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# The Process of Radicalization Contextualizing the Case of Pakistan

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To be a radical is to be the extreme relative to something that is defined or accepted as normative, traditional, or valued as the status quo; it is a total departure from the mainstream political thought of a society or group. However, radicalization gets clarified only by its association with extremism within the context that one is looking for. Nobody consents to being labeled as an extremist, no matter how radical their worldview, and thus the term lacks contextualization by ownership. Extremism is the link in the chain which terminates in violence, though extremism does not necessarily have to overtly manifest itself; an extremist thought process by itself contributes to the radicalization of society. It is arguably even more dangerous than express manifestations of radicalization, since it insidiously finds its way into the mind of the citizen. Talibanization is just one example of manifestations of extremism in Pakistan, since it is not just an overtly expressed set of behaviors, but a thought process as well which can translate into action. Though this may not necessarily happen in the case of many citizens of Pakistan who are exposed to this phenomenon, the potential for instilling extremist ideals which may translate into action cannot be ignored.

The threat from extremism labelled radicalization is also usually defined as a process whereby an originally moderate individual or group of individuals becomes progressively more extreme in their thinking, and possibly their behavior, over time. For the purpose of this study Flaherty's definition of radicalization<sup>1</sup> suffices, since it encompasses the entire spectrum of extreme responses that one would want in order to contextualize terrorism in Pakistan. 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. This would seem to hold true from the Taliban insurgency to militant organizations to individuals which wish to deconstruct the existing order to bring about a new one, without clear notions of the trajectory of such processes beyond a hazy concept of implementation of Shariah.

There is a sense of emergency and urgency in the radicalized population, wherein the ends justify the means. The reason for choosing this particular definition was due to its underlying prospect of violent change exerting its own inherent appeal, which seemed a good benchmark for the study. Thus, even when power sharing in forms of negotiated compromises was on the table for insurgent populations in Pakistan such as the Taliban, they preferred continuation of violence, which in essence was an end rather than the means to an end. In all these processes, individuals changed from a state of passiveness or activism to become more revolutionary, militant or extremist. This radicalization is often associated with youth, adversity, alienation, social exclusion, poverty, or perceptions of injustice to oneself or others.

Why is radicalization dangerous? This can be explained from observation of ideologues and instigators of extremist movements, who tend to rely on "black-or-white" or "all-or-none" thinking to direct the radicalization process.<sup>2</sup> A cognitive divide of social perceptions is created between elements supportive

of extremism and the 'others', namely, people outside one's social and ideological group or "in-group".<sup>3</sup> Violence toward the 'out' group can thus be facilitated by thinking of its members as being justifiably excluded from the moral considerations one would impact upon members of one's own group, making violence morally sanctionable. This can also be done by resorting to a higher legal sanction than man-made law, bringing divine sanction and ideology into play. The perception that a shunned social category is outside the boundaries of the in group's sphere of morality can free individuals to become morally disengaged in their behavioral interactions with members of the social category so shunned.<sup>4</sup>

Notwithstanding the attention paid to radicalization as a precursor to terrorism or even a "root cause" of terrorism and socio-political violence, it is widely agreed that although radicalization predisposes to such violence it does not essentially have to necessitate it. For instance, according to a Global Futures Forum (GFF) report, "radicalization is a process, not an end unto itself, and it does not necessarily lead to violence".<sup>5</sup> Simply put, radicalization cannot be a sufficient cause of terrorism because most radicals are not terrorists, but the entrenchment of radicalization processes within terrorists indicates its associations with terrorism. This may be why the term violent radicalization is often encountered in discourse on terrorism, since radicalization by itself is insufficient to explain the trajectories of terrorism. If violence were indeed necessitated by radicalization, the qualified term would simply be redundant. Prevalent terms such as violent radicalization or militant radicalization thus tend to qualify certain forms of radicalization with violence to elucidate the association of radicalization with violence.

Another layer of contextualization to radicalization also needs to be added; there is a commonly observed tendency to conceive of radicalization in terms solely of ideology. Religious zealotry, extremism and militancy, or whatever one prefers to call them, are often associated with retrogressive barbarism, lack of education and absence of a civilized mindset which is deemed the very opposite of what is considered 'modern'. This recourse to colonial binaries is as retrogressive as radicalization itself, and even resembles the social cognitive division process as mentioned above.

Instead of trying to analyze radicalization as some kind of inherent flaw within a particular people, religion, culture or belief system, it is advisable to examine the trajectories of the political economy of radicalization, so that some variables can be identified. This is the same process that scholars have used to differentiate between Islam and Islamism, as essentially the conflicts between competing social classes attempting to establish their hegemony and deploying religion, or a specific form of it, to justify their position in the social and economic hierarchies.<sup>6</sup> Thus, Islamism, which is a form of radicalization and representative of it, provides an ideological cover for class-based privilege and exploitation; arguably, radicalization consists of the same process constructs as its subcategory of Islamism.

It is also necessary to clarify the association of ideology with radicalization at the outset, since the debate about ideology being the major construct of radicalization rages on. The simplifications of complex issues into binary oppositions which create a visceral impact are a characteristic of ideologies, especially when they tend to articulate a set of grievances of one set of people against the other.<sup>7</sup> This is also the predominant process within radicalization.

This is the contextual paradigm of ideology that resonates within paradigms of terrorism in Pakistan, wherein the terrorists have used a reductionist worldview to whittle down complex socio-economic, geostrategic and political problems into essentially a contest between good and evil. Thus, there are

hardly any grey areas for terrorists in Pakistan, i.e., a fellow citizen not following the terrorist ideology is clearly a *murtid*, one who has turned away from true faith as perceived by one school of thought or sect against the other.

The need for action which edifies the spirit and allows the ideology to grow has been a common theme within anarchism, fascism, communism, and for the purpose of this study, Islamism.<sup>8</sup> When there is a conducive environment that induces a sense of emasculation or despair, ideology can provide not only a source of solace, but an impetus for action for populations undergoing stress. Thus, venting of grievances through the platform of ideology, whether it is Jihadism, Salafism, Takfir or any other, has the potential of making the message resonate to other persons undergoing similar stimuli. Since an ideology is self replicating, it would have the potential of attracting more converts, and in essence it is actually more powerful than the violent behavior that it inculcates. In the context of Pakistan, this means that extremist terrorist ideologies are the overarching paradigm which drive and also foster terrorism, and in many cases radicalization.

Regardless of the processes exerting influence on a radical, who we shall refer to later, it is necessary to understand the dynamics of the process. Some scholars, such as Marc Sageman,<sup>9</sup> hold the view that radicalization does not follow any fixed sequence, while others, like Silber and Bhatt, tend to view radicalization as a path which may lead to terrorism based upon a clearly demarcated series of stages.<sup>10</sup> One of the prevalent models is a four-stage model, which includes pre-radicalization, self-identification, indoctrination, and “jihadization”, respectively. Sequential models such as this one essentially represent radicalization as key transition points along a time course, leading from the normal life of individuals to their departure from the mainstream centre of society.

It also needs to be realized that a single variable is not always enough to radicalize individuals. For example, religion as an ideology or set of ideologies is often unthinkingly invoked as the paramount disposing factor behind radicalization in Pakistan, without taking into account the fact that issues of terrorism and extremism do not arise from ideology alone. Rather, the problems that Pakistan is confronted with also arise from fundamental socio-economic and class inequalities, which have allowed the ruling classes to espouse, promote and encourage orthodox, rigid and fundamentalist versions of religion, as opposed to the more tolerant, peaceful ones that the dispossessed classes reflect. As Pakistan redefined its identity by invoking the Arabian origins of Islam during the Afghan Jihad heydays, the relatively more tolerant, syncretic and peaceful strands of Islam in South Asia have been increasingly replaced by harsh, literalist and bland versions of Arabian Islam amongst an extremist fringe.

### Contextualizing Variables for Radicalization in Pakistan

#### Youth Bulge and Economic Disparity

Another layer of contextualization also needs to be added with regards to the demographic variables affecting this radicalization, if it indeed is a process. Radicalization does not affect all classes homogeneously, but has had a more observable effect on Pakistan's youth. This youth bulge of Pakistan's population between ages 15-24 is estimated at 36 million, while a staggeringly high number of 58 million individuals are below the age of 15.<sup>11</sup> Together, they make up nearly 60 percent of Pakistan's population, a proportion that is second only to Yemen,<sup>12</sup> with the added variable of Pakistan having a

male cohort that is larger than its female counterpart. This is particularly relevant in the sense that the literature on youth radicalization is focused almost solely on males. Even though fertility rates in the country have decreased modestly, the current rate of 3.8 births per female will carry Pakistan's youth bulge well beyond 2025, giving a projected estimate of Pakistan's population under the age of 24 reaching 51.4 percent of the total in 2030.<sup>13</sup>

High unemployment and income disparity have all the potential for young Pakistanis to be swayed towards radicalization, and add support for militant agendas from among the Pakistani populace. This income disparity has manifested itself by the ratio of the highest to the lowest income quintiles ranging from 3.76 in 2001 to 4.15 in 2005, and further to 4.2 in 2005-06. The high level of underemployment for the young from lower socio-economic classes causes an escalating strain. While the growing economy has expanded the labor market, and the unemployment rate has declined to around 5.32 percent, the modest improvement cannot cope with the rapidly expanding youth bulge. This alienates the poor segment of the youth bulge, since the majority of non-elite young men can only find relatively menial, unfulfilling jobs.<sup>14</sup> Radicalization is one of the ways that the poor and the dispossessed find voice, since the path to radicalization demands action to challenge the status quo, often in the form of violent activism. This violent action may become terrorism in its extreme manifestations, or smolder within the non-elite youth in the form of extremism. Thus, presuming radicalization to be a process and also assuming certain Pakistani demographic segments to be more vulnerable to it than others, one can draw up empirical frameworks of how individuals in Pakistan tend to get radicalised, and then populate these frameworks with data.

### **Polarization of Education**

There has also been a radicalization polemic inherent within the educational system in Pakistan. While education is a universal panacea for many social evils, it can also be used as a tool-kit to influence minds and mould attitudes, sometimes in the form of a return to traditional values, or as a pretext of 'saving the children from degenerate cultural influences'. If this presumption is accepted that education can change a nation's ethos, then a distortion of educational policy should logically have the ability to disrupt the thought processes of the students, especially in a post-colonial society. This is because post-colonial societies and newly emerged states usually struggle between a need to preserve a heritage which has often been a motivating cause of their creation, and change from outside which is often seen as imposition of a colonizer's thought processes.<sup>15</sup> This urgently felt need of inculcating a sense of collective identity, to protect the fledgling nation state from forces which are perceived to threaten that identity, often creates acute insecurity. This tension is intensely felt in the educational discourse, curricula, theories and institutional practices in such states.

Pakistan started out with a narrow technical base, and thus with the prevailing ideology of development being the goal, a large number of institutions of technical education were established. These institutions enjoyed many incentives such as massive tax holidays.<sup>16</sup> This development-oriented worldview also found expression in the curriculum of the 1950s, which tended to focus on nationalism perceived in futuristic and modernist terms.<sup>17</sup> Rather than a tangible foe, the enemies were "ignorance, backwardness, parochialism, corruption, black marketing, superstition and lack of industry".<sup>18</sup> At the same time the focus was more outward looking as well, since Pakistan was expected to compete on par with the comity of nations. The vision of the government of the day was that narrow nationalism in the modern world

was not enough; and if the child was given only that, it would be a disservice to him.<sup>19</sup> Military ruler Ayub Khan was himself a proponent of such reform; this is illustrated by his comments that 'when nationalism, in its extreme form, takes charge, human reasoning gets second place'.<sup>20</sup> This perception was conducive to producing a much more forward looking curriculum than would appear later, emphasizing multiculturalism and recognizing the tempering effects of humanity on ideology.

The succeeding state of insecurity in the 1960s and the 70s culminated in Ziaul Haq's efforts to reform the curriculum according to a particular worldview; this radically altered the curriculum, particularly social sciences. Zia's educational policy of 1979 stated that the highest priority would be given to the revision of the curricula with a view to reorganizing the entire content around Islamic thought and giving education an ideological orientation so that Islamic ideology permeates the thinking of the younger generation and helps them with the necessary conviction and ability to refashion society according to Islamic tenets.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, curriculum revision committees were set into motion to marginalize what would be conceived as disruptive forces of parochialism and religious diversion. The Afghan Jihad also precipitated a mindset in which the most militarized entities were most useful, which shifted the emphasis towards a more martial ideology of an exclusionary Sunni state much on the model of Iran as a Shia one.<sup>22</sup>

In the succeeding democratic governments, hardly any comprehensive educational policy emerged; the 1998 educational policy demonstrated the largely continued practices: "educational policy and particularly its ideological aspect enjoys the most vital place in the socio-economic milieu and moral framework of a country...We are not a country founded on its territorial, linguistic, ethnic or racial identity. The only justification for our existence is our total commitment to Islam as our identity. Although the previous educational policies did dilate on Islamic education and Pakistan Ideology but those policies did not suggest how to translate the Islamic Ideology into our moral profile and the educational system."<sup>23</sup> This is the thought process which still continues to shape the curriculum, particularly the social studies throughout Pakistan today.

While many apologists more or less correctly point out that there is no inherent material in the social studies textbooks that explicitly glorifies the violent form of jihad,<sup>24</sup> the effect of a polarized historiography on immature minds cannot be ignored away. Contextualizing the shaping of attitudes from this process, one can induce why this polarized process is dangerous and has the ability to radicalize students in a society. This can be explained with reference to the above mentioned "black-or-white" or "all-or-none" thinking to direct the radicalization process.<sup>25</sup> A cognitive divide of social perceptions is created between elements supportive of extremism and the 'others', namely, people outside one's social and ideological group or "in-group".<sup>26</sup>

Since the elite classes in Pakistan have abandoned the public education system, relying instead on a mainly English-speaking private sector, a wider divergence of educational discourses has become all the more evident. While all schools are bound to follow similar syllabi in subjects such as Pakistan Studies, even then a number of private schools now encourage objectivity and creative thinking among students, which is done by reliance on histories more open to interpretation. This stratification of Pakistan's educational infrastructure has created significant divergences of worldviews which are representative of their curriculum design, whether by design or by default. Madrassa students tend to gravitate more

toward jihad, a weltanschauung arguably created by their educational discourse and its emphasis on strict ritualism, and no margin for objective thinking. Public school or Urdu-medium students are comparably more tolerant, but still have imbibed radical ideas as illustrated by Christine Fair in her seminal works. The private sector educated elite children have more leeway for objective thinking, but tend to relate little with the two more mainstream student streams.<sup>27</sup>

This trend of polarization springing from dynamics of education also effectively contributes to a widening social divide, which the extremist project exploits by manipulating a social and opinion leadership vacuum. Thus, this has the tendency to promote a 'class war mentality' in which a culturally 'centrist' class is increasingly wedged in between an indifferent secular elite and an activist ultra-right,<sup>28</sup> which may force this centre to choose sides. Since the elites do not identify with this centre either, the radicals are the more natural partner due to being more accessible.<sup>29</sup> As Denoëux puts it: "when one focuses on their fundamental convictions, their most cherished values, and the kind of society and political order they aspire to create, moderates have far more in common with radicals than they do with Western-style democracies" (which is what the secular elite essentially promote).<sup>30</sup>

### Democratic Deficit

Authoritarian politics in Pakistan has also affected this radicalization process; it has often been argued that since democracy came late to Pakistan and has faced numerous difficulties, this allowed the processes initiated by Ziaul Haq to take root. It has also been argued that dictatorships have tended to enable the incumbent government to adopt repressive measures and ultimately abolish democracy itself, since these movements were used by governments to justify the continuation of repressive policies. Such arguments were accepted by Western states which feared that radical Islamists, upon assuming power, would also turn against their interests.

These regimes ostensibly inculcated virulent anti-American rhetoric in place of political dissent.<sup>31</sup> Thus, by analogy to the Middle East, the conclusion was quickly drawn that the democratic deficit in Pakistan had contributed to the emergence of Islamist terrorism. However, this is notwithstanding the fact that the transition from dictatorship to democracy has often been turbulent and that 'more than a few established democracies have struggled with persistent terrorist threats.'<sup>32</sup> Many scholars have argued on both sides of the spectrum; Mohammed Hafez's 'Why Muslims Rebel' and Jennifer Noyon's 'Islam, Politics and Pluralism',<sup>33</sup> for example, argue for a connection between the absence of democratic politics and Islamist violence and radicalization. Hafez documents Muslim rebellions which resulted from institutional exclusion and discrimination, while Noyon argues that Islam and democracy are compatible, and that democratic participation by Islamists discourages radicalization. Indeed, studies on democracy and terrorism (which is an extreme form of radicalization) do not demonstrate a simple causal relationship between the lack of democracy and terrorism anywhere in the world, as a seminal work by Martha Crenshaw suggests.<sup>34</sup> She built her premise on Luigi Bonanate's works, arguing terrorism and radicalization to be a result of retaliation in 'blocked' societies resistant to innovation.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, surveying the American political scene, Christopher Hewitt concludes that 'the resort to violence is most likely to take place when members of a group have their hopes and aspirations raised, but then become disillusioned with the political process.'<sup>36</sup>

### Honor as an Ideology, Globalization and Tribalism

Why is Pakistan so radicalized? Besides other explanations, one could argue that the exaggerated trajectories of Islamism are the reaction of a world influenced by the response of traditional cultures to globalization. The reaction is a mixture of bewilderment, anger, fascination, incomprehension, confusion, seduction and violent hatred with Western modernity. The Islamic world to a great extent still holds on to tribal and cliquish emotive sentiments of group loyalty or social solidarity. Akbar S. Ahmed has hypothesized that the onslaught of globalization has caused an exaggerated variant of group loyalty to emerge, which he has termed 'Hyper Assabiyya'.<sup>37</sup> He suggests that this exaggerated group loyalty can become the basis of identification with Muslims under peril anywhere in the world, which can be a cause for emergence of 'fundamentalism'.

The warped identity of social solidarity indeed revolves around a distorted perception of honor, which is diametrically opposed to the commonly held perceptions of honor as chivalry. It is this metamorphosis of honor as the exaggerated feeling of group solidarity of Islamism, based upon a perception of grave necessity of redemption of this violated collective honor, which arguably contributes to radicalization in Pakistan. This is one of the responses to globalization that the society in Pakistan is trying to come to terms with, which also needs to be understood.<sup>38</sup>

A much more connected and communicative world has made the Muslims think that they had been victimized in conflicts left over from centuries of European wars and from decolonization. The perpetual Palestine problem and the thorny Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan were seen as legacies of blatant colonial aggression. Chechnya, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, etc., were seen as avoidable human tragedies, if it were not for the intransigence of the western powers, which were perceived to have acted disproportionately quickly in the Gulf War as opposed to these orphan conflicts. Thus, hegemony over oil was perceived to have overtaken human rights interests. This started to be a widespread perception in the Muslim world.

The post-1973 oil shock era also ushered in a time of intensifying strains, faltering ideologies and crumbling institutions, wherein the vacuum needed to be filled. Islamism provided such an alternative due to "... an emotionally familiar basis of group identity, solidarity, and exclusion; an acceptable basis of legitimacy and authority; an immediately intelligible formulation of principles for both a critique of the present and a program for the future. By means of these, Islam could provide the most effective symbols and slogans for mobilization, whether for or against a cause or a regime."<sup>39</sup>

Although globalization has brought undeniable benefits to the world, for many in the developing societies globalization is synonymous to Armageddon, as explained by Dr Mahathir Mohammad:<sup>40</sup> "Muslims and Muslim countries are faced with a tremendous and frightening challenge. Globalization in the form that it takes now is a threat against us and our religion."<sup>41</sup> Globalization has unfortunately also been an agent of despair, particularly for Muslim societies: "I try very hard to be optimistic about the Muslims in the 21st century of the third millennium of the Christian era," confesses Dr. Mahathir Mohammad. "But I must admit that it is very difficult for me to be optimistic. I find few Muslims understand reality."<sup>42</sup>

The modern Muslim nation-states are legacies from the era of Anglo-French imperial domination and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and have thus had their boundaries redrawn by colonial powers, which sometimes cut straight across the tribal and rural heartlands, separating a particular tribe, caste or religious minority across a line or divide. Imposed boundaries of this kind are bound to create a stronger feeling of group solidarity in a group which feels that it has been sequestered. The fact that there exists a cognitive dissonance between the past and the present, the unified empires of yore and the squabbling Muslim nation-states of the present, creates an opportunity for the alarmist to play upon these sentiments by highlighting this "fall from grace". This perception is heightened by the fact that the unified Muslim polity of state and religion is currently a modern fiction.

Despite the commonly held perception that the institutions of state and religion are unified in Islamic polity, most observable Muslim societies did not conform to this ideal, but were built around separate institutions of state and religion.<sup>43</sup> Keddie has described the supposed near-identity of religion and the state in Islam as "more a pious myth than reality for most of Islamic history."<sup>44</sup> This holds particularly true for societies which tend to hold on to concepts of honor and group solidarity based upon tribal or loose religious affiliations. Thus, when there is a perceived feeling of honor having been slighted and religion targeted, the resulting religious hatred takes on an almost mimetic quality, no matter which religious group feels it is being plotted against. Everyone who is a member of the group which perceives that it has had its collective honor violated closes ranks, and anyone not adhering to the philosophies of the group is considered an outsider, apostate, *murtid*, *kafir* or infidel.

Thus, honor violated, especially religious honor, is a powerful driving force which spurns evil behavior. Honor is taking hold in the minds of young Muslims at a dangerous time, when a large percentage of the population in the Muslim world is young, dangerously illiterate, unemployed, and can therefore be easily manipulated by radicalizing forces, making them prone to join fundamentalist projects. In essence, a tribal (group) interpretation of Islam offers a better explanation of the fact that the Taliban were indeed funded and raised by the Saudi government with the help of Pakistan. It also explains why they had support from a Muslim society where tribalism is strong, as in some parts of Saudi Arabia. Even Mullah Omar, the supreme Taliban leader, rose to prominence when he reportedly rescued the honor of a girl by releasing her from the clutches of a minor warlord. Thus Islamism, even in the breeding ground of the Afghan Jihad, took its cue from tribal mindsets, ideologies and above all redemption of honor prevalent in tribes.

### **Role of Ruling Elites**

The ruling leadership in Pakistan has led the nation on Islamist trajectories, whether by default, design or misplaced intentions.

Radicalization of religion in many Muslim countries such as Pakistan need not be considered as a revolt against modernity per se, but against the backdrop of failed attempts to impose a Western or Marxist 'imported' variant of it, which failed against the staunch resistance from the traditionalists, in the process veering many of these defensive entities towards Islamist trajectories. Dismal socio-economic frameworks and income inequalities also ensured that the elite felt insecure about their power base, and tended to hold on to it by processes varying from brutal military dictatorships to appeal to Shariah. Zakariyya says that the recent resurgence of Islam is "a clear reflection of the lack of

consciousness among the masses. The spread of these movements becomes inevitable after more than thirty years of oppression, the suspension of reason, and the domination of a dictatorial political system."<sup>45</sup>

The supremacy of the leadership is a resonance of the colonial past in many of these post-colonial countries; since the colonizing force was generally a symbiotic entity with the local elites, these elites opted for a favorable compartmentalization of policy, as against a uniform national political arena which would have allowed populist politics to flourish. The unbridled power of monarchy in the Gulf States and tribal chiefs in East Africa and Nigeria, along with feudalism in Pakistan are expressions of the spectrum of elites which went along with the center (a colonial power at one time) in order to negotiate as an entity on behalf of vested groups. When direct rule from the Centre was preferred, as in Algeria, the system tended to break down, which espoused the cause of the elites in reaching centre stage in politics in many post-colonial Muslim nation states. As a preferred governance framework, the inherent power relationship structures within colonialism were perpetuated in continuum by these elites, until they met expressions of resentment, most notably from the Islamist movements in these countries.

Then there is the problem of tribal sentiments in such states. If we follow Khaldun's philosophy,<sup>46</sup> then logically, the tribal cliquish mindset of the leaders in an Islamic country which has been raised from the ashes of tribalism would tend to persist even in a state framework. This seems to be somewhat the situation in present day Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, all states which are most affected by violent Islamism and tribalism; not coincidentally, autocratic leaders in these states have been blamed for the current dilemmas of these states.

Delving into the universe of Muslim leadership in the twentieth century, a bewildering array of kings, military dictators, mullahs, democrats and tribal men (Taliban) emerges; adding to this motley arraignment of leadership are newly emerging aggressively literalist Islamist movements, which are expressions of the ultra right or neo left. This has fostered the creation of leaderships which share the same characteristic of having a political agenda of survival or sustaining of foisted regimes on a populace; since this is a system of governance imposed by an elite driven by political motives of sustenance of a certain regime or agenda, it can loosely be classified as elitist political Islamism. The connotations of this type of Islamism are that due to the top-down enforced agendas (whether political or Islamist), reactionary Islamism takes root in the society, much of which is due to state policies, whether as a direct or indirect consequence.

It is also pertinent that even when Muslim states in the Far and Middle East such as Syria and Iraq were taken over by military dictators, the late Hafez Assad in Syria and Saddam Hussein in Iraq tended to repose their trust in members of their own tribes and sects. Similarly, Zia in Pakistan reposed confidence only in the puritanical Deobandi persuasion of Islam, which resonated with his own worldview of how things ought be run with religious fervor, particularly in the context of 'jihad' in Afghanistan.

Islam with its clarion call for implementation of Shariah has been widely used throughout the Islamic world to mobilize the masses. The spectrum of ruling elite which has utilized it for the political purpose ranges from secular nationalist to pan-Arabist to Marxist, which utilized its populist appeal

to support agendas of self preservation. Paradoxically, many of the same rulers created Islamist movements, which they then crushed with an iron hand. In Egypt, Nasser attempted to make the prestigious Al-Azhar University dependent on the government in order to lend religious legitimacy to governmental policies, including his ruthless suppression of Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>47</sup> Saddam Hussein, the leader of the zealously secularist Ba'ath party, put "God Is Great" on the Iraqi flag, and engaged in speeches about the duty of jihad in a failed effort to get Iraqis to fight to defend his regime.<sup>48</sup> Zia created the Jihadist groups, and then attempted to disown 'turncoats,' independent-minded warlords like Masud who wanted an Afghanistan free from Pakistani control.

Another type of model one could examine to draw analogies with Pakistan is the type of governments which modeled themselves on the Stalinist model. The ruling elite of many of Islamic states used the rhetoric of the rising of the proletariat against the bourgeois, which petered out with the advent of the end of the Cold War. As in Iraq and Syria, these 'caring' regimes evolved into little more than brutal dictatorships utilizing the devices of *mukhabbarat* (secret police) as coercive instruments. An epitome of this variant is Nasser's government in Egypt, and Numairi's government in Sudan, which prompted violent reaction by Islamists. Nasser's strong-arm tactics would later spark the Islamist movement, particularly Muslim Brotherhood, into a roaring flame. However, what is not very well appreciated is that Sadat, with his purportedly patronizing attitude towards Islamist groups, was perhaps even more instrumental in igniting these movements. The Islamists felt betrayed by Sadat's unfulfilled promises, which would lead more radical Islamists like Al-Jihad into a causal loop with violence begetting more violence. Qutb's simplistic analysis has been inspirational for a vast majority of Islamists disillusioned by regimes which could be clearly discerned to have one agenda; self sustenance. Thus Qutb used the classical pre-Arabian Islamic concept of 'jahiliya' or ignorance to denounce the Muslim leadership, which he saw as failing to overthrow the yoke of the West.

The ruling leadership in this category has skillfully tended to exploit the apprehension of the West regarding a communist advent in the Islamic world before the end of the Cold War, and an Islamist takeover after 9/11. The argument forcefully put forward by this ruling elite is; we are all that stood between the annihilation of the West by communists earlier, and by Islamist weapons of mass destruction currently, particularly in the context of nuclear Islamic state like Pakistan. Debatably, that is why the US was so anxious to appease Gen Pervez Musharraf and bolster his military dictatorship in the grab of a 'chief executive' against the wishes of nearly the entire electoral mass, which conclusively ousted him from office when relatively transparent elections were held. The leaders in this category have either been courted as darlings of the West, or as pariahs, depending upon the perspective. An allegation commonly leveled against this type of ruling elite is that they have tended to get away with literally anything, as long as they were being perceived by the West to be supporting it.

The placing of Islamic tradition at the altar of political objectives and nationalistic causes has gravely affected the perception of Islam, particularly in the West. This is paradoxical inasmuch many of the leaders in this category tended to woo the West, but caused a schizoid identity crisis in their conservative masses. Increasingly, since Islamic heritage was selectively sifted through to support shifting and temperamental political causes,<sup>49</sup> the intellectual revivalism in the Muslim world suffered greatly. Also, Islam started to connote a politics of identity, amongst which exploitation of feelings of the masses by the leadership for their own ends became inextricably intertwined with political

agendas; this also served to display to the outside world a distorted picture of political Islam.

### The 'Petro Radicalization' Process

Zakariyya illustrates another trajectory of radicalization prevalent amongst Muslim states. "A specific type of Islam has been gathering momentum of late, and the appropriate name that applies to it is 'Petro-Islam.' The first and foremost objective of this type of Islam has been to protect oil wealth, or, more appropriately, the type of social relations underlying those tribal societies that possess the lion's share of this wealth. It is common knowledge that the principle of 'the few dominating the largest portion of this wealth' permeates the social structure [of the Gulf region].... oil wealth has not resulted in lasting solutions even in the societies themselves and has remained, more often than not, a privilege in the hands of the few at the expense of the majority and in the hands of the present generations at the expense of future ones."<sup>50</sup>

The 'Islam' that he speaks about is predominantly the Saudi-bred creed of Wahabism promoted by Muhammad Ibn Wahab, which carries strong undercurrents of tribalism. This has spread from the Arabian Peninsula to distant theaters such as Afghanistan and Pakistan, due to Saudi financing and help to the Afghan Jihad. The Wahabi movement was in fact a religious expression of a pro-Arab ethnocentrism, that was as vehemently opposed to Ottoman Turks (which epitomized the height of Islamic society in that age) as it was to Christians and Jews; Muslims deemed as non-practicing by Wahabis were considered even more heretical.<sup>51</sup>

The Saudi export of Wahabism and Salafism to different theaters is well known; what is not appreciated is the huge transformative effect this has had. An example is Pakistan's neighboring Afghanistan, which is now shrugged away as an eternally radical state; this is just not true, at least in the context envisaged of mullahs running amok for centuries in this state. It is true that adherence to Islamic ritualism is inbred in the lifestyle of the Afghans and the Pakistani tribals, regardless of whether they really are religious or not. The panoply of adherents includes former King Zahir Shah, communist pro-Russian ministers, and Mujahideen warriors. That is the point, however, where the analogy breaks down; Islam in Afghanistan (and arguably in Pakistan's tribal belts by analogy) had historically been extremely tolerant, and not at all the 'push it down your throat' type.<sup>52</sup> Minorities such as Sikhs, Hindus and Jews had enjoyed minimal persecution in Afghanistan; in fact they were quite wealthy and controlled the money markets. Even the Afghan mullah was a laissez faire variety of preacher who would admonish people for not coming to prayers regularly, but would rarely preach sectarianism and politics. Saudi money and Pakistani expertise at running the Afghan Jihad created a whole new intolerant breed of Islamism, the repercussions of which continue to be a predominant recurring theme of this century.

Then the year 1992 saw a watershed; this year, not coincidentally, corresponds to the Taliban gaining strength in Afghanistan. After 1992, the brutal civil war created irreconcilable schisms within Islamic sects and ethnic groups, setting the stage for the contemporary intolerant Afghanistan. Masud's massacre of the Hazaras in Kabul in 1995, the Hazaras' massacre of the Taliban in Mazar in 1997, and the Taliban massacres of Hazaras and Uzbeks in 1998 mark brutal 'Islamocide' perpetrated by Muslims in the name of their indigenous breed of ideology.<sup>53</sup> This was a novel phenomenon in Afghanistan's history, creating the present religious divides. Minority groups all but fled the country,

since the ethnocide committed above, coupled with the Taliban's deliberate anti-Shia program transformed the fiercely independent tribalism of the Afghans into a militant fundamentalism.

### Conclusion

Thus, the radicalization process in Pakistan can have many trajectories, all of which will need to be elucidated coherently in their own context and polycentric paradigms to be demonstrable as variables which have caused radicalization in Pakistan. This paper identifies only a few of them, at the same time highlighting the fact that the arguments for and against a particular viewpoint run in both directions, even at the abstract level, making delineation in particular theatres a tremendously difficult task. Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) has been a pioneer at conducting such studies in specific theaters in Pakistan, but much more needs to be done than can possibly be attempted in theatres, some of which are at best hostile terrain for any such research to be conducted. Even a cursory glance reveals the complexities inherent in eliciting a tangible response which can be interpolated into any meaningful research into the phenomenon of radicalization in Pakistan. Then there is the fact that much of the response will be subjective, and reducing bias in any statistically based study, which has to depend a lot on social variables which affect the outcome would require expertise in such phenomenon. Perhaps the answer lies in strengthening institutions which have been attempting this complicated task from the very beginning, and trying to comprehend that whatever little has been attempted in the past needs to be concretized much more before we can finally begin to understand what radicalization in Pakistan entails.

## Notes:

- <sup>1</sup> See Manzar Zaidi, "The Poverty Radicalization Nexus in Pakistan," *Conflict and Peace Studies* (Pak Institute for Peace Studies, Islamabad) 3, no. 3 (2010).
- <sup>2</sup> D. R. Mandel, "Instigators of genocide: Examining Hitler from a social psychological perspective," in *Understanding genocide: The social psychology of the Holocaust*, eds. L. S. Newman and R. Erber (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 259-284.
- <sup>3</sup> H. Tajfel, *Human groups and social categories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).
- <sup>4</sup> A. Bandura, "Moral disengagement in the perpetration of inhumanities," *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 3 (1999): 193-209 and E. Staub, "Moral exclusion, personal goal theory and extreme destructiveness," *Journal of Social Issues* 46 (1990): 47-65.
- <sup>5</sup> Global Futures Forum, "Radicalisation, violence and the power of networks," (Report of the Autumn 2006 Brussels Workshop).
- <sup>6</sup> See Olivier Roy's *Political Islam*.
- <sup>7</sup> Jarrett M. Brachman, *Global Jihadism: Theory and Practice* (New York & London: Routledge, 2009).
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>9</sup> M. Sageman, "Radicalization of global Islamist terrorists," (Testimony presented to U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, June 27, 2007), <<https://www.globalfuturesforum.org/ReadingDetail.php?rid=520>>.
- <sup>10</sup> M. D. Silber, & A. Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West: The homegrown threat* (New York: New York Police Department, 2007).
- <sup>11</sup> Moeed Yusuf, "Prospects of Youth Radicalization in Pakistan: Implications for U.S. Policy," The Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World, Analysis Paper Number 14, October 2008, [http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2008/10\\_pakistan\\_yusuf/10\\_pakistan\\_yusuf.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2008/10_pakistan_yusuf/10_pakistan_yusuf.pdf).
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>15</sup> Rubina Saigol, "Ideology and Curriculum in India and Pakistan, in Religious Revivalism in South Asia," in *Sapana South Asian Studies*, Volume X, ed. Imtiaz Alam (Lahore: Free media foundation, 2006).
- <sup>16</sup> Rubina Saigol, *Becoming a Modern Nation: Educational Discourse in the Early Years of Ayub Khan (1958-1964)* (Islamabad: COSS, 2003).
- <sup>17</sup> W. Zafar, *Pakistan Studies for Secondary Education* (Lahore, 1986), 4-7.
- <sup>18</sup> See the *Sharif Report on Education*, p.116.
- <sup>19</sup> *Speeches and Statements of Field Marshall Mohd. Ayub Khan* (Karachi: Pakistan Publications, 1961), 82.
- <sup>20</sup> Rubina Saigol, Knowledge and Identity: Articulation of Gender in Educational Discourse in Pakistan, (Lahore: ASR, 1995), pp. 243-247.
- <sup>21</sup> Rubina Saigol, "Boundaries of Consciousness: Interface between the Curriculum, Gender and Nationalism," in *Locating the Self: Reflections on Women and Multiple identities*, eds. N. S. Khan, R.S. Saigol & A.S Zia (Lahore: ASR, 1994).
- <sup>22</sup> W. Zafar, *Pakistan Studies for Secondary Education*. Also cited in Yvette Claire Rosser, "Hegemony and Historiography: The Politics of Pedagogy," *The Asian Review* (Spring 2000), [www.infinityfoundation.com](http://www.infinityfoundation.com).
- <sup>23</sup> Rubina Saigol, "History, Social Studies, Civics and the Creation of Enemies," in *Social Science in Pakistan in the 1990s*, ed. Akbar Zaidi (Islamabad: Council of Social Sciences, 2003).
- <sup>24</sup> Moeed Yusuf, "Prospects of Youth Radicalization in Pakistan: Implications for U.S. Policy."
- <sup>25</sup> H. Tajfel, *Human groups and social categories*.
- <sup>26</sup> A. Bandura, "Moral disengagement in the perpetration of inhumanities."
- <sup>27</sup> Tariq Rehman, "Pluralism and Tolerance in Pakistani Society: Attitudes of Pakistani Students Towards the Religious Other," (conference paper, Aga Khan University-Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilization, October 25, 2003), <http://www.tariqrahman.net/language/Pluralism%20and%20Intolerance%20in%20Pakistani%20Society.htm>.
- <sup>28</sup> Martha Crenshaw, "The Causes of Terrorism," *Comparative Politics* 13, no. 4 (1981): 381-5.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>30</sup> Guilain Denoeux, "The Forgotten Swamp: Navigating Political Islam," *Middle East Policy Council Journal* IX, no. 2 (2002): 73.
- <sup>31</sup> Hugh Pope, "War of words between U.S., Saudi media heightens tensions in the crucial alliance," *Wall Street Journal*, November 21, 2001, quoted in Josh Pollack, "Saudi Arabia and the United States, 1931-

- 2002," *Middle East Review of International Affairs (MERIA) Journal* 6, no. 3 (2002): 13, <http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2002/issue3/jv6n3a7.html>.
- <sup>32</sup> Thomas Carothers, "Democracy: Terrorism's Uncertain Antidote," *Current History* 102, no. 668 (2003): 404.
- <sup>33</sup> Jennifer Noyon, *Islam, Politics and Pluralism: Theory and Practice in Turkey, Jordan, Tunisia and Algeria* (London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2003); and Mohammed M. Hafez, *Why Muslims Rebel: Repression and Resistance in the Islamic World* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2003).
- <sup>34</sup> Martha Crenshaw, "The Causes of Terrorism."
- <sup>35</sup> Luigi Bonanate, "Some Unanticipated Consequences of Terrorism," *Journal of Peace Research* 16 (1979): 197-211.
- <sup>36</sup> Christopher Hewitt, "The Political Context of Terrorism in America: Ignoring Extremists or Pandering to Them?" *Journal of Peace Research* 16 (1979): 340.
- <sup>37</sup> Akbar S. Ahmed, *Islam under Siege* (Lahore: Vanguard Press, 2003).
- <sup>38</sup> Postmodernists like Jean Baudrillard see the globalization as rich West confronting "the distress and catastrophe" of Africa, Asia (where the majority of the Muslim population lives), and Latin America in a mutually self-destructive and symbiotic relationship". Globalization is thus "part-promise, part-reality, and part-imagination."
- <sup>39</sup> Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror* (London: Phoenix, 2003), 19.
- <sup>40</sup> Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: The story of the afghan Warlords* (London: Pan Macmillan, 2001), 49.
- <sup>41</sup> Mahathir Mohammad, *Islam and the Muslim Ummah*, (Malaysia: Prime Minister's Office, 2001).
- <sup>42</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>43</sup> Ira M Lapidus, "State and Religion in Islamic Societies," *Past and Present* 151 (May 1996): 3-27.
- <sup>44</sup> Nikki Keddie, "The Revolt of Islam, 1700 to 1993: Comparative Considerations and Relations to Imperialism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 36, no. 3 (1994): 463-487.
- <sup>45</sup> Fouad Zakariyya, *al-Haqiqah wal khayalft'l harakah al-islamiyyah al-mu 'asirah* (Cairo: Dar Slna, 1988), 15.
- <sup>46</sup> According to Ibn Khaldun's cyclical theory of tribal settlement: "...outlying tribes tied together by kinship solidarities conquer, settle, and rule a state. In time kinship loyalties loosen, the rulers urbanize and their state loses control over distant tribes, and the cycle begins again."
- <sup>47</sup> Khaled Abou El Fadl, *The Great theft: wresting Islam from the extremists* (India: Harper Collins Publishers, 2006), 42.
- <sup>48</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>49</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>50</sup> Fouad Zakariyya, *Myth and reality in the contemporary Islamist movement* (London: Pluto Press, 2005), xiii-xiv.
- <sup>51</sup> Abd al-Wahhab, "Bayan al-Najah wa al-Fakak: al-Risalah al-Thaniya 'Ashra," in *Majmu'at al-Tawhid*, collected by Hamad al-Najdi, 358-68, 375, 412.
- <sup>52</sup> Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: The story of the afghan Warlords*, 82.
- <sup>53</sup> Ibid, 83.

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The Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) is an independent, not-for-profit non governmental research and advocacy think-tank. An initiative of leading Pakistani scholars, researchers and journalists, PIPS conducts wide-ranging research and analysis of political, social and religious conflicts that have a direct bearing on both national and international security. The PIPS approach is grounded in field research. Our surveys and policy analyses are informed by the work of a team of researchers, reporters and political analysts located in different areas of conflict in Pakistan. Based on information and assessments from the field, PIPS produces analytical reports, weekly security updates and policy briefings containing practical recommendations targeted at key national and international decision-makers. We also publish survey-based reports and books, providing in-depth analysis of various conflicts or potential conflicts.



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