s labour wing ‘tries to negotiate’ with the factory owners by ‘avoiding confrontation’\textsuperscript{49} although it considers ‘trade-unionism as a democratic method of collective bargaining.’\textsuperscript{50} According to Jamaat leadership, ‘Islam does not only protect the rights of the workers but also of the employers.’\textsuperscript{51} Moreover, according to Islamic principles, the rights of the owner and labour are mutually complementary.\textsuperscript{52} In addressing the question of ‘labour problem’, the Jamaat leader, Ghulam Azam gave an example of Pakistan period before the independence of Bangladesh, where labour-capital disputes were settled by guaranteeing rights and privileges of labour invoked through courts of law and without resorting to ‘strikes, strife, jails, hatred and ill-will and unrest, disruption in economic life and confusion in political affairs’, which he argues as ‘the cherished dreams of the Communists.’\textsuperscript{53} He further argues that ‘the ideal before the Jama’at is to eliminate in a growing industrial economy the struggle between the labour and capital and establish an order in which none could coerce or exploit the other.’\textsuperscript{54} In a neoliberal setting, such capital friendly trade-unionism of Jamaat that does not opt for confrontation with the capital with traditional tactics of strikes and in fact also cares for the rights of the capitalists only creates conditions to strengthen neoliberal hegemony in Bangladesh. The 2008 election manifesto of Jamaat argues to put an end to the ‘involvement of teachers and students in party politics…in educational institutions by making necessary amendments to the existing legal

\textsuperscript{49} Rahman, \textit{Introduction to Bangladesh Sramik Kalyan Federation}, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{50} Azam, \textit{Jama’at-e-Islami}, p. 110.
\textsuperscript{52} Rahman, \textit{Islam and Rights of Labours}, p. 18.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
framework.\footnote{Election Manifesto of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami 2008, p. 13.} Previously, in the ‘Introduction’ of the thesis, we have seen how neoliberal policy regimes in general, seek to depoliticize varied sections of the population by weakening organized forms of collective action. Jamaat’s opposition to strikes and organized politics inside universities only creates conditions for strengthening neoliberalism as a policy regime in Bangladesh.

Now so far I have discussed how Bangladesh Jamaat is complicit towards neoliberalism by not waging any significant political mobilization against neoliberal economic policies of privatization and neutralization of militant labour movements, both inside and outside the parliament. However, even if it follows an economic policy that helps to sustain neoliberalism, nonetheless, it proposes a cautious approach in its stated economic and social policies in many other issues of running the country. In its successive election manifests of 1996, 2001 and 2008, the Jamaat has argued more in favour of petty production and local domestic capital, which are currently threatened by the incursion of foreign multinational corporations under a neoliberal economic framework. Secondly, in all these manifests, it has argued for reducing ‘foreign dependency’ and favours to pursue a policy of ‘self-sufficiency’. Thirdly, it has argued in favour of increasing ‘agricultural subsidies’, state support in controlling prices of agricultural goods, monitoring policies against ‘land grabbing’, interest free ‘agricultural loans’ and ‘rural credit system’ in an era, when neoliberal economic policies have aggravated agrarian crisis in several developing nations like Bangladesh. Fourthly, the Jamaat election manifests has consistently argued in favour of free school education and university education in a phase-wise manner and promoting public health services ‘to ensure the basic right to medical treatment’ in a time when successive Bangladesh governments seek to privatize social sectors like health and
education. Finally, ‘poverty alleviation’ programmes like ‘economic assistance’ and ‘special financial packages’ for people below poverty line and ‘social security’ measures for older persons, widows, disabled persons, orphans, beggars, slum dwellers etc. are announced in Jamaat election manifestos. Some of these targeted policies towards socially vulnerable sections of the population are entirely consistent with neoliberalism of post-Washington variety as we have seen in the ‘Introduction’ of the thesis.

However, some of the above mentioned policies of Jamaat are in fact a break from aggressive neoliberalism that favours an unbridled market economy in every sphere of life while others are entirely consistent with neoliberalism of post-Washington consensus. Clearly, Jamaat in Bangladesh does not subscribe to such neoliberal policies in every aspect of socio-economic life. In this respect, Jamaat’s approach is not entirely consistent with neoliberalism. Rather, its policies are pro-capital and pro-business but not necessarily pro-market, anti-state and pro-globalization.

After surveying the economic policies of Bangladesh Jamaat, I would rather argue that this Islamist party is in favour of a welfare state with active role of the government in controlling and regulating the economy while supporting social sectors like health, education and social security. I would discuss the limits of such a welfare state as proposed by Jamaat in the next chapter. After discussing Bangladesh Jamaat’s economic policies, I would now deal with its response to issues of censorship and moral policing against what it calls ‘western cultural globalization’.

Censorship, Moral Policing and Violence of Bangladesh Jamaat: Islamist Assertions against ‘Western’ Cultural Globalization

The leadership of Bangladesh Jamaat has argued in my fieldwork interviews that ‘western cultural globalization’ is currently threatening Islamic values among the Muslim
youth. In this respect, they pointed out that besides Television, cinema and pornography, the issues of ‘free sex’, ‘nudity’, ‘obscenity’, and ‘sexual permissiveness’ have also captured Bengali literature which was amply reflected in the writings of Taslima Nasrin. Moreover, according to the Jamaat leadership, Ms. Nasrin also attempts to argue and make ‘atrocious comments’ against God, its prophet, the Holy Quran and the Muslim community. To the Jamaat leadership, Ms. Nasrin has committed blasphemy and should be punished according to the Sharia laws. The politics of censorship propagated by the Islamists in Bangladesh including the Jamaat was able to impose a statist ban on Taslima’s writings under BNP regime in 1993-94. Commentators have argued that it is a kind of police measure as a method of repression.\footnote{For an elaborate analysis of state censorship on Taslima’s work in Bangladesh see Zafar, ‘Under the gaze of the state: policing literature and the case of Taslima Nasrin’.
} By 1993, several books of Taslima were well sold both in India and Bangladesh, prior to her ‘crowning moment’ of receiving the prestigious Ananda Purashkar in West Bengal, India.\footnote{Zafar, ‘Policing Literature, Disciplining Taslima’, pp. 157-158.} Such popularity was coupled with her outspoken statements about repealing the Sharia based ‘discriminatory Muslim Family Law’\footnote{Ibid., p. 159.} and arguing that the holy texts like the Quran, Vedas and Bible being ‘out of place and out of time’ and for ‘progress’, one needs to ‘move beyond these ancient texts.’\footnote{Ali Riaz, Voice and Silence: Contextualizing Taslima Nasreen (Dhaka: Ankur Prakashani, 1995), pp. 43-44.} The promotion of Taslima’s writings and her remarks ‘on the Koran and Sharia’ helped the Islamists, ‘especially the Jamaat-i-Islami, Bangladesh, incite mass protests, demanding Taslima’s execution for apostasy as per the Islamic dictate.’\footnote{Zafar, ‘Policing Literature, Disciplining Taslima’, p. 159.} The centre-right BNP led government, an ally of the Jamaat issued a warrant and then arrested her ‘for allegedly violating the religious feelings of her fellow citizens’, thus buttressing ‘the
illegally invoked *fatwa* with ‘the legally invoked censor.’\(^{61}\) Commentators have pointed out that the ‘Islamic right’ especially the Jamaat as the largest Islamist party in Bangladesh had unsuccessfully lobbied the BNP Government, once in 1992 and then again in 2004, to at least introduce a blasphemy law\(^ {62}\) for “creating new offences of ‘insult to the Koran’ and ‘insult to the Prophet’, respectively carrying maximum sentences of life imprisonment and death.”\(^ {63}\) If the Jamaat had succeeded in passing the blasphemy bill in the National Parliament, it ‘would have not only introduced life imprisonment and capital punishment as penalties, but also required no proof of intent on the part of the alleged blasphemer.’\(^ {64}\) Taslima was subsequently forced to leave Bangladesh and since 1994, she is in exile, mainly in Sweeden, where she was granted citizenship, and periodically in Kolkata, India.\(^ {65}\) Even in Kolkata and in some other parts of India, Islamist agitations took place against her stay in India and she was finally forced to leave India as we have seen in Chapter 3. The censorship case of Taslima has two distinct arguments: (a) ‘law and order compulsions and hence the attempt to regulate what the state considers hate speech and/or offence to religious sensibility’ and (b) ‘offence to morality, usually obscenity, but also blasphemy etc.’\(^ {66}\)

I would argue that while the first argument is being given by the state, the second argument is given by the Islamists who create pressure on the state to take action against the moral offender or the blasphemer. In this respect, the Islamist assertion against Taslima is actually a ‘moral policing’, which turned violent as we have discussed in Chapter 3. I would further discuss the dynamics of such Islamist violence against controversial authors or

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\(^ {61}\) Ibid.

\(^ {62}\) Ibid., p. 160.


\(^ {64}\) Zafar, ‘Policing Literature, Disciplining Taslima’, p. 160.

\(^ {65}\) Ibid., p. 161.

\(^ {66}\) Ibid., p. 157.
persons, who have been alleged as ‘blasphemer’, ‘atheist’ etc. in the next chapter by trying to explain why the Islamists, more often than not, choose an assertive and violent campaign on these issues and could not overlook or ignore such issues or at best democratically debate and argue such issues.

In my field interviews, on the issue of ‘homosexuality’ and ‘live-in relationships’, the Jamaat leadership of Bangladesh had out-rightly rubbished such acts as ‘un-Islamic’ and ‘illegal’ (haram). They argue that such acts are unknown in a Muslim country like Bangladesh and are products of perverse western mindset.

**Electoral Politics of Bangladesh Jamaat: Success and Failures**

After analyzing the politico-ideological articulations of Bangladesh Jamaat vis-à-vis neoliberal capitalism and ‘western cultural globalization’ the important question that comes to the fore is how does Jamaat fair in electoral politics in Bangladesh? Moreover, whether there is a relationship between its stated politico-ideological positions on varied issues and its electoral outcomes. Secondly, whether electoral outcomes of Jamaat are independent of its politico-ideological articulations and are more dependent on organizational strength of Jamaat and tactical alliance with mainstream political parties like BNP? Thirdly, how does Jamaat grapple with a strong ideological orientation within its organization on one hand and electoralism on the other hand? In other words, is there a contradictory or a complementary relationship between its politico-ideological expressions and electoral strategy? Fourthly, can the election data comprehensively identify the moments of success and failures of Jamaat in politically mobilizing the Bangladeshi people behind its Islamist agenda? Finally, can we make a proper assessment of Jamaat’s *struggle for hegemony* or *crisis of hegemony* in Bangladeshi politics by only referring to election data or is it prudent to take into account
broader politico-ideological discourses in Bangladesh and the response of Jamaat to those discourses?

After the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971, the Jamaat was banned as a result of adopting secularism as state policy by the Mujib government. Thus, the Jamaat was banned during the 7th March, 1973 election and was unable to participate in that election, which witnessed the overwhelming victory of Sheikh Mujib led Bangladesh Awami League (see Table: 1 below). The parliamentary election was followed by the Presidential election on 8th April, 1973 in which Abu Syeed Chowdhury was elected under Parliamentary management.67

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>Seats Contested</th>
<th>Seats Won</th>
<th>Vote Share</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Awami League</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>73.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Awami Party (Muzaffar Group)</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Awami Party</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jatiya Samajtantric Dal</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Jatiya League</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Independents (120)</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bangladesh Election Commission Data

Before the parliamentary election of 28th February, 1979 a direct presidential election was held on 3rd June, 1978 in which General Ziaur Rahaman was elected68 with a huge margin with serious charges of electoral rigging.69 The 1979 general election witnessed the rise of Zia led BNP as a major political party in the electoral politics of Bangladesh, although the landslide victory of the BNP was suspected of blatant malpractices and

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68 Ibid.
The 1979 election saw the prominence of religious identity based parties like Bangladesh Muslim League and Islamic Democratic League (whose ‘organizational backbone’ was the Jamaat-e-Islami) in the national political scenario of Bangladesh unlike 1973 elections, when there was a constitutional ban on religious identity based parties (see Tables 1 & 2).

### Table 2
**Performance of Major Political Parties in Bangladesh Parliamentary Elections, 1979** (Total Seats: 300)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>Seats Contested</th>
<th>Seats Won</th>
<th>Vote Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Jatiatabadi Dal [BNP]</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>41.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Awami League (Malek)</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>24.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Awami League (Mizan)</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Muslim League &amp; Islamic Democratic League (Rahim)</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal [JSD]</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Awami Party (Muzaffar)</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Gana Front</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Samayabadi Dal</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Jatiya League [BJL]</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Gantantrik Andolan</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jatiya Ekota Party</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Candidates (422)</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10.10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *Information not available
Source: Bangladesh Election Commission Data

In 1976, when the Islamic Democratic League (IDL) led by Mawlana Abdur Rahim obtained permission from the government (a martial law administration led by Zia-ur-Rahman), the Jamaat activists began to operate under the banner of IDL. Some Jamaat leaders even contested in the general elections of 1979 as nominees of the Democratic League, and six of them were elected. In 1979, the ban on religion-based political parties was withdrawn, and thus Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh was revived.  

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70 Ibid., pp. 239-241.
While getting state patronage under Zia’s regime, the Muslim League and Jamaat backed Islamic Democratic League contested the 1979 elections under the slogan of “defeat the Awami League and keep Islam safe in the hands of President Zia.” Also, after the assassination of Sheikh Mujib in the wake of a military coup, Bangladesh Awami League was split between rival factions. The 1979 election also witnessed the fragmentation of electoral system in Bangladesh with no party getting more than 50% votes as noticed in 1973 election. The parliamentary elections of 28th February, 1979, 7th May, 1986 and 3rd March, 1988 were organized by military rulers and were highly controversial. In 1979 election, although the ban on Jamaat was lifted by Zia-ur-Rahman, it could not contest the election because of its organizational weaknesses. Thus, in independent Bangladesh, Jamaat first contested elections in 1986 getting just 10 seats and 4.61% votes (see Table: 3 below).

Table: 3
Performance of Major Political Parties in Bangladesh Parliamentary Elections, 1986
(Total Seats: 300)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>Seats Won</th>
<th>Vote Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Awami League</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>26.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jatiya Party</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>42.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Muslim League</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Communist Party</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Awami Party [NAP] (Muzaffar)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Awami Party [NAP]</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAKSHAL</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Workers Party</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal [JSD] (Rab)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal [JSD] (Shahjahan Shiraj)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16.19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bangladesh Election Commission Data

73 Franda, Bangladesh, p. 232.
Like the 1978 presidential election, on 15th November, 1981 direct presidential election was held in which Justice Abdus Sattar was elected following the assassination of President Ziaur Rahman on 30th May, 1981. He was deposed by a bloodless military coup of Husain Mohammad Ershad on 24th March, 1982. However, the 1986 election was highly controversial because ‘the counting of ballots was dramatically suspended and certain announced results were later reversed.’ The 1986 election was also marred by ‘violence’ and ‘rigging’ by the military junta of Ershad as noted by foreign observers and media reports. Such a controversial election of May 1986 was followed by another controversial election in March 1988, for which the election commission, till date has not come up with a data about ‘percentage of invalid votes’, ‘number of polling stations’ and ‘number of polling booths’ as it has been the case with other parliamentary elections in Bangladesh. Although, the election commission now shows 51.81% votes cast in 1988 election, election analysts have argued that ‘the opposition count, as corroborated by foreign observers, allowed only one percent.’ Thus, both the 1986 and 1988 election is generally not regarded as free and fair. By late 1970s and early 1980s, the Jamaat, by the admission of its own leadership was ‘primarily an urban party that appeals to the religiously-minded educated classes.’ This support base of Jamaat among the urban educated middle classes had undergone a significant change with new rural constituencies voting for it as evident in 1991 election.

During the political movement against the ‘autocratic rule’ of Hussain Muhammad Ershad, Jamaat members in the national assembly resigned on 3rd December, 1987. The

75 Ibid.
76 A collection of such media reports can be found in Abdul Matin (ed.), Ershad’s Election Fraud (London: Radical Asia Publications, 1986).
78 Ibid.
80 Franda, Bangladesh, p. 214.
Awami League led 8-party alliance, BNP led 7-party alliance, 5-party alliance and the Jamaat-e-Islami participated in the anti-Ershad movement. The movement of the alliances turned into a mass upsurge at the end of 1990. As a result, General Ershad was compelled to resign from the presidency, and hand over power to the caretaker government headed by Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed. In the parliamentary election held on 27th February, 1991, the Jamaat contested 222 seats, winning 18 seats and got 12.13% votes, a sharp rise in its electoral performance when compared with 1986 and its best performance so far (see Tables: 3 & 4).

Table: 4
Performance of Major Political Parties in Bangladesh Parliamentary Elections, 1991
(Total Seats: 300)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>Seats Contested</th>
<th>Seats Won</th>
<th>Vote Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Jatiatabadi Dal [BNP]</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>30.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Awami League</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>30.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jatiya Party</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>11.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Krishak-Sramik Awami League [BAKSAL]</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Communist Party [CPB]</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islami Oikya Jote</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh National Awami Party [NAP] (Muzaffar)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ganatantri Party</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Democratic Party [NDP]</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal [JSD] (Shahjahan Shiraj)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Workers Party</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Candidates (424)</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *Information not available
Source: Bangladesh Election Commission Data

In 1991, the Jamaat became the fourth largest party in the Parliament and third largest party in terms of national vote share after BNP and Awami League (See Table: 4). This success of Jamaat was possible due to its strong organization by late 1980s as we have

seen earlier in this chapter. Moreover, its political campaigns and street demonstrations against the military rule of Ershad and its joint political movements with other secular parties for periodic elections and restoration of democracy gave impressive electoral dividends.

After the 1991 election, the BNP was only able to form the government with the outside support of the Jamaat, which increased Jamaat’s legitimacy and strength of political bargaining in the country. In rendering its support to BNP in forming the government, it also secured 2 out of 30 reserved seats for women in the National Assembly. Following the elections, in December 1991, Professor Ghulam Azam was elected ameer (President) of Jamaat-e-Islami with his citizenship declared valid by the High Court and he continued to hold this office till December 2000.

The 1991 election performance of Jamaat suggests that Islamism can have a cross sectional mobilization behind it where it can attain a mass character, even if not a class one. This is similar to various other contexts of Muslim societies in the early 1990s, where Islamism was out of direct control of political power but nonetheless enjoyed popularity among a significant section of the population. The different sectors of population might find a common platform of opposition under the banner of Islam(ism) against an antagonistic frontier of the power bloc represented either by the ‘state’ or mainstream political parties. Although the Jamaat has never been close to an electorally dominant party, its noticeable presence has influenced Bangladeshi politics to move towards Islamisation over the years,

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84 Ibid.
which is evident in the Awami League and BNP politicians’ eagerness ‘to publicly 
demonstrate their observance of Islamic rituals.’

By mid-1990s, the Awami League could enlist support of the Jamaat in their 
movement for introducing the caretaker government system to replace the BNP government. 
To intensify the movement, the Jamaat members of the National Assembly resigned in 
December 1994. In 1996 elections, the Jamaat contested for all 300 seats, and got only 3 
seats and 8.61% votes even if it had contested 78 more seats than 1991 (see Tables: 4 & 5). 
Thus, in 1996, there was a reduction of 3.52% votes for Jamaat from the 1991 figure. The 
party poked 12.13% votes by contesting only 222 seats in 1991, but just got 8.61% votes by 
contesting 300 seats in 1996.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>Seats Contested</th>
<th>Seats Won</th>
<th>Vote Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Awami League</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>37.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Nationalist Party [BNP]</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>33.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jatiya Party</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islami Oikya Jote</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal [JSD] (Rab)</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Candidates (284)</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.06%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *Information not available 
Source: Bangladesh Election Commission Data

In this regard, how can we explain the decline of vote and seat share of Jamaat in 
1996 when compared with 1991 election even if it contested far more seats in 1996 than it 
did in 1991? In this respect, I would argue that the 1996 election is the starting point of crisis 
for Jamaat’s electoral mobilization behind its Islamist project, effectively reflected in its 
sharp decline in seat share and vote share in the 1996 election, when compared with 1991

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election (see Tables: 4 & 5). I would argue that Jamaat’s success in 1991 election was due to its anti-Ershad agitations and campaigns for democratic elections from late 1980s onwards. Moreover, the resignation of 10 Jamaat MPs from the Parliament during late 1980s in protest of Ershad’s continuing military rule and Jamaat joining hands with secular parties during the anti-Ershad mobilizations as discussed earlier had given some credibility to its stigmatized past of being associated with pro-Pakistan and anti-Bangladesh ideological inclinations. Thus, when in late 1980s onwards, Jamaat launched a political movement for electoral democracy, giving a call for liberation from military dictatorship, it gained popularity among the masses as reflected in the electoral gains of Jamaat in 1991. By contrast, Jamaat’s working relationship with BNP and with an outside support to BNP led government in early 1990s hindered them to play any real oppositional role in the politics of Bangladesh. During 1991-96, the Jamaat could not replicate the kind of oppositional politics that it played against a governmental power bloc like the military establishment of Ershad during late 1980s. On the contrary, Jamaat’s outside support to the BNP led government in early 1990s, complemented with lack of militant opposition against the government, created conditions, where it got identified with the power bloc. In those circumstances, the underdog character of Jamaat in late 1980s as an oppositional force got discredited and transformed into a close relationship with the power bloc. In such a situation, it lost its plebian character representing the people against the power bloc and by 1996, the ‘people’ who voted for Jamaat in 1991, turned their backs to Jamaat. Moreover, its flip-flop and ambiguous position vis-à-vis the BNP also confused many of its traditional supporters in 1996 election. This ambiguous position of Jamaat vis-à-vis BNP is reflected in the fact that in 1991, it supported the BNP government from outside, while in the year 1994, it chose to have a political

alliance with the Awami League and the Jatiya Party ‘in the two-year struggle against the BNP which culminated in the resignation of Khaleda Zia’\textsuperscript{88} in March 1996 and then chose to contest all 300 seats alone without any pre-poll electoral alliance with any other party.

However, even if the Jamaat suffered enormous losses in 1996 election, the hegemonic presence of Islamic religion if not the Islamist party, became more prominent in Bangladeshi politics. This hegemonic presence of a moderate Islam in a Muslim country, where a significant population is ‘god fearing’, compelled even the secularist Sheikh Hasina to make ‘some symbolic gestures to demonstrate her loyalty to Islam.’\textsuperscript{89} In fact, after the 1996 election win, the Awami League looked ‘transformed’ and ‘quite similar’ to the BNP.\textsuperscript{90} Now, as far as the presence of Islamic religion in Bangladeshi politics is concerned, the voters find the two main parties no less religious than the Jamaat since both the Awami League and the BNP have made special efforts to make it appear that they are indeed ‘God-fearing’ and this strategy of the mainstream parties have undercut Jamaat’s claim of being the ‘sole upholder of Islam’.\textsuperscript{91} Similarly, a political analyst has argued that ‘the Jamaat has never enjoyed popular support in Bangladesh because the people are basically moderates and are not inclined towards fundamentalism’ since to the majority population, ‘religion is a private affair’ and the people do not like those who use it for ‘partisan purposes’.\textsuperscript{92}

In December 2000, Professor Ghulam Azam resigned from the post of national President of Jamaat, and Maulana Matiur Rahman Nizami became the Ameer (President/chief leader) of Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh.\textsuperscript{93} In 2001, the Jamaat had a pre-poll

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{89} Jahan, \textit{Bangladesh Politics}, p. 288.
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{93} \url{http://www.banglapedia.org/httpdocs/HT/J_0043.HTM} accessed on 09/11/2010.
seat adjustment with BNP and just contested 31 seats while winning 17 seats and 4.28% votes (see Table: 6 below). In the general elections held on 1\textsuperscript{st} October 2001, the BNP led 4-party alliance secured more than two-thirds of the seats in the National Assembly and as a member of the alliance, Jamaat has been included in the government of Begum Khaleda Zia with two of its members in the cabinet.\textsuperscript{94}

### Table: 6
Performance of Major Political Parties in Bangladesh Parliamentary Elections, 2001
(Total Seats: 300)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>Seats Contested</th>
<th>Seats Won</th>
<th>Vote Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Nationalist Party [BNP]</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>40.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Awami League</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>40.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islami Oikya Front</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Candidates (486)</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Jatiya Party (N-F)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islami Oikya Jote</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krishak Sramik Janata Dal</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jatiya Party (Manju)</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: *Information not available  
Source: Bangladesh Election Commission Data

In 2008 elections followed by a couple of years of military backed caretaker government, the Jamaat could not however repeat its good performance of 1991 or 2001 and only managed to get 2 seats and a mere 4.60% votes (just a marginal increase of 0.32% votes) despite the fact that it contested 39 seats, 8 seats more than the number of seats it contested in 2001 elections (see Tables: 6 & 7).

\textsuperscript{94} Ibid.
If we analyze the Jamaat’s victory of 2001 elections and its defeat in 2008 elections not in terms of seat share but in terms of vote share, then it is nominal. However, it is difficult to compare the vote share of Jamaat in 2001 and 2008 with 1996 election since it only contested 31 and 39 seats respectively in 2001 and 2008, compared with 300 seats in 1996. Given the available data from Bangladesh Election Commission, it is difficult to calculate the national vote share of Jamaat in 2001 and 2008 because we cannot possibly tell the exact percentage of Jamaat votes available in other constituencies, where it had not contested. It is likely that those Jamaat votes have gone towards its electoral alliance partner, BNP. A couple of Jamaat leaders in fact told me during the field interview that according to their assessment, the Jamaat has a national vote share of 10-12%. In fact they were unable to cross 12% votes that they got in 1991 election. Overall, they don’t have more than 12% votes, which mean that as an organization, they are not growing. It is evident that the Jamaat has not grown as an organization in Bangladesh since 1991 as its vote share has either declined from 1991 or at best stagnated since 1991. Even in seat share terms, the Jamaat has not been able to repeat its 1991 performance, let alone doing better than 1991. This evidence

### Table 7
Performance of Major Political Parties in Bangladesh Parliamentary Elections, 2008 (Total Seats: 299)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>Seats Contested</th>
<th>Seats Won</th>
<th>Vote Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Awami League</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>48.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Nationalist Party [BNP]</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>32.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jatiya Party</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>7.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent (148)</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal [JSD]</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Workers Party</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Democratic Party</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *Information not available
Source: Bangladesh Election Commission Data

If we analyze the Jamaat’s victory of 2001 elections and its defeat in 2008 elections not in terms of seat share but in terms of vote share, then it is nominal. However, it is difficult to compare the vote share of Jamaat in 2001 and 2008 with 1996 election since it only contested 31 and 39 seats respectively in 2001 and 2008, compared with 300 seats in 1996. Given the available data from Bangladesh Election Commission, it is difficult to calculate the national vote share of Jamaat in 2001 and 2008 because we cannot possibly tell the exact percentage of Jamaat votes available in other constituencies, where it had not contested. It is likely that those Jamaat votes have gone towards its electoral alliance partner, BNP. A couple of Jamaat leaders in fact told me during the field interview that according to their assessment, the Jamaat has a national vote share of 10-12%. In fact they were unable to cross 12% votes that they got in 1991 election. Overall, they don’t have more than 12% votes, which mean that as an organization, they are not growing. It is evident that the Jamaat has not grown as an organization in Bangladesh since 1991 as its vote share has either declined from 1991 or at best stagnated since 1991. Even in seat share terms, the Jamaat has not been able to repeat its 1991 performance, let alone doing better than 1991. This evidence
shows the crisis of political mobilization that the Jamaat is facing today. However, it is evident from comparing the 1996 election data with 2001 and 2008 data that after the election debacle of Jamaat with receding vote and seat share from 1991 to 1996, it has restricted itself only to those constituencies, where they have a relatively better electoral and organizational strength. This is where I would again go back to the fall in vote share of Jamaat from 1991 to 1996 and reiterate the argument that the crisis of electoral mobilization behind Jamaat started from 1996, with a declining vote and seat share or at best being electorally stagnant. The 1996 election debacle actually compelled the Jamaat to come to terms with BNP while having a tactical electoral understanding in 2001 and 2008 with not more than filing 13% of its total candidates that it contested in 1996.

From the available election data, we can possibly argue that the Islamist project of Jamaat was in crisis right from the mid-1990s onwards with the \textit{decline of vote share} in all elections after 1991 although with the logic of the first past the post electoral system, it had performed better in 2001 than 1996 in terms of ‘seats won’ but falls short of the 1991 performance. Also, the Jamaat got richer electoral dividends in terms of winning more seats in parliamentary elections when they are in opposition and is detached from any direct link with the ruling power bloc. However, the logic of first past the post system of electoral democracy, in fact erroneously makes us to focus on the category of ‘seats won’ than ‘votes won’. This fallacy only confused some commentators and the 2001 Bangladesh election, in fact, puzzled a number of political analysts to such an extent that some of them had wrongfully portrayed the electoral verdict as the emergence of ‘Islamist Taliban state’, rise of ‘conservative ascendancy’, ‘Islamist militancy’ and ‘Islamic terrorism’ in Bangladesh.\footnote{See Hiranmay Karlekar, \textit{Bangladesh, the Next Afghanistan}? (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005); Ali Riaz, \textit{God Willing: The Politics of Islamism in Bangladesh} (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004); Sumit
An expert argues that most reports about Bangladesh becoming another or next ‘Afghanistan’ or Bangladeshi Islamist groups developing links with Pakistani ISI and international terrorist organizations have come from the Indian news media and South Asia Terrorism Portal, a frontal organization of Indian intelligence agencies. Certainly, the political analysis projecting Bangladesh as a ‘new Islamist state’ after 2001 election have not taken into account of either the declining vote share or político-electoral stagnancy of Jamaat in successive elections or its inability to repeat or better its best ever electoral performance of 1991.

Now, aside of this electoral crisis of Jamaati Islamism in recent times, it has so far done well by at least reemerging as a key player in Bangladeshi political mainstream. In that sense, it is interesting to note that the same Jamaat-e-Islami, which was banned for being opposed to the very creation of Bangladesh, started to have a consistent electoral presence in the Parliament right from 1979 election, first under the banner of the Islamic Democratic League and from 1986 election onwards, with its own banner of Jamaat-e-Islami. This emergence of Jamaat in the mainstream politics of Bangladesh was a result of legitimating the Jamaat by successive military establishments as I have discussed in the previous chapter.

However, from 1980s onwards, the Jamaat also tried to relegitimize itself by often aligning with mainstream secular-nationalist parties. First, it joined hands with the secular-nationalist opposition against Ershad in late 1980s and then it gave outside support to BNP to form the government in 1991. During early 1990s, the Jamaat briefly formed a political coalition with the mainstream secular parties.

alliance with its ‘arch-enemy’, the Awami League and Ershad’s Jatiyo Party (National Party) against the BNP government. Then in 2001, it again realigned with BNP in a pre-poll electoral alliance and this alliance between Jamaat and BNP has been so far continuing till date. So, an expert has rightly pointed out that the Jamaat’s political struggle since its reemergence in early 1980s has primarily focused through ‘shifting political alliances, to relegitimize itself in the new political context of postindependence Bangladesh.’

However, there are some other important features in the success of Jamaat in its electoral career in Bangladesh. First, it has been able to at least become a key player in the electoral politics of Bangladesh even after its stigmatized past. Secondly, even after its electoral debacles, it has always been the major spokesman of ‘Islamic conservatism’ in socio-religious matters and its intense politico-ideological battles against secular liberalism in Bangladesh. Thirdly, it has been instrumental in at least having the symbolic presence of Islamic religion in Bangladeshi politics. In other words, due to its consistent usage of Islamic vocabulary and rhetoric, even mainstream parties cannot afford to ignore the religious significance of Islam in everyday Bangladeshi politics and makes symbolic gestures to prove their loyalty towards Islamic religion. On the other hand, the failure of Jamaat lies in the fact that it has been unable to become an electorally dominant party in Bangladesh with significant political influence, leave aside its failure to establish a model Islamic state in Bangladesh.

Now the question arises that does Jamaat’s performance rely mainly on its stated politico-ideological perspectives, its economic policies, its vision of an Islamic state, its anti-Westernism or it just depend on the tactical electoral alliances with major political parties in Bangladesh?

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99 Ibid.
Bangladesh. In this respect, a Jamaat leader, who sits in the national headquarters of Bangladesh Jamaat, in a brief field interview, argues that both ideological positions and electoral alliances with some Islamic parties and BNP are major reasons for electoral success in 2001 elections.\(^{100}\) He further states that ideological assertions are needed to keep intact the core Islamist constituency of Jamaat, who thinks that ‘Islam is a complete way of life, and an ideal Islamic state is needed for good life of all citizens of Bangladesh.’\(^{101}\) However, he further states that in order to rally other sections of the population, electoral alliances with a few Islamic parties and BNP is necessary.\(^{102}\) Thus, it is clear that the limited electoral success that Jamaat got was due to its ideological assertions and tactical electoral alliances apart from its selective oppositions against the ruling power bloc.

However, does electoral data actually tell everything about the success and failure of an Islamist project or is it better to complement the election analysis with broader political discourses in a particular context? This is the task that I would take in the next subsection of this chapter.

**Crisis of Islamist Populism in Bangladesh**

In the last subsection, we have seen that at present, the Jamaat is going through a crisis of political mobilization that gets reflected in its recent electoral debacle in 2008. Now, I would argue that the crisis of Islamism in contemporary Bangladesh is not just merely an electoral one as I have shown in the last section of this chapter. In fact, electoral crisis is only a symptom of a much deeper crisis in terms of Jamaat’s inability to invent a new politico-ideological articulation. Secondly, as we have seen previously, Jamaat always

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\(^{100}\) Interview with Najmul Haque on 16/02/2009.  
\(^{101}\) Ibid.  
\(^{102}\) Ibid.
fairs better in political mobilization, when it is in the opposition than when it enjoys political power. Thirdly, not only has it been unable to establish its cherished goal of an ‘Islamic welfare state’, it is now facing an enormous challenge from the new secularist consolidation comprising of the Awami League, the much skewed Bangladeshi Left and liberal progressive intelligentsia.

The fragmentation of electoral politics of Bangladesh was noticed in successive elections from late 1970s onwards with no party ever getting more than 50% votes except in the 1973 election. However, in the 2008 general election, the Awami League had a thumping majority with high voting percentage, close to 50% votes. The high percentage of votes in Awami League’s kitty, followed by its renewed assertion for booking alleged war criminals of 1971 and its reaffirmation of ‘secularism’ as a principle in the Bangladeshi constitution, signify a political swing in Bangladeshi politics in favour of secular politics and the changing political discourse in Bangladesh. In the backdrop of a renewed struggle for secular hegemony, Islamism in Bangladesh is facing a crisis of popular mobilization both during elections and its inability to launch massive protest demonstrations against Awami League’s policies of secularization. So, Bangladeshi Jamaat today faces a dual crisis: a) a crisis of electoral mobilization b) a crisis of political mobilization behind its Islamist and anti-secularist agenda.

In 2008, the Jamaat was in fact, defending its government in the election. It was no more an oppositional force as it was before 1991 or before the 2001 election. On 2008 elections, a Jamaat intellectual was putting the blame on lack of free and fair elections by claiming that how the media and the caretaker government was in favour of the Awami League. He also argued how the corruption of BNP, the ideological legacy of Awami
League and the maturity of Awami in denying tickets to corrupt politicians unlike the BNP were major reasons behind the big electoral win of the Awami League.\textsuperscript{103} He was also arguing how the Bangladeshi people have short memory and how it looks at the performance of the incumbent government than a previous government. Safiuddin Sheikh, a Jamaat member and a Mathematics teacher in the Government Madrasa Aliya (Dhaka) also argues on same lines about unfair elections while blaming the poll officials:

‘Jamaat’s vote share in 2008 election is almost same as 2001. It has not gone down. Basically there was no free and fair election with large scale manipulation by the presiding officers and administrative officials in conducting, counting and reporting the number of votes. However, BNP’s corruption was also an issue.’\textsuperscript{104}

In my field interviews, there was complete absence of introspection from Jamaat leadership on the 2008 elections. They were rather putting the blame on someone other than accepting political and tactical mistakes on their part. The only exception was Md. Kamruzzaman (Senior Assistant Secretary General of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami and member of Majlis-e-Shoora). In a draft election review document he argued that corruption, nepotism and favouritism of the BNP members in the BNP-Jamaat government and the government’s inability to fulfill the genuine and legitimate aspirations of the people like combating inflation, terrorism, and electricity problem are some of the major reasons behind the defeat of the BNP-Jamaat alliance in 2008 election.\textsuperscript{105} Therefore, in 2008, the Jamaat was more identified as a part of the corrupt and inefficient power bloc and thus lost its credibility as a voice of the plebs/people. Thus, as a part of the power bloc, pursuing the same set of neoliberal economic policies without resolving fundamental problems of the people have delegitimized and discredited the Jamaat as a representative of the plebs. In this respect, the gap between the Jamaat as the ‘representative’ of the ‘people’ and the ‘people’

\textsuperscript{103} Field interview with Prof. Omar Faruq, Department of Islamic History and Culture, Dhaka University on 03/06/2009. See Appendix 37.

\textsuperscript{104} Field interview with Jamaat member Safiuddin Sheikh on 04/06/2009.

as ‘(un)represented’ widened when the democratic demands of the people (primarily addressing the question of poverty, inequality, inflation, governmental corruption and employment)\textsuperscript{106} could not be fulfilled by the Jamaat. Moreover, unlike the anti-military mobilizations of the late 1980s, the Jamaat could not launch a similar protest movement during the 2006-08 military backed caretaker government, and thus failed to create a visible antagonistic frontier. Thus, its project of Islamist populism could not articulate a protest discourse that had been so instrumental in its politico-ideological articulations in late 1980s.

Now, the crisis of Islamism in Bangladesh, which was first noticed as an electoral symptom in the 1996 election has deepened after the rout of Islamists in the last parliamentary elections of 2008, and with the current offensive of the new Awami League government against Jamaat on war crime issue. A Jamaat member was also defensive on the organization’s anti-Liberation image apart from admitting a leadership crisis.\textsuperscript{107} Also, Jamaat is defensive about the issue of war criminals. Currently, the Jamaat has a strategic dilemma—whether to make an offensive attack against the government by ignoring the allegations of anti-patriotism and betrayal from ‘corrupt regimes’ like Awami League or to ‘confess’ their ‘political mistake’ by issuing a public apology addressing the nation.\textsuperscript{108} Recently, corruption charges against Jamaat leadership\textsuperscript{109} and finally found guilty of corruption\textsuperscript{110} have also tarnished their image. These corruption scandals have the

\textsuperscript{106} Badruddin Umar, a noted political commentator in Bangladesh informed me in a field interview that the basic issues of Bangladeshi people are poverty, inequality, inflation, government’s corruption and unemployment. Interview taken on 13/02/2009. Similar views were expressed by Bangladesh Left leaders like Rashed Khan Menon of Bangladesh Workers Party and Mujahidul Islam Selim of Communist Party of Bangladesh on 14/02/2009 in my field interviews.

\textsuperscript{107} Field interview with Safiuddin Sheikh on 04/06/2009. See Appendix 38.

\textsuperscript{108} Field interview with Prof. Choudhury Mahmood Hasan on 04/06/2009.


\textsuperscript{110} Anwar Ali, ‘Nizami found guilty of Tk 35cr misuse’, \textit{The Daily Star} (Dhaka), June 10, 2009.
potentiality to discredit the honest puritan Islamic image of Jamaat which might further deepen the crisis of Islamist politics in Bangladesh.

It is interesting to note that in contemporary situation as it exists today, the Islamists in Bangladesh are retreating from their previous non-secular position and trying to accommodate/address both the linguistic and nationality questions. That is to say, they are now saying that they were also part of the Bengali language movement, Bangladesh liberation movement etc. In fact, they have now changed their name from Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh to Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami. All these may be tactical ways or just cosmetic changes to clean up their image but it also reflects the crisis of the Islamists because beyond a point, people are hardly attracted to their Islamic appeal. This crisis of Islamists has been recently seen in the 2008 Bangla elections also. Therefore, the call for a non-secular alternative in Bangladesh and the identification of the people to the Islamist political project is in crisis, which exposed the limits of Islamism that is unable to become a dominant ideological discourse in Bangladesh with the possibilities of the emergence of a new secular political formation.

Now, the current crisis of Jamaat from the earlier stage of struggle for politico-electoral and ideological prominence of Islamism in 1990s in Bangladeshi polity has deepened. How the Jamaat is going to tackle this current crisis and whether the Jamaat would be able to provide a counter-hegemonic politics in Bangladesh in the near future is a significant question to ask. It seems that the Bangladesh Jamaat seeks to tackle its present crisis by strong anti-India rhetoric and trying to portray the Awami League as the client/puppet government of both India and United States. It has already heightened its anti-
India rhetoric in the wake of Tipaimukh dam project in northern Indo-Bangladesh border.\textsuperscript{111} Jamaat leadership also thinks that there is a significant anti-India audience in Bangladesh and its major target is to capture/appeal to that audience.\textsuperscript{112} Such anti-Indian sentiments in Bangladesh are not new as it was witnessed during the last days of Mujib regime and during early 1980s under Zia’s regime. As some commentators claim that such anti-India sentiment was a result of Bangladesh’s close co-operation with the business interests and political establishment of India.\textsuperscript{113} An intellectual of Bangladesh Jamaat thinks that since the BNP is a loosely confederated party without any core ideological foundation, it is reliant on the individual charisma of Begum Khaleda Zia. Thus, after Khaleda, BNP would be weak, disorganized or even become fragmented and Jamaat can rally a major section of BNP support base on an anti-India plank.\textsuperscript{114} Secondly, the same person also thinks that the Jamaat should resolve the 1971 war crime issue by openly declaring that it had committed a political mistake at that time in the wake of military threat from ‘Hindu India’. According to him, such an honest confession would only help to rebuild Jamaat’s tarnished image as ‘traitors’ of Bangladesh liberation movement.\textsuperscript{115} Beside Jamaat’s politico-ideological crisis, it is also undergoing a crisis of organizational and intellectual leadership.\textsuperscript{116} The 2008 Parliamentary elections had a devastating impact on Jamaat intellectuals, who admitted about Jamaat’s organizational weaknesses.\textsuperscript{117}

In 2008, just before the Bangladesh elections, when I was doing fieldwork in India, a very senior leader of Indian Jamaat, Maulana Shafi Moonis was hopeful of the Islamist

\textsuperscript{111} ‘Jamaat for steps to stop Tipaimukh Dam building’, \textit{The Financial Express} (Dhaka), May 22, 2009.
\textsuperscript{112} Field interview with ex-Jamaat President Ghulam Azam in Dhaka on 12/02/2009.
\textsuperscript{114} Field interview with Prof. Choudhury Mahmood Hasan on 04/06/2009. See Appendix 39.
\textsuperscript{115} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{116} Field interview with A.T.M. Fazlul Haque on 02/06/2009. See Appendix 40.
\textsuperscript{117} Field interview with Prof. Omar Faruq on 03/06/2009. See Appendix 41.
political project in Bangladesh than in Pakistan. He pointed out that the presence of feudal zamindari class in Pakistan is a hindrance to such an Islamist project since it is attracted to various ‘un-Islamic pleasures’. By contrast, such a class is absent in Bangladesh. Here it should be noted that he points out a strategic reason for long term political project of Islamic state in Bangladesh than merely talking about electoral outcomes.

Now, whether the Jamaat would be able to resolve its ideological and electoral crisis in recent future or whether it would be able to create an Islamic state in Bangladesh in the long run, is a question that history will eventually tell us. For now, let us move towards the next chapter, where I will try to make a comparative overview of the ideological articulations of JIH and Bangladesh Jamaat, particularly analyzing its rhetoric of ‘Islamic alternative’ that has been discussed in the last four chapters.

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118 Field interview with senior JIH leader Shafi Moonis on 01/12/2008. See Appendix 42.
Chapter 6

Islamism in Contemporary India and Bangladesh: Comparative Overview on the Politics of Alternative

In the previous four chapters, I have made an overview of the politico-ideological articulations of an Islamist party like the Jamaat in two different contexts of contemporary India and Bangladesh. In this chapter, I intend to make a comparative analysis on the basis of the narrative in the previous chapters. In Bangladesh, the politico-ideological articulations of Jamaat are both linked to the historical and contemporary experiences of the Bangladesh Jamaat. In India, in contrast nobody in the political realm was concerned about what Jamaat-e-Islami actually said or did in the past. This is surely related to the dominance of Hindutva majoritarianism than Muslim sectarianism in India. Since, JIH is a much smaller organization when compared to Hindutva organizations in India, Islamism in a minority context of India has a much lesser presence in the contemporary political and historical discourses of India than Hindutva. However, even in contemporary Bangladesh, the role of Jamaat before the creation of Bangladesh or during the Bangladesh Liberation war is often put into scrutiny. Not ignoring such specific historical contexts, we have also seen that this thesis is written from the vantage point of contemporary India and Bangladesh, where neoliberalism is the ruling philosophy in governmental affairs of both the countries. In the previous four chapters, I have demonstrated how the Jamaat has responded to neoliberalism in two different contexts of India and Bangladesh. Let us now comparatively analyse the similarities and differences of Jamaat’s responses to neoliberalism in India and Bangladesh and account for possible reasons behind such responses.
Islamism Encounters Neoliberalism: Contrasting Indo-Bangladesh Experiences

The fundamental differences between contemporary Islamism and *Hindutva* brand of communal-fascism in South Asia is that Islamism has an anti-imperialist and anti-consumerist character whereas *Hindutva* genuflects at imperialism with a pro-neoliberal, pro-imperialist, pro-consumerist and elitist tendency as observed by Patnaik.¹ I would further add that Islamists in India have a subaltern character and is responding to threats of economic and cultural globalization.

The JIH sees the ‘Islamic Economic System’ as a fundamental solution or ‘the only alternative which ensures justice’² to the gross economic injustices of our times rooted in the nature of contemporary neoliberal capitalism. Such an imagined ‘just order’ anticipated by the Islamists is being called as ‘Islamutopia’, a utopia which ‘opens up the possibility of hope at the most profound level of human imagination’ by transcending the mundane human order.³ The various narratives of ‘Islamic alternative’ articulated by JIH were noticed in chapters 2 and 3. It’s Policy and Programme, 2007-11 states that it is opposed to ‘globalization’, ‘anti-labour legislation’, and ‘government’s anti-people’ policies like ‘foreign direct investment’, ‘special economic zones’, ‘abolition of subsidies and privatization of health care, education and other services’.⁴ In this context, one can ask why Islamist rhetoric is so poised against capitalist globalization. Can we argue that Islamism is a refracted form of anger of victimhood against capitalist globalization? Žižek would probably agree on this point since he argues that after the revolutions of 1789 and 1792 in France and the February and October revolutions of 1917 in Russia, the Maoist rebellion in China and fascism in the West, when our contemporary time has exhausted its potentiality of a ‘global

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¹ Patnaik, ‘Of Finance and Fascism’.
² *JIH Policy and Programme*, p. 19.
⁴ *JIH Policy and Programme*, p. 19.
rage’, Islam represents ‘the rage of the victims of capitalist globalization’ along with some other forms of ‘global resentments’ like ‘irrational outbursts by youth’, ‘Latin American populism, ecologists, anti-consumerists and other forms of anti-globalist resentment.’

The qualitative data gathered from the collected materials like organizational literature, interviews, Jamaat documents, VCDs, election data (only in the case of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami), give two fundamentally different versions/visions of Islamism in India and Bangladesh. Islamism in a Muslim minority context with a socio-economically backward and politically marginalized constituency in India is radically different from Bangladesh where Muslims are more class stratified and are more heterogeneous in economic terms, unlike in India, where Muslims are a subaltern group with an overwhelming majority/concentration in the country’s poor and working population. This varied socio-economic and political contexts of India and Bangladesh vis-à-vis Indian Muslims and Bangladeshi Muslims (the core constituency of Jamaat) not only affects the shaping up of distinct ideological articulations but also reflected in the political practice of Jamaat in two very different situations—particularly with reference to identification of the enemy/antagonistic frontier and tactics of political mobilization. For example, Islamism as a ‘totalistic ideology’ is threatened by the incursions and challenge of western ideologies like secularism, liberalism and socialism in Bangladesh where it also identifies those as ‘enemy ideologies’. As a logical corollary to the above theoretical explanation/justification by the Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, it also identifies the secular and Leftwing political forces as their prime enemy.

By contrast, in India, we can notice that recently, Jamaat has been softer towards secular-democratic and Left parties. This is precisely because of the identification of two

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very different political enemies by Jamaat in two varied contexts of India and Bangladesh. The Indian Jamaat identifies ‘communalism’ or ‘communal fascism’ in the form of *Hindutva* and ‘imperialism’ in the form of ‘American hegemony’, ‘neoliberal economic policies’, ‘corporate globalization’ etc. as not only enemies of Indian Muslims but also for the Indian people at large. The Bangladesh Jamaat on the other hand, identifies the secular and Leftwing politics as their prime enemy and the economic issues related to neoliberalism and corporate globalization are almost absent in their political discourses. That is to say, while Indian Jamaat is more critical and opposed to neoliberalism, the Bangladesh Jamaat is non-engaging, rather than having clearly stated position on this issue.

However, although to a lesser extent and less vocal than Indian Jamaat, the Bangladeshi Jamaat emphasizes ‘American hegemony’ in the field of international politics, particularly related to U.S. attitude towards Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran and Palestine and also anxious about its intervening role in Bangladesh politics, specifically alleging that in the current context, U.S. backed the secular Awami League in the December 2008 National Assembly election. Almost all the Jamaat leaders that I have interviewed in February 2009 and subsequently in June 2009 primarily gave the reason of ‘American hand/conspiracy’ against them in the 2008 Bangladesh parliamentary elections. Although, they have accepted their defeat for internal organisational reasons and the alliance with a ‘corrupt’ BNP as mentioned in the last chapter, their prime focus was to blame ‘American conspiracy’ in 2008 Bangladesh elections. Also, they were arguing that the 2008 Bangladesh elections were ‘rigged’ with the help of American establishment, local military caretaker government and the Awami League. When asked that why such a case would happen only against them and not with the Awami League, the Jamaat leaders could hardly respond. In other words, the
Bangladeshi Jamaat was confused how to explain the electoral debacle in 2008 and thus took refuge in conspiracy theories. It must be noted here that conspiracy theory is ‘an obscure attempt to understand the reality of sociability from the myopic perspective of a non-social political ideology.’ Thus, in a new world of uncertainties, it is possible that the powerless (in this case, Jamaat) identify someone or start believing that some hidden or secret power is conspiring against them.

Now, coming back to the Jamaat’s response to neoliberalism, I would argue that due to two very different approaches/attitudes towards neoliberalism, the Jamaat also has two distinct visions of ‘development’. In India, the Jamaat is fiercely critical about ‘corporate model of development’ with big land acquisitions, FDI in retail sector, rampant privatization and dominance of big capital, retreat of the state from major welfare activities like education and health etc. which directly affects the Muslim peasantry, working classes and the petty producers. On the contrary, Bangladeshi Jamaat is favourable to big private investments in the overall ‘growth’ and ‘development’ of Bangladesh. Regarding land acquisition, the Jamaat in Bangladesh is a little concerned and thus demands industrialization in non-agricultural lands which is a standard argument of most of the political parties: left-right-centre in both India and Bangladesh with an agenda of peasant populism. In this case, it should be remembered that for Bangladeshi Jamaat, it is only a matter of ‘where industry should be built’ without questioning the corporate nature of industrialization and the corporate model of development unlike the Indian Jamaat.

This leads to an important question about the complex relationship between neoliberalism and Islamism. Under what conditions does Islamism oppose or critique

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neoliberalism and under what situations, does it remain mute in critiquing neoliberalism? The findings of this research lead to the conclusion that the political positions of Jamaat in two varied socio-political contexts of India and Bangladesh regarding neoliberalism is fundamentally related to two varied socio-economic profiles of Muslims and dynamics of power bloc in these countries. In India, the overwhelming majority of Muslims is poor and is adversely affected by neoliberalism while in Bangladesh the Muslims are more heterogeneous in economic terms. Unlike India, there is an expanding Muslim middle class and upper class in Bangladesh. Moreover, the share of political power or becoming a part of the power bloc is never an issue for the Muslims in Bangladesh as they form the overwhelming majority of political elites in Bangladesh. That is why, the issue in Bangladesh is more of ‘secularists’ versus ‘Islamists’ and ‘progressives’ versus ‘conservatives’ in the power struggle, unlike India, where political marginalization and political (under)representation is an issue for Muslim politics. Now, neoliberal consensus as a hegemonic formation in both India and Bangladesh, where resistances towards neoliberalism is weak and fragmented, the political elites who becomes the part of the power bloc would be more favourable towards neoliberalism than the people who are adversely affected by the neoliberal regime/phase of globalized capitalism. Since, Muslims have a plebian status in India with socio-economic backwardness and political marginalization with an absence of prominent Muslim political elites; the neoliberal policies are thus opposed by a Muslim organization like Jamaat where Muslims form a subaltern group. In this respect, the friend/foe duality and construction of an antagonistic frontier in the political field is done very differently in India and Bangladesh as far as the politico-ideological articulations of Islamist politics like Jamaat is concerned.
In this respect, I would argue that the identification of neoliberalism along with its political representatives of Congress and BJP as the enemy of the ‘people’ including the Muslims is an important development in the Islamist politico-ideological discourses in India. This addition of neoliberalism, Congress and BJP to the existing ‘enemy’ in the form of ‘western imperialism’ is surely an expansion of an antagonistic frontier constructed by Islamism in India. In this respect, it fundamentally differs from the past discourses of Jamaat in pre-neoliberal India, where the Islamist discourse of Jamaat simply regard anything that is non-Islam or un-Islamic as ‘jahiliya’ (ignorance of non-Islam) and henceforth as an ‘enemy’. Today, the Jamaat is trying to make an equivalential articulation with other non-Muslim elements like Dalits, Tribals, and Christians etc. by taking up their cause, speaking for their democratic demands and standing in solidarity with them. Thus, a rigid explanation of ‘jahiliya’ which was characteristic of the ideological morphology of Jamaat even a decade back has now been reformulated. We can also notice this reformulation in connection with JIH’s recent soft stance on western political concepts like ‘secularism’, ‘democracy’, ‘nationalism’ etc. Therefore, ‘jahiliya’ as a core concept in Islamist ideology is redefined in the recent political articulations of JIH. Thus, in theoretical terms we can argue that the previous decontested concept of jahiliya in the ideological articulations of JIH has now been recontested. In both Freeden and Laclauian sense, we have now seen how the apparently decontested concept of jahiliya with an ideological closure has undergone a change of meaning with inconclusiveness and partial fixations in the ideological articulations of JIH.

Thus, selected elements of ‘jahiliya’ like Congress, BJP and neoliberal policy regime are treated as ‘enemy’ by the Jamaat whereas secular-democratic and Left forces are regarded as possible ‘allies’. We witness that recently, there is a new trend of increasing
proximity of Jamaat with the Left and several secular-democratic parties apart from other human rights organizations in India. Furthermore, political articulations of JIH along the lines of (secular) class issues by raising the demands of eradicating poverty and unemployment among the Muslim community and settlement of political and economic grievances of the Muslims are surely an important break from its earlier association with primarily religious, faith based and cultural issues like Muslim personal law, banning Taslima, divorce laws, minority status for universities like Aligarh and Jamia etc. However, the religious and faith based issues are not put into oblivion by Jamaat as the recent Kerala text book controversy has shown. Evidently, such issues are taken up by JIH as we have seen in its staunch opposition to Taslima, homosexuality, blasphemy, atheism etc. in chapter 3. But surely, the addition of a new political articulation of raising the demands of economic issues like poverty and unemployment even by an organization which is largely identified as ‘Muslim fundamentalist’ can create conditions of possibilities for further progressive political articulations among Indian Muslims in general on several other issues.

On the other hand, the non-identification of neoliberalism as an antagonistic frontier in Islamist ideological articulations of Jamaat in Bangladesh is related to the unavailability of a prominent progressive political articulation and its critique of neoliberalism in the political mainstream of Bangladesh. By contrast, in India, the Jamaat is operating in the milieu of a Leftwing critique of neoliberalism both at the national level in general and Kerala in particular, where the organizational strength of Jamaat is relatively better than other states. In Kerala, Jamaat is targeting the Muslim youth with much heightened leftwing rhetoric with slogans like ‘Chavez, Nezad and Castro—carry on, we are with you’ in their rallies, or speaking against SEZs, Walmart, Reliance, corporate globalization, ‘FDI in
Retail’ etc. in order to attract certain Left oriented Muslims, only to expect that some would/might join Jamaat.

In a neoliberal policy regime, where the state has withdrawn from major welfare activities in the sectors of health and education, both in India and Bangladesh, the Jamaat tries to involve themselves in these sectors by investing on subsidized public education, health and housing projects or what they call ‘the social services’ of Jamaat to rescue people from material problems. In this respect, Bangladeshi Jamaat is more professional with major investments in education (running schools, colleges, private universities, coaching centres), health (private hospitals, diagnostic centres, pharmaceutical industries), housing projects, financial sector (Islamic banks, stock markets, Insurance, Leasing companies), Business organizations (Retail, Wholesale, Departmental stores), Communications (Truck, Bus, Launch, Steamers, Ship, Car, Three wheeler CNG, etc.), Real Estate, Media (both print and electronic), IT, Books and Publications, NGOs. Such investments are only meant for profit generation out of these projects. Thus, there is a significant network of political economy of Islamism under the supervision of Jamaat in Bangladesh. By contrast, the JIH lacks such enormous resources and is more concentrated on literacy mission, and providing subsidized facilities in education, health and housing projects to a limited extent. For such projects, the JIH generally gets money from individual members, cadres and supporters who generally donate money on a monthly basis (almost like a levy), the money collected from annual zakat (alms) to the organisation as well as from foreign expatriates, particularly from West Asia.

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8 Interview with JIH CAC member, K.A. Siddique Hasan on 02/012/2008; JIH brochure for Vision 2016 collected from JIH headquarters in Delhi.
From the discussion so far in the thesis, I would argue that in India, Jamaati Islamism is a protest discourse against neoliberal form of capitalism but in Bangladesh, it is complicit towards neoliberalism and at times, serves the interests of neoliberal capitalism. However, in both India and Bangladesh, Jamaati Islamism is at best articulating an agenda of Islamic welfare state and can be perfectly accommodated within the logic of capitalism with a system of wage labour and private ownership of major means of production. Thus, its cherished alternative of ‘Islamic state’ is not actually an ‘alternative’ to capitalism but rather has an agenda to reform capitalism with a projected human face of welfarism. Although, the ideologues of Jamaat in South Asia claim to follow a ‘middle path’ and oppose both capitalism and socialism, effectively, their agenda is not to move beyond capitalism and construct an alternative post-capitalist society. In fact, Charles Tripp has argued that the discourse of Islam often articulated by prominent Islamists is characterized by distinct economic ideas ranging from what he calls ‘Islamic socialism’ based on development initiatives by the state, moral economy and social harmony and solidarity, to the promotion of interest free Islamic economics via Islamic banking and zakat (alms/alms tax) for both social welfare and individual benefits to the ideas of ‘Islamic anti-capitalism’ as a form of resistance political activism. Tripp further argues that the Islamic ideas to respond capitalism have been influenced by ‘society’, ‘nation-state’ and ‘market economy’, which are intricately linked to the historical development of capitalism and the Islamic banking is

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rather a successful engagement with global capital than a step towards abolition of capitalism.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 195 & 199.}

In this respect, I would argue that Jamaat’s projected Islamic welfare state very much accommodates the logic of welfare capitalism than an abolition of capitalism or a move towards socialism. Now, in the midst of neoliberal hegemony or the consensus of ‘market capitalism’ in India and Bangladesh, a political project of Islamic welfare state can be seen as an ‘alternative’ to neoliberal capitalism rather than an ‘alternative’ to capitalism in general. However, such a project of Islamic welfare state in India and Bangladesh becomes extremely difficult to establish. The JIH is a minority voice in the political discourse of India and also a minority within a minority among the Indian Muslims. Thus, the structural constraints of a ‘number game’ in a representative democracy like India would hinder Jamaat from creating such an Islamic welfare state. In India, the Jamaat only operates as a pressure group and places its demands like reversing neoliberal economic policies and arguing for a welfare state if not an ‘Islamic’ one. Such a demand of a welfare state is unlikely to be heard by the political establishment, given the current hegemony enjoyed by neoliberalism in the governmental discourse of India. If ever, the neoliberal hegemony is challenged by an alternative politico-ideological articulation to be able to push hard towards the direction of a workable welfare state, then it could be only possible by a broader ‘united front’ of several Leftwing and democratic forces, which the Jamaat might be part of (like its support towards the Left on certain issues as we have seen in chapters 2 & 3), but it is unlikely that the Jamaat would be the ‘vanguard’ of such a struggle to create a ‘welfare state’ in India.
In Bangladesh, the Jamaat has so far been unable to realize an Islamic welfare state again because of the number game in a representative democracy. However, it certainly has greater influence in the political discourse of Bangladesh by being an opposition party in the parliament, as compared to being a mere pressure group in the national politics of India. It should however, be remembered that when the Bangladesh Jamaat was in power from 2001-2006 for a full five year term, it was least interested in reversing neoliberal economic policies or taking stringent measures for welfare capitalism. Despite Bangladesh Jamaat’s promise to create an ‘Islamic welfare state’ in the successive election manifestoes of 1991, 1996 and 2001, it did not take any strident policies towards creating a ‘welfare state’, leave alone the question of ‘Islamic welfare state’, when it shared power with BNP from 2001-06. On the contrary, it pursued some aggressive neoliberal economic policies in the sectors of agriculture, social welfare and industry as we have seen in chapter 5. Thus, when Islamism in Bangladesh lost its subaltern character of opposing the dominant political establishment and have found a place in institutionalized power structures like the national government, it became subservient to neoliberal capitalism. So far, I have argued that the Jamaat in India has more reservations against neoliberalism than its Bangladeshi counterpart although in both the countries, its political goal is to experience an Islamic welfare state based on private property system with major role of the state in providing social welfare like education, health, unemployment benefits etc.

However, is there any ideological basis within the discourses of Islamic religion that made the JIH to oppose neoliberalism? Islamist theoreticians like Siddiqui argues that according to Islam, ‘natural resources related to the common interests of man, such as rivers, mountains, sea, space and collective goods such as roads, bridges etc. are not to be owned
by individuals.\textsuperscript{13} Besides such ‘natural resources’ and ‘collective goods’, any individual, man or woman can own objects ‘rightly acquired through purchase, inheritance or original possession of unowned objects.’\textsuperscript{14} Now, during the contemporary phase of neoliberalism, corporate take-over of natural resources like water, forests, and land (popularly known as \textit{jal, jungle, zamin}) is a reality in India. We have seen in chapters 2 and 3, how the JIH has in fact launched protests and organized local resistance movements against such corporate encroachment over what the Islamists describe as ‘natural resources’ and ‘collective goods’. Thus, political opposition to such ‘primitive accumulation’ of natural resources and collective goods by corporate capital under a neoliberal policy regime has an ideological basis within the discourse of Islam(ism) itself.

Secondly, as opposed to neoliberal economics of deregulated capitalism, Islamists propose a regulated capitalism by arguing that such a model has an ideological basis within the discourse of Islam itself. Maududi argues that Islamists ‘cannot establish a free economy like that of capitalistic system’ nor a ‘collective control over the entire economy like the communist system’, but ‘have to construct a free economy within certain limits and restriction.’\textsuperscript{15} While arguing the right of individual acquisition of permissible objects in Islam, nonetheless, Siddiqui clarifies that ‘the State may \textit{regulate} such acquisition in the social interest (italics mine).’\textsuperscript{16} To add further, Siddiqui argues that in a modern Islamic state:

‘Prices, wages, rates of hire and rent, and profits will normally be left to be determined by the market forces. Given the co-operative attitude and social orientation on the part of the economic agents in Islamic society it is expected that the rates and prices so determined will be just and socially correct, giving rise to no cause for

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item Ibid.
\item Siddiqui, \textit{Some Aspects of Islamic Economy}, p. 91.
\end{itemize}
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State intervention. But the State has the power to intervene and fix prices and rates when it becomes imperative to do so in order to protect the common man and the society from profiteering and other baneful policies of the economic agents involved. Speculative hoarding and artificially engineered monopolies are a case in point.\(^\text{17}\)

Thus, although Siddiqui proposes a free market economy in a modern ideal Islamic state, the apprehensions of a speculative and monopolistic economy makes him argue for a regulated capitalism with state intervention in fixing prices, wages, rates of hire, rent and profit. The model of regulated capitalism is also expressed by Ghulam Azam by arguing that Islam recognizes ‘private ownership’ as ‘controlled’\(^\text{18}\) and ‘conditional’ for individuals and groups without monopolization and concentration of national wealth by few individual capitalists under capitalism, or for the party, government and state-capitalists under socialism.\(^\text{19}\) In this respect, the ideological articulations of Jamaat as we have seen in chapters 2 and 3 by opposing the policies of rampant privatization, monopolization and concentration of capital has an ideological chord with the discourse of Islam.

Thirdly, Islamism has an anti-consumerist tendency which is opposed to the discourse of consumerism in a neoliberal setting. In chapters 2 and 3, we have seen such an anti-consumerist thrust of the JIH. Such anti-consumerist positions of the Islamists also have an ideological basis within the discourse of Islam. An ideologue of Jamaat argues that Islam has always preferred an ‘austere policy’ while prioritizing the fulfillment of ‘necessities’ than ‘comforts’ and ‘luxuries’.\(^\text{20}\) Maududi argues that Islam forbids ‘self-indulgence’ and has put some prohibitions for men like wearing ‘silk dresses’, ‘golden ornaments and jewels’, decorating the house with ‘pictures and statues’.\(^\text{21}\) In the words of Maududi, ‘Islam has closed all those outlets through which the greater portion of a man’s wealth is spent on

\(^{17}\) Ibid., p. 99.
\(^{19}\) Ibid., p. 133.
his own luxuries and indulgences’ and prefers a ‘decent life of an average standard.’\textsuperscript{22} Since, the discourses within Islam forbids ‘self-indulgence’, it is not surprising that the ideological articulation of Jamaati Islamism has an anti-consumerist element, which certainly does not gel well with the philosophy of consumerism in a neoliberal context. To summarize the above three points, we can argue that the Islamist opposition to the plunder of ‘natural resources’ and ‘collective goods’, its staunch support for ‘regulated capitalism’ and its political agenda of ‘anti-consumerism’ is definitely a break from the neoliberal trajectory that is characterized with ‘primitive accumulation’, ‘unbridled market capitalism’ and ‘consumerism’.

Besides, critiquing and politically opposing neoliberalism, we have seen earlier in this thesis that Islamists often propose that the discourse of Islam is an ‘alternative’ to capitalist modernity.\textsuperscript{23} However, the Sharia, which is hailed by the Islamists as the model code of conduct to run an Islamic society, law and state ‘is in no way an obstacle to the practice of market relations and respect for the status of private property, both necessary for the functioning of capitalism.’\textsuperscript{24} Maududi himself was in favour of private ownership by citing that Islam is not opposed to private property and does not make a distinction between ‘means of production’ and ‘consumer goods’.\textsuperscript{25} He argues that ‘from the Islamic point of view, a person has the right to own land or a machine or factory just as he has the right to own clothes, utensils and furniture.’\textsuperscript{26} He further asserts that ‘if the right to private property is snatched away and collective ownership is imposed on all economic resources, individual liberty will inevitably come to an end because, after all, the members of society become the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid.
\item Also see Amin, Eurocentrism, p. 71.
\item Ibid.
\item Maududi, Islamic Economic System, Principle and Objective, p. 8.
\item Ibid.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
servants of the organization which controls the economic resources of the entire country.’

Similarly, ex-President of Bangladesh Jamaat, Ghulam Azam argues that ‘ownership in itself is not responsible for exploitation’ and ‘capitalists can exploit only with the governmental backing.’ Another prominent ideologue of Jamaat, who is internationally regarded as a specialist in ‘Islamic economics’ in Jamaat circles argues that Islam gives the ‘right’ to ‘private ownership and freedom of enterprise.’ On the basis of Maududi’s writings, the positions of JIH as expressed by Siddiqui and the founder of Bangladesh Jamaat, Ghulam Azam are more close to regulated capitalism with state monitoring of the economy and having a greater role for the state in the economy with a welfarist model.

In both India and Bangladesh, the Jamaat and its ideologues are at best opposed to ‘interest-based economic system’ and is in favour of ‘interest free banking’ along with imposing prohibitions on transacting certain *haram* (unlawful/prohibited/impermissible) commodities (wine and other intoxicants) prohibiting certain professions (music, dancing, gambling, prostitution, business spreading indecency and licentiousness, business based on fraud and deceit etc.), and practices (hoarding, bribery, cheating, speculation etc.) as prescribed by ‘Islamic guidelines’. According to Maududi, as a general rule, ‘Islam does not permit the control of certain sectors of the economy by certain special persons or families or classes to the exclusion of all others’ and ‘only a monopoly which is absolutely essential for the collective good of society is allowed.’

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27 Ibid.
‘collective good’ and how it would be defined in an Islamic state is a significant question to pose, which Maududi has no clear answer.

In this respect, as we have seen earlier in the previous chapters that an Islamist party like Jamaat could argue against neoliberalism, which is only a peculiar form of policy orientation of contemporary capitalism but it cannot offer any concrete alternative to capitalism as such. In fact, there is discrepancy in Jamaat’s theoretical critique of capitalism and the alternative of Islamic welfare state suggested by it. Thus, even if Jamaat criticizes capitalism as promoting ‘monopolies’, ‘concentration of wealth in few hands’, ‘poverty’ and ‘economic inequalities’, its adherence to private property, wage labour and its inability to suggest any alternative mode of exchange other than the circulation of money and commodities (M-C-M'), which is seen under conditions of capitalism ultimately makes it a political force, which cannot promise a credible alternative to capitalism as a whole. Moreover, an Islamist party like Jamaat is unable to propose any other modes of exchange like ‘gift and reciprocation’, which can be noticed among several agrarian communities, or ‘plunder and redistribution’ as a mode of exchange under feudalism, or ‘mutual aid’ in a possible associationist model of communist society.

However, the 1996 election manifesto of Bangladesh Jamaat has argued in favour of ‘land reforms’ by recording land ownership, fixing land ceilings, and proposed a policy for ‘co-operative farming’, ‘modernized farming’ and ‘co-operative marketing’, later on dropped from 2001 and 2008 election manifestos. In this respect, Jamaat ideologue, Siddiqui

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33 Marx has shown that capitalism sustains on wage labour and private property or private ownership of major means of production, whose mode of exchange is expressed in the circulation of money or capital and commodities (M-C-M') where M=money, C=commodity and M'=more money with hidden surplus value. For Marx, “M-C-M' is therefore in reality the general formula of capital as it appears prima facie within the sphere of circulation.” See Karl Marx, *Capital Vol. I* (Marxists CD Archive, 2002).


proposes to ‘eliminate’ concentration of land holdings and the Islamic state’s ‘power to fix a ceiling on landed property’, which according to him is justified in the light of ‘large feudal holdings’ in the Islamic world today.\textsuperscript{36} He argues that such feudalism in the contemporary Islamic world with large land holdings is a ‘departure from Islamic policies by the Muslim States in the past.’\textsuperscript{37} In this respect, Siddiqui’s proposal is that the ‘democratic procedure laid down by Islam’\textsuperscript{38} actually want to eliminate the economic basis of feudalism. Therefore, I would argue that such a proposal to eliminate feudalism as prescribed by Islamic principles actually create conditions for the development of capitalism.

Therefore, an Islamist group like the Jamaat cannot propose any alternative to capitalism since its political discourse is only constituted by a rhetorical critique of capitalism without a substantive proposal to alter the capitalist mode of production and without replacing the existing mode of exchange by money (\textit{M-C-M'}) as noticed in capitalist market economy with an alternative ‘Islamic’ mode of production and exchange. Furthermore, an Islamic economic system with moral prohibitions on transacting certain commodities, prohibiting certain professions and practices does not fundamentally distinguish itself from the logic of capitalism, although the diversity of commodities and professions in the market can be certainly squeezed due to such moral prohibitions. Even if an Islamic economic system is fundamentally opposed to an interest-based economy, it is certainly not opposed to extracting surplus value and its other different forms: namely, profit and rent.\textsuperscript{39} In fact, both Maududi and Siddiqui point out that in Islam, both profit and rent

\textsuperscript{36} Siddiqui, \textit{Some Aspects of Islamic Economy}, p. 100.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{39} Marx argues that Surplus-value ‘splits up into various parts’ falling to ‘various categories of persons, and take various forms, independent the one of the other, such as profit, interest, merchants' profit, rent.’ See Marx, \textit{Capital Vol. I}.  

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are permissible if they are acquired through just and permissible means while engaged in lawful business. Thus, surplus generated through profit and rent would help to accumulate capital in an economic system marked by private property and private ownership of means of production.

Maududi suggests that Islam is opposed to ‘hoarding’ and ‘accumulated wealth’ as it prescribes to constantly put the wealth in ‘circulation’. However, there are no strict restrictions on such accumulation of wealth or capital as according to Islamic principles, meagre two and a half percent per annum will be charged as zakat (a form of tax) on such accumulated wealth by force of law to give economic assistance to the poor and needy. In fact, Maududi himself argues that one can transfer halal (lawful/permissible) wealth to others as a ‘gift or a favour or use it for producing more wealth or leave it as inheritance for his descendants.’ He further argues that ‘on these rightful earnings no limitations can be put at any stage’ and Islam does not stop anyone from becoming a ‘millionaire’ and ‘does not raise unreasonable obstacles’ or ‘stop people from lawfully earning as much as they like.’ Similarly, Siddiqui argues that ‘every owner has a right to use his property for earning more money through commerce, industry and agriculture’ provided that he observes the Islamic ‘code of conduct.’ Marx has incisively shown us that capitalism sustains itself through continuous accumulation and circulation of capital. Thus, Islamic economic system along with its system of private property gives scope to both accumulation and

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42 Ibid.
44 Ibid.
circulation of capital with surplus wealth in private hands, generated through profit and rent. This is an important limit of Islamism, where it is unable to give an alternative to any given mode of production and exchange in general and capitalism in particular. Moreover, it does not propose any alternative method to break the chain of accumulation and circulation of capital or put an end to the extraction of surplus value and the continuous reproduction of surplus value in various forms like profit and rent. In such a situation, the call for an Islamic state only becomes a political agenda to make changes in existing laws and governance by Sharia rule without changing the capitalist mode of production and exchange, accumulation and circulation of capital and the extraction and reproduction of surplus value under an economic framework of capitalist market relations.

Finally, the contradictions of an Islamist party like Jamaat vis-à-vis neoliberalism is its confusion to prioritize Ummah as a universal political actor and the Saleh Jamaat (the righteous party) for an emancipatory project against neoliberalism. The implications of such an ideological confusion is reflected in the Islamist project of global Islamic revolution followed by Global Islamic society, mostly argued by groups like Hizb-ut-Tahrir and Islamic revolution and Islamic state in one country. The Jamaat is clearly in favour of the latter position. However, it cannot altogether discard the concept of Ummah, which I would argue creates conditions to think about global Islamic expansionism with globalized forms of economy, culture and community inspired by the discourses of Islam. Thus, the concept of Ummah creates conditions to think about an Islamic globalization as opposed to the hegemony of Euro-American neoliberal globalization. Since, both forms of globalization are based on private property, reproduction of surplus, and accumulation and circulation of capital it cannot be anything different but a capitalist globalization as such. Thus, if Jamaat
holds on to the concept of *Ummah*, it cannot be conceptually opposed to the possibility of globalization as such even if it only opposes a particular form of globalization, namely the ‘western’ one.

*Islamist Opposition to Cultural Globalization in India and Bangladesh*

So far, I have shown that vis-à-vis neoliberalism, the positions of Indian and Bangladeshi Jamaat are very different. However, on the issues of ‘freedom of expression’, ‘blasphemy’ and ‘atheism’ as expressed in Rushdie, Taslima Nasrin, Danish cartoon and Kerala text book controversies, on issues of sexuality: particularly gay rights, anti-sodomy laws and live-in relationships, on issues of sexual permissiveness and ‘nudity’, which the Jamaat broadly categorize under the single label—‘western cultural globalization’, the positions of both Indian and Bangladesh Jamaat are similar in terms of vehemently opposing and condemning such acts. In chapters 3 and 5 of this thesis, we have also seen how Islamist political mobilizations against controversial ‘blasphemous’ personalities bearing a Muslim family background like Taslima Nasrin and Salman Rushdie is common among the Muslim community in both India and Bangladesh. But what is the logic of assertive political mobilization often taking refuge in violent protests against controversial ‘blasphemous’ personalities or say the Danish cartoonist? The media caricatures and stereotyped political cartoons equating Islamic religion and Muslims with ‘terrorists’, ‘backwardness’, ‘irrational’, ‘violence’, ‘evil’, ‘brutal’, ‘oppressive’, ‘crazy’, ‘exaggerated masculinity’, ‘misogynist’, ‘harem’, ‘hedonist’, ‘subjugated women’, ‘duplicitous’, ‘vengeance’, ‘fanaticism’, ‘blackmail’, ‘distaste for compromise’, ‘double-talk’, ‘hijacker’ etc.47 is

nothing new. The political cartoons caricaturing Muslims and Islamic religion in the western media is as old as historic moments of 1956-58 Suez Canal crisis,\textsuperscript{48} 1973-74 oil crisis,\textsuperscript{49} Iranian revolution and hostage crisis between 1979-80,\textsuperscript{50} the gulf war of 1990,\textsuperscript{51} and 9/11 followed by Afghanistan war in 2001 and invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003.\textsuperscript{52} Now if Muslims and Islamic religion in general are portrayed in a bad light in all these cartoons, why the world did not witness so much of violent protests on these cartoons, which were essentially offensive? In other words, what was so special about the Danish cartoon that the Muslim protests became so violent? Is it the religious authority and sanctity of the Prophet that got challenged, which led to violent protests among sections of Muslim population on a transnational space? Is it the religious authority and appeal of the Prophet as an ideal role model for the entire Muslim believers that enraged so many Muslims globally? Is it because the mocking and stereotyped portrayal of Nasser, Bin Laden, Khomeini and Saddam Hussein did not appeal to ordinary Muslims since many Muslims do not identify with them? Or is it the sedimented discourses of constant vilification and humiliation in regular stereotyping of the Muslims that galvanized the rage of ordinary Muslims to take the issue during the Danish cartoon controversy to protest against the stereotyping and vilification of both the Prophet and the ordinary Muslims?

I would separately deal with the issue of Muslim protests against blasphemy and controversial opinions of Rushdie and Taslima on one hand and the Danish cartoon and Kerala text book controversy on the other hand. I would argue that a forceful assertion of Islamism on the question of blasphemy in fact reflects the crisis of authority and insecurity

\textsuperscript{48} Gottschalk and Greenberg, \textit{Islamophobia}, p. 73, pp. 113-116.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., pp. 119-123.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., p. 129.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., p. 134.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., pp. 130-141.
of Islamists, since blasphemy fundamentally challenges the authority/legitimacy and core beliefs of religion and community. This insecurity of Islamists is rooted in the belief that if punitive action is not taken against the disobedient/disloyal and blasphemous person, then blasphemy can become a norm/instance/precedence in the society and in the long run, can challenge the very foundation of religious faith upon which authority of Islamist ideology is built/established. Thus, Islamism acts assertively by ensuring the punishment or disciplining the violator of religious code of conduct (in this case the blasphemer) with violence without waiting for the last day of judgment according to Islamic belief. It should be borne in mind that this Islamist political assertion is a function of an orthodox faith that relies on a scriptural-dogmatic understanding of Islamic religion and cultural practices. Islamist faith is essentially insecure in nature within the realm of modernist thought and postmodern anxieties of contemporary life.\textsuperscript{53} The Islamist assertion in cases of censoring/banning a creative work like a novel is an attempt to close down a space of dissensus/dissent within the authentic boundaries of the community.

Faisal Devji argues that the peculiar Muslim protests in the Rushdie Affair and Danish cartoons on a transnational space without any particular party or organization playing the anchor role for such a worldwide response was actually possible due to the globalization of media.\textsuperscript{54} It was through the media that the issue was discussed and circulated and images of the protests got a global audience crossing the borders of Britain and Denmark resulting into further protests from the Muslim community in various other countries. Furthermore, right from 19\textsuperscript{th} century onwards, in British India, ‘a diminution of


\textsuperscript{54} Devji, \textit{The Terrorist in Search of Humanity}, pp. 167-79.
the Prophet’s religious status during this period was matched by a corresponding elevation of his status as a figure of love and reverence. The global protests also signify the ‘splintering of Islamic authority’ with more ‘fragmentation and thus democratization of authority in the world of Islam that might account for the militancy of its globalization.’

But what actually hurt the Muslims that they were so raged to protest on these issues? Why does Islamists need to react violently instead of disregarding these issues? Why are Islamists so sensitive when someone denounces and critiques the Islamic religious authorities? Can Islamists at all afford to overlook and ignore the issues of religious blasphemy, atheistic plea and mocking of religious figures like the Prophet by both members and non-members of Islamic community? Even Khomeini who was non-engaging with the Western discourses reacted assertively on Salman Rushdie’s *Satanic Verses* by issuing a death fatwa. Devji argues that to the Muslims, both Rushdie’s novel and Danish cartoons tried to tarnish the image of Muhammad as a role model, as a person of civic virtue, as an ideal father, husband and family man that Muslims were so hurt and enraged to protest on those counts. Islam as a political symbol is associated with protests against American imperialism and local issues have also resulted into escalated Muslim anger but it also ‘moved it well ahead of any demonstrations over Iraq, Afghanistan or Guantánamo Bay’ and has nothing to do with ‘American imperialism, economic exploitation or Third World dictatorship.’

On the other hand, both liberal politics and liberal nation states giving the clarion call of ‘freedom of expression’ were actually unable to manage the global arena characterized with such issues of Rushdie affair or Danish cartoon controversy involving the issues of

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55 Ibid., p. 169
56 Ibid., p. 175.
59 Ibid., p. 175.
‘personal hurt, insult and offence’ that liberal democracy was completely unfamiliar with.60

As Devji clarifies:

“By chancing in seemingly arbitrary fashion upon the Danish cartoons as a cause, Muslim protestors were only proving global Islam to be relatively unhampered by the political traditions proper to old-fashioned liberalism. …The Danish cartoons did not simply disguise the political or economic causes of Muslim anger in religious terms…[r]ather they allowed Muslims to set the terms for global politics precisely by fixing on an issue that national states are unable to address…Muslims and their Prophet were offended because they had been denuded of the protection that states and citizenship have to offer. Their hurt was nakedly felt and nakedly expressed, existing outside the cosseted debate on freedom of expression. It is because global Islam comes to us from the future that it exposes so clearly the historical limits of liberal democracy. Such limits are evident in the circular definition that has marked liberalism from its founding days: only those will be tolerated who are themselves tolerant. Such a definition deprives tolerance of any moral content by making it completely dependent on the behaviour of others. Tolerance therefore becomes a process of exclusion in which it is always the other person who is being judged. Even at its most agreeable, however, the definition is severely limited, because its circularity works only within the bounds of a national state. It is unable to deal with real differences at all and certainly not with difference at a global level.”61

While agreeing with Devji on the problem of liberal ‘tolerance’, I would add that the concept of ‘tolerance’ re-inscribes the so called superiority of the tolerant subject over the so called inferiority of the intolerant and tolerated. Secondly, the so called intolerant and tolerated subjects are defined by the parameters of the tolerant ones. However, while agreeing with what Devji has to say on the issue of Muslim protests, I would further elaborate on the dynamics of Islamist opposition to such texts of Rushdie (1989), Nasrin (1994 onwards), Danish cartoons (2006) and Kerala text book controversy (2008) vis-à-vis the response of Jamaat in India and Bangladesh.

In this respect, a possible question can be of the following: why Islamists cannot ignore such critical opinion about the Islamic religion, God or the Prophet? It seems that Islamists seek to protest against anybody whose opinions might threaten the very foundations of religious belief in the name of ‘hurting religious sentiments’. In this respect, the state has often succumbed to the pressure of Islamists by arguing that if the demand of the Islamists are not met then there is a threat of ‘fomenting violence’ and ‘communal

60 Ibid., pp. 173-176.
61 Ibid., pp. 175-176.
I would argue that the political violence often unleashed by Islamists on such issues in both India and Bangladesh is precisely the result of absence of normative concepts of individual *liberty* and *freedom* within the specific ideological morphology of Islamism.\(^{63}\) According to the Jamaati Islamists, individual liberty and freedom is supposed to be submitted by humans to the creator and as loyal subjects, the obligatory duty of humans is to obey the rules of the creator because the humans or the created/creatures are born slaves of the creator.\(^{64}\)

Bikhu Parekh argues that the ‘fundamentalist discourse’ is essentially a ‘moral discourse’.\(^{65}\) I would further add that it is a regulatory discourse as well. In the case of Rushdie, Taslima and Danish cartoons, a regulatory morality is governed and legitimized by the religious authority and then justified in the name of the holy text. This regulatory discourse is also a result of ‘a crisis of identity and authority’\(^{66}\) within a religious community. Thus, protests against ‘religious blasphemy’ of noted controversial novelists by the Islamists are the expression of an assertive political articulation with a purpose to *control* and *regulate* those *texts* which challenges the very foundational basis of religious doctrines, resists the sphere of religious authority and in turn violates the law of obedience and loyalty towards religious figures who enjoy that authority. Moreover, in the cases of Rushdie and Taslima, there is a challenge coming from within the community as the texts of Rushdie and Taslima are themselves posing a threat/challenge to the religious authority per se. It is not

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\(^{62}\) The censorship debates around Taslima’s writings focusing on the issues of ‘free speech’ versus ‘hate speech’, ‘freedom of expression’, ‘democratic and humanitarian right of the author’ versus ‘hurting of religious sentiments’ is well documented in Taslima Nasrin and Sujato Bhadro, *Nishiddho mot Dwikhandito poth* [Forbidden Opinion, Divided Path] (Kolkata: People’s Book Society, 2004); Taslima Nasrin, *Narir Kono Desh Nei* [Woman has no Country] (Kolkata: Riju Prokashoni, 2009).

\(^{63}\) For a brief exposition on the morphology of Islamism see Browers, ‘The Secular Bias in Ideology Studies and the Case of Islamism’.

\(^{64}\) Maududi, *Towards Understanding Islam*.

\(^{65}\) Parekh, ‘The Concept of Fundamentalism’, p. 113.

\(^{66}\) Ibid., p. 109.
anybody else outside the Muslim community like in the case of Danish cartoons or a Left government’s prescribed school text books in Kerala, who are saying something inappropriate or unwelcome statements about Islamic religion, or questioning the existence of creator or questioning the moral purity of the Prophet. Rather, it is articulated by two novelists (in this case Salman Rushdie and Taslima Nasrin) who have a ‘Muslim name’ and thus a ‘Muslim identity’ for any layman Muslim, who does not even know or just don’t bother to know whether Rushdie and Taslima are atheists in their personal beliefs or not. In fact, the Islamist concern is that how come a member of the Muslim community challenges the sphere of religious authority by proposing blasphemous statements and questioning the morality of the Prophet. That is why the Islamist assertion is deeply embedded in an anxious belief that if today, people who disobey religion cannot be suppressed and repressed, then a trend of religious blasphemy might be a common social syndrome among the Muslims. As Al-Azmeh argues, ‘[t]he rights of God concern protecting and maintaining the Muslim body politic through international relations both martial and pacific, and through invigilating its internal integrity by the creation of a Rechtsstaat and the suppression of ideological sedition—that is, unbelief, apostasy and…blasphemy.’  

Therefore, before the revolt against Islamic faith within the Muslim community becomes a reality, the Islamists prepared themselves to challenge those who question the authority of religion and religious texts. This tradition of silencing and repressing the revolt against any Islamic theological and spiritual authority like God or the Prophet is nothing new. In fact, much before the Rushdie and Taslima issue, the Jamaat-e-Islami while disassociating itself from anti-Ahmadi mob violence was nonetheless opposed to the Ahmadis in early 1950s in Pakistan

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68 Ahmad, ‘Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia’, p. 471
‘authentic’ Islamic system.\(^6^9\) In other words, there is a history of constructing antagonistic frontiers within the politico-ideological discourses of Jamaati Islamism against what they identify as the non-Islamic politico-ideological discourse.

In this respect, the Islamists would hardly pay any attention to the Quranic injunction that ‘there shall be no coercion in matters of faith’.\(^7^0\) But as an ideology of political action, Islamism strives to act on behalf of God and hence, the ‘criminal’ who is accused of blasphemy would be punished in this Earth only. The threat of challenge from the blasphemous—the act of violation/violator (in this case, the blasphemous person) has to be thus repressed with violence. The precise anxiety of Islamism is that if a revolt expressed in terms of blasphemy within the community is not suppressed promptly, the violator/blasphemous might become an exemplar and the very non-action against the blasphemous person might be seen as the weakness of Islamic ummah. Since, blasphemy is regarded as a ‘revolt’ by a member of an ‘authentic’ community, who ‘dares’ to challenge the foundations of religion and religious authority, it is generally repressed by the religious authority to maintain its hegemony over the ‘authentic’ community. Moreover, Islamism has an inbuilt narcissism, self-obsession and a sense of megalomania precisely because of the Quranic belief that Islam is the final apostle, the final holy book and is the rightful guidance for all of humanity. In Kantian sense, Islamism can be identified with dogmatism ‘without previous criticism of its own powers.’\(^7^1\) This dogmatic confidence of Islamism as the bearer of an ‘absolute truth’ and the right way to life gets shaken when it encounters such


\(^7^0\) 2:256 of The Holy Quran; source quoted from The Message of the Qurān: The Full Account of the Revealed Arabic Text Accompanied by Parallel Transliteration trans. and explained by Muhammad Asad, complete edn. (Bristol: The Book Foundation, 2003), p. 69.

challenges like atheism and blasphemy because these trends only ignore the path of Islam and instead critique it for being ‘backward’, ‘oppressive’, ‘irrational’ and ‘regressive’. In the face of such stiff challenges of atheism, blasphemy and consumerist hedonism; Islamists become confused and sometimes take refuge to violence to eliminate its opponent’s claims and opinions—in this case the political articulations of atheism, blasphemy and consumerist hedonism.

In the context of an absence of a progressive political leadership among the Muslims, assertive identitarian mobilizations among sections of Muslims with Islamist rhetoric against ‘religious blasphemous persons’ often equated with ‘western agents’ in Islamist discourses are possible. Thus, it was absolutely interesting to note in my fieldwork interviews that Jamaat leaders and supporters were keen to harp on the label of ‘western agent’ to both Rushdie and Taslima. This is how Islamism vilifies revolting members of the community by equating them with an already constructed antagonistic frontier/enemy, namely the ‘West’. In the case of Danish cartoons and Kerala textbook controversy too, the ‘West’ is constructed as an antagonistic frontier by Islamism, while the Islamist political leadership of Jamaat thinks that the ‘global western conspiracy’ of Judeo-Christian world and the atheistic communists have been trying to make an offensive against Islam by maligning Islam as a ‘bad’, ‘undemocratic’, ‘violent’ religion which has an historic legacy right from the period of Prophet’s time and later on during the crusades and now currently being continued particularly after 9/11.

So far, I have written the thesis from a political theory perspective complemented with glimpses of political philosophy. In the ‘Introduction’, I have maintained that a psychoanalytical approach is beyond the scope of my research. However, in analyzing the
Islamist protests against the issues of ‘western cultural globalization’ as the ‘other’ of the Islamist subject, an engagement with the psychoanalytical approach might be fruitful. As Žižek argues that it is in those moments of engagement with the ‘other’ when religion including Islam becomes ‘particularistic in spite of its global expansionism’ although at the same time ‘there is a place for others: they are tolerated, even if they are looked upon with condescension.’

But this place of the degenerated/degraded ‘other’ in Islamism is also a point of Islamist envy towards the freedom and enjoyment of the ‘un-Islamic other’, namely the ‘sinner’. That is to say, Islamism gets perplexed and envious by noticing the freedom of ‘non-Islam’ which does not care/bother to follow Islam (hence ‘sinner’ in the eye of Islam) and in some cases like the Rushdie, Taslima, blasphemous persons and Danish cartoonist even dare to challenge the authority of Islamic religious beliefs. This particular freedom to revolt by the ‘un-Islamic other’ against Islam has a sense/feeling of enjoyment, an enjoyment of the right and ability to revolt. This element of ‘enjoyment’ or what Jacques Lacan calls jouissance, is deprived of or absent in the case of Islamists in moments of rebellious blasphemy against them or the negation of Islamic religion by the non-believers. Islamists get irritated by this lack of jouissance or enjoyment or happiness by revolting.

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72 Žižek, Violence, p. 46.

against Islamic faith and religious authority because its constitutive identity is originally shaped by a submission to the creator and not by revolting against the creator.

However, *jouissance* connotes both ‘enjoyment’ and ‘suffering’. *Jouissance* means ‘that excitement whether correlated with a conscious feeling of pleasure or pain’.\(^{74}\) Thus, one simply cannot deny the *jouissance* in Islam which signifies ‘complete submission to God’. Thus, ‘submission to God’ and a sense/feeling/belonging of a community of believers namely the *ummah* also has its own pleasure and pain. The enjoyment is revealed in its celebration of collective solidity among *ummah*, its pride to belong to the correct path, its happiness in announcing her/his identity that (s)he belongs to the righteous path along with the hope of getting the eternal bliss of heaven in the afterlife. However, at the same time, pain or suffering is very much part of the life of an Islamist, who disciplines herself/himself by following the strict code of conduct in Islam and whose life is guided by the principle of sacrifice in order to fulfill the task of creating an ideal Islamic order. Islamists claim that they are always obedient and loyal subjects of the creator. Now, in becoming a loyal and obedient subject of God, it has to lead a life that undergoes disciplining, regimentation, suffering, pain and sacrifice. However, it is through undergoing pain or suffering that pleasure is derived by the Islamists. But it is at the same time, that they feel envious to the ‘non-Islam’ and ‘non-believer’, who has the freedom to be a rebel and in some cases, a rebellion against Islam itself, that Islamists certainly do not enjoy and thus make them frustrated and unhappy.

However, the contradiction exposed in the constitutive split within any given identity according to the observations of Laclau is that of *lack*. As Laclau observes:

“[A]ny social identity would necessarily entail, as one of its dimensions, construction, and not simply recognition. The key term for understanding this process of construction is the psychoanalytic category of identification, with its explicit assertion of a lack at the root of any identity: one needs to identify with something because there is an originary and insurmountable lack of identity.”

Now, both Islamic and Islamist subject identifies with an identity of a submissive, obedient and loyal subject of the God but this also means that there is an ‘insurmountable lack’ of a rebellious identity, a lack of disobedient and disloyal identity. This inability to become a disloyal subject of God is also the moment of its temptation to become such a disobedient subject but at the same time it cannot become a rebellious subject. This non-becoming of a disloyal subject and yet secretly having the desire to become one such disobedient subject of God is the precise contradiction of the Islamists. Now, Islamists sense that the obedient Islamic subject might have a temptation to become a disobedient subject one day/any day. That is why they harp on the well-defined discursive concept of the ‘Devil’ (Shaitan) and its association with ‘evil’ or ‘wrong path’ according to Islamic beliefs. They also propagate among the Muslims and non-Muslims about the incentive structure in the Islamic religion for obedient subjects of God by giving hope and promising good life in this world (in an ideal Islamic state) and beyond, in the heaven. In this respect, the Islamists also tell the Islamic subject about its responsibility and duty of establishing an Islamic State, which would be ‘just’ and ‘prosperous’. Therefore, the jouissance of the Islamic community in following the religion of Islam is both material and spiritual and based on hope and promise for a better future. On the other hand, the temptation of becoming the disloyal subject is based on an assessment that right to revolt against God, and freedom to negate religion must have some pleasure/happiness/enjoyment, otherwise, why people do that?

As Žižek argues that ‘the moral majority fundamentalist is always haunted by the unspeakable pleasures in which sinners engage. The reference to envy as one of the seven deadly sins can thus serve as a perfect instrument enabling us to distinguish the authentic fundamentalism from its moral majority mockery: authentic fundamentalists DO NOT ENVY their neighbors their different jouissance." Therefore, the Islamist assertion against religious blasphemy is not only an initiative of suppressing the revolt against Islam but also informed by its frustrations of not enjoying the freedom of negation of religion of the non-believer/blasphemer and thus with an envious mode/mood, it turns violent against the non-believer/blasphemer. Žižek proclaims that ‘[m]odern society is defined by the lack of an ultimate transcendental guarantee, or, in libidinal terms, of total jouissance. There are three main ways to cope with this negativity: utopian, democratic, and post-democratic. The first (totalitarianism, fundamentalism) tries to reoccupy the ground of absolute jouissance by attaining a utopian and harmonious society which eliminates negativity.’ In this respect, Žižek contrasts different kinds of ‘fundamentalism’--‘authentic fundamentalists’ (eg. the Tibetan Buddhists or American Amish), ‘pseudo-fundamentalists’ of Christian and Muslim variety and ‘western liberal fundamentalists’ by asking some questions and then trying to answer those:

“Are, however, the terrorist fundamentalists, be they Christian or Muslim, really fundamentalists in the authentic sense of the term? Do they really believe? What they lack is a feature that is easy to discern in all authentic fundamentalists, from Tibetan Buddhists to the Amish in the US: the absence of resentment and envy, deep indifference towards the non-believer’s way of life. If today’s so-called fundamentalists really believe that they have found their way to Truth, why should they feel threatened by non-believers, why should they envy them? When a Buddhist encounters a Western hedonist, he hardly condemns the latter. He just benevolently notes that the hedonist’s search for happiness is self-defeating. In contrast to true fundamentalists, terrorist pseudo-fundamentalists are deeply bothered, intrigued, fascinated, by the sinful life of non-believers. One senses that, in fighting the sinful other, they are fighting their own temptation. …Deep inside themselves, terrorist fundamentalists also lack true conviction—their violent outbursts are proof. How fragile the belief of a Muslim must be, if he feels threatened by a stupid caricature in a low-circulation Danish newspaper? Fundamentalist Islamicist terror is not grounded in the terrorists’ conviction of their superiority and in their

I would argue that Žižek has fundamentally grasped the root of the Islamist psyche. In this respect, the Jamaat’s opposition to the controversial texts of Rushdie, Taslima, Danish cartoons and Kerala textbook can be explained in terms of its insecurity in its Islamic faith, the inferiority complex vis-à-vis the non-Islamic subject and what Žižek has rightly pointed out about the Islamist ‘lack of true conviction’, and a ‘negative passion of resentment’.

On the issue of homosexuality and live-in-relationships, both the Indian and Bangladeshi Jamaat is clearly opposed to such acts by condemning those acts, and in most cases, took refuge to moral policing followed by violent outbursts. The political discourse of moral policing is in fact embedded within most traditional and religious discourses concerning sexuality and the attempts to regulate sexual behaviour. The politics of moral policing, just like vehemently opposing atheism and blasphemy are negative politics, which are relatively easier to conduct than offering a positive politics of providing an ‘alternative’ to existing mode of production and exchange as we have argued earlier. The tactical implications of such negative politics of opposing atheism, blasphemy, homosexuality and live-in-relationships etc. by the Islamists is that it gets easily noticed. Such negative politics by the Islamist groups give them more publicity while justifying their acts of moral policing.

78 Ibid., pp. 332-33.
on grounds of moral prohibitions in Sharia laws, which according to the Islamists are legally binding on each and every Muslim. Moreover, these issues are generally related to few individuals or events or at best, limited to small groups and thus easy to respond for the Islamists even in a non-Muslim country like India given a significant opinion in a society prejudiced against atheism, blasphemy, homosexuality, live-in-relationship etc. But Islamists in both India (a non-Muslim country) and Bangladesh (a Muslim majority country) are unable to replace the socio-economic system with say Islamic laws, universalization of interest-free banking system, or replace capitalist mode of production and exchange with their goal of ‘Islamic state’. Such transformative initiatives are not easy to materialize as they are time bound and need long term political struggle. In chapters 2 and 3 also, we have seen how the JIH has got some success in playing a negative politics of opposing certain local level capitalist-developmental projects but failed to change macro level neoliberal policies of the government despite its strong rhetoric against such neoliberal policies.

From our discussion so far, we can argue that Islamism can articulate protest but one needs to remember that it is a protest ideology against a hierarchical (dis)order to be replaced by another form of hierarchy, oppression and exploitation. The oppressive character of Islamism against many non-Muslim subjects particularly the apostates, blasphemous and atheists can be noticed in its assertion against Rushdie, Taslima and homosexuality as we have so far seen in this thesis. The ideal of Islamic state that Islamism projects as an ‘alternative’ to ‘man made systems, laws and ideologies’ while critiquing the socio-economic and political models of secularism, nationalism, capitalism, socialism and democracy is largely based on private property, theo-democracy and uneven politico-legal rights for women, non-Muslims and blasphemous persons. In an ideal Islamic state as
imagined by the Jamaat, both non-Muslims and women are subjected to discrimination in matters related to political and legal rights as they can neither be elected as head of an Islamic state nor can be elected as members of the legislative assemblies, and there would be complete segregation of non-Muslims and women with that of the mainstream affairs of the Islamic political system.79 Similarly, the Islamist opposition to the rights of divorced Muslim women in contemporary India has a history in the case of Shah Bano, which I have mentioned earlier in this thesis. Moreover, Islamists would hardly be sensitive to the homosexuals as that would be an illegal act in an ‘Islamic state’ imagined by the Islamists like Jamaat. Similarly, in such an ‘Islamic state’, any pre-marital cohabitation like live-in relationships would be also regarded as illegal and ‘adultery’ and there would be strict punishment according to Sharia laws for such acts.

We can now convincingly argue that the Jamaat in Bangladesh has complicity to neoliberal political economy and sometimes supports such a project but it opposes the culture of consumerism, sexual permissiveness etc., which are generally seen by them as the commercialized form of neoliberal moral and cultural philosophy. By contrast, the Indian Jamaat is opposed to neoliberalism in its totality along with its political economy and moral and cultural philosophy. Secondly, we have seen how the JIH prioritizes the antagonistic frontier of Hindutva form of majoritarian communalism than neoliberalism and imperialism. By contrast, we have seen how the Bangladesh Jamaat identifies secularism and Leftwing political forces as greater political enemies of Islamism than neoliberalism. However, we have seen that on substantive political issues like providing an ‘alternative’ of an ‘Islamic

welfare state’ (although we have discussed earlier that it is merely an alternative to contemporary neoliberalism than to capitalism as such); the Jamaat faces a significant crisis of political mobilization. Such a crisis of political mobilization is corresponded with an ideological crisis of Islamism as well, particularly it’s pre-occupation with the ‘West’ as the prime political enemy that we would finally see in the next chapter, briefly summarizing the concluding remarks of the present thesis.
Summary and Conclusion

It is time to summarize the major findings and conclude the broad arguments of the thesis. In the ‘Introduction’, after briefly discussing the topic of my research, I have clarified the terminologies that have been used in the thesis. Then I have discussed the genealogical debate on the rise of Islamism in the Muslim world followed by the existing categories of analysis for research on ‘Islamism’. The chapter then moves on to assess the prominent academic debates on ‘Islamism’ apart from outlining a brief chapter plan.

In Chapter 1, while justifying the current research project, I critically examined the limitations of relevant literature on Islamism of the Jamaat-e-Islami variety in India and Bangladesh and identified my point of departure from extant academic literature. I classified the existing literature on Jamaati Islamism as *ontic* studies or *ontical research*, largely concerned with empirico-factual analysis rather than engaging with broader *ontological* issues regarding the very *existence* of the political ideology of Islamism, which is my primary research concern. Also, the chapter critically assessed the existing theoretical and methodological frameworks followed by the methodological overview of the present study. Finally, in the subsection, *Ontological Engagements with Islam(ism)*, I briefly put forward my thoughts on the overlapping boundaries of religion and politics. I have argued how political fronts embedded within organized religion in general and Islam in particular create conditions for generating a political ideology called Islamism. I further tried to invoke the questions related to the emergence/existence of Islamism as a political ideology in contemporary Muslim societies and the possible explanations regarding the growth of Islamism as a politico-ideological movement in our times. In my discussion of the existing literature, I further deployed three existing analytical frameworks: a) understanding
Islamism via the psychoanalytical category of ‘return of the repressed’ b) Islamism as a ‘protest ideology’ after the collapse of anti-capitalist discourse of 20th century socialism and c) Islamism negotiating with the new hegemonic politics of neoliberalism.

In chapters 2 and 3, I have focused on the specific case study of Jamaat-e-Islami variety of Islamism in India. Chapter 2: ‘Islamism in Neoliberal India’ has discussed the contemporary phase of neoliberal India, where Islamism operates in a minority context and the major politico-ideological debates within which Islamism is situated. The first subsection of this chapter under the heading Contemporary Muslim Situation in Neoliberal India briefly analyzed the socio-economic conditions of Muslims—the core constituency of Islamism, who form a religious minority in India. It briefly discussed the peculiarities and specificities of the Muslim question by pointing towards the socio-economic and political marginalization of Muslims in contemporary neoliberal India.

The chapter then proceeded towards narrating three distinct Politico-Ideological Articulations among Indian Muslims representing three varied groups of political leadership. This section argued that in India, the leftwing progressive discourses, historically, were never a dominant political discourse among Indian Muslims and the majority of Indian Muslims form a ‘moderate’ group supporting secular political parties than any Islamist or Muslim communal groups. It disclosed three possible strands of Muslim political leadership corroborated with three distinct politico-ideological articulations within the community in a neoliberal policy regime. The first group is the token representation of Muslim leadership in mainstream political parties like Congress, BJP and those regional parties who run political affairs with an agenda of neoliberal consensus. The political leadership emerging out of this kind of collaborationist group with neoliberalism is the representative of power bloc and I
have described this political articulation as *power bloc articulation* serving the interests of the neoliberal status quo. This power bloc political articulation is a dominant political discourse among Indian Muslims. The second group has an agenda of ‘Muslim particularism’ with only community specific demands. This group comprises of some small Muslim political parties and pressure groups with conservative Islamic and Islamist agenda. This politics of Islamism in India, which I termed as *politics of particularism* has specific narrow political interests for its constituency. Since, the politics of Islamism cum Muslim particularism is entangled with theological discourses I have described it as *theo-political articulations* among Indian Muslims. I have pointed out that Islamism as such is a less popular political discourse among Muslim minorities in India. Further, I have argued that the Islamist politics in the form of Muslim particularism in India tries to celebrate its own marginality and seeks to be a part of the power bloc by replacing a hierarchical society with another form of hierarchical society. It generally tries to negotiate with the politics of the power bloc. This politics of Muslim particularism often celebrates the *excluded* condition of its Muslim constituents while being located on the *margins* and then attack the power bloc from ‘outside’ but without having a radical agenda for social transformation. I have also described this politico-ideological position as *politics of altered status-quo* (representing a mirror image of neoliberal status-quo) that vacillates between collaboration and opposition to the dominant neoliberal power-bloc. I have argued that the politico-ideological articulations of Jamaati Islamism represent a politics of Muslim particularism and politics of altered status-quo with theo-political articulations. Finally, I have argued that there can be a possibility of constructing *progressive political articulations* among Indian Muslims with the joint initiatives of liberal, secular and progressive sections of Muslim community and the
concrete initiatives of Leftwing politics that is currently marginalized both in the dominant political discourses of the country as well as among Muslims and thus can be regarded as a ‘marginal political discourse’ among Indian Muslims. In the final subsection of chapter 2, I have engaged with the specific rhetoric of Jamaat-e-Islami against ‘neoliberal capitalism’, ‘American imperialism’, ‘Indian state’ and Indian ‘ruling classes’.

Chapter 3: ‘Islamic Universalism and Muslim Particularism: Ideological Articulations of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind’ narrated the particular cases of politico-ideological articulations of Jamaat as an Islamist organization. This chapter described how the Jamaat reacts to contemporary issues in India by mobilizing its varied mass organizations among students, youth and women by articulating a politics of resistance in many localized anti-capitalist and anti-state struggles while using the rhetoric of ‘Islamic alternative’. I have shown how the Jamaat is critical of the politics of neoliberal economic reforms and foreign policy shifts of the Indian state and ideologically articulates a politics of anti-Hindutva, anti-imperialism and anti-Americanism. On the other hand, the chapter narrated how the Jamaat is more sympathetic to the Left and other secular democratic forces to forge broader anti-imperialist and anti-Hindutva alliances. This chapter also showed how the Jamaat is relatively soft on Indian nationalism and secularism and how it identifies Hindu majoritarianism as a prime antagonistic frontier to fight. Thus, in moments of elections, the Jamaat often supports secular-democratic political formations even if it carries forward a neoliberal agenda since Jamaat prioritizes Hindutva as a greater antagonistic frontier/political enemy than ‘American imperialism’ and neoliberalism. In this chapter, I also discussed how the Jamaat is critical of any form of terrorism, whether perpetrated by an individual, group or a state, as ‘un-Islamic’ and how it is concerned with the issues of
security for Muslim minority citizens. This chapter also discussed how Jamaat is critical about ‘western cultural globalization’ in the form of its professed anti-consumerism. However, I also pointed out the staunch oppositions of Jamaat on the issues of live-in relationships, religious blasphemy, atheism, homosexuality/gay rights, and freedom of expression. The Jamaat’s rhetoric on various issues that were discussed in chapters 2 and 3 are then posited within the theoretical and ideological contradictions of Jamaat between what I have termed ‘Islamic universalism’ and ‘Muslim particularism’. The former is an attempt to pose Islam as an ideological guide for everybody: both Muslims and non-Muslims alike and thus claims to be an emancipatory political discourse for entire humanity, while the latter is a narrow sectarian vision for placing particularist demands for only Muslims.

I have also argued how the Jamaat lacks a Universalist agenda of an Islamic state precisely because of the minority character of its constituency of Indian Muslims unlike Bangladesh, and how the plebian constituencies of India could not identify with the political project of Jamaat at the same time. As a result, I argued how the Jamaat is unable to construct a populist politics of underdogs against a common antagonistic frontier of the neoliberal power bloc. Neither could it become the ‘vanguard’ of Indian Muslims by achieving a hegemonic position among the Muslim leadership in India nor could it rally other non-Muslim marginalized sections of Indian population. Thus, even if the Jamaat has an aspiration to represent a hegemonic politics of Islamic universalism, it is unable to do so and rather being relegated to a marginalized Muslim pressure group. This is what I have called the limits of Islamist populism, where its crisis of political mobilization in India
encounters another strategic cum ideological crisis of unresolved tussle between Islamic universalism and Muslim particularism.

Chapters 4 and 5 discuss the case of Jamaat-e-Islami in India’s Muslim majority neighbouring country, Bangladesh. Chapter 4: ‘Islamism in Muslim Majority Context: The Case of Bangladesh’ has focused upon the context of rise of Islamism in Bangladesh. In the first place, I gave a brief overview of existing literature in accounting the rise of Islamism in Contemporary Bangladesh. After engaging with the existing literature on the rise of Islamism in contemporary Bangladesh, I try to add a political theory perspective in explaining the prominence of Islamism in contemporary Bangladesh. After doing such an exercise, I proceeded towards pointing out the broad contours of Mujibism to which the Islamist discourse of Bangladesh Jamaat was responding. In particular, I have highlighted the limits and problems of ‘Kemalist’ politics of Sheikh Mujib and subsequent military dictatorships with its inability to satisfy the democratic demands of the Bangladeshi people, which created the conditions in which Islamism emerged as a prominent political player in Bangladesh. In this regard, I have argued how Mujibism turns out to be mimicry of the Kemalist project in Turkey. Then I pointed out the prominent politico-ideological discourses in contemporary Bangladesh within which Islamism tries to find its own niche audience. Finally, the chapter outlined the ideological interventions of Jamaat in terms of constructing antagonistic frontiers in Bangladeshi politics and briefly touched upon the specific rhetoric of ‘Islamic alternative’ in asserting Islamic universalism.

Chapter 5: ‘Islamist Politics of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami: The Crisis of Islamist Populism’ first outlines the neoliberal setting in Bangladesh and the nature of response by the Jamaat to such neoliberalism. It also discusses the Jamaat’s assertive oppositions to the
issues of atheism, blasphemy, live-in relationships, homosexuality via its call for censorship and moral policing against what it calls ‘western cultural globalization’. The chapter also analyzes the success and failures of Jamaat’s electoral politics by assessing its rise in late 1980s and early 1990s, while noticing the crisis of its electoral mobilization that actually started from mid-1990s until the present with each elections right from 1996 marking receding vote share for Jamaat in real terms. Subsequently, the chapter accounts for Jamaat’s ideological crisis in the present conjuncture. In this context, I analyzed the structural constraints of political mobilization behind the Islamist project of Bangladeshi Jamaat and thus suggest possible reasons for the crisis of ‘Islamist populism’ in Bangladesh.

In chapter 6: ‘Islamism in Contemporary India and Bangladesh: Comparative Overview on the Politics of Alternative’, I compare the similarities and differences of politico-ideological articulations of Jamaati Islamism with regard to its rhetoric about ‘Islamic alternative’ in contemporary India and Bangladesh. I compare the politics of Jamaati Islamism vis-à-vis neoliberalism in both the contexts of India and Bangladesh, which has been discussed in the previous chapters. In making such comparisons, I argue how the position of Bangladesh Jamaat is fundamentally different from the Indian Jamaat’s ‘anti-neoliberalism’. Then, I venture out the limits and vacillations of Islamism in fighting/challenging neoliberalism in India and Bangladesh despite its political rhetoric of providing an (Islamic) ‘alternative’ to any ‘man made system’. I argue that even if Jamaati Islamism promises an ‘Islamic alternative’ to neoliberal capitalism, it cannot substantially give an alternative to capitalism in general. This is because it profoundly defends private property rights along with its inability to invent alternative Islamic modes of production and exchange other than the existing modes of production and exchange that humanity
has already witnessed under tribal agrarian communities, feudalism and capitalism. I have argued that Jamaati Islamism, at best, is articulating an agenda of Islamic welfare state and can be perfectly accommodated within the logic of capitalism with a system of wage labour and private ownership of major means of production. Thus, its cherished alternative of ‘Islamic state’ is not actually an ‘alternative’ to capitalism but rather has an agenda to reform capitalism with a projected human face of welfarism. At present, this welfarist model of Jamaati Islamism is conflicting with neoliberalism that tries to provide an alternative to welfare capitalism by reducing state subsidy in education, health and other social sector benefits. Thus, Jamaati Islamism can promise an alternative to neoliberalism than an alternative to capitalism in general.

Further in the sixth chapter, while discussing the Islamist rhetoric against ‘western cultural globalization’, I notice similarities in ideological articulations between Indian and Bangladeshi Jamaat on the questions of blasphemy, atheism, homosexuality, and freedom of expression like in the cases of Rushdie and Taslima Nasrin controversies. In this respect, I also explain why on the question of neoliberalism, sometimes, the positions of Jamaat are very different in India and Bangladesh, but why on the question of ‘western cultural globalization’ the positions of Jamaat across the two countries are similar. Moreover, I try to assess the extent of crisis of Islamism in India and Bangladesh by analyzing the dynamics of Islamist opposition to ‘western cultural globalization’ by tracing out the precise stakes that Islamism has in accepting such ‘cultural globalization’.

Now Jamaat’s opposition to ‘capitalism’, ‘neoliberalism’, ‘American imperialism’ and ‘western cultural globalization’ brings out the ‘West’ as an antagonistic frontier in the ideological articulations of (Jamaati) Islamism as discussed in the thesis. But the question
arises that why (Jamaati) Islamism has to always target the ‘West’ as an antagonistic frontier? Previously, we have seen in the ‘Introduction’ how Hardt and Negri argue that Islamism is the ideology of losers of globalization. But an expert on Islamism like Mumtaz Ahmad would argue that Jamaat’s ‘struggle is not simple protest’ and neither its struggle is ‘merely a reaction against social dislocation which results from processes of socio-economic change.’ Rather, Jamaat’s attempt is to ‘find a secure place in the new social arrangements’ and thus its ‘selective retrieval of the Islamic past is intended to gain a firm foothold in the present.’

Thus, Jamaat’s anti-western critique is more a culturalist and politico-ideological one as it never denies the acceptance of western science and technology for the material benefits of the Muslim population but it negates the cultural and political baggage of western modernity like secularism, nationalism, liberal capitalism and socialism. Thus, it differentiates between ‘modernization’ and ‘westernization’. Jamaat accepts the concept of modernization that entails technological, scientific and socio-economic development but rejects ‘westernization’ signifying un-Islamic systems that are based on secularism and sexual freedom as discussed in this thesis. By closely studying the Jamaat in 1980s and writing in the first half of 1990s, Mumtaz Ahmad argued that ‘[n]one of Jamaat’s intellectuals has tried to articulate the issues of modernity beyond its instrumental aspects. It is not surprising, therefore, that when the debate on modernity is extended beyond science, technology and development to include such issues as pluralism, democracy, tolerance and freedom of thought and conscience, their attitude in this regard is at best ambivalent.’

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1 Ahmad, ‘Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia’, p. 510.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., p. 509.
4 Ibid.
However, today, as we have seen in this thesis that Jamaati Islamism in India has almost accepted religious and linguistic pluralism as well as liberal parliamentary democracy. It might be the case that the JIH has no other option but to accept such ideals given the diverse and composite character of Indian nation-state and given the Muslim minority context in India. However, in this thesis, we have seen how the Bangladeshi Jamaat is adamant in not accepting religious pluralism and instead asserts majoritarianism. Nonetheless, it has accepted liberal parliamentary democracy as a form of government and also practices democratic norms within its organisational activities (e.g. periodic elections to elect organisational leadership, process of debates, discussions and consultations for policymaking) like the Indian Jamaat. It is on the question of freedom of thought and expression that both Indian Jamaat and its Bangladeshi counterpart has been illiberal as we have seen in its assertive oppositions to some writings of Rushdie, Taslima, as well as its oppositions to the question of pre-marital sexual relationships, homosexuality, atheism and blasphemy in the name of opposing ‘western cultural globalization’.

Thus, it is the precise limits of (Jamaati) Islamism that it cannot ignore the Western discourses and ideologies. Rather it has to always respond/react to the West as its existence is dependent on the sustenance of Western discourses and ideologies. In the context of neoliberalism in contemporary India and Bangladesh, which is largely a western project, precisely a Euro-American project, Islamism survives either by opposing such a project or negotiating with such a project. Thus, in both India and Bangladesh, the (psycho)analytical category of ‘return of the repressed’ is not valid. Therefore, in India, (Jamaati) Islamism exists by opposing neoliberalism and in Bangladesh it exists by vacillating between
opposing neoliberalism on one hand and sometimes negotiating and carrying forward the neoliberal agenda on the other hand.

Thus, from the discussions in the thesis so far, I would argue that Islamism is partly supportive of socio-economic, technological and infrastructural ‘modernization’, based on western models of urbanization and modernization but opposed to (western) cultural ‘modernity’. Also, the ideological articulations of Islamism varies and changes when Islamism is an underdog and opposed to a power bloc than when it is part of the power bloc. But I would further argue that this is simply not a question of whether Islamists are inside or outside the power bloc. This is precisely the inherent ideological contradiction of (Jamaati) Islamism that cannot resolve whether it should respond to the West or it should ignore the West. This is the precise ideological crisis of Islamism in contemporary India and Bangladesh that I would briefly conclude in the next subsection.

_Crisis of Islamism in Contemporary India and Bangladesh_

In the previous chapters, I have showed how (Jamaati) Islamism in contemporary India and Bangladesh has been experiencing a crisis of political mobilization. Apart from that I have also argued in the thesis that (Jamaati) Islamism in contemporary India and Bangladesh is also facing an ideological crisis. This ideological crisis of (Jamaati) Islamism is expressed in its profound ideological confusion and contradiction between what I have called ‘Islamic universalism’ and ‘Muslim particularism’ on the one hand and it’s pre-occupation of the ‘West’ as an antagonistic frontier on the other hand.

As I have argued earlier that the politics of Islamism is nothing short of a _politics of particularism_ with specific narrow political interests for its constituency, namely the
Muslims. This politics of Islamism although in the minority context of India tries to articulate a ‘politics of particularism’ but at the same time, it always struggles to articulate its Universalist claims by giving a call of organizing the Muslims in the name of *Ummah* as we have seen in both India and Bangladesh. Since, conceptually, ‘Ummah’ incorporates the Muslim community in the world as a whole; Islamism always tries to claim itself as a ‘mass ideology’ instead of a ‘class one’. For a mass ideology it asserts the unity of ‘Ummah’ where persons coming from various class backgrounds, nationalities, linguistic and gender differentials can become a part. As an effective tool of political mobilization, the concept of *Ummah* as a homogenous universal concept is absolutely crucial in Islamist political ideology. In Laclau’s terms, we can argue that in Islamist politics, *Ummah* acts as an ‘empty signifier’ around which different particularities would organize themselves to claim a common universality or universal identity. In India, we have seen how the Islamic notion of *Ummah*, a central concept in Jamaat’s politico-ideological discourses was a hindrance to construct a successful project of Islamist populism.

By contrast, in Bangladesh, the concept of *Ummah* being central to Jamaati Islamism, in fact, reaped comparatively better results in terms of political mobilization. However, the Islamist project based on the resistance of *Ummah* against the antagonistic frontiers is currently in crisis in Bangladesh. This is because unlike India, the Muslim community of believers (*Ummah*) in Bangladesh is relatively heterogeneous by socio-economic and political parameters. Moreover, the Islamic concept of *Ummah* is equivalent to the notion of population than the plebs. As we have learnt from Laclau that without taking into account of the heterogeneity and the existence of a chasm between plebs and the power

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5 For a theoretical understanding of the concept of ‘empty signifier’, see Laclau, ‘Why do Empty Signifiers Matter to Politics?’ in *Emancipation*(s), pp. 36-46.
bloc within any given population, a populist politics of the people/underdogs is impossible. The Islamic concept of *Ummah* in fact, neutralizes the antagonistic frontiers between the plebs and the power bloc within the Muslim community in the name of Islamic religion that justifies the existence of rich and poor and the existence of socio-economic and political hierarchies as ‘natural’. In such a situation, the Islamist search for equality and social justice is conceptually contradictory to the concept of *Ummah* because the Muslim community of believers are themselves split into privileged and underprivileged sections. Thus, the Islamist call for the ‘unity of *Ummah*’ from the very beginning might always face difficulty given the enormous challenge to organize varied particularities within the Muslim community like class, gender, nationality, language etc. under the Islamist banner.

Nonetheless, it is the empty nature of such an empty signifier like the concept of *Ummah* that provides the ground for the Islamists to take the challenge of rallying the entire Muslim community—cutting across class, gender, nationality, language etc. under its political project. Such a political project of rallying varied sectors of the Muslim population under the Islamist banner is what I have called, *Islamist populism*. In this thesis, we have seen that such a political project of *Islamist populism* is facing a crisis of political mobilization in contemporary India and Bangladesh for various reasons. In contemporary India, Islamist populism of Jamaat is unable to become the hegemonic politico-ideological project among the Indian Muslims due to presence of several other Muslim and Islamic groups that contest each other to be the spokesperson of the Indian Muslims. Moreover, several non-Muslim sectors of the Indian population who are adversely affected by the neoliberal policy regime in India hardly identifies with the Islamist populist struggle of Jamaat against neoliberal capitalism despite Jamaat’s rhetoric against the contemporary
neoliberal policy regime in India and some localized resistance movements against ventures of big capital under the auspices of such a policy regime. In contemporary Bangladesh, Islamist populism faces an electoral crisis apart from a sustained crisis of political mobilization for an Islamic welfare state. Moreover, in an era when contemporary phase of capitalism is increasingly becoming identical with neoliberalism, Jamaat’s repeated rhetoric against capitalism for an Islamic welfare state, which is conceptually not different from the economic models of welfare and regulated capitalism, fails to attract significant section of Bangladeshi population. Apart from such issues, (Jamaati) Islamism in contemporary Bangladesh also faces an ideological contradiction in defining its position/stance towards several neoliberal policies and towards the Bangladesh liberation movement that gave birth to the nation-state of Bangladesh. However, in both India and Bangladesh, Islamist populism of Jamaat faces the political constraint of being numerically outnumbered in a representative democracy and thus being unable to change any major policy direction against the neoliberal project in favour of Islamic welfarism.

Secondly, on the question of Islamist pre-occupation of the ‘West’ as an antagonistic frontier, currently, Islamism in India and Bangladesh has not taken the path of disengagement with the western political discourses of liberty, freedom, secularism etc. as it was the case with Khomeini in Iran according to Sayyid. Rather it opts for a dual route of violent confrontation on one hand and negotiation on the other, on a case by case basis. The current protest/challenge of (Jamaati) Islamism to the West not only signifies the crisis of Eurocentrism or western universalism but it also signifies a dual crisis of both Islamism and the West precisely because of the engagement of Islamism with the West. Without the West, Islamism cannot operate as it has to construct an antagonistic frontier, and the easily best
candidate suitable for filling/occupying the vacant position of ‘enemy’ of Islamism is none other than the ‘West’ itself. In fact, the contemporary history of the past few decades only shows that both the West and Islamism have been trying to construct each other as ‘enemies’. We can argue that in the case of present tussle between Islamism and the West, the antagonistic model is not transformed into agonism via a democratic engagement. Here it should be borne in mind that while *antagonism* is a friend/foe relation which is ‘the limit of all objectivity’ and a ‘struggle between enemies, *agonism* is struggle between adversaries.’ The agonistic model of democratic politics does not perceive the opponent ‘as an enemy to be destroyed but as an adversary…whose ideas [are] combat[ed] but whose right to defend those ideas [are] not put into question’ because ‘an adversary is a legitimate enemy.’ In this respect as Chantal Mouffe points out that ‘the task of democracy is to transform antagonism into agonism.’

The binary opposition between ‘Islamism’ and ‘West’ is not simply a construction of Orientalists but it also emanates from the logical corollary of arguments of both Islamists and a section of postmodern celebration of Islamism as we find in the thesis of Sayyid, who seems to have uncritically accepted the project of Islamism. This portrayal of an essential conflict between Islamism as a ‘protest discourse’ against the ‘Western hegemony’ only creates an image that both the Western power bloc and Islamism take each other seriously by giving due importance without being able to relegate each other into redundancy by constructing a no-enemy world. This kind of discourse with its emphasis on an essential conflict between ‘Islamism’ and ‘West’ in fact produces an *all encompassing discourse*

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8. Ibid., p. 102.
reflecting a mirror image of Orientalism, where the debates are polarized on the lines of a fundamental contestation between two actors. It is no less than a politics of mutual Othering between Orientalism and Islamist Occidentalism. Effectively, this eliminates, erodes and obliterates any other critical political discourse that might not take a position either in favour of Western power bloc or Islamism and rather choose to be in opposition to both.

Indeed, when there are attempts to construct such a binary logic of a tussle between Islam and West, we must resist such a temptation to choose a camp between Orientalism and Islamist Occidentalism. Rather we must think beyond such fault-lines and struggle to create a critical political, ideological and intellectual discourse that would contest the hegemony of orientalism, neoliberalism and the exclusive project of Islamism, which in the name of an emancipatory Universalism, reproduces a political project that sustains much of the exploitation and oppression under conditions of contemporary capitalism. I have tried to precisely do such an exercise in dealing with the academic discourse that centres around the debates between West and Islam by identifying the problems of Euro-American neoliberalism that is being mimicked in India and Bangladesh on one hand and the limits and inability of Islamism in providing an ‘alternative’ to neoliberalism on the other.
Appendix 1

The rhetoric of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind [JIH] against what it calls ‘Western/American/global imperialism’:

“Political circles and masses of our country are fully aware of the danger posed by global imperialism and they also express frequently their misgivings in this regard…India has not been able to face squarely the hegemonising tendencies of global imperialism. The impact of imperialism may be clearly seen in our foreign policy, economic order, and legislation as well as in the dominance of western culture and values. Our country seems to have succumbed to imperialist pressure. It is also a sad fact that our country is beset with grave problems of corruption, hunger, disease, conflict, chaos, oppression and injustice…Turning to the international scene, the most visible phenomenon is the emergence of western imperialism led by America which seeks to dominate the world and monopolize its resources. One of the strategies employed by imperialism is economic globalization. The capitalist system is spreading its influence throughout the world, and the nominally independent and sovereign nations and their legal systems are continuously compromising with its demands. The second strategy of the imperialist campaign consists of indirect military intervention as well as direct aggressions aimed at enslaving sovereign countries. The Muslim countries, in particular, are the victims of this aggression. The third imperialist method is the exploitation of the world economic and political forums to curtail the freedom of sovereign countries through undue intervention in their internal affairs under various pretexts (like the issue of human rights violations or the issue of nuclear disarmament). Yet another method adopted by imperialism is the promotion of permissiveness, nudity, and consumerism under the garb of modernism. The imperialist vision is the ultimate dominance of the materialistic outlook which would transform the whole world into a huge market for western capitalism. The people would be so deprived culturally and ethically that they would easily succumb to the imperialist onslaught. One must mention that there are indeed individuals and groups throughout the world and even in the west itself, who are opposed to the imperialist designs and who believe in justice and fair play. Presence of such elements is a ray of hope for the future of humanity and if they become active and effective, the imperialist march may be checked…The Jamaat seeks to acquaint all fair minded people and particularly the Muslims, with the grave danger posed by global imperialism. They should motivate the countries of the world and in particular our own country, to effectively face and counter the imperialist onslaught.”

Appendix 2

The press statement of JIH about a seminar on ‘India’s Foreign Policy: Past, Present and Future’ on 10th March 2007 at New Delhi:

“Following the shift in India’s economic policy in favour of an accelerated neo-liberal agenda since the early 1990s, the foreign policy has come to be aligned closely with the US. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the world has come to be dominated by the United States that has extended its domination by suppressing all forms of resistance to US policy and has following 9/11…divided the world between those ‘for us’ and ‘against us’, directed in substantial measure against the countries and peoples of West Asia. It is based on a clear strategy that spreads Islamophobia and demonizes Muslims. Therefore the current Global War on Terror is only an excuse to wage war, occupy nations and monopolise their resources. India’s acceptance of the global domination of the US is reflected in 18 July 2005 agreement on nuclear policy with the US, its recent conduct in the WTO, cooperation with the US agenda for India on genetically modified foods, its growing relationship with Israel including military relations, its complete reversal on its support for Iran and virtually pulling out of the Indo-Pak-Iran gas pipeline deal and its willingness to be part of the ‘global war against terror’.”

Appendix 3

The peculiar rhetoric of JIH in a pamphlet on ‘‘Anti Capitalist Imperialism Campaign’’:

“In 1991 a Financial Crisis was created in our country. To get rid of it, our rulers sought the help of IMF and embraced its policies. From that time onwards, we too took that disastrous path of Economic Liberalisation whose natural outcome is slavery and poverty. Our policy makers started neglecting agriculture and rural economy. They started reducing public spending on social and welfare sectors. FDI started pouring in and its strong streams swept away the small local industries. Huge public sector companies were privatized creating massive unemployment. The trades of poor like grocery, vegetable etc. were opened for big corporate houses. Public funds were generously invested in beautification of big cities and building infrastructure mainly aimed at the elite business class. In short, the policy making took a new turn, escalating its focus on the rich and powerful and criminally neglecting the poor and backward. These policies have been helpful in creating the wealth. But this newly created wealth got converged in a few rich hands.”

Appendix 4

The issues of growing inequality in India, rural distress and farmer suicides are discussed in the Jamaat pamphlet below with statistical information:

“We have been at number 2 in terms of GDP growth and at number 4 in the world and no. 1 in Asia in terms of the number of billionaires. But this has not helped us in making the lives of our poor citizens better. Our rank in Human development Index is consistently falling and now we are ranked at 134 in the world. It implies that despite of a high rate of increasing wealth, the condition of our poor majority is getting worsened. [Present] policies are negatively impacting the agriculture and rural economy. Two third of India lives in villages. When our GDP was growing with an impressive 9 percent rate, the growth in agriculture sector was just 4 percent, which further deteriorated to just 1.8 percent last year. We spend only 20 percent of our infrastructure budget in rural areas. When we impressed everyone in the world with our GDP growth, largest ever wave of suicides in human history was passing through our country with around 17000 farmers killing themselves every year.”

Appendix 5

The JIH pamphlet argues about the crisis of public health and education in India in the following words:

“The situation of public health in our country is among the worst in the world. Over five million children die in our country due to lack of proper treatment. This figure is half of the world figure. But still, in the ranking of the countries based on the ratio of health spending to GDP, we are fifth from the below in the list of 175 countries prepared by WHO. On Education, our expenditure in proportion to GDP is less than many poor African countries...Education is getting costlier. Quality Higher Education is getting out of rich for poor and even middle class populace...education is gradually being confined to producing human resources for the corporates. The relation of education with our socio-cultural values and our social needs is getting weakened.”

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4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
Appendix 6

The JIH pamphlet talks about the issue of ‘displacement’ in contemporary India:

“Poor, tribals, and villagers are being displaced from their lands. Since independence over six crore people have been displaced. Over 80 percent of them have not been rehabilitated. In the name of Special Economic Zones people are being displaced, workers are being exploited and capitalist are getting freedom to establish semi-independent states within the country… Environmental Crisis is the contribution of these policies only. Today, neither our air is safe nor the water. The human existence is at stake and our planet is in unprecedented danger.”

Appendix 7

The notion of ‘Freedom’ in Jamaat backed Solidarity Youth Movement pamphlet:

“Freedom can be realized only when even the least minuscule remnant of imperial exploitation perishes. For banishing poverty, backwardness and all multifarious exploitations, total annihilation of capitalism is a must. The capitalistic-imperialistic powers are now on a globe trot for looting the resources of people. They are plundering the natural resources of the third world…had taken hold of the oil-fields [and] natural gas throughout the world. They are siphoning out the life-giving fresh water resources of earth also. Solidarity places itself in the path of struggle against this blatant, day-light looting. The capitalistic ways of governing the contemporary world has to be strongly opposed and defeated. For this an incessant struggle has to be waged. It is only through this struggle that we can realize the protection of human rights, restore democratic values, eliminate poverty, protect the health of people and ensure education for all… In this context, Solidarity is now organizing a relentless struggle for realization of true freedom and is making extensive use of the resources of youth-hood for retrieval of this actual freedom.”

Appendix 8

Field interview with M. Sajid on the issue of ‘Development’:

“We are protesting against imperialism. Today imperialism in general and capitalistic imperialism or what experts call neoliberalism and neo-colonialism is a major issue of our time. This capitalist imperialism has a special design of ‘development’. ‘Development’ is always related to certain politics and not at all apolitical with very specific socio-economic concerns for particular classes. From the liberalisation era of 1990s, we can notice a particular model of capitalist development in India is perpetrated. We are opposed to several so called developmental projects which displace people. These developmental projects are not for development of common people. This development model is anti-poor.”

Appendix 9

The JIH manifesto before 2009 Parliamentary elections in India places the following demands under the plank of ‘Development’:

“(i) Ensure just distribution of resources among all sections of the society (ii) In basic infrastructure development initiative such as roads, bridges etc. there should be no role for Public Private Partnership (iii)

6 Ibid.
7 Excerpts from SYM pamphlet: ‘Oceans without waves, are they beautiful and captivating? What about youths without a revolutionary zeal?’ collected from JIH National Headquarters in Delhi on 02/12/2008.
8 Interview with M. Sajid in Delhi, 02/12/2008.
Amend the Land Acquisition Act prohibiting acquisition of agricultural lands for industrial purposes and mandating proper compensation for the acquired lands (iv) Enact a comprehensive Rehabilitation Act to ensure that: (a) the life standard of evicted people improves compared to the previous condition (b) Eviction should be done only after complete and satisfactory rehabilitation (c) Modify the SEZ act including the labour laws, removing the boundless powers vested on Development Commissioners, removing the limitless tax exemptions etc. (v) Introduce low price, interest free housing scheme for the poor and middle class (vi) Appoint a commission to study the use of land, the landless people and the illegal land grab by various corporate companies and implement its recommendations.\textsuperscript{9}

The JIH manifesto before 2009 Parliamentary elections in India places the following demands on ‘Economy’:

“(i) The interest on loans to farmers, poor entrepreneurs and other micro-credits should be brought to zero percent and a law should be enacted to effectively check the exploitation by private money lenders (ii) Minimize the dependence on IMF and World Bank and support and develop a third world alternative to the IMF-World Bank framework (iii) Explore the opportunities for internal resource mobilization rather than depending more on international loans. Retract unnecessary legislations blocking resource mobilization of states from within the country (iv) Interest Free Banking should be included in the banking system which has already been recommended by the high level committee in the financial sector reform (CFSR) of the planning commission. Banking Regulations Act has to be suitably modified to accommodate this.\textsuperscript{10}

The JIH manifesto before 2009 Parliamentary elections in India places the following demands on the issue of ‘Health’:

“(i) Make Right to Health a fundamental Constitutional Right and enact a Right to Healthcare Act under which all Indian citizens can get easily accessible, quality healthcare services (ii) Stop privatization of healthcare and abdication of the state’s responsibility for health of citizens in the country (iii) Raise budget allocation for health to 5 percent of GDP by 2012 and to 10 percent of GDP by 2015; Allocate adequate portion of the health budget to traditional healthcare systems also (iv) Provide emergency interest free loans to all needy citizens during illness (v) Enact a Rational Drug Policy that allows the sale of only generic drugs and also limit the patent holding rights on all drugs to a maximum of five years (vi) Enact a comprehensive Health regulation Act to stop the malpractices and exploitation by corporate hospitals and to ensure proper mechanism of licensing, regular prescription audits, adherence to standard medical processes, maintenance of proper records and its access to patients and proper geographical distribution of practitioners and institutions.”\textsuperscript{11}

As far as ‘Education’ is concerned, the JIH articulates the following demands in its manifesto:

“(i) At least 6% of GDP should be spent for education sector (ii) To materialize the article 21A of the constitution, enact the Right to Education with necessary amendments in the “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill 2008” to ensure that free education would be of equitable quality and in the mother tongue of the child. Financial obligations to union and states would be clearly spelt and inequality will not be promoted in the system (iii) Enact comprehensive law to ensure equity and justice in the admission and fees structure of self financing educational institutions (iv) Make the procedures for getting minority status for educational institutions easier (v) Remove all the communally biased contents from school text books of all states (vi) Urdu medium schools should be provided with necessary infrastructure and sanction posts (vii) No

\textsuperscript{9} http://www.jamaateislamihind.org/index.php?do=category&id=102&pageid=459 accessed on 05/10/09.
\textsuperscript{10} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.
FDI should be allowed in education sector (viii) Fees in Universities and colleges should not be hiked (ix) Minority status of Jamia Millia Islamia and Aligarh Muslim University should be recognized in explicit terms (x) Special measures should be undertaken to provide primary and secondary education to children’s working in cottage and small industries (xi) Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya facility will be extended to Minorities and backward classes concentrated areas too. “12

In the field of ‘Agriculture’, the Jamaat manifesto includes the following demands:

“(i) Requisite efforts should be made to promote agrarian sector and safeguard the farmers and rural population from exploitation (ii) Implement the recommendations of Swaminathan Commission on farmers (iii) Allow interest free loans to needy farmers (iv) Total ban on Future Trading and Forwarding of agricultural commodities (v) Triple the existing budgetary allocation on agricultural sector (vi) Revoke the Indo US knowledge initiative on Agriculture (vii) Regulate contract farming by corporate groups (viii) Revoke the clauses of Intellectual property rights from seeds.”13

On the issue of ‘Industries’, the Jamaat has asked for the following demands in its 2009 manifesto:

“(i) Encourage and subsidize low and medium industries especially cottage industries (ii) Stop privatization of Public sector industries (iii) Stop FDI in retail sector (iv) Enact legislation to check the crippling influence of big corporate groups in retail sector which leads to devastation of ordinary retailers (v) Cancel the licenses of all industries causing pollution and recover full damages from them for harm caused to the people and environment (vi) Bailout packages should be provided to sinking industries like textiles, diamonds, carpets etc.”14

Appendix 10

The Resolution of the JIH’s CAC on economic inflation in India:

“The CAC expressed its grave concern on the alarming rise in prices, especially of essential commodities…due to the faulty economic policies of the Government and also due to insufficient and half hearted measures to control the price rise. The pressure of the imperialist capitalism, trade based on speculation and hoardings are the main causes which should be countered to control the price rise. The CAC demands a comprehensive reorientation of economic policies in tune with the welfare of the people. The state should not succumb to the pressure of multinationals, the World Bank or IMF. The government should curb wastage of public money by ministers and officials. Those taxes which contribute to price rise should be avoided. The CAC is apprehensive that if not controlled effectively, the price rise may lead to wide spread unrest.”15

Appendix 11

Excerpts from JIH people’s manifesto before 2009 Lok Sabha elections on Foreign Policy matters:

“(i) India should revive its original non-aligned policy and should back the interests of developing and poor countries in all international forums (ii) Repeal the 123 agreement with USA (iii) Should condemn Israel’s aggression on innocent Palestinian, demand end of Gaza blockage, recognize Hamas led Govt. as a legitimate democratic government of Palestine, support a separate Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, and

12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
condemn the racial Zionist policies of Israel (iv) Should abolish Indo-Israel strategic alliance. Should not engage Israel in security and defense related matters (v) Should abolish Indo-US strategic alliance. Should condemn the imperialist design of USA, shall demand complete pull out of USA & NATO forces from Iraq and Afghanistan (vi) Revive SAARC. India, Pakistan and Bangladesh should sign no war pact and a pact on terror free sub continent. Should promote good and friendly relations with all neighboring countries.16

Appendix 12

The description of some SYM agitations and initiatives marked with catchy slogans are of the following:

“Always with poor and downtrodden,” “Bush, you are unwelcome in India, no place for you in human civilization,” “Heralding a new era of environmental consciousness—a massive workout for refurbishing the coastline with mangroves,” “Salt-Satyagraha revisited—raising consciousness against neo-capitalistic policies of Government,” “For us, service to people is worship to God—correctly channelising the energy of youth,” “We are pledged to shackle the Shylocks who aspire to rule the world,” “Vote against Iran, shame to the Nation,” “Manmohan—your mandate is not to sell India—Solidarity observes Independence Day as ‘Protect Freedom Day’,” “Toiling to build the dreams of the poor and shelterless.”17

Appendix 13

Anti-imperialist assertion of SYM can be in its pamphlet in the following words:

“Solidarity is a revolutionary youth movement inspired by consciousness of God. It derives inspiration from the critical struggles undertaken by Prophets in history against enemies of God and people, who have tried to impose their illegitimate hegemony over the world. Solidarity boldly questions the irreligious imperial dominance and repressive regimes that are growing stronger all over the world. Solidarity supports all liberation movements throughout the world fighting against weapons race and against invasions of the new imperialism. We understand that the common task of humanity is to unify all the collective efforts for freedom and liberation and thus to create a formidable defense against the global evil of wanton American supremacy.”18

Appendix 14

Field interview with M. Sajid on Coca Cola agitation:

“Our second phase of agitation was to make at least 25 Cola free villages throughout Kerala, although we succeeded to make 100 Cola free villages. Cola free village means that the village people would not allow any Cola truck to enter into the village. With the help of Cola retailers and shopkeepers, we were able to make such Cola free villages. In this way, Coca Cola was virtually banned by the people only in those hundred villages. Later on, this ban came from the Kerala government. We got to know from the Coca Cola website that due to this agitation which was led by us and joined by many other organizations, a major setback was experienced in terms of Coca Cola sales in Kerala. Similarly, we are also agitating against water privatization and decreasing ground water levels along with the noted environmentalist, Vandana Shiva.”19

17 Excerpts from Solidarity Youth Movement brochure collected on 02/12/2008.
18 Excerpts from SYM pamphlet titled: ‘Oceans without waves’ collected on 02/12/2008.
19 Interview with M. Sajid, 02/12/2008.
Appendix 15

Field Interview of M. Sajid justifying the opposition to the Kerala Express Highway project in the following words:

“We were opposed to this project not because that we are anti-development. We have to first understand the development requirements of Kerala society. The so called advantage [of this highway] was that if you take a car from the northern end of Kerala i.e. Kasaragod you can reach the southern end, Trivandrum by 6 hours. But how many people actually want to drive a car from Kasaragod to Trivandrum by 6 hours? How many people will be benefiting from this project? Very few rich persons, who drive cars would benefit from this project. Well, if that benefit is not harming others, we would have considered. But this small benefit is actually at the cost of many thousand lives. So, this express highway is not our dream. Moreover, if you have to fill up this bridge with soil, many hills would become martyrs. So the environmental question and displacement of common people is there. Now, if you calculate the whole balance sheet of this project taking into account of the environmental question, displacement issue, the number of beneficiaries and hindering the right of free travel of the common people then this project is wrong. This project would be benefiting the builders, developers, their commissioning agents and the ministers.”

Appendix 16

Jamaat’s support for the Left on grounds of ‘anti-communalism’ and ‘anti-imperialism’ has been echoed by M. Sajid in the following words:

“When we talk to the Congress leaders during our placement of demands after agitations, or when they come to seek our support for votes they talk in a very simple political dialogue. They just say, you leave all these issues and just support us. But Jamaat’s policy is that when we support any specific political party, we support on the basis of certain fundamentals. So we supported the Left front as a whole in the last 2006 Kerala Assembly election because the Left is comparatively better on the issue of communalism and imperialism. After India’s vote against Iran in the IAEA on the advice of America, and the Congress government’s alliance with US on war on terror project and Nuclear deal—we increasingly felt that it would be difficult for the Jamaat to take a pro-Congress stand in Kerala politics. Congress also understood this thing.”

Appendix 17

M. Sajid talks about the anti-imperialist political alliances of JIH in the following words:

“When we interact with common people and Left intellectuals, we tell them that whatever we are doing, our motivation is Islam. Our action is guided according to the Quranic principles. So we also present Islam to such people when we talk about development and imperialism. For example, we compare between the perspectives of Marxism and communism with Islam on the issues of development and imperialism. In this respect, we use to contrast the depthlessness of non-Islamic viewpoints like Marxism in critiquing development and imperialism. We assert that the issue of resistance to capitalistic development and imperialism is not a monopoly of the Left but it is the duty of every Muslim to resist capitalism and imperialism. There is a general feeling that if somebody is talking about American imperialism, then it must be a Leftist agenda. We want to tell that it is nothing about left and right but right and wrong, in which case, Islam has something to say about these issues. However, keeping in mind about the practical political field, we believe that there should be a broad alliance of all anti-imperialist factions against imperialism, whether it is Islamist, Leftist, socialist, Gandhians everyone. Environmentalist Vandana Shiva has come to our many programmes. We always try to connect all these people to widen the anti-imperialist platform. We try to attract whoever is ready to come for

20 Interview with M. Sajid, 02/12/2008.
21 Interview with M. Sajid, 02/12/2008.
this anti-imperialist struggle. So, on one hand our intention is to broaden the anti-imperialist platform but on the other, we tell them that Islam has a strong anti-imperialist notion.”

Appendix 18

A Press note of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind clarifies its position on 2009 Maharashtra Assembly Elections:

“Due to emergence of the Third Front and failure of the Congress-NCP Government in Maharashtra to resolve major public issues and the policy of injustice have led Advisory Council of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind, Maharashtra to pull out its earlier decision of party-wise support in elections...The Maharashtra Government has failed to control suicide of farmers and the communal violence. It did not offer proportionate representation to minorities specially Muslims in this Assembly Election. Despite its earlier promises it did not implement the findings of Sri Krishna Commission. The government also paved the way to remove the MCOCA on the Malegaon blast accused Sadhvi Pragya Singh and files an affidavit against the CBI inquiry of Hari Masjid firing case in the Supreme Court...Jamaat-e-Islami Hind, Maharashtra will assess the situation of every constituency, will discuss it with the local people and will support the Strong Secular Candidate, who held high moral values and who will be in agreement with the Peoples’ manifesto released by the Jamaat and try to implement it.”

Appendix 19

M. Sajid speaking on jahiliya and political alliances of JIH:

“When you look into Islam as an ideology or a comprehensive way of life then the notion of jahiliya actually comes out. Now, the system of jahiliya will always be present in its different manifestations. The present manifestation of jahiliya is in imperialism. Now, when we talk about broadening the anti-imperialist platform, several non-Muslim elements or who were erstwhile defined as having a jahil mentality can be part of an anti-imperialist resistance. But this is in fact rooted in our understanding of Prophet’s life. Prophet has very clear cut enemies. But at the same time, Prophet has also utilized several jahil people against the main enemy. With practical wisdom, Prophet made an alliance with Jews and Christians against powerful idolaters of Mecca. Making practical alliances with non-Muslims only arises out of the misconception about ‘Puritanism’. This whole puritan concept that only we Muslims alone can fight against any injustice is not present in Islam. The concept of alliances is present throughout Islamic history and these alliances were not only between purely likeminded people. Rigid Puritanism is very much absent in Islam.”

Appendix 20

The People’s manifesto of JIH before 2009 Lok Sabha Elections put forward the following demands under the heading of ‘Security’:

“(i) Implement all the directives of Supreme Court of India regarding Police Reforms and reserve 25% positions at all levels of Police force for minorities to ascertain unbiased policing (ii) An exclusive Anti-Riot Act should be promulgated that will ensure (a) Stringent punishment for hate speeches and writings, communal riots, inciting for communal killings and other such crimes (b) Permanent Tribunal to investigate riots and terror incidents with full judicial powers (c) Punishment to law and order authorities failing to act honestly and judiciously to control the riots (iii) Enact a law to make it mandatory to investigate all deaths in police encounters and custodies through a permanent commission with judicial powers (iv) Amend the Unlawful

22 Interview with M. Sajid, 02/12/2008.
24 Interview with M. Sajid, 02/12/2008.
Activities (Prevention) Act by removing the provisions of detention without bail and 3 years imprisonment for withholding information (v) Enquire by a high level commission all the terrorist activities, explosions and encounters held in last 10 years (vi) All those arrested in any case should be undergone trials within a period of one month (vii) Those persons acquitted after long time of imprisonment finding no evidence against them should be sufficiently compensated (viii) Take actions against those convicted by Sri Krishna Commission and implement the recommendation of the commission (ix) Check the human rights violations by the security forces in Kashmir and North Eastern region and punish the perpetrators severely.”

Appendix 21

The campaign folder of JIH that was distributed before the public rally on 18th November, 2008 in Kolkata featured the following demands:

1) All riots and terrorist attacks of the last decade should be probed into by an independent high powered commission to identify the actual culprits and the report of this enquiry should be made public. 2) Reforms should be initiated in the Police and Law Enforcement machinery and the recommendations of National Police Commission should be immediately implemented. At least 25% Police personnel at all levels should be belonging to minority communities. 3) Effective legal mechanism should be evolved to check Police atrocities, illegal detentions, fake encounters, tortures and custodial deaths and fabricated accusations. 4) Harassment of relatives and well wishers of the detainees should be stopped and a whole locality should not be targeted or victimized. 5) Confidential reports and confessions extracted under duress must not be leaked to the media. Effective regulations and legal mechanism should be enacted to ensure fair and unbiased reporting in media. 6) All efforts for undemocratic and unjust legislation should be stopped and all those laws in states should be cancelled wherein confessions in police custody is made admissible in courts or that allow police to keep persons arrested without filing charge sheets.

Appendix 22

The detailed response of JIH leader S.Q.R. Illiyas on the issue of Muta is of the following:

“As far as Muta or temporary marriage is concerned, it is only one provision among the Shia sect. There are no other Muslims who approve of this practice. Even in Shiite Iran that is not permitted now. Muta is however permitted among Shias only in certain conditions. For example, when Arabs were going to the West for studies, some Arab scholars gave the permission that they can marry a western woman. If they would not have provisioned Muta in that context, they fear that they would indulge in un-Islamic acts like adultery and fornication. So, to prevent the haram (forbidden) zana (adultery/fornication) they gave permission for Muta or temporary marriage to a western woman but they cannot bring the western woman back to their country. So, that was done to prevent a greater evil although there were many ulemas (Islamic theologians/scholars) who objected to this permission of Muta. In fact, there is no example of Muta marriage neither during Prophet’s lifetime nor in the case of any Sahaba (immediate followers of Prophet).”

Appendix 23

A press note of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind that summarizes its position on the issue of Taslima Nasrin controversy:

“Jamaat-e-Islami Hind’s provisional General Secretary Mr Ghulam Akbar condemned in hardest manner the central government decision to extend the visa period of mischievous and anti-national Taslima Nasrin. He said that the decision was unwise and like mocking with the sentiments of the principled and religious traditions of

26 Interview with Dr. S.Q.R. Illiyas, 03/12/2008.
Indians, especially Muslims. He demanded the government not to hurt the real citizens’ sentiments of the country for the sake of a foreign controversial lady. He also demanded to retract the decision and don’t permit her to live further in India.”

Appendix 24

A Press note of JIH quoting its Secretary General summarizes its position on homosexuality:

“Jamaat-e-Islami Hind has deplored the Delhi High Court verdict legalizing gay sex among consenting adults, and urged the Central government to make necessary legislation to nullify this judgment. Jamaat-e-Islami Hind is shocked and perturbed over the scraping of section 377 of IPC by Delhi Court. This judgement hurts the religious feelings of millions of people of India and is a setback to moral values and family system…It is not a question of merely scraping of section 377 of IPC but it is an attack on the moral and religious fabric of our society. Almost all religions consider homosexuality as a dreadful sin and social evil which leads towards the societal disintegration and breaking up the family…The homosexuality is also injurious to health as it leads to spreading of HIV+/AIDS.’ Jamaat has called upon the government to challenge this judgment in apex court so as to restore the dignity of humanity and confidence of the people who are shocked and disturbed by this judgment and feel that if this would not be nullified it would spoil the very foundation of the society i.e. family system.”

Appendix 25

The opposition to gay rights is expressed in a press statement of SIO issued from New Delhi on July 3, 2009 in the following words:

“Deleting anti sodomy law will lead to more anti-social activities and will cripple the HIV/AIDS prevention efforts…[T]omorrow, on the guise of ‘right to personal liberty’, incest and sex with animals would also be legalized…Gay and lesbianism are against basic humanitarian values and against the social fabric of a civilized society. No person is born homosexual, just like no one is born a thief, a liar or murderer. These evil habits are acquired from surroundings. The agenda of homosexuals is just to universalize their behavior and make the notion that it’s normal. It is extremely sad to see that instead of trying to implement measures to curb heinous and uncultured practices, even courts are legalizing them. SIO has a principled stand against counter values being promoted by market forces…SIO would raise fundamental debates on morality and sexuality.”

Appendix 26

A press statement of SIO issued from New Delhi on ‘Education Reform’ dated June 28, 2009 states:

“Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal should not be in hurry [for] major shifts in education system [like] doing away with the Class X board exams, setting up of a single school board at the national level, winding up of the University Grants Commission and opening up FDI in the education sector must be made after consultation and debates…By allowing private investment including from abroad, in education, the state must not abandon its role as a social welfare guarantor to every section of the society. Before making public his

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intent to invite foreign direct investment (FDI) in education, one must think, why reputed Universities like Oxford, Cambridge or Harvard is not coming to India? It’s the duty of government to regulate the entry and also the fees of profit based foreign education providers, reserve seats for socially and economically backward class and protect students from receiving sub-standard education offered by foreign institutions. FDI can only be welcomed to develop the educational standard of the country but not treating education as ‘industry’. In India, institutions of higher learning like the IITs, the IIMs, JNU, and most reputable medical and engineering colleges are government-owned. So we strongly believe that education…in a developing country like ours will be served, both qualitatively and quantitatively, if only the state itself seriously consider education as an important social activity. Before taking any major reform in Madrassa education major Muslim organisations, Madrassa teachers, students must be consulted to arrive at a consensus.”

Appendix 27

JIH leader, K.K. Zuhaira summarizes the viewpoint of women’s wing and GIO in the following words:

“Islamic Sharia and Muslim Personal Law should be made aware in the near future regarding misconceptions about divorce and polygamy in Islam. We are going to organize some more conferences in the coming years for women on these issues. A lot of misconception about women and Islam is also prevalent among non-Muslims. We need to review and correct those misconceptions. Muslim Personal Law Board should run according to Islamic Sharia. The strong support base of Jamaat among women in Kerala has some key reasons. Jamaat started its special campaign and dawa work among women in Kerala right from 1950s and particularly stressed on women’s education, which resulted into strong organizational presence among women in Jamaat. In this respect, there should be more women’s representation both in Kerala Jamaat leadership and central leadership in Delhi. We have not yet taken the decision on the issue of women’s reservation bill in parliament but Jamaat would definitely take the decision in the light of Quran and Sunnah. However, I am in favour of women’s reservation. Muslim women should get more education and should also work independently. The Islamic Sharia never imposes any restriction on the issue of jobs for women. If there is safety and security for women in the workplace, then obviously they should work more. There is no bar on women’s work neither in Islam nor in Jamaat.”

Appendix 28

JIH’s rhetoric of Islam as an alternative and universal ideology for humankind:

“The way of life that Prophet Muhammad taught mankind has, thus, been universal in character. It is by no means a property of those who are born in Muslim families. It is a Religion for all mankind, sent by one God, Who is the Lord of them all. It is through faithful acceptance of the Message and sincere and whole-hearted adherence to it in practice that a man becomes true Muslim (i.e., submissive to God) and not by the mere accident of birth…We admit that the statement of the ideology of Islam and its practical demands…are hardly corroborated by a study of existing Muslim societies. It is indeed regrettable that the true Islamic society is nowhere in evidence. Muslims of today generally fail to live up to the noble dictates of Islam. But we submit that it would be equally unfortunate if this failure were interpreted as a reflection on the inadequacy of Divine Guidance…Even now despite our long drawn antagonism to Western Imperialism, we as a nation are engaged in assimilating the essence of all that is good in the Western civilisation. Communism and Socialism, essentially foreign ideologies, are passionately advocated by those of our countrymen who are convinced of their relevance to our present conditions. Given this attitude, Islam as a social order has greater claims to unprejudiced consideration. It restates the fundamental teachings of all previous Divinely revealed Scriptures in a complete and reliable manner, shedding all additions and innovations that had become associated with Divine Guidance through the vicissitudes of history. It does not repudiate a single preceding Prophet of God, nor does it


31 Field interview with K.K. Zuhaira on 13/01/2009.
controvert the teachings of anyone of them but accepts them all as the galaxy of Divine Messengers, and as links of the same chain. If Muslims have faith in the efficacy of Islam, which has been a potent force for the good of mankind throughout the ages, it is not only the necessary demand of their faith, but also their altruistic duty to propagate its principles, especially at a time when the country is in search of a stable basis for building the edifice of its life.32

Appendix 29

Jamaat leader Dr. S.Q.R. Illiyas on Caravan for Justice and Peace:

“When we decided to take out a caravan for peace and justice, our approach was three dimensional. First, we urged the Muslim community not to be demoralized. They should not feel alienated and so our caravan was morale boosting and confidence building exercise for the Muslim community. Secondly, we wanted to expose those forces, which are creating troubles like the RSS and even the ruling classes. Thirdly, we wanted to raise the real issue by asking why the people of this country are not getting justice. Despite last 60 years of independence there are more than 35% of the population not getting their daily livelihood, 40% of people are still illiterate. Dalits, Tribals and Women are all facing similar problems like the Muslims. But nobody is coming forward to address these issues. So, through this caravan, we tried to send the message that the system is responsible for the problems of the common man. Whatever resources we are earning, most money is going to the hands of few people and rest of the population is left out to poverty. So, India is not shining and GDP growth rate does not talk about shining India, it only shows how the corporate groups are progressing.”33

Appendix 30

The ‘pro-people’ rhetoric of SYM in its pamphlet:

“Youths have a vital role in the overall cultural, educational, material and spiritual growth of all people including workers, farmers, tribals and other downtrodden and marginalized sections, minorities etc. Solidarity treads the path of this revolutionary task in the supreme Light of Divine Guidance and in accordance with the liberation model enacted by the Prophets aiming for success and welfare in life before and after death for all people...Words and slogans fortified by apt deeds—this is how Solidarity marches forth. Struggle and service are inextricable elements in its work culture. It strongly points its one hand towards the injustices of the elite classes while at the same time engaging the other arm in providing support to the voiceless poor and destitute...If you are also ready to speak out against injustice, irrespective of all differences in caste and creed and if you are ready to wipe the tears from the eyes of the poor and helpless then you are also part of Solidarity.”34

Appendix 31

Some Political Demands in the JIH People’s Manifesto 2009:

“Social Justice: (a) Ensure immediate tabling of Justice Ranganatha Mishra Commission report in the Parliament, full implementation of its basic recommendations, namely, 15% reservation for the minorities, with 10% exclusively for the Muslims, along with the unutilized portion of the other 5%, and the deletion of para 3 of the Constitution (SC) Order 1950, issued under Article 341 of the Constitution for the inclusion of Muslims and Christian Dalits in the SC list (b) Repeal draconian laws in the guise of curbing terrorism in all states. e.g. UAPA, MCOCA and Armed forces Special Power Act etc. (c) Ensure reservation in public employment and higher education, benefits of social development and flow of resources for the Muslims in proportion to their population and level of backwardness (d) Diversity Index should be introduced as recommended by Sachar

33 Interview with Dr. S.Q.R. Illiyas, 03/12/2008.
34 Excerpts from Solidarity Youth Movement pamphlet titled: ‘Oceans without waves’ collected on 02/12/2008.
Committee in all public and private sectors and all government incentives should be linked with it (e) Establish Equal Opportunity as recommended by Sachar Committee (f) Make sub plans for Muslims in central and state plans and schemes and allocate budgets on par with SC and ST for such sub plans (g) All the allocations and schemes provided for Minorities concentrated districts should be specific to the developments of minorities in that particular region (h) Provide all basic amenities to tribals in Tribal and Forest Land without affecting their culture and customs (i) Ensure development of basic needs and other infrastructure in Kashmir and North Eastern states (j) While allocating tickets for party candidates for Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, Assembly, Council and Municipal elections, it should be ensured that each community gets proportionate representation. **Women:** (a) A separate quota should be provided to OBC’s and Minorities in the proposed 33% reservations for women in legislature (b) Women should be exempted from working in night shifts in Govt. and private services except in hospitals (c) Enact law to stop the exploitation of female employees in MNCs and Call Centers (d) Stringent laws should be enacted to punish those involved in harassment of women (e) Appoint a commission to study the menace of feticide and social, legal, medical and scientific measures to curb it and implement its recommendations (f) Enact a law to check social misconduct and intolerance towards girl child.

**Public Accountability:** A massive campaign should be launched to effectively check the criminalization of politics and rising corruption in government machinery. For this, (a) Ticket should not be given to any candidate with criminal records, i.e. convicted or charge-sheeted in a court of law (b) Veerappa Moily Commission’s recommendations regarding bureaucratic reforms and increasing the punishment for bribe should be implemented (c) Transparency in government functioning should be increased through effective implementation of RTI and e-governance measures. **Waqf:** The Waqf properties should be freed. **Other Reforms:** (a) Bring constitutional provision that no international treaty can be signed without the consent of the parliament (b) Simplify the procedures for OBC certificate (c) Introduce a new fast and easier mechanism to register all voters of the country with photo identity cards so that no body will lose the opportunity of casting their democratic rights (d) Repeal the anti conversion laws in various states (e) End the system of colloquium for selection of judges and introduce merit and reservation based selection of judges (f) Darul Qazas operating in different parts of the country should be provided legal status under ADR (Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanism) (g) Provide statuary status to NHRC, NCM and NWC.

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**Appendix 32**

Muslim Community Issues in JIH Policy & Programme:

“(Under Article 3 of the Policy) (A) Educational and economic backwardness of Muslims is a matter of deep concern; even the government has recognized the gravity of the situation. In this connection, the Jamaat shall endeavour :- (i) That the government undertakes all necessary measures to remove Muslims’ backwardness and in particular, provides them reasonable safeguards in education and employment. (ii) That Muslims on their own implement a comprehensive plan to overcome their backwardness in these fields. (iii) That they develop the habit of extraordinary hard work, cultivate academic and technical skills and work for economic consolidation in the light of Islamic principles. That they are motivated to benefit from the government schemes, within permissible limits. (B) The Jamaat shall endeavour that :- (i) Impact of western values and fascist tendencies on the educational system be checked and reversed. (ii) Muslims be inspired to develop unity among themselves to counter the challenges posed to their security and safety and their religious and cultural identity. Instead of falling prey to sectarian tendencies and petty disputes, Muslims would be encouraged to work unitedly for the important common causes. (iii) Muslims be motivated to organize Zakat and Ushr (collection and distribution) on a collective basis. (iv) Muslims be motivated to take necessary measures collectively, within the legal and Shariah limits, to protect and defend themselves against the assaults on their

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life, property, honour and dignity; and seek the cooperation of all just people in this regard. (v) Waqf properties be protected and their income properly utilized. The government and the mutawallis will be called upon to discharge their duties. (vi) Effective steps be undertaken to counter Qadianism and apostasy.”

Appendix 33

Ex-SYM President and Jamaat ideologue, M. Sajid speaks on OBC Muslim reservation in Kerala:

“We have led many struggles on minority issues like reservation. Among the minority issues that we concentrated in Kerala was about the Narendran Commission which looks into the actual reservation that the Muslims got. In Kerala, 99.99% of Muslims are included in Other Backward Classes [OBC] category. So, the benefit of OBC reservation is theoretically available to Muslims. But because of malpractices and biasness by the politician-bureaucracy nexus for upper caste people, Muslims and other lower classes are denied of getting practical benefits out of reservation in jobs. So Narendran Committee was appointed to look into the details of this issue and it was revealed by the same committee that nearly 9000 posts were lost by Muslims which were actually due to them. So, we took this issue and made very strong political intervention. We demanded to fill up the vacant posts for Muslims as soon as possible. We believe that in 2006 Assembly election, the Congress led UDF got a severe electoral blow from the Muslims mainly because of this Narendran Commission Report. In Kerala, there is 12% reservation for Muslim OBCs. So, what we are demanding is that the Muslims should get the exact 12% reservation that is stipulated for them. Why the reserved posts for Muslims would remain vacant? Here we are just demanding two things: a) the fulfillment of the present 12% Muslim quota by filling up present vacancies for Muslims and b) fulfillment of those posts by Muslims which due to malpractices were lost to Muslims while others/non-Muslim persons have filled up those posts.”

Appendix 34

The central emphasis on Islamic *Ummah* as the harbinger of Islamic revolution or establishment of Islam while fighting against ‘non-Islamic’ ideologies can be traced in the JIH programme in following words:

“The saddest aspect of the Muslim situation is their ignorance of their lofty status. They have forgotten, by and large, that they are Khair-e-Ummah (the best of communities) whose duty is to become ‘witnesses of truth’ by their word and deed. This ignorance has reduced Muslims to the status of merely ‘a community among many’ that exists in the world. They do not realize that actually they are benefactors and guides of the entire humanity...Muslims have fallen prey to petty differences because they are indifferent to their status and basic duty. Instead of being one united ummah, they are getting fragmented into groups and there are indications that sectarian strife is being encouraged by anti-Islamic forces to weaken the Muslim ummah. This opportunity to anti-Islamic forces has been provided by Muslims themselves, due to their ignorance of their mission. In these circumstances, Jamaat-e-Islami Hind deems it necessary to awaken the deep sense of being ‘Khair-e-Ummah’ in the Muslims. Muslims must subject themselves to tough and impartial introspection and launch a campaign to reform themselves. They should unite and become ‘Witnesses of truth’ and march towards the goal of Iqamat-e-Deen.”

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36 *JIH Policy & Programme*, pp. 15-16.
37 Interview with M. Sajid, 02/12/2008.
38 *JIH Policy and Programme*, pp. 7-8.
Appendix 35

Interview with Prof. Choudhury Mahmood Hasan, Faculty of Pharmacy, Dhaka University:

‘Islam versus non-Islam is the major contradiction both in Bangladesh and elsewhere in the Muslim world. We are more under attack by the 1971 position vis-à-vis Bangladesh Liberation Movement. Jamaat might have done strategic mistakes like Ikhwan in Egypt but there is no doubt that it has been able to penetrate as an ideological movement among the educated persons by renewing the original concepts of Islam. Jamaat has been able to emerge as a political force in Bangladesh with inspiration from Iran and Afghanistan’s Islamic regimes. The main contribution of Jamaat towards Islamisation in Bangladesh is that in the public discourses, at least a big section of population including educated and political leadership thinks that Islam is a complete code of life. This recognition of Islam as a totalistic religion and a complete way of life is a significant contribution of Jamaat. However, in terms of establishing Islam or to make it functional, there is doubt among those very constituents of population, i.e. the educated persons and the political leadership.’

Appendix 36

Interview with A.T.M. Fazlul Haque on the issue of BNP-Jamaat alliance:

‘BNP is not an ideological party. It is more a motley combination of varied ideological people of rightists, centrists and leftists. Although, it is a rightwing nationalist party and does not believe in socialism but only believes in democracy, yet they have given space to lot of erstwhile leftist leaders like Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, ex-Secretary General of BNP during Khaleda Zia’s jail term. Mannan Bhuiyan has been expelled from BNP after his revolt against Khaleda. Also, the question of honesty and corruption is the major difference between Jamaat and BNP. However, pragmatic ground reality of electoral politics only compels both the Jamaat and the BNP to make electoral alliances against the Awami League.’

Appendix 37

Interview of a Jamaat intellectual on reasons behind the Electoral debacle of Bangladesh Jamaat in 2008:

‘Major reason of BNP-Jamaat setback in the 2008 National Assembly elections is because of corruption of BNP, which was exposed by the military backed caretaker government. All the charges of corruption were not true but definitely some were true. Also, the media was more in favour of Awami League. Moreover, the military backed caretaker government helped the Awami League to win the election in a pre-planned manner. Although, Awami League would have won in any case because of rampant corruption of BNP but the big margin was due to coordinated help of caretaker government to the Awami League. On the other hand, BNP is not an ideological party like Awami League and Jamaat. BNP is a curious mixture of all sorts of Left, right and centrist people whereas Awami League had an ideological legacy well before Liberation. In this election, Awami was more matured in appealing to the common voters, denying tickets to those who have been charged with corruption cases while giving more freedom to its alliance partners like Jatiyo Party. Finally, public memory in Bangladesh is very weak. It is more concerned with the last incumbent government than the misdeeds of previous governments.’

39 Field Interview with Prof. Choudhury Mahmud Hasan, Faculty of Pharmacy, Dhaka University on 04/06/2009.
40 Field Interview with A.T.M. Fazlul Haque on 02/06/2009.
41 Field interview with Prof. Omar Faruq in the Department of Islamic History and Culture, Dhaka University on 03/06/2009.
Appendix 38
Defensive statements about Anti-Liberation image of Jamaat by a Jamaat Member:

‘We have fear of repression when initiating political mass movements. Also, we are more defensive regarding the anti-independence image of Jamaat propagated by the mainstream political parties. There is an inferiority complex among Jamaat on this issue and we also have shortage of effective leadership, facing a leadership crisis.’

Appendix 39
Field Interview with Prof. Choudhury Mahmood Hasan:

‘If Jamaat can resolve the 1971 issue by declaring that it had committed a political mistake at that time then we can perpetually make-up our tarnished image. After all, people pardon political confessions if it is justifiable. The Jamaat MPs were always very popular among the masses although such popularity is a localized phenomenon and fail to become a national wave for Islam as our electoral experiences show. Jamaat also lack a rich intellectual and research cell. Jamaat can successfully rally a big section of anti-Indian and anti-Awami population when BNP would be weak. This is a real possibility in the long run after Khaleda Zia since BNP would be disintegrated after Khaleda as BNP is a loosely ideological and less organized party. So our current crisis of political mobilization can be only overcome with the successful weakening of BNP as the only platform for anti-Indian and anti-Awami sentiments.’

Appendix 40
Interview with A.T.M. Fazlul Haque on Intellectual leadership in Jamaat:

‘Jamaat people are more soft people and less vocal in nature. Mostly they are not professional organizers like other political parties. Another serious problem is lack of intellectual contribution to the Jamaat organisation to make it a sharper ideological movement.’

Appendix 41
Interview with Jamaat intellectual Prof. Omar Faruq:

‘The character of Islamist movement of Jamaat is fundamentally different from other mainstream political parties. For example, in the university politics of Bangladesh, most teachers in the universities are associated with university politics mainly for vested interests like housing facilities, and other benefits like posts and promotions but not for larger social cause. We are not involved in placing any charter of demands for teachers in front of the Vice-Chancellors because we know from our past experiences that those would not be fulfilled. Our organization is weak in Dhaka University which is mainly based upon personal relations and network building. We generally comment upon national and international issues by giving press statements. We cannot initiate large-scale movements because people would not join us. We also do not have the mental strength for such large-scale movements among the university teachers, academics and intellectuals. We have the fear of repression on the excuse of linking Jamaat to terrorism, a myth that has been created by mainstream political parties.’

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42 Field interview with Jamaat member Safiuddin Sheikh on 04/06/2009.
43 Field Interview with Prof. Choudhury Mahmud Hasan, Faculty of Pharmacy, Dhaka University on 04/06/2009.
44 Field Interview with A.T.M. Fazlul Haque on 02/06/2009.
45 Field interview with Jamaat member Prof. Omar Faruq in the Department of Islamic History and Culture, Dhaka University on 03/06/2009.
Appendix 42

A very senior leader of Indian Jamaat, Maulana Shafi Moonis expressed his views about Islamist movement in South Asia in following words:

“As far as South Asia is concerned, common people in Afghanistan and Bangladesh have been traditionally very religious in their private lives and was ripe for vibrant Islamic movement. Ghulam Azam played an important role in Bangladesh Islamic movement. I am particularly hopeful about the prospects of Islamic movement in Bangladesh than Pakistan because of the strong presence of feudal zamindari class in Pakistan and the absence of this class in Bangladesh. This feudal class is generally more attracted to various pleasures, which are un-Islamic and also would be hindering a relatively equitable and just Islamic state.”46

46 Field interview with senior Jamaat leader Shafi Moonis on 01/12/2008.
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