

Linda Hewitt

"Isamilis do not look Muslim". The Isma'ili Community and Constructions of Islam and Modernity in Germany

Master's Thesis

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“Isma‘ilis Do Not Look Muslim”

The Isma‘ili Community and Constructions of Islam and Modernity in Germany

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements of the degree of
Master of Arts
In Middle Eastern Studies

Author: Linda Hewitt
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The only constant is change.

Heraclitus

Abstract

This thesis examines Isma‘ili individuals’ “lived religion” through personal views on religious values combined with daily practices in German society. Since a Eurocentric view on Islam often fails to recognize the complexities of Muslim communities while emphasizing the Muslim faith as incompatible with “modernity”, the current study of the Isma‘ili branch serves as an example of Muslim practices that adapt and adjust its divine principles to a modern and secular society while maintain its unique religious identity. Important values of everyday life are observed in connection to Ulrich Beck’s and Anthony Gidden’s “reflexive modernity” theory as a process that encompasses old and new traditions while adapting ambiguous and pluralist forms of contemporary societies.

Key Words: Isma‘ilism, Aga Khan, Islam in Germany, Modernity, Pluralism