Considerable criticism has been directed towards traditional Islamic educational institutions, the madrasas, as breeding grounds of militant Islam and training camps for young men. This charge has been strengthened by the supposed unilateral inter-relatedness between these religious schools and jihad, between mullahs and violence, produced and perpetuated fear in the public mind in the West. As a result, the relationship between state power and civil rights has been subjected to very severe restrictions in countries like Pakistan – and without major reactions from the public.

This has enabled governments to push through restrictive policies in an unprecedented way.

Efforts in Pakistan and other Muslim coun-
tries to streamline madrasas into the nation-
elogical organizations, better even than ser-
vice offered by NGOs, he clearly revealed that he is influenced by the notion that reli-
gious scholars are narrow-minded and pro-
hibitive. The country’s future, he postulated, was to be not a theocratic state but an Islamic welfare state, not marginal-
ization but modernization, not traditional-
ism but reform.

In the 19th century – in the wake of colo-

nial penetration – with the introduction of new systems of education, the madrasa lost its function as a general training institute and turned into an institution exclusively for religious learning. While some groups made use of Islamic symbols to mobilize against colonial power, other Indian Mus-
lims remained traditionalists. Reform or conscience is a means to counter colonialism. Various Sunnite schools of thought emerged, such as the Deobandis, the Bareliwais, and the Ahl-

e-Hadith. These groups appealed to specific social groups and were tied to particular regions, and thereby added to the religious and soci-
elogical complexity of South Asia. Yet another movement, the modernist Aligarh school, tried to Anglicize the Muslim educational system, but this was contested by the Coun-
cil of Religious Scholars (Nadwa al-Ulama), which aimed at an integration of religious and

cultural considerations. One is the Deobandis in the North Western Frontier Province and Baluchistan, where tribal soci-
ety is the dominant sector to rethink its own position. The centre may be pushed to its political strength of representatives of the political strength of representatives of different groups, but has indeed too simplistic to equate madrasas

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These various reforms, however different they may have been, thought to be achievable only through ‘modernization’. It was thought to be achievable only through ‘modernization’. It might never be allowed to affect the mak-

ing of the educational policy at any level.10

Danger of expectations

With the official support of religious scholars in the 1980s and even in the 1990s, the political benefits of the promotion of this section of Islamic traditionalism has in-
creased unmistakably. Thus, the Islamiza-

cationalization of different groups, but has never been allowed to affect the mak-
genesis of all measures and structural changes. The Islamization policy in Pakistan has re-

sulted in considerable problems. First of all, the prospect of zakat grants resulted in a mushrooming of madrasas, mostly in rural areas. In response, the government has introduced various measures to try to stem the tide, but this has not only been ineffective in new problems. Secondly, the number of the graduates of higher religious schools – not to speak of religious schools in Pakistan – is considerably smaller than the number of religious scholars since 1983 – with foreign aid. The Islamization policy has the potential to form an institutionalization of different groups, but has never been allowed to affect the making of educational policy at any level.10

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and daily in Pakistan madrasa. Students study Pakištani clergy, the current regime came up with yet of them met instantly by the government. To demand several Islamic provisions, some 2000, Islamic parties were powerful enough of the clergy and Islamists, based on what simply a reflection of the aggressive mood should not therefore be blamed for issuing Islamic Ideology set up in the 1960s, and the Pak- by religious elements. The Council of Islam- used as a means of self-defence against for- cold war in Afghanistan, when they were ex- hands of different players: their role in the many graduates of religious schools into the mostly functioning, cannot be adequately alms and religious schools, still existent and especially when indigenous social and edu- cational structures, such as endowments, alms and religious schools, still existent and mostly functioning, cannot be adequately replaced and thousands of unemployed mullahs who have access to the masses are not successfully integrated. The raised expectations have pushed many graduates of religious schools into the hands of different players: their role in the cold war in Afghanistan, when they were ex- pliated by certain groups and governments; their role in post cold-war Afghanistan, when once again, they were caught up in power politics supported by different secret services; and now in the post-Taliban era, when some of them have taken sides with terrorist groups. The rhetoric of Islamic symbolism and jihad has shown that it can be effectively used as a means of self-defence against for- eign encroachments, and there has been constantly increasing pressure on the state by religious elements. The Council of Islam- ic ideology set up in the 1960s, and the Pak- istani Federal Ministry of Religious Affairs, should not therefore be blamed for issuing outrageous Islamic proposals. Similarly, the failure to reform either the Blasphemy Law 1994 and 2001, or the madrasas in 1995 is simply a reflection of the aggressive mood of the clergy and Islamists, based on what has been called ‘paranoid Islam’. In May 2000, Islamic parties were powerful enough to demand several Islamic provisions, some of them met instantly by the government. But in order to increase control over the clergy, the current regime came up with yet another madrasa reform proposal in August 2001.

General Musharraf called for a peaceful ‘Sunniization’ of life-worlds, referring to Is- lamic mysticism and prohibiting madrasa students from going for divine force. The re- construction of tradition ought to serve to raise the madrasa and bring it to a level with the mainstream. The major task seems to be to open up the job market for the graduates. Similarly, mosques should be reformed in order to guarantee a secular and modern- ized society, otherwise Pakistan will be mar- ginalized – and radicalized. This policy clear- ly aims at controlling some 20,000 madrasas with approximately 3 million students, and more than 50,000 mosques – a solid power-struc-ture. The control of the clergy seems to be even more important since there has traditionally been a movement across the borders of Pakistan with Afghanistan, India and Kash- mir. This is especially true of ethnic groups such as Pashtuns in Pakistan, who outnumber their fellow Pashtuns in Afghanistan, and are linked by family networks, commer- cial connections, and religious-political soli- darity. Hence, despite the Pakistan govern- ment’s recent strict policy against foreign students, Afghan students of religious schools have vowed to continue their edu- cation in Pakistan.

Effects of the reforms
The reforms envisaged by the state have produced an imbalance that has resulted in a variety of problems, some of which were temporarily alleviated through jihad in Afghanistan. In the wake of these develop- ments, several different branches of Islamic learning and madrasas have emerged. We need to distinguish: firstly, students of reli- gious schools in general; secondly, mujahidin or freedom fighters; thirdly, Taliban, and finally, jihad groups. As far as the first category is concerned, they have been subjected to several reforms from within and from without, but have played a pivotal role as traditional media- ties with Afghanistan and other neighbour- ing countries and as a result of the use of jihad rhetoric, some of them were used as foot-soldiers in the cold war. This is the sec- ond group – the mujahidin. In order to keep this group under control and to maintain a Pakistan Day and the propagation of jihad in textbooks even in formal schools’ and daily on television for the cause of Kashmir are cases in point. This state-promoted violence and hatred from childhood onwards might be part of the painful nation-building process and search for ideology, but it certainly fails to instil tol- erance and acceptance of plurality in the stu- dents. The alarming increase in mayhem for ransom in the cities as well as in rural areas, the killing of whole families by senior family members because of lack of material resources are causes of major concern.

Concluding remarks
In this scenario religious schools provide at least space for some kind of education and survival, and what is more important, they use the variety of religious repertories to make sense of the predicaments people are facing in a highly fragmented society. The growing presence and visibility of religious power politics supported by different secret organizations and are linked by family networks, commercial connections, and religious-political solidarity. Hence, despite the Pakistan government’s recent strict policy against foreign students, Afghan students of religious schools have vowed to continue their education in Pakistan. In this scenario religious schools provide at least space for some kind of education and survival, and what is more important, they use the variety of religious repertories to make sense of the predicaments people are facing in a highly fragmented society. The growing presence and visibility of religious power politics supported by different secret organizations and are linked by family networks, commercial connections, and religious-political solidarity. Hence, despite the Pakistan government’s recent strict policy against foreign students, Afghan students of religious schools have vowed to continue their education in Pakistan.