hierarchical, mutual and discursive. The online communication of Jihadists is described as being structured by a multi-layered interaction of rituals.

“Forgotten Swamp Revisited” by the editor of this volume, Rüdiger Lohlker (Professor of Islamic Studies, Oriental Institute, University of Vienna) clarifies some basic categories currently used in the study of Jihadism stressing the importance of a religious studies approach. Since the religious dimensions of Jihadism are often seen and misunderstood as mere varieties of ideology this approach must be added to the toolbox of Jihadism studies.

“YouTube Jihad” by Bouchra Oualla (researcher at the research project ‘Jihadism Online’, University of Vienna) stresses the importance of videos on popular platforms like YouTube as an essential medium for Jihadi propaganda. Oualla meticulously analyses one particular video following the rhetorical strategies used by the producers of these videos. This aspect of online communications is still not thoroughly understood; so Oualla lays the foundations for a new approach in Jihadi studies.

“Worldwide Online Jihad versus the Gaming Industry Reloaded: Ventures of the Web” by Nico Prucha (researcher at the research project ‘Jihadism Online’, University of Vienna) deals with the ways Jihadis are operating online compared with the strategies of the gaming industry.

“Jihad via Bluetooth: Al-Qa’ida’s Mobile Phone Campaign,” also by Nico Prucha and the last article of this fascinating volume, describes the ways Jihadis use modern devices for mobile phones to disseminate their ‘worldview’ via Bluetooth etc. Both of Prucha’s contributions are providing new insights into Jihadism online as a media phenomenon.

In sum, this fascinating volume should be required reading for a serious study of contemporary extremist movements in the Muslim world. Without sensationalising, it lays the groundwork and sets the standards for Jihadism studies in the future. It is hoped that this book will find a circle of readers that goes beyond the usual military staff colleges and Islamic studies industry in the West by reaching out also to relevant institutions throughout the Muslim world – that is to say, where it would actually matter most.


Christoph Marcinkowski International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies (IAIS) Malaysia

Thomas K. Gugler, the author of this detailed study which is also his PhD thesis, is
a promising scholar from Germany with a strong background in both Indology and Islamic studies – which, unfortunately, is still a rather rare combination of interests in the land of the late Annemarie Schimmel (1922-2003), the only other significant German scholar with such a focus.¹

In his book, Gugler highlights the phenomenon of what he refers to as ‘post-Islamism’ on the basis of two preeminent missionary movements from South Asia: Da’wat-i Islāmī – strongly marked by Sufi tendencies – was founded as a counter-movement to the Tablīghī Jamā’at which has links to the Deobandis. Da’wat-i Islāmī is now one of the largest transnational religious movements coming out of Pakistan.

Da’wat-i Islāmī can be considered as some sort of Islamic ‘evangelical’ movement, somewhat similar to what is currently coming out of evangelical Protestantism in the United States. It was founded in 1981 in Karachi, Pakistan, by Muḥammad Ilyās Qādirī. Members are expected to wear a green turban, white and a brown shoulder cloth and a white dress.

Tablīghī Jamā’at, in turn, is a religious movement which had already been founded in 1926 by Muḥammad Ilyās Khandhlawī in the north of what was then British India. The movement came forth as an offshoot of the Deobandi movement. It gradually expanded from local to a national to a transnational movement and now has followers in over 150 countries. Despite its pacifist stance, Tablīghī Jamā’at has appeared on the fringes of numerous terrorism investigations. It attracted significant public and media attention when it announced plans for the largest mosque in Europe to be built in London.

The competitive dynamic between the two organisations raises many questions in terms of modern processes of religious change and the increasingly deregulated ‘religious markets’ – an ingenious expression, to the mind of this reviewer. Increasingly, networks of symbols, myths, and rituals of religious traditions seem to influence each other as complex adaptive systems in their development processes. This seems to develop competitively and according to rules of resource maximisation through cross-environment communication of ideas. Within this setting, the Sunnah is re-emphasised as a normative system of lifestyle, enabling in particular younger Muslims to generate community-specific social capital. Gugler’s meticulous and quite fascinating study also shows to what extent the ‘piety-policy’ projects of the young neo-fundamentalists take the bread out of the mouth of the ‘old’ Islamists.

Gugler’s thorough study is subdivided into six chapters:

“Emotion und Markt: Muğāhidīn islamischer Mission in religionsökonomischer Perspektive” (Emotion and market: Muğāhidīn of Islamic mission in a religio-economic perspective; pp. 17-49) provides a detailed analysis of the present state of research on the Islamic mass movements of South Asia and also gives valuable historical background information.

“Die neue Friedensfähigkeit des Neofundamentalismus: Retraditionalisierungsprozesse der jungen Islamisten der Tablīghī Jamāʿat und Daʿwat-e Islāmī” (The new peace-ability of neo-fundamentalism: Processes of re-traditionalisation of the young Islamists of the Tablīghī Jamāʿat and the Daʿwat-i Islāmī; pp. 89-130) focuses on the impact of post-modernism and post-Islamism and the influence of extremist ideas.

“Sunnaisierung und selbstbestimmte Symbolermächtigung” (Sunnaisation and self-determined symbol-authorisation; pp. 131-166) focuses on the efforts of both movements toward making a mass phenomenon of what Gugler ingeniously refers to as Imitatio Muḥammadi (the imitation of Muḥammad, in clear analogy to Thomas à Kempis’ fifteenth-century Imitatio Christi, today a still well-known handbook for spiritual life arising from the Devotio Moderna movement, of which Kempis was a member).

“Doing Culture: Rituale der Medinaaktivierung” (Doing culture: Rituals of Medina activation; pp. 167-188) explain the practical rituals which characterise the activities of both movements.

“Autorität und Autonomie: ʿAṭṭārīya-Pīrismus in der Praxis” (Authority and autonomy: ʿAṭṭārīyyah Pīrism in practice; pp. 189-206), the sixth and last chapter, explains the links of both movements to Sufism.

Aside from two valuable appendices which provide information on the relevant shaykhs of the Qādiriyah-Riḍwiyyah-ʿAṭṭārīyyah silsilah (especially the places where they died and the years of their deaths) and a transcript of an ʿijtimāʾ-bayān meeting, respectively, Gugler’s study contains also 63 coloured photographs (apparently taken by himself during his field studies) which he put under the headline “Visuelle Eindrücke: Zwischen Megamoschee und Vorstadtislam” (Visual impressions: Between mega mosque and suburban Islam).

In closing, Gugler’s book should be required reading for everyone studying the currently ongoing phenomenon of the marketing of religion. It is hoped that Gugler will soon come up with an English version of his book – a version which will be targeted at a somewhat wider circle of readers.

Notes

1. Gugler, whom this reviewer had the privilege of meeting personally in Berlin in December 2011, graduated in South Asian Studies, Religious Studies, and Psychology from Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich and did his PhD in Islamic Studies at the University of Erfurt. He was a Research Fellow at the Zentrum Moderner Orient in Berlin and is currently a recipient of a Gerda Henkel Foundation scholarship, working for the blog ‘Jihadism Online’ at the Oriental Institute of the University of Vienna, Austria.