

Political Thought of the Scholars of the Deobandi Movement in India

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the introduction, the formatting error “SIntroduction” and the isolated initial letter “S” before “ince the second half of the nineteenth century” should be corrected. This appears to be a layout or drop-cap error, but it gives the first page an unpolished appearance. Since the manuscript is already formatted as a published article, such production-level errors should be removed before peer review or final publication.

In the first introduction paragraph, the statement “Deobandi thought was founded upon a mujtahid-oriented perspective that directed the scholars of this school toward ijthihad in newly emerging issues” requires conceptual clarification. The Deobandi tradition is generally rooted in Hanafi legal authority and often emphasizes disciplined adherence to inherited jurisprudential frameworks; therefore, the phrase “mujtahid-oriented” may be misleading unless the authors define precisely what they mean by ijthihad in this context and distinguish it from taqlid, fatwa practice, and reformist legal reasoning.

In the introduction, the paragraph beginning “Previous studies have mainly focused on the historical origins and educational role of the Deoband movement...” identifies a research gap, but the gap is asserted rather than demonstrated. The authors should strengthen this paragraph by organizing prior literature into clear strands, such as institutional history, madrasa studies, ulama and authority, nationalism and partition, Hindu nationalism, and Deobandi transnationalism, and then show precisely where the present study contributes beyond existing works.

In section 2.1, the sentence “In the Islamic intellectual tradition, politics has not been regarded as a domain independent of religion” is too broad and risks essentializing Islamic political thought. The authors should refine this claim by acknowledging internal plurality across Sunni legal schools, philosophical traditions, Sufi political ethics, modern reformism, and minority Muslim contexts. A more precise formulation would help prevent the theoretical framework from treating “Islamic political thought” as a single unified tradition.

In section 4.1.3, the sentence “Deobandi scholars... followed the Chishti and Naqshbandi orders in the path of purification of the soul and self-discipline” needs stronger evidence and nuance. The Deobandi relationship with Sufism is complex,

involving reformist Sufi practice, critique of popular shrine-based practices, and different affiliations among individual scholars. The authors should avoid presenting all Deobandi scholars as uniformly Chishti and Naqshbandi and should provide examples of specific figures, orders, texts, and practices.

In section 4.2.1, the discussion of Nanautavi and Gangohi states that “a ruler who lacks adherence to the norms of Sharia... is deprived of religious validity,” but it does not cite or analyze the actual writings, fatwas, or recorded positions of these figures. Since this section is central to the article’s argument about legitimacy, the authors should incorporate primary textual evidence or at least detailed secondary reconstructions of Nanautavi’s and Gangohi’s political-theological positions.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In section 2.2, the manuscript introduces Weber’s social action theory and states that “value-rational action is particularly important for analyzing the behavior of religious currents,” yet the findings sections do not explicitly return to Weberian categories. The authors should integrate Weber more systematically by showing, for example, which Deobandi positions are interpreted as value-rational action, which as traditional action, and whether any instrumentally rational strategies appear in Madani’s composite nationalism or in contemporary responses to Hindu nationalism.

In section 2.3, the research background is too brief for an article that claims to offer a systematic intellectual analysis. The paragraph discussing Malekzadeh, Abedi, Zaman, and Ingram provides only a descriptive summary and does not critically evaluate their arguments, methods, or limitations. The authors should expand this section to include more recent and specialized scholarship on Deoband, Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, South Asian Muslim minority politics, and the distinction between Indian Deobandi scholarship and Deobandi currents in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and transnational contexts.

In the research method section, the sentence “the data of the study were collected through library-based and documentary methods and include the works of Deobandi thinkers, historical texts, academic studies on Islam in India, and analytical sources” is too general to meet qualitative research standards. The authors should provide a transparent source-selection protocol, including which primary texts were analyzed, which databases or libraries were used, what keywords were searched, what time period was covered, and how irrelevant or duplicate materials were excluded.

In the research method section, the paragraph beginning “At the analysis stage, qualitative content analysis with an interpretive approach was used...” does not explain how coding was conducted. The authors should specify whether coding was inductive, deductive, or hybrid; whether Weber’s theory supplied a priori codes; how themes were generated; whether a coding matrix was used; and how interpretive credibility was ensured through peer checking, audit trail, reflexive memoing, or triangulation across primary and secondary sources.

The ethical considerations statement says, “In this research, ethical standards including obtaining informed consent, ensuring privacy and confidentiality were observed.” This is inappropriate for a documentary and library-based study unless human participants were involved, which the method section does not indicate. The authors should revise this statement to fit documentary research, for example by noting that no human participants were recruited and that all analyzed materials were publicly available or properly cited.

In section 4.1.1, the paragraph beginning “Deobandi political thought is rooted in the intellectual tradition of Shah Waliullah Dehlawi...” makes a strong genealogical claim but relies mainly on secondary citation and general exposition. The authors should strengthen this section by adding direct engagement with Shah Waliullah’s relevant concepts and showing specifically how those concepts were transmitted into Deobandi institutional and political thought. Without textual evidence, the argument risks appearing as a linear intellectual genealogy rather than a demonstrated historical relationship.

In section 4.1.1, the sentence “This intellectual continuity gave Deobandi political thought a coherence that distinguished it from reactive Islamic currents and gave it a fundamentalist character in the sense of returning to principles, not in the sense of extremism” needs careful revision. The term “fundamentalist” is highly loaded in contemporary religious and political studies

and may mislead readers unless it is explicitly theorized. The authors should either define it using an established conceptual framework or replace it with a less ambiguous term such as “scripturalist,” “revivalist,” “reformist,” or “principle-oriented.”

In section 4.1.2, the paragraph stating that “the legitimacy of any power is assessed according to the extent of its conformity with religious norms” remains conceptually abstract. Since the article focuses on political thought, the authors should specify which Hanafi categories are relevant to legitimacy, authority, minority status, obedience, public order, justice, fatwa, or governance. This would make the analysis more jurisprudentially precise and prevent the discussion of Sharia from remaining at the level of broad generalization.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.