

A PIPS Research Journal

Conflict and Peace Studies

VOLUME 3

JUL-SEP 2010

NUMBER 3

Radicalization in Pakistan

A Comprehensive Study - II



Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS)

A PIPS Research Journal

Conflict and Peace Studies

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JUL-SEP 2010

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Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS)

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ISSN 2072-0408

Price: Rs 500.00

US\$ 40.00

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Comment

Folds of Radicalization

Muhammad Amir Rana

Pakistan faces a litany of challenges today on account of phenomena such as jihad and militancy, religious extremism and radicalization. Even though the people of Pakistan—who largely lack awareness about the threats extremism and radicalization pose—are the ultimate victims of such hazards, at the societal level they provide ideological support to radical and extremist forces and facilitate them in waging jihad. In a society like Pakistan, where religiosity is a largely innate characteristic of the populace and critical thinking has generally been discouraged, such ideological initiations play a critical role in influencing public opinion.

A counter-narrative remains conspicuous by its absence. The state and society are yet to realize the nature and implications of the threat. Academics consider radicalization a political phenomenon, triggered by inequality, socio-economic injustices and inequitable state policies. Clerics and religious scholars look at the phenomenon in the socio-political perspective but through religious shades. They argue that Talibanization is the outcome of state policies, including its failure to enforce *Shariah* in the country. They also express concerns over ‘westernization’ of Pakistani society. The state links radicalization with external factors. The respective narratives are also reflected in public opinion. But radicalization is a far more complex phenomenon than these narratives are willing to concede and most of the prevalent notions in Pakistan lack empirical evidence. Assumptions would not lead one towards solutions.

Most of the definitions of radicalization identify the phenomenon as a process in which an individual or a group regards his/her or their ideas and objectives noble and superior to others. The desire to realize such objectives at all cost may lead to use of violence.

A recent study on radicalization by Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) concludes that the phenomenon affects all segments of society, irrespective of affluence. The study finds that poverty, inequality and economic deprivations

contribute to radicalization in some areas but are not drivers of the phenomenon. The study also notes increasing religiosity in society, and though it does not find a direct link between violent radicalization and religiosity, it identifies religious extremism as the common factor in all the visible trends and patterns of radicalization in Pakistan.

Various indicators support the study's findings that radicalization in Pakistan is driven by multiple factors and occurs on three levels. Firstly, among lower income groups, mainly in poorly governed areas including the tribal areas bordering Afghanistan and the nearby districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, as well as parts of southern Punjab and interior Sindh, where poverty, inequality and loose administrative structures spur radicalization and terrorism. Madrassas and networks of militant and sectarian organizations in these areas act as catalysts, exploiting these factors to further their extremist agendas, leading to radicalization and sectarian violence. It is not surprising that sectarian outfits, such as Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Tehrik-e-Jaafariya and small sectarian outfits of the Ahl-e-Hadiath and Barelvi sects have managed to establish and sustain strongholds in these areas. In the tribal areas, these factors can further contribute to the ongoing insurgency. Militant organizations also recruit their foot soldiers from these areas and in many terrorist attacks in Punjab the attackers have been traced back to the southern parts of the province.

The levels and trends of radicalization are different in the middle income group. The drivers of radicalization in urban or semi-urban areas, including central and north Punjab, Karachi and Hyderabad in Sindh, settled districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Kashmir are mainly political. These trends are influenced by both internal and external political developments and promotion of a radical narrative by radical groups and media manifests itself in misplaced notions of jihad and acts of terrorism. Militant organizations such as Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Muhammad, Hizb-e-Islami and Al Qaeda-affiliated terrorist cells mainly rely on promotion of radical tendencies to find new recruits. Radicalization is not specific to a community in these parts, though madrasa students and the more religiously inclined communities are usually considered more receptive or vulnerable to absorbing violent tendencies. A closer look at the cadre of militant organizations involved in Kashmir and Afghanistan mainly finds youth educated at formal educational institutions. Student wings of religious political parties as well as sectarian, charitable, radical and militant

organizations remain active in colleges and universities. Other wings of such organizations seek to influence various segments of society. Almost every religious organization, whether its ambitions are political, sectarian or militant, maintains wings with a specific focus on women, traders, lawyers, doctors and teachers, among others. These wings have a major role in promoting radicalization among middle income groups and have an array of tools at their disposal to increase their influence. They consistently rely on radical literature and publications and disseminate the message not only through the usual printed word but also through CDs and DVDs. Militant organizations in Pakistan increasingly use the Internet as an instrument to promote radicalization and spur recruitment, with the youth from middle income groups as their specific target. International terrorist organizations, such as Al Qaeda, have also benefited from this level of radicalization, in the form of generating financial and human resource, as well as a favorable perception among the population in some parts of the country.

Growing alienation from society is the major driver of radicalization among the upper-middle class and the so-called elite of the country. Radical groups such as Hizbut Tahrir and Al-Huda are active in indoctrinating this segment of the population. Both organizations brand themselves as agents of change though they focus on different target groups. Al-Huda mainly focuses on women, with the stated objective of “bringing them back to their religious roots”. Hizbut Tahrir has been striving to create a niche among the influential elite as part of its top-down approach to realize its objective of introduction of a caliphate in the country.

However, the presence of radical trends in these areas and among the various segments of population does not entail that these trends are popular tendencies. Similar levels of radicalization, minor variations notwithstanding, can be found in other Muslim countries. A recent survey by Pew Research Center finds many similarities in public opinion on the issue across Muslim countries. Interestingly, Pakistan and Turkey are among Muslims states with relatively much lower support for terrorism among the people. The people of the two countries are concerned about an increase in extremism linked to religion. The level of radicalization is much higher in Indonesia, Egypt, Nigeria and Jordan.

However, Pakistan faces the most unnerving degree of terrorism, which far exceeds anything faced by the countries with a decidedly higher level of radicalization. And that begs the question. What are the main factors contributing to such a violent landscape in Pakistan despite popular opposition of terrorism? There is no one answer. Firstly, society may be against violence, but not necessarily against the agendas of extremists. The second, and the most important, feature is the presence of militant networks on Pakistani soil. Over 100 militant and Taliban groups and foreign terrorist networks operating in and from the tribal areas of Pakistan present the key difference between Pakistan and other Muslim states. Radicalization and terrorism have a cause-and-effect relationship in Pakistan. The challenge of terrorism cannot be overcome without weakening this bound. But moving beyond assumptions and gaining an empirical understanding of the phenomenon of radicalization has to be the first step.

Survey

Radicalization: Perceptions of Educated Youth in Pakistan *

Introduction

Any study that seeks to understand the phenomenon of radicalization in any society cannot afford to ignore the educated youth. This segment gains even more significance in Pakistan where an estimated 103 million people, or 63 percent of the population, are less than 25 years old¹ and often lack access to education and employment opportunities. According to the Economic Survey of Pakistan 2007-2008, there were 113 mainstream universities and 1,371 degree colleges in the country in 2007, where 424,271 and 324,988 students were enrolled, respectively.² There were also some unregistered universities and degree colleges but their number was negligible.

The ratio of youth is a significant demographic feature of Pakistan's population. The rising militancy and violence in the country, deteriorating socio-economic conditions and a decrease in employment opportunities have caused disenchantment among the youth. The youth in conflict-hit areas are the most affected because of closure of educational institutions and discontinuity of education due to a combination of militancy and security forces' operations. Political violence at university campuses, particularly in Karachi, has also had severe implications for Pakistani students. Students hailing from conflict areas, studying in Islamabad, show symptoms of major psychological problems.³

Further, incidents of harassment and violence in the country's leading universities present worrying signs of possible radical tendencies among the educated youth.⁴ However, despite grave implications, not a single study has been conducted so far to focus on radicalization among the educated youth of Pakistan. The present study is an effort to assess the general perceptions of the educated youth in Pakistan on specific social, political and religious issues

* The survey was conducted by eight field researchers. Saba Noor, Wajahat Ali and Khurram Iqbal contributed to the analysis and the survey report.

in order to identify factors that enhance radical sentiments among them. The scope of the study is limited to students of post-graduate colleges and universities in Pakistan.⁵

Radicalization among Muslim youth has emerged as a global phenomenon. The governments and national and international bodies not only recognize the scale of the threat, but considerable academic efforts have also been devoted to studying the issue in a scientific manner. However, numerous lacunae remain. Firstly, a major part of the literature available on youth radicalization is focused almost solely on violent radicals, overlooking non-violent manifestations of radicalization. Secondly, the literature on youth radicalization is more theoretical and lacks empirical research, especially in the context of Pakistan.

Given the higher risk of youth radicalization among Muslim communities, European scholars have contributed an enormous volume of knowledge on the topic in their own demographic context. In his book “Radical Islam Rising: Muslim Extremism in the West”, Quintan Wiktorowicz explains how young individuals are drawn to radical groups and convinced to engage in high-cost and high-risk activism.⁶ However, while analyzing what influences a young Muslim to join radical militant groups such as Al-Muhajiroon and Hizbut Tahrir, Wiktorowicz overlooked non-violent radicals who are not necessarily involved in terrorist activities. Factors behind non-violent radicalization may not be the same.

“Young Muslims in Italy” by Donatella della Porta and Lorenzo Bosi is one of the most comprehensive research reports focusing on patterns of youth radicalization in Italy. Using concepts and hypotheses developed within social movement studies, the report investigates how perceived political opportunities, at different geographical levels, influence young Muslims’ attitudes and behavior in terms of social and political commitment. The scope of this study is only limited to Italy and can be extended by applying similar theoretical and empirical components.

Colleen McCue and Kathryn Haahr have discussed patterns of violent radicalization and youth violence in the American perspective.⁷ The authors outline the impacts of the European radicalization experience on American society and how the youth ‘bulge’ of radical Islamists in the US transforms

into homegrown terrorists. Since the paper lacks empirical data, it is difficult to determine the factors of violent and non-violent radicalization among young Muslim Americans.

Vitaly V. Naumkin presents a historical background of Islamic radicalization in the context of Central Asia in his book "Radical Islam in Central Asia: between pen and rifle."⁸ However, the study does not measure the level of youth radicalization in the Central Asian region, nor does it assess the social, political and cultural variables that influence young individuals in Central Asia to subscribe to radical ideologies or explains why individuals join radical groups.

Apart from these studies, a great body of literature exists on radicalization in different geographic contexts with a specific focus on youth. In the case of Pakistan, however, the issue has rarely been a topic of empirical or theoretical research. Indeed only a few studies have tried to explore the issue in a methodical manner.

The closest attempt to exploring factors of violent radicalization among Pakistani youth has been made by Sohail Abbas in "Probing the Jihadi Mindset."⁹ He has endeavored to explore the 'Jihadi' mindset by conducting case studies of militants involved in the "Afghan Jihad" who are detained in Haripur and Peshawar jails in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in northwestern Pakistan. Abbas has focused on individual psychological analyses of the sample to understand their mindset. Since the sample only consisted of detained militants, the non-violent manifestation of radicalization among Pakistani youth in the larger society remained unexplored.

Moeed Yousaf's analysis paper, "Prospects of Youth Radicalization in Pakistan: Implications for US Policy," is a description of indicators that are known to increase the likelihood of youth radicalization.¹⁰ Devoid of empirical data, the paper can only be described as an objective analysis of the trend of youth radicalization in Pakistan, not a comprehensive empirical and theoretical study. It does not necessarily measure the scale of the threat or explore the factors of youth radicalization with academic rigor.

However, some studies and opinion polls have tried to bridge this gap, attempting to measure the scale of radicalization among Pakistani youth and

exploring the youth perspectives of jihad, extremism and radicalization, which is the focal point of this paper.

Herald, a monthly publication of Dawn group from Karachi, conducted a mass survey in late 2009 to seek Pakistani youth's opinion on a range of issues, including politics, war, economy, suicide bombings and the American presence in Afghanistan. The survey yielded interesting findings regarding youth perspectives and some answers confirmed conventional wisdom on multi-dimensional issues facing contemporary Pakistan. However, though the report of the survey carried out by Herald describes various variables causing radical tendencies among Pakistani youth, it falls short of analyzing the findings in any particular theoretical framework. The survey attempts to make the case that extremist tendencies are on the rise among Pakistani youth but fails to explain why some individuals are more inclined towards these ideas.

Saba Noor's case study "Radicalization among Educated Pakistani Youth" is an empirical portrayal that identifies trends of radicalization among educated Pakistani youth, albeit on a small scale. The study, which revolves around both male and female students of Quaid-e-Azam University in Islamabad, indicates that the educated youth of Pakistan is generally not radical and supports equal rights for men and women.¹¹

Internationally, the issue of youth radicalization has attracted enormous research work. But Pakistan lacks empirical studies to explore patterns of radicalization among different segments of youth in a scientific way.

The present study is an effort to explore the phenomenon of radicalization among the educated youth of Pakistan through empirical research that will help to understand the general perceptions of the educated youth on certain important issues that have the potential to radicalize this segment of society.

Methodology

The present study is a combination of theoretical and empirical research methods aimed at exploring the general perceptions of the educated youth regarding various social, political and religious aspects that can play a vital role in radicalizing this segment of society. A countrywide survey was conducted in various universities and colleges, and a wide range of literature by Pakistan and foreign authors and researchers was reviewed for this purpose.

Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) developed a comprehensive questionnaire in English language with a total of 63 questions in four main categories: personal information; leisure and media interests; views on religion; and views on politics. From February to April 2010, a team of eight field researchers visited 16 public and private universities and post-graduate public colleges across the country. The selection of universities reflected the population of the four provinces, the federal capital, Azad Kashmir, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Gilgit Baltistan, the region formerly known as Northern Areas. (See *Annexure 1*) As many as 345 university students, 40 percent of them girls, participated in the survey. The response to the questionnaires was coded, tabulated and analyzed under Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 16.0, the computer program used for statistical analysis.

Findings

Most of the respondents (99.4 percent) were Muslims. The survey population was equally divided between students from rural (49.6 percent) and urban (50.4 percent) areas. It was observed that the families of the majority of the respondents had migrated from villages to cities as 58 percent said that their parents used to live in rural areas.

The majority of the respondents had received their basic education from public schools. However, a sizeable proportion had studied at private (20.5 percent) and elite English medium educational institutions (13.6 percent).

Most of the respondents said that they listened to music (89.2 percent), watched movies (80.1 percent) and read poetry (59.4 percent). A substantial number (45.6 percent) also read fiction in their spare time.

Sources of Information

Most of the respondents relied on multiple sources of information to keep themselves abreast of the latest developments. These information sources included television channels, newspapers and the Internet. The survey findings also suggest that most of the respondents wanted to keep themselves significantly informed. Around 93 percent of the respondents owned television sets. A little over half of the survey population (50.2 percent) relied

on Geo News, an Urdu cable news channel, for information and only four percent said they watched QTV, a religious education channel. (See Table 1)

Table 1: Favorite TV Channel

Which is your favorite TV channel?		
	Frequency	Valid Percentage
PTV (state-owned)	43	13.1
Geo News	165	50.2
QTV	13	4
ARY	9	2.7
Star Plus	15	4.6
Any other channel	36	10.9
More than one channel	34	10.3
Don't know	14	4.3
Total	329	100
*16 respondents did not respond to the question. ** SPSS 16.0 software distributed the 16 missing values accordingly with the distribution of frequencies of the 345 answers given.		

Nearly 86 percent of the respondents said they read newspapers. Most of them named mainstream Urdu broadsheets such as *Jang* (40.7percent), *Express* (19.9 percent) and *Nawa-e-Waqt* (9.4percent). Only a few were interested in militant media publications such as *Daily Islam* (2.7percent) or *Zarb-e-Momin* (0.7 percent). (See Table 2) This despite the militant media's claims of having greater outreach and circulation than some of the leading mainstream media publications in the country. Nevertheless, it is pertinent to mention that some strands of militant discourse can also be observed in the conservative segments of Pakistani media. Hence, young people remain exposed to radical ideas whether they read militant media publications or not.

Table 2: Favorite Pakistani Newspapers

Which is your favorite Pakistani newspaper?		
	Frequency	Valid Percentage
Nawa-e-Waqt	28	9.4
Jang	121	40.7
Islam	8	2.7
Express	59	19.9
Zarb-e-Momin	2	0.7
More than one	17	5.7
Others	52	17.5
Don't know/ no response	10	3.4
Total	297	100
*48 respondents said that they do not read any newspaper.		

Attitude Towards Religion

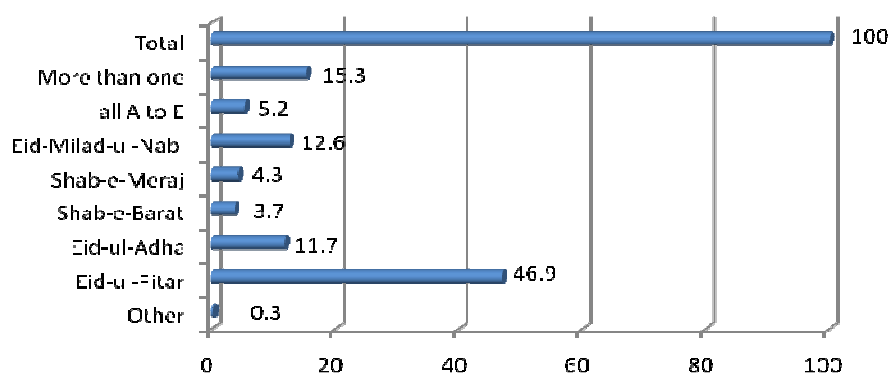
An overwhelming majority of the respondents (92.4 percent) maintained that religion played a pivotal role in their life. However, only 51.7 percent said that they had attended any religious service in the last seven days. More than half (55.8 percent) insisted, nevertheless, that religious values were critical to Pakistan's progress. Significantly, 51.3 percent of the respondents endorsed the country's hybrid legal system in which *Shariah* is not the only source of law. A sizeable percentage of the survey population (28.2 percent), however, believed that religion should be the only source of law in Pakistan. It was observed that while a significant majority of the respondents from Punjab (76.5 percent) believed that religious values were critical for the country's progress, a much smaller number of respondents from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (36 percent) and FATA (53.8 percent) agreed with them. Nonetheless, the view of 50 percent of the respondents from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 61.5 percent from FATA that *Shariah* must be the only source of law in the country might be due to the impact of Talibanization in the region. (See Table 3)

Table 3: Shariahas a Source of Law

	<i>Shariah must be the only source of law</i>	<i>Shariah must be a source of law, but not the only source</i>	<i>Shariah should not be the source of law</i>	<i>Don't know/ no response</i>
Punjab	16.9%	61.0%	9.3%	12.7%
Sindh	22.9%	44.3%	1.4%	31.4%
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	50.0%	40.0%	0.0%	10.0%
Balochistan	30.0%	52.5%	12.5%	5.0%
FATA	61.5%	30.8%	0.0%	7.7%
Islamabad	25.0%	68.8%	0.0%	6.3%
Azad Jammu & Kashmir	47.4%	42.1%	10.5%	0.0%
Northern Areas	13.3%	53.3%	0.0%	33.3%

Nearly 95 percent of the respondents said they celebrated Islamic holidays. Almost half of them (46.8 percent) named Eid-ul-Fitr as their favorite religious festival. Very few celebrated Shab-e-Barat (4.1 percent), Shab-e-Meraj (4.1 percent) or Eid-Milad-un-Nabi (12.6 percent), the three Islamic holidays which are considered *bid'at* (innovations) by the Ahl-e-Hadith and Deobandi sects of Islam. (See Chart 1)

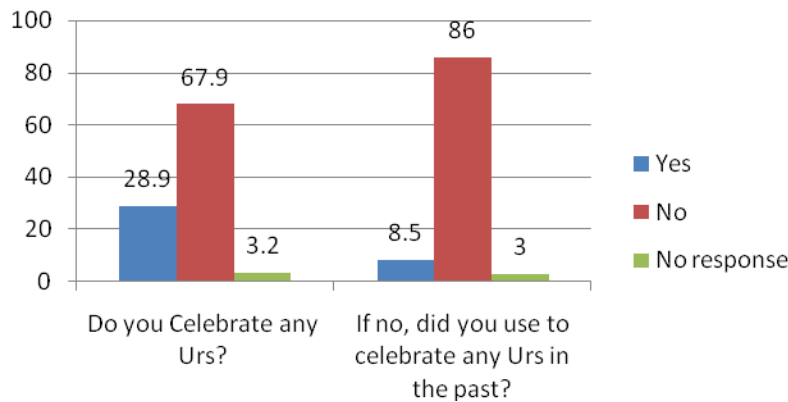
Chart 1: Favorite Islamic Holiday



Around 68 percent of the respondents said they did not attend festivals such as *Urs*, or death anniversary, of a Sufi saint. This was despite the fact that 8.5

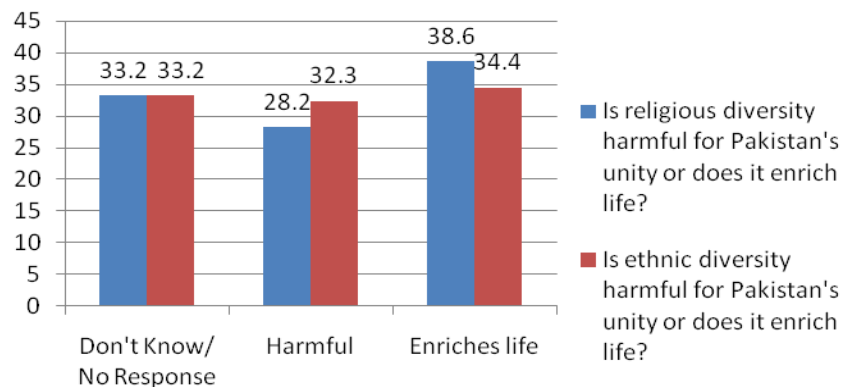
percent of them used to participate in such events previously. Their answer indicated a movement away from Islam's benign mystical tradition towards a more literalist and orthodox version. (See Chart 2)

Chart 2: Participation in *Urs* Celebration



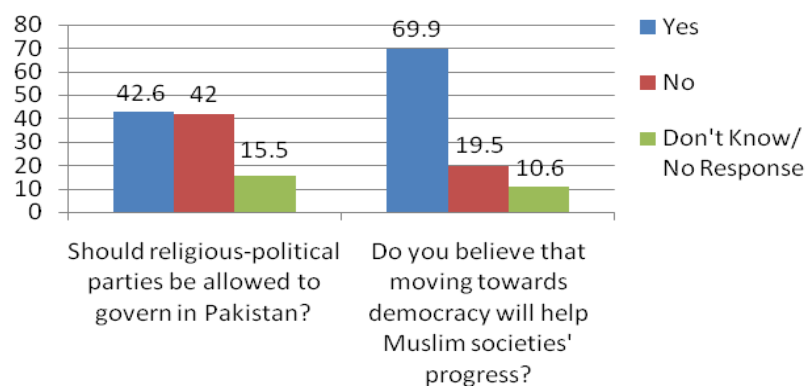
As many as 38.6 percent of the respondents considered that religious diversity enriched life, while 28.2 percent believed that it was harmful for Pakistan's unity. Similarly, 34.4 percent of the respondents viewed that ethnic diversity was necessary to enrich life, whereas 32.3 percent considered it detrimental to Pakistan's unity. (See Chart 3)

Chart 3: Religious and Ethnic Diversity



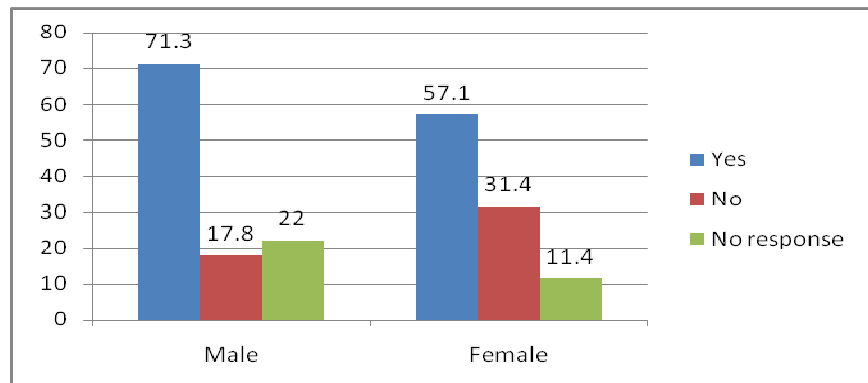
The respondents were almost equally divided when asked if religious-political parties should get a chance to rule the country, with 42.6 percent endorsing the idea and 42 percent opposing it. Meanwhile, 69.9 percent believed that a movement towards democracy could ensure progress in the Muslim world. But a fairly large percentage, 19.5 percent of the respondents, thought that following the democratic path would not lead to progress. (See Chart 4)

Chart 4: Role of Religious-Political Parties and Democracy in Governance



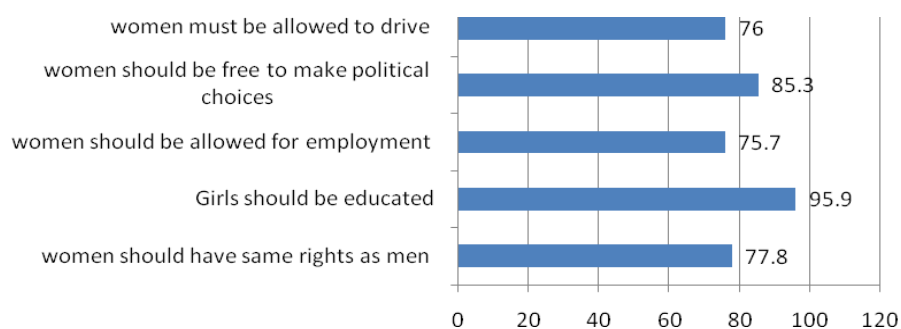
Most of the respondents (65.5 percent) also thought that women should observe *pardah* (veil) outside their homes. The ratio of male students favoring that women observe *pardah* is quite high compared to female respondents. (See Chart 5)

Chart 5: Should Women Observe *Pardah* Outside Their Homes?



A large proportion of the respondents stated that women had the same rights as men (77.8 percent) and there should be no restriction on their access to education (95.9 percent) or to gainful employment (75.7 percent). Most of the respondents believed that women should be free to make political choices (85.3 percent) and must be allowed to drive (76 percent). (See Chart 6)

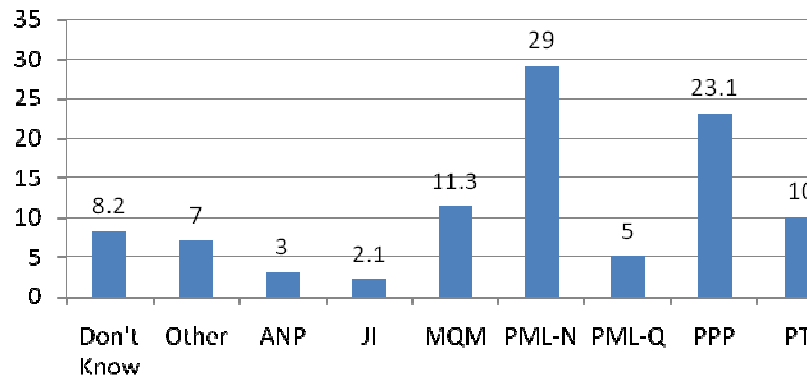
Chart 6: Views on Women's Rights



Political Attitude

Most of the respondents (66.4 percent) appeared to be politically conscious and said they will cast their vote in the next elections, indicating the desire to use the democratic process to bring about a change. Significantly, the respondents largely seemed frustrated by the current state of affairs in Pakistan: only 23.1 percent said that they would vote for the incumbent Pakistan People's Party (PPP); 29 percent said they would support the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), the main opposition party in the country. Only 2.1 percent said they would vote for the right-wing Jamaat-e-Islami (JI). This is despite the fact that the JI has penetrated various educational institutions in Pakistan and has a strong student wing. Interestingly, 10 percent of the respondents named the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), led by former cricket captain Imran Khan, as their preferred political party, indicating that the PTI was gradually gaining influence among the country's educated youth. There was 11.3 percent support for the urban Sindh-based Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM); 5 percent for Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) that was allied with former military dictator General Pervez Musharraf; and 3 percent for the Awami National Party (ANP), which is part of the ruling coalition in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh.

Chart 7: Preferred Political Party

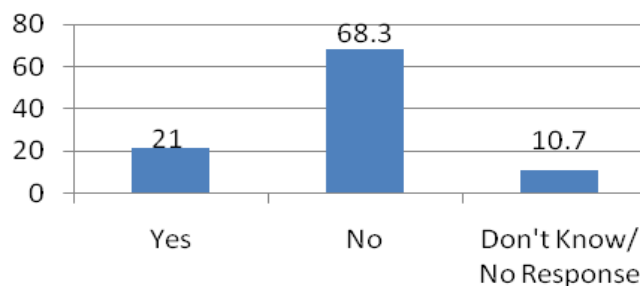


Despite the desire to bring about a positive change in society, most of the respondents (69.5 percent) said they were not involved in student politics. Those who claimed otherwise either supported the People's Student Federation (23.3 percent), affiliated with the PPP, or Muslim Student Federation (Nawaz) (12 percent), the student wing of the PML-N. Very few said they supported the JI student wing Islami Jamiat Talaba (6.4 percent), or Anjuman-e-Talaba-e-Islam (5.1 percent).

Security Issues

The majority of the survey population (68.3 percent) believed that Pakistan should not support the US-led "war on terror". (See Chart 8)

Chart 8: Should Pakistan Support the US-led "War on Terror"?



* Seven respondents did not respond to the question.

** SPSS 16.0 software distributed the seven missing values accordingly with the distribution of frequencies of the 338 answers

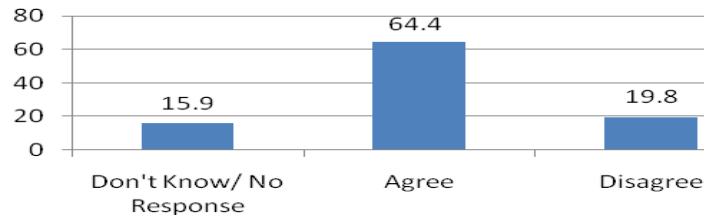
The highest proportion of the respondents (29.5 percent) identified the United States as the main threat to Pakistan's security, 14.7 percent mentioned India and a small proportion referred to Al Qaeda (6.5 percent) and the Taliban (6.8 percent). (See Table 4)

Table 4: Main Threats to Pakistan

Which of the following is the main threat to Pakistan?		
Threat	Frequency	Valid Percentage
India	50	14.7
Iran	3	0.9
United States	100	29.5
Al Qaeda	22	6.5
Anti-democratic initiatives	22	6.5
Taliban	23	6.8
A combination of any two threats cited above	63	18.6
A combination of any three threats cited above	39	11.5
A combination of more than three threats cited above	17	5
Total	339	100
<i>* Six respondents did not answer the question.</i>		
<i>** SPSS 16.0 software distributed the six missing values accordingly with the distribution of frequencies of the 339 answers given.</i>		

However, 79.4 percent of the respondents said that they did not believe that the Pakistani Taliban were doing any service to Islam. As many as 74 percent of the respondents believed that terrorism could not be eliminated as long as poverty and exploitation persisted. A clear majority (64.4 percent) also stated that nothing justified terrorism or taking of human lives. (See Chart 9)

Chart 9: Nothing Justifies Terrorism and Taking of Human Lives

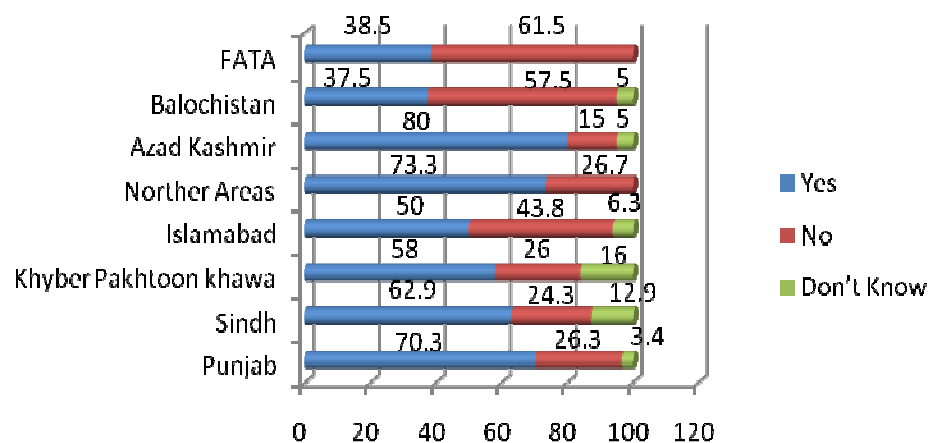


*11 respondents did not respond to the question.

** SPSS 16.0 software distributed the 11 missing values accordingly with the distribution of frequencies of the 334 answers given.

Most of the respondents (85.6 percent) believed that Islam did not allow actions such as suicide bombings. A large number of the respondents (61.7 percent) supported the military operations against the militants in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA. Most of the students in Punjab (70.3 percent), Sindh (62.9 percent), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (58 percent), Azad Kashmir (80 percent) and Gilgit Baltistan (73.3 percent) favored the security operations. But most of the respondents from FATA (61.5 percent) and Balochistan (57.5 percent) opposed them. (See Chart 10)

Chart 10: Support for Military Operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA



Conclusion

In recent years, there has been increasing realization of the need to curb and reverse the trend of radicalization in Pakistan. However, there is little evidence to suggest that the efforts made so far have met a great deal of success. On the contrary, the rising militancy and violence in the country point to further deterioration. Counter-measures have focused almost exclusively on the nexus of radicalization, violence and terrorism and little attention has been paid to factors behind non-violent manifestations of radicalization. A one-size-fits-all approach seems increasingly unlikely to deliver in the circumstances. That is precisely why it is vital to move beyond one-dimensional responses and focus on various segments of the population to assess inclinations towards radicalization in order to come up with an appropriate response in each case and, most importantly, have empirical basis for such measures rather than proceeding on assumptions. An assessment of non-violent radical tendencies of the educated youth may offer valuable insight not only into future prospects but also future patterns of radicalization.

The findings of this study offer a peep into the mindset of the educated youth, highlighting some areas of concern but also some that hold considerable promise. The clear preference among the youth for peaceful and democratic means to effect change is something that can be built upon. Ensuring that such possibilities for change remain available and meaningful can be vital both in countering radical tendencies and preventing such tendencies from taking root among the overwhelmingly young population of the country. In that respect, the perception among a fairly large number of respondents that democracy would not help Pakistan deal with its problems, as well as widespread frustration over the current state of affairs in the country, needs to be changed. Equally important among the social and religious variables that influence young individuals is the resistance to ethnic and religious diversity among a large section of Pakistani youth, necessitating urgent efforts to counter this distrust.

A perception among the educated youth that the United States—and not Al Qaeda or the Taliban—constitutes the main threat to Pakistan's security perhaps demonstrates a continued denial among the youth of the risks that extremists poses, rather than any large-scale sympathy for the extremists.

However, appropriate awareness and education campaigns must seek to contextualize the threats.

Views on gender equality, particularly the changing opinions on gender stereotypes, and the role and influence of the relatively new independent electronic media, such as cable news channels, also hold promise.

This study is a small first step towards providing empirical basis for the strategies to counter and prevent radicalization and justifies a further focus on the cited and additional variables to map patterns of non-violent radical tendencies, which must inform the counter-radicalization discourse.

Annexure 1:

S.No	List of Universities
1.	International Islamic University, Islamabad
2.	Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi
3.	Lahore University of Management Science, Lahore
4.	University of the Punjab, Lahore
5.	Bahauddin Zikrya University, Multan
6.	Government Degree College, Dera Ghazi Khan
7.	Peshawar University, Peshawar
8.	Islamia College, Peshawar
9.	Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan
10.	University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Muzaffarabad
11.	Government College Mirpur, Azad Jammu and Kashmir
12.	Karakoram University, Gilgit
13.	Karachi University, Karachi
14.	Iqra University, Karachi
15.	Sindh University, Jamshoro
16.	University of Balochistan, Quetta

Notes

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- ¹ Youth in Pakistan, United Nations Development Programme Pakistan, <http://undp.org.pk/undp-and-the-youth.html>, accessed on August 17, 2010.
 - ² "Education", Pakistan Economic Survey 2007-2008, Chapter 10, p. 173, <http://www.finance.gov.pk/survey/chapters/10-Education08.pdf>, accessed on August 17, 2010.
 - ³ A focused group discussion was held at Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS), Islamabad on March 26, 2009 with six students at Quaid-e-Azam University, who hailed from conflict-hit parts of the country.
 - ⁴ Saba Noor, "Tarakkiyati Amal: Intiha Pasandi kay Tadaruk Main Muaawin", monthly Tajziat, Islamabad, June 2010.
 - ⁵ A survey conducted by eight field researchers with students at 16 leading educational institutions across the country forms the basis of this study. Saba Noor, Wajahat Ali and Khurram Iqbal contributed to the analysis and the survey report.
 - ⁶ Quintan Wiktorowicz, "Radical Islam Rising: Muslim Extremism in the West", Oxford, 1st ed, United States of America, 2005.
 - ⁷ Colleen McCue and Kathryn Haahr, "The Impact of Global Youth Bulges on Islamist Radicalization and Violence", CTS Sentinel, October 2008, Vol. 1, Issue 11.
 - ⁸ Vitaly V. Naumkin, "Radical Islam in Central Asia: between pen and rifle", Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1st ed, United States of America, 2005.
 - ⁹ Sohail Abbas, "Probing the Jihadi mindset", National Book Foundation, Islamabad, 2007.
 - ¹⁰ Moeed Yousaf, "Prospects of Youth Radicalization in Pakistan: Implications for US Policy", the Brookings Project on US Relations with the Islamic World, Analysis Paper Number 14, October 2008.
 - ¹¹ Saba Noor, "Radicalization among Educated Pakistani Youth", Conflict and Peace Studies, Pak Institute for Peace Studies, Vol. 2, No. 1, January-March 2009.

Abstracts

A Link Between Poverty and Radicalization in Pakistan

Manzar Zaidi

The phenomenon of radicalization has played a major part in the ongoing militancy in Pakistan's restive tribal regions along the Pak-Afghan border. This paper traces a possible link between radicalization and poverty in the country by surveying 1,147 respondents, consisting of a sample universe of the poor compared with more affluent control groups. All the provinces of Pakistan were included in the sample universe, with the findings centered on an analytical discourse of poverty in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces, and a possible link to escalating militancy there. The analysis engages with relevant literature to argue for the development of sub-nationally researched, fresh perspectives on linkages between poverty and radicalization in Pakistan.

Religious Behaviors in Pakistan: Impact on Social Development

Muhammad Azam

Based on findings of a country-wide survey and personal observations of the author, this paper analyzes how and in what ways the religious behaviors of Pakistanis impact upon the process of social development in the country. In this context, social conditions in Pakistan, religious influences, aggravation of social institutions, exploitation in the name of religion, religio-political behavior, religious behavior of the ruling elite, religious divides, sectarianism, militancy, and terrorism have also been discussed.

Pakistan's Responses to Terrorism: A Broad Overview

Wajahat Ali

Pakistan has been facing the menace of religious militancy for many years. Yet, it has failed to formulate a coherent and comprehensive strategy to

Abstracts

defeat radical outfits and neutralize their extremist ideology. This paper not only takes a broad overview of the country's responses to the twin challenges of radicalization and Islamist violence but also recommends steps that must be taken to win this war. Giving a concise account of Pakistan's involvement in the pre-9/11 Afghanistan, it argues that the country could not have distanced itself from the US-led "war on terror" in the region. It also contends that militant groups are posing a grave threat to the state not only because they find its alliance with the United States unpalatable but also because they despise its constitution and democratic system.

A Link Between Poverty & Radicalization in Pakistan

Manzar Zaidi

Introduction

Contemporary literature review has a tendency to suggest that the presumed post-9/11 link between a reduction in poverty and an increase in educational attainment and a simultaneous de-escalation of international terrorism is quite tenuous. The connections between poverty, education and terrorism have been suggested to be ephemeral, inasmuch as the recent profiles of terrorists suggest that they are not the stereotyped, impoverished and uneducated youths as was generally presumed. Instead they are the progeny of years of frustrated political aspirations and indignity, which inculcates an acute sense of insecurity and consequent hatred against those who are perceived to have brought about these conditions. Much scholarly ink has been spilt in the quest for answers to what produces terrorists, and many theories have been put forward. These range from crime-related theories of terrorism as a rational choice model (Becker, 1968; Ehrlich, 1973; Freeman, 1996; and Piehl, 1998), homicide (and violent terrorism as a manifestation of it) as being decoupled from economics (Piehl, 1998; and Ruhm, 2000) and the demand and supply of hatred (Glaeser, 2002). Economic models which pertain to crime have also been applied to international terrorism (Landes, 1978; and Sandler, Tschirhart and Cauley, 1983). However, economic theories which interpolate terrorism as a variable that could be defined by a rational economic choice model, have all tended to stray from the point that economics by itself cannot explain terrorism; clearly more complex variables are needed.

Studies using hate crime as a variable, which could be examined as having relevance to terrorism have also not yielded unambiguous results. Further analysis using hate crime becomes even more difficult when one remembers that the co-relation of terrorism with economics itself rests on shaky ground. (Hamm, 1998; Kressell, 1996; and Green, Glaser and Rich 1998). Jefferson and Pryor (1999) conclude: “[E]conomic or sociological explanations for the existence of hate groups in an area are far less important than adventitious

circumstances due to history and particular conditions.” These projections support Lerner’s classic hypothesis that “the [e]xtremists are not simply the ‘have-nots,’ suggesting rather that they are the ‘want-mores’” (Lerner 1958, p. 368). Lerner has also hypothesized that “[p]overty prevails only among the apolitical mass” (Lerner 1958, p. 368). Angrist’s research in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has indicated that even significant increases in educational attainment of Palestinians in the 1980s could not alleviate the economic troubles of more highly educated Palestinians (Angrist, 1995). The shortcoming of the applicability of the study to a universalistic paradigm, was, however, pointed out.

A simplistic rational choice model of terrorism for economically deprived and uneducated individuals does not even apply unambiguously to the most extreme form of terrorist—the suicide bomber. According to Nasra Hassan’s seminal study: “None of them (Palestinian suicide bombers) were uneducated, desperately poor, simple-minded or depressed. Many were middle class and, unless they were fugitives, held paying jobs” (Nasra Hassan, 2001). These results resonate well with Berrebi’s econometric models of Palestinian suicide bombers; the study concluded that the suicide bombers in question tended to have a higher high school and college attendance average than the general Palestinian population, and that they were less likely to come from poverty-stricken families (Berrebi, 2003). Studies utilizing a broad-based sample representative of many different cultures and terrorist organizations have also tended to project little direct relationship between terrorism and poverty (Russell and Miller, 1983; Taylor, 1988). Krueger and Maleckova postulate that terrorism is primarily a political, rather than an economic phenomenon.¹ It has been suggested that whilst linkages of poverty and militancy have not been demonstrated conclusively in the case of the Islamist leadership or elite, poverty and illiteracy may still be important factors in the motivations of the rank and file of radical organizations. It has also been argued that militancy evolves in a conjunctural environment of many factors, which is particular to a specific region or ideology, and thus needs to be studied at sub-national, rather than international levels. The tenuous linkage between poverty and militancy is also debated in numerous studies in political science and economics by Dreher and Gassebner (2008), Krueger and Laitin (2008), Abadie (2006) and Piazza (2006); sub-national studies by Piazza (2009) and Krueger (2007) and studies of individuals by Sageman (2004) and Atran (2003). However, there are also studies by Li and

Schaub (2004) and Burgoon (2006), which suggest the opposite; about poverty being a significant predictor of terrorist activity. The definitive nuances between religious conservatism, political Islamism, and radical Islamist militancy also need to be contextualized.

Lipset (1960, ch. IV) has pointed to several mechanisms, by which poor people—with their harsh upbringing and authoritarian family patterns—are prone to join militant movements. The factors he identifies are a low level of education, which tends to promote a simplified worldview of politics, and an uncompromising nature due to economic insecurity, which leads to a heightened state of stimulus to perceived disturbing events. This insecurity leads to a search for immediate solutions to problems, including taking up arms. Lipset also postulates that impoverished people are isolated from the activities and controversies of the society at large, which effectively cocoons them from the intricacies of political problems. This also has deleterious effects on acquiring a spirit of tolerance. The lack of tolerance and the propensity to look for shortcuts to politically intricate problems promotes a worldview within which ideologies, especially dogmatic ideologies which tend to provide simplistic revivalist philosophies, find expression, one manifestation of which is radicalization.

Houtman has expanded upon Lipset's thesis by further postulating in his sociological research that authoritarianism, intolerance of non-conformity, and racial prejudice are closely related to poor education (Houtman, 2003). Thus, studying the evolution of radicalization in the context of isolated variables may not be a fruitful pursuit, especially in different theaters where these variables may have different trajectories; the Pakistani scenario may very well be a case in point as far as the relationship of poverty and radicalization is concerned. As far as radicalization is concerned, I do not want to revisit the fiat of the debate about its definition; for the purpose of this study I have chosen Flaherty's definition of radicalization (Azam, 2009). This implies a sense of futility evoking desperate measures, wherein destruction of the existing order is seen as a desirable goal, which precludes any compromises or power sharing. There is a sense of emergency and urgency in the radicalized population, wherein the ends justify the means. The reason for reliance on this particular definition was its underlying prospect of violent change exerting its own inherent appeal, which seemed a good benchmark for the study. As is evident, these concepts seem to resonate

closely with Lipset's hypothesis about the poor. Flaherty's postulates can be seen to apply equally not only to the Islamist radicalization process in Pakistan, but also to a large number of other Islamist movements as well.

The past six years have witnessed a significant rise in incidents of terrorism in Pakistan, with the writ of the state being directly challenged by the rise of many militant groups, who have transmigrated from Pakistan's tribal areas. Until recently they were in almost absolute control of areas such as Swat. This extremism is marked by an unprecedented alacrity, organizational capability and impunity. Scholarship about this phenomenon has not kept pace with terrorism, and is in a nascent stage in Pakistan, with little comprehension and research into the drivers of extremism among researchers, analysts and policy makers. Nevertheless, whenever the social issues are raised, amongst the possible factors giving rise to terrorism in Pakistan, poverty and poor social indicators pop up fairly prominently. This paper is an attempt to explore a potential nexus, utilizing the fairly limited variables available in the form of literature, news and opinion pieces, which are tested with the help of a survey.

Since the reasons behind the rise of militancy are multifarious; an analysis utilizing any single variable would be misleading.² However, the terrorism narrative is prominently evident in most of the discourses, whilst the socio-economic aspects are just as significantly absent.³ It is also quite pertinent that even the 'non-partisan' think tanks tend to concentrate quite heavily on security scenarios, while governance and socio-economic imbalance take a back seat.⁴ Amongst the socio-economic factors, poverty, especially rural poverty, figures prominently.

The pattern in Pakistan is dismally skewed towards a few feudal families holding large land holdings; barely one percent of households own more than 35 acres of land. This is reinforced by the Gini coefficient⁵ of land holding which was very high at 0.6151 in 2001-02. Thus, the problem is not just lower levels of land holding in Pakistan, but also highly unequal land distribution leading to a class of land haves and have-nots. Strikingly, poverty levels tend to decrease in inverse proportion to land holding, with poverty virtually disappearing with holdings of 55 acres and above. This indicates that poverty and landlessness are directly related to each other in the rural areas of Pakistan. Evidence of income disparity rampant in Pakistani society is

bolstered by statistics, with the Lorenz curve⁶ of 2001-02 for Pakistan lying below the 1984-85 levels.

This projection also points out the dismal fact that the richest one percent who used to get 10 percent of total income in 1984-85, would be getting almost 20 percent of the total income in Pakistan in 2001-02.

Sohail Abbas has utilized his experience as a psychologist to conduct profiling research of Jihadis in the treatise 'The Jihadi Mindset' (Abbas, 2007). A PIPS study by Safiya Aftab has also documented a similar literature review of Sohail Abbas. Abbas's sample consists of 517 men, interred in Haripur and Peshawar jails in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province after they had attempted re-entry into Pakistan from Afghanistan following the overthrow of the Taliban regime in 2001. Abbas has attempted to profile these individuals by comparing them with a matchable "control" (more affluent) group of individuals of similar socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds which had not joined the jihad. The study limits itself, however, to men inclined to join the jihad, but does not attempt to co-relate drivers of violent terrorist behavior; there is no indication given in the book that the sample population attempted any terrorist acts. The study is nevertheless quite illuminating as an insight into proneness to join jihad and militant Jihadist organizations.

The sample was small but still significant; it is extremely difficult, not to mention hazardous, to interview Jihadis in Pakistan. Arrested militants were studied in two sample groups in Haripur and Peshawar Jails. Abbas concludes that the Jihadis were drawn largely from mainstream Pakistani society, hailing from marginalized tribal society only to an insignificant extent. The majority were not educated in madrassas, contrary to popularly held belief, but were educated in public schools in Pakistan where the majority of the country's population, particularly the rural one, obtains access to education. Surprisingly, their mean literacy level as a group was higher than the Pakistani average for education. The Peshawar group sample, however, had an almost zero percent unemployment rate. The majority (33.8 percent) had worked as tenant farmers, and laborers (24.2 percent), while skilled labor and students were equally represented at about 17 percent each. Ownership of business was at a very low level at about 3.5 percent of the sample. This study seems to go entirely against the popular preconceived notions of Pakistani Jihadis being totally illiterate and unemployed youth.

The PIPS study (PIPS, 2008) also attempted to factor poverty into the research variables, by trying to ascertain the average income level scatter pattern of the Jihadis. The Haripur sample reported a huge 35.7 percent of the respondents with no income of their own. The Peshawar sample yielded comparable results, though the respondents having no income stood at around 26.3 percent. This puts the majority of the respondents at the lowest income percentiles in Pakistan in terms of their individual earnings. However, the majority was employed in one form or the other, though the amounts of dividends of such occupation seem to have been meager. The study does not address the issue that many individuals in Pakistan are supported at home by remaining in joint family systems, wherein income is distributed amongst the less gainfully employed by some family member/s, usually some elder. Similarly, the average income of the Jihadis' families was not factored into the calculation. This is a shortcoming in a study attempting to research a society wherein resources tend to be pooled at the household level.

The Study

My survey was a supply side study designed to document increased incidence of radicalized ideas amongst the impoverished in Pakistan; and not a study of the co-relation of poverty and militancy in Pakistan. The plethora of literature on studies of militants in Pakistan have provided vague empirical assessments of the proposed links between education, poverty and other aspects of socio-economic status and popular support for terrorism, which although not incidental to the study, can only be used hypothetically to support observations made therein. The study was a link in this chain in an attempt to contextualize the support for radical ideas amongst the less privileged classes in Pakistan, which cannot be used to ascertain their propensity to join militant movements or carry out terrorist acts, as that needs an interpolation of different complex variables.

Militancy is often an organizational phenomenon, with different organizations adopting different criteria for indoctrination of recruits. Fair has commented that sectarian terrorists in Pakistan tend to be madrassa-educated youth,⁷ while other organizations in Pakistan may utilize Mesquita's quality 'game' approach⁸ to indoctrinate and train their human resource. The Taliban tend to recruit persons who have had at least a brush with Deobandi madrassa education, while suicide attackers in Pakistan's tribal belt are

impoverished, madrassa educated, or in many cases, illiterate youth. It is not that the organizations want to use suicide recruits of low caliber, but the fact that they are constrained to use whatever human material they have available. There is little popular support for suicide in Afghanistan and Pakistan,⁹ since it is considered *haram* (sacrilegious); this is in striking contrast to the Palestinian and Lebanese territories, where a correspondingly higher popular support for suicide attacks means that the organizations are not supply constrained in choosing suicide recruits. Thus, empirically examining just one variable other than poverty which can promote militancy and extremism, it is easy to see how different trajectories can affect the outcomes of variables in different theatres; perfectly relevant sub-national studies in one theater may yield totally different results in others.

How can one co-relate poverty and education with the process of radicalization? During lean economic times, relatively better qualified, better-educated individuals may add to the ranks of the unemployed, which decreases the opportunity costs for relatively accomplished, educated individuals to participate in seeking simple solutions to complex problems (for example engaging in crime to relieve financial burdens or joining militant organizations to take part in jihad). While lack of educational attainment is disruptive of economic mobility, educational attainment sans comparable employment opportunities is even more dangerous; expectations are raised, which if left unfulfilled, cause cognitive dissonance between the reality-expectation nexus. This can be a major cause of disenchantment with the society, particularly amongst the youth. Militant groups may thus become increasingly free from demand constraints in times of economic recession.

It is important to remember at the outset that this study is not about predicting which of the poor samples may become militants; several layers of indoctrination and ideological permeations operate to make this a complex process, which in any case is not the aim of this study to expostulate upon. It is also beyond the ambit of this survey to co-relate links in education and socio-economic status with supply of recruits for terrorists; the study simply aims at exploring the permeation of radical ideas amongst the poorer segments of population of Pakistan.

Survey Design and Methodology

The data was collected between October 2008 and March 2009. The survey was originally planned to cover the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) along with the other four provinces of Pakistan, but due to escalation of militant activities and the ensuing anti-militancy army operations in FATA, the study team was unable to obtain permission to enter the tribal areas for field survey, which was an unavoidable field constraint. The four poorest districts in each province were chosen as a convenience sample, according to a World Bank Food Program study (Hussain et al, 2003) mapping out poverty distribution incidence in Pakistan, along with four matchable controls of the four richest districts in the same province as per Human Development Index (HDI).¹⁰ It is worth mentioning that 60 percent of the districts which ranked amongst the top one-third more affluent percentiles were from Punjab and 19 percent were from the NWFP, or Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as it has since been renamed. Similarly, among the bottom one-third percentiles (the poorest) 47 percent were from Balochistan, and 34 percent from the NWFP (Hussain et al, 2003). Not a single district from Punjab was in the poorest percentiles.

The data was collected with the help of structured questions laid out in a questionnaire, distributed and collected by two field researchers in each province; local researchers were chosen in order to better comprehend the cultural nuances, and a similar pattern of questionnaire distribution was followed in order to reduce interviewer bias. The study was generally conducted by doing household surveys; another method utilized in lieu of 'cold calling' was contacting respondents through the village headmen, or in some cases with the help of local administration. An unavoidable sample bias was encountered when most of the questionnaires were filled in by the educated male members of the household,¹¹ or the head of the family, again almost always a male. Female representation was not accounted for; this could have been avoided by asking for the gender of the respondents. However, after intra research group brainstorming, it was decided that asking for the gender of the respondents could create hurdles in respondent compliance, since asking question from women about such sensitive topics could be potentially offensive to the sensibilities of the conservative rural population.

Households having a consolidated land holding of 55 acres or more were discarded. However, many respondents were not forthcoming in response to questions about personal wealth and income, which are considered personal issues in Pakistani rural society; this was again an unavoidable field constraint. Reluctance to answer questions was more visible in the NWFP and Balochistan, with the most difficulty encountered in the NWFP heartlands. This may have been due to the fact that respondents may have viewed the team as a 'western' ploy or attempts by the state to get information about these generally conservative areas. A random sample of villages to be surveyed had to be chosen from within the district sample groups; there is an extreme paucity of data within the districts about the rural breakdown of poverty village wise, which necessitated the random selection of villages within the 32 districts surveyed. A total of 1,147 respondents were surveyed; the provincial-wise breakdown is as follows:

Table 1

Sample Group	Number of Respondents
Punjab Control (more affluent)	158
Punjab Sample (poor)	144
Sindh Control	148
Sindh Sample	164
NWFP Control	145
NWFP Sample	127
Balochistan Control	129
Balochistan Sample	132

Life in a typical Pakistani village is simple; men are usually tenant farmers who work in the fields from sunrise to sunset, while women stay at home to attend to the children or assist the men in their farming activities. The gender balance is somewhat patriarchic, with gender roles skewed in favor of the males. The social life of women centers on births, deaths and anniversaries, with the practice of *pardah* more strictly observed in the NWFP and Balochistan in general, though there are significant variations within the same province.

As for religion, Cohen notes that "most Pakistanis in rural areas remain vague about their Islam, and their religion is strongly intermixed with folk practices, Sufi beliefs, and even Hinduism and Buddhism."¹² Life in small villages is

difficult; some are still devoid of facilities like safe drinking water and electricity, with medical facilities situated sometimes at considerable distance from the more remote villages. At least one-tenth of the rural communities do not even have access to basic facilities.¹³ Poverty affects family planning and parenthood, with 75 percent more children in poor families on average as opposed to the non-poor households. A disproportionately large number of households are headed by aged persons, who utilize transfer incomes, such as pensions and other forms of social support, sometimes for running the financial affairs of the entire household.

The society is stratified; it is quite easy to pick out the 'common' man in the village by virtue of his relatively simply constructed house. Such houses are typically clumped together in the centre of the village, while the relatively affluent landlords and wealthier villagers tend to construct cemented houses, usually situated on the outskirts of the village.

It is this 'central' village stratum that the research team was interested in; it was easier to identify a poor rural sample universe by going to the heart of the village and conducting a survey there, though this of course constituted a convenience sample.

Religiosity

The question about the state of religiosity was introduced as a dummy; religiosity is not easy to define in relative terms in Muslim countries, and the researchers were not expecting any useful input by eliciting a close-ended response (high to low). Also, religious ritualism (like praying or going to the mosque) cannot be taken as a benchmark of religiosity, or for that matter radicalization in Pakistan, since Islamic (as opposed to Islamist) sensibilities run throughout the fabric of the society; this was evident in the case of the survey as well, wherein an overwhelming majority of the respondents answered in favor of higher levels of religiosity; any other response could be considered socially embarrassing. The purpose of this question was to serve as an 'adjuster' and for setting the stage for the succeeding questions, which enquired about support for violence by religious groups, Islam as a system of life, etc. (*see below*). This question was relevant in the context of adjusting the following questions, which enquired about the perception of the respondents about an Islamic governance system. As elucidated below, the purportedly

high levels of religiosity as a response was at odds with respondents' answers to related questions.

Table 2

Q. 5: Do you support the use of violence by religious groups in Pakistan?	Number of Respondents			Total	Percentage		
	Yes	No	No opinion either way		Yes	No	No opinion either way
Punjab Control	14	89	55	158	8.86%	56.33%	34.81%
Punjab Sample	17	78	49	144	11.81%	54.17%	34.03%
Sindh Control	9	102	37	148	6.08%	68.92%	25.00%
Sindh Sample	19	93	52	164	11.59%	56.71%	31.71%
NWFP Control	13	69	63	145	8.97%	47.59%	43.45%
NWFP Sample	24	62	41	127	18.90%	48.82%	32.28%
Balochistan Control	27	66	36	129	20.93%	51.16%	27.91%
Balochistan Sample	35	59	38	132	26.52%	44.70%	28.79%

Some 11.81 percent of the Punjab sample (poor) replied in the affirmative to the question that asked whether resort to violence by militant groups was justifiable (Question 5), compared to 8.86 percent of the control group. Some 54.17 percent of the Punjab poor sample and 56.33 percent of the control group replied in the negative while 11.59 percent of the poor sample group in Sindh responded positively to the query. Interestingly, 56.71 percent were against the use of militancy by the religious groups. The finding resonated with 6.08 percent affirmative answers and 68.92 percent negative answers in the matchable control group.

The situation was quite different in the NWFP and Balochistan; in the NWFP poor sample, 18.90 percent of the respondents approved of the use of violence

by the militants as a political tool while 48.82 percent decried it. The situation was comparable to the NWFP control group, albeit with lower percentages; 8.97 percent approved of militant violence, with 47.59 percent opposing it and 43.45 percent staying undecided. Higher percentages were obtained in the case of the Balochistan poor, with 26.52 percent in favor, 44.70 percent against and 28.79 percent undecided in the sample population, comparable to 20.93 percent in favor, 51.16 percent against and 27.91 percent undecided in the control group.

Is there something inherent in the Pashtun and Baloch cultures, which are inimical to violence, and support for groups using violence as a tool? In the Pashtun culture certainly, an element of violence is ingrained in cultural paradigms. Children get weapons as rite of passage to adulthood in tribal societies, arms and ammunition are considered a status benchmark, and even some children's game contain an element of violence.¹⁴

The Baloch culture is relatively more benign; the rise of militancy in these areas has to be comprehended in ethno-nationalist terms. Balochistan has been the hub of many ethnically driven guerilla insurgencies. Akhtar¹⁵ points out that the major insurgency in the 1970s, which was crushed by the Pakistani establishment, had a solid ethno-nationalist support base within Balochistan. The current insurgency is a much more amorphous Taliban entrenchment, with Baloch nationalist militancy and other elusive militant entities vying to gain hold of Balochistan's abundant natural resources and "mega development" projects, such as the warm-water port of Gwadar on the south-western tip of the province, projected to be a future linchpin of the warm-water access to lucrative central Asian oil pipelines. The nationalist discourse surrounding Gwadar reveals a deeply ingrained fear of Baloch cultural extinction that has been a consistent theme in both Sindh and Balochistan provinces of Pakistan; nationalists in both regions have maintained that such development projects precipitate an influx of ethnicities other than the Baloch and the Sindhis in the respective provinces, with the resultant dilution of Baloch and Sindhi dominance in culture and politics. Thus the nationalist rhetoric in both these provinces has always contained some emotive narrative of ethnic Baloch and Sindhis becoming minorities in their respective provinces.

The problems are compounded by the fact that Balochistan is predominantly rural and has dismal per capita income levels. Rural poverty in Balochistan was estimated to be 42 percent in 2001-02, slightly lower than in Sindh and

the NWFP. However, as of 2001-02, the poverty factor is superimposed by the fact that 78 percent of households owned no land in Balochistan and amongst the landless, Balochistan's rural poverty rate was the highest in Pakistan, at nearly 70 percent.

It may also be worthwhile to remember that sometimes the poor and the deprived compensate for their lack of material possessions by asserting their social status; this can be done by gaining power, authority or privilege,¹⁶ sometimes by using force for political ends, which in essence is the process of radicalization. Radicalized persons have a strong perception of being discriminated against, and of alienation from the larger society due to socio-economic deprivation. This is exacerbated by falling education standards, lack of economic opportunities, and unequal access to avenues for social and economic mobilization, which are a hallmark of countries facing turbulent times and paradigmatic cultural polarization.¹⁷ The powerless and the impoverished may project their aspirations onto groups which are seen to be 'doing something' about the plight of the deprived masses, as opposed to a bureaucratic and ineffective state. This may account for the rise of militant groups, particularly the Taliban, in the NWFP and Balochistan.

Table 3

Q. 6: Should religious leaders acquire public office in Pakistan?	Number of Respondents			Total	Percentage		
	Yes	No	No opinion either way		Yes	No	No opinion either way
Punjab Control	37	67	54	158	23.42%	42.41%	34.18%
Punjab Poor	40	73	31	144	27.78%	50.69%	21.53%
Sindh Control	31	97	20	148	20.95%	65.54%	13.51%
Sindh Poor	45	93	26	164	27.44%	56.71%	15.85%
NWFP Control	50	69	26	145	34.48%	47.59%	17.93%
NWFP Poor	61	54	12	127	48.03%	42.52%	9.45%
Balochistan Control	39	73	17	129	30.23%	56.59%	13.18%
Balochistan Poor	44	59	29	132	33.33%	44.70%	21.97%

Table 4

Q.7: Is an Islamic state the solution to all of Pakistan's problems?	Number of Respondents			Total	Percentage		
	Yes	No	No opinion either way		Yes	No	No opinion either way
Punjab Control	21	96	41	158	13.29%	60.76%	25.95%
Punjab Poor	36	82	26	144	25.00%	56.94%	18.06%
Sindh Control	18	75	55	148	12.16%	50.68%	37.16%
Sindh Poor	35	63	66	164	21.34%	38.41%	40.24%
NWFP Control	42	63	40	145	28.97%	43.45%	27.59%
NWFP Poor	55	59	13	127	43.31%	46.46%	10.24%
Balochistan Control	46	53	30	129	35.66%	41.09%	23.26%
Balochistan Poor	39	62	31	132	29.55%	46.97%	23.48%

Question 6 was adjusted by Question 7, which asked whether *Shariah* rule could be a panacea for all the problems in Pakistan. Even though more respondents tended to answer in the affirmative to religious leaders acquiring office, support for *Shariah* as a cure for all of the country's problems was not as forthcoming. This support was at its highest amongst the NWFP poor. This may be an indicator of the way the poor masses of that province think; for them religiosity may be linked inextricably with the Islamists coming to power, which might explain the rise and the entrenchment of Taliban in the province. It is significant that the support among the population in Balochistan, though higher in comparative terms to the Punjab and Sindh samples, was still relatively low compared to the NWFP sample, particularly amongst the Balochi poor. This indicates that many conjunctural forces align to complicate the Balochi imbroglio, amongst which religion may only be one of the stimuli. This lends credence to the above mentioned ethno-nationalist narrative for Balochistan. This also reveals a paradigmatic dissonance within

Pakistani society in general; for a state whose citizens purportedly have high levels of religiosity, support for religious leaders and *Shariah* was not very high.

This may be due to the fact that there is a certain ambivalence towards religious leaders and *Shariah* in Pakistan, which has been dwelt upon at some length by earlier surveys as well. For instance, data collected by Pew Research Center in 2002 and 2005¹⁸ indicated that even though many people believed that Islamic religiosity was very important, they did not really believe in this becoming ingrained in Pakistani politics. The same trend is revealed by data from the current survey; respondents replied positively to Islam being a potent force in their lives, but were not too keen on it becoming a system of governance. This may have something to do with the way the clerics have been involved in Pakistani politics, which has not been looked upon favorably by the majority of the population, as reflected by poor voter support in Pakistani elections. A WorldPublicOpinion.org poll of 907 urban Pakistanis has also revealed the inherent ambivalence in the average Pakistani citizen's mind, wherein a large number of Pakistanis envisage a greater role for Islam and *Shariah* in Pakistani society, but simultaneously want more secular democracy, favoring liberalizing reforms and opposing terrorism.¹⁹

Significantly, the provincial-wise and district-wise breakdown showed that support for an Islamic system of governance was more deeply echoed by the poorer respondents. This does suggest that poorer respondents had a simpler worldview on politics; even though Pakistan has had immense trouble synchronizing religion with politics, as demonstrated by the failure of the rightist regime of General Ziaul Haq and the liberal one of General Pervez Musharraf to sway the people. In Pakistan, the balance between the state and the religion does not seem to sit in comfortably with politics. However, the poorer respondents were optimistic that an Islamic state would be a panacea for the troubles of Pakistan, which resonates with Lipset's view that the poor are relatively readier to grab at simple solutions.

War on Terror and Support for Jihad

It seems that amongst all respondents, support for the idea of a Taliban takeover of the country was relatively higher amongst the NWFP poor, Balochistan poor, Balochistan control and NWFP control sample with a much lower percentage recorded in Punjab and Sindh overall. This still leaves a lot of people in Balochistan and the NWFP opposed to a Taliban takeover in Pakistan, which needs to be explained in its context.

Table 5

Q. 8: Are you in favor of a Taliban takeover in Pakistan?	Number of Respondents			Total	Percentage		
	Yes	No	No opinion either way		Yes	No	No opinion either way
Punjab Control	12	87	59	158	7.59%	55.06%	37.34%
Punjab Poor	17	75	52	144	11.81%	52.08%	36.11%
Sindh Control	9	96	43	148	6.08%	64.86%	29.05%
Sindh Poor	11	82	71	164	6.71%	50.00%	43.29%
NWFP Control	23	74	48	145	15.86%	51.03%	33.10%
NWFP Poor	44	81	2	127	34.65%	63.78%	1.57%
Balochistan Control	24	48	57	129	18.60%	37.21%	44.19%
Balochistan Poor	32	68	32	132	24.24%	51.52%	24.24%

The Pakistani Taliban have been in control of the Waziristan area adjacent to Afghanistan, and until recently controlled Swat, a previously progressive district of the NWFP. Taliban-style militias have also gained dominance in other parts of the NWFP, such as Peshawar, which used to be one of the most open and accessible areas of the province, but has fallen prey to the stealthy advance of extremism. The citizenry in Peshawar have witnessed numerous suicide attacks, as have people in other NWFP cities such as Tank, Darra Adam Khel and Dera Ismail Khan. Girls' schools have been closed, torched or

bombed, while video and music shops have also been targeted. Militants have threatened barbers with death for shaving beards. Social campaigns such as administration of polio vaccine have been halted amidst extremists' claims that it is a US plot to sterilize future generations.

Even though former President Musharraf tried to contain these elements under pressure from the Americans, his strategy was mainly to try to regulate the madrassas in the NWFP and elsewhere in Pakistan that provide recruits for the Taliban, seizing their funds and banning them from admitting foreign students. This did not prove to be enough; the army was sent into Swat, taking heavy casualties. The operations were halted with negotiations ensuing, which just allowed more time to the Taliban to further entrench themselves. The harsh measures by the extremists have prompted a public backlash; the Taliban seem to have become unpopular amongst the masses, though of course, they have their ideological support base even amongst the powerless strata in the society, as evidenced by the findings of this study. Though it is beyond the scope of this study to discuss that in detail, the militants seem to have exploited lacunae in distributive social justice in some areas, particularly in FATA, mainly to their advantage.²⁰ When they took over the lucrative emerald mines in Swat, for example, they announced the distribution of two thirds of the proceeds of the mines amongst the hitherto meagerly paid miners, which must have been an extraordinary financial incentive for these poor Swatis.²¹ Similarly, the Taliban have been quick to ask for money and commodities from the large feudal families²² in the areas where they have entrenched themselves; they have reportedly distributed some of their plunder amongst the poor masses. This could have served to increase their popularity amongst the poor and the downtrodden, and perhaps added to their support base, even though the harsh measures of Talibanization have adversely affected the lives of the common citizenry.

Table 6

Q. 9: Do you condone or condemn the 9/11 Al Qaeda attacks on US?	Number of Respondents			Total	Percentage		
	Condone	Condemn	No opinion either way		Condone	Condemn	No opinion either way
Punjab Control	9	94	55	158	5.70%	59.49%	34.81%
Punjab Poor	22	87	35	144	15.28%	60.42%	24.31%
Sindh Control	13	106	29	148	8.78%	71.62%	19.59%
Sindh Poor	29	68	67	164	17.68%	41.46%	40.85%
NWFP Control	23	65	57	145	15.86%	44.83%	39.31%
NWFP Poor	47	55	25	127	37.01%	43.31%	19.69%
Balochistan Control	28	62	39	129	21.71%	48.06%	30.23%
Balochistan Poor	44	51	37	132	33.33%	38.64%	28.03%

Table 7

Q. 11: Do you support future attacks against US targets?	Number of Respondents			Total	Percentage		
	Strongly for	Strongly against	No opinion either way		Yes	No	No opinion either way
Punjab Control	13	89	56	158	8.23%	56.33%	35.44%
Punjab Poor	11	97	36	144	7.64%	67.36%	25.00%
Sindh Control	21	92	35	148	14.19%	62.16%	23.65%
Sindh Poor	17	94	53	164	10.37%	57.32%	32.32%

A Link Between Poverty & Radicalization in Pakistan

NWFP Control	29	68	48	145	20.00%	46.90%	33.10%
NWFP Poor	43	71	13	127	33.86%	55.91%	10.24%
Balochistan Control	35	61	33	129	27.13%	47.29%	25.58%
Balochistan Poor	46	65	21	132	34.85%	49.24%	15.91%

The Western preconception of the typical Pakistani mindset is depicted as being oriented to religious conservatism and militancy. With this overview, one would expect the majority of Pakistani population to be inclined to support the 9/11 attacks, or to espouse further attacks against the US. Suicide bombings and other terrorist attacks would then be contextualized as nothing more than reactions to American military presence in Afghanistan, or a revenge for US unmanned drone attacks in Pakistan's tribal areas. The cyclical argument would run as thus; Pakistan's security forces are purportedly killing the tribal people in FATA and beyond at the behest of the US, which angers the Taliban, who exact retribution by targeting Pakistani state institutions as vengeance for the state's complicity with the US. This worldview has been shaped not only by madrassa education, but as elucidated by Fair (Fair 2007, 2008), also by the regular state education system. Ziaul Haq's government provided state patronage to Islamist groups and militancy, the media was used as a state Islamist propaganda apparatus, and radicalization of young people was allowed to continue unabated. Pervez Musharraf made an ineffective effort to thwart this Islamist nexus, but his manipulation to maneuver the staunchly Islamist Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA)²³ diluted his efforts, and tarnished his credibility as a liberal. Despite that, however, there are indications that even the relatively conservative rural society is slowly breaking free of the Islamist spell; this is reflected in the survey response, wherein a majority of the respondents opposed terrorist attacks including the 9/11 attacks. A significant characteristic observed in this case was the large number of respondents who did not answer the question about their stance on the 9/11 attacks, because they were either unaware of them, or were poorly informed.²⁴

Table 8

Q. 10: Intensity of grievances against US?	Number of respondents			Total	Percentage		
	Strongly support the US	Strongly oppose the US	No opinion either way		Support	Oppose	No opinion either way
Punjab Control	13	89	56	158	8.23%	56.33%	35.44%
Punjab Poor	11	97	36	144	7.64%	67.36%	25.00%
Sindh Control	21	92	35	148	14.19%	62.16%	23.65%
Sindh Poor	17	94	53	164	10.37%	57.32%	32.32%
NWFP Control	15	88	42	145	10.34%	60.69%	28.97%
NWFP Poor	9	98	20	127	7.09%	77.17%	15.75%
Balochistan Control	12	89	28	129	9.30%	68.99%	21.71%
Balochistan Poor	8	103	21	132	6.06%	78.03%	15.91%

The question about support for the United States within society revealed an almost unequivocal response of condemnation of Washington's policies in the region, even though a majority of the sample population had expressed condemnation of the 9/11 attacks and had not supported attacks against the US. Though the respondent samples may not be characteristic of the Pakistani population as a whole, this response pattern can be indicative of an almost universal disapproval of the policies of the US amongst the sample population. The sharp rise in the number of drone attacks in FATA, which have led to an increase in innocent civilian casualties, the inclusion of Balochistan as a drone target area, Washington's patronage of Musharraf whom the majority of Pakistanis perceived as a dictator, and recent statements by US diplomats, deemed to encroach upon Pakistan's sovereignty, may be just some of the grievances exacerbating patterns of mistrust of the US amongst the Pakistani masses. Boasting about secular values, while remaining relatively oblivious to the core culturally conservative values of Pakistani society has meant that the West, particularly

the US, has lost credibility amongst the masses.²⁵ This has also provided leverage to the opposite camp, the Islamists, to harp on about the 'callousness' of the 'Great Satan'.

The US has consistently justified aerial attacks in the FATA region by claiming that important Al Qaeda hierarchy is the target; Ayman Al-Zawahiri has been cited as the most sought after target several times. However, it is debatable what the policy of unilateral incursions into Pakistan would yield. There is also an attitudinal change in Pakistani politics, whence the masses have turned activist, while they were previously regarded as pliant and flexible by policy makers and politicians alike. This has to be factored into any geo-strategic projections about security in the area.

Conclusion

It is obvious that the poor samples in the NWFP and Balochistan, and to a lesser extent, the control samples in the other two provinces, tend to display a more radical worldview than their more affluent Punjabi and Sindhi counterparts. The study does not contend that poverty alone is to blame; there are a number of factors which interact on the individual within the ambit of society to produce a radical outlook. However, the results of the survey do suggest that poverty by itself cannot be dismissively waved off as a minor determinant variable of radicalization in Pakistani society. As Angrist's research reveals, there are different trajectories to determinant variables of terrorism in different theaters, which may very well be the case in Pakistan where poverty, rather than educational attainment, may be a radicalizing factor, as demonstrated by Fair and Abbas (regarding education). It is also debatable that even employed persons may be facing crippling poverty in some areas of Pakistan, particularly the tribal areas. It seems that a majority of young men from rural backgrounds can only find relatively menial jobs.²⁶ Over time, the private sector's already constrained capacity to accommodate the youth cohort in employment is shrinking even more.

Even though there has been some improvement in the macroeconomic structure of the country, it is inadequate to keep pace with the growth of the youth cohort,²⁷ which is one of the largest in the world, assessed by international comparison of youth, including children, as a percentage of overall population.²⁸ The size of Pakistan's population between ages 15-24 is

estimated at 36 million. A further 58 million individuals are below the age of 15. Coupled together, these account for nearly 60 percent of Pakistan's total population, a proportion that is only second to Yemen. This youth cohort is disproportionately skewed towards the male population,²⁹ which obviously focuses emphasis on their potential to fall victim to radicalization, if left marginalized in the mainstream Pakistani society.

This demands a fresh look at contextualizing how poverty operates to radicalize the poor (including the seemingly employed) in Pakistan; macro level sociological overviews will not produce concrete data for the required purposes. This is particularly important with regard to providing financial assistance to the beleaguered Pakistani state, since investment by the Pakistani government in the social sectors has been less than generous, even when it has been offered soft loans and outright aid packages in the past.

Judging the responses elicited from the study, it seems that even though the Taliban may not be the ubiquitously preferred choice against the Pakistani state, they do have a certain amount of ideological support amongst the poor, and to a lesser extent, amongst the more affluent in the NWFP and Balochistan. Factoring in the support for militant religious groups and the rampant grievances against the US, it seems that the poor are more prepared to opt for militancy instead of an ineffective governance structure as a solution to their problems; this may become increasingly relevant as the Taliban continue to gain footholds in the NWFP districts one after the other, and Balochistan seems poised to attract attention as the new Taliban militant haven. International attention by donors and global policy makers needs to be focused on Pakistan's poverty fault-lines, lest they become ruptured by radicalization and extremism.

Annexure 1: Questionnaire

1. Education (1 = high to 3 = low)
2. Occupation (1 = high to 3 = low)
3. Income (1 = high to 3 = low)
4. How do you describe the intensity of your religiosity? (1 = high to 3 = low)
5. Tell us your opinion regarding the following statement: "I support certain religious groups' use of violence to achieve their objectives." (1 = strongly support 2 = strongly oppose 3 = No opinion either way)
6. Should religious leaders acquire public office? (1 = strongly support 2 = strongly oppose 3 = No opinion either way)
7. Tell us your opinion regarding the following statement: "An Islamic state is the solution to all of Pakistan's problems" (1 = strongly support 2 = strongly oppose 3 = No opinion either way)
8. How do you feel about a Taliban takeover in Pakistan? (1 = strongly support 2 = strongly oppose 3 = No opinion either way)
9. How do you feel about the 9/11 attacks? (1 = strongly condemn 2 = strongly support 3 = No opinion either way)
10. Describe the intensity of your grievances against the United States. (1 = strongly support 2 = strongly oppose 3 = No opinion either way)
11. What is your opinion regarding any future attacks against US targets? (1 = strongly support 2 = strongly oppose 3 = No opinion either way)

Annexure 2: Most Affluent Districts (Province Wise)

Province	District	HDI	Ranking within country
Punjab	Jhelum	0.703	1
	Sheikhupura	0.621	4
	Bhakkar	0.581	7
	Kasur	0.577	8
Sindh	Karachi	0.618	5
	Dadu	0.535	21
	Hyderabad	0.532	23
	Mirpur Khas	0.522	31
NWFP	Haripur	0.629	3
	Abbotabad	0.598	6
	Kohat	0.537	19
	Peshawar	0.531	24
Balochistan	Ziarat	0.697	2
	Loralai	0.556	13
	Mastung	0.528	28
	Lasbela	0.514	33

Annexure 3: Least Affluent Districts (Province Wise)

Province	District	HDI	Ranking within country
Punjab	Muzzafargarh	0.459	59
	Dera Ghazi Khan	0.471	53
	Narowal	0.472	52
	Lodhran	0.475	51
Sindh	Tharparkar	0.343	88
	Jacobabad	0.393	77
	Shikarpur	0.417	72
	Larkana	0.435	67
NWFP	Shangla	0.332	90
	Kohistan	0.332	89
	Batgram	0.363	83
	Upper Dir	0.369	82
Balochistan	Dera Bugti	0.285	91
	Jhal Magsi	0.345	87
	Kharan	0.346	86
	Kohlu	0.348	85

Notes

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- ¹ Education, Poverty and Terrorism: Is There a Causal Connection? Alan B. Krueger and Jitka Maleckova, *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Volume 17, Number 4, Fall 2003, pp. 119-44.
 - ² Eriposte, "Developing A Framework to Understand and Develop Working Solutions to Major Conflicts: The Case of Mizoram (India) - Part 4", *The Left Coaster*, Jan 2009. Also see Eriposte, "Language and Ethnic Conflict in South Asia", *The Left Coaster*, Feb 2009.
 - ³ B. Riedel, "Pakistan and Terror: The Eye of the Storm", *Annals of the AAPSS*, 2008; T. Rubin, "Bruce Riedel: We need to make the war against al Qaeda Pakistan's war, not just America's war", *Academy Blog*, 2008; B. Gwertzman interview of B. Riedel, "Riedel: U.S. Needs to Tread Carefully in Pakistan", *Council on Foreign Relations*, 2008.
 - ⁴ Council for Foreign Relations, *Pakistan Archives*.
 - ⁵ The Gini coefficient is a measure of statistical dispersion, commonly used as a measure of inequality of income or wealth distribution. It is defined as a ratio with values between 0 and 1: A low Gini coefficient indicates more equal income or wealth distribution, while a high Gini coefficient indicates more unequal distribution. 0 corresponds to perfect equality (everyone having exactly the same income) and 1 corresponds to perfect inequality (where one person has all the income, while everyone else has zero income).
 - ⁶ In economics, the Lorenz curve is often used to represent income distribution, where it shows for the bottom x% of households, what percentage y% of the total income they have. It can also be used to show distribution of assets.
 - ⁷ Christine Fair, "The Madrassah challenge; Militancy and religious education in Pakistan," (Lahore, 2009: Vanguard Books), p. 70.
 - ⁸ Ethan Bueno de Mesquita, "The Quality of Terror," *American Journal of Political Science* 49, No. 3, July 2005.
 - ⁹ Pew Global Attitudes projects, *Global Opinion Trends 2002-2007*.
 - ¹⁰ The HDI is a composite statistic used to rank countries by level of "human development", which usually also implies whether a country is developed, developing, or underdeveloped.
 - ¹¹ This perception was subjective, since in most of the cases it was hard enough to have the questionnaire completed by a household; the survey team did not have the leeway to request that female members of the household also complete the questionnaire.
 - ¹² Stephen P. Cohen, "The Idea of Pakistan," (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004).
 - ¹³ Population Council, "Adolescents and Youth in Pakistan 2001-02: A National Representative Survey," project sponsored by UNICEF, 2002, p. 130.
 - ¹⁴ Muhammad Azam, *Radicalization in Pakistan; Socio cultural realities, Conflict and Peace Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Jan-Mar 2009, p. 51.
 - ¹⁵ A. S. Akhtar, "Balochistan versus Pakistan", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Nov 2007.

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- ¹⁶ Sabeeha Hafeez, *The changing Pakistan society* (Karachi, 1991: Royal Book Company), p. 3.
- ¹⁷ Henrik Urdal, "The Demographics of Political Violence: Youth Bulges, Insecurity and Conflict" in Lael Brainard and Derek Chollet (eds), *Too Poor for Peace? Global Poverty, Conflict and Security in the 21st Century* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2007), pp. 90-100.
- ¹⁸ Pew Global Attitudes Project, <http://pewglobal.org/>.
- ¹⁹ 'A New Lens on Pakistan,' Steven Kull, WorldPublicOpinion.org, January 18, 2008, <http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/articles/brasiapacificra/443.php?lb=bras&pnt=443&nid=&id=>.
- ²⁰ See 'A profile of Baitullah Mehsud', September 2008 and 'A profile of Mangal Bagh', November 2008, both by Syed Manzar Abbas Zaidi, The Pakistani Taliban pages, Featured Reports section, The Long War Journal.
- ²¹ 'Emerald Mines of Swat Possessed by Taliban', Ernest Dempsey, March 28, 2009, <http://www.digitaljournal.com/article/270005>.
- ²² 'Only Taliban can do it', Saeed Qureshi, April 24, 2009, Pakistan Observer, <http://pakobserver.net/200904/24/Articles02.asp>.
- ²³ The MMA was an Islamic alliance of religious-political parties in Pakistan. In the Pakistani parliament, the MMA became a coalition opposition, formed after Pakistan became a part of the "Global War on Terror". The coalition was forged against President Pervez Musharraf because of his support for the US-led 'war on terror'. However, support or dilly-dallying by the MMA helped the Musharraf regime at crucial junctures, earning a reputation for some components of the MMA of being a 'friendly opposition'.
- ²⁴ A commonly encountered notion by the research team was; 'Didn't the US perpetrate 9/11 on itself?' This was not expressed as a mere conspiracy theory, but in relatively certain terms as if it had been proved, portraying the simplistic worldview entertained by villagers in Pakistan.
- ²⁵ A recent poll puts Pakistan as the third most anti-American nation behind Turkey and Palestine. Umit Enginsoy, "Turkey 'Most Anti-U.S. Country' in World, Poll Says," Turkish Daily News, June 29, 2007, <http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=76984>.
- ²⁶ The CIA World Fact Book's caption on unemployment in Pakistan aptly captures the current situation; it states "Unemployment Rate: 6.5 % plus substantial underemployment (2006 est.)"
- ²⁷ Pakistan's Ministry of Finance, *Economic Survey 2007-08*, p. 202.
- ²⁸ Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat; *World Population Prospects: The 2006 Revision; World Urbanization Prospects: The 2005 Revision*, <http://esa.un.org/unpp>.
- ²⁹ Official statistics for 2006 estimate the male population at approximately 81 million and the female population at 75 million. See Federal Bureau of Statistics, Government of Pakistan, *Pakistan Statistical Yearbook 2006* (Islamabad, 2007), p. 309.

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Religious Behaviors in Pakistan: Impact on Social Development

Muhammad Azam

Behavioral sciences have come a long way in studying human behaviors and behavioral change. The list of research carried out on the subject is a long one. *The freedom to do God's will: religious fundamentalism and social change*, edited by Haar and Busuttil,¹ and Aidala's "Social Change, Gender Roles and New Religious Movements"² are among the examples. Social development is a process that³

encompasses a commitment to individual well-being and volunteerism, and the opportunity for citizens to determine their own needs and to influence decisions which affect them. Social development incorporates public concerns in developing social policy and economic initiatives.

The goal of social developments is⁴

the welfare of the people...and the consequent creation or alteration of institutions...so as to create a capacity for meeting human needs at all levels...and for improving the quality of human relationships and relationships between people and societal institutions.

Social development also refers to social processes at all levels. It also "connotes the development of people, institutions, and their environment." Paiva identifies four crucial concepts with reference to social development: structural change, socioeconomic integration, institutional development, and institutional renewal.⁵ He also explains major concepts associated with the larger concept of social development, including inter-systemic integration, structural change, and institution development.⁶

The list of factors behind social development is a long one and includes religious behaviors and attitudes. In this paper, only religious behavior as a factor in social development is analyzed. However, keeping in mind the prevailing situation of Pakistani society, underdevelopment and non-development of society would also be touched upon.

The importance of religious behaviors and attitudes is substantially acknowledged by the theorists in the field of development studies and research. Development models based on European and Japanese experiences in the field of social development also take religious attitudes and behaviors as a factor of development and change.

Religious behaviors and social development in any society are interlinked and cannot be seen in isolation. As Calhoun wrote in 1925, "...the social universe is a real universe and not a series of segregated divisions."⁷

Social conditions in Pakistan, religious influence on people's lives, religio-behavioral change, deterioration of social institutions, exploitation in the name of religion, religio-political behavior, religious behavior of the ruling elite, social divide, sectarianism, militancy and terrorism have also been analyzed. Irrational, conservative and dogmatic aspects of religious behavior have been discussed. Towards the end of this paper, the aspects of religious behavior that support and contribute to the process of social development are also discussed.

In order to understand the relationship between the two variables (religious behavior as independent and social development as dependent), various manifestations of religious behavior are discussed in the following pages, including, offering prayers; fasting; pilgrimage to Makkah; growing a beard; dress code; observing *pardah* (veil); social services; charities; donations to madrassas, mosques, and orphanages; free clinics, medical camps and hospitals set up by charities; preaching tours with the Tablighi Jamaat;⁸ blind following of clerics' motivated interpretations of Islam; exploitation; and sectarianism, extremism, violence, militancy and terrorism in the name of religion.

Social development essentially entails social change. Thus, social changes contributing towards social development also need to be analyzed.

Since Islam draws certain parameters for not only one's personal life, but also social, political and economic dimensions of life, a religious follower's behavior in all spheres of life needs to be studied as religious behavior. So, we need to look into the personal, social, political and economic aspects of people's behavior in order to understand the relationship between religious behavior and social development. Social behavior can be defined as a

“behavior that takes place in a social context and results from the interaction between and among individuals.”⁹ Antisocial behavior is one that “violates the rights of others; usually associated with antisocial personality.”¹⁰

A country-wide survey was conducted in order to substantiate the findings, with 1,568 respondents answering a questionnaire with closed-ended questions. The survey sample included respondents from all four provinces, federal capital Islamabad, Azad Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). See the following table for details.

Table 1: Province/Region of the Survey Respondents

Region	Frequency	Percent
Punjab	538	34.3
Sindh	290	18.5
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	359	22.9
Balochistan	178	11.4
FATA	35	2.2
Islamabad	40	2.6
Azad Kashmir	77	4.9
Gilgit-Baltistan	51	3.3
Total	1,568	100.0

The rural-urban mix of the respondents is given in the following table.

Table 2: Rural-Urban Mix

Place of residence	Frequency	Percent
City	837	53.4
Town	232	14.8
Village	469	29.9
Tribe	7	0.4
No Response	23	1.5
Total	1,568	100.0

Gender ratio of the respondents is shown in the following chart.

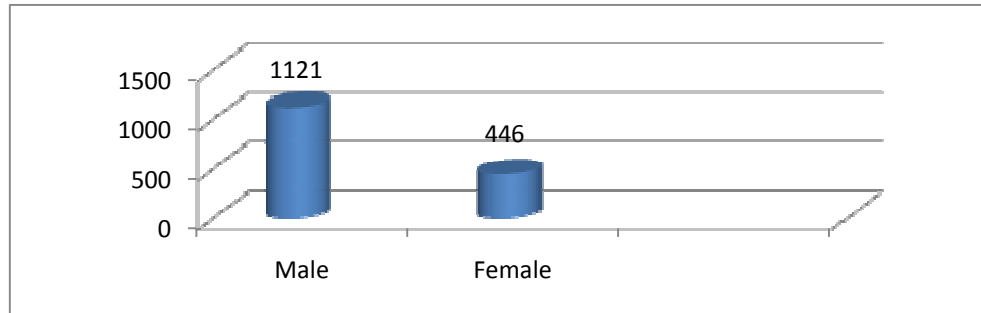


Chart 1

As the following chart shows, the respondents belonged to a range of age groups.

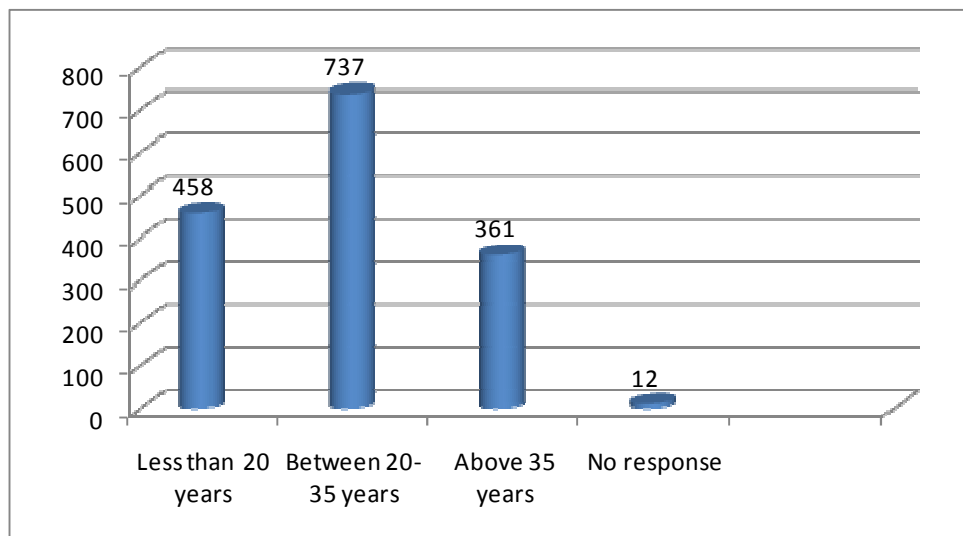


Chart 2

The survey sample included people from almost all walks of life. See the following table for details.

Table 3: Occupations of Respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Government service	308	19.6
Private service	315	20.1
Private business	240	15.3
Student	442	28.2
Unemployed	229	14.6
No response	34	2.2
Total	1,568	100.0

Before proceeding further, a look at the prevailing social conditions in Pakistan would be worthwhile. A country profile prepared by Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) says that 29 percent (46 million) of Pakistanis live in absolute poverty. Adult literacy rate is only 52 percent. Dropout rate in primary schools is 44 percent for boys and 65 percent for girls.¹¹ Development indicators prepared by Asian Development Bank are given in the following table.

Table 4: Pakistan: Development Indicators¹²

Population in millions	162.58 (2008)
Annual population growth rate (%)	1.8 (2006–2008)
Adult literacy rate (%)	54.9 (2007)
Percent of population in urban areas	35.7 (2007)
Percent of population living on less than \$1.25 a day	22.6 (2005)
Percent of population living below the national poverty line	22.3 (2005)
Under-5 mortality rate per 1,000 live births	90 (2007)
Percent of population using an improved drinking water source	90 (2006)

Human Development Index (HDI)—a publication by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) that relies on composite statistics to formulate an index to rank countries by level of ‘human development’—“uses life expectancy, literacy, average number of years of schooling, and income to assess a country’s performance in providing for its people’s welfare and

security.”¹³ In Human Development Report 2009 published by the UNDP, HDI rankings are divided into four categories: very high human development; high human development; medium human development; and low human development. Pakistan is in the “medium human development” category and is currently in the 141st place out of 182 countries.¹⁴ It has slipped five places since 2009 when it was in the 136th place.¹⁵

A comparative look at the development indicators with reference to Pakistan and its neighbors is also helpful in understanding the issue. Urban growth rate in Pakistan is 3.54 percent, whereas it is 5.72 percent in India. Pakistan’s gross domestic product (GDP) is 60,177 thousand US dollars, compared to 482,765 thousand US dollars for India. Infant mortality rate in Pakistan (87 per 1,000 live births) is much higher than Iran (33), China (37) and India (64). According to figures released by the Statistics Division of the United Nations Secretariat for the year 2000, public energy consumption in Pakistan was 291 kilograms per capita, much lower than that in Iran (1,814), China (561) and India (318). According to Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, 541 cubic meters of water per person from rivers and groundwater is available annually in Pakistan. The water availability per person in Afghanistan is 2,421 cubic meters, in China 2,201 cubic meters, in Iran 1,898 cubic meters, and in India 1,244 cubic meters.¹⁶

Around 50 percent of the survey respondents said they had not experience any improvement in their economic conditions as time went by. They said their economic circumstances had either worsened or remained unchanged.

Religion is one of the most, if not the most, fundamental characteristics of Pakistani society. Few people dare to call themselves secular publicly. Seculars also pretend to be religious in order to avoid the wrath of society and attacks by extremists. In Pakistani society, individuals start learning about religion literally as soon as they are born. In the laps of their mothers, children listen to parents and other family members reciting the Quran. In schools, Islamic Studies is a compulsory subject from the beginning to the graduation level. Most children receive daily lessons from religious teachers visiting their houses, or attend classes at mosques and madrassas, on how to recite the Quran and read other Arabic texts. Mosques are spread across the country, almost all of them equipped with loudspeakers. *A’azan* (call to prayer), Friday sermons and prayers, and sermons on other religious occasions are delivered using the loudspeaker. Clerics and students at

madrassa established in mosques use loudspeakers whenever they want to recite Quranic verses, or sing praise of God and Prophet Muhammad or to deliver a speech to convey or remind people of the religious commandments. In everyday social interaction, individuals are keen to lecture others on how to follow the religion and conform to the injunctions ordained by God, His prophets and religious authorities and leaders. Against this backdrop, one can imagine the extent of influence religion has on people's lives and behaviors. Answers by the survey respondents in the following tables provide evidence of the reach of and access to religious education in Pakistani society.

Table 5: Source of Learning about Religion

Sources	Frequency	Percent
Parents	395	25.2
School	107	6.8
Mosque	92	5.9
Madrassa	50	3.2
Reading	50	3.2
Any two of these sources	339	21.6
Any three of these sources	345	22.0
All of these sources	178	11.4
No response	12	0.8
Total	1,568	100.0

Table 6: Preferred Source of Learning about Islam

Sources	Frequency	Percent
Parents	229	14.6
Common course books	77	4.9
Religious books	539	34.4
Prayer leader/cleric	224	14.3
Any other	37	2.4
Any two of these sources	226	14.4
Three or more of these sources	80	5.1
All of these source	122	7.8
No response	34	2.2
Total	1,568	100.0

Around 84 percent of the respondents said they watch television. Eight percent of the TV watchers watch only religious channels. More than 43 percent watch channels of two or more of the following categories—news, entertainment, sports, and religious—signifying that religious channels have a considerable audience.

According to the findings of the survey, 33.5 percent of the respondents use internet. A little over 14 percent use internet solely to get information. Out of the 14 percent, only four percent use internet to access religious information. Of the 33.5 percent who use internet, around two percent use it for chatting. Only two percent of the two percent chat with religious-minded people, implying that religious-minded people, in general, do not have internet access or do not use that to be in touch with like-minded people.

Nearly one quarter (23%) of the respondents do not listen to music, while 16 percent ascribe that to religious reasons. A further one percent say they do so on account of a combination of parental restrictions and religious reasons. Another nine percent listen to music for religious reasons, i.e., they listen to *qawwali*, *naat* or *hamd*, where singers sing praise of God and Prophet Muhammad. In other words, 32 percent of the respondents consider music an issue which has something to do with religion. The majority of the respondents (51%) consider the decision by Pakistani pop singer Junaid Jamshaid's decision to quit singing, after he grew increasingly religious, as correct. Only 17 percent consider it to be an incorrect decision. More than a quarter of the respondents were not sure whether the decision was correct or not.

These findings do not necessarily mean that people are guided by religion in all spheres of life. The majority of the people tend to behave religiously when the issue at hand does not affect their own interest. If an issue or thing is deemed as depriving them of something, then religion takes a backseat. People violate religious teachings but want to be viewed as not behaving irreligiously. It is a kind of duality existing in society as a whole.

Paiva points out that structural change is a prerequisite for social development and changes in existing institutions are required so that the process of social development continues to move forward. The overwhelming majority of people in Pakistan accepts the righteousness of the religious

authorities (clerics, preachers, prayer leaders, etc.) and follows their advice and interpretation of religion. Fifty-six percent of the respondents surveyed believe that clerics, religious teachers and scholars and prayer leaders are actively serving Islam and society. Whereas the fact of the matter is that figures of religious authority do not allow change to take place in certain social institutions. The institution of 'honor' of men and women and violence in the name of 'honor' is one example. The woman, in general, is not seen as an entity in her own right, but as the honor of her male relatives, including father, brother, husband and son. Male family members take the life of a female relative if they feel that her actions or even her existence has slighted their 'honor' and consider that murdering such a woman would redeem their 'honor'. Frequently, women are married, despite their objections, to men chosen by the women's male relatives. The majority of the clerics delivering sermons in mosques or religious congregations condone crimes committed in the name of 'honor' or act as if they do not negate the principles of Islamic or human rights. This has serious implications for social development as well as for women's rights and their empowerment. Many deem a woman working outside her house to earn money for the family as bringing dishonor to her family. If a man is unemployed and his wife or sister is employed, he is called *bayghairat*, one who has no honor, for living off money earned by female relatives. Most men do not tolerate female family members working to earn a livelihood in order to 'maintain family honor'. As a consequence, a huge number of women are unable to grow personally, socially, economically, and politically. On the one hand, such restrictions deprive them of the right to realize their potential, and, on the other, the process of social development does not gain its full momentum because half of the population is not allowed to work outside the house.

Many Muslims believe that educating girls might encourage them to go astray. Parents either do not allow their daughters to join a school at all or discontinue their education after they reach the age of puberty, around the middle or matriculation level. Some of them argue that if a girl learns to read and write, she may engage in un-Islamic romantic affairs by writing letters to men.

Less than five percent of the respondents think that observing *pardah* (veil) is not necessary for women. More than 67 percent believe it to be a religious duty. Less than six percent say it is a personal matter. Eighteen percent think

that observing *pardah* depends upon the situation. Fifteen percent of the respondents hold that female education is 'not important' or 'not very important'. Another three percent have no opinion in the matter, pushing to 18 percent the number of respondents who do not consider educating girls as necessary. The response of 34 percent of the people was a categorical 'no' when asked if women should be allowed to work outside their homes. Half of the respondents (49 percent) consider the grant of right to divorce to women as 'bad'. Another 16 percent say they are not sure whether it is good or bad, signifying that 65 percent of the people do not believe it to be 'good'.

It is common for women in many parts of the country to be barred from voting in an organized manner, sometimes by mutual agreement of all candidates contesting the election. Thousands of women were not allowed to cast their votes in Lakki Marwat, in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, on February 10, 2010 in polling for by-election in a constituency. A national daily reported:¹⁷

Very negligible [number of] women voters turned up at female polling stations.... Many of the combined polling stations even did not have female booths. The reasons for low female turnout were restrictions on women mobility and local agreements among contesting parties and candidates on barring women from voting.

For social development to take place, Paiva lists three prerequisites: political will, an ideology that sees man as a human being, and cooperation.¹⁸ But a number of groups in Pakistan see man as a religious entity first. One of its consequences is that such groups engage in killing 'heretics' and 'infidels'. Such a behavior negatively impacts the process of social development. In Islamists' view, any ideology in Pakistan must be a religious ideology. But, at the same time they do not allow rational and innovative thinking to penetrate into the Islamic ideology. Here lies the dilemma of how to push the social development process forward while preserving the Islamic character of the state and society.

About followers of the Moravian religion, a Protestant denomination that originated in Bohemia (modern Czech Republic), Max Weber had concluded that "the emotional and nonrational elements of the Moravian religion tended to preclude the development of a rational attitude toward economic action."¹⁹

To a large extent, that is also true in case of Pakistan where the problem is not with the religion itself, but with the way the people perceive and follow the religious teachings. Religious behavior, in general, is irrational. Quite often, people see their lot as an outcome of the grand divine design. Many, whose economic lot is not that good, hold that the life on earth is temporary and the life hereafter, which is permanent, would be perfect in every respect. Such an attitude leads them not to utilize their temporal, physical and intellectual resources appropriately. It also leads to complacency and inactivity, with the result that such individuals do not grow economically, develop socially, and advance intellectually. Thus, it keeps them from becoming a part of the process of social development. It does not allow them to be able to contribute towards the development of their family and society. Rather, they remain a burden on the infrastructure for the many services they need throughout their life, such as transport, roads, healthcare, etc.

Theorists argue that "Development...can only be sustained through a supportive network of social structures, process, and norms.... The innovative value...will have to be institutionalized."²⁰ Religion itself is not dogmatic and anti-innovation but a large number of followers and preachers of religion tend to possess a dogmatic thinking which ultimately shapes their behavior. Such a behavior usually suppresses innovation and only rarely accommodates it.

Development essentially entails change. Any social development taking place in any society simply means that the society and its institutions are undergoing a process of change. Barring exceptions, religious behavior in Pakistan tends to be anti-change. The religious forces are for status quo as far as observance of rituals associated with religion is concerned.

Three alternatives have been put forward to change social structure in order to facilitate social development: "to introduce new institutions, modify or restructure existing ones, or eradicate harmful institutions."²¹ One can hardly imagine religious institutions in Pakistan embracing change. Rather, they are symbols of resistance to change.

A visible transformation has taken place in religious environment of Pakistan in recent years with the emphasis on continuity of religious conservatism. Violent religious behavior has emerged with full force. Pakistani society is

moving from spiritual Islam to a violent version propagated by individuals and groups that subscribe to a militant ideology. As religious tolerance has waned, intolerant religious behavior is on the rise. With a few exceptions, various interpretations of Islam are getting more rigid by the day, making the religious behavior more inflexible and extremist as well. One facet of that extremism was on display in Gojra town of the Punjab province on August 1, 2009, when more than 50 houses belonging to Christians were torched, seven Christians burnt alive and another 18 injured. Another dimension of this change is the perceptibly increased trend of use of force and resort to violence by religious extremists.

In fact, some religious institutions have deteriorated over time. *Dars-e-Nizami*—a study curriculum used in a large number of madrassas in South Asia—is one example, which at the time of its inception around three centuries ago was much more comprehensive and ahead of its time. It included the most advanced branches of natural and social sciences along with the theological subjects at that time. Now, *Dars-e-Nizami* no longer includes modern branches of knowledge and fields of inquiry. The institution of *tasawwuf* (mysticism) is another example of deterioration. Most of the individuals who lay a claim to being Sufis (mystics), or are perceived by society as such, no longer have anything to do with *tasawwuf*. In the past, Sufis were considered the flag-bearers of tolerance, peace, love and respect for humanity and were renowned for exemplary moral character. That is no longer the case for the Sufis of today, whose behavior simply reflects their ignorance, and weak character. “Society has moved backward over the past decades; it has become more conservative and rigid,” laments Ashfaq Saleem Mirza, associated with South Asian Free Media Association (SAFMA).²²

Sufis have historically been symbols of tolerance, peace, love and respect for humanity. These values are the anti-thesis to violence, sectarianism, militancy and terrorism, and terrorists and extremists have recently targeted mausoleums of renowned Sufis in Pakistan. The mausoleum of Pashto Sufi poet Rehman Baba was bombed in Peshawar in March 2009. The shrine of another renowned mystic, Bari Imam, was bombed in May 2005, killing at least 20 people and injuring another 150. And in early July 2010, suicide bombers targeted the shrine of Hazrat Data Ganj Bukhsh in Lahore, killing 36 people and injuring 175.

Individuals who work hard in order to improve their economic conditions and are not regular in offering prayers are considered irreligious or materialistic. They are regularly accused of forgetting God and not spending an appropriate amount of time and energy on fulfilling their religious obligations.

People with religious inclinations generally emphasize and argue in terms of overt acts such as observance of prayers, fasting, dress code, growing a beard, not drinking alcohol and offering Haj, the pilgrimage to Makkah. Values like respecting the rights of others, sanctity of human life, and contribution towards humanity are not considered as important in today's Pakistan. The same was reflected in the outlook of the respondents of the survey. Sixty-five percent of the respondents answered in the negative when asked whether a person can be a good Muslim even if he or she does not offer prayer five times a day. Another eight percent did not have an opinion in the matter. Less than 27 percent believe that a person can be a good Muslim even if he or she does not offer prayers regularly. Approximately 68 percent of the respondents like wearing *shalwar kameez*, the traditional dress worn by men and women in Pakistan. Twenty-five percent of the respondents mention religion as a reason behind their dress choice, with 22 percent giving religion as the sole reason, whereas the other three percent cited culture and comfort as considerations in addition to religion. They believe that following the western dress code takes one away from religion.

In an interesting study, Leighton and Smith compared social and cultural change in seven villages of Canada, Peru, Thailand, Burma, India, Japan and the semi-autonomous Native American Navaho Reservation. They found family sizes reduced in many places and linked that to changed values and ideologies, "including the trend toward secularization".²³ Despite considerable efforts by the government in Pakistan, including through funding by international organizations, family size has fallen in the country in very few cases with a vast majority of families still large in size. That alludes to the fact that change in social values and ideologies has not taken place at the required pace. Religious behavior is the major reason behind this phenomenon as family planning and birth control methods are still looked upon distastefully and considered un-Islamic. People argue that God has taken it upon Himself to feed and shelter every living being. The result is that the population in Pakistan is increasing at a fast rate, while the infrastructure

is not developing at the required pace to meet the challenges posed by a population of this size.

It is not uncommon for religious circles to see globalization and the spread of a global culture as a threat to religion. That is more so in case of Pakistan. Globalization constantly draws tirades from religious leaders and preachers, who castigate it for spreading a monoculture, exposing the social process to two opposite pressures exerted by the forces of globalization and the religious enthusiasts. Though the process of globalization has a number of drawbacks, it has also yielded benefits in several areas, such as education, healthcare, promotion of free media, human rights and personal freedoms, increased awareness and empowerment for individuals. But religious groups are generally not willing to concede any benefits of globalization.

Exploitation in the name of religion is another hurdle in the path of social development. Modern-day *pirs* (spiritual leaders), with few exceptions, thrive on myths created by themselves and, in some cases, by their followers. People demonstrate devotion and reverence for *pirs*, offer them money and do their bidding. In addition to exploiting their followers, these *pirs* also mislead them regarding their religious, personal, professional, and social dealings. In some cases, they take full control of the lives and families of their followers. The followers consider it a blessing bestowed upon them by God. This is only one mode of exploitation in the name of religion. There are many others. The exploiters pretend to be acting in the name of religion and the exploited believe the pretense. The following editorial that recently appeared in a national daily illustrates the phenomenon:²⁴

It is symptomatic of the retrogression in Pakistani society that heinous crimes are committed under the influence of misplaced notions of culture, religion and superstition.

The recent case of infanticide in Karachi is an example. A raid on a Korangi house [in Karachi] led the police to the remains of a six-month-old girl buried in a shallow grave and her four-year-old sister trussed up and starved. The girls' parents told the police that their house had fallen under the influence of 'evil spirits' and that a 'pir sahib' had appeared in their dreams to guide them towards this course of action....

However, there is no doubt that in Pakistan's deeply conservative, illiterate society, holy men and pirs often exercise a pernicious influence over the credulous. There have been cases where such so-called religious men have raped and tortured or incited followers to commit inhumane crimes – the victims have generally been women and children. At the very least such pirs use their influence to extort money or goods....

Feudalism could not be rooted out in Pakistan mainly because a group of religious scholars declared land reforms un-Islamic. Feudalism remains the single largest obstacle in the path of social development in the country. Feudal lords thrive on the illiteracy and simplicity of their tenants. They use their influence and power against human development in the vast tracts of land owned and controlled by them. Thus, they are a symbol of anti-development. The religious scholars came to the feudal lords' rescue when the government was planning to carry out land reforms in order to ensure equitable distribution of land.

Voting behavior in elections is also influenced by religious factors. Twenty-one percent of the respondents surveyed said that religion is a consideration when they cast their vote. Forty-seven percent replied in the affirmative when asked 'Should the religious political parties be given a chance to rule Pakistan?' Thirty-three percent said they support religious parties and organizations. Religious influence is much stronger in rural areas compared to cities on account of less education and modernization in the villages. Had the survey teams surveyed more people from rural areas, the findings are likely to have shown even greater religious influence.

Religious behavior of the political leadership also needs to be taken into account. It is theorized that human rights and human development thrive in areas where democracy flourishes. But under autocratic regimes, human development does not take place because their "policies fail to recognize cultural identities and discourage diversity...."²⁵ In Pakistan, autocratic regimes (military dictatorships) have been getting legitimacy and enjoying support of religious parties. Leadership of the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) mobilized people in the name of Islam against the elected government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto²⁶ and contributed significantly to Bhutto's ouster from

power and the ensuing 11 years of military dictatorship of General Ziaul Haq, dealing a severe blow to the fledgling democracy in the country.

Religio-political parties, particularly the Jamaat-e-Islami, have been engaged in politics of agitation throughout the history of Pakistan. They claim their behavior, which is dominated by agitation, is directed towards serving Islam and Pakistan. But, in fact, such a behavior is a disservice to both, as it diverts people's attention and energies from the real problems and issues concerning social development. Religi-political behavior of the ruling elite is another dimension of the phenomenon. Bhutto's government declared *Ahmedis* as non-Muslim. The declaration led to social repression of *Ahmedis*. General Ziaul Haq's Islamization drive "heightened sectarian tendencies within society."²⁷

Those who go on preaching tours with the Tablighi Jamaat on a *chilla* (visit of three, ten, forty or more days for preaching and meditation) generally neglect their family responsibilities, leaving their wives, parents, and children for extended periods because of their imbalanced religious behavior.

A 'jihad' campaign was launched by General Ziaul Haq in collaboration with the United States and its allies to drive out the Soviet Union from Afghanistan after the December 1979 invasion of Afghanistan. Dubbed as the 'Afghan Jihad', this campaign was promoted as a religious duty for Muslims to fight against the Soviets in Afghanistan purportedly because the secular Soviet Union's presence in Afghanistan was a threat to Islam. Under the 'jihad' campaign against the Soviet Union, non-state actors were provided with financial resources, weapons and trained to fight. In hindsight, this campaign proved to be the biggest folly in the history of Pakistan. Non-state actors have now turned their guns against the state which had facilitated their growth. The state is now struggling to rein in the insurgents at the expense of development of the nation and society.

In the early 1950s, the government of the province of Punjab had used the print media to promote extremist religious views. The newspapers that campaigned against *Ahmedis* received money from the government's Directorate of Information.²⁸

Socio-political divisions on the basis of religion are deepening with the passage of time. Through their sermons, a substantial number of prayer leaders and *khateeb*s (religious leaders who deliver sermons or *khutba* ahead of Friday prayers and religious occasions such as *Eids*) contribute towards deepening of the existing divides rather than bridging them, again creating obstacles in the path of social development.

An overwhelming majority of religious groups and organizations as well as the clerics associated with them spread hatred against each other. They brand people from other sects 'infidels' or 'heretics' and incite their murder. Such hatred against other sects is spread not only through sermons and speeches but also through a litany of religious magazines and newspapers.²⁹ Mainstream media also faces threats and attacks by religious parties and groups, sometimes for publishing certain news items and at other times for not giving sufficient coverage to the views and activities of religious parties. Many political parties in Pakistan also resort to similar tactics against the media when they think that that would serve their purpose.

The social identity of a Pakistani citizen hinges on (a) religion, (b) province, and (c) tribe or caste. As with the two other foundations of social identity, religious identity is further divided into innumerable categories, mainly on the basis of sects. However, divisions on the basis of perceived religious identities are much more absolute than provincial and caste-based identities. Though divisions in all three categories have bred hatred and animosity among the people in Pakistan, the religious divide seems to have done the most damage to social fabric and to the process of social development.

The intensity of the sectarian divide among is brought home by the fact that 61 percent of the respondents surveyed believe that life partners should share the same religious sectarian background. Another 10 percent did not have an opinion in this regard, signifying that 71 percent of the respondents do not believe that life partners should be from different sectarian backgrounds.

There have been over 4,000 killings in sectarian violence in Pakistan in the past two decades.³⁰ Mosques, shrines, rallies, congregations, Eid prayers and other religious gatherings have been targeted by bombers and gunmen belonging to different Islamic sects. A suicide bomber hit the largest *A'ashura* procession of Shia Muslims in the country, in Karachi, on December 28, 2009,

killings at least 43 people and injuring more than 50. Another Shia procession was hit in the same city by a bomber on February 5, 2010. Soon after the February 5 explosion, a second bomb exploded in a hospital where the injured from the first explosion had been brought for treatment. Thirty-three people were killed and more than 100 injured in the two explosions.

Pakistan has a vast and diverse territory (796,095 sq km)³¹ and a huge population (153,578,000 in 2003).³² When it comes to religious behaviors, there are huge dissimilarities among different regions as well as followers of various schools of thought. For the sake of analysis and keeping in mind the most problematic issue of terrorism and militancy in the name of religion different areas of the country can be categorized as:

- 1) War zones
- 2) Peripheries
- 3) Relatively peaceful areas

Similarly, religious groups in Pakistan with reference to militancy and terrorism can be classified as:

- 1) Militant/Terrorist
- 2) Their sympathizers
- 3) Their critics
- 4) Neutrals

The darkest aspect of the religious behavior with reference to social development is violent extremism, militancy and terrorism engulfing Pakistani society in the name of religion. It is the extreme form of violent religious behavior, and has brought the process of social development across the country to a standstill. The damage violence and terrorism have caused to the process in the militancy-hit areas is particularly extensive. Schools, colleges, universities, and even hospitals, have been bombed. Millions of people have been internally displaced.

Many of the religious-minded people support violence and terrorism against members of other sects and consider it 'jihad'. Twenty-six percent of the respondents believe that Taliban are fighting for the glory of Islam. Eight percent of the respondents also support Taliban attacks on CD/video and barber shops, girls' schools, and cinemas. The respondents say that such attacks are justified to (a) end anti-Islam activities, (b) spread fear among anti-

Islam forces, (c) push people towards Islamic teachings, and (d) compel the government to enforce Islamic laws.

Some armed religious organizations and groups collect funds through coercion. It is not uncommon for members of these religious groups to phone factory owners and ask them to have large sums of money delivered to the religious groups' offices as the office-holders do not have the time to go and collect the money themselves. The factory owners regularly comply with such demands for fear of loss of life or property. Fear of the radical religious groups has gripped society, casting long shadows on the processes of personal as well as social development.

Pakistan has made substantial cuts in the development budget and diverted the money to the security and law enforcement sectors to meet the huge challenge of eradicating terrorism being carried out in the name of religion.

Looking at the arguments made in these pages, one may ask that if indeed such is the case then what is the explanation for the social development that has been witnessed in the country. The answer is that this paper does not at all suggest that all the factors behind social development have been or are working in a negative direction. Neither has it been suggested that all Pakistanis behave in a 'religious' fashion. Many people do not buy the narrow interpretations of religion and many others act in a secular manner. The acceptance and popularity of interest-based banking and other businesses illuminates this point. Usury (interest) is forbidden in Islam. All Muslims believe it to be un-Islamic. Yet, with a few exceptions, they do not mind engaging in interest-based activities.

Social welfare projects and activities by religious organizations and charities, undoubtedly, are a great contribution to the process of social development. Such projects are working mainly in the sectors of health, education, and humanitarian relief. Poor children get basic education, boarding and lodging free of cost. Free hospitals and dispensaries are run and free medical camps are arranged by a number of religiously motivated organizations. In cases of natural disasters, such as floods and earthquakes, religious organizations are always in the forefront of relief activities. Many people volunteer on such occasions out of religious motivation.

Conclusion

In Pakistan, the linkage between religious behavior and social development is a strong one. However, on the whole, the linkage is negative. As the facts and arguments furnished in these lines demonstrate, religious behaviors in Pakistani society have caused hiccups in the development process. Trends and patterns of change in religious behavior are damaging the social fabric. Furthermore, the distorted interpretations of Islam have pushed the humanitarian aspect of the religion far backwards.

Notes

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Pakistan's Responses to Terrorism: A Broad Overview

Wajahat Ali

Introduction

It was described as Pakistan's 9/11. The suicide truck bombing that targeted Islamabad's Marriott Hotel on September 20, 2008, was so severe that it left a twenty feet deep and forty feet wide crater at the site of the explosion. It also claimed at least forty lives and injured hundreds of people.¹

Most of the blast victims were attending *iftar* dinners during the Muslim fasting month of Ramazan: the fact that they were targeted by Islamist militants, who professed to be fighting a "holy war" for the supremacy of their religion, perplexed everyone.

Soon after the incident, a leading TV anchor asked the participants of his program: "Is this our war?" The question was awkward, even offensive, given the fact that militants were using Pakistan's soil and targeting its citizens. Yet, the query also reflected, in a tragic and peculiar way, the degree of ignorance among the people about their enemy and the nature of the conflict.

Religious militancy was not considered to be a threat by the anchor: he was more inclined to discuss the American presence in Afghanistan, General (retired) Pervez Musharraf's decision to join the US-led "war on terror" and how the two variables had come to impact Pakistan's domestic security. Clearly, the government had failed to build consensus against extremist groups that were posing a mortal threat to the state.

This was despite the fact that Pakistan had been facing the menace of extremism much before Al Qaeda targeted the United States on September 11, 2001. Thousands of people had been killed in the name of religion and sect, sometimes in their places of worship since the 1980s. But with the US troops in the region, it became quite convenient for everyone to blame such acts of violence on American activities in the region. After all, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) had always maintained that it was targeting the country's security forces since the Pakistani administration had abandoned the Afghan

Taliban and sided with the “crusading” American forces. Many people thought that Pakistan would get some respite if it stopped fighting “the US war” in the region.

However, their argument was flawed on two counts: firstly, Pakistan’s pre-9/11 involvement in Afghanistan had made it impossible for its administration to distance itself from the conflict; and, secondly, the militant groups would have challenged the state, with or without the American presence in the region, since they wanted to significantly alter its social, political, judicial and economic systems.

This became amply clear from Maulana Sufi Muhammad’s address in Mingora in April 2009. The leader of Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNSM) declared the country’s parliament and its superior judiciary un-Islamic and accused its government of “appeasing the West by thrusting the system of ‘Kufr’ on the Islam-loving people” of the country.²

His argument was also echoed in Ayman al-Zawahiri’s writings. In December 2009, the Al Qaeda leader criticized the country, saying: “*Shariah* is not the supreme authority in Pakistan, rather the supreme authority is the will of the majority in the Parliament, which they claim ... reflects the will and power of the people. Whether their claims are right or false, what is certain is that the authority in Pakistan does not belong to the *Shariah* law, the Quran or the righteous Sunnah. It rather belongs to other powers that detour Pakistan from the Path of Islam, and manipulate its destiny according to their whims.”³

Religious militancy thus posed a significant threat to the country’s constitution and its political system. Before we analyze Pakistan’s responses to it, however, let’s find out how it got embroiled in the US-led “war on terror” in the first place.

Pakistan’s Backyard

Pakistan’s involvement in Afghanistan preceded the September 11 terror attacks in the United States. The country had acted as a frontline state during the Afghan-Soviet war by providing logistical support and training facilities to the mujahideen groups fighting the Red Army. Many other countries were also interested in the outcome of the war. The United States, for instance,

wanted to bleed its archrival in Afghanistan to avenge Vietnam.⁴ It remained deeply engaged in the region until Moscow announced to pull its forces out of Afghanistan.

The stakes were different for Pakistan, however. It had micromanaged the conflict from the outset and—after the Soviet withdrawal—saw a perfect opportunity to install a friendly administration in Kabul and advance its strategic interests in its western neighborhood. It decided to overthrow the communist regime of Najibullah, mediated among different warring factions and, ultimately, chose to assist and work with the ultra-orthodox Islamist group, the Taliban.⁵

Analysts believe that Islamabad was not in full control of its Taliban policy from the beginning. According to one account, Benazir Bhutto's administration did not want its intelligence apparatus to assist the Taliban's takeover of Kabul. Instead, her government was more interested in using the group's new-found strength as a bargaining chip to negotiate for a coalition government in Afghanistan. The Pakistani prime minister had no idea that her country's own security establishment was actively helping the ragtag militia of former seminary students until she was confronted with some evidence by President Ali Akbar Rafsanjani during her visit to Iran.⁶

A few years later, General (r) Pervez Musharraf acknowledged in his autobiography what he was reluctant to admit before. "After the Taliban came to power," he wrote, "we lost much of the leverage we had with them."⁷ Despite its waning influence in Kabul, however, Pakistan did not adopt a more nuanced approach towards the Taliban. It firmly stood behind the group and created an impression that it was capable of modifying the Taliban's behavior. Nevertheless, the militant outfit was swiftly turning into a liability. The international community was getting impatient after Osama bin Laden and his militant network, Al Qaeda, found sanctuary in Afghanistan. President Bill Clinton took up the issue with Musharraf during his brief visit to Pakistan in March 2000, but the Pakistani president refused to do anything that might upset the Taliban.

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) was also passing resolutions to condemn the *de facto* Afghan administration and its backers in Islamabad. The UNSC Resolution 1214, adopted on December 8, 1998, warned the Taliban

against “sheltering and training” terrorists. It also sent out a signal to Pakistan when it asked all UN members to persuade the Taliban to abandon Al Qaeda. Similarly, the council’s Resolution 1333, passed on December 19, 2000, stopped countries from providing weapons and training to the Afghan fighters and even prohibited them from rendering any advisory support to the group.

As a noted American counterterrorism expert observed, “Between 1998 and 2001 the United States, the United Nations, and the international community made a major effort to persuade Pakistan to rein in the Taliban and stop its support for international terrorism. Though it paid occasional lip service to the campaign, Pakistan took no action against the Taliban. If anything, it increased military assistance to the Taliban, in direct violation of a UN stricture.”⁸

It may appear a bit surprising that Pakistan’s foreign policy establishment did not read the writing on the wall and change its diplomatic direction in Afghanistan. But the fact is that the country’s Afghan policy was crafted and managed by its security establishment that sought “strategic depth” against India in Afghanistan. The concept was never clearly defined by anyone. But it was based on Pakistan’s desire to use the Afghan soil to regroup its forces and launch counterattacks in case of a war with India.

The whole idea of “strategic depth” reflected that Pakistan viewed its neighbor across the Durand Line not as a separate state but as its own extension. Little wonder then that the Foreign Office did not have enough power to amend the country’s Afghan policy in any significant way.

It is also important to mention that Taliban had got their sympathizers in all the strategic places in Pakistan. The country’s religio-political parties, militant groups and several of its military and intelligence officials had developed a symbiotic relationship with the group. In January 2001, they held a meeting at Darul Uloom Haqqania, a famous seminary in Akora Khattak from where many of the Afghan fighters, including their leader, Mullah Omar, had graduated. The meeting was attended by people like Maulana Masood Azhar of Jaish-e-Muhammad, Khalilullah Ferozi of Taliban, Sufi Muhammad of Tehreek-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi and the former director general of Inter-Services Intelligence, General (r) Hamid Gul. The participants of the

meeting urged Islamabad to disregard the UN resolutions and express solidarity with the regime in Kabul.⁹ As the "war on terror" began, these people and their followers decided to criticize the shift in Pakistan's Afghan policy and continued to support the Taliban.

The 9/11 U-turn

Given the history of Pakistan's involvement in Afghanistan and its failure to distance itself from Taliban at the right time, it was not surprising how it got sucked into the conflict that followed the 9/11 terror attacks in New York and Washington. General (r) Pervez Musharraf was at the helm of affairs in Pakistan when terrorists flew planes into the World Trade Center and Pentagon. He immediately realized that the events in the United States were going to have repercussions for his own country. Musharraf was soon contacted by US Secretary of State Colin Powell who famously gave him this ultimatum: "You are either with us or against us."

Later, the Pakistani president recalled making "a dispassionate, military-style analysis" of his options. He thought that New Delhi "would gain a golden opportunity with regard to Kashmir" in the absence of a positive response from Pakistan. "The Indians might be tempted to undertake a limited offensive there," he contemplated, "or, more likely, they would work with the United States and the United Nations to turn the present situation into a permanent status quo." The Pakistani President also believed that a negative response to the United States from his government would jeopardize the country's nuclear weapons and damage "the military parity that Pakistan had achieved with India by becoming a nuclear weapons state".

Apart from looking at these threats, Musharraf considered the benefits of joining the American camp as well. "First, we would be able to eliminate extremism from our own society and flush out the foreign terrorists in our midst," he wrote. "We could not do this alone; we needed the technical and financial support of the United States to be able to find and defeat these terrorists ... Second, even though being a frontline state fighting terrorism would deter foreign investment, there were certain obvious economic advantages, like loosening the stranglehold of our debt and lifting economic sanctions. Third, after being an outcast nation following our nuclear tests, we would come to center stage."¹⁰

It is safe to say that any Pakistani government would have taken the same decision for its own survival in such grave circumstances. Yet, many of Musharraf's cabinet members resented it since it was taken without a consultative process.¹¹ The President faced more intense emotions when he confronted his military colleagues at one of the longest corps commanders' conferences. Some of his closest subordinates reportedly questioned the wisdom of his decision and tried to convince him not to support the United States against the Taliban. However, he used the India card and managed to push his decision through. It may be recalled that these officers were sidelined in a military reshuffle that took place soon after the meeting.¹²

Analysts agree that purging the armed forces and intelligence services of Taliban sympathizers was one of the greatest challenges facing the Musharraf administration in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. Many of these officers were not pleased with the new policy shift and some of them were even accused of working against it. For instance, General (r) Mahmood Ahmed, who was the then ISI chief, was sent to Kandahar to persuade Taliban to give up Osama bin Laden and his network. But, according to a report, he told Mullah Omar to do exactly the opposite and resist the American onslaught. Ahmad was also accused of briefing the Taliban on Washington's likely war strategy.¹³

The Musharraf administration's other challenge was to explain the policy shift to the people of Pakistan. While the absence of democracy in the country had resulted in a quick decision-making process, the lack of democratic institutions made it difficult for the government to mold public opinion through a constructive debate.

The Pakistani president decided to hold meetings with prominent public figures from different walks of life to explain his decision to them. According to his foreign minister, Abdul Sattar, about 90 percent of them understood "the gravity of the situation and the need for circumspection". Only the religious leaders thought that Pakistan should have sided with the Taliban.¹⁴

In the coming years, Musharraf's decision to join the US camp turned out to be quite controversial and unpopular. This was because of the following reasons.

1) Most people in Pakistan heavily relied on conspiracy theories to understand and explain the 9/11 attacks in the United States. Many of them believed that the attacks were orchestrated by the American establishment to launch a “crusade” against the Muslim world. It is not surprising that they detested Islamabad’s decision to side with the US and accused their government of safeguarding American interests in the region.

2) The Musharraf administration’s conduct of war was highly objectionable. Many people were picked up by local intelligence agencies and some of them were handed over to the US authorities without due process of law.¹⁵

It may be recalled that Pakistan had not adjusted its legal framework at the outset of this war. The Bush administration, for instance, had introduced the Patriot Act, giving sweeping powers to its law enforcement agencies. The Act was severely criticized by civil liberty groups but it also gave ample space to the state to prevent future terror attacks without prompting a legal backlash. The Pakistani government did not change anything in the statute books, creating a number of complexities in the upcoming years.

3) Urban terrorism in Pakistan was another reason why people started questioning Musharraf’s decision to join the US camp. As suicide attacks rocked the country, many politicians, journalists and former military and intelligence officials started creating a perception that Pakistan was fighting America’s war. It became increasingly difficult for the government to explain its position to the people. The president had sidelined the leadership of the country’s top political parties and surrounded himself with a bunch of politicians who did not have their roots in the masses and lacked courage to take the ownership of the war and convey its rationale to the people.¹⁶

The Musharraf administration was thus oscillating between domestic opposition and international expectations. It is not surprising that its officials were more interested in negotiating with militant groups in the tribal territories than fighting them. They got into several peace deals with different networks in the northwest. But these agreements only strengthened the

groups fighting in Pakistan.¹⁷

However, the government also took some important steps against the backdrop of the war against religious militancy. When the Indian parliament came under an unprecedented attack by a handful of militants on December 13, 2001, for instance, the Pakistani administration once again found itself under intense international pressure to act against radical outfits. New Delhi deployed its forces along the Indo-Pak border and resorted to coercive diplomacy. The Pakistani President addressed the nation on January 12, 2002, saying: "Pakistan will not allow its territory to be used for any terrorist activity anywhere in the world ... No organization will be allowed to indulge in terrorism in the name of Kashmir." Banning five extremist groups, Musharraf also pointed out that "we are not custodians of taking jihad all over the world".¹⁸

This infuriated the groups which were previously fighting for the "liberation" of Kashmir and receiving state patronage for their cause. Many of their workers and leaders were detained by the security agencies. But these steps only restricted their activities for a limited period. Many of these factions resurfaced under different names within a few months.

Nevertheless, their supporters within the country's official circles were quite perturbed by the development. They believed that the existence of these militant outfits was vital for Pakistan's national security. Yet, the Musharraf administration's steps not only forced these groups to keep a low profile but also increased the possibility of better relations with India. In the coming years, Islamabad and New Delhi took several confidence-building measures and initiated what they thought was an "irreversible" peace process.¹⁹

The previous administration also tried to address the issues of radicalization and recruitment by extremist groups by reforming religious seminaries in Pakistan. The initiative was taken after the London attacks of July 7, 2005, but was never properly implemented. Musharraf's religious affairs minister was General Ziaul Haq's son who frequently maintained that there was nothing wrong with Pakistani religious seminaries.²⁰

The Pakistani President was forced to take those steps under international pressure. But they helped him build a constituency among the country's

secular and liberal elite.²¹ However, he was also accused of playing a double game with his allies. A noted expert learnt from Pashtun bureaucrats that Islamabad wanted to deliberately increase the Taliban influence in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) to force "Karzai to bend to Pakistani wishes, keep U.S. forces under threat while maintaining their dependence on Pakistani goodwill, and create a buffer zone between Afghan and Pakistani Pashtuns". He also maintained that the country was following a complex policy of "minimally satisfying American demands" and "not interfering with the resettlement of the militants in Waziristan".²²

The government was also accused of creating a "new clandestine organization" to facilitate the Taliban since it was "impossible for the ISI" to simultaneously assist the CIA and the militant group. This organization worked "outside the military and intelligence structure" and "set up offices in private houses in Peshawar, Quetta and other cities". It "maintained no links with the local ISI station chief or the army" and "there were no records, and logistics and expenses came through not the ISI but the less scrutinized offices of the Frontier Corps".²³

Musharraf faced several assassination attempts during his tenure as the President.²⁴ Yet it was widely believed that his administration had not severed its alliance with the Afghan Taliban. It is true that the group was not fighting in Pakistan. Yet, its ideological appeal inspired hundreds of militants on the east of the Durand Line.

PPP's War

Despite the allegations of double dealing, the Bush administration not only relied on Pakistan's President but also publicly praised him on several occasions. However, it was gradually becoming clear that Musharraf was finding it difficult to convince his people about the necessity of fighting this war for Pakistan's own survival as a nation-state.

Meanwhile, Benazir Bhutto, the country's twice-elected former Prime Minister, was trying to persuade the world that her party could take the ownership of the war and fight it to the bitter end. She decided to take a strong position against militant groups in Pakistan when no other politician in the country was willing to denounce them in categorical terms. The

trouble, however, was that she was in exile and knew that the Musharraf administration would not let her return to Pakistan without sufficient international pressure.²⁵

Benazir Bhutto had always maintained that the West should not support military dictators in Pakistan. She wrote in her autobiography that Musharraf was flirting with the West, "dispensing occasional and calculated but ultimately disingenuous support in the global war on terror". "This," she added, "keeps America and Britain off his political back while the Taliban regroup in the tribal areas of Pakistan and kill NATO troops in neighboring Afghanistan."²⁶

Nevertheless, she took a more pragmatic view of the situation while dealing with the Bush administration. The PPP leader told US officials that she was willing to work with General (r) Pervez Musharraf at that stage. According to Peter Galbraith, a former US ambassador who personally knew Benazir Bhutto, the chairperson of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) "had been prime minister twice, and had not been able to accomplish very much because she did not have power over the most important institutions in Pakistan – the ISI, the military and the nuclear establishment. Without controlling those, she couldn't pursue peace with India, go after extremists or transfer funds from the military to social programs. Cohabitation with Musharraf made sense because he had control over the three institutions that she never did. This was the one way to accomplish something and create a moderate center."²⁷

Benazir Bhutto finally managed to return to the country in October 2007. She was received by thousands of enthusiastic people at the Karachi airport. As her convoy began to move around the city, two powerful explosions rocked the vehicle carrying the PPP leader. She managed to survive the bid on her life. But a large number of her party activists got injured or lost their lives.²⁸ Nevertheless, she continued with her political campaign and, in the coming weeks, traveled around the country to address people in different cities.

However, Benazir Bhutto remained in the crosshairs of militant groups and was finally targeted in a gun-and-bomb attack in Rawalpindi.²⁹ Some political commentators compared her assassination with Anwar Sadat's killing in 1981 and Ahmed Shah Massoud's murder in September 2001.³⁰

As the PPP won the February 2008 general elections, the militants were launching brazen attacks across Pakistan. Nevertheless, the party leadership did not try to address the problem immediately. In fact, it was more focused on political wheeling and dealing during the first few months of its tenure. The militants, on the other hand, were gaining strength. They had managed to expand their operations in the major urban centers of the country. Many of them were also foraying into Afghanistan and launching audacious attacks against the coalition forces. It was against this backdrop that Afghan President Hamid Karzai, for the first time, threatened to invade Pakistan.³¹

It is true that some very effective military operations were launched after the PPP formed its government in Islamabad. But it is equally true that the party was reluctant to take the ownership of the war in the beginning. For instance, when the local Taliban started spreading their tentacles in the country's northwestern province and captured Buner,³² the government did not issue any reassuring statements. This was despite the fact that the international community was getting alarmed by the situation in Pakistan and there was a genuine fear that militants were planning to take over the federal capital.

The first person who broke this silence was neither the President nor the Prime Minister: it was the army chief. General Ashfaq Pervez Kayani told the people that the state was not giving concessions to the armed Islamist militants and that victory against terror and militancy would be achieved at all cost. He added that the army "never has and never will hesitate to sacrifice, whatever it may take, to ensure safety and well-being of the people and [the] country's territorial integrity".³³ Ironically, the government remained silent even after this statement. But when it realized that General Kayani's words had gone down well with the people, the Prime Minister decided to stretch his neck out and said that he had asked the army to take decisive action against militants in Swat and adjoining areas.³⁴

However, by that time, military operation was already underway in the restive region.

The PPP should have brought the army and the country's intelligence community under civilian supervision. But its leadership was not willing to take such risks. This was despite the fact that the army needed political support to fight militant factions. Its top brass had briefed a joint session of

parliament on the necessity and challenges of fighting that war. However, many of the legislators did not want to take the war any further.³⁵ The joint session of parliament unanimously adopted a resolution that insisted that dialogue should be the “principle instrument of conflict management and resolution”³⁶ in the country.

It soon became clear, however, that negotiations and peace deals were only helping militant groups reorganize and launch more devastating attacks in Pakistan. The PPP government thus decided to establish the National Counterterrorism Authority (NACTA)³⁷ to formulate a more coherent and comprehensive strategy to fight the threat of religious militancy. But, according to sources, the decision was opposed from the outset by a number of officials. The bureaucratic turf war that followed the creation of NACTA forced its chairman to resign in July 2010.³⁸

The PPP government also got into a verbal battle with the administration in Punjab over the threat of religious militancy in the southern parts of the province. The whole debate about launching a military operation in the country's most densely populated province was unwarranted. Experts believe that the “Punjabi Taliban” can be stopped from gaining strength through “vigilant intelligence and better policing”.³⁹

On the whole, the PPP government fell short of devising a viable counterterrorism strategy to win this war. Its failure to stamp its authority on the country's defense and security establishment and reclaim Pakistan's Afghan policy may have far-reaching consequences for the stability and security of the region.

What Needs to be Done?

It is no secret that Pakistan decided to support the Taliban for “national security” reasons. Like any other country, it reserved the right to take pragmatic decisions and even get into an unholy alliance with a militia group that was run by “half-baked, obscurantist clerics”.⁴⁰ But there was a problem with Pakistan's national security paradigm: it only assumed the threat of external aggression and was merely grounded in military security; none of the Pakistani administrations tried to broaden the framework by including other significant variables such as political and economic stability and progress.

The events that followed the Musharraf administration's decision to join the US-led "war on terror" indicated that the country was facing an internal threat. The political turbulence and the rising number of terror attacks in 2007⁴¹ clearly reflected that the state was wilting under the weight of its own contradictions. Not surprisingly, the international community began to wonder if it was dealing with a "failed state" that was armed with sophisticated nuclear weapons and was facing the specter of religious extremism.

As the world begins to limp towards a diplomatic endgame in Afghanistan, there is once again an urge among certain segments in Pakistan to revert to the pre-9/11 policy of using extremist groups to advance the country's security interests in the region. There are, at least, three problems with this:

- 1) Previously, the policy did not work for the country beyond a certain point: it bruised the Indians and kept the Kashmir dispute on the international radar screen; but once Pakistan lost the element of plausible deniability and it became obvious to the international community that the valley's "indigenous liberation movement" was actually fueled by groups from Pakistan, a perfectly legitimate cause was discredited. In other words, this policy may have yielded tactical benefits to Pakistan; but it gave tremendous strategic advantage to India in the long run.
- 2) After the September 11 terror attacks, the world became extremely concerned about the threat of religious extremism in this region. The Americans fought a war in Afghanistan and are currently facing an insurgency there. Similarly, other countries, including China,⁴² have also expressed their anxiety over the menace of religious extremism. It will not be wise for Pakistan, therefore, to rely on these groups to achieve its security and foreign policy objectives in the region.
- 3) The idea of creating and nurturing extremist factions has not only created tremendous problems for Pakistan on the international level but has also ruined the country's social fabric. Even if Islamabad is not afraid of international isolation, it should consider growing intolerance among its citizens and try to analyze how its decisions in the past have weakened the country. It is certainly important to prepare Pakistan against the possibility of any external aggression; but it is equally, if not more, critical to work for greater political stability, economic progress, social cohesion

and human development. Pakistan must strengthen itself internally and make itself positively relevant to the rest of the world.

In terms of dealing with threat of religious extremism, the country must take the following steps:

1) It must identify the enemy and understand the nature of the conflict. It is quite unfortunate that even after facing religious militancy and radicalization for so many years, the government has been trying to create an impression that India is responsible for the prevailing security deficit in Pakistan. It is true that India has done everything to isolate Pakistan in the post-9/11 global affairs. It may also be taking full advantage of the situation in this country by providing weapons and financial assistance to some of the militant groups. But the government has so far failed to provide any evidence to the world of New Delhi's involvement in the matter or taken up the issue at appropriate international forums.

It is important to recognize that the trouble lies within Pakistan. Islamabad needs to examine its previous policies and learn lessons from them.

2) Once the government has reviewed its policies and truly motivated itself to eliminate the problem, it must try to prevent further radicalization in Pakistan. This can be done at two levels. Firstly, NACTA should be made operational and asked to provide a broader knowledge base to the policymakers about the workings of different militant groups. It is important to understand how these outfits recruit and exploit young people. This will significantly help the government take informed decisions and keep the youth from falling into the wrong hands.

Secondly, it is imperative for the government to recognize that militant groups have been deriving their strength from the state's own pre-9/11 narrative about Pakistan's identity that was developed at the expense of alternative political discourses and was grounded in religion.⁴³ The government must understand that the mindset that readily responds to militant Islamist ideology was developed by the state itself. It is, therefore, important to develop counter narratives. Some of the religious

scholars in Pakistan have already presented strong critiques against Al Qaeda ideology.⁴⁴ Unfortunately, their statements have not been duly promoted by the local media. Nevertheless, their works can be used to destroy the recruitment base of different militant factions since they can instill a better understanding of religion among the youth and remove the cobwebs of ignorance about the notion of jihad in their minds.

Groups like Al Qaeda and the TTP understand the threat to their recruitment base better than anyone else. They have frequently described “moderate Islam” as “a prostration to the West”⁴⁵ and threatened or killed those clerics who have challenged their religious interpretation.⁴⁶

Yet, the Pakistani state has so far only focused on fighting the militants and providing some economic assistance to people living in poverty-stricken areas. Obviously, it needs to continue such exercises. However, in conjunction with that, it must also try to transform the ideological mindset by developing counter narratives.

It will not be easy to put these points into practice. Yet, these are the first few steps that must be taken in order to defeat the militant ideology. The government will obviously need to do more to completely cure the cancer that has, for years, been metastasizing. It will have to address some of the outstanding governance issues, for instance, to reclaim its credibility. It will also need to take well informed decisions about the country's national security concerns and not outsource this business to its armed forces and intelligence community.

Finally, it will have to launch its own DDR program to **disarm, demobilize** and **reintegrate** members of different militant factions. That will be its biggest challenge. But if the above steps are properly implemented and the culture of religious militancy and radicalization is appropriately addressed, the government may find it relatively easy to de-radicalize diehard militants and completely win this war.

It is important to understand, however, that the problem of religious extremism will not disappear overnight. The country will need to devise a short- to medium- to long-term strategy to address its ongoing predicament. The sooner it ponders its game plan the better.

Notes

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- ¹ See Raja Asghar, Irfan Raza, Muhammad Asghar and Munawer Azeem, "Terror tears through capital", *Dawn*, September 21, 2008.
<http://www.dawn.com/2008/09/21/top1.htm>, accessed on August 29, 2010.
- ² Sufi Muhammad also claimed that there was no room for democracy in Islam. He censured "democratic ulema" for joining the movement for restoration of judiciary since he thought that the country's judicial system was *ghair-sharaee* (un-Islamic) and it was *haram* (sacrilegious) to approach the existing courts for justice. Sufi Muhammad's remedy was to sack judges and set up Shariah courts across the country. See "Superior courts 'un-Islamic', says Swat Sufi: Govt asked to set up Darul Qaza by 23rd". *Dawn*, April 20, 2009.
<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/superior-courts-unislamic,-says-swat-sufi-govt-asked-to-set-up-darul-qaza-by-23rd>, accessed on August 29, 2010.
- ³ Cited in Brian Fishman, "The Battle for Pakistan: Militancy and Conflict across the FATA and NWFP", Counterterrorism Strategy Initiative Policy Paper, New America Foundation, April 2010, pp. 8-9.
- ⁴ According to Diego Cardovez and Selig Harrison, the United States was initially divided between "bleeders" and "dealers": the former group, led by Zbigniew Brzezinski, "wanted to keep Soviet forces pinned down in Afghanistan"; the latter, led by Cyrus Vance, wanted to compel Soviet withdrawal "through a combination of diplomacy and military pressure". As time went by, the "bleeders" managed to influence the US policy more. See Diego Cardovez and Selig S. Harrison, *Out of Afghanistan: The Inside Story of the Soviet Withdrawal*, Oxford University Press, 1995.
- ⁵ An excellent account of how Pakistan formulated its Afghan policy during the 1990s can be found in Steve Coll's book, *Ghost Wars*.
- ⁶ Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001*, The Penguin Press, New York, 2004, p. 294.
- ⁷ Pervez Musharraf, *In the Line of Fire: A Memoir*, Simon & Schuster, 2006, p. 203.
- ⁸ Bruce Riedel, *The Search for Al Qaeda: Its Leadership, Ideology and Future*, Vanguard Books, 2009, p. 74.
- ⁹ Imtiaz Gul and Sadaqat Jan, *From Akora Khattak with love*, The Friday Times, January 19-25, 2001, Vol. XII, No. 47.
- ¹⁰ *In the Line of Fire*. pp. 201-203.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 206.
- ¹² Rory McCarthy, "Dangerous game of state-sponsored terror that threatens nuclear conflict", *The Guardian*, 25 May 2002.
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2002/may/25/pakistan.india>, accessed on August 22, 2010.
- ¹³ Kathy Gannon, *I is for Infidel, From Holy War to Holy Terror: 18 Years Inside Afghanistan*, PublicAffairs, New York, 2005, p. 93.
- ¹⁴ Abdul Sattar, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy: A Concise History*, Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. 245-246.
- ¹⁵ See Moazzam Begg, "The President and Me", *Open Democracy*, October 4, 2006.
http://www.opendemocracy.net/conflict-india_pakistan/musharraf_3967.jsp,

- accessed on August 29, 2010.
- ¹⁶ The political vacuum in the country had already helped a six-party religio-political alliance, Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal, form its government in Pakistan's two provinces bordering Afghanistan in the wake of the October 2002 general elections. Some people even speculated that the government had propped up these religious clerics to extract a hard bargain from Washington. See Najam Sethi, "Thank you, Gen Musharraf", *Daily Times*, October 11, 2002.
- ¹⁷ To get a comprehensive perspective on the situation in Pakistan's northwestern territories, see Brian Fishman, "The Battle for Pakistan: Militancy and Conflict across the FATA and NWFP", Counterterrorism Strategy Initiative Policy Paper, New America Foundation, April 2010, p. 9.
- ¹⁸ Ahmed Rashid, *Descent into Chaos: How the War against Islamic Extremism is being lost in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia*, Allen Lane, 2008, p. 117.
- ¹⁹ See "Rivals say peace 'irreversible'", *BBC News*, April 18, 2005.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4455351.stm, accessed on August 28, 2010.
- ²⁰ For more information on the initiative, see Christine Fair, *The Madrassah Challenge: Militancy and Religious Education in Pakistan*, Vanguard Books, 2009.
- ²¹ For an interesting analysis of this, read William Dalrymple, "Where Liberals Love a Dictator", *The Guardian*, May 17, 2005.
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2005/may/17/pakistan.comment>, accessed on August 26, 2010.
- ²² *Descent into Chaos*, p. 269.
- ²³ *Ibid*, pp. 221-222.
- ²⁴ See "Assassination attempts against Pakistan's Musharraf", Reuters, July 6, 2007.
<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/L06499787.htm>, accessed on August 28, 2010.
- ²⁵ General (r) Pervez Musharraf wrote in his memoir: "Former prime ministers Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto, who had twice been tried, been tested, and failed, had to be denied a third chance." At one point, he mocked the PPP leader, saying: "Benazir became her party's 'chairperson for life,' in the tradition of the old African dictators!" See *In the Line of Fire*, pp. 164-165.
- ²⁶ Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East: An Autobiography*, Simon & Schuster, 2007. p.428-429
- ²⁷ Robin Wright and Glenn Kessler, "U.S. Brokered Bhutto's Return to Pakistan", *The Washington Post*, December 28, 2007. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/12/27/AR2007122701481_pf.html, accessed on August 29, 2010.
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- ³⁰ Martin Kramer, "Bhutto's Murder: Prelude to ...", *Middle East Strategy at Harvard*, December 30, 2007.
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- ³⁹ See Muhammad Amir Rana, "The Punjabi Taliban", *Dawn*, July 9, 2010, accessed on August 29, 2010.
- ⁴⁰ *In the Line of Fire*, pp. 202-203.
- ⁴¹ There were 657 terrorist attacks in Pakistan in 2006. But the number sharply increased to 1422 in 2007.
- ⁴² Wajahat Ali, "China says terrorists from Xinjiang hiding in Pakistan", *Daily Times*, May 29, 2004. http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=story_29-5-2004_pg7_4, accessed on August 26, 2010.
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Profile

Hizbut Tahrir in Pakistan: Discourse and Impact

Muhammad Amir Rana

Introduction

Islamist organizations in Pakistan have been struggling in many ways to achieve their respective agendas since the country was founded. Their primary strategic focus has remained on Islamization of the state and religio-socialization of society. It was mainly due to Islamist pressure that the Constituent Assembly first defined the ideological discourse of the state in the shape of the Objectives Resolution of 1949, which stated that Muslims would be enabled to mould their lives in accordance with the teachings and requirements of Islam. Declaring Pakistan an 'Islamic Republic', providing supremacy of 'divine injunctions' over parliament, and enacting one view of *Shariah* as legislation during military ruler General Ziaul Haq's regime are some of the other successes claimed by Islamist organizations and clerics. Pakistan indeed faced a similar religiously justified conflict at the time of its independence from colonial rule. Though Pakistan vied to transform itself into a secular state, sectarian tensions started to emerge with the passage of time. Before the partition of India, the All India Muslim League had sought the support of religious and Islamist quarters to win the crucial provincial elections and stake the claim for an independent homeland for Muslims of the Subcontinent. These groups had promised their voters that Pakistan would be an "Islamic state". The Objectives Resolution and the subsequent Islamization efforts were therefore expected outcomes.

The anti-Ahmedi movement of 1953 was another turning point in this regard.¹ The modernist ruling elites were disturbed by this, and the following agitations against Pakistan's first military ruler Ayub Khan's Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, 1961—a law designed to regulate certain aspects of Muslim family law such as divorce, polygamy, minimum age of marriage, and registration of marriage, and which Islamist organizations and clerics deemed un-Islamic—but they remained undecided, confused and co-opting in their

response. Ayub tried to resist such Islamist movements but he too legitimized the role of religious clerics, albeit indirectly, when he persuaded some religious leaders to issue a *fatwa* (edict) that under Islamic law a woman cannot be the head of the state. In the 1965 elections, Ayub was up against Fatima Jinnah, sister of the founder of Pakistan Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Measures such as these further facilitated the Islamization of politics.

The Legal Framework Order introduced by President General Yahya Khan (1969-71) also required that the National Assembly preserve the “Islamic Ideology” of Pakistan. It was during Yahya’s rule and the campaign for the 1971 general elections that the term “Islamic Ideology” was explicitly used for the first time and acquired a new meaning.² The ideological conflict intensified during and after Zulfikar Ali Bhutto’s regime (1971-1977). The Constitution of Pakistan, 1973 provided more Islamic injunctions than the two previous constitutions of the country. And in 1974, a change in the country’s constitution³ declared Ahmedis a religious minority after an anti-Ahmedi movement resurfaced.⁴ This classification of Ahmedis as non-Muslims renewed the Islamization of politics. Bhutto’s regime also became the target of Islamists when he tried to implement socialism, which Islamist forces regarded as synonymous with secularism and contrary to Islamic teachings. To counter this agitation, Bhutto fell back on such ritualistic aspects of Islam as inviting the Imam of the Kaaba, the most sacred site in Islam, in Saudi Arabia to lead Friday prayers in Karachi, enforcing certain prohibitions, and declaring Friday, instead of Sunday, as the weekly holiday. These measures did not appease the agitators; instead they gave further momentum to the politics of Islamization in Pakistan.⁵ In July 1977, Bhutto’s government was overthrown by army chief General Ziaul Haq in the wake of an Islamist movement led by the Jamaat-e-Islami and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam.

When Zia assumed power in 1977, the politics of Islamization also helped him legitimize his rule and provided him the opportunity to develop a relationship with Saudi Arabia and Muslims around the world in general on similar basis. Zia introduced normative and structural changes to the political system. For criminal offences, “Islamic” punishments were announced and implemented. At the structural level, in 1973, ‘*Shariah benches*’ were introduced to enforce laws justified by Islamic jurisprudence. To Islamize the economy, on February 10, 1979, the Zakat and Usher Ordinance was announced, making it compulsory for Muslim citizens of Pakistan to pay 2.5

percent as *Zakat* on assets and savings in excess of a prescribed amount, and 10 percent as *Usher* on agricultural produce to the official Zakat fund which was supposed to distribute the proceeds among the Muslims in need. Interest-free banking was introduced and was hailed as a major step towards developing a framework for an “Islamic” economy. Learning Arabic was encouraged and ‘Islamic studies’ was made a compulsory subject at the high school and college levels.⁶ Zia’s Islamization drive was also coupled with Jihadist sentiment during the anti-Soviet war in Afghanistan.

This state-led Islamization of society and politics resulted in Islamist organizations and clerics becoming greatly empowered. The main goal of such organizations is the complete Islamization of the state, so as to assert themselves strongly in the political affairs of the state. Most, if not all, of these organizations think that this objective cannot be achieved unless they control the state apparatus. This motivates them to set their political agendas around capturing power. Parallel to the Islamization measures cited above, the increasing role that religion is now playing in the socialization of Pakistani society can also strengthen Islamist organizations’ expectations of achieving their ultimate goal. Islamists seek to sell their ideology to, and recruit from, the following forms of religious expression in Pakistan: conservative religious orders,⁷ modern-obscurantist religious movements,⁸ modern-reformist religious trends⁹ and Sufi spiritual orders.¹⁰ Additionally, and in many cases unlike these religious groupings, Islamists are exceptionally adept at propagating their political ideology and narrative to traditionally secular and irreligious sections of society.

From a political perspective, a simple categorization of Islamist groups or organizations can be made by their political participation, belief in the electoral process and views of the constitution or law. Muhammad Waseem divides Islamist organizations into first-generation and second-generation; the former being generally supra-sectarian, focused on changing the law, striving to come into power through elections, and operating through literature, while the latter attempt to change the rules of the game not through peaceful means such as elections but through the barrel of the gun.¹¹ Examples of the latter include the Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNSM) and the Pakistani Taliban. The common characteristic of all such groups is their lack of popularity among the masses and the unlikelihood of

their coming into power through the electoral process, which many of them refuse to believe in regardless.

Oliver Roy identifies Waseem's 'second-generation Islamists' as 'neo-fundamentalists', who combine political and militant Jihadism against the West. To Roy, "Islamism" is a brand of modern political Islamic fundamentalism which claims to recreate a true Islamic society, not simply by imposing their version of *Shariah*, but by establishing first an "Islamic" state through political action. Islamists see Islam not only as a religion, but also a political ideology that should be integrated into all aspects of society, including politics, law, economy, social justice, foreign policy, etc.¹² According to political scientist Ishtiaq Ahmed, Islamism—without any distinction of first and second generations which are based on absence of and resort to violence, respectively—simplifies Islam to a set of beliefs and practices which are ostensibly anti-intellectual, anti-modern, anti-liberal, and anti-democratic. Thus, as a political ideology, Islamism—also known as Islamic fundamentalism, militant Islam, radical Islam and so on—generates a mindset that is invariably hostile to non-Muslims, 'deviant' sects, women and liberal Muslims. Such a mindset translated into political action tends to be violence-prone and can give impetus to terrorism.¹³

In Pakistani context, however, Waseem's description is more relevant because there are many groups that fall somewhere between first-generation political Islamists and second-generation neo-fundamentalist Islamists. Such groups believe that the change they desire is impossible within the Constitution of Pakistan and the existing system. They consider democracy and the democratic or electoral process inadequate for change, contrary to first-generation Islamists who profess a belief in the electoral process and constitutional norms. However, also in distinction to second-generation Islamists or neo-fundamentalists such as the Taliban—with whom they share many ideological traits—these in-between groups do not yet resort to the use of force or violence against the state, its institutions or people to effect change, despite not recognizing the legitimacy of the current constitutional set-up. This is the category identified by Maajid Nawaz as 'revolutionary Islamists', sitting between non-violent 'political Islamists' and the violent 'militant Islamists'.¹⁴ Examples of these in-between groups are the Tanzeemul Ikhwan and Tanzeem-e-Islami,¹⁵ Jamaatud Da'wa, the *Khilafah* movement, Al-

Muhajiroon and Hizbut Tahrir. Hizbut Tahrir is the oldest and the most globalized of these groups which forms the focus for this paper.

Hizbut Tahrir

Hizbut Tahrir (HT) is a global revolutionary Islamist movement, with branches in around 50 countries, including the United Kingdom and the United States. However, HT claims that it is a political party that has Islam as its ideology.¹⁶ Established in Jerusalem in 1953 by Taqiuddin an-Nabhani (1909-1977), a religious cleric and an appeal court judge in the Shariah court in Jerusalem, HT's goal is to establish an expansionist super-state they would call the *Khilafah* (caliphate).

A former associate of Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamist organization established in Egypt in 1928, Nabhani thought that the Brotherhood had become too accommodating in its ideology and went on to set up the more radical HT. He rejected capitalism and democracy as *kufr* (apostasy), which remains a basic tenet of HT's ideology even today, and declared that Islam and Western civilization were incompatible.¹⁷ He set out the goal for HT to unite all Muslims of the world under one political entity governed by his interpretation of *Shariah*. Nabhani led HT until his death in 1977. He was succeeded by Abdul Qadim Zallum, a Palestinian cleric. Ata Abu Rashta, the engineer who is currently the global leader of HT, succeeded Zallum in 2003.¹⁸

While HT's political activities were confined to Jordan, the West Bank and Lebanon throughout the 1950s, the popularity of the party increased in other Middle Eastern countries in the 1960s. This rise in popularity was followed by HT staging military coups in the early 1970s in unsuccessful bids to seize power in Syria, Jordan and Iraq.¹⁹ After the failure of the coups and the arrest of its members, support for the party declined in the Middle East in the 1970s and 1980s. Some members of HT from the Middle East moved to the UK, Germany and Sweden in the 1980s and 1990s to set up party chapters in Europe. HT quickly garnered support from some second-generation European Muslims.²⁰ After the collapse of the Soviet Union, HT made inroads into Central Asia in the latter half of the 1990s.

Imtiaz Malik, who had been the underground leader of the party in Pakistan for a long time, formally set up HT in Pakistan in the 1990s. After Pakistan conducted nuclear tests in 1998, HT Britain sent at least 10 senior members to Pakistan to set up HT cells in all major cities of the country. It secretly enlisted some officers of Pakistan Army, who were receiving training at Sandhurst, the elite British military academy. The army officers' links with HT were later discovered by the regime of military ruler General Pervez Musharraf and they were arrested in 2003.²¹ In the wake of the army officers' arrest, HT was banned in Pakistan.

Far from being deterred, HT has continued its efforts to infiltrate into high echelons of Pakistan Army and the elite of the Pakistani society. Shahzad Sheikh, the designated spokesman of HT in Karachi, was quoted as saying that the party had been persuading the army to stage a bloodless coup in the country to overthrow the government.²²

The message of HT in Pakistan revolves around three polemical claims. First, that the rulers are agents of the United States, and are working for American interests. Second, the US and the Pakistani governments are killing innocent men, women and children in drone attacks and military operations in the name of the war on terror. Third, the private US security agencies and intelligence agencies, protected by the Pakistani government, are behind suicide bombings and other terrorist attacks in the country.²³

Addressing the Pakistani people in a video uploaded on HT's website on the occasion of presentation in Islamabad on May 9, 2010 of the 'Declaration to the People of Power', a reference to army officers, Naveed Butt, the chief spokesman of HT in Pakistan, said:

"...Today Pakistan's oppressor rulers... shield the Americans *kuffar* [infidels]. Moreover, the Americans lead these rulers in the fight against Muslims under the banner of strategic dialogue... It is these oppressor rulers that allow the American *kuffar* to conduct relentless drone attacks on Pakistani territory that target the old and the young, the men and the women, collapsing houses on the heads of Muslims."

Urging the Pakistanis to rise up in rebellion against their democratically elected government, Butt says: "It is these oppressor rulers that permit the

kuffar private security agencies and intelligence agencies to arrange a campaign of assassinations and bombings throughout Pakistan, attacking civilians, security forces and the armed forces alike. They [the Pakistani rulers] even shield these American murderers from the local forces, ordering their release whenever they are caught so that they can work without interruption through their infiltration of Taliban...O people of power, respected brothers, these rulers neither care for you nor [for] those whom you have sworn to protect. They care nothing for the *deen* [religion] you carry in your hearts, nor Allah, nor the Holy Prophet. They care nothing for the blood of Muslims...O people of power, raise your swords to uproot these rulers and establish Khilafat in their place, remembering your brothers in arms who preceded you in establishing Islam as a state and a rule in Madina."²⁴

HT levels the same charge against the Americans and President Asif Ali Zardari's government in an open letter to *ulema* (clerics) of Pakistan. Issued on December 15, 2009 the letter implores the *ulema* to join HT to establish a *Khilafah* in Pakistan: "O *ulema* of the Muslims in Pakistan! The suffering of the Muslims today in Pakistan and other Muslim countries, the occupation of Muslim lands, the violation of sanctities, the assault upon honour, the looting of wealth and resources, and the hardship in all Muslim countries; these and all other afflictions suffered by the Muslims are the result of the absence of the Islamic state, the Islamic *Khilafah*, and the absence of the *Khaleefah* [caliph]... It is your duty is to join hands with the sincere callers to Islam [Hizbut Tahrir] and establish a second Rightly-guided *Khilafah* state, of whose establishment Rasul Allah [the Prophet] gave good tiding, which is now well within sight, closer than the blink of an eye, through which the Laws of Allah will be implemented, frontiers and souls will be protected and the scheming of the *kuffar* will blow up in their faces."²⁵

Although working within a limited sphere in the presence of a multitude of religious organizations striving for similar causes in Pakistan, Hizbut Tahrir tries to distinguish itself on three levels. First, it thinks and advocates that change is not possible within the existing system and emphasizes a struggle beyond constitutional and legal constraints. HT claims that the Constitution of Pakistan and the current democratic system are un-Islamic, and are major hurdles in the way of renewal of the *Khilafah* system in Pakistan.²⁶ For example, the first campaign launched by HT in Pakistan was the anti-Constitution movement in 2001.²⁷ Secondly, HT claims that it has a

comprehensive plan—which it asserts other Islamist groups lack—for how the *Khilafah* system will work when it replaces the current system after a revolution.²⁸ And finally, HT does not believe in mass struggle for change and wants to bring change through intervention by the military and the elite.²⁹

It is debatable whether Hizbut Tahrir is the only organization in Pakistan that has, or claims to have, these three characteristics. That will be discussed later in the paper. However, one unique feature of HT is that its leadership appears modern in its outlook, most of its members wear western clothes and are fluent in English. This proves to be an effective tool to influence the modern elite.

Although it is still far from realizing its goal, HT has succeeded in creating some impact on the educated youth in Pakistan. As discussed earlier, HT presents itself as an agent of change. Such slogans appeal to a desire for change among the youth, especially when most of them are under immense pressure of radicalization amid shrinking space for moderate, secular and left-wing tendencies and narratives. What is obvious is that organizations such as HT, which have an attractive agenda, are trying to fill this growing void, associated with a desire for change.

HT: An International Narrative

In the early years after its establishment, HT's prime focus remained mainly on Middle Eastern countries. A brief note on the history of HT in its manifesto³⁰ states that it was between 1977 and 2003, under the leadership of HT's second head Abdul Qadim Zallum, that the organization started its operations in more than 40 countries, including many Islamic countries. According to organizational claims, millions of people had by then associated with HT and it had emerged as the largest 'political party' in the world working for the establishment of an Islamic *Khilafah*.³¹ The present *amir* (head) of HT Ata Abu Rashta has been associated with the organization since his early age. Before assuming leadership of HT in 2003, he had also served as the party's spokesperson in Jordan.

With the aim to establish a trans-national *Khilafah* state—initially consisting of Muslim-majority states and ultimately expanding to the rest of the world—Hizbut Tahrir employs a central strategy of engendering popular support and seeking *Nussrah*, literally, victorious material support, to establish the *Khilafah*.³² However, the tactics for achieving its objectives may differ from place to place. For instance, in the UK, HT had for some time followed the ‘keep your ideology in your heart’ strategy without vocally or tacitly supporting the violent acts carried out by Islamist militants. But in Pakistan, the organization not only accuses Pakistani and Western governments of involvement in acts of terrorism but also extends its sympathies and support to militant groups who are, according to HT, sincerely fighting to establish Islamic rule and strongly resisting the “nefarious designs of the infidels against the Muslims of Pakistan and Afghanistan”.³³ HT’s approach to such issues in the UK will be totally different, where it increasingly disguises its support for jihad, anti-Semitic beliefs and intolerant ideologies after the 7/7 terrorists attacks.³⁴

Such a variation of tactics and approaches indicates the adaptive nature of HT. In the case of Muslim-majority countries such as Bangladesh, Indonesia and the Central Asian states, HT exploits the weaknesses of ‘corrupt’ regimes, their inability to deliver good governance, their pro-West policies and heavy influence of Western culture on a societal level. By doing so, it represents itself as a better alternative to repressive, corrupt and pro-infidel regimes. It is safe to say that HT is not only the most vociferous and open critic of governments in Muslim-majority countries but also does not seem willing to compromise on its ideological and operational activities in accordance with ‘engendering popular support and seeking *Nussrah* for establishment of an Islamic state’. That is why it has been banned in so many countries and is put under strict surveillance. A clampdown on HT over time by different countries such as Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Libya and Turkey is an example of how governments of Muslim-majority countries view the organization. In Muslim-minority countries, however, HT considers certain compromises within the respective legal frameworks.

One understandable reason for this difference in HT approach in Muslim-majority and Muslim-minority countries could be the fact that HT aims to first establish the *Khilafah* system in Muslim-majority countries. But HT’s focus on Muslim-minority countries, especially in Europe, offers them certain

benefits. For example, being based in Europe, it enjoys freedom of speech which it can use to lobby and influence Muslims for the establishment of the *Khilafah*. Many Muslims from Muslim-majority countries either live in European countries or go there for study or business. HT enjoys complete freedom to reach out to these individuals in those countries to try and persuade them to join the party's cause. It also has few curbs in establishing networks among Muslim communities in these countries to win their support.

HT's tactical variations to achieve its political objective of establishing a worldwide system of governance, the *Khilafah*, demonstrates that the party is not averse to fine-tuning its tactics to fit local contexts.

Evolution in Pakistan

Imtiaz Malik, a British-born Pakistani had been the long-term underground leader of the group in Pakistan.³⁵ Naveed Butt, however, is arguably the most prominent leader of HT in Pakistan. A graduate of University of Illinois, Naveed joined HT in the United States, where he worked for Motorola for some time.³⁶ Naveed, who is in his 40s, speaks fluent English and Urdu and extensively quotes from the Quran and *Hadiths* (traditions of Prophet Muhammad) in his speeches. He is also well-versed in HT's Islamist polemics.

Imran Yousafzai, another prominent leader of HT Pakistan, is the deputy spokesman of the party in the country.³⁷ While little is known about Imran, his appearance, accent and last name, Yousafzai—a Pashtun tribe living in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa—suggests that he hails from north-western Pakistan. Shahzad Sheikh is the other deputy spokesman of HT Pakistan and the main recruiter of the party in Karachi. Imtiaz Malik is believed to have informally set up HP in Pakistan in the early 1990s. In 1999, a call was sent to British Hizbut Tahrir members to move to Pakistan, prompting the movement of some of the UK's "top quality" activists to South Asia.³⁸ The Pakistan branch of Hizbut Tahrir was thus formally established in December 2000 when a group of British youth of Pakistani descent, headed by Malik and guided behind the scenes by British-Pakistanis Dr. Abdul Wajid in Lahore and Dr. Abdul Basit Shaikh in Karachi among others decided to use Pakistan as the base camp for their movement to establish the *Khilafah* in the world.³⁹ HT Pakistan's spokesperson, Naveed Butt, clarifies that he is a Pakistani national.

However he too was enlisted while in the US. Naveed sees this emphasis on a foreign connection as propaganda against HT and says that the Pakistani branch of HT does not operate out of Britain.⁴⁰ Another HT member, Shahzad Malik, believes it was just a coincidence that the movers and shakers of HT hailed from the UK.⁴¹ British newspaper The Sunday Times has claimed that HT UK targeted for enlisting Pakistani military cadets sent to train at Sandhurst.⁴² Conversations with members of HT Pakistan reveal that it retains strong connections with HT UK. In fact, Tayyab Muqem, an HT member reported to have assaulted former member Maajid Nawaz in Lahore is a British-Pakistani from Stoke-On-Trent, UK. He, like many others, moved to Pakistan to further the aims of the party.

This British connection has fuelled suspicion among Pakistani officials that HT was launched in Pakistan by MI6, the British intelligence agency.⁴³ Naveed denies the charge. He argues that the Pakistani state is a puppet in the hands of the US, and that it is afraid of HT's alternative plan and rising power in the country.⁴⁴

In addition to recruits, financial support for HT to set up operations in Pakistan also came from HT UK. At the time of its establishment in Pakistan, HT launched an extensive publicity campaign in various Pakistani cities, particularly Lahore, Rawalpindi, Peshawar and Karachi and set up its office in Lahore. The campaign focused on the need for an "Islamic" revolution by establishing *Khilafah* rule.⁴⁵ The first national-level conference of HT in the country was organized in Lahore in November 2003, two and a half years after its formal establishment in Pakistan, and attracted thousands of youth.⁴⁶ Just three days after this conference, HT was banned by the government of Pakistan. It challenged the ban in the Lahore High Court but the court dismissed the writ. In 2006, the party again filed a petition against the ban before the Rawalpindi bench of the Lahore High Court, and the case is still pending.

According to Nawaz, and some analysts, HT's focus on Pakistan was motivated by the nuclear tests carried out by the country in 1998, as the group wanted to facilitate the acquisition of nuclear technology for the *Khilafah* state.⁴⁷ Secondly, HT considers Pakistan's strategic location, particularly its proximity with Muslim-majority countries including Central Asian states, suitable for implementing its agenda.

Comparison and Ties with Other Political Groups

a. Political Islamist Parties

The ideological, political and tactical narratives of HT are deeply rooted in the political Islamist movements of the Cold War era. These movements were initiated by the educated youth in Muslim-majority countries and they had borrowed the tactics of leftist movements such as using study groups, demonstrations, and influencing the elite classes, for effecting change. In Pakistan, the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) was an extension of such international Islamist movements. HT follows a similar model in Pakistan. It would be interesting to compare between the two to understand the prospects of HT in Pakistan. The JI had also tried to establish influence within the military and the intellectual elite. HT puts a great deal of emphasis on the economy just like the JI has been doing, the only difference being that the JI invested all its energies in developing an economic narrative to counter Communism. Both groups share certain commonalities in their concept of the state as an agent of change, their emphasis on an organizational structure and their tactics.

The JI has so far failed to create any mass movement and its electoral record is also not impressive. JI's emphasis has remained more on international issues rather than those of local. JI's influence in the military, however, has aided it in creating a support base. Its close association with the establishment allowed it to develop as a pressure group, which was used to destabilize governments in the past. But the political discourse and trends on the public level are different and the party has failed to convert its support base into a mass movement. However, that has not prevented the JI from dominating and monopolizing certain public spaces, such as student unions. Such monopolization, as has been the case with Punjab University, the Lahore-based main university of the province of Punjab, has seriously stifled debate and hindered the natural development of students' views. In this sense, the JI could be considered to play a considerable destabilizing role.

On a strategic and tactical level, HT is following a similar pattern. However, it lacks in three important aspects of leadership. First, it does not have a charismatic ideologue like Maulana Maudoodi, the JI founder; HT's Middle Eastern leaders have little appeal or influence in Pakistan. Secondly, though the HT leadership, comprising mainly of foreign-educated young men, has

good communication skills, they do not stand as 'ideologues' and cannot create an impact. Thirdly, the HT leadership has not been brought up in Pakistan and their *Salafist* tendencies could be a hurdle in gaining popular support.

Two important aspects which make the HT discourse in Pakistan different from that of the JI and put it at a disadvantage are its anti-constitutional agenda, and aims of bringing about a revolution through a military coup. Many nationalist parties in Pakistan pursue anti-constitutionalism but the mainstream discourse in the country does not encourage such tendencies. HT could win the support of youngsters in Pakistan but penetrating the military establishment cannot be effective particularly on account of its anti-constitutional program.⁴⁸

Another inherent weakness associated with the HT discourse is that the party is developing introvert tendencies among the youth. It teaches its new recruits that everything one knows about anything is wrong and *haram* (sacrilegious). One has to begin with a clean slate in HT and there is no room for opposition.⁴⁹ The organization discourages common members to interact with other political and Islamist party workers, which is developing a phenomenon of 'group think' in HT.

With the exception of partial cooperation with the JI and Tanzeem-e-Islami founded by the late Dr. Israr Ahmed, HT is generally not on good terms with Islamist forces in Pakistan. But HT's leadership in Pakistan views such cooperation as a mere coincidence.⁵⁰ As mentioned earlier, HT believes that other religious groups and Islamist parties working in Pakistan for an "Islamic" revolution, or the *Khilafah*, lack a concrete roadmap and are part of the existing constitutional system; hence they are unable to bring about change. This perception within HT's ranks has generally worked as a factor in keeping its political outlook at odds with that of other Islamist parties in Pakistan. For example, it developed differences with Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA)—an alliance of six Islamist parties sharing the provincial governments in Balochistan and the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) during General Musharraf's regime—when it rejected the MMA's claim of being a true representatives of Islam. HT labeled the MMA as part of an imperialist democracy that should not have called itself an 'Islamic alliance' because it did not fulfill the essential requirements of an "Islamic"

government. The HT spokesperson took the view that the MMA government was collecting taxes whereas there was no concept of collecting taxes or charging for utilities according to Islam. Secondly, “the *Hisba* Bill introduced by the MMA government in NWFP was an un-Islamic bill and could not be an alternative to the Islamic system of jurisdiction.”⁵¹ The opposition for the MMA led to HT facing a lot of hardships, especially in the NWFP (now called Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), where Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), one of the constituent parties of the MMA, stopped HT from carrying out its activities in JUI-controlled mosques.

Members of HT have favorable views of Tanzeem-e-Islami of the late Dr. Israr, a prominent Islamist cleric in Pakistan. One of the reasons for this is that Dr. Israr had also worked for the establishment of *Khilafah* in Pakistan from his own platform. HT members are also not critical of Dr. Israr’s roadmap for *Khilafah*, which an HT member claims has actually been borrowed from them.

HT seems keen to develop ties with mainstream politico-religious groups of the country. Addressing an HT press conference, Muhammad Akmal, an activist, said that HT is interested in forging ties with other religious-political parties of Pakistan.

b. Militant Groups

HT is ostensibly against militancy and calls all destructive activities in Kashmir, Afghanistan, etc. unproductive acts. It believes that Muslims should first establish a *Khilafah* after which it would be proper to take care of all concerns and problems via a state-sponsored “jihad”. “Our workers are working peacefully without getting involved in any kind of terrorism,” claimed the HT spokesperson in Lahore.⁵² Interviews with HT members suggested that the group believes in bringing about a bloodless military-led revolution and will never resort to Jihadism to establish their *Khilafah* state.

It was during its confrontation with the MMA that HT declared all Pakistani *Jihadist* organizations state puppets, which led to a direct clash between HT activists and militants. Militant groups have beaten up HT members on several occasions, mainly on the occasions of their congregations while HT members were distributing their party’s literature among the militant group members.

There is some ambiguity in the HT discourse with regard to its stance on militant narratives in Pakistan. It criticizes both the militants and the Pakistani government's 'crackdown' on the militants. HT also seems hesitant to point fingers at the militants for their actions against civilians and security forces in Pakistan. One assumption that informs most HT arguments, disseminated through media and literature, is that Muslims, Pakistan-based militants in this case, could not possibly be responsible for the horrific acts of terrorism being carried out across Pakistan. At the same time some leaflets and other HT literature assert that terrorism in Pakistan is a reaction to the anti-Islam policies of successive governments and a revenge of sorts against the killing of Muslims. However, it is not stated who is involved in these 'activities of reaction and revenge', though it is repeatedly asserted that the Pakistani government and the United States are involved in this bloodshed of Muslims.

Leadership and Organizational Structure

After a clampdown on HT in various countries, particularly in the Arab and Central Asian states, where its members were arrested and put behind bars, HT has made its organizational network more obscure to avoid any breakdown. Being a banned organization, HT has no offices in Pakistan and its organizational affairs are mainly looked after from members' homes. Furthermore, HT members have complained about media attitudes, saying it creates problems for them in running organizational affairs.⁵³ HT spokesperson Naveed Butt refused to disclose the number of the party's members in Pakistan, citing security concerns. However, even in the UK, where divulging membership figures would apparently pose no security concern, HT refuses to do so. Questions have been raised whether this is a ploy to hide the lack of a mass membership base. Though HT may not necessarily aspire to mass membership in countries like Pakistan, it could still be embarrassed by perceptions of a lack of mass membership.

HT discourages the concept of 'leaders' within the organization and all members enjoy equal status. For example, there is no concept of public office-bearers in HT in Pakistan; there is only a chief spokesman who has two deputies.⁵⁴ There are, however, office-bearers for internal party structure. No member other than the chief spokesman can issue any statement to the media. No member can deliver sermons or lectures without the permission of the

spokesman, who is also bound to follow the instructions of an underground central leadership.⁵⁵ The central body is bound to follow the instructions from HT's global office and keep in touch with the UK office for consultation.⁵⁶ No member can stay permanently at one station in a country and they usually migrate every six years.

It is interesting that HT members, working in different departments, generally know little about each other. For example, those working with army personnel will have no contact with those working with lawyers or traders. There are only a few occasions where there may be a possibility of knowing members working in other areas. Those who are in charge of relevant departments take their instructions from UK office and send their reports to the chief spokesman who directly reports to the centre.

Usually HT members do not disclose organizational affairs, information about the number of members, and their contacts with the media or with non-members. An HT member in Islamabad, who only gave his name as Imran, claimed that the party's members in Pakistan number in thousands and they are working in all major cities of the country. The HT seminar in November 2003 in Lahore was attended by more than 2,000 members. It is the only Islamist organization in Pakistan that has a large number of female members, who usually appear in demonstrations and protests held by the party.

Discussions with HT members revealed that at present Taimur Butt, Naveed Butt, Imran Yousafzai, Shahzad Shaikh, Muhammad Irfan, Nadeem Khan, Professor Nasir Safdar, Dr. Irfan Paracha and Saad Abdul Raheem, most of whom hail from the UK, are amongst the most prominent members of the party in Pakistan. However, the true leadership in Pakistan remains undisclosed, even to the members, due to security fears. At the time of HT's launch in Pakistan a decade ago, the central leadership committee was headed by British-Pakistani Imtiaz Malik. Until 2003, HT Pakistan's campaign to enlist military officers was led by Omar Khan, a British-Pakistani who had become an HT member during his stay in the United States. In 2003, Omar was detained by Pakistani authorities for being the brain behind the exposed coup plot.⁵⁷

HT: Discourse in Pakistan

In Pakistan, HT focuses on a six-point agenda under their broader theme of *Khilafah*:

- 1) Economic reform
- 2) Judicial reform
- 3) Foreign policy
- 4) Good governance and reform in the administrative structure
- 5) Social justice
- 6) Education

A brief description of this agenda is strict accountability of the rulers, distribution of wealth and resources among the citizens, prompt justice for all, an 'Islamic' rather than 'Western' social system, an Islamic media, a foreign policy "based on Islam" which will take "humanity out from the darkness of *kufr* [infidelity] to the light of Islam" through preaching and jihad, a domestic policy based on equality, and education for all.⁵⁸ It is noteworthy that though HT uses the word 'reform', the intent is to overthrow the existing system and replace it in accordance with its manifesto. Perhaps the word 'reform' indicates the difficulties in getting Pakistanis to adopt a more revolutionary stance against the constitution.

The HT spokesperson in Pakistan claims that the party provides a clear roadmap to achieve the goals and objectives on its agenda: "Hizbut Tahrir has a very strong and clear blueprint to replace the democratic and imperialistic systems with the *Khilafah*."⁵⁹ He vows that HT will provide the world with an alternative that would rid the people of all injustices. He asserts that HT's concept of *Khilafah* is a comprehensive alternative to the capitalist system and that the party has done its homework regarding its implementation by working out details of the economic, political, judicial and administrative alternatives.

As mentioned earlier, the main political emphasis of HT Pakistan is on replacing the present constitutional framework and democratic parliamentary system with a "*Shariah-based Islamic Khilafah* system". In 2003, HT organized three seminars in Lahore, Peshawar and Islamabad on the "1973 Constitution and *Khilafah*", concluding that the constitution of Pakistan was un-Islamic.

Strategies and Tactics

As discussed earlier, HT's central strategy in Pakistan revolves around engendering popular support and seeking *Nussrah*. Within this strategic domain, it has been using two main tactics; first, challenging the existing system; and secondly, targeting only the literate and influential segments of society such as intellectuals, students, military officers, journalists, lawyers, businessmen and policy makers. HT members claimed in their discussion with the author that it was only recently that the party started to target and reach out directly to the masses. This process was initiated to consolidate and expand 'popular' support for HT after the party felt that it had been successful in cultivating contacts in influential circles. To create a space in the public also means increasing the demand for *Khilafah* and increase pressure on the government.

HT claims that change in Pakistan is only possible by moving influential segments of society. Considering the special context of Pakistan, creating an area of influence within the army would offer a certain control over the country and the decision-making process, and HT is focused on reaching out to four or five such military leaders who may help it establish *Khilafah* in the country, hence the party's emphasis on the elite and the military establishment.

According to an HT member, the military is their prime target because it is the most powerful institution in Pakistan: "It (military) does not follow the Constitution or any law and comes to power whenever it wants to. That is why we have been persuading military officers to establish the *Khilafah* and we have been very successful in doing that."⁶⁰ Winning support from the political and religious parties, judiciary, the lawyers' community, bureaucracy and the media is the second priority of the group.

HT's plans regarding the media seek to make conditions favorable for the party, persuading the people of the soundness of its viewpoint, and winning sympathies of powerful institutions and individuals in the country. HT has been known to set up stalls outside offices of mobile phone companies, seeking to enlist staff who can share the personal and contact details of key figures in Pakistan. Once that was achieved, HT began a mass SMS campaign to all leading journalists, regularly updating them on HT news.

HT's focus on major cities is fuelled by its belief that the people of major cities play an important role in forming public opinion in the country. Furthermore, the HT leadership thinks that it should recruit a number of bureaucrats, who would be capable of running the affairs of the *Khilafah* according to HT's plan. Hence, HT has targeted the academic institutions that are best known for producing civil servants, such as Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS).

HT has encouraged the establishment of various front organizations that offer advice and help to students in getting visas for the United Kingdom. One Lahore-based member, British-Pakistani Shahzad Karim, has set up a company with other HT members, advising prospective students on the practicalities of living and studying in the UK. HT has also successfully planted its members as lecturers in various institutions across the country, including institutions such as the Punjab University, LUMS and the International Islamic University in Islamabad. Bagging such teaching positions is especially easy when British-Pakistani members have qualifications from foreign universities, and in some cases, hold lecturing positions in universities in Britain. Sheffield-based Dr. Muhammad Nawaz was one such individual who moved from a lectureship in a UK university to Punjab University in 1999, facilitated by Maajid Nawaz.

It is difficult to generalize and compare these strategies and tactics as a whole with those of one or two Islamist groups in Pakistan. Even if there are some similarities in tactics, they are probably not being used to further the same ends. For example, many Islamist groups use public pressure tactics, but there may not be a similar demand for establishing a *Khilafah*. Others may use this tactic in order to demand enforcement of their version of *Shariah* like the Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi in Swat. Similarly, HT and Jamaat-e-Islami both try to influence the military but their objectives in doing so are not the same; Jamaat-e-Islami's attempts are not aimed at bringing about a 'military coup' and an eventual Islamist revolution.

Communication and Ideological Propagation

HT describes its ideological propagation as an 'awareness campaign' to inform the public about the difference between their concept of *Khilafah* and other systems of governance in the world.⁶¹ HT employs multiple tools to

spread its message and propagate its ideology. Besides relying on print and online dissemination, it also has a comprehensive program for ideological indoctrination and training of its members, particularly new recruits. It also has a very clear roadmap for the media and the information ministry of its desired *Khilafah* state, which is included in HT's manifesto. Before and after its May 9, 2010 'Declaration to the People of Power' in Pakistan, HT has mounted an aggressive advertisement campaign in the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, using billboards, banners, pamphlets and text messages.⁶² Banners advertising the HT declaration could be seen in markets, neighborhoods and on main roads of the two cities. A brief description of HT's tools of communication and ideological propagation is given below.

Print

Pamphlets, booklets, books, press notes, open letters, and HT publications such as magazines are the major print media tools of the party. Distribution of one- or two-page pamphlets outside mosques after Friday prayers accounts for a significant part of HT's 'awareness campaign'. The party also conducts door-to-door campaigns for this purpose. Sometimes HT also distributes booklets, usually containing around 10 pages, in the same manner. It also engages illiterate and unemployed youth to distribute their pamphlets and put up posters. In 2008, police in Karachi arrested boys aged between 14 and 15 for putting up such HT posters. The boys were not HT members and had no idea what the content said. They were being paid 100 rupees per day to put up the banners.⁶³ The group also relies on leaflets to launch campaigns. For example, in 2009, HT distributed hundreds of thousands leaflets denouncing 'American presence in Pakistan and Afghanistan'.

According to Naveed Butt, HT publishes books, booklets, and pamphlets, mainly in English and Urdu, about the 'system of the *Khilafah* which explain the political, social, judicial and economic systems under an 'Islamic' government.⁶⁴

The party also publishes a monthly Urdu magazine called *Khilafat*, which is in breach of the law for publication of magazines and newspapers in Pakistan, as it does not have the mandatory official permit.

Electronic and Online

Since HT is banned in Pakistan, the media is reluctant to give coverage to the party's activities and ideology. Therefore, HT is rather successfully using the Internet as an alternative medium to spread its ideology. The party's Urdu and English websites have a wide range of HT publications, including HT Pakistan's manifesto, videos, electronic copies of books, as well as pamphlets, booklets, articles, press releases, comments on news, analysis of important events, information about HT's organizational activities and press coverage of HT activities.⁶⁵ Apart from the websites of HT Pakistan, one can also find on YouTube a plethora of videos of HT Pakistan seminars, and messages to the Pakistani people. The video of HT's press conference in Islamabad on May 9, 2010, on the occasion of presentation of its 'Declaration to the People of Power', was available on YouTube on May 10.⁶⁶

HT also relies on social networking sites, particularly Facebook, to recruit Pakistani youth. The party has set up a group called 'Rise of Khudi' on Facebook, which has more than 1,500 members.⁶⁷ HT advertises forthcoming events on Facebook and posts pictures of earlier events on the social networking site. News feeds, videos, articles and *Hadiths* that support HT's worldview are uploaded on the 'Rise of Khudi'. Links to publications of HT Britain are also available on the Facebook group. In short, the 'Rise of Khudi' is a complete radicalization package that the youth may succumb to.

HT relies extensively on modern tools of communication to spread its message. Its blogs and websites contain vast amounts of material on ideological, political, economic and organizational issues. This is an inexpensive but extensively effective source of indoctrination, to which HT directs the interested youth, instead of its literature, especially since the organization is banned in Pakistan. HT regularly demonstrates its resilience and technological prowess by launching new websites soon after the cyber crime wing of the Federal Investigative Agency (FIA) shuts down previous ones. After their websites on Pakistani servers were shut down, HT now uses Afghanistan-based satellite systems to host their websites.⁶⁸ The party uses the same system to sending short messaging service (SMS), another effective communication tool for HT.

While HT has essentially been using the Internet to promote its ideology, the party has recently made desperate efforts to persuade the mainstream media to cover its activities. Before its press conference at National Press Club Islamabad in May 2010, HT contacted several senior journalists requesting coverage of the event.⁶⁹

Demonstrations

Holding of peaceful demonstrations is a legitimate right in a democratic society, but as a banned organization HT faces curbs on the right to assembly and protest. Yet, HT often holds demonstrations not only to register its protest but also to demonstrate its manpower. After the November 2003 ban, the number of participants in these demonstrations fell to a few dozens, but number has recently been increasing. HT successfully managed to gather hundreds of demonstrators for anti-US rallies in Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad and Peshawar on May 30, 2009.⁷⁰ More than 200 activists were arrested across the country at the time while participating in rallies organized by HT. Demonstrations lead to dissemination of HT message in two ways; directly among the participants; and through media coverage of the event.

HT argues that the curbs it faces in Pakistan are unjustifiable and claims that its action should not be covered by prohibition of hate speech or of violent activity under the country's anti-terrorism laws but under guarantees of freedom of expression, and that it is entitled to peaceful demonstrations.⁷¹

Training and Other Events

According to an HT member, the training of a new member takes between three to six months. "First we identify a person who has the potential to be useful for HT and then focus on convincing him to join the *Khilafah* cause. When he is ready, the training process starts, and five to six members develop close association with the new member. The first phase consists of correcting his beliefs—to convert him to *Salafism*—and the second phase aims to teach him about HT objectives and strategies. In the last phase, his potential and duties are identified and he is assigned responsibilities, either in the organizational structure or in persuading other people to join the party."⁷² Thus, training also works as a chain process to recruit more people for HT.

HT also arranges weekly study circles to educate its members and to recruit new activists. Before the party was banned in Pakistan in 2003, the study circles were organized in mosques or restaurants, but now they are held at the residences of HT members on account of what the party calls 'security reasons'. Though the message remains the same, HT has changed its *modus operandi* to persist with its dissemination.

HT uses other methods, such as debates and seminars, to create interest among the people about its ideology. The participants usually include students, academics and scholars. At times HT holds a series of such events on a certain topic in various cities. For instance, it held seminars entitled 'Ramadan: A Month of Islamic Dominance' in major cities across Pakistan during the Muslim fasting month in 2009. A summary of these seminars, published and distributed in the form of leaflets, states that Pakistani Muslims reject America's 'political intervention' because it is *haram* (sacrilegious) to have any agreement with non-believers or infidels which authorizes their interference in the affairs of an 'Islamic *Khilafah* state'. It demands that the government shut down the US embassy in Pakistan, and expel the ambassador. It also invites Muslims to the *Khilafah* and calls upon Pakistan's army to help HT toward that goal.⁷³

Individual meetings with influential and educated people, in order to influence and convince them about HT's agenda, are another important tactic of HT members.⁷⁴

HT's Impact

The party's chief spokesperson, Naveed Butt, evaluates HT's impact in Pakistan in terms of increasing membership and popularity of the party in educational institutions. Discussions with other HT members suggest that the party is so far satisfied with its performance in Pakistan. The HT members were unanimous in the stating that HT's work in Pakistan was in the preparatory phase, and at this stage the primary goal, which was attached with the main objective, was to create awareness among the masses about the *Khilafah* system, and that HT had been successful in creating an impact in that respect. However, it is difficult to independently validate these claims. Some analysts argue that it is the duty of the ideological and religio-political ethos that people seem 'sympathetic' towards such 'religious' narratives, but that

this does not mean they will lend political support to HT, which is vital for its success. They quote examples of other Islamist parties which have been striving for electoral support since Pakistan was founded but are yet to achieve considerable success. They assert that although HT claims it has a concrete blueprint for implementing its concept of *Khilafah*, it offers a very crude and impracticable roadmap towards the first step, which is how to establish that *Khilafah*.

Some others however highlight the gradual penetration of HT into its targeted audience—which includes the educated classes who have a role in policy making, administration and decision making in the military, civil bureaucracy, business community, media, the legal fraternity and intellectuals—through which it seeks to establish the *Khilafah* rule. HT focuses not only on the people who currently hold positions of influence in the military establishment and bureaucracy but also those who could assume such roles in the future. Hence, the focus on student bodies in colleges, universities and professional educational institutions. HT Pakistan mainly has such focus in six cities: Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar and Quetta. That is because its members believe that any change in the country will originate in these cities, due to the influence their inhabitants have on policy making and shaping the opinions of fellow countrymen. In other cities, HT concentrates only on the youth from the elite and students of professional institutions.

This focus has yielded dividends for HT Pakistan. The Islamabad police arrested a PhD nuclear scientist, an environmental scientist and a USAID project officer in October 2009 during a demonstration against US policies.⁷⁵ An HT member confirmed that the arrested men were their activists and boasted that it was very easy to convince the elite to join the party. He said that the objectives of HT inspire most of them and if, infrequently, anyone has any objection he or she engages in an argument with HT and is almost always convinced after a debate.⁷⁶ However, he said that it was often difficult to convince the people who were already actively associated with a political, religious or sectarian organization, and HT members “do not waste their time on them”.⁷⁷

However, the fact that most of the members and sympathizers of HT in Pakistan are military officers, scientists, engineers, bureaucrats and the youth

with promising careers ahead of them should not be dismissed. It gives credence to the HT leadership's claims that the party has succeeded in having an impact on its targeted audience.⁷⁸

Strategic and Security Threat Assessment

HT's political discourse is based on religio-ideological narratives that are already in abundance in Pakistan and form one of the root causes of the main security threats posed to the Pakistani state and society. HT can, in fact, give impetus to the theo-political polarization in Pakistani society where space for any discourse other than the Islamist narrative has almost already disappeared. This is a threat in general, irrespective of which Islamist organization or group is contributing to it; and HT is also a part of this threat augmentation.

HT claims to be a non-violent movement, but has been linked to a number of terrorist plots in Pakistan, including an attempt to assassinate former president General Pervez Musharraf. During an interview in Islamabad, an HT member, who requested anonymity, did not deny the involvement of HT members in some 'violent activities'—such as the plot to assassinate Musharraf and the case of an army captain who faces court martial in Kotli, in Pakistan-administered Kashmir on charges of planning a coup on behalf of HT—but characterized them as personal acts of a few individuals which do not reflect the overall HT policy. "If some HT members get involved in violent activities in their personal capacity or in collaboration with some other group that does not affect HT's interests or its emphasis on non-violent means to effect change."⁷⁹

Some other factors also suggest that HT may pose potential threats to the security of the Pakistani state and society. Firstly, the disenchanted youth associated with HT may get involved in terrorist activities; secondly, HT does not denounce such activities. Thirdly, as Maajid Nawaz, a former HT member claims the party has two faces. HT does not discount the possibility of resort to violence via the military, in order to achieve the ultimate goal of establishing the *Khilafah* state, it rather obliges it. Naveed Butt states that after establishment of *Khilafah*, part of the second phase will be to spread the borders of the state through offensive 'jihad' or aggressive warfare.

At another level, the pursuit of a Jihadist agenda cannot be ruled out in the case of HT. It believes that jihad and preaching will be used for “taking humanity out from the darkness of *kufir* (infidelity) to the light of Islam” after the establishment of *Khilafah*.⁸⁰ Perhaps HT has assumed a timeline for the establishment of their *Khilafah* in Pakistan after which it plans to pursue ‘jihad’ to expand the *Khilafah*’s boundaries. But the question is if things do not happen according to HT’s expectations, as the dominant discourse in Pakistan suggests, who can guarantee that the party, or its members at least, will not adopt the militant or Jihadist discourse to achieve their primary objectives, especially when there are already some indications of their involvement in such activities.

Secondly, HT tries to influence the political leadership, mainly leaders of Islamist parties in Pakistan. It claims, as discussed earlier, that they do not have a clear agenda and that HT can provide them with a viable blueprint for the establishment of *Khilafah*, or an ‘Islamic’ revolution, that they are working towards. Most Islamist organizations are traditionalists in their approach and work under the Constitution of Pakistan. HT can lead the Islamists to a viewpoint that is characterized by opposition to the constitution. In other words, HT has the potential to compress the political and democratic space by guiding the Islamist parties and the citizens of Pakistan towards non-democratic and unconstitutional narratives of governance and state-functioning.

Thirdly, HT has been persistently targeting Pakistan Army officials for enlisting and the fact that it has the potential to augment the ‘Islamic revolution’ niche among some senior military officials cannot be ignored. It is pertinent to mention that in two military coup plots unearthed in Pakistan HT was the prime suspect. A military court in Pakistan-administered Kashmir identified two military officers and two civilians in January 2010 as members of HT and charged them with planning to attack Shamsi Airbase of Pakistan Air Force in Balochistan. This facility is generally believed to be used as a base for US drones which attack targets in Pakistan’s tribal areas. The accused were also charged with transferring sensitive information to HT.⁸¹ HT had also developed close links with Major General Zaheer Abbasi, the main accused in the foiled military coup in 1995.

Fourthly, HT concentrates considerably on university students and those studying in professional institutions. The infiltration of these groups,

especially with an anti-state and anti-constitutional agenda, runs the risk of putting more and more educated Pakistani youth on the path of radicalization. According to Maajid Nawaz, radicalization of this section of youth could have a poisonous effect on other segments of society, eventually making the core fabric of society prone to radicalization owing to its Islamism-guided polarization.

Conclusion

HT is an ideological group that falls somewhere between political Islamists and militant Islamists, and may also be classified as a kind of a revolutionary Islamist set-up. HT emphatically asserts that the only way to progress, prosperity and development is the implementation of Islam as an ideology in Pakistan and in the whole world. In Pakistan, it has an anti-constitutional and anti-democratic outlook and agenda, and its narrative on militant and violent movements and groups in the country remains vague. It has well developed tactics to communicate with the masses and propagate its ideology. The danger in discourses such as HT's is not so much in its ability to achieve popular appeal in Pakistan. Rather, its appeal will always remain niche and exclusive. The group primarily targets Pakistan Army, the educated youth, bureaucracy and the business community to win their support and sympathies to realize their *Khilafah* plan.

By focusing on the elite and the military for achieving its ambition, taking over the Islamist discourse and pushing all other narratives to the fringes, there is little need for HT to have popular support to take control of things. Most analysts tend to watch madrassas and popular mass movements for signs of radicalization. The danger with HT is ever more serious and often overlooked because it is not always visible and does not conform to stereotypes. Vanguard ideological movements and military coups rarely have mass appeal, but they can and do succeed sometimes. It may not be able to take over by stealth, but it can certainly contribute to pushing the intellectual and positive discourses in the country to the periphery. HT certainly has the potential to polarize progress in Pakistan by injecting schismatic dogma into the very classes that Pakistan so desperately needs to progress.

Notes

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- ¹ Under Pakistani law the Ahmedis are accused of having challenged the finality of the Prophet of Islam. Mirza Ghulam Muhammad was the supreme leader of Ahmedis.
- ² Muhammad Munir, *From Jinnah to Zia*, (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1980), pp. 84-85.
- ³ Article 260 (3), Constitution of Pakistan, 1973.
- ⁴ Saeed Shafqat, *Political System of Pakistan and Public Policy*, (Lahore: Progressive Publishers, 1989), pp. 99-100.
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ Manzooruddin Ahmed, *Contemporary Pakistan: Politics, Economy, and Society*, (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 1980). pp. 27-37.
- ⁷ Such as the Deobandi Tableeghi Jamaat movement and various groups of the Bareilvi denomination, such as Minhajul Quran.
- ⁸ Such as the obscurantist Salafist Ahl-e-Hadith denomination.
- ⁹ These include Salafist modernist reformers such as Javed Ahmed Ghamidi and his Al-Mawrid Institute of Islamic Sciences.
- ¹⁰ Like the personality-led sufi cults of the *pirs*.
- ¹¹ Muhammad Waseem, "Origins and Growth Patterns of Islamic Organizations in Pakistan," <http://www.apcss.org/Publications/Edited%20Volumes/ReligiousRadicalism/PagesfromReligiousRadicalismandSecurityinSouthAsiach2.pdf>, accessed on July 13, 2009.
- ¹² Olivier Roy, "Changing Patterns among Radical Islamic Movements," *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Winter/Spring 1999 – Volume VI, Issue 1.
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- ¹⁴ Maajid Nawaz, in testimony before the US Senate Homeland Security Government Affairs Committee, July 10, 2008. <http://www.quilliamfoundation.org/component/content/article/39-events/206-maajid-nawaz-roots-of-violent-islamist-extremism-and-efforts-to-counter-it-hsgac.html>, accessed on June 29, 2010.
- ¹⁵ Both organizations have their origin and headquarters in the Punjab province. The former is being headed by Akram Awan and Dr. Israr Ahmed led the latter until his death.
- ¹⁶ See HT's manifesto at the party's website: www.hizb-pakistan.info
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- ¹⁸ Ibid., p. 71.
- ¹⁹ International Crisis Group. June 30, 2003. *Radical Islam in Central Asia: Responding to Hizb Ut-Tahrir*. ICG Asia Report N°58 Osh/Brussels, p. 3.
- ²⁰ Ibid.
- ²¹ Nicola Smith, *British Islamists Plot Against Pakistan*, The Sunday Times. July 4, 2009. <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article6638483.ece>, accessed on July 15, 2010.
- ²² Ibid.

- ²³ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4nyGLECUILY&feature=related>, accessed on May 26, 2010.
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ Open letter to the *Ulema* of Pakistan from Hizbut Tahrir Wilayah Pakistan. <http://www.hizb.org.uk/hizb/resources/leaflets/open-letter-to-the-ulema-of-pakistan-from-hizb-ut-tahrir-wilayah-pakistan.html>, accessed on May 27, 2010.
- ²⁶ See the HT manifesto on its website: www.hizb-pakistan.com
- ²⁷ Interview with Naveed Butt, chief spokesperson of HT Pakistan, Lahore, April 2010
- ²⁸ Ibid.
- ²⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁰ Available at www.hizb-pakistan.info.
- ³¹ Ibid.
- ³² HT defines *Nussrah* as a way to achieve power through influencing the army to stage a coup.
- ³³ An Urdu language pamphlet distributed by HT Pakistan in December 2009 blamed Zardari's government and his 'American allies' for orchestrating 'bombing campaigns' in Pakistan in order to defame the "Mujahideen".
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- ³⁹ Interview with an HT member, a software engineer, who spoke on condition of anonymity, Islamabad, January 15, 2010.
- ⁴⁰ Interview in Lahore, April 18, 2010.
- ⁴¹ Interview in Islamabad, March 22, 2010.
- ⁴² <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article6638483.ece>, accessed on July 13, 2009.
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- ⁴⁵ Naveed Butt, "Why the ban on an intellectual and political party like HT? *Khilafat*, Issue 8.
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- ⁴⁷ Dr. Simon Ross Valentine, Fighting Kufr and the American Raj: Hizb-ut-Tahrir in Pakistan, Pakistan Security Research Unit, Brief No 56, February 12, 2010.
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- ⁴⁹ Murtaza Ali Shah, Plotting a revolution, The News on Sunday, October 25, 2009
- ⁵⁰ Interview with HT member Shahzad Malik, Rawalpindi, March 31, 2010.
- ⁵¹ Interview with Naveed Butt.
- ⁵² Interview with Naveed Butt.

- ⁵³ Interview in Islamabad.
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- ⁶⁰ Interview with a HT member in Islamabad
- ⁶¹ Interview with HT member Muhammad Amir, Islamabad, April 2010
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- ⁶⁴ Interview in Islamabad.
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- ⁶⁶ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7b4U9nY-9sA>, accessed on May 14, 2010.
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- ⁸¹ Daily Aaj Kal, Islamabad, January 21, 2010.

Notes on Contributors

Manzar Zaidi's area of expertise is the Taliban insurgency in Pakistan. A former lecturer at the University of Central Lancashire, UK, he has embedded with the UN and worked in conflict areas. He is the author of two books on the Taliban in Pakistan.

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and issue numbers, and, the page number/s referred to. Names of the books and journals cited may be italicized but may not be in quotation marks. Names of the articles cited may be in quotation marks but may not be italicized.

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LAST ISSUE

A PIPS Research Journal

Conflict and Peace Studies

VOLUME 3

APR-JUN 2010

NUMBER 2

**Radicalization
in Pakistan**

A Comprehensive Study - I



Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS)

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Abstracts

Trends and Patterns of Radicalization in Pakistan

Abdul Basit and Mujtaba Muhammad Rathore

The phenomenon of radicalization has played a major part in the ongoing militancy in Pakistan's restive tribal regions along the Pak-Afghan border and elsewhere in the country. Islamabad's obvious strategic importance in the US-led war on terror and the extent of religious radicalization in the country have made Pakistan a special focus of discourses on religious extremism and fundamentalism. The growing trends and patterns of radicalization in Pakistan and the underlying factors are anything but straightforward. The dynamics of such trends and patterns may be different from each other but they are interlinked. The roots of radicalization in Pakistan can be traced back to the beginning of violent sectarian divisions between the Shia and Sunni sects and to General Ziaul Haq's Islamization policies in the 1980s. This paper studies the various manifestations of radicalization across the socio-cultural, ideological and religio-political spectrums, highlighting varying tendencies of this rather complex phenomenon. In the light of an empirical study, it has been argued that religious extremism is the common prevalent factor in all the visible trends and patterns of radicalization in Pakistan.

Jihad, Extremism and Radicalization: The Public Perspective

Safdar Sial and Tanveer Anjum

Pakistani society has been facing multiple threats on account of phenomena such as jihad, extremism and radicalization since 9/11. The people of Pakistan, who largely lack awareness about radicalization and extremism and the threats they pose, are the ultimate victims of such threats. At the societal level, people provide ideological support for radical and extremist forces and facilitate them in waging jihad. In a society like Pakistan, where religiosity is an inborn trait and education and critical thinking have been largely ignored, such ideological initiations can have implications for public opinions and perceptions. This

study is an attempt to explore the genesis and evolution of certain public perspectives in their historical settings, particularly across the socio-cultural, religious, political and educational aspects. It has been disputed that the concepts of radicalization and extremism overlap with the concept of jihad in public perception. Certain state-led ideological patterns along with assertions of religious scholars and clerics have had a great impact on people's perceptions about these issues. Although no religious-political party enjoys popular support in the country, but people's perceptions endorse the need for two things: an increased role of religion in politics, law and society; and the need for social development.

Women Radicalization: An Empirical Study

Saba Noor and Daniela Hussain

Radicalization has emerged as a grave challenge to Pakistan's diverse society. However, research into reasons of radicalization of Pakistani women and their involvement in terrorist activities has received little attention. This study explores trends of radicalization among Pakistani women. The focus on women is crucial in the context of Pakistan where women form 53 percent of the population but have little say in policy and decision making at the local or national level. They are not even free to make vital decisions regarding their own life and do not have equal access to the opportunities available to men. The causes of radicalization among women are varied and complex. Women's involvement in terrorism is motivated by ideological reasons and their role has until recently been confined to providing logistic support and assistance to male militants. The trends of radicalization among Pakistani women can be traced back to the Afghan Jihad when women played an active role by providing logistic help and facilitation as mothers, daughters and wives to male militants fighting on the battlefield. At times women have got involved in terrorist activities by choice and at other times they have been forced to do so. However, an active role of women in Pakistan in terms of radicalization became visible to the world during the Lal Masjid/Jamia Hafsa standoff in Islamabad in 2007. A survey forming the basis of this empirical study found that though evidence of large-scale radicalization among Pakistani women has not been found, but women are vulnerable to both radicalization and exploitation in the name of religion, on account of ignorance at societal, political and religious levels.

Litterateurs' Response to Extremism in Pakistan

Muhammad Amir Rana

Extremism is defined in Pakistan in a number of ways, mainly in political, religious, and social contexts. A lack of consensus even on definitions make it difficult to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon, further complicating efforts aimed at countering extremism. This study by Muhammad Amir Rana is based on a survey that aimed to analyze the opinion of intellectuals, mainly individuals associated with literature and creative arts, in order to assess their opinion about the reasons for the steady rise of extremism in Pakistan. The study finds that Pakistani litterateurs are not only well aware of the extent and the various manifestations of extremist trends—they declare extremism to be “a real problem” for Pakistani society—they also offer comprehensive recommendations to address the rise in extremism. However, a comparison of litterateurs' views with opinions of other segments of society, recorded through surveys conducted by PIPS earlier, reveals considerable differences with regard to the preferred course to counter extremism. The litterateurs emphasize ideological and empirical aspects for countering extremism. However, religious scholars assert that extremism is a political issue, which they insist would resolve itself if Pakistan distances itself from the US-led war on terror. Finding a middle path among such divergent stances would obviously be difficult. However, efforts for convergence of views is indispensable as differences at such an elementary level would weaken efforts aimed at an effective response.

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