

Re-imagining Pakistan: In Search of a National Narrative

Selected papers from the International Conference on
Women, Religion and Politics

Special Bulletin 2013

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Shirkat Gah

Women's Resource Centre

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Introduction

The refusal of religion to remain confined to the private sphere makes it impossible to ignore its role as an important socio-political factor. From the national and regional to the global arenas, the political use of religion demands we re-examine our environment and the issues we face in the context of 'religion and politics'. When viewed through the lens of gender it becomes clear that the political use of religion poses a major challenge to women's representation and participation in the public domain. The rigorous regulation and politicization of the private sphere by religious actors blurs the boundaries between private and public, further challenging the struggle for gender equality and equity. Inevitably, when religion enters politics, women are the biggest losers.

Recognising the significance of research and discourse in countering the status quo, Shirkat Gah Women's Resource Centre in collaboration with Heinrich Böll Stiftung, held a national conference in 2010 on "Women, Religion and Politics in Pakistan", and followed up with an international conference under the same theme in 2011. The aim of the conferences was to generate debate and new ideas so as to delineate possible pathways for future work on gender, development and democratization from the perspective of religion, politics, and gender. This publication brings together a selection of the papers presented at the conferences.

As Farida Shaheed notes in her paper, "the religion-politics-gender nexus defies simplistic equations of the '1 + 1 = 2' kind as well as the 'if you have a, and then add b, this inevitably leads to c' variety." Reviewing the commonalities emerging from case studies of different countries undertaken as part of a collaborative international research project by HBS and the United Nations Research Institute on Social Sciences (UNRISD), her paper concludes that the interweaving of religion, politics and gender needs to be viewed through the lens of patriarchy. Any analysis of this nexus must focus on power dynamics as it is ultimately patriarchal structures – both religious and secular – that define the struggle for gender equality.

While both pluralism and democracy value the citizen, Anita Mir feels that the added value of pluralism is that it celebrates differences and allows for a vibrant society. Examining periods in Pakistan's history when the State imposed its own conceptualisation of 'Muslimness' on the nation, Mir analyses the concepts of identity and citizenship. Basing her argument on field research conducted with two minority communities in Pakistan, she proposes that instead of calling for Pakistan's regressive Islamic laws and practices to be repealed and changed, we should be arguing from an ideal position that Pakistan become a pluralistic state.

Tracing Pakistan's path to becoming an ideological state and its move towards 'revisionist nationalism,' Khaled Ahmed contends that the nature of Pakistan's nationalism was determined very early with the annexation of Kashmir by India and the subsequent

designation of India as the 'enemy' state. This nationalism determined the nature of the 'revisionist' state in Pakistan. Another aspect of Pakistani nationalism is its religious ideology. Threat perceptions are produced by the mind and national strategies by imagination on the basis of nationalism and geopolitical compulsions. Pakistan's permanent danger is supposed to emanate from India; and, as a challenger state Pakistan is supposed to endanger India to a point where it relents on Kashmir. But the strategy of endangering India has its reverse side, that of an anticipation of counter-threat. From early days, Pakistan sought to endanger India in its tribal northwest, while India sought to endanger Pakistan in Baluchistan. From the 1990s, Pakistan enhanced its capacity to endanger and the two countries went into a whirlwind of action and reaction. Today it is difficult for most Pakistanis indoctrinated by the media to see who endangers first and who is merely 'reactive.'

Among the fundamental human rights of every citizen is the right to education. The Hamburg Declaration of Adult Education describes the objectives of youth and adult education to be "to develop the autonomy and the sense of responsibility of people and communities ... and to promote coexistence, tolerance and the informed and creative participation of citizens in their communities." It further states, "It is essential that approaches to adult learning be based on people's own heritage, culture, values..." Women's education is considered essential to their empowerment and emancipation. Rubina Saigol's research on women's education in 'faith-based' organisations reveals that the curriculum and teaching methods of these organizations are designed to reinforce existing patriarchal realities, gendered division of labour and the public-private divide. Although religious organizations support women's education, the emphasis is on a religious, conservative and patriarchal education that mass-produces good Muslim wives and mothers. She concludes that religion based education seems to be disempowering rather than empowering women.

Conversely, Ayesha Siddiqa analyses the socio-political attitudes prevalent amongst youth in elite universities in three major cities of Pakistan. The study finds that the youth are prone to accept and internalize radical ideas and opinions popularised through the media. They oscillate between a socio-cultural liberal attitude and a narrow worldview in matters pertaining to geo-politics, geo-strategy and identity politics. The absence in society of an alternative discourse that would encourage independent thinking and promote the exchange of ideas and opinions is sorely felt.

We repeatedly see that when religion and politics fuse, it is often women's rights that are bartered for political expediency. The politicisation of religion creates an environment that facilitates further discrimination against women. Denied equal citizenship rights, women's political participation also falls prey to the system. Amina Samiuddin examines the bases of women's exclusion from the electoral process as both voters and candidates. Existing patriarchal interpretations of religion and culture create a disabling environment for women and many women choose not to challenge the status quo. Furthermore, the internalization of this patriarchal ideology by the women themselves subsequently makes them players in reinforcing the gender stereotypes and systems that are in fact working against them. When culture and religion are used to justify women's exclusion from political participation, she asks: in terms of cost of empowerment, what is more difficult to overcome, culture that justifies violence, threatened and actual, or the internalization of religious interpretations that views free choice as a transgression of religious laws?

**Refracted
Dynamics of
Gender, Politics
and Religion**

Farida Shaheed

Introduction: emerging commonalities

This paper draws upon my own research and pulls out some key threads that emerge from the papers of the collaborative research project of the Heinrich Böll Stiftung and the United Nations Research Institute on Social Development (UNRISD) on Gender equality, politics and religion.¹ Commonalities are all the more striking given the fairly diverse countries of study: Chile and Mexico in South America and the USA in North America, Nigeria in Africa, Turkey, Iran and Israel in the Middle East, Poland and Serbia in Europe and India and Pakistan in South Asia. Based on these commonalities, and some divergences, I hope to present issues/areas needing further research and some questions for activists in the women's movement.

The relationship between religion, gender, political processes and actors is both complex and complicated. The religion-politics-gender nexus defies simplistic equations of the '1 + 1 = 2' kind as well as the 'if you have a, and then add b,

this inevitably leads to a variety. As noted in my own paper 'The interface of religion, politics and gender illustrates the impossibility of separating out the realms of the social from the political, the public from the private...everyday life is not neatly packaged into self-contained spaces but flows freely, impacting different dimensions simultaneously' (Shaheed, 2010:851). Conceptual separations of the political from the cultural, social or economic spheres may be helpful for analysis, but blur in real life. 'Public political contestations are often provoked by women's actions in what are defined as social, rather than political spaces' - such as women's apparel, social interactions, and leisure-time activities. Conversely, political discourses and the result of political negotiations directly impact women's everyday life in the shape of legislation, policies, personal status law, development initiatives etc. that exclude or include women and promote, grant or deny them rights.

Using an exclusive political science lens, centred on state power dynamics, is grossly inadequate to study the fusing of politics and religion and its impact on women. It is precisely in the interface of so-called private and public life that gendered politics are most intense, and where adding religion to the mix, poses such a challenge. Sexuality emerges as a leit motif in the studies, a number of which specifically focus on women's sexual and reproductive rights (e.g. abortion, sex education, family law matters, dress codes), and control over women's sexuality is the fulcrum of gender politics. Yet, sexuality is not a subject considered by classical political science as central to political processes.

The complexities and interweaving of the social, religious and political, of the personal and the public is richly illustrated by the diverse studies undertaken.

Religion vs. the use of religion in the public and political sphere

It is well to recall, as pointed out by Razavi and Jenichen in their introductory piece (Razavi & Jenichen: 2010), that the backdrop of the studies is: the rising hegemony of the neo-liberal economic model and growing transnational networks of finance (and activism) and, I would add, of the nation-state paradigm being challenged by both transnational economic forces and other forces such as the political Islamists, e.g. the Taliban.

The general consensus of the researchers is that religion *per se* is not the issue. As stated in the US study, "religion," is not in and of itself determinative of the political response to sexual and gender inequalities ... the political influence of religious actors alone is not determinative of policy' (Bernstein & Jakobsen, 2010:1036). The problem is a privileging of *particular* religious institutions within the context of the power dynamics of socio-economic and political contestations located in, and resulting from, specific historical moments. It should be stressed that the pre-eminence of particular religious institutions and traditions indicates a self-serving selection process influenced by power disparities. The question needing to be addressed is why divergent historical realities have led to a contemporary privileging of religious institutions in both state and society in so many parts of the world. Significantly, with the exception of Iran and possibly Israel, in none of the countries of study do religiously defined elements or representatives of the official religion control the State. Rather, it is the alliances with those in – or aspiring to – State power that consolidates and extends the power of religious institutions.

It also needs to be said that with the exception of Hinduism in India, the religions in the studies are Abrahamic traditions: Judaism in

Israel, the protestant and Catholic churches of Christianity, Sunni and Shia tendencies in Islam. These are all institutionalized religions, meaning that contestations notwithstanding, they have specific entities (individuals, offices or positions) that are considered to be authoritative. All the religious traditions examined have strong institutional and material bases which have been inherited (e.g. churches) or acquired a material basis where previously none existed (e.g. the Hindutva in India and Muslim Islamists in Pakistan and Nigeria). In none of these traditions, is leadership elected through a democratic process that involves the polity, or even the faithful, as a whole. An important feature of institutionalized religions is their ability to be networked amongst themselves. This, and the fact that they are usually not treated as political actors, increases their freedom to operate in a cycle of power: they enjoy legitimacy; they are allowed to continue to function even when other 'political actors' are restricted; consequently they are able to provide space for dissent. This cycle further increases their legitimacy in the eyes of the marginalized.

None of the case studies examined situations where differently organized religions with dissimilar cosmovisions exist in which, for example, instead of people choosing their religion, goddesses and gods choose their representatives on earth (e.g. the Candomblé religion in Brazil). Studying such religions would perhaps shed a different light on the interrelationship between religion, gender and politics. The very absence of these traditions, however, does suggest their marginalization in the political arena.

Questions of State & society

The secular nature and role of the State

A first question needing to be addressed is what a secular state means. Even agreeing

with the Mexico study that the 'secular state has been a necessary condition for the emergence and growth of modern struggles for women's human rights in the country' (Amuchástegui et. al., 2010:990), what it means for a State to be secular remains unclear. The separation of religion and state is not always clear even in States that are officially secular. In India, for example, Zoya Hasan points out that 'secularism was adapted to suit Indian conditions in ways that enabled it to combine with and respond to the demands of statecraft, while incorporating the religious ideals of Gandhi, on the one hand, and the modernist outlook of Jawaharlal Nehru, on the other.' In practical terms, she argues, the state reserves the right to interfere in the affairs of the majority religion to eliminate practices considered unacceptable in a modern nation-state and/or at odds with rights under the constitution, but absolves itself of such responsibility with respect to the communities of minority religions. The result is 'two paradoxes. India is secular and yet ordinary Indians no longer have access to public institutions except on the basis of religious and social identities. The other is the protection of conservatism among Muslims which is the effect of a secularism that envisages state intervention in the affairs of the majority religion but strict non-intervention in that of minority religions, paradoxically, in the name of secularism.' (Hasan, 2010:941, 951)

In the USA, the First Amendment to the constitution stipulates the disestablishment of religion from government and protection for the free exercise of religion, stating that 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.' Bernstein and Jakobsen contend this has never been realized historically; the US Supreme Court has twice ruled that 'public Christianity is secular rather than religious,' leading to considerable debate about what 'disestablishment' and 'free exercise'

principles mean.² The country experiences a Protestant secular hegemony, which at different points in history has both excluded other religious groups and variously sutured them into hegemonic understandings. The problem the researchers identify is that, 'Almost everyone in this debate is working with a model of religion that is historically and culturally bound in ways that are rarely fully acknowledged.' Consequently, even those engaged in debates over free exercise 'sincerely committed to pluralism' are trapped by the fact that 'the diverse American religions they celebrate all look a lot like evangelical Protestantism.'

While Poland is a constitutionally secular State, the 1998 *Concordat* signed with the Holy See *de facto* acknowledges the Catholic Church as an essential entity of Polish society and history. Although religion and state are not merged, religion exerts palpable authority through the state and through political parties (Heinen and Portet, 2010). In Nigeria, section 10 of the Constitution states: 'The Government of the Federation or of a state shall not adopt any religion as a State Religion.' Christians have argued that this provision means that the country is secular, a position rejected by political Islamist activists (Pereira and Ibrahim, 2010). In Turkey, the Constitution forbids even proposing to change republican secularism, and yet there is no full separation since a Directorate of Religious Affairs allows the State to oversee religious matters and shape religious activity. This enables the State to have a say in how religious functionaries interpret religion and what the preachers and prayer leaders can or cannot say in Friday sermons (Arat, 2010). So, separate perhaps, but not entirely divorced. Of course in Iran, Israel and Pakistan, the State is conferred a specific religion although in Israel the majority of its citizens are said to self-identify as secular (Halperin-Kaddari and Yadgar, 2010).

Since the conjoining of politics and religion –

to women's detriment – is being witnessed in all these countries, answers need to be found beyond the official secular or religious nature of the State. The less than full divorce between religion and State in even avowedly secular States suggests the need to further explore and debate exactly what are – or should be – the parameters of the relationship between religion and State power; who, for example, would be entitled to legally intervene, at what point, for what purpose.

Linkages to Nation-state identities

Intricate linkages tying Nation-state projects to religion are especially important in times of transformations. Hence, according to Rada Drezgić (2010), nationalism became the meeting point of religion and secular politics in Serbia: religion serving as a *differentia specifica* among otherwise closely-related ethno-national groups that were ethnically, culturally and linguistically hardly distinguishable. Starting in late 1980s, a de-secularisation in former Yugoslavia transformed society from being highly secularised to high rates of religious identification, peaking during the 1990s Yugoslav wars. Religion gained a privileged position in society and State not because it offered salvation but as an inherent marker of culture and national identity. Within the Nation-state project, 'women [were] simultaneously mythologised as the nation's deepest essence and instrumentalised in their "natural" difference—as the nation's life/birth saver/producer' (Drezgić, 2010:958).³ The use of religion by politicians seeking to meld the people into one nation-state threw open the space for more specifically defined politico-religious elements. The net result, after 2000, is that society and state underwent a re-traditionalisation and re-patriarchalisation of gender roles within the domestic realm, and a model of 'religious nationalism' replaced the earlier 'instrumental pious nationalism' of the 1990s.

In Pakistan, I have argued that ‘Had the secular elements [including the military] not used Islam for political ends so consistently, in the process promoting a notion of “Muslim nationhood,” politico-religious groups could not have so steadily inscribed religion into the body text of politics, state and society’ (Shaheed, 2010:853). The starting ‘uncertain liberalism’ of the elite that assumed power at independence became even shakier when it came to women. The socially liberal General Ayub Khan (1958-1968) had no compunctions about mobilising an anti-woman-head-of-state *fatwa* (religious opinion) in the 1965 presidential elections against his opposing candidate, Fatima Jinnah. Starting with the 1954 closure of the Women’s National Guard and Naval Reserve following an outcry by politically peripheral religious elements that young women being trained for self-defence by males was unIslamic, rulers have regularly caved in to the demands of the religious right to curtail women’s rights and spaces. The Chilean study also notes the ‘left-wing timidity’ on contentious issues, which is attributed to political instability in a nascent democracy (Guzman, Seibert and Staab, 2010).

In Pakistan, a major component of the Nation-state project was constructing a national identity in opposition to a ‘Hindu India,’ while on the other side of the border, minorities in India became frozen into religious identities and, as a result, ‘Muslims and Muslim women continue to be defined by birth-bound identities.’ In Nigeria, and in much of Africa, a key aspect of national ‘boundary-building’ has been the use of women to map the territory and to delimit the boundaries. Women are ‘constructed as bearers of culture, including religion and tradition, across the African continent ... densely laden with meaning and symbolic value,’¹⁴ so that, as pointed out by Mohanram ‘the woman’s body functions as a mediator for the male citizens to experience the ... nation as ... comforting and familiar.’

Consequently, as stated by Hoodfar and Sadr: ‘women have been targeted as markers of identity, made the object of social and economic policies and restrictive legal reforms, with major resources directed to their implementation’ (Hoodfar & Sadr, 2010:886).

The State & its resources

The ability of religious institutions to access State resources merits further investigation and documentation. Access sometimes takes the form of subsidies for/underwriting particular activities, but can also consist of privileged treatment and promotion of the conservative religious rhetoric by State institutions. As Drezgić, echoing Bernstein and Jakobsen with reference to the US, says of Serbia: it is ‘power struggles and party politics [that] shape the relationship between the Church and the state’ (Drezgić, 2010:965). Hence, the Church was unable to exercise direct influence until it became aligned with state institutional power. Alignment has material consequences and, for instance, the Serbian Ministry of Culture provided financial support for activities of the pro-life movement while the government banned the 8 March demonstration planned by the feminists of Women in Black. This differentiated treatment of conservative and gender equality projects was seen in Pakistan during the standoff around the Red Mosque. No action was taken to stop young women of a religious seminary who were not only protesting but had taken over a government building and then kidnapped a woman and her relatives. These ‘young misguided daughters,’ the President said, were to be excused. Had “secular” women’s rights activists undertaken similar action, they would have been unceremoniously arrested’ (Shaheed, 2010:863).

State resources in Nigeria underwrite Muslim activities by, for example, subsidising Muslim pilgrims for *haj*, and State takeovers of

missionary schools. Researchers point out that in Mexico 'because the Catholic Church legally lacked privileges in the public sphere, as well as a prominent position that could enable it to openly put pressure on politicians,' the 'State did not need to legitimate its power before religious institutions, nor negotiate citizens' rights ... However, the constitutional changes of 1992 granted it an increasing public presence' (Amuchástegui et. al., 2010:998). In Turkey, the Directorate of Religious Affairs, which is part of the secular state apparatus and the highest religious authority in the country, has started to 'exhort women not to use perfume outside their homes, not to remain alone with men who were not relatives, and not to flirt' (Arat, 2010:875). In the USA, as 'domestic trafficking' became equated with 'sex trafficking' the federal government provided US \$5 Million worth of grants to support weekly patrols. 'These new provisions became federal law through the intimate collaborations of devoted evangelical and feminist anti-trafficking activists and neo-conservative Washington think tanks' (Bernstein and Jakobsen, 2010:1035). As Hoodfar and Sadr (2010) argue, the combined use of the instruments of the state and of particular, conservative religious ideologies to suppress dissent and/or advance political agendas is hugely problematic.

It is important to document and interrogate State spending and decision-making regarding religious institutions and groups, including those who, regardless of activities, may be religiously labelled, not least because at the end of the day, this is tax-payers' money.

What is left and right politics in today's world?

A second important question raised by a reading of the studies is the need to reconsider classical thinking about

progressive and conservative forces, about 'Right-wing' and 'Left-wing' politics in the contemporary world. If politico-religious groups and institutions find their natural allies in Right-wing political parties, the left-right divide does not follow similar fault-lines in all situations; it also shifts with time and changed circumstances. In Iran, for instance, between 1979-1997, distinctions of right and left politics were primarily based on the positions adopted on economic policies: the 'Left' was defined as those favouring nationalisation and a greater regulation of the economy by the state; the 'Right' as those favouring a more liberal economy and more privatisation. Where the 'Left' tended to be more progressive on issues of democracy and women's rights, the economic liberals, particularly under Rafsanjani (1989-1997), more strongly advocated improving women's legal status and access to education. In 1997, following Khatami's unexpected success, the categorisation of political parties/factions shifted from positionality on economic policies to that on social and political issues, in which gender became a more central issue (Hoodfar & Sadr, 2010). Poland 'does not fit neatly into the basic left-right dichotomy' either, since the left coalition supported progressive agrarian reforms and economic policies but held traditionalist views with respect to women (Heinen and Portet, 2010:1010). In Israel, the left focuses on the peace movement, leaving out issues of gender related to personal freedoms and democratic rights, while 'feminist endeavours ... have taken place on the socio-economic sphere (i.e. issues of redistribution, welfare, class divisions etc.)..., or what could be termed as the Israeli class divide' (Halperin-Kaddari & Yadgar, 2010:913). Women activists have not engaged in what are usually considered to be the 'real' ideological-political schisms in Israel: the right-left divide (which in Israel denotes the national conflict), and the religious-secular divide. In Mexico, which disinvested the Church of its assets in the 1920s, the church has re-emerged today as a force and 'the character and nature of

the Mexican (secular) state has become an arena of intense struggle, (Amuchástegui et. al., 2010:989).

The ‘new Right’ in the USA emerged thanks to an alliance of predominantly religious ‘social conservatives’ and predominantly secular ‘fiscal conservatives’ within the Republican Party, despite class interests that were often at odds. Fiscal conservatives, understood as free-marketeers, the authors argue, resist government regulation, even while encouraging forms of regulation that meet their own interests. For their part, the social conservatives, whose class position suggests that they might stand to benefit from a more economically interventionist welfare state, embrace the free market and urge government regulation in private life and other areas, like broadcasting (Bernstein and Jakobsen, 2010:1028). In Pakistan, the mainstream political parties are known to regularly ally themselves with politico-religious parties and groups or to adopt their language and agenda points even if they are nominally ‘secular’.

Alliances: ends, means and outcomes

Politics and moral authority

Religion plays into power politics regardless of whether the aim is to justify illegitimate regimes, such as General Zia-ul-Haq’s usurpation of power in Pakistan, or to bolster new democratically elected governments, underlining the need to marshal new conceptual understandings of the dynamics that allow and support the increased presence of religion in the political sphere. An important factor in the politics-religion nexus may be the real or imagined legitimacy enjoyed by religious institutions, especially amongst socially disadvantaged segments of society such as

the poor and rural populations.

The studies reveal that religious institutions enjoy a strong moral authority in certain States because of the historical role they played in defiance of and in opposition to a repressive authoritarian regime, providing people with much-needed sanctuaries and spaces for discussion and dissent forbidden in the public sphere. This is notably the case of Chile and Poland, where the church became the only safe space to congregate, not just for the faithful but for citizens as a whole (Guzmán, Seibert & Staab, 2010; Heinen & Portet, 2010). Mosques and religious institutions in Iran played a similar role during the Shah’s autocratic rule where the Shah’s regime was ‘careful not to tinker with them [religious institutions] too much. Therefore mosques were the only space that remained relatively open to the public’ (Hoodfar & Sadr, 2010:889). The ability to offer a relatively safe stand-in for the public sphere allows religious institutions to exercise considerable influence at a particular point of time, a reputation they and their successors ‘continue to collect the debt’ for as Guzmán, Seibert and Staab put it in their study on Chile. But the opposite can also happen. Religious institutions may be associated with oppressive regimes, such as in Pakistan especially under Zia’s military dictatorship, or may play either a conflicted or an insignificant role as in the case of India or Mexico.

It is crucial to underline that the rhetoric of religion is widely used by all sides, not only actors defined as religious. Moreover, the alliances formed between religious elements and those considered to be, or technically, ‘secular’ are frequent and almost inevitably have negative repercussions for women. In Mexico, for example, analysts noted how the ‘bartering away women’s rights in exchange for the Church’s support’ became especially visible in the run up to the 2012 elections. In Poland, by 2005, right-wing parties were not only echoing ‘the Church’s expectations but

also started to independently use religious doctrine as one of their main arguments in the name of the defence of the Polish nation and the Nature created by God' (Heinen and Portet, 2010:1013). Worldwide, feminists have consistently pointed out the bartering away – or sacrificing of – women's rights for political expediency. What is new, perhaps, and of concern, is that several studies noted that decisions favouring the religious authorities were taken despite surveys indicating the opposite view of the citizenry that governments are supposed to represent – at least in democratic setups. These decisions seem to derive, in part at least, from State policy-makers presuming a level of conservatism in the citizenry that is unconfirmed by any survey. The result is a 'silencing of the voice of the majority population,' as noted in the studies on Chile and Poland and Pakistan. This should give us pause to consider the intentions and aims of those in State power – that are usually not religious institutions and rarely politico-religious parties.

The purpose of such alliances has little to do with the salvation of citizens' souls; mostly, the rationale is far more mundane. In Serbia, for example, the introduction of religious education in Serbian schools came about, Drezgic argues, because delivering Milošević to The Hague to be tried for war crimes was a risky political decision that rendered the ruling party vulnerable. Hence, she sees the introduction of 'religious education in public schools [as] a pre-emptive damage control measure.'

Appropriating spaces opened by democracy

Ironically enough, in a number of instances, it is not the imposition of an authoritarian regime which has provided religious institutions more ground to act. Instead, it is the easing up of previously constraining political environment and the introduction

of a democratisation process that have given this opportunity to religious institutions. In this study, this is notably the case in the studies on Poland and Turkey.

Sometimes the new spaces have been occupied by religiously defined political parties; at other times, the space has been taken over through the alliances, treaties or other arrangements political parties have entered into with religious institutions. A similar space can emerge when the party that brought independence loses its hegemonic influence. Hence, in India, when the Congress Party lost its hegemony, this allowed anti-secular alternatives to be formulated and publically espoused. Turkish secularism, Arat points out, was neither democratic nor liberal: it was statist and both comprehensive and radical.⁵ The regime inspired by Atatürk was less interested in securing religious freedoms than in disestablishing Islam and controlling its power in civil life (Arat, 2010:871). When the multiparty system emerged, therefore, this provided new space to religious and politico-religious groups.

The wider picture

International events can conspire to promote conservative religious outlooks and alliances. In the case of the Catholic population, the papal rule of John Paul II had a huge negative impact. In the USA, the authors argue that the alliance with religious groups fits into the alliance of 'social conservatives' and predominantly secular 'fiscal conservatives' in the Republican Party meshing the socially prominent religious groups with neoliberal economic and political interests. In Pakistan, the USA proxy war with the USSR in which Pakistan played cat's paw during the first Afghan war, provided legitimacy to jihadist outfits as freedom fighters. This international legitimacy helped to mould the discourse and people's attitudes on

what is desirable and to be accepted and what is to be rejected and penalised.

The means of hegemony and points of focus

Narrowing down religious choice and spirituality

From the USA and Chile, to Iran and Pakistan, passing through Nigeria, Serbia and Poland and Turkey, study after study indicates that the silencing or marginalisation of more progressive voices within religious traditions is not coincidental: it is a deliberate strategy of politically aggressive and ideologically conservative religion groups. As the Pakistan case study says about Zia-ul-Haq's military regime: 'Political Islamists systematically seek to delegitimise and eradicate the diverse perspectives of the faithful, especially the mystical Sufi traditions which are antithetical to their positions and perspectives. The popularly-rooted, pluralistic and decentralised Sufi traditions in many parts of Pakistan are being eroded by the rise of a centralising institution-based Wahabi-Salafi Islam' (Shaheed, 2010:862). In the USA, 'alliances serve to articulate religious values in such a way that religious positions that depart from a hegemonic Protestant vision of appropriate gender and sexuality become invisible,' including progressive protestant voices (Bernstein and Jakobsen, 2010:1028). With respect to Turkey, Arat notes that: 'The more liberal interpretations of Islam, which do not expect women to cover [themselves with a veil] and which the founding fathers assumed, is being replaced by another one increasing patriarchal control over women's bodies. The fact that alternative interpretations of Islam which do not restrict women's choices are not being propagated by government-controlled bodies is disconcerting (Arat, 2010:875). In Chile,

researchers found that the politico-religious promotion of the concept of a 'natural law' 'ignores more progressive positions within the Catholic and Evangelical churches whose advocates have grown in numbers, but do not enjoy the same level of visibility and political weight as their conservative contenders.' Guzmán, Seibert and Staab note that political aggressiveness is a key trait, and that the 'Political connections and enormous visibility (partly supported by conservative media), has marginalised more progressive protests, effectively silenced critical voices within the church, presenting its intransigent vision as the unique point of reference' (Guzmán, Seibert & Staab, 2010:973, 975).

Religion itself is instrumentalised in the political arena, used by many political actors who would not otherwise define themselves as 'religious.' Its use is selective, deployed in the pursuit of increased power and to promote agendas which are united only, it sometimes seems, by their overarching patriarchal understanding. Bringing pre-eminence to conservative agendas, the fusing of religion and politics impoverishes religion. Used in the political sphere, instead of being a spiritual experience, religion is reduced to a coercive force of imposed rules and regulations. Hence, I have argued that 'The overwhelming emphasis of politico-religious elements on punitive law pares down the faith of Islam to Muslim jurisprudence.' Secondly, the religion-politics nexus forwards a problematic notion of democracy. As pointed out in the case study of Chile, the connection straightjackets diversity and dissent in the public sphere and introduces manipulated democratic norms in which democracy is deemed acceptable for the general polity in terms of state-citizens relations, but the same right to self-determination and decision-making becomes unacceptable within the family and personal decision-making. This distortion undermines women's intellectual as well as bodily integrity.

The language of activism and politics of language

A point made by both Arat and Shaheed needs to be stressed: the values promoted by politically conservative religious groups reiterate 'values that the [population] they are more familiar with' (Arat, 2010). Deploying the language of familiarity is an important feature of successful communication. Gaining significance from pre-existing lexicons of history and culture, it draws in the audience providing a shortcut to understanding in ways that an unfamiliar idiom cannot. The discourse of the religious Right has the advantage of drawing upon not only existing lexicons but also deep wells of patriarchal norms and values in society. In contrast, human rights and gender equality initiatives struggle against the tide. Using a language too often lacking rootedness, they expend considerable time 'explaining at length the exact phraseology of standards and norms referencing a mostly unknown world' while the narratives of religiously defined groups resonating 'deeply with the cultural lexicon is deemed self-explanatory.' The rhetoric of shariah as a 'one-stop justice window,' for example, is particularly seductive 'when rampant class-bias enables better connected, more affluent people to regularly flout the law while penalizing the poor; where the state and its resources mean one thing for the poor and another for the rich' (Shaheed, 2010:864). As one female *madrassah* student cynically observed in the Pakistan study: 'Even if people don't want Islam, they do want justice.'⁶

A relatively new development is the selective use of civil rights and human rights discourse by the political religious Right. In Chile, for example, the government made it obligatory for all pharmacies in the country to stock emergency contraception medication in 2005. However, a well-connected Opus Dei member who owns a pharmaceutical chain, refused to do so saying he was a 'conscientious objector' and

received immediate backing from the Catholic clergy. Freedom of conscience has also been used to support doctors who refuse to perform abortions, despite the legal provisions under State law. The process is highly selective of course: women are denied freedom of conscience within the home and regarding their own bodies. 'Freedom of conscience' is reserved for those sharing the views and propagating the ideology of the religious right.

Common focus on educational systems, sexuality and youth

Sexuality: All politico-religious projects uniformly focus on sexuality, aiming to control women's sexuality and promote hetero-normative family structures. Ironically enough, the politico-religious discourse which calls for the sanctity of home and sexual mores within this, in fact brings sexuality out of the bedroom and into the very public arenas of mass-media, and sometimes the streets as protests. The battlefield is one of 'biopower, women's bodies and sexuality' as summarised by the Mexico study. As the study on Nigeria so eloquently puts it:

[R]eligion is a prime site for the construction of gender as well as sexuality ... Women's bodies constitute significant zones for the inscription of social norms, practices and values. This is where the apparently different agendas of the Christian and Muslim politico-religious groups come together, for both share the view that women's bodies are sexually corrupting and therefore in need of control.' (Charmaine & Jibrin, 2010:921)

The entry of religion into the political discourse attempts to reduce and convert womanhood into motherhood, as stated by Drezgić (2010), with similar patterns visible

in Nigeria, Serbia, Chile, Mexico, Poland, USA, Pakistan, India or Iran. Whether the issue is that of sex work in trafficking as studied in the USA, contraceptives, abortion and sex education in Latin America and Poland, the introduction of religious education in Serbia, dress codes and family laws in Iran and Pakistan – the moral panic engendered by women’s sexuality is prominent; the aim is ‘to control women’s bodies, discouraging them from working outside their homes where contact with non-relatives would be inevitable, and aiming to regulate their sexual lives [that is] ... religious interpretations are expanding men’s control over the choices and bodies of women’ (Arat, 2010:875).

The studies, especially those on India and Pakistan, showcase women’s involvement in the conservative right-wing politico-religious parties: women who militate against gender equality and women’s right to be active members of the polity all whilst doing so themselves. Hasan’s (2010) reading is that although women in conservative politico-religious groups undoubtedly feel more ‘empowered’ through such engagements, they tend to replicate in the public sphere the domestic role allocated to them by patriarchy. These women appear to adopt wholesale the sexuality discourse from their male counterparts. In Pakistan, women journalists visiting the Red Mosque women’s seminary were made acutely conscious of their own sexuality, as one said:

With my head uncovered while I film, I feel the burden of being a woman, of my morality being under scrutiny. I am extremely conscious of my sexuality which, I learn, through my interaction with my Hafsa sisters, is a possible threat to a pristine world. And I thought only men could make me feel so vulnerable!⁷

Clearly, not all women are victims of the

fusion of religion and politics; a number are active agents, underscoring the need to discover what attracts women to apparently seriously misogynist projects.

Regarding sexuality, I would like to underscore two key points:

1. The view of women’s sexuality needing to be controlled is not confined to either the religious traditions examined by the studies or to politico-religious groups, but is shared by secular elements as well. This is because controlling women’s sexuality and reproductive powers is the base of patriarchal systems, regardless of other specifics in articulation and normative prescriptions that can, and do, vary.

2. Women’s bodies constitute key sites mediating the experience of nationhood as well as ‘the experience of religion, by the ways in which they configure gender and sexuality.’ Veiling, for example, serves to distinguish Muslim from Christian or other women; it ‘marks the body in a way that simultaneously inscribes gender and in many instances, religious identity, whilst masking sexuality.’ (Pereira and Ibrahim, 2010: 921)

Capturing the youth: Politico-religious groups appear to make concerted effort to capture the youth. From Turkey to Chile and Mexico, religious institutions have consciously sought to monopolise or influence the educational systems, whether it is through opposition to sex education, modifying its contents, or objecting to human reproduction being taught. It is also executed by imposing the contents of textbooks, especially self-serving versions of history in India (by the Hindutva) and Pakistan, and in the latter case, also shaping religious

instruction. This does not always entail direct interference. Influence can, and often is, exercised through connections and alliances with civil society, experts and politicians favourable to the views of conservative religious institutions/groups. In Latin America, politically active conservative religious groups have emphasised the right of parents to decide educational matters – presumably, they believe parents can be more easily influenced than their offspring through Church activities. These alliances have not been sufficiently explored as key means of influence.

There is also a definite, but insufficiently documented, link with business communities as noted in Turkey, where the Gülen business-focused community runs a number of youth-oriented initiatives, including hostels for 25,000 students. In Chile, Church-run educational institutions include the influential *Universidad de los Andes*, polyclinics and student residences. As in Turkey, sections of the Chilean business class also provide a strong base of support. In Pakistan, the assistance provided to students by the student wing of the Jamaat-e-Islami political party is well known; it includes facilitating hostel accommodation as well as orienting and supporting students in new and often unfamiliar urban environments. Apart from actual financial or institutional connections, a number of the studies highlight the discursive links between separate entities engaged in politico-religious affairs, again an area for further investigation. Uncovering the material as well as discursive linkages would provide a more complete picture of the dynamics at hand.

Conclusion: implications for the women's movement

Ultimately, the issue is one of patriarchy and it is through the lens of patriarchal power that the nexus of gender equality-politics

and religion needs to be examined. When religion and politics fuse, women and their issues inevitably become instrumentalised in the pursuit of larger agendas. Hasan (2010), for example, points to how the Right-wing Hindutva political lobbies subverted the women's movement demand for a uniform civil code to ensure the equal rights of women from religious minorities for their overall agenda of promoting a Hindu nation. This left women's groups in a quandary as the uniform civil law was inserted into an altogether different project than that of women's equality.

A challenge for women's equality projects is the unusual positioning of religion as both an intensely personal, individuated and private experience, and simultaneously as highly public processes of communal participation, belonging, and identity. Ironically enough, religion showcases the feminist position that the personal is political, vividly illustrating how effects in one life domain ricochet to impact apparently unrelated aspects of other life domains. The deep-seated and intricate interconnections between the public and the domestic and between the political, economic, social and cultural spheres seem to be better understood by the Right, especially the religious Right, than progressive forces. A vigorous cultural agenda prescribing everyday norms is a hallmark of all politico-religious projects, most visible in discourses and gender-normative regulations around sexuality, dress codes, women's 'appropriate' spheres and roles. Women conforming to such prescriptive norms even within strictly socio-cultural spaces, rather than the political public sphere, become poignant political symbolic markers of 'appropriated political territory' (Shaheed, 2010). The result is a reconfigured public order as well as private daily practices. Even when veils become the epicentre of heated debate and contestation, the problem is not the headscarf, as argued by Arat, but the insidious changing of

mindsets towards a more conservative view of gender altogether as motherhood and the domestic sphere. As Anne Phillip (2007:148) says, and a recent multi-country research project confirms,⁸ women's 'horizons are drawn in relation to what is perceived as possible' and the intertwining of religion and politics constricts horizons and narrows down women's options while the long-term project for gender equality and women's rights initiatives must be to widen the horizons to the maximum possible.

With respect to the women's movement I would only reiterate a few critical lessons and challenges needing to be overcome.

- 1) In the absence of a robust democracy and accountable structures of State and society, the use of religion in politics gravitates to dictatorial rule using both the instruments of State and religious ideology to suppress dissent. There is a need to understand the real power struggles and untangle the apparently disparate forces that come together in order to develop effective countervailing strategies. On this there is both good and bad news.
 - a) The bad news is that religion in politics too often eclipses other reference points for state and society. Further bad news is that, as exemplified in Pakistan, the shifts effectuated by marrying religion to politics do not remain restricted to the State but permeate all aspects of society, so that the State is not necessarily the enforcer of new moral norms. Moreover, the intensive use of violence by political Islamists to quell even the mildest of opposition to their views is hugely problematic and also brings into question the writ of the State.
 - b) The good news is that effective democratization of state and

society can oblige religious institutions to play by the rules of structured politics. As a result of such processes, in Mexico for example, the Church has been transformed from being the bearer of truth to becoming just another political actor in the democratic arena – a big step. The question put by the researchers is how to ensure that the State not enforce a 'moral truth' as determined by the Catholic hierarchy, but 'protect a lay morality founded on individual autonomy and citizens' freedom of conscience' (Guzmán, Seibert & Staab, 2010:999). Further good news is that coalitions built across religious and secular feminists in Turkey denounced any type of 'control over women's bodies whether in the name of modernity, secularism, the Republic, religion, tradition, custom, morality, honour or freedom' (Arat, 2010:880). Similar positive outcomes of such alliances are documented in Iran (Hoodfar & Sadr, 2010). Some coalition-building is being undertaken in India to strategize on renewing a campaign for a uniform civil code that distinguishes the women's movement activists from the protagonists of Hindutva (Hasan, 2010). Women's rights groups and human rights initiatives in general, need to build effective alliances and explore how to retrieve/safeguard the social and cultural spaces being either attacked or occupied by the right-wing religious-political combine.

- 2) A major challenge for women's rights activists is the highly skewed playing field in which civil society is not uniformly progressive but includes religious institutions engaged in both

social and political arenas. As noted by Merike Blofield 'interest groups with a conservative agenda' are 'more organised, have more resources and tighter networks, and maintain better access to political parties.'⁹ In contrast, more progressive advocacy groups, including those fighting for gender equality, are poorly resourced and have difficulties in forging effective links with and inroads into the agendas of mainstream political parties. They are usually dependent on creating effective alliances with social movements out of power.

- 3) *Avoiding a carceral approach to feminism:* In their very interesting case study on trafficking, Bernstein and Jakobsen signal the urgency of revisiting some of the tactics and strategies adopted by the women's rights movement. Underscoring how a shift from the local to the international arena has been aided by the human rights system and participation by the UN, they show how issues of class, race and international economic systems have been discarded in the new discourse around trafficking which has been reduced to the trafficking of women for sex work, which is equated with 'sexual slavery' by the Right. This has brought about an unlikely but real if unacknowledged alliance between mainstream feminist groups and religious conservatives. Bernstein and Jakobsen raise three critical concerns that have developed in the last two decades: (1) the displacement of activism focused on economic and social issues in favour of sexual and reproductive rights and health. (2) The growth of what they call 'militarised humanitarianism,' reflected in spectacular rescues of women and children in an 'undercover mass-mediated model of activism [that] has become the emulated standard for

evangelical Christian,' regardless of later coverage that shows people 'escaping their rescue,' and been adopted by 'even some secular feminist organizations' (Bernstein and Jakobsen, 2010: 1033). The study warns against the dangers of an emerging 'carceral feminism,' a term used by Marie Gottschalk to describe 'the commitment of abolitionist feminist activists to a law and order agenda.' Their review indicates how the location of interest has allowed a 'convergence of evangelicals' militarised humanitarianism with what might be termed 'carceral feminism.'¹⁰ The drift away from the welfare state to the carceral state as the apparatus for effecting feminist goals, is problematic since it 'locates social problems in deviant individuals rather than mainstream institutions ... seeks social remedies through criminal justice interventions rather than through a redistributive welfare state, and ... advocates for the beneficence of the privileged rather than the empowerment of the oppressed.' A carceral state is uncomfortably close to the articulated positions and actions of politico-religious groups in this part of the world.

It is important, that activists strive to be as rigorous as possible in analysing existing issues and to avoid unthinkingly adopting popular language, tactics and positions just because of common usage, especially in donor circles.

- (3) The challenge, as Bernstein & Jakobsen say is to develop an 'alternative feminist approach ... [that] would shift the focus from the criminal justice system to the structural conditions that propel people of all genders to engage in risky patterns, that result in diverse forms of

exploitation ... The challenge for feminists in addressing the question of religion and politics is not so much whether to promote religious or secular advocacy as it is to challenge ... dominance ... in both its religious and secular forms' because, as they say, 'we cannot assume that religious influence in politics is necessarily conservative or that more secular politics will necessarily be more progressive than the religious varieties.'

For me the real issue is challenging patriarchal controls and systems, both secular and religious. While politico-religious groups and alliances with the state could take up economic issues from the standpoint of religion, so far they have focused intensely on the social. This focus could well be due to the lack of an articulated political economy agenda amongst the religious Right, as argued by Samir Amin, but this does not make the problem at hand any easier, for as feminists, or activists of the women's movement, we too lack a political economy programme.

There is a pressing need to spell out clearly our vision, over and beyond what Rada calls the 'a feminist vision according to which men and women were equal partners in the project of modernity, and the state would not privilege or marginalise any group' (Drezgić, 2010:959). This is simply not enough. Feminists and the women's movement in general – also the human rights advocates in general – all seem to know what we do not want, we are far less clear about what we are concretely suggesting as an alternative to an obviously unjust system. We criticize the Nation-state as masculinist but propose no alternative; we are unhappy with globalization but propose no economic system of our own. Unless we do so and in

language which has resonance with the people, we shall remain at a disadvantage; less able to leverage the alliances and support we need to change the system, not merely gain favours within it.

End Notes

- ¹ The Unhappy Marriage of Religion and Politics: Problems and Pitfalls for Gender Equality, Special Issue, Third World Quarterly, Vol. 31, No 6, 2010.
- ² Lynch v. Donnelly and Allegheny County v. ACLU 'Court ruled that the display of religious symbols at public expense or on public property at Christmastime was an essentially secular act.' Cited in Bernstein and Jakobsen (2010) p. 1025.
- ³ Ž Papić, 'Europe after 1989: Ethnic Wars, the Fascitization of Civil Society and Body Politics in Serbia' in G. Griffin, R. Braidotti (eds.), *Thinking differently: a reader in European women's studies*, (Zed Books, 2002) p. 128; cited in Drezgić 2010.
- ⁴ A. Mama, 'Shedding the Masks and Tearing the Veils: Cultural Studies for a Post-Colonial Africa' in A. Imam, F. Sow and A. Mama (eds.), *Engendering African Social Sciences*, Dakar, CODESRIA, 1997, cited in Pereira and Ibrahim, 2010.
- ⁵ Parla and Davison argue that Kemalist secularism was not 'true secularism' because it prohibited 'religious freedom' rather than guaranteeing it, T. Parla and A. Davison, *Corporatist Ideology in Kemalist Turkey*, Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 2004, p. 6; cited in Arat 2010.
- ⁶ R. Karrar, 'Inside the mosque', *The Herald*, May 2007; cited in Shaheed 2010.
- ⁷ A. Salahuddin, 'Rendezvous with the "others"', *Newsline*, July 2007; cited in Shaheed 2010.
- ⁸ *Women's Empowerment in Muslim Countries: gender, poverty and democratization from the inside out*, a DFID supported research consortium carried out extensive research primarily in China, Indonesia, Pakistan and Iran from 2006-2010. See www.wemc.com.hk
- ⁹ Merike Blofield, 2006, 'The Politics of Moral Sin: Abortion and Divorce in Spain, Chile and Argentina' cited in Guzmán, Seibert and Staab, 2010.
- ¹⁰ Taken from Marie Gottschalk's writing about responses to rape.

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Pakistan:

A Pluralistic State?

Anita Mir

Introduction

If identity is understood as the first social value one would fight for and the last value one would give up, then traditionally in Pakistan tribal and ethnic identities have had a greater hold on people than the amorphous concept of a Pakistani identity. Beginning in the 1950s, successive governments' have, with varying levels of success, attempted to mould a Pakistani identity into a singular shape: a Muslim identity.

If a state defines itself by a dominating idea, the likelihood is that some people will identify with this idea. If this idea then gains sufficient momentum, others will be drawn to it too. The question of the authenticity of its appeal is difficult to gauge; we will therefore leave it undisturbed.

As this dominating idea's popularity or alliance to those in power increases, querying or dissenting to it diminishes or at the very least, becomes less vocal. But silence on such fundamental questions of being is a rescinding of responsibility.

This paper is the second of two papers based on

the Women's Empowerment in Muslim Contexts¹ (WEMC) field research in two gated religious minority communities in Pakistan: the Christian Father's Colony in Peshawar, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and the Hindu community in Usta Mohammad in Balochistan. The first paper addressed the question of empowerment; this paper looks at ideas of identity and citizenship.

The WEMC Reference Framework, *Women Empowering Themselves: A Framework that Interrogates and Transforms* (hereafter, the *RF*) states,

'It is important to clarify that WEMC is concerned with women in social contexts in which 'Muslim-ness' constitutes a key dimension, not just with women identified as 'Muslim' in one way or another.' The *RF* continues,

We...take into consideration the worldview that people in contexts where 'Muslimness' is of significance will be influenced, among other factors, by their understanding and engagement within religion - a situation with immediate repercussions for the gender system within which women operate, (Shaheed & Wee, 2008:8-9)

An interesting aspect of the Pakistan situation is that as the state has promoted Muslimness, with itself as the safeguard of Muslim values, other religious groups, or those with some form of functional representative bodies, discriminated as they are against by the law, and viewed and abused as "lesser people", have likewise increased in religiosity and have come to see themselves primarily from the marker of their own religions. We will look at how these two shifts took place and helped to shape what is present day Pakistan.

An Ideal Position

Rather than arguing that Pakistan's regressive Islamic laws and practices be repealed and changed, I will be arguing from an ideal position that Pakistan becomes a pluralistic state. This might seem like a difficult argument to make. Why take the ideal as my starting point when the country is far removed from what constitutes just laws or good behaviour? My answer is that a realistic position, merely outlining what is wrong and should be amended is, in an important way, limited. It is limited because it focuses on correcting ends, so that, for example, in a best case realistic scenario, the Blasphemy Law, which discriminates against religious minorities is indeed repealed. Though we could say that the position of Pakistan's religious minorities had improved, could we also say that it had become good, fair? Wouldn't other more difficult attitudinal changes have to be brought into effect before we could make such a statement?

An ideal position on the other hand, begins from the understanding that in order to be good citizens we must value ourselves in conjunction with valuing others. In human relations, as distinct from the law, we are not speaking of treating all people equally, which, as well as being near impossible, does not take into account the differences in our thick (intimate) relations and thin relations.² Rather, we are talking about treating all people equably. If one does not fulfil this bargain, or what some writers call an 'unwritten civic contract,' and only values oneself or one's group then one cannot be called good. While in a moral sense then, we may sometimes only be called upon to be/get away with being good enough, in a political sense we are either good or not good.

I propose a pluralism based rather than on tolerance or sympathy, one based on *sorge*/caring for the other; although admittedly, tolerance and sympathy are components of caring. Tolerance suggests

a state that is either imposed upon one (i.e. the state has rigorous racial laws which curb, at least in public, my racist views) or a state that one imposes upon oneself (i.e. I do not like you but because you are my boss I will tolerate you). Sympathy, on the other hand, suggests a state which is time specific (i.e. Last week when it was the biggest story in the news, I had great sympathy for the Syrian's plight. This week my sympathy is turned elsewhere).

A central aspect of being human is the ability to care, and within this, is caring about people and ideas whose impact on our lives may not be direct. We cannot care about all these things it is true, but I would like to posit that we should care about some of these things which are presently unfamiliar to us. There are both practical and non-practical reasons for doing so.

Heidegger's '*Sorge*', which the English word 'care' does not fully encompass, has a near equivalent in the Urdu word, '*fikr*'. '*Fikr*' means both to care for others and to worry, and as such, points to two important human attributes: the meaning that is added to our lives by other people and the apprehension we feel about the future: the days which we and ours are yet to live and the world we cannot fully imagine. '*Fikr*', reasoned, often leads to action.

It is often argued that the sub-continent has a rich tradition of religious pluralism and nowhere is this more exemplified than in the lives and works of its mystics.³ Mysticism is said to have transcended any one particular manifestation of God. The argument for a return to this Golden Age of pluralism is often, though it must be said, not always, made by those who divorce mysticism from its religious context and who do not apprehend that while some mystics adopted symbols and ideas from other religions, they often remained all the while deeply rooted in their own religious traditions (exceptions, of course, existed). The tolerance of the

mystical approach had as its foundation a lineage of knowledge which has since become lost to us. Appropriating therefore, a sensibility without attending to or attempting to acquire the knowledge which informs that sensibility would, I think, be a hollow venture and one that is bound to fail. This model, then, we dismiss.

If pluralism is our stated goal, then a model which gives greater weightage to a majority group and treats minority groups unfairly, clearly does not work. The present Pakistani model, which promotes a literalist version of Islam and discriminates and punishes religious minority groups can, by this standard then, be easily dismissed. Where, however, religious sentiments and practices exist in a state/society (the question of to what degree they have been cultivated for political ends is something we will shortly discuss), a secular model, even if imposed, would probably not have much longevity and so, for the present, it too can be put to one side.

What then of a rational approach - could it produce/support pluralism? Detractors may say that rationalism is a particularly Western idea and it therefore cannot and should not be appropriated. Although part of me cringes at having to address this argument, I see that within the Pakistani context it remains, unfortunately, necessary to do so. Firstly then, there are important sub-continental thinkers who were proponents of rationalism and they include Allama Iqbal and Sir Syed Ahmed.⁴ Additionally, as our world has shrunk, ideas no longer belong to one geopolitical region or the other, if indeed, they ever did. Now with that hopefully out of the way, I can say that the rational approach to pluralism I will be examining is one set out by John Rawls.

I will shortly justify my reason for doing so, but first, a little background regarding how Pakistan came to the position it has vis-à-vis its increased Muslimness and its

discrimination against religious minorities.

I will begin by looking at key moments when the state has tried to impose this identity on its people, the passage of “Islamic” laws starting in 1979 which have been directed at seeming “soft targets”, women and religious minorities. I will then analyse the WEMC field discussions on identity and citizenship. I should here point out that the incidences of discrimination described in these two WEMC field sites, while not as brutal as they often are in the Punjab, are significant still in showing how a people can be diminished. And in this, these acts are inhuman.

After this analysis I will return to my first position: why we should not be arguing for concessions to return us to a pre-Islamic legislative state, but rather, why we should be pledging to the big picture and the big ideal: a pluralistic state.

The Past

Within certain circles there are scholars who would like to see Pakistan returned to its geographically understood space; that is, within the context of South Asia rather than, as it so frequently appears, within the context of the Middle East, where, with those other countries it is analysed primarily for its Muslimness. This paper, looking at certain aspects of Pakistan’s growing Muslimness and the position of its religious minorities, places Pakistan very much within the context of the Middle East. For though the historical trajectories of these disparate countries are unique, Pakistan shares enough narrative threads with the Middle East bloc to make a comparison plausible, in the very least.

Following the retreat of the British imperial presence in India and the birth of the two new nation states, India and Pakistan, there was some question as to which way the state of Pakistan would go, for its beginning was

riddled with contradictions: was it to be a religious state or a secular state? The debate about intentions has proven irresolvable and so, over sixty years after Independence, the argument continues to play.

This new nation state, like many others in the Middle East, bought in to what has been called the modernist project.⁵ Pakistan’s rulers, like those in those other countries, largely sprung from the secular elite. And in the early years, the economic and social markers of development looked good. When compromises were made with the religious right, who were not a political force but wielded some influence still, the significance of these actions appeared hardly worth serious attention.

The first of many such acts was the adoption of the Objectives Resolution, a preamble to the 1949 Constitution which stated that ‘sovereignty belongs to God alone’. While protecting the rights of minorities this document spoke, for the first time, about the right of Muslims to order their lives according to the Qur’an and the Sunnah. Pakistan would hear more of such ideas in the coming years.

The economist, Omar Noman argues that in these early years, “the question of the role of religion in politics had been settled, at least temporarily, with the dominance of a bureaucracy wedded to a secular government.” However, he adds, “In spite of its secular orientation, the government could not resist the temptation of using religion to control dissent. The revival of political parties in 1962, for example, was conditional on their adherence to Islamic ideology. Since parties had to adhere to an undefined concept, it provided the government with a flexible instrument for suppressing political opposition” (Noman, 1990:34-35).

Economically, the country progressed, though not in all the regions of the new state. In the country’s Eastern wing, to which

Cripps had not, as the new maps of partition were being made, provided a corridor, tension was rising high and each day brought heightened economic and political discontent. The first general elections were held in 1970 and though Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman's Awami League, based in the eastern wing, won outright, his opponent, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and his Pakistan People's Party (PPP) refused to accept this verdict. In 1971, after a bloody war, in which West Pakistan was defeated, East Pakistan gained independence and became Bangladesh. Z. A. Bhutto was declared President by the military regime and his Pakistan People's Party became the ruling party.

The early 70s were a crucial time for Muslim majority states throughout the Muslim world. In one country after the next, as services were seen to fail or be corrupt or both, the modernity project began unravelling. Against this background, the religious right, who had been sidelined and often silenced by the non-religiously defined or secular states,⁶ was growing in number. Such strength needed to be tested.

In Pakistan, this opportunity came about when Bhutto, seeking approval for his new parliamentary form of government over the existing presidential system, met with the Jamaat-e-Islami's (JI) head, Maulana Maududi. Says the historian Stanley Wolpert,

[Bhutto brought the] opposition Jamaat around to accepting the accord by agreeing to make Pakistan an "Islamic Republic," whose president and prime minister would always have to be Muslims, and by promising that "no law" would be passed under his constitution against any "teachings and requirements of Islam" as articulated in the Holy Quran and Sunnah (teachings of the Prophet). Islam was to be the "State religion of Pakistan." (Wolpert, 1993: 206)

This was just the beginning.

The post war economic crisis hit Pakistan hard. In 1971, this strife was compounded by religious riots which erupted in the Punjab against the Ahmadiyya, a sect which considers itself Muslim. Although not on the scale of the earlier 1953-4 JI led riots, these riots were nevertheless significant enough to again raise the ghost of 'The Ahmadiyya Question.' In 1974 the state declared the Ahmadiyya apostates to the faith. Other compromises, less grave, were made.

Little was then known of what has now come to be called transnational Islam. This idea, a lynchpin of Maududi's and his JI politics, holds that an individual's allegiance to a Muslim *ummah* or universal brotherhood should outweigh his/her allegiance to his/her nation state. In its placing of the *ummah* above the individual this philosophy is authoritarian; in its approach to how power is to be rested, it is revolutionary. Says Maududi:

Islam is a revolutionary doctrine and system that overturns governments. It seeks to overturn the whole universal social order ... and establish its structure anew ... Islam seeks the world. It is not satisfied by a piece of land but demands the whole universe ... Islamic Jihad is at the same time offensive and defensive. (Haddad, 1995: 10)

We are today more familiar with the practical manifestation of this idea, which has meant that 'soldiers of Islam' from say, Afghanistan, feel obliged to fight for their brothers and sisters in Iraq etc. Its theoretical manifestation has been more subtle.

In Pakistan, secularists have often laughed away the religious rights' failed attempts to seize electoral power. When the growth of religiosity is examined, it is examined from

the stand-point of encroaching Saudi Wahaabi dominance. True as this is, it ignores the flow of ideas, which, since the communication revolution of the 80s, has been increasingly fast moving. Maududi's thinking has influenced, not only the Deobandi Taliban but Wahaabism itself. And from this perspective, Pakistan's religious right has shaped, by a circuitous route, the political sensibility of Pakistan. They have also, however, used more direct methods.

When General Zia-ul-Haq, a man, unlike Bhutto, of avowed religious sensibility, pushed into power in 1977, in what he called a 'bloodless coup', the door was further opened to the religious right. Their role in contouring the ethos of the state was made possible by the passage of certain laws, and with them, the support of a prohibitive morality in the public sphere. This ideology, which would be espoused by officials as well as ordinary citizens, was prohibitory because it told people what they could not do. A standard of morality was therefore set in place not by an affirmation of the good but a turning away, a dismissal of what was seen as bad or outright evil. In analysing this pattern in the Arab world, Deniz Kandiyoti says, 'Cultural nationalism and Islam now appear as practically interchangeable terms.' (Kandiyoti, 1991:5)

When in 1979 Zia-ul-Haq passed the Hudood Ordinances, which set harsh punishments, including death, for women's alleged relationships of sex outside marriage and protected rapists against those who were raped by making the crime near impossible to prove for maximum punishment, the ordinances did not send the expected shock waves across the world stage. For in that year the first Afghan war began and in Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini ousted the sitting Shah and declared the creation of an Islamic republic. Islamism, to the West, seemingly growing from nowhere, was suddenly a force to be reckoned with. The region from Iran to Pakistan had become one

of the most important and potentially dangerous political belts in the world. As globalism and later, technology, facilitated the movement of people and ideas, a radical transnational Islam was formed and grew. As Bernard Lewis notes, this early period in the 80s marked the desecularisation of the world as the West knew it, and the return of Islam.⁷

Separate Laws, a Separate System

From 1979 to the mid-80s, a series of discriminatory laws were passed which were directed at women and religious minorities: the Hudood Ordinance of 1979, which deals with rape, adultery and other sexual crimes; the Law of Evidence, which deals with financial matters; and, the amended sections of the Blasphemy Law of 1986, which apportions death for the crime of blasphemy against the Qur'an or the Prophet. The first two laws largely victimised women and the third, religious minority groups. Another amendment further introduced electoral apartheid, dividing Pakistan's citizens into Muslim and non-Muslim camps. Under the separate electorate system non-Muslims could only vote for non-Muslim candidates; their political power was thereby marginalised in one act. This system was repealed in 2002.

The passage of these laws converted crimes previously seen as an offence by one individual against another into offences against the state (in the case of the Hudood Ordinance) and against God and Islam (in the case of the amended Blasphemy Law). As each individual could see him/herself as a protector of the state's values and the values of Islam, he/she could also lodge a case in the name of the state or God. And often did (Shirkat Gah, 2004:3). By this measure, values become not what is good and can be aspired to but what are bad and must be refrained from, monitored and reported.

In order to comprehend the circumstances under which the women in this analysis live,

an overview of these legislations is required. It will necessarily be brief as substantial work has been done elsewhere.⁸

In his 1988 article, *'Islamisation in Pakistan: Implementation of the Hudood Ordinances'*, Charles H. Kennedy says,

On February 10, 1979, President Zia-ul Haq promulgated four ordinances collectively referred to as the Hudood Ordinances (singular, *hadd*), which were crafted to make significant revisions in Pakistan's criminal legal system. The intent of the ordinances as stated by President Zia, was to bring Pakistan's legal system closer to the precepts of Islam. Accordingly, revisions were made in criminal statutes bearing on sex related crimes (*zina*) and theft. (Kennedy, 1998:307)

Revisions were also made to statutes on rape, abduction, enticement to marry under false pretences, drunkenness and a whole lot of other sexual crimes.

Usha Ramanathan, in 'Women and Law' says that before these ordinances were promulgated only a handful of reported cases of *zina* made their way to court (Ramanathan, 1997:3117). The Shirkat Gah booklet, *'Why the Hudood Ordinances must be repealed'* explains that this is because under the old British legal system in force until then, 'complaints of adultery could only be made by the husband of a woman or, in his absence, by some person who had care of such woman on his behalf.' (Shirkat Gah, 2004:3)

Although most cases of *zina* are finally overturned, pre-trial alleged criminals can face long periods of incarceration in jails. And there, they may be raped.⁹

As with the case of *zina*, so with the

Blasphemy Law. Prior to the passing of the law in 1986, only several incidences of alleged blasphemy had ever been reported. From 1986 onwards a proliferation of accusations and cases have come before the courts of law. According to the National Commission of Justice and Peace, 964 charges of blasphemy have been made since then (WLUML 2009).

In Urdu, the Blasphemy Law is called '*Ghustaq-e-rasul*' which means 'disrespect of the Prophet.' The Blasphemy Law, however, covers all forms of blasphemy and the amendments provide a death penalty for both disrespect towards the Prophet, as well as disrespect towards the Qur'an.

Blasphemy cases, like those of *zina*, are predominantly urban and predominantly Punjab based; they are especially pronounced in those regions of the Punjab where Islamist groups are strong: Faisalabad, Multan and Bahawalpur.

Muslims, Christians and the Ahmadiyya have all been targeted by this law, as indeed have Hindus, though to a much smaller degree. In each case, the dimension of the targeting is distinct.

It is important to note that reports of blasphemy often have behind them personal or local feuds. I have covered a large number of these cases for the press and only recall one instance in which words of blasphemy were actually spoken and heard. And in that case, the young man who spoke the words was and is mentally disturbed.

With the passage of these legislations a new moral order was created. In this new moral order, the status of women and religious minorities as members of political society was radically diminished. Equity was no longer a value Pakistan's citizens could aspire to.

Today in the West, the public sphere is largely considered to be gender, class and race neutral. It has what Charles Taylor calls

a 'presumption of equality'.¹⁰ The orthodox or natural position of rights is summed up by John Simmons who says, 'Human rights are rights possessed by all human beings (at all times and in all places) simply in virtue of their humanity.'¹¹ Practice, however, often reveals something else. And indeed, Farida Shaheed argues that this is one of the first myths about citizenship that needs to be debunked. She says, '[There] is a general misconception that equal citizenship and rights for all was a fundamental principle in the creation of nation-states. However "natural" this concept may seem today, it has no basis in history' (Shaheed, 1997:56).

The concept of what is and who makes up a political society is open to change. In Pakistan, the poor have never been valued as members of political society. Says Nira Yuval-Davis,

People's citizenships, in their different layers of citizenship, affect and are affected by their citizenships in other layers, of state and non-state polities, as collectively, they have differential political powers and often differential hegemonic political projects. However, it is also important to remember that people's citizenships are also affected by their locations within each polity, as they are constructed (often in unstable and contested ways) by other intersecting social divisions, such as gender, class, stage in the life cycle etc. In this sense, the notion of multi-layered citizenship is firmly attached to those who view citizenship as embodied. (Yuval, 2007:9)

In theory, the right to vote allows people to bring about an important change at the macro level state – selecting political leaders whose values they share and whose programmes promise them a better future.

In practice, however, large numbers of people obey the dictates of those who hold power over their lives and vote as their feudal lords, their tribal leaders, husbands or fathers tell them to vote. In this sense and this sense alone, the poor and those without power do not have, as the political system today stands, the capability of bringing about real change at the macro level. Does this also hold true for the meso and intimate levels?¹² Activists have found that one way of shaking up the status quo is to listen to peoples' stories and relate them to others. By such a process they offer a witness to human life, validate and applaud what has worked and relay these narratives to others, who may choose to adopt certain strategies, transforming them, in the process, to their own particular contexts. This is one of the overriding principles behind WEMC's work.

Pakistan and its Religious Minorities

Pakistan, while not a theocracy, is far from being a secular state. For the present, its Islamist groups – and it would be incorrect to call them a movement because there seems to be small ground on where they cohere – do not appear to be interested in or indeed, capable of creating a hierarchy based on both power and knowledge.

As well as numerous disparate ethnic and religious codes, numerous parallel legal systems co-exist within Pakistan. Therefore, the idea of what justice and what virtue is changes radically depending upon where one stands or is placed. Nowhere perhaps are the varying ideas of human possibility and ethical value more clearly illustrated than in the example of Pakistan's religious minorities, of which the most prominent are Christians, Hindus and Parsis (Zoroastrians).¹³

According to the census of 1998, Pakistan has 2.59% Christians and 1.16% Hindus.¹⁴

However, it has been argued that the real figure is probably somewhat higher. Firstly, some people from religious minority groups may not wish to declare their identity for fear of persecution or limiting their job opportunities. And secondly, some may be wrongly identified as Muslims. I saw an example of this first-hand as a member of the census monitoring team. When a Christian name proved too unusual and difficult for a census official to write, he sometimes replaced it with a more familiar Muslim name. The census numbers are, then, far from exact.

Christians

The Christian narrative in the sub-continent begins some five hundred years ago. The question of whom to convert was one of the most pressing confronting the first missionaries who landed on Indian soil. After a difficult start, in which high-caste Hindus were invited to join the faith, Church leaders decided to address their message to the Untouchable groups, who stood outside of the established power paradigm, and therefore, remained unprotected. Fr. John O' Brien in *The Construction of Pakistani Christian Identity* argues that these first Indian Christians, or Chuhras, were not, as is often assumed, low-caste Hindus but rather a distinct ethnic group of their own, with their own religion (O'Brien, 2006:426-7). He then points out that Pakistani Christians will often refer to themselves as *Masih qom* (people) of the Messiah, where the term *qom* (people) signifies both a religious and ethnic identity. And yet, the majority of Pakistani Christians are ethnic Punjabis and this identity too is strong.

Protestants followed Catholics to the sub-continent and so began the war for converts. Neill says that these missionaries, as well as bringing with them the Word of God, brought with them hundreds of years of unresolved internecine conflict. In many

respects, these contentions continue.¹⁵

Pakistan has a roughly equal number of Catholics and Protestants. Depending upon whom you ask, one group is viewed as in the ascendant. Among the many interesting aspects of the WEMC Christian site of Father's Colony is that it is a gated community in which Catholics and Protestants live together, quite a novel concept in Pakistan.

According to the Imperial Gazette of 1907-9, 'The tribe which became known as the Chuhra stretched from Ferozpur to Sialkot and East from Gujrat to Gurdaspur (O'Brien, 2006:44). The second interesting aspect of the WEMC Christian site then, is that it is in the North West Frontier Province, now Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and that its residents were transposed there from their homes in the Punjab. Ethnicity is an important marker of belonging in Pakistani society. And the movement of one ethnic group to another location can create seismic shifts in how identity is constructed.

Hindus

A WEMC researcher of the Hindu research site in Usta Mohammed, says: Until recently, the *sardars* (tribal leaders of Usta Mohammed) prided themselves on the fact that its religious minorities were 'completely safe'. This situation changed before our very eyes, and we heard of the first abductions for ransom taking place, followed by several subsequent incidences.¹⁶

While such incidences are predominately money driven; Hindus being abducted as they are traders and deemed able to pay a ransom, also implicit in this targeting is the idea that Hindus are unprotected by the legal and political system.

As a result of significant changes to the legislative and executive in Pakistan, the

dominant ideology has become Islam. The growth of Muslimness as a political identity in the public sphere has diminished the space for other identities. Pakistan's religious minorities are reacting in two ways: either accepting, for the present, the status quo or/and imagining their futures elsewhere (i.e. Usta Mohammed's Hindus); or alternatively, affirming a political religious identity of their own (i.e. Punjab's Christians).

In our ideal pluralistic state, the Usta Mohammed Hindus would behave in the way that they already do: as a people who share mores and behaviour and have a sense of connectedness and sympathy to one another and to others. But as the situation today stands, to exist with a cultural and social identity but no political identity is to be perceived as weak.

What incidences such as kidnapping show is the precariousness of the Hindus situation, as well as the fact that fear, once experienced, cannot easily be pushed back into the sub-conscious. And when one fear is experienced, others can be imagined. Fear is a strong narrative thread in Pakistan's story.

Following the declaration that India was to be divided into two countries, upper and middle class Hindus in the soon-to-be West Pakistan belt immigrated to India. The Hindus who remained were largely poor. Most of them live in rural areas (the largest number in the province of Sindh) where the most powerful antagonistic force they have to deal with is not the state but the feudal landlords who dictate where they should live and what work they can, and should do. As is evident from the numerous reports which emerge from Sindh, these feudals control the entire personhood of those who work their land. Abduction and rape cases are not uncommon. Due to these factors Hindus have not, by and large, developed a political voice, though the Dalit (Untouchable) community in areas such as Tharparkar are working to

both protect and promote their rights.

As Pakistan's identity has become increasingly Muslim these communities have, for different reasons, increasingly come to be seen as foreign. Christians are categorised as alien because of Christianity's connection to the West; Hindus are categorized as alien because of their connection to India, the 'enemy' state.

When the Babri mosque was pulled down in Ayodhya in 1992 by Hindu fundamentalist groups in India, retaliatory action was immediately taken against Hindu communities in Pakistan. Hundreds of Hindu temples were destroyed throughout the country – often with local government support.

In *Women, Gender and Islam* Leila Ahmed quotes Fatima Mernissi's formula for describing how the Muslim order conceives of its enemies, 'The infidel without and the woman within.' (Ahmed, 1993:128)

The Rise of Fear

Few blasphemy cases have been reported in either Sindh or Balochistan and the relevance of the amended law to these two sites may not, at first, be obvious. However, the Blasphemy Law may still come to be used here, as it has in the Punjab, to disguise local disputes, stir up animosity, or as a pretence to settle personal scores.

The residents of Father's Colony and Usta Mohammad are not unaware of the rise of crimes against religious minorities in other parts of the country. And this knowledge necessarily creates fear. Added to this, there is a growing sentiment amongst Sindh's Hindu and Christian communities that the penetration of Islamic fundamentalists into their areas has already begun.¹⁷ With the rise and spread of newer and newer Islamist groups, including Pakistani and foreign

Taliban sections, all seeking refuge in the Northern parts of Pakistan, it is likely that minority groups in these areas will soon be picked out for target attacks and killings.

Issues of a more everyday safety are already of concern to these two groups. For instance, a young man in Father's Colony reports that he was out walking with his sister one day. A passing soldier got fresh with his sister and when the young man chided the soldier, he was told, "What do you think you are?" The young man, recalling the incident says, "What respect can we have in the eyes of our women when we're treated like this?"

"And this," says another, "despite the fact that we're People of the Book." And with these words we see that the Christians, at least, have internalized the value of Muslim-ness which has spread across the country; they measure themselves by their affinity to Islam. As a People of the Book they should, they think, be respected, and seem surprised that they are not. A man says, "No Muslim eats with us, shakes hands with us. Our whole lives and those of our children are lived in dirt."

Identity Issues

Questions of identity are central to both groups. Says a young man in Father's Colony, "If we go outside our area, there's no problem. People think we're Punjabis. They don't know what [religion] we are." One arena in which their identity does become key in the outside world is when they seek employment. Some of the men have FA (equivalent to 12th grade/A-level education) and Bachelor's degrees and yet cannot find jobs. If they try to find work outside of the accepted framework for Christian men – as sweepers and sewerage workers – they are first mocked and then turned away. Discrimination, we see therefore, does not always require a law to operate. An attitude, supported by society, can be enough. Says a resident of Father's

Colony, "We're always seen as less."

WEMC research in the Punjab shows that this is not always the case, and in some areas, where Christians do not live in Christian only colonies they have equitable and often friendly relations with their Muslim neighbours. This raises the question of whether gated communities, while seemingly offering protection, do not in fact lead to isolation and increased vulnerability.

While Indian TV dramas are watched by countless people throughout Pakistan, their effect on the Hindu community of Usta Mohammad is particularly pervasive. For under the influence of these dramas the lure to cross the border, where life appears to be both materially better and where they will be the majority and not the minority group is, as the discussants in the research groups point out, becoming daily more substantial. The community believes in the value of education as a cultivating force to change an individual's life as well as abusive cultural practices. As one woman says, "People have left to give their children a better education, a better life." This sense of not fully belonging to Pakistan is evinced in the language habitually used: *yahan ke log* (people from here, i.e. Muslims) and *hum log* (we people). More so perhaps than the residents of Father's Colony, the inhabitants of Usta Mohammad view themselves as outsiders.

A call for pluralism then, is about more than the repealing of discriminatory laws.

Pluralism as Beginning and End

The philosopher John Rawls is one of the most important thinkers of our age working on ideas of justice. In *The Idea of Public Reason*, he argues for a system of governance which he calls reasonable pluralism and says that it could incorporate comprehensive doctrines (be they religious, atheist, or other) as long as all abide by the idea that the

political is supreme. It is this inclusion of disparate comprehensive doctrines that makes his argument, I think, important for a country such as Pakistan. He says,

The idea of public reason has a definite structure, and if one or more of its aspects are ignored it can seem implausible, as it does when applied to the background culture. It has five different aspects: (1) the fundamental political questions to which it applies; (2) the persons to whom it applies (government officials and candidates for public office); (3) its content as given by a family of reasonable political conceptions of justice; (4) the application of these conceptions in discussions of coercive norms to be enacted in the form of legitimate law for a democratic people; and (5) citizens' checking that the principles derived from their conceptions of justice satisfy the criterion of reciprocity. (Rawls, 1997:767)

Rawl's concept of reciprocity has, I think, at its heart, the idea that the human being is an ethical being who seeks reason and sociability, and for whom fulfilment is reliant on and measured by the skills of interdependency she seeks and acquires. We here return to our earlier argument about the human responsibility to care, '*fikr kerna*'. If we expand this model out from the individual to collective groups of people we see, I hope, how a call to pluralism could be made.

This system finds a strong parallel in the Medina Contract of 624 wherein the Pagans, Christians, Jews, and the newly arrived Muslims who had fled persecution in Mecca, agreed to support one another on key issues (i.e. security, trade), leave each other to practice their religion as they chose and in political terms, give greatest allegiance to the Medina Contract – above their respective

religious codes. The Medina Contract did not last and it can be argued that with Islam's expansion this was inevitable. However, the fact that it existed is, I think, important, especially when trying to engage religious groups to value pluralism.

Rawls says that the system of reasonable pluralism has to address two questions; those pertaining to constitutional issues and those regarding basic matters of justice. Within our context, the first would be interpreted as law and the second, as behaviour to one another that was fair. Rawls' system requires that people do what is rational, not for an ideology but for the people as a whole. The problems with such an idea are that people do not often act in a disinterested way; they would need to be trained and educated to see the value of religious minorities in both the abstract sense (from a humane position of valuing others) and the practical sense (of how religious minorities enrich society by the work they do, as well as in other ways). David Hume, however, argues that no act of reasoning has the power to incite a feeling or an action.¹⁸ And the place of emotions in leading us to act is something Rawls is acutely aware of and seeks to address.

What if though, the emotional is not contrary to the rational? Nussbaum presents the following position:

- (1) The strongest philosophical account of the emotions shows that they are not brutish irrational forces, but intelligent and discriminating elements of the personality, closely related to perception and judgment; (2) that other common objections that have led to the conclusion that emotions are (in a normative sense) irrational can also be effectively answered. (Nussbaum, 1995:365)

She goes on to defend 'emotions as essential ingredients in deliberative

rationality' and as 'a valuable part of the 'capabilities' of the good person and the good citizen.' (Nussbaum, 1995:369,371)

Clearly, this process of shifting to a pluralism based on reasonableness would necessitate consent. The steps towards such consent would include, though not necessarily in this order: a rationality in which the emotional has not been weeded out but is, in fact, entrenched; that individuals and groups learn to think in terms of society and not just their own particular social group within society; and that they learn to sympathise and to think like those they are not – often the weakest members of society.

Could it be that to care then, is not just an instinct but perhaps a skill that with practice is bettered and without practice worsened? But why should we care about others? To return to the case of minorities: Once the practical contribution of minorities is seen and understood, one could build an argument from an individual and a social perspective. For our capacity to care is a sign of both a cultivated human being and a cultivated society.

I would like to tentatively argue here that once consent is given, a particular modality of thinking needs to be brought into play. This modality understands that as the human condition is in flux any theory of equitable representation has, at its heart, to be open to recurring change. This means, I would argue, that the process of debate and consent, of arriving at values and giving them order is constantly examined and possibly revised. As is perhaps becoming evident, a movement towards such a pluralistic society would mean that as citizens engaging and participating in society, they are constantly called on to think and reflect. In the Pakistani context, this would be impossible to bring about without land and education reforms.

This paper has attempted to make a case for why Pakistan should become a pluralistic society. I have chosen to speak about pluralism rather than democracy because while both give equal value to all citizens, pluralism sees the added value to society of citizens being different. Pluralism, the seeing of different images, the hearing of different voices, allows the imagination to shift, to play, and this is, I believe, a crucial factor in keeping individuals and the societies they build, vibrant.

End Notes

- ¹ The Research Programme Consortium on 'Women's Empowerment in Muslim Contexts: gender, poverty and democratisation from the inside out.'
- ² Language borrowed from Avishai Margalit (2002), *The Ethics of Memory*.
- ³ I should here point out that while I write on politics, my major research area is mystical poetry.
- ⁴ Iqbal is careful, however, to make a distinction between the tradition of Greek classical rationalism and the rationalism he supports, which is God-centred.
- ⁵ See the work of Halliday and Milton-Edwards cited in the bibliography.
- ⁶ Most notably in Pakistan and Egypt.
- ⁷ Bernard Lewis, 'The Return of Islam', *Commentary*, 1976.
- ⁸ See Khawar Mumtaz and Farida Shaheed (1987).
- ⁹ Interviews with women prisoners I carried out as a journalist and as a member of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan's investigative team.
- ¹⁰ Charles Taylor, *On Social Imaginary*. Also in Taylor's *A Secular Age* (2007).
- ¹¹ See Charles R Bietz, *Human Rights and the Law of Peoples*.
- ¹² Christian interaction at the meso level is far more pronounced than that of other minority communities as they tend to congregate in Christian-only communities (this is more evident in a rural or town setting than in a city setting) and Christians tend to run or work for civil organisations (schools, hospitals, dispensaries, etc.) which would elsewhere be called meso level apparatuses of the state.
- ¹³ While the state also categorises the Ahmadiyya, whose population is judged to be more than 2 million, as non-Muslims, the group sees itself as Muslim.
- ¹⁴ See the Population Census Organisation <<http://www.statpak.gov.pk/depts/pco/statistics/statistics.html>>.
- ¹⁵ Stephen Neill (1985), *A History of Christianity in India, 1707-1858*.
- ¹⁶ Shirkat Gah researcher, November, 2010.
- ¹⁷ Interviews in Mirpurkhas, Umerkot and interior Sindh, 2009.
- ¹⁸ Catherine Chaliar (2002), *What I ought to do? Morality in Kant and Levinas*.

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Pakistan and Nature of the State:

**Revisionism, Jihad
and Governance**

Khaled Ahmed

The course of democracy has never run smooth in Pakistan. Every time the state is ruled by a dictator, the urge for democratic governance increases. Yet, each democratic interregnum has unfolded amid controversy and wrangling till it is no longer tolerable for the state. Ironically, looking back, scholars find only the periods of non-democratic rule more economically successful. The normal state of the state in Pakistan appears therefore to be non-democratic. While the variations in the mode of governance introduced by dictators to achieve acceptance and legitimacy have been studied, there is still space for studying the changing nature of the state itself.¹

After the creation of Pakistan in 1947, Pakistan faced many problems associated with newly independent states in history. Two of them, lack of funds and opposition from India, later became a part of its nationalism, again in line with nationalisms in history: the consciousness of a “painful birth”. The most significant factor in this consciousness was the war with India over Kashmir. It determined the nature of Pakistani nationalism at an early stage. The unspoken

“mission statement” of Pakistan became based on “revisionism” positing “injustice” of the annexation of Kashmir by India and promising its reclamation through a “just war”.

Like other states, nationalism determined the nature of the “revisionist” state in Pakistan. All the classical features associated with nationalism were there: India was designated as the “enemy state” whose survival meant end of the survival of Pakistan because India was not reconciled to the existence of Pakistan; the use of the “external enemy” as the cementing factor inside a multi-ethnic Pakistan.² From the expenditures made on defence in the first 25 years, one can say that this revisionist doctrine embedded inside Pakistani nationalism invested the Pakistan army with special importance. Over time, this developed into an institutional supremacy that periodically becomes contentious.

Pakistani revisionism placed a tough task on the army and shaped its outlook for years to come. It was required to challenge a state many times larger than Pakistan, a state it could not win a war against or annex as a trophy of war. Since these factors of “fundamental inequality” normally determine the strategy of an army, strategy was discarded by the Pakistan army to enable it to challenge the Indian army tactically. In consequence, the Pakistan army became a “tactical” organisation whose officers had more panache than intellect, in line with the Islamic concept of jihad that relied on faith rather than on the calculus of relative military power. It fought “niche” or “set-piece” wars with India on the basis of Pakistan’s revisionist nationalism with results that could be interpreted vaguely as victories.

The Cold War era helped Pakistan to continue adherence to its nationalism which also meant yielding paramountcy to the army. The army “took over” every time

it needed to remind the civilian leaders that they had reneged on nationalism. Every time it took over it also touched base with its own “tactical” nature and provoked war with India. The fall of East Pakistan should have shaken Pakistan out of the groove of its revisionist thinking, but it encouraged revanchism instead. Under civilian rule the army was once again strengthened by this instinct for revenge. The nationalist myth of binding the nation on the basis of the “external enemy” began to fall apart. Communities inside Pakistan that had suffered because of Pakistan’s excessive attention to the “Indian threat” began to challenge the civilian rule.

Another aspect of Pakistani nationalism was its ideology; based on Islam but in no small measure propelled by a desire to differentiate Pakistan from India and prevent its “relapse” into India. Islamic governance, based on the doctrine of non-separation of state and church, became an early intellectual challenge but could not be resolved through creative re-interpretation. The army, already in the habit of using tribal lashkars or non-state actors in national wars with India, consolidated Pakistan’s nationalism by adding to it the element of religion. It became the guardian of frontiers as well as ideology. This was completely in tune with the Pakistan’s post-1947 Muslim ethos. After the 1971 war in East Pakistan, the Pakistan army seriously inducted the concept of the non-state actors into its tactical philosophy of “death by a thousand cuts” on the presumption that India was already in the process of falling apart.³

Jihad and the Creation of ‘Ungoverned Spaces’

The induction of jihad into national war had its consequences for the sovereignty of the state and its “monopoly of violence”.

The formation of jihadi militias and their location within civil society after their military training tended to create multiple centres of power in Pakistan. Because of this new phenomenon, the first fissures of loyalty within the Pakistan army made their appearance. For the first time, during the war in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union, a kind of “reverse-indoctrination” in favour of the mujahideen became observable inside the army: the “handlers” became won over to the cause of jihad in supersession of the authority of the state. What comes first: Islam or the state? By the 1990s, public discussions showed that more and more Pakistanis were inclined to say that they were Muslims first and Pakistanis later.⁴ In the 2000s, because of the proliferation of madrassas as nurseries of jihad and as intellectual guides for the common man, the TV channels began to reflect this subordination of the state as an accepted value in Pakistan.

Pakistan always had “ungoverned spaces” on its territory. This is where the non-state actors came from in the 1947, 1965 and 1999 wars against India. It is moot whether the retention of these territories was propelled by the “civilian” desire to preserve the traditional way of life of the tribes or the “military” need to obtain non-state actors. However, after the Afghan war, in which Pakistan participated covertly together with the United States and its other allies, it expanded these ungoverned spaces and brought them into the settled areas. The madrassas network, aided by the mujahideen militias, partook of the sovereignty of the state, benefited from the additional centres of power they increasingly represented. Allegiance of the army officer became divided and he began to show more loyalty to the Islamic warrior he was handling than to the Pakistan army.⁵

The rise of the “ungoverned spaces” as bastions of jihadi power after 2001 began

another process: the tribalisation of Pakistan’s settled areas and the retreat of state governance from the provinces. This new trend in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA) was carried on the Islamic demand for sharia that challenged the Constitution of Pakistan and its implementation of sharia through the Federal Shariat Court. The jihadi sharia was based on the enforcement of “*marufaat*” – not in the Constitution – as well as the punishment of “*munkiraat*” – contained in the Constitution. By 2005, all the clergy in Pakistan, including the non-jihadi section, believed in the enforcement of “*marufaat*” and thus indirectly rejected the Constitution. Tribalisation of Pakistan was now quite visible as suicide-bombing shifted to the cities. The NWFP did not only lose the Malakand region of PATA, it lost most of the cities outside Peshawar to the Taliban, including important military and air force bases in Kohat and Bannu.⁶

There are two trends that set Pakistan apart from the Third World norm as a state with problems specific to itself: its permissive stance towards the expansion of “ungoverned spaces” and its acquisition of nuclear weapons. Both incidentally favoured the environment of jihad at the expense of the sovereignty of the state since jihad was fought by non-state actors. The acquisition of nuclear weapons was actually more suited to Pakistan as a revisionist state vis-à-vis India than to India which had renounced revisionism vis-à-vis China. (Why India did not choose to challenge China, many times more powerful than itself, makes for a separate study reflecting non-dominance of the Indian army in the state because of the nature of Indian nationalism.) The “niche” war doctrine of Pakistan army could now be carried out under a nuclear umbrella. After failing to

tackle aggression after bilateral nuclearisation, India has now decided to confront Pakistan with Pakistan's own concept of "limited war".⁷

Sacrifice of Governance for National Security

While external sovereignty of the state is a myth, no state can exist without internal sovereignty. Before the 20th century international order became consolidated, the only measure of a state's existence was its writ: its ability of governance over territory it claimed, including taxation and law and order. The adoption of jihad by the state was directly instrumental in the gradual deprivation of the writ of the state. It began in Balochistan and the Tribal Areas and crept into the cities in the shape of "no-go" areas. Balochistan suffered as a province owing to many factors but not least because Pakistan's security concerns were focused more on the eastern border; and its only concern for Balochistan was expressed through the presence there of the Pakistan army and Frontier Constabulary (FC). The political consensus in Balochistan today is against the presence of the police, against the presence of the army and the FC, clearly a signalling for a status far beyond the confines of federalism. And when India decided in favour of "limited war" with Pakistan it opted for activism in Balochistan.

Governance depends on the writ of the state which precedes governance. Governance in regions without writ of the state or writ shared with non-state actors will be flawed. In the Tribal Areas and in Malakand for at least two years, the local infrastructure was not in the control of the state, there was no law and order and people could survive only by renouncing their loyalty to the state of Pakistan. In

Balochistan, the infrastructure is under challenge and assets of the federal state are unprotected despite the presence there of the army and its paramilitary adjuncts. The police is either non-existent outside Quetta and some other cities or under challenge from the system of levies the Baloch leaders favour. Private armies are the norm and the only order that works is the law of deterrence and intimidation. If you add up Balochistan, the Tribal Areas of FATA and PATA plus most cities of the NWFP, the no-go areas of Sindh and the city of Karachi, and an increasing thinning of the state in South Punjab, you come up with nearly 60 percent of Pakistan without proper governance, or areas where governance is not possible because of the weakness of the writ of the state.

Governance, at the primitive level, means law and order. After that comes the ability to collect taxes, especially direct taxes linked to people's incomes; tax collection is also an indicator of the "outreach" of the state. Both factors of governance have been lacking in Pakistan for over a quarter of a century. The Third World state is generally deficient in tax-collection and, to some extent, its ability to achieve effective executive and judicial outreach. But Pakistan has certain characteristics that it doesn't share with the Third World states; it shares them rather with the failed or failing states like Somalia, Chad and Afghanistan. The first is absence of law and order in large rural and urban areas; the second is the prostration of the judiciary and the executive in the face of intimidation from the terrorists and jihadi organisations. The third factor that is unique to Pakistan is that foreign terrorists and Pakistani non-state actors are able to carry out terrorist acts outside Pakistan, as far afield as Europe and the United States. This opens Pakistan to invasion from the aggrieved states under international law.

Pakistan is now subject to insurgencies aimed at changing the map of the state from the inside. There are non-state actors, meant originally to strike outside Pakistan, who are now striking inside Pakistan on behalf of the very foreign states once targeted by Pakistan through them. There are non-state actors who are labelled foreigners but are a part of the Islamist-terrorist global movement fighting the West in general and the United States in particular. They are supposed to be located in some parts of Pakistan where the state doesn't have its writ; they are also said to be located in other parts of Pakistan where they are protected by the intelligence agencies of Pakistan. This development is complicated by Pakistan's policy of dividing the Taliban into two categories, the good and the bad Taliban, ironically the bad ones being Pakistani Taliban. The dominant sentiment in Pakistan is anti-American which means it finds itself handicapped in inhibiting militant elements opposed to the United States.

Anti-Americanism has brought disadvantages in its wake. The US policy in the region is in lockstep with the thinking of the other regional and non-regional states threatened by terrorism. Adopting an anti-American posture is advantageous in Pakistan for politicians as well as institutions looking after or enhancing their turfs. While it is empowering to be anti-American in Pakistan, it comes at the price of isolation at the international level. Given the pattern of economic dependence, Pakistan can ill-afford this isolation. Attention is deflected from this realistic scenario through appeal, once again, to national security - to "threat from India" - which traditionally trumps threat from economic malfunction. In the absence of a Cold War environment, the reliance on "threat from India" is a dangerous introversion since no one among the allies

of Pakistan, including the United States, believes it.

Does appeal to "threat from India" create the sort of national solidarity it did in the past?⁸ From evidence on the ground, it doesn't, but it does unite all the centres of power against the incumbent government. The provinces, demanding autonomy after half a century of uneven economic growth, apparently feel no need to curb their criticism of the federation and the federal executive in the national security interest. However, the "centres of power", appearing on the scene during the struggle to remove General Musharraf in 2007, use the traditional anti-Indian rhetoric with the new anti-American rhetoric to attack and destabilise the federal government. Pakistani nationalism has run its course and insurrections in Balochistan and other regions do not respond to it, affirming the failure of "nationhood" in Pakistan over time because of the imposition of the national security state from above. The media at times joins the establishment in Islamabad in insisting that Pakistan be considered a national security state in order to maintain the posture of hostility towards India.⁹

Pakistan's Six Pillars of the State

All states have three mutually balancing "centres of power" or pillars of the state: the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. As the nationalist and ideological pressures mounted in Pakistan, a fourth informal pillar was added: the army. Over time, this evolved into what is called the establishment, supplemented by other permanent institutions of the state: the military-bureaucratic pressure group. The shibboleth of "security" brought the intelligence agencies of the state to the top of the establishment hierarchy. Today the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) plays the

role of the strategic mind of the establishment, while an increasingly active Military Intelligence confirms the dominance of the army in the establishment. Two more centres of power have been added to the pillars-of-the-state theory: the media and the jihadi organisations. Out of the “six pillars” in 2009, five were intensely anti-American and anti-Indian in varying degrees. The executive, seen as pro-American and pro-India, was seriously undermined by this imbalance in the checks-and-balance mechanism of the state and by calls for “mid-term” elections in the media, which accuses the opposition in the legislature of being too soft on a renegade government.

Today, the “existential” pillars of the state are: 1) Legislature, 2) Executive, 3) Judiciary, 4) Army plus Establishment, 5) the Media and 6) Jihadi Organisations. The rise of the media as arbiter and manufacturer of pressure through “public opinion” is dated to the years in power of General Musharraf who allowed a proliferation of TV channels and, through them, dominance of the Urdu-medium opinion expressed by right-leaning ideological columns. The first instalment of TV anchors came from the top-rung Urdu columnists; later, as the channels proliferated, second- and third-grade columnists too found their place among the “mind-benders” of the nation. The rise of the Jihadi Organisations was made possible gradually over the years because of the use made of them in the covert and low-intensity wars staged by the Pakistan army in Afghanistan and Kashmir. The rise of the jihadi militias as “centres of power” arose over the years because of the protection they were given by the state in their intercourse with civil society. The judiciary too became subordinated to them in the countryside where seminaries attached to the jihadis could force the lower judiciary to deliver verdicts of their liking. One can say that even the higher

judiciary did succumb in many cases to their intimidation.¹⁰

The campaign to oust Musharraf brought together three entities: the media, the agitating lawyers and the judiciary. There was support from civil society to this movement as the campaign symbolised rejection of military rule and elevation of a judiciary that broke the past tradition of judges submitting to military takeovers. The other support for this movement was not universally recognised, the one coming from the jihadi organisations. The jihadi organisations were offended by Musharraf’s switching-off of the Kashmir jihad and his clampdown on the Al Qaeda elements with which the jihadis were aligned. The religious parties, as Muttahida Majlis Amal (MMA), had felt betrayed by him equally after he agreed to be a part of the Muslim League Quaid (PMLQ) alliance by not relinquishing charge of his dual army-chief-and-President office. The MMA parties were aligned in differing measures with the jihadi organisations and the Taliban and backed the movement for the restoration of the judges fired by Musharraf after his showdown with the chief justice of the Supreme Court, Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry.

After the 2008 general election the PPP government in Islamabad took its time restoring the judges fired by Musharraf and violated the agreement it had signed in this regard with the largest political party in the parliamentary opposition, and the ruling party in Punjab, Muslim League Nawaz (PMLN). As the PMLN distanced itself from its traditional rival, the PPP, and the lawyers stepped up their campaign for the restoration of the judges – this time against the PPP government – the media and the judiciary formed a bond of solidarity. During the 2007 Lal Masjid siege in Islamabad, opposition to

Musharraf compelled the TV channels to take a pro-cleric stance, which affected the attitude of the Supreme Court about the Lal Masjid clerics for the same reason. It was in this way that the judiciary, the media, the lawyers and the PMLN were seen as “friendly” by the Taliban, the jihadi militias and Al Qaeda. It should be noted that Al Qaeda had taken a stand at the highest level of its leadership on the side of the defiant clerics of Lal Masjid.

The PPP government, in light of the pledge made in the Charter of Democracy (2006) began to make moves to “normalise” relations with New Delhi, beginning with the Trade Policy of 2008 which the “establishment” did not like judging from the articles thereafter placed in the press. The Trade Policy, apart from increasing the tradable items to 2000, envisaged the setting up of an Indian factory near Lahore for the manufacture of CNG-equipped buses. In November 2008, after the Mumbai attacks by Pakistani non-state actors, the government first offered to send the ISI chief to India for consultations, then tried to subordinate the ISI to the Interior Ministry, both actions falling foul of the establishment. Earlier, President Zardari had announced that he was ready to forswear the doctrine of nuclear first strike against India because he was not scared of India. All these purported “policy changes” were opposed by an angry media remarkable in its uniformity of views.¹¹

As observed above, the effect of jihadi organisations on the judiciary, especially in the districts, has been a familiar consequence of the state’s waging of covert war. Journalism too has been under the pressure of intimidatory tactics in the districts where the jihadi militias locate themselves. The English-language press misses out on the districts news because of a lack of reporters with the ability to

write in English. This “blackout” on the dominance of the jihadis in the countryside is also owed to two additional factors: 1) that the Urdu newspapers do not pay salaries to their district correspondents, forcing them to rely on handouts they receive from people whose news they get printed in the newspapers; and 2) that the intimidated district correspondents work literally as the “press branch” of the jihadi militias, printing only news that showed the jihadis in a favourable light while attacking their victims, non-Muslims and Shias, as the offending parties.

This has undermined the “independence” of the media the same way as it undermined the “independence” of the lower judiciary in the districts. If the TV channels assert their independence daily by attacking the PPP alliance in government, their “independence” to do so will be legitimised only if they are able to comment freely on the activities of the jihadi organisations as well. Most newspapers continue to write “militants” instead of “terrorists” and abstain from referring to the terrorist organisations by name, only applying the term “a banned organisation” when reporting an act of extreme violence by one of them. In a paper read at a seminar of the Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) on 18 November 2009 some observations were made about the partisanship or lack of independence of the media in Pakistan:

“Many media experts would tell you that the newspapers and TV channels in Pakistan do not perceive the Taliban as a threat to the country or its people despite butchering thousands of men, women and children and flouting in the most blatant manner the rights and protection guaranteed by the constitution. Only a few months ago – before the launch of the military operation in Swat – countless newspaper reports and TV talk shows were

opposing military action or justifying the illegal and unconstitutional demands of the Taliban when they had effectively ended the writ of the state in Malakand division and were quite literally slaughtering security forces personnel, public representatives and common citizens. At that time, there were many voices in the media either calling for reaching an understanding, or an agreement with the Taliban and ceding more territory to them, or generally writing and airing favourable reports, either out of fear or on the establishment's behest. It is painfully obvious why elements in the establishment would still be interested in a favourable press for the Taliban and other militant extremists".¹²

The same paper speaks of the trouble one Lahore-based daily had with the warlord of Khyber Agency, Mangal Bagh, on calling him "a thief" in its second editorial after noting his ransom-taking activities in the Agency and in Peshawar. The terrorist warlord picked up the newspaper's reporter from Peshawar and made him grovel at his feet for hours, asking him to reveal the name of the editorial-writer. The paper finally gave in, apologised to him and placed an embargo on any news thought to be negative about Mangal Bagh and his men. The editors of a Lahore English-language weekly had to abjectly apologise to a jihadi organisation based in Lahore for writing a critical "inside" account of the militia. The apology was "arranged" by the Punjab administration on the condition that similar material never be published again. A similar incident took place in Lahore after an English-language newspaper published a cartoon that gave offence to the wife of the Lal Masjid cleric, Abdul Aziz. The paper came under threat from the jihadis ready to die for Lal Masjid.

The PIPS paper goes on to put on record another incident which is thought to be

typical of the press in Pakistan: "A leading English language daily newspaper referred to the Taliban as militants in its coverage. Then one day someone asked the editor's wife if her husband's newspaper did not consider Taliban terrorists and if it did then why would it not say so in its reports. The following day that newspaper started referring to the Taliban as terrorists. The same week, the newspapers' reporters from Malakand and the NWFP pleaded with the main office in Lahore that the Taliban had threatened to kill them if the paper referred to them as terrorists once more. The next day Taliban had got back the tag of militants".

More blatantly: "In October 2009, a Taliban group sent two letters to the Lahore Press Club – one on October 12 and the other on October 14 – warning that if the media 'does not stop portraying us as terrorists ... we will blow up offices of journalists and media organisations'. The list of threats and warnings individually sent to journalists and media organisations is a long one". One typical example was the threat to author and columnist Dr Ayesha Siddiqa carried in the publication *Al Qalam* belonging to Jaish-e-Muhammad, rebuking her on writing about the power of Maulana Masood Azhar in Bahawalpur. Dr Siddiqa understood the editorial comment as a threat and was greatly concerned about her safety as were her friends, especially as her book *Military Inc* was considered highly critical of the Pakistan army. It is a pointer to the continuing co-existence of the state with jihadi organisations that firing of automatic weapons in November 2009 on the house of columnist Kamran Shafi in Wah was confused between terrorists who rang him after the incident and the state itself.

The creation of uniformity of opinion in the media has directly undermined the authenticity of public opinion in Pakistan.¹³ The interaction between the

shaper of public opinion and public opinion itself has given rise to the censoring of the variant point of view on the TV channels. Columnist Saleem Safi wrote in *Jang* (6 Dec 2009) that in a TV discussion he held the position that President Karzai would continue to be president of Afghanistan because the Americans had no alternative to him despite tentative reference to Ashraf Ghani and Agha Sherzai. He added that sadly Pakistan and the Taliban too had no alternative to Karzai but had thoughtlessly unleashed propaganda against him. Only when non-Pashtun Abdullah Abdullah came up against Karzai in the elections was it realised in Islamabad that Karzai was still the best option for Pakistan. The TV anchor so disliked his opinion that he cut it out of the show during editing.

When public opinion is not formed in conditions of freedom guaranteed by the writ of the state, it loses its validity and may be extremely dangerous to the survival of the state. It begins to resemble the public opinion produced in fascist and totalitarian states through a coercive state propaganda machinery. In Pakistan, this lack of freedom emanates from the weak writ of the state, and the ganging up of the five pillars of state power against the executive have brought about a dangerous trend towards populism. This has introduced distortion in the objective and expert handling of the affairs of the state, producing the judicial trend of “interference” in areas requiring expertise rather than reference to public opinion. Populism has been defined as a negative trend in democratic societies being run on scientific lines by politicians elected by the people. Its most harmful traits include stereotyping of communities and states and the propagation of these stereotypes through dogmatic assertion. In the case of Pakistan, public opinion thus formed has damaged the economy and curtailed the

flexibility of stance in the domain of foreign policy; or it has habituated the people to see the suppleness of foreign policy options as a kind of capitulation and betrayal of national honour (*ghairat*).¹⁴

Conclusion: Getting out of India-Based Threat Perception

Pakistan has “discovered” the political and economic disadvantage of relying on the threat perception established by nationalism. Both the mainstream national parties, after being alternately overthrown from power following their attempts to “normalise” with India, pledged themselves to change the country’s India policy in the Charter of Democracy in 2006. After coming to power in 2008, the PPP government, backed by its traditionally pro-India ally parties, the ANP and the MQM, tried to fulfil the pledge made in the Charter. Apart from his efforts described above, President Zardari became the spearhead of some concrete measures in the direction of normalisation. These efforts were in line with earlier efforts to create security through “interdependence” with India such as the project of Iran-Pakistan-Indian (IPI) gas pipeline.

There was international pressure on Pakistan during the Musharraf era to move towards economic interdependence with India to end the decades of conflict the two countries had engaged in. The World Bank offered liberal credits if any plans were made to build trade routes through Pakistan to enhance its strategic importance as a “trade corridor”. Musharraf was thinking in paradigmatic terms about converting Pakistan into a trading hub for the regions lying around it. Since he had begun to build the Gwadar Port – not first conceived by him,

let us admit – the network of roads and railway tracks branching from the port seemed to leave India out. But later he began to speak in more general terms and was once privately in favour of conceding the Indian request that a corridor be given it for trading with Central Asia. The idea of the Indian corridor got side-lined because the general deferred to the “defence” angle and abstained from delinking it from Kashmir after having strangely established the precedent of delinking the IPI from Kashmir. As a general he probably knew that he was standing on the edge of an identity-change of the state of Pakistan. Perhaps he realised the limits of how far he could go as a military leader in changing the country from a warrior state to a trading nation.

President Zardari was less half-minded in extending this policy and moving more quickly towards a policy of economic interdependence with India. The SAARC summit had issued a declaration in April 2007 on the desire of the member states to develop “connectivity” including roads that would link the South Asian region for trade and travel. In May 2009, when he was in Washington and met his Afghan counterpart, President Karzai, he signed an MoU with him which was significant in its strategic outreach. Pakistan and Afghanistan agreed “to begin talks on a transit trade agreement which will ultimately allow India to use the Wahga-Khyber route for trade with Kabul”. The memorandum committed the two countries “to achieving a trade transit agreement by the end of the year”. US Secretary of State Ms Hillary Clinton, hosting the round, said: “This is a historic event. This agreement has been under discussion for 43 years without resolution”.

Although India was not mentioned as a beneficiary in the memorandum, its ghost was very much present on the occasion.

Ms Clinton spelled out all the implications – a set of Western beliefs in trade as antidote to war which is not greatly appreciated in Pakistan – of what the opening up of Indo-Afghan trade through Pakistan will imply: “Nothing opens up an area to economic development better than a good road with good transit rules and an ability to transport goods and people effectively”. The DG ISI of Pakistan was among the delegation led by President Zardari which saw the memorandum being signed by the foreign ministers of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Later, the Foreign Office in Islamabad was compelled to play down the MoU in words that implied non-commitment. Pakistan in 2009 was busy diverting the threat perception from internal elements to India.

Threat perceptions are produced by the mind. National strategies are produced by imagination on the basis of nationalism and geopolitical compulsions. Threats have to be imagined so that armies can be trained and weapons acquired accordingly. Some states have fixed enemies. All dangers are to be interpreted on the yardstick of this fixed enmity. Other nations are flexible and keep changing their perceptions of threat. It can be Russia today and China tomorrow. External threats can be “created” to distract from internal threats. Pakistan’s permanent danger is supposed to be from India. As a challenger state it is supposed to endanger India to a point where it relents on Kashmir. But the strategy of endangering India has its reverse side, that of an anticipation of counter-threat. From early days, Pakistan endangered India in its tribal northwest. India endangered Pakistan in Balochistan. Starting 1990, Pakistan enhanced its capacity to endanger. After that Pakistan and India went into a whirlwind of action and reaction. Today it is difficult for most

Pakistanis indoctrinated by the media to see who endangers first and who is merely “reactive”.

After the November 2008 attack in Mumbai by Pakistani non-state actors, India has emerged as a source of renewed threat in Pakistan. Nationalism has made a reactive comeback “to stand up to India’s accusations”. On the other hand, India has changed its “dialogue policy” and has increased its presence in Afghanistan as a policy of counter-threat with the clear approval of the US and its allies. Despite evidence to the contrary after the capture of many terrorists, most attacks including suicide-attacks in Pakistan are officially blamed on India. On the 7 December 2009 attack on Moon Market in Iqbal Town Lahore, the Punjab Law Minister said that the attack had come from India and Israel working together. The Punjab governor was less sure about it and linked it to the Taliban reaction to Pakistan army’s successful operation in South Waziristan. The NWFP senior minister Bashir Ahmad Bilour refused to blame India for a blast that occurred in Peshawar the same day. On the other hand, Interior Minister Rehman Malik stuck to his position that India “and others” – meaning the US – were involved in terrorism inside Pakistan. Some TV channels expressed anger at those who refused to blame India.

Public opinion, created through a unidirectional media, has come to the conclusion that confrontation with India has become inevitable. International opinion however is insistent that the epochal Indo-Pak conflict can only be resolved through economic inter-dependence. Economists located inside Pakistan seem to agree with the nationalist sentiment in favour of confrontation, but Washington-based Shahid Javed Burki, former finance minister of Pakistan and former vice-

president of The World Bank, thinks it more urgent than ever that Pakistan should opt for an economic partnership with India as a means of resolving its disputes with it. After observing that Pakistan is not likely to solve its resource problem any time soon - like increasing either its domestic savings rate to invest more in the economy or its tax-to-GDP ratio for the government to turn its attention to provide services to the poor - he proposes:

“One way of opening it is to work closely with India on the economic front and get foreign investment to come from that route. With better relations with Pakistan, Indian companies may be willing to invest in Pakistan. I believe during the Musharraf period Tata Computer Services had shown some interest in investing in Pakistan, making use of the cheaper skilled labour available here compared to the demands of workers in India. The Reliance Group also wanted to develop oil storage facilities in the Jhelum area making use of the exhausted salt mines. This would have reduced the amount of freight and storage India was paying on the Middle Eastern oil. But Pakistan did not permit these investments for political reasons. A democratic government may be able to take a different policy stance. Another way Pakistan could benefit from the revival of interest in India on the part of foreign investors is to establish strong links with some of the industrial sectors in India. Automobile industry is one such candidate. Recent industry data showed sales of trucks and buses in India rose 52 percent in October, the fourth consecutive monthly rise and the strongest expansion since April 2007”.¹⁵

The civilian meaning of “geopolitical importance” of Pakistan is its median position as a trade corridor; the military meaning of the term is Pakistan’s ability as a median state to obstruct trade in

order to exert pressure for a better bargaining position on Kashmir. In the middle of Pakistan's war against internal terrorism the state has once again chosen to insist on the solution of the dispute of Kashmir.¹⁶

This paper was read as the Hamza Alavi Lecture 2009, at the Irtiqa Institute of Social Sciences, Karachi.) The paper has been published in Criterion Quarterly, Vol. 5-No. 2 (July 16, 2012).

End Notes

- ¹ Raymond Hinnebusch in his paper *Authoritarian Persistence, Democratization Theory and the Middle East: An Overview and Critique* in *Democratisation in the Muslim World*: Edited by Frederic Volpi & Francesco Cavatorta; Routledge 2007; p.12: "Authoritarian regimes can adapt to new conditions; specifically, their political liberalisation or pluralisation is, for structural reasons, more likely to be a substitute for democratisation than a stage on the way to it". Shades of this would be observable in the Muslim world as well as in the non-Muslim world but one has to agree that Muslims are more vulnerable to this substitution.
- ² Dr Ishrat Hussain, 'Public Policy and Social Sciences', in *Critical Perspectives on Social Sciences in Pakistan*, Eds. by Pervaiz Tahir, Tahir Kamran & Rizwan Omer Gondal, GC University Lahore 2008; p.72: "Since its inception, Pakistan has faced the monumental task to spell out an identity different from the Indian identity. Born from the division of the old civilization of India, Pakistan has struggled for constructing its own culture, a culture which would not only be different from the Indian Culture but one that the whole world would acknowledge".
- ³ Public statements by ex-army chiefs like Aslam Baig and ex-ISI chiefs like Hamid Gul keep referring to scores of insurgencies inside India which will one day unhinge India. Hafiz Saeed of Jamaat-ud-Dawa repeated this in his article in daily Jinnah in the 6 December 2009 issue. Pakistan simply has to deliver a cut here and there to get India to implode.
- ⁴ Army General Kayani repeated this on visiting the dead of Rawalpindi's Parade Lane mosque in December 2009, saying that the army would die for Islam and Pakistan, and confirming that the priority of faith before the state was accepted.
- ⁵ Herald, April 2009: Major General (Retd) Faisal Alvi revealed that he had written a letter to the army chief saying that serving generals had joined up with the Taliban. Alvi was later killed by Major (Retd) Ashiq who worked for another retired army officer – denied by the Pakistan army – Ilyas Kashmiri now located with the Taliban in North Waziristan.
- ⁶ Khaled Ahmed, The Friday Times, 21 September 2007, *Islam and its function of retribalisation*: "After Islamisation, and the part played in it by Saudi Arabia through the manipulation of the Council of Islamic Ideology, the rest of Pakistan too began its backward journey to tribalism. Jirgas and panchayats began to raise their ugly head as parallel systems of justice with the ideal of revenge-seeking at the centre of their codes of conduct. The modern state began to be pulled down gradually as the Islamic state came into its own. The Pakistani society, honour-based because of the persistence of its collective tribal memory and low 'secular' literacy, began to say goodbye to the municipal law already dysfunctional because of lack of reforms in the institutions that ran it. The madrasa saw itself as the presiding authority over this retribalisation and instrumentalised the concept of jihad to give itself the power of the executive".
- ⁷ Daily Times, 25 November 2009: Indian Army chief General Deepak Kapoor's address during a defence seminar indicated that the possibility of a limited nuclear war was "very much a reality in South Asia".
- ⁸ Christophe Jaffrelot, *A History of Pakistan and its Origins*, Anthem Press, 2004; p.37: "The limits of national integration explain the campaigns against 'others', regularly brought into play by Pakistani leaders in order to weld the unity of the country once more. These campaigns are launched against 'bad' Muslims such as the Ahmadi or against the Hindus or the Christians. The orchestration of this antagonism is all of a piece with the perpetuation of the conflict over Kashmir. Pakistan, therefore, might well be a case of nationalism without a nation".
- ⁹ Chief Editor *Jinnah* (8 Nov 2009) wrote that PPP spokesperson Fauzia Wahab told the press that Pakistan was not a security state but an economy-based state. He took strong exception to this and observed that Ms Wahab should not have said this in the open. Because not terming Pakistan a security state could harm the PPP government. He stated that if Ms Wahab had said it in rage (*tap gai*) she should learn to control herself. He thought an economy-based Pakistani state would have to normalise relations with India and that was not acceptable.
- ¹⁰ Justice (Retd) Bhatti of Lahore High Court who allowed bail to Christian Salamat Masih accused of blasphemy was killed after retirement in his chamber. In the case of sectarian killer Riaz Basra of *Lashkar-e-Jhangvi* a number of judges retired during the hearing of the murder of Iranian consul Sadeq Ganji but did not pronounce judgement. Shia-killers Akram Lahori and Malik Ishaq are about to be released from Multan and Lahore courts in 2009 because the witnesses in the trial have either been killed or have resiled.
- ¹¹ Literature on nuclear war does not recognise the credibility of the doctrine of "second strike" and therefore renouncing the doctrine of "first strike" is rendered meaningless.

¹² Najam U Din, *Mainstream media's response to radical extremism*, paper read on 18 Nov 2009 at Holiday Inn Lahore, during PIPS seminar.

¹³ Ahmed Rashid, *Pakistan conspiracy theories stifle debate*, BBC website 27 Nov 2009: "Switch on any of the dozens of satellite news channels now available in Pakistan. You will be bombarded with talk show hosts who are mostly obsessed with demonising the elected government, trying to convince viewers of global conspiracies against Pakistan led by India and the United States or insisting that the recent campaign of suicide bomb blasts around the country is being orchestrated by foreigners rather than local militants".

¹⁴ Lyrical columnist Irfan Siddiqi wrote in *Jang* (17 Oct 2009) that the bride of *ghairat* (honour) has left the house of Pakistan. And carrying the *kashkol* (begging bowl) and wandering in the streets of the world is the fate of the nation. We are empty in the pocket of our robes (*tahi-daman*) and cannot live within our means; but then why is the spark of *ghairat* rising from our ashes?

¹⁵ Dawn, 30 Nov, 2009, *Working with India*.

¹⁶ Stephen Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan* (Vanguard Books, 2005), p.51. Cohen thinks the 'Kashmir Curse' of Pakistan has "seriously damaged Pakistan's prospects as a state...a cost that several generations of Pakistani leaders have been willing to pay".

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Reconstructing Patriarchies:

**Nationalism, Religion and
Women's Education**

Rubina Saigol

There are widespread assumptions regarding a purported incompatibility between religious beliefs and values based on Islam and the education of women. The spate of attacks on girls' schools in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province appears to have reinforced the idea that Islam is inherently averse to the education of women. In developing societies, however, women's education is often regarded as a key development concept indispensable for their empowerment and emancipation. Women's education is often promoted by the state, non-government organizations and foreign donors as the most salient feature of women's citizenship rights, and as a pivotal concern in national development.

Women between cultural nationalism and colonial modernity

The tension between the provision of modern secular education to women through mass schooling, and the eagerness of religious communities to maintain control over women,

whom they regard as symbols of the community, goes back to colonial times. As the colonial state in India began to secularize knowledge and laws, women were perceived to represent the backwardness of local communities. Women's position in society was a popular barometer of civilization and it was argued that 'oriental backwardness' was partly due to women's low status in colonized societies (Jayawardena, 1994:12).

This charge by the colonial, modernizing state posed a dilemma for Indian nationalists, both Hindu and Muslim. While acquiring modern knowledge became essential for accommodation with colonial rule and to compete with other local communities, the maintenance of tradition, continuity and the past was imperative to preserve community identity (Chatterjee, 1986). Hindu nationalists resolved this dilemma by invoking a division between the home and the world (Chatterjee, 1989). The public sphere, now under colonial domination, became a modern space where the business of politics and commerce was transacted by men; the home, as the private space of the colonized, represented tradition, continuity with the past, morality and spiritual superiority. Women - the symbols of tradition and community honour - were to be protected from the polluting influences of western culture. Modernity was not to be allowed into the home.

Muslim nationalist reformers were equally concerned with the preservation of culture, tradition and their unique religious identity in the face of the onslaught of an intrusive modernity (Saigol, 1999). The pressure to educate women could no longer be resisted as ideas of democracy, equality and liberty spread across the colonized landscape. The figure of the incarcerated and veiled native woman evoked images of horror in the enlightened among the colonized as well as the colonial master (Grewal, 1996). The inner sanctum of the colonized had to be rendered up and made transparent to

enable more efficient control and discipline by a state eager to restructure all aspects of the lives of the colonized.¹

Indian social and nationalist reformers believed that by initiating reform in the legal and social structures to allow widow remarriage, and by prohibiting the custom of *Sati*, ending polygamy, abolishing *purdah* (veiling) and providing Indian women with modern education, the charge of 'backwardness' could be countered and such symbols of modernity and progress could be useful for nationalist reconstruction. This consciousness, argues Jayawardena, demanded a new woman who would be a companion to her husband and not merely a childbearing, subordinate being (Jayawardena, 1994:12; Khan, 1999:41).

Thus, arguments for women's education ensued. Women were required to be traditional and modern - traditional because the roles of wives, mothers and homemakers were still considered their primary roles; and modern because mothering and housekeeping could now be done along modern, rational and scientific lines instead of being based on superstitious beliefs and practices. The purpose of modern schooling in 19th century India was thus the creation of not only *moral* motherhood but enlightened and *modern* motherhood. As Kumari Jayawardena states:

The objectives of the reformers were thus twofold: to establish in their countries a system of stable, monogamous, nuclear families with educated and employable women...and yet to ensure that women would retain a position of traditional subordination within the family. (Jayawardena, 1994:15)

This education was not intended to liberate women as Jayawardena argues:

The policies of promoting women's

education and the type of education provided were not intended to promote women's emancipation or independence, but to reinforce patriarchy and the class system. The plea that education would only improve women's efficiency as wives and mothers left its indelible mark on the education policy. (Jayawardena, 1994:89)

The goal of nationalist education, therefore, remained essentially conservative and primarily oriented toward the preservation of patriarchal values and norms, while its methodology acquired the form of modern mass schooling.

Women's Education and Muslim Reformers

The first generation of Muslim reformers reflect a response not only to the decline of Muslim power and the advent of British rule, they also address the degeneration of the Muslim tradition which had become steeped in ignorance, superstitious beliefs, rituals and magic (Minault, 1998). These reformers included Syed Ahmad Khan, Nazeer Ahmad and Altaf Hussain Hali who sought to arrest the political, economic, cultural and social decline of Muslims through accommodation with a modern western secular education, while retaining those aspects of religion they believed were essential for identity. However, despite his fervent pleas to male Muslim youth to acquire education in the secular sciences, Syed Ahmad Khan believed that women must not be exposed to its potentially corrupting influences, and their learning should be limited to religious instruction, household management, and motherhood skills (Saigol, 1997). He believed that Muslim women should only receive a modern education after Muslim males had been educated.

Nazeer Ahmad and Altaf Hussain Hali wrote novels exhorting Muslim women to reach for ideal Muslim womanhood as imagined by the male reformers. Nazeer Ahmad, in his famous work, *Meerat-ul-Uroos* (Bride's Mirror) created a contrast between two sisters, one a quintessential 'good' woman in possession of all the virtues of a respectable Muslim woman, and the other, a typical 'bad' woman who is a wasteful, disobedient and irreligious wife (Saigol, 1999). This work was brought to the notice of the Director of Education of the Northern and Western provinces and was recommended as a textbook and guide for the education of girls. Within a period of about two years, ten thousand copies were sold and several editions published. Sections of the novel continue to be a part of state textbooks until today.

Guidebooks, texts and journals for the instruction of women within a Muslim ideal of womanhood continued to be produced and widely disseminated (Minault, 1998). Prominent among these were Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi's encyclopaedic work, *Bahishti Zewar* (Heavenly Adornments) and Syed Mumtaz Ali's *Huquq-un Niswan* (The Rights of Women). Thanvi's work was a detailed treatise on the regulation of women's behaviour and contained guidelines for the proper management of the household, while emphasizing individual piety. This work categorically laid out woman's secondary role and position within the Muslim hierarchy (Metcalf, 1990). Metcalf argues that while Thanvi believed that men and women were equal religiously, he staunchly averred that women's status in the home was subordinate and that their education should be tailored towards making them better housewives and mothers (Metcalf, 1990).

This was a response to colonial rule. The public sphere was beyond the control of Muslim men, therefore the private sphere had to be reorganized to restructure

Muslim power; it was by teaching women proper religion that they could be empowered to sustain Muslim families against superstition and detrimental customs on the one hand, and a modernizing English education on the other (Metcalf, 1990). However, *Bahishti Zewar*, a representative of the Muslim Ashrafia, is regarded by other writers as a desperate attempt to preserve the rapidly eroding feudal culture of veiling and incarcerating women, and maintaining control over every detail of their daily existence (Ali, 1992).

Mumtaz Ali, however, seemed to be ahead of his time as he referred to women's 'rights' and recommended a broadly humanistic education which would help diminish the influence of custom and superstition, while emphasizing women's rights as propagated within Islam (Minault, 1998). His work, however, was received with hostility by the elite Muslim classes in Northern India. Over a period of time women's Urdu magazines, especially *Huquq-un Niswan*, *Khatun* and *Ismat*, played a significant role in disseminating ideas of women's rights to education and knowledge (Minault, 1998). Nevertheless, the thrust of most of the materials in these magazines was on making women competent homemakers, obedient wives and good mothers. The aim of most of the reformist activity of the period was on domesticating women of the well to do classes. The same refrain is discernible in the large number of poems of Akbar Allahabadi, who used a satirical tone to mock modernity and staunchly defended *purdah* and a conservative education for women (Saigol, 1999). Similarly, Pakistan's national poet, Allama Iqbal, writing in the first four decades of the twentieth century, warned against giving women the kind of education that would make them less feminine and docile (Saigol, 2007).

The male Muslim reformers mainly addressed a particular class composed of the *Ashrafia* in Northern India. Shahida

Lateef has argued that there was no monolithic Muslim consciousness in India as Muslim practices were regionally specific and varied according to class, but the construction of Muslim nationalism in Northern India required the erasure or denial of this diversity in order to create the sense of common identity which came to be organised around religion (Lateef, 1990:17-18). Since most reformers belonged to, and advocated, an education of respectability for the *Ashrafia*, they had to prove that education would not violate the principle of *purdah* (Khan, 1999:38). Even the Begum of Bhopal, who advocated women's education, insisted that *purdah* be observed in schools (Khan, 1999:39). However, the notion of 'upper class charity went a long way in making female education acceptable' (Khan, 1999:40). Ayesha Khan rightly observes that Muslim women who championed the cause of female education 'made repeated compromises with institutions or ideologies other than women's emancipation. They made concessions to Islam, to Muslim nationalism...and to the demands of their elite class...the deepest current of their beliefs was subject to the demands of religion' (Khan, 1999:44-45).

The staunchest advocates for the education of Muslim women in parts of India, whether male reformers or their female counterparts, had to perforce rely on religious arguments for promoting women's education. Very often, such arguments were overlaid with patriarchal reasoning along the lines that educating women would ensure efficient homes, obedient wives and moral mothers. The reasoning was fundamentally instrumental, and oriented to the needs of the 'Muslim nation.' This kind of entry strategy of women into the discourses of the liberal state was subsequently used by some strands of the women's movement which drew upon religious justifications for the advancement of women.

Pakistani Women's Movement and the Religious versus Secular Divide

The feminist movement in Pakistan reflects the tensions and contradictions that arise from the pre-colonial religious justifications for women's education and advancement, and the post-colonial secular strands of feminism that seek to shun a religious framework for women's rights (Mumtaz & Shaheed, 1987). Feminists with a secular orientation believed women's emancipation to be impossible within a religious idiom, finding religion to be inherently patriarchal. Within a broadly secular framework, there are diverse strands that range all the way from Marxist and socialist feminists to those who believe in women's human rights within the paradigm of a liberal state. It must be remembered though that there are too many overlaps and complexities to lay out strict categories, and the above distinctions merely reflect trends and tendencies.

Alternatively, a number of feminists reclaim feminism within a religious cosmos of multiple meanings. Mumtaz and Shaheed have argued that since Islam is the overarching reality within which most Pakistani women live their lives, it is a context that cannot be ignored or bypassed in any analysis, understanding or activism (Mumtaz & Shaheed, 1987). Others, who work within a religious paradigm, have engaged in a process of un-reading patriarchal interpretations of the *Qur'an* (Barlas, 2004). Still others have provided alternative theological interpretations in an effort to reconcile Islam and the modernist human rights discourse (Hassan, 1996; 2008). Feminist Psychotherapist, Durre Ahmad, applies a Jungian framework to argue that religion has been denigrated by positivist thinkers because of its deep connections with the feminine, emotional

and subjective, as opposed to the purportedly masculine world of scientific objectivity, rationality and value-neutrality (Ahmad, 1994; 1997).

In her work with the women of the Jamaat-i-Islami, Amina Jamal discerns agency and autonomy among them, and warns that secular feminists fail to grasp that women belonging to faith-based organizations negotiate with modernity on their own terms (Jamal, 2005). In a similar vein, Iqtidar, in her study of women belonging to the Jamaat-i-Islami and Jamaat ud-Daa'wa concludes that religion is a valid category for political analysis and that women's agency is perceptible, even if not expressed as a conscious feminist position (Iqtidar, 2008). Borrowing from the work of Saba Mahmood (2005) on the politics of piety, these feminists refute the notion that agency must be informed by feminist consciousness and argue that far from being coerced, women find agency and liberation by joining religious political parties, an act which provides space for activism and political engagement.

However, the approach of the feminists who seek to reconcile their feminism with faith-based politics, or work within a religious framework, has been challenged by a new generation of feminists located within a secular feminist tradition. Fauzia Gardezi offered an early critique of the Women's Action Forum (WAF) movement in Pakistan by arguing that the women's movement encountered problems trying to function within an Islamic framework inherently opposed to women's interests, and by failing to incorporate feminist knowledge and principles sufficiently into the movement (Gardezi, 1990). Similarly, Afiya Zia argues that the ascendancy of a new feminism located in Islamic discourse and 'non-confrontational, privatized and personalized', whose aim is to 'empower' women within Islam, is not a post-9/11

development as is often assumed; rather, it is the result of 'unresolved debates on the issue of religion within the progressive women's movement'. (Zia, 2009a). It is the accommodation of religion-based feminist arguments by the primarily secular feminist movement of the 1980s, that paved the way legitimizing such voices and, in the process, marginalizing its own agenda. Arguing that the new reconstructionist politics of feminism that seeks to separate negative cultural practices from 'pure' religion, ultimately pays a price for 'such a project is willing to sacrifice if it does not fit the cultural, spiritual or political requirements of an increasingly conservative and anti-women agenda of the religio-political forces in Pakistan' (Zia, 2009b).

In her critique of the Al-Huda movement in Pakistan and internationally, Sadaf Ahmad concludes that while this organization has been successful in highlighting and redefining women's Muslim identity, and associating it with Pakistani identity, the movement aims to create a monolithic culture and instils particular values and behaviours that may be at variance with other ways of being Muslim for which there is no space (Ahmad, 2009:188-189). Farida Shaheed, while noting that women do not constitute a homogenous group and are separated by class and culture, points out that:

A significant number of women themselves subscribe to the views of religiously defined groups. Indeed many women are active proponents of such views. And, as seen in the Al-Hafsa case, a number of women experience activism that seeks to control women as a group, as a personally empowering process.

In the Jamia Hafsa case alluded to here large numbers of women students carried

batons, kidnapped, threatened and committed other acts of violence in Islamabad, all in the name of religion. This violent 'empowerment' finally ended with 'Operation Silence' in July 2007 when the state used unbridled violence of its own to end their siege of the madrassa. Al-Huda and Al-Hafsa may be two very different kinds of women's religious movements, nevertheless, both seem to reinforce the conservative cultures of patriarchy.

In spite of the deep suspicion of faith-based politics among secular feminists, Nighat Khan outlines some of the dilemmas of working in an environment where Islam is the dominant religion and the state is defined within its parameters. It is difficult to argue that the personal is political, while upholding a secular position which strictly separates the private from public and personal from political, and more so in a context where there is no Church from which to separate the state (Khan, 1992). The interpenetration of the public and private is much greater in Pakistan as compared with countries where the two are kept relatively, though not completely, apart. In fact, Jamal argues that the modernizing state and secular nationalism have strengthened patriarchal control over women by re-creating the private and public domains, with the former representing culture and tradition, and the latter the legal-political arena (Jamal, 2010:135). Shaheed argues that everyday life blurs the lines that divide the conceptual separation of the political from cultural, social and economic, and religious groups actively support and collude in inscribing religion into the legal apparatus (Shaheed, 2009). Shaheed cautions against the use of the 'faith-based' versus 'non-faith based' binary as it "feeds into the agenda of the self-appointed guardians of religion (in this case Islam) who promote themselves as 'faith based' to the exclusion of all others as non-believers" (Shaheed, 2009).

Women's Education and Faith-Based Organizations

As regards women's education in 'faith-based' organizations, very few systematic studies have been carried out. While there has been a growing interest in *madrassa* education since 9/11, and *madrassa* reforms have generated much public debate, there have been few attempts to explore women's *madrassas*. Studies of *madrassas* have focused either on religion and violence (Rahman, 2004; ICG Report 2002), promotion of sectarianism (ICG Report, 2005) or as a social entity with a specific socio-economic role (Bano, 2007). However, the Jamia Hafsa events of 2007 generated an interest in studying girls' religious seminaries, and Muhammad Farooq carried out a study of the *Wafaq-ul-Madaris* Board Curriculum (Deobandi) for girls (Farooq, 2005).

Using a Foucauldian post-structuralist perspective, Farooq found that women's *madrassas* represent a total institution which disciplines women in a manner that suits the aims of the *madrassa*. The *Dars-e-Nizami* curriculum is different for boys and girls. The entire curriculum for girls revolves around the notions of homemaking, subservience to male authority and a secondary status in the social hierarchy. Most of the *madrassa* leaders and managers are men and the teaching is premised on value education through the curriculum, but also through inculcating *Aadab* (etiquette required of good Muslim women). This study reveals that women's education in religious settings is organized around the patriarchal ideologies espoused by the particular sect to which the *madrassa* belongs.

This kind of education is seen in contrast to the modernizing agenda of secular education adopted by most post-colonial states. However, in countries like Pakistan,

where the state is defined in religious terms and Islam is the state religion, the difference between community and state education, especially with regard to women's education, is not as steep as it might be in avowedly secular countries. The state educational system - its policies, curriculum and syllabi - reflects a deeply religious consciousness which is also steeped in patriarchal values (Saigol, 1990; 1995; 2003). However, a detailed and thorough study of religious beliefs and values regarding women's education, the manner in which these are interpreted by religious leaders, and the extent to which they are internalized or resisted by the followers has not been conducted in the past. It was to fill this gap, that the current study was conducted in the Pakistani cities of Lahore and Peshawar.

Findings of the Research

In the first phase of the research, leaders and teachers of Shi'ite and Sunni faith-based organizations² in Lahore and Peshawar were interviewed to learn how they interpret religious messages and injunctions on women's education. In the second phase, the followers and students of the same organizations were interviewed to explore the extent to which the teachings are internalized or rejected. For comparative purposes, civil society leaders and heads of development organizations were interviewed to see if their views on women's education differ significantly from those of religious organizations, and if so, in what ways. The materials being used for women's education were examined to understand the kinds of messages being conveyed.

The following questions were asked of all respondents: 1) Should women receive an education? 2) If yes, what kind of education should they be given? 3) Are there any particular subjects/topics that women should/should not be taught, and why? 4) What are your views on co-education? 5)

What is your opinion about the bombing and torching of girls' schools in the Malakand Division and the tribal areas? These questions were derived from Pakistan's social, cultural and political context where the state was locked in violent battles against the Taliban and a number of militant religious groups, who were believed to be bombing girls' schools and had banned women's education in Swat and other parts of the Malakand Division in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Furthermore, there has been a raging public debate between secularists, modernists and conservatives over the kind of education to be imparted.

Should women be given an education?

Contrary to the initial expectations of the researchers, the leaders, teachers, as well as followers, of all religious organizations expressed a strong support for women's education. The Taliban's banning of women's education seemed to have no direct bearing on the responses. A large number of respondents said that gaining knowledge is an essential duty of all Muslims - men and women. However, the reasons given for educating women varied considerably, and ranged from the idea that education is a basic need and a woman's right to the instrumental view that educated women nurture an educated nation. The differences in reasoning were discernible within the same organization, as the following responses from women belonging to the Jamaat-e-Islami demonstrate:

Education is a woman's right and responsibility.

The Qur'an considers women the creators of the human race. No one can deny that women raise the nation in their laps and this is a national duty.

Another perspective is offered by a woman belonging to the well to do, urban Al-Huda:

Yes, women must be educated. Mothers are very eager to get their children educated as they learn personal hygiene.

This response reflects an appeal to motherhood as well as to the middle class notion of personal hygiene. A member of the cross-sectarian Minhaj-ul-Quran which caters to the educated middle classes asserted gender equality in religion by saying that:

In Islam it is a duty to be educated and both men and women have been addressed equally. There is no discrimination in education.

Several women gave examples of the Prophet's (PBUH) wife Hazrat Ayesha and his daughter, Hazrat Fatima, who taught other women, and many pointed out that Hazrat Zainab had actually debated against a king in open court. These examples were designed to bolster the view that Islam enjoins education upon women. The Shi'ite organizations were even more emphatic in their support for women's education and equality, and argued that Islam has recommended an education for everyone, otherwise an economic slowdown can occur. Even the lower class, highly conservative Jamaat-ud-Daa'wa considered women's education to be a religious duty.

Similar results were obtained in Peshawar despite the initial assumption that people there would be generally more conservative and less amenable to the idea, especially since the JUI is the religio-political party that nurtured the Taliban. A JUI (S) leader contended that Islam makes no distinction between men and women and that there are now more *madrassas* for women than ever before. Some of the reasoning observed

in Peshawar is interesting in that it is based on a concept of reward. Respondents asserted that if a man educates his concubine and then frees and marries her, his blessings would be doubled. Another man believed that a man who educates two daughters would be allowed in heaven. Women's education here appears as a transactional relation between God and man. However, the instrumental view that educated women make better mothers and wives was a recurring theme in Peshawar as much as in Lahore.

What kind of education should be imparted to women?

While there were no significant differences in the responses to whether or not women should be educated, there was a marked gender difference with regard to the *kind* of education women should or should not be given. An overwhelming majority of respondents emphasized the importance of religious education as a necessary component along with worldly subjects. However, a substantial number stressed differences between men and women that must be taken into account. For example, a man from the Jamaat-e-Islami said:

Allah has made man the breadwinner and woman is the weaker sex. When a man returns home tired, a mere glance from the woman takes away all his troubles. This is nature's creation. Allah has not given the West or anyone else the right to go against this law and the difference between men and women must be kept in mind when they are educated.

Most of the respondents who felt that the 'natural' differences between men and women should determine the kind of education they receive, supported medicine and teaching for women as respectable

subjects. According to a man from Jamaat-ud-Daa'wa:

A woman has her own skills and nature. She should specialize in the work she is required to do and not be made to study things that are used in work she won't do. A woman can be a good doctor, nurse or teacher.

The logic was that women doctors and teachers are needed to attend to female patients and educate girls. The two professions were considered respectable and well-suited to women's nature. However, education for certain professions was considered inappropriate for women, for example, it was considered distasteful that they should become drivers, engineers or enter industry where they could potentially mix with men. Women from Al-Huda recommended that women should be taught to be moral, well-mannered, and kind-hearted - a character-building education often emphasized in missionary schools where many women belonging to elite classes were educated in the 1960s and 1970s. Some women belonging to Al-Huda also suggested that education should be tailored towards the improvement of women's economic status in life. Keeping in mind women's 'delicate nature' was also mentioned by some women members of the Shi'ite Jamia Minhaj-ul-Hussain.

A number of male respondents emphasized that women should receive education in Home Economics and the Domestic Sciences, while none of the female respondents suggested this. The following is a typical example of the masculine conception of women's gender roles:

Home Economics is obviously only for women, not for boys. When we want to bring up girls according to our own context, then we know what kind of

syllabus to make... Allah has made woman the weaker sex so physically and mentally she is not suited for hard labour. Woman has been given most respect by Islam... A lady doctor or professor is good but if you put her in the wrong profession society suffers. Men are also distracted from their focus. We should not take a pattern on women's education that is handed down from above. So-called 'progress' is taking us towards westernization and we are just imitating them.

This extract from an interview with a JI leader reflects the anxiety that if women were to be given an education unsuited to their perceived gender roles, society would suffer in this 'imitation of the West'. The idea that vice comes from the outside, mainly from the West, was a recurring theme among many of the men who seemed concerned about keeping Muslim women 'feminine'. In sharp contrast to this, a woman from Al-Huda asserted:

Subjects like Home Economics and Domestic Sciences are useless. They should be taught the subjects that they want to study instead of wasting time on these.

A woman belonging to the much more liberal Shi'ite organization, Jamia Minhaj-ul-Hussain, had similar opinions:

Women must be free to study all subjects ... allowed to become doctors, engineers, pilots, army officers or anything else. If we go through Islamic history we'll find a lot of examples of women contesting the rulers of their time, fighting wars, helping wounded soldiers in battle, trading along with men independently or as partners.

However, a Shi'ite male from Jamia Al-Muntazar expressed sentiments similar to the Sunni men:

Women don't have to engage in trade. We have to see which work suits men and what suits women.

Interestingly, very similar ideas were articulated by men belonging to the cross-sectarian and fairly liberal Minhaj-ul-Quran:

Subjects should be according to gender needs. Women should not box and men should not be involved in childcare. Women make excellent teachers and men are better in the army.

Subjects should be based on the psychological and physical needs of the genders. Physics, Chemistry and Biology can be studied by both. However, Economics should be studied by men and Home Economics by women. Men are better suited to work outside the home.

However, a woman member of the same organization seems to disagree:

Women should get all kinds of education; even if space has to be explored ... they should go into science, engineering, medicine, teaching ... everything. Hazrat Fatimah even gave water to the injured during battle.

Arguments based on the gender division of labour and separate spheres keep recurring within men's responses with a fair level of consistency within and across organizations. On the contrary, women appear to be equally consistent in their view that when it comes to learning, there is no difference between the two. A slightly more nuanced perspective comes,

surprisingly, from Jamaat-ud-Daa'wa, where woman's education is upheld except in cases where her body and sexuality are exploited for profit:

Islam does not prevent women from going into any field. Women can go into the battlefield and fight. They can give water to the wounded and bandage the injured ... and also join the army. But a woman should not be exploited and not be made to sit at the reception to get good business. She should not be turned into a showpiece as Islam forbids this.

In Peshawar, the responses were relatively more conservative. The following is the opinion of a male member of JUI-S:

A man only educates himself but a woman educates the whole family. But religious education is important in which girls should be educated on how to take care of their husbands and their in-laws and what are the laws of Allah one should abide by. The present formal education is not right for girls as it is spreading immoral behaviour. They have abandoned *pardah*, I think wearing the *hijab* is very important as it will enable girls/women to go out. Even within the educational institutions there should be strict adherence to *pardah*.

The concern with morality and chastity seems to be greater in the more conservative city of Peshawar, especially among religious organizations like the JUI-S which instructed the Taliban. Formal education is denounced because of its potential to violate the sanctity of veiling and lead to immorality. The following responses offer some insights:

JUI-S female teacher:

Women's education should be limited to that prescribed by our religion and within the confines of *pardah*.

JUI-F female teacher:

Education should be religious and it is important to spread the teachings of Islam, if it is only limited to worldly education then there is no use.

Even in Peshawar, the Shi'ite respondents appear to be more liberal. The following responses by Shi'ite men depict a mindset that is much more supportive of all kinds of education for women:

Education is very important for girls - both religious and secular. We have children who come to our *madrassas* but we encourage them to go to schools and only spend an hour here so that they are well-versed in our history and beliefs. Nowadays, women have also entered the armed forces in our country. I think usually girls do better in any area they choose to enter. Look at the example of Iran which is a theocratic state, but women are highly visible in all fields.

The responses of the followers and students of the organizations were similar to the views of the leaders and teachers showing a high level of internalization of religious messages. An overview of the responses to what women may or may not be taught reveals that there is a gender difference in how women are perceived. Men, who rely on women's labour in the home, seem to emphasize Home Economics education and one that is oriented to household and wifely duties, while women consistently emphasize their

right to learn all kinds of secular subjects to be able to enter any field of endeavour. Interestingly, women seem to think that Home Sciences are a waste of time as such skills are usually best learned at home.

Women do not perceive themselves as the delicate and weaker sex for whom certain subjects/professions are unsuitable. However, men regard some areas such as science, engineering, sports and the army, as male domains. Women invoke Islamic history to prove that Muslim women participated in battles, politics as well as judicial and other functions. There seems to be some difference between Sunni and Shi'ite males for the latter appear to be much more open to the idea of women learning all kinds of subjects and entering any field of endeavour. However, the Shi'ite sample was too small to reach definite conclusions and a separate study would be required to find out if there are systematic sectarian differences with regard to gender.

Co-education versus segregation of the sexes

The issue of segregated versus co-education seemed to elicit a great deal of anxiety around moral transgression and the fear of loss of purity and piety. Co-education was upbraided by virtually every respondent in all the religious organizations. One of the frequently expressed fears was that co-education would violate the injunctions of *hijab*, therefore "it is better to stay away from what is strictly forbidden...it is better for the two to remain separate." Another reason for supporting sex-segregated education that was offered by many female respondents was that women perform better in single sex institutions, which also exist in western countries. One woman from JI expressed her strong support for Jamia Hafsa:

Even Britain and America have separate universities and colleges

for girls. We had Jamia Hafsa. There were no arms there ... only thousands of women studying the *Quran*. But it was destroyed by our rulers.

Another reason for opposition to co-education was articulated by a member of Al-Huda:

In co-education students don't take education seriously. They develop sex consciousness at a young age. Co-education is alright at the primary level, but as they grow older it is not good. Allah enjoins *purdah* on us.

Underlying the anxiety over co-education is a fear of sexuality and the potential for the violation of moral norms. Several women respondents, especially from Al-Huda, voiced their concern over a budding sexuality. Members of Minhaj-ul-Quran argued that co-education would create an immoral environment and violate the norms of modesty and chastity. One male respondent from Minhaj-ul-Quran expressed the fear of female anatomy and its propensity to beguile and entice men. While these concerns kept recurring among the male respondents, one woman from Minhaj-ul-Quran pointed out that immorality is also present in single sex institutions.

The Shi'ite organization, Minhaj-ul-Hussain concurred with Sunni organizations regarding the age at which co-education may be permissible, that is, either at the primary or at university levels. Co-education during the crucial pubertal years seemed to create the most fear. On the other hand, one Shi'ite woman from the same organization believed that co-education is working fine in Islamic countries and is a problem only in the immoral western culture. All the male respondents of the Jamaat-ud-Daa'wa were strongly opposed to co-education.

The fear of moral decay and decadence was even greater in Peshawar as evident in the following response by a member of JUI:

No, co-education is not good as things are not right in our society anyway. For instance, I know that a daughter and father in Karachi were watching cable television and following a program ... they ended up having sex; there is another example of incest between a brother and sister ... this is due to co-education which provides the grounds for sex.

A fear of immorality and the decay of family values was evident in the responses of the followers and students. Nevertheless, one follower of Al-Huda said: "What is wrong with it? Women have fought wars alongside men," and another woman from Minhaj-ul-Quran did not find anything wrong with co-education up to certain levels and under certain conditions. The Shi'ite Imamia Students' Organization supported co-education as long as *purdah* is observed and preferably when children are older and can distinguish right from wrong. The strongest support for co-education came from a woman who belongs to the Shi'ite Jamia Minhaj-ul-Hussain who said:

Yes, absolutely there should be co-education. It has a lot of advantages. In the West they are not stupid that they give co-education. Religion is one thing and the world another...if a boy and girl want to get romantically involved that can happen outside an educational institution too. Obviously, young people get involved, but this can be taken positively. They are of the same age and status and understand each other. If they choose each other for marriage, what is wrong with that? Parents don't oppose marriage so

why not get them married? All students are not alike. The home environment, teaching and upbringing also play a part.

Conversely, a male respondent from Jamaat-ud-Daa'wa strongly opposed co-education:

No, there should be no co-education. Islam does not permit co-education. Islam says that even a woman's voice should not be heard outside the four walls of the house. No strange man should hear her voice. So how can Islam tolerate that a girl and boy be educated together?

There seems to be a sectarian and gender divide with regard to co-education and mixing of the sexes. The Shi'ite women seem to have no issue and even recommend the mixing of men and women as healthy, while the Sunni (mainly Deobandi) males demonstrate an enormous fear of female sexuality and condemn the potential overturning of patriarchal norms that govern sexual interactions. The overall finding was that sexual segregation is preferred by most religious respondents as it is expected to ensure the maintenance of the patriarchal social and moral order, which depends on the strict control over female sexuality and the regulation of sexual relations within the bounds of licit sexual conduct in marriage.

Violence against women's education

The issue of violence and the bombing and torching of girls' schools in the Malakand Division and other parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, elicited responses that reflect ambivalence, consternation, denial and the invocation of conspiracy theories. While the act was seriously condemned across the board, there was enormous reluctance to attribute it to the Taliban and the militant

groups. The constant refrain was that no Muslim could commit such an act, so this was being done by the US, NATO forces, Russians, Hindus, foreigners, the secret agencies and the army. The following is a typical response by a woman of the JI:

No brand of Islam propagates this. We are against violence. But there is a historical context of what happened in Bajaur. Their culture was under threat. In Jamia Hafsa too, women and children were killed mercilessly. In Afghanistan and FATA the Russians were there so the Taliban had to be strict.

There is an implied admission here that the Taliban may have been responsible but they were forced to commit such acts because of Russian presence. Another woman, also from JI, said:

We don't know who is doing this bombing – the US, Taliban or the agencies. It is not right to call this act Islamic. Islam gives importance to education.

Some of the women respondents of JI pointed out the massacre in Jamia Hafsa to underscore the point that when the state itself murders it remains unquestioned. There seemed to be a veiled attempt to absolve and condone the Taliban by highlighting the atrocities committed by the militarized state. A member of Al-Huda, an organization which presents itself as a modern, liberal and feminist version of Islam, said the following:

This is not an Afghan problem. India has opened consulates all over Afghanistan. The Hindus are doing this. They are letting criminals out of jail who are doing it. The people of Swat were peaceful and contented. The media is giving a false view. The

Russians and the US caused the problem in Afghanistan and blamed everything on the Taliban. They were educating girls inside buildings which were destroyed by the enemies. There was no place left to educate girls who can only be taught inside four walls.

Here one finds a justification for the Taliban's opposition to women's education by resorting to an argument based on safety and protection. The 'no Muslim can harm another' reasoning was repeated by members of Minhaj-ul-Quran who also expressed the suspicion that such acts of violence were being committed by outsiders or the agencies. Most of the religious respondents staunchly asserted that such acts have no basis in Islam and that this is a conspiracy to malign the religion. Similar suspicions and denial were perceptible in Peshawar. According to a member of the JUI-F:

Islam does not even tell us to destroy the assets of our enemies – bombing of schools is being done by the agencies and not Taliban. They are doing this to get assistance from external sources – I want peace and happiness in my country.

Another response from Peshawar:

Destroying girl's schools is a conspiracy against us – they want to prove that we are against women's education – these are not Muslims. This is a conspiracy to close down *madrassas* – it is important that all Muslims unite.

A member of the JUI-S, an organization believed to have spawned the Taliban, says:

The Americans are doing this since I don't think the Taliban can

do this ... no Muslim can do this as Islam means peace.

Militant violence against women's educational institutions is relegated to the dark realms of conspiracy. There is a great deal of congruence among the leaders, teachers, students and followers of religious organizations that no Muslim is capable of such acts and these are being committed to demonize Islam as a violent religion that is anti-women. However, a woman respondent seems to suspect the religious militants as she says:

If those who bomb schools want that girls should stay at home and not go to school then they should just not send their own girls to schools instead of bombing them.

In sum, it appears that all the religious organizations support the education of women as long as the curriculum and syllabus can be controlled, and women are trained to be good Muslim wives and mothers. While both religious and secular subjects are upheld as necessary for women, there is great emphasis on a proper religious, conservative and patriarchal education. The patriarchal gender division of labour is clearly visible in that men consider an education in the domestic sciences essential for women, while nearly all the women feel it is a useless subject. Men were far more likely to see women confined to certain gender-based roles and responsibilities as compared to women.

Men seem to be far more rooted than women in the idea of separate spheres – the public and the private. Men seem to emphasize the instrumental reason for educating women as several men argued that educated women create an educated family and nation; they believe the nature of women makes certain occupations unsuitable for them. Women stake a claim

to education as a basic right and rarely accepted the idea that there are innate differences between men and women making them suitable for different vocations. The gender divide was thus clearly evident in the responses to the kind of education deemed permissible for women. In general, however, Shi'ite men and women appeared to be more liberal and open to women's secular education and emancipation than the Sunnis, although greater study is needed to ascertain if there is a systematic sectarian divide.

Patriarchal Ideology and the Curricula of Faith-Based Organizations

In order to explore how the patriarchal ideologies reflected in the interviews with the respondents from faith-based organizations translate into curricular and textual practices, a sample of supplementary books used in Deobandi *Madrassas* for girls were examined for their content. The lessons contained therein were approved by the Wafaq-ul-Madaris (Deobandi).

The titles of these books, intended specifically for women, are telling with regard to the kind of 'ideal Muslim woman' that is to be nurtured. For example, one book is called *Jannati Aurat (A Woman of Paradise)* written by Maulana Mufti Muhammad Irshad Hussain. The sub-title of this book says, 'a valuable gift for Muslim women' and adds that 'the reading of this book is bound to make every home like heaven.' The book has several sections on what constitutes a virtuous woman. Some examples are:

- *A virtuous woman is one who obeys her husband; she shall enter Paradise from whichever door she desires.*
- *A virtuous woman is half the deen (religion).*

- *A virtuous woman is the best form of wealth.*
- *Virtuous women are superior to hooris (virgins & paradise).*

A good number of the topics/sections are devoted to the idea of marriage, home and ideal wifehood as subordination to the needs of the husband and capitulation to his whims and desires:

- *A woman who does not marry is laanat (curse) on men.*
- *A good tempered wife is best for man.*
- *Fulfilling the husband's need is the first duty.*
- *God loves a woman who obeys her husband.*
- *Serving the husband is like attaining shahadat (martyrdom).*
- *Demanding divorce makes jannat haram (forbidden) on woman.*
- *A woman who demands khula is a munafiq (hypocrite).*
- *Washing husband's clothes will bring blessings on her.*

Several topics in this book exhort women toward household labour and warn her about her limits and the boundaries within which she must confine her activities. There are detailed prescriptions and proscriptions regulating her person:

- *Housework for women is equal to jihad (holy war).*
- *Woman is the protector of the home.*
- *A woman who goes out with fashion will be in darkness on Judgement Day.*

- *A room is better than the courtyard.*
- *A woman must not go out, or go to a janaza (funeral) or mazaar (shrine).*
- *Keep all openings - windows, doors - closed.*
- *It is haram to sit next to strange men.*
- *Laughing and talking to husband's brother is haram.*
- *Use asthar (lining) for see-through fabric.*
- *A woman who wears a pyjama should pray for blessing and forgiveness.*
- *A woman must not wear a thin dopatta (head scarf) through which her complexion can be seen.*
- *A woman's shalwar (traditional baggy pants) should be long enough to fall below her ankles.*
- *Ghungaroes (ankle bracelets worn by dancing girls) and jewellery are strictly forbidden.*

This short overview of the topics covered by this book reflects a deep-rooted patriarchal ideology steeped in the husband's superiority and the wife's subordination to him. At the same time there is enormous moral anxiety over her activities lest she come into contact with strange men or is seen through the windows or doors of the house, or adorns herself for any reason outside of pleasing her husband which is her primary duty. Underlying this discourse is the fear of loss of control over a woman's sexuality. Her freedom is curtailed so that male control over her body may be complete. In a style reminiscent of Thanvi's *Bahishti Zewar*, she is forbidden from public spaces and every minutiae of her existence is regulated. However, she is

allowed to partake of masculine victories and prestigious positions vicariously through serving the husband, which is likened to shahadat and housework, which is equated with *jihad*.

Another book also used in some Deobandi *Madrassas* for women in Peshawar is *Misali Dulhan* (Ideal Bride) by Qari Jameel-ur-Rehman. This book begins with a few chapters on the position of women in Islam followed by a comparison to women's position within Judaism, Christianity and Hinduism showing how the latter do not allow women the respect and status that Islam does. This comparison is followed by homilies on being a good wife and mother, obedient daughter and efficient housekeeper. The names of some of the sections are self-evident in the ideology they aim to promote:

- *Motherhood is the Road to Heaven*
- *The Moment a Woman becomes a Mother she is Superior to All Angels*
- *Duties to the Husband*
- *Marriage brings Respect, Dignity and Greatness.*
- *Respect for the Husband*

The sermons are followed by exhortations to women to 'speak properly', 'don't ask the husband for too many things', 'don't complain too much', 'always be happy about blessings', 'keep expressing love', 'don't point out his shortcomings', 'be a good housewife', 'forget his past errors', 'keep his desires in mind', 'don't spy on him', 'don't fast without his permission', 'follow even the most difficult orders', 'if the husband is angry, your prayers will not be accepted', 'don't fight with him', 'adjust with in-laws', 'don't label, don't accuse', 'try to reach a compromise with the husband', 'don't complain about financial troubles',

'control your temper', 'don't make mountains out of molehills', 'cooperate with him', 'don't refuse him sex' and so on.

These pieces of advice are followed by the kinds of women men like, the characteristics of an exemplary wife, and the characteristics of a bad woman. This book also seems to follow the pattern set by Thanvi's famous *Bahishti Zewar*, a book often gifted to brides. Women are asked to forego all needs, desires and wants in favour of the husband who is to be served, obeyed, and loved under all circumstances. There seems to be a remarkable continuity between the beliefs of pre-colonial cultural nationalists who sought to maintain control over what women were taught, and the perspectives of modern-day faith-based organizations. There is an obvious contradiction here for development practitioners who believe women's rights, equality and empowerment to be the prerequisites of social development, and at the same time wish to pursue their agenda through faith-based organizations.

In *Misali Dulhan*, the statement that if Allah had allowed *sajda* (prostration) to anybody it would have been to a husband by a wife, highlights the husband's status. While one narrative is reserved for women, another one simultaneously tells men their position and privileges: the main among these is 'you won't be questioned for beating a disobedient wife' and 'don't go to hell trying to be modern.' Since domestic violence is considered a bane in modern times, this book legitimizes such violence by invoking religious sanction.

The urge to exert control over women's bodies and sexuality is reflected in the detailed advice given to women regarding their bodies. *Aurton Ki Zeenat Aur Araish Kay Sharaie Ahkaam* (Shariat Injunctions on How Women Should Adorn and Decorate Themselves) by Maulana Sharifullah Madani lays out detailed prescriptions

regarding women's dress, cosmetics and jewellery. Women are instructed to avoid pants and short shirts, wear a decent length *shalwar*, and told how thin a *dopatta* may or may not be. They are told to shun white dresses, short sleeved and sleeveless shirts with long slits, and to avoid dressing like men, especially wearing masculine shoes! They are strictly forbidden to wear any kind of jewellery which creates music, especially anklets and ankle bracelets, because of the association of such adornments with dancing girls. If a locket or ring is worn it should have only Allah's name on it. Perfume is to be used only for the husband's pleasure and by no means should the face be shown to strangers, otherwise they would be in serious trouble on Judgment Day. Cosmetic surgery and visiting beauty parlours is off limits and during *Iddat* (three month period following a husband's death) minimum make-up or jewellery should be used. Women are advised not to speak of other women's make-up lest unrelated men hear such talk.

The obsession with women and their bodies is discernible in the other books included in the sample selected for study. A book called *Tohfa-tul-Uroos* by Maulana Allam Mahmood Mehdi Istanboli states that even if a woman marries an adulterer, she becomes an adulterer. The book then elaborates on the 'features of a good woman', and 'features of a bad woman', and exhorts women by admonishing: 'don't act like a man and vice versa', 'don't be an exhibitionist', 'the conditions of sex life in Paradise', 'how strong should a woman's honour be' and the 'punishment for a disobedient wife'. The preoccupation with a 'disobedient wife' seems intense and continues across the spectrum of books written as guides for young girls. Notions of honour and punishment, combined with the spectre of a disobedient wife, and 'acting like a man' reflect a deeply-entrenched fear of female sexuality that lies at the heart of the patriarchal urge to control women's bodies.

The few selected samples from the literature taught at some of the religious seminaries for girls is sufficient to advance the argument that such teaching cannot be empowering for women. On the contrary, it does the exact opposite by denying women the right of choice in their daily lives, circumscribing their freedom of movement, and decrying the assertion of equality with their husbands. It is, therefore, erroneous to assume that education, in and of itself, is an empowering strategy because empowerment in the end depends upon the *kind* of education given and the *content* of what is taught.

A brief look at some of the magazines and periodicals produced by religious organizations sheds further light on the ideology they promote with regard to women's role and status in society. A study of the militant media in Pakistan by the Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies³ reveals that at least half a dozen publications that mainly target women promote a religious and *Jihad*-based education and attempt to convince mothers, wives, sisters and daughters to encourage their male relatives to participate in *Jihad*. The language used is deceptively simple and appeals to emotions. Some of these publications form parts of the main publication, for example, *Khawateen ka Islam* (Women's Islam) is distributed along with the publication 'Islam' as a supplementary magazine. Some magazines, like *Tayyabaat*, are monthly publications dedicated to women. *Tayyabaat* carries stories about the atrocities committed by western societies against Muslim women, and their practices such as *pardah* (veiling) and use of the *hijab*. These stories aim to create a sense of indignation and rage among the readers.

Some of the publications discuss women's issues on which they receive advice from male Muftis (religious experts) regarding any questions they may pose. Most of the questions are about day-to-day religious

rituals such as the veil, jewellery and cosmetics. In *Khawateen ka Islam* readers can call a hotline with questions and relevant replies are published.

The most significant aspect of these magazines is their frontal attack on women's rights and movements for equality and emancipation. Some opinion writers published in these magazines argue that the notion of equal rights for men and women has destroyed Islamic culture and the traditional family structure and condemn women who blindly follow western practices. They exhort women to remain confined to the home and cite research which has 'proved' that such women are more self-confident. Such ideology contrasts directly with development discourse that emphasizes women's equality and emancipation as well as their freedom of movement.

Many of these publications by religious organizations carry serialized fictions and short stories that underscore Islamic morality and show how one who deviated from the 'right path' suffered. Many of the stories are about the 'bad effects' of a vibrant social life and the message is that an overly social woman destroys her home. Magazines like *Tayyabaat* openly criticize women who enter politics and education. One opinion column stated that "nations which nominate a woman as a leader cannot achieve prosperity." Since political participation is considered the cornerstone of women's empowerment within the dominant liberal development paradigm, there is a glaring contradiction between their perspectives and attitudes of religious groups.

Interestingly, many of the magazines contain advertisements – a modern, capitalist and allegedly 'immoral' practice. However, the advertisements focus on the Islamic veil and new styles and varieties of

Hijab or *Niqab* fashions. Others promote cosmetics, medicines, food items and Islamic books. Therefore, there is an ironic commercial dimension to the project of religious ideology. Other items contain food recipes which reinforce the idea that a woman's place is in the kitchen.

The majority of the writers of these magazines are women and many of them refrain from revealing their own identity. They use pen names like Umme Hammad (Mother of Hammad) or Hamsheera Hafiz Muhammad Iqbal (sister of Hafiz Iqbal). Revealing the name or identity publicly is looked upon as the loss of *purdah*, so women use the route of the pen name to preserve their veiling while putting their views out in the public – an interesting meeting of the private and public within a religious universe.

The books used by religious seminaries, the topics taught to women and the popular publications by the religious and militant media, all show a clear and irreconcilable contradiction between the liberal development discourse and faith-based education. While religious organizations seek to construct a particular kind of woman that fits within the confines of Muslim and sectarian patriarchies, the development discourse aims to liberate women and enable them to receive a secular education and enter a profession of choice, participate in politics, enter assemblies, make laws and govern. Development regards women's emancipation and equality as necessary, while religious outfits abhor these. Development seeks freedom of choice in marriage, profession and the number and spacing of children, while religious organizations believe this to be the prerogative of the husband. The one emphasizes equality, the other hierarchy; one promotes freedom, the other confinement; one stresses rights, the other duties. Routing development through

faith-based organizations would be tantamount to denying women their most basic citizens' rights granted in the fundamental law of the land.

Secular Civil Society and Women's Education

For purposes of comparison, views on women's education were obtained from members of civil society who are either avowedly secular in their approach, or whose work is not specifically tailored to religion. These included academics, feminists, teachers and development practitioners. Their perspectives on women's education offer interesting contrasts and convergences with the respondents of the faith-based organizations.

When asked about whether or not women should be given an education, a male respondent in Lahore appeared amused by the question and said: "Only the Taliban can be against it, nobody else could think that way". As regards the kind of education that women should receive, Mubarak Ali, a historian, said:

Purists like Imam Ghazali and Ashraf Thanvi say women should just get religious education and not worldly, but it should be absolutely the same education [as men] and there should be no difference.

A leading feminist in Lahore responded to the question of the kind of education women should receive, saying:

They should study all kinds of subjects. Religious education should be a choice but instead of religious education it should be Ethics/Morality or Comparative Religion, not just one religion.

An interesting response to the question of women's education in the domestic and home sciences was provided by Neelam Hussain, a feminist who said:

I don't find Home Economics or domestic science very exciting. Home Economics is inappropriate for women. There should be Home Economics for men though. Otherwise education should be same for both.

This response is in sharp contrast to the views of religious men who advocated a domestic education for women. The feminist, on the contrary, believes that it is men who require such an education underlining the idea that men need to take equal responsibility for homemaking instead of upholding the patriarchal division of labour which locates men in the public sphere. Mubarak Ali's perspective was even stronger. As he said:

The subject of Home Economics reflects our faulty social structure in which women are limited to some tasks and men to others. It is based on the faulty idea of separate spheres. It simply justifies the gender division of labour and should not be included in the syllabus.

All the secular and development practitioners in Lahore supported co-education, however, one feminist opined that women are occasionally more self-assured and perform better in single sex institutions where their level of comfort is higher. Nevertheless, they should be given a choice. The men, however, strongly supported co-education and argued that it creates healthy attitudes towards the opposite sex and removes suspicions and misgivings between the sexes in an otherwise segregated society. They maintained that men and women no longer

remain mysterious strangers to each other and develop better understandings. This contrasts very sharply with the views of religious men who expressed deep-rooted fears of licentiousness and transgression of moral norms in a co-education environment.

In sharp contrast to both religious men and women, secular civil society members roundly condemned the burning and bombing of girls' schools and attributed it totally to the religious militants and the Taliban.

Development practitioners in Peshawar focused more on the low quality of education and the low priority accorded to it in the national budget. A woman parliamentarian outlined the problem thus:

A minimum of 6 per cent of the GDP needs to be allocated to education. Do away with the dual education system and ensure elementary education in mother tongue. Education should be made compulsory up to high school for all. Increase and improve outreach especially for girls ... security of schools especially of girls in remote areas should be ensured ... promote technical training and special incentives for teachers. Higher education needs special attention encouraging research ... the education policy and implementation standards need serious review and improvement.

Regarding the issue of a segregated versus co-education system, a development consultant said the following:

Segregation in our society is not really relevant in Islam as during Hajj women and men are together. But sometimes, segregated education is better for girls and

boys since both perform better in single sex schools since some gender issues are not reinforced.

Another response highlighted an interesting aspect of how some donor agencies in Pakistan reinforce the gender division of roles through development projects:

The west has discriminatory policies – in their own countries they have both kinds of schools, segregated and non-segregated, but through some projects here under the guise of being culturally sensitive they run programs – same-sex schools – which reinforce patriarchy all over again and then blame our culture for it.

It seems that those who do not subscribe strongly to a religious worldview support a secular education for girls. They generally oppose educational sex segregation, except when the aim is to enable girls to receive an education in a non-threatening environment. These respondents held the Taliban and religious militants responsible for the violence against girls' institutions and explained that it comes from ancient Arabic tribal values that have been superimposed on society. There were significant differences in the approach and perspectives of the secular respondents as compared to religious ones both in Peshawar and Lahore.

To summarize the main findings of the study on women's education in Peshawar and Lahore, the following tentative conclusions can be drawn: 1) Both religious and secular respondents support women's education but for very different reasons; 2) religious and secular respondents recommend very different kinds of education for girls based on their respective worldviews; 3) religious and secular respondents have opposing views on the issue of segregated versus co-education with the former staunchly

opposed to co-education and the latter generally in favour of it; 4) religious and secular/civil society members attribute the bombing and torching of girls' schools to entirely different causes, with the former invoking conspiracy theories blaming foreigners, and the latter squarely blaming the Taliban and religious militants; 5) There are gender-specific differences among religious men and women with regard to the kind of education that women should be given; men's views correspond far more closely to the patriarchal gendered division of labour than those of religious women. Among the civil society and secular respondents there are no observable gender-based differences with regard to women's education.

Reflections on the Findings

The mainstream development discourse regards education as a modernizing and liberating force capable of ushering in progress and prosperity in society. Most donor agencies active in developing countries underline the central importance of education in creating a modern, enlightened and progressive society where productive forces would be unleashed through the spread of mass schooling. Women's education, in particular, is perceived as a major development concept capable of enhancing women's productive capacity, empowerment and emancipation. It is also generally believed that women's contribution to national economic and political development would increase if they were to be given an education. A large number of formal and non-formal educational initiatives have been undertaken by donors, NGOs and the government in developing societies for the literacy and education of girls and women. Lack of education among women in developing societies is often viewed as a major impediment to the development of the country as a whole (Khan, 2010).

There is a growing perception among development practitioners that the reason that women's education initiatives have been unsuccessful in unleashing productive forces in society is that the dimensions of culture and religion have been ignored while formulating and planning educational interventions. Since a great deal of the resistance to a modern, secular education has come from religious and traditional communities, the assumption is that if somehow culture, religion and tradition could be woven into the educational package, and development could be re-routed through these channels, it would be more fruitful as it would not violate local and cultural sensitivities. In Afghanistan, for instance, the values of *Jihad*, martyrdom and war were incorporated into the curriculum for girls' education in order to make their literacy palatable to the patriarchal Afghan men. The finding in this case was that the infusion of conservative and religious values of war and martyrdom served to reinforce patriarchal values on the one hand, and militarism and warlike values on the other (Saigol, 2001). In this case, education was reduced to the narrow concept of mere schooling rather than being seen in the broader sense of the development of intellectual faculties, critical thinking and a liberating experience.

The results of the current study demonstrate that the hope of introducing universal education among women by incorporating cultural, religious and customary values is misplaced. Faith-based organizations have learned to re-define, adjust and re-orient themselves in the face of growing criticism that they fuel militancy and inculcate outdated, conservative and violent values. They have all espoused the cause of education but, in a manner reminiscent of the cultural nationalists who countered the colonial state's objections by educating

women, they have kept strict control over the subject matter that would be taught. In order to make women's education palatable they emphasize a religious and conservative education that reinforces the very patriarchal values and beliefs that the development world seeks to dismantle. By stressing a domestic education for women along with religious values, leaders and ideologues of faith-based organizations seek to re-construct the patriarchal division of labour that associates women with the private reproductive sphere and men with the public productive realm. The subordinate status of women that religious leaders advocate becomes even more entrenched through such schooling.

The modern system of mass schooling thus becomes a vehicle for reinforcing traditional, conservative and patriarchal norms and values, rather than a vehicle for change. The same trend can be observed in the public schooling system of the state which, instead of inculcating the values of equality, freedom and justice for women, has served to reinforce religious values and norms that subordinate women (Saigol, 1995; 2003). As Nosheen Ali has demonstrated, the public school system, steeped in a sectarian and narrow worldview, stirred up riots in the Northern Areas and reproduced religious conflict and state repression (Ali, 2008). It is imperative, therefore, that the curricula and syllabi of the faith-based, non-formal as well as formal schools undergo radical transformation if any change is to occur. By simply reviewing and fine tuning pedagogical methods no positive change can occur because as long as the content is conservative and patriarchal, the efficient methods of dissemination would be that much more dangerous. Furthermore, as long as centralized public examinations are based on rote learned material to be regurgitated faithfully on the examination paper, the current textbooks and materials

would perforce be internalized by the students.

There seems to be a marked continuity between the imperatives of pre-colonial cultural nationalism, post-colonial state policies, and the aims of the faith-based organizations in terms of containing and controlling female sexuality and the right of women to make choices in life, through the mechanism of mass schooling. In each case, 'modern' schooling systems seem to have been adopted, but with strict control over what women should or should not learn. The goal in each case appears to be to maintain control over the private sphere - of the colonized in the case of pre-colonial nationalists; over the lower and lower middle classes in the case of the national security state; and over the community (religious, sectarian) in the case of the leaders of the faith-based organizations in Pakistan.

In each case, power in the public sphere had been ceded elsewhere. For the cultural nationalists, political, economic and commercial power resided with the colonizer therefore the only space where personal patriarchal power could be asserted was the private sphere of the family which represented continuity and connections with the past. For the post-colonial state, political and economic sovereignty appeared to lie increasingly with global powers, and the only arena of exerting state power was the domestic sphere with the family forming the core unit of policymaking. For the religious and sectarian communities, likewise, power in the political, economic and commercial spheres seemed to lie with the state and foreign powers, with the domestic, familial and private sphere being the only one amenable to control and domination. The conflict over who dominates the private sphere and controls women's choices and rights still continues, with the global development and militarist thrust claiming

to liberate women from the clutches of local communities, cultures and traditions; the national state balancing the competing claims of global powers and local communities over women's rights and liberties; and, the local communities equally determined to maintain a measure of autonomy by preserving precisely the sphere in which they exercise virtually unlimited power.

In each case, there seems to be an urge to preserve and protect the home which became symbolic of tradition, culture and customs defining the nation, state and/or the community. Hence, neither the cultural nationalists, nor the post-colonial state or local religious or cultural communities could afford to lose control over the vital institution of the home and family. Control over this institution implied control and domination over women who came to symbolize culture, tradition and continuity as a part of home. Nevertheless, the public and private spheres have managed to inter-penetrate and are not as dichotomously divided as they might appear. Global development and state policies do penetrate households, while communities attempt to make their voice heard through national parliaments, governments, and finally through violence.

The development paradigm of education by incorporating religious and cultural values therefore requires a radical re-thinking. It is, in the end, not an empowering strategy. Education must become the road to liberation and not the path to further shackling of women. Thus, all three components of the educational code – curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation – would need to be sufficiently altered and brought in line with a modern, liberal and secular orientation to achieve the goal of women's empowerment and participation in national development. Since the educational bureaucracy is the largest one in Pakistan, and has tremendous

outreach, with schools in virtually every village and hamlet across the country, it makes far more sense to reform the state school system than focus on faith-based organizations which are by definition sectarian and divisive.

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End Notes

- ¹ Timothy Mitchell (1988), *Colonizing Egypt*. In his study on the colonization of Egypt, Mitchell refers to this aspect stating that the moral inferiority of the colonized was gauged by the status of women and Egypt was required to create 'a generation of mothers keenly alive to their responsibilities as regards the moral training and welfare of their children...In such ways political power would hope to penetrate that 'inaccessible' space 'invisible to the observation of the police' and thus commence... 'to work from the inside out'.
- ² The faith-based organizations selected for the study in Lahore were: Jamaat-e-Islami, Minhaj-ul-Qur'an, Al-Huda, Jamaat-ud-Daa'wa (Sunni, Deobandi); Jamia Minhaj-ul-Hussain, Jamia Al-Muntazar, Imamia Students' Organization (Shi'ite). In Peshawar the following organizations were studied: Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam (Fazlur Rehman), Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam (Sami-ul-Haq) both Sunni/Deobandi, and Arif-ul-Hussaini (Shi'ite).
- ³ Understanding the Militants' Media in Pakistan: Outreach and Impact. 2010 Islamabad: Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies. pp. 176-177.

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Red Hot Chilli Peppers Islam:

**Is the Youth in Elite
Universities in
Pakistan Radical?**

Ayesha Siddiqa

Introduction

Pakistan faces a predicted rise in the number of its youth population. According to a 2000-2001 report, it then had the largest cohort of youth in its history with a number of 25 million between the ages of 15-24. At present, an estimated 63% of the population (103 million) is below 25 years of age. According to estimates, this number will rise to 230 million by 2030 and further increase to 280 million by 2050. It is also believed that the population bulge in terms of the youth will peak around 2045 after which the number of older people will increase. Such population explosion is sufficient cause for concern, as it will overstretch the state's existing capacity to cater for its people. Greater numbers also mean increased competition for limited national resources. The dearth of electricity, water, jobs and social development can only exacerbate the country's existing problems.

Besides these obvious pressures, the impact this will have on the people, especially the youth, is a matter of great concern for observers inside and outside the country. The international

community, in particular, is interested in assessing the degree of religious conservatism, extremism, and Islamism in the society, particularly the youth who represent the future of Pakistan. There is an underlying assumption that social conservatism or religious conservatism indicates an insular mindset, which does not bode well for inter-civilization relations.

A clash of civilizations is likely to add to the grim scenario that the world and the South Asian region already confronts with the war on terror in Afghanistan and the Middle East. The international community and South Asian region in particular cannot afford to see other equally ungovernable spaces emerging. The possibility of Pakistan becoming ungovernable, of course, is an extreme scenario. Nevertheless, the major concern of most at present is to ensure that youth in this region does not drift towards extremism and consequently violence, especially terrorism. Does the state have sufficient capacity to cater for the dreams and desires of its youth? Or can it produce positive thinking youth with the skills to use national resources for its own, and the country's social and economic mobility? These are important questions and cannot be answered without first analysing the attitude or mindset of the youth.

In the past decade, the academic community, media and various other stakeholders have tried to determine the source of religious extremism. They have scrutinised the education system, especially *madrassah* (religious seminary) education as a source of religious and social conservatism in the country. The International Crisis Group (ICJ) report of 2002 considered *madrassah* education responsible for growing extremism in the country.¹ Although the World Bank study by Tahir Andarabi challenged ICJ's figures of the number of *madrassah* students as not being factual, we cannot ignore that the

ICJ report indirectly cautioned about the growing menace of extremism amongst the nation's youth. Written in the aftermath of 9/11, the report drew international attention and raised concern about the inability to counter the Al-Qaeda and Taliban threat particularly if the youth's extremist indoctrination continued.²

However, as more information trickled in regarding the social and educational background of extremists, especially the Al-Qaeda cadres, it became apparent that *madrassahs* were not the only issue worth analysing. Subsequently, area experts and counter-terrorism experts started to examine the extent of extremism amongst Muslim youth and analysing youth attitudes in Pakistan has emerged as a new area of interest. Although the emphasis continues to be on linking poverty and *madrassah* education with extremism, it is hoped that further study might one day produce a more objective analysis that will include non-*madrassah* educated youth as well.

Pakistan's Youth – The Existing Analysis

In recent years, five studies have been conducted in Pakistan analysing youth attitudes, especially understanding the link between youth and extremism. These are:

- *Prospects of Youth Radicalization in Pakistan: Implications for US Policy* by Moeed Yusuf (Brookings Institution – October 2008)
- *Radicalization among Educated Pakistani Youth* by Saba Noor (Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies – 2009)
- *Pakistan: The Next Generation* (The British Council Pakistan – November 2009)

- *Youths' Review of Counter Extremism Policy in Pakistan* (Centre for Civic Education Pakistan – 2009)
- *Beyond Madrassahs: Assessing the Links between Education and Militancy in Pakistan* by Rebecca Winthrop and Corinne Graff (Brookings Institution – 2009)

The underlying conclusion of four out of five of the above-mentioned studies is that Pakistan's youth are being radicalized. None of the studies defines radicalism. They have used different framework and data sets to arrive at their conclusions. The basic premise of all these studies is that radicalization among the youth is related to poverty, poor governance, political instability, poor quality of education and absence of the link between education and social mobility.

Moeed Yusuf's study published by the Brookings' Institution is based on a data set of roughly 350 people in Swat and Malakand.³ It is not clear whether this also includes female opinion. The conclusions extrapolated from this data from two areas of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa were then applied to the rest of the country. The study links radicalization among youth with poverty, substandard education including religious education, lack of good governance and Pakistan's poor image abroad, especially after 9/11 (Yusuf, 2008:21-26). Yusuf also argues that the education system is class oriented with the result that youth schooled through the state system of education are unable to gain employment. The lack of gainful employment is a huge issue in a limited job market. Although Pakistan's employment to population ratio for 2010-2011 is fixed at 53.4 percent,⁴ experts believe that this category also includes many self-employed people. The agriculture sector where people have small farms or the small to medium sized

trader/merchants, often use their children in the family business. Therefore, official figures are hardly a correct representation of what the economy offers the youth.

Furthermore, Yusuf stipulates that given the inbuilt disparity in the education system, a lot of young people end up going to *madrassahs*. Such schools attract poor youth and an under-paid and under-qualified faculty (even on religious issues), thus generating a poor understanding of religion and religious principles and a limited worldview. This upbringing compounded with the country's problematic socio-political culture reduces options for poor youth and leads them to an extremist alternative. The study does not explore problems of *madrassah* education or contest the nature of ideology that the youth subscribe to. For instance, the author argues that the insistence on secularizing Pakistan must stop as it creates a wedge between the west and the Muslims in Pakistan. He believes that Pakistan "...abhors secularism and extremism at the same time" (Yusuf, 2008:27).

The main audience of this report seems to be the US government, which is then implored to invest in Pakistan and relax its visa policy towards its South Asian ally believing that this will bring change and stop the flow of Pakistani youth towards radicalism and ultimately extremism. Although Yusuf does not delve into the issue of Pakistan's military's involvement in the war on terror or its support to some segments of the Taliban and *jihadis* (both past and present), he suggests that the US must help solve the Kashmir issue and desist from supporting India in Afghanistan as this creates anxiety amongst the youth (Yusuf, 2008:29). Therefore, there are no real lessons for Pakistan since Yusuf believes the military has no intention to radicalize society. The

major flaw is that of inefficient political leadership, especially of non-religious parties who have failed to create an alternative for society. Radicalism, as it appears between the lines from this report, is essentially a temporary problem that can go away by adopting a tactical approach such as greater aid for education and job creation. Focused mainly on poverty, Yusuf does not explore the reasons why youth from affluent families choose religious seminaries for education. This shortcoming in his study is highlighted as he quotes Christine Fair's study on *madrassah* education in which she claims that 11.7 % of *madrassah*-going youth are from affluent families (Yusuf, 2008:25).

One of the gaps found in all five studies mentioned above is that they do not focus at all on the affluent or resource-efficient strata of society and their linkage with extremism and religious conservatism. Radicalism is thus considered a temporary phenomenon triggered by problematic domestic politics, poverty and global politics.

Diagnostically, the British Council report titled "*Pakistan: The Next Generation Report*" is written along similar lines. Released in November 2009, it highlights lack of human and socioeconomic development as the key issues behind youth radicalization. Analysing a sample (ages 18-29) comprising literate, semi-literate and illiterate youth, it is larger than the Brookings report. Conducted across the country in both rural and urban areas, the survey highlights the dissatisfaction and frustration of the youth with the lack of systems in the country. The report highlights limited employment opportunities, poor education and lack of good governance as some of the primary concerns of its sample group. It also touches upon the issue of quality of education; falling standards of education

make the youth less qualified to compete in national and/or international markets leading to greater frustration. The British Council report, which drew the attention of international media (Tavernese 2009), highlights the youth's lack of faith in the political leadership, a trend that is discernible in all five reports. Sixty percent of respondents trusted the military over the politicians (The British Council Pakistan, 2009: 29). This, the report argues, compromises the confidence of young people – even those from elite backgrounds. This lack of confidence can be linked to the sense of isolation perceptible in the opinions regarding Pakistan's image as a state caught in the whirlpool of violence and extremism. Therefore, the youth consider their country to be the best and believe external threats to be one of the reasons for its poor state. The primary conclusion of this report is to invest in education and energy resources, which would contribute to creating opportunities for the new generation.

The Centre for Civic Education (CCE) report is based on a survey of 1,855 people from 13 districts across the country. According to this study, 69.6% of the sample said that there is an increase in extremism amongst the youth; however, about 85.4% were hopeful that the situation can be changed through playing a positive role, especially by the youth (Centre for Civic Education, 2009: 3, 18). The report very systematically lays out causes of extremism such as poverty, illiteracy, lack of conceptual clarity, unemployment, intolerance, denial of fundamental rights and absence of good governance. The last problem becomes apparent by reviewing the policies of various political parties on fighting terrorism. The suggestions presented by the CCE are to improve socioeconomic and political development and initiate a debate through the media.

The Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) report takes a slightly different approach to arrive at the same conclusion, i.e., education contributes to changing public perception and diverting the youth from radicalism. The author, Saba Noor, arrives at her conclusion based on a survey conducted at the Department of Defence and Strategic Studies, Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad. The sample of 70 comprised students from ages 20-35 and represented youth from both rural and urban social backgrounds. This categorization was fundamental to the conclusions as it was found that students from a rural background had greater tendency towards radicalization as compared to those from urban background. The sample appeared liberal especially when it came to social and political matters. For instance, they rated scholars and intellectuals as more trustworthy than the military which got 7% support. The support for military rule, however, was greater than politicians who only 4% respondents favoured. Noor's study seems to indirectly conclude that education is necessary to fight radicalism and, perhaps, political apathy. The marked difference between the responses on military versus political obtained from the three earlier surveys implies that education can result in political emancipation. This report also contradicts one of the conclusions of the earlier studies that youth tend to support the military as the majority of respondents considered scholars and teachers more reliable. Such conclusions could be driven by an environmental influence rather than representing a genuine response. The study did not comment on such variations and failed to question the reason behind this particular response.

Finally, the Winthrop-Graff study highlights the poor quality of education in Pakistan and its impact on conflict and violence in Pakistan. The study does not

touch upon tertiary education but is restricted to primary and secondary education. Furthermore, the study is not based on any survey or data collection but uses existing studies to draw its conclusion that education or literacy does not have an impact on the increase or decrease in violence. It challenges the popular conclusion that most militants are *madrassah* educated only. Therefore, the study recommends that education reforms must not be conflated with counter-insurgency measures and should be limited to conflict-sensitive educational programming. Such a conclusion draws upon an earlier research conducted by Christine Fair of Georgetown University that emphasized problems in Pakistan's schooling system in general. Since there are structural flaws in Pakistan's education system including corruption and a lack of will to implement reforms, the study also recommends private sector education as an option that international donors might consider investing in. Clearly, the biggest shortcoming of the study is that it is driven by the objectives of western policymakers and the donor community and hence does not explore the depths of the problem. There is no emphasis, for instance, on the importance of changing the national narrative and making it more tolerant. Since the narrative is the same in both the public and private sectors, it might not make a lot of difference even if foreign governments do collaborate with the private sector.

In summary, the studies find the causes of extremism in youth to be:

- Lack of education both in quantitative and qualitative terms
- Socioeconomic factors such as poverty and unemployment
- Problematic governance and rampant corruption

Since assessing the attitude of the youth is a new subject, the existing studies tend to use a simplistic framework. The analysis is reductionist as it tries to establish a linear relationship between poverty and radicalism, or lack of/poor standards of education and extremism. Nor is there any analysis of what aspect of the education system breeds extremism. Furthermore, researchers tend to draw a linear linkage between social conservatism and extremism; if respondents make socially conservative choices such as preferring hijab, believing in God or observing religious rituals they are deemed politically conservative with a likelihood of becoming extremists. The present study aims to analyse the question of whether extremism or radicalism can be defined so narrowly. More important, there is no definition of radicalism given in any of the studies: What are the parameters used to label an attitude as extremist or its opposite?

Red Hot Chilli Peppers – From Pop Music to Pop Islam

Red Hot Chilli Peppers Islam debunks the argument of radicalism being a natural by-product of poverty and/or lack of education. Its basic conclusion is that radicalism, especially in terms of the popular perspective of the outside world or the ‘other’ world is part of the social pop culture reflected in the political views of youth from all socio-economic categories. Youth have a tendency to embrace radicalism or ideas tantamount to radicalism not necessarily, because they understand the underlying ideology or religious principles, but because such ideas are popular in society and not challenged by an alternative discourse. A radical ideology does not necessarily indicate the willingness to change ‘their’ world internally and make it better. The

youth are part of a social drive to create stereotypes of ‘us’ versus ‘them’ which empowers a limited number of people rather than changing social reality substantially.

More importantly, the ‘us versus them’ categorization, which is popularly viewed as evidence of radicalism, is driven by an identity issue or crisis of ego. In this respect, religious, social and political conservatism is part of a popular culture which is not necessarily a response to a particular event or a factor, but the culmination of a process that dates back to the 1980s (this will be discussed in the later segment of the paper).

The study offers the following arguments:

- Radicalism does not only stem from poverty, but is also found amongst youth from affluent backgrounds. The basic conclusion drawn from the study is that a ‘clash of civilizations’ is unfortunately a popular notion which is not limited to the less educated, illiterate or poor youth.
- Due to lack of effort to de-segregate political and ideological issues at a domestic, regional and international level, even the youth from upper-middle class backgrounds tend to view the world through a black and white lens in which reference to the theory of clash of civilizations becomes prominent.
- Better educational facilities and access to ‘other’ worlds does not necessarily bridge the civilizational gap. Therefore, the political ideology of the youth from an affluent social background is not markedly different from the poor youth. While the possibility of these young men and women studying in top class universities physically joining jihad

and waging war may be less, their underlying thinking is not very different.

- The views on domestic politics did not necessarily indicate any difference vis-à-vis attitudes expressed by respondents from lower-middle class.⁵
- The study sample was from some of the top universities (mostly private). Yet, the respondents reflected a tendency to see Pakistan and the Muslim world as a 'victim' that was being targeted by an 'unfriendly' and 'hostile' west.
- The study reveals a difference between social attitudes and political views.
- The political attitudes of the respondents reflected pop Islam also because religious morality was subsequently not found in their sensitivity towards poverty. Majority tended to equate poverty with radicalism without appreciating that their views on political issues were not very different.
- The views of the respondents was not necessarily driven by a deep understanding of religion or religious morality but a popular division of the world into that of Islam versus the rest.
- There was no difference in opinion based on gender.⁶

Introducing the Sample

The study used a sample from the three major cities of Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi. The sample size of the survey is 608 comprising 228 responses from Karachi, 168 from Lahore and 132 from Islamabad. It was conducted in the

following educational institutions:

Karachi:

1. Baqai Medical College – 20 students
2. Zabist – 50 students
3. Indus Valley School of Arts and Architecture (IVS) – 38 students
4. Greenwich University – 62 students
5. Institute for Business Administration (IBA) – 88 students

Lahore:

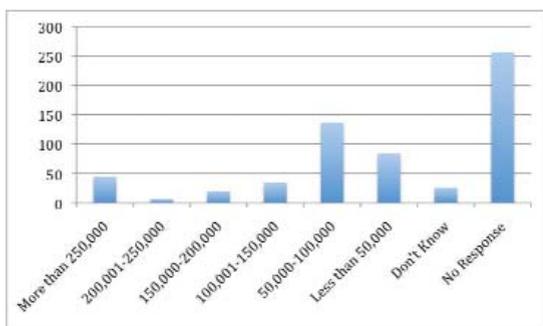
1. Kinnaird College University – 50 students
2. Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) – 62 students
3. Lahore School of Economics (LSE) – 57 students
4. National College of Arts (NCA) – 49 students

Islamabad:

1. National Defense University (NDU) – 13 students
2. Bahria University – 35 students
3. Iqra University (IU) – 28 students
4. National University of Science and Technology (NUST) – 25 students
5. Shifa College of Medicine – 31 students

These institutions are known for their high tuition costs and better educational standards, and attract youth from affluent backgrounds. The term elite does not necessarily use excellence as a criterion, however, the fact that these institutions cater to middle to upper-middle classes means that these youth have relatively better opportunities once they qualify. Although the respondents were asked about their family income, majority did not respond favourably to the question. Forty-two percent did not disclose family income, 4% did not know the answer and 39% gave a range from Rs. 50,000 – 300,000 monthly.

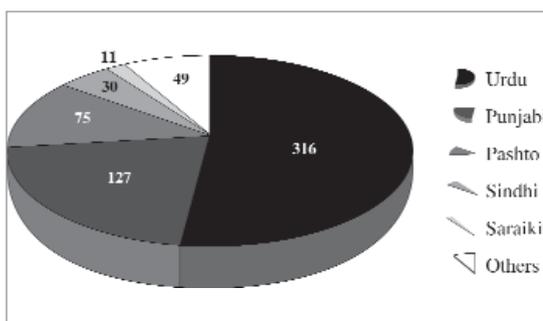
Figure 1: Economic background of respondents



Except for the 28 from IU (Islamabad) and 30 from IBA (Karachi), the respondents came from elite school systems. The respondents from IU and IBA were from lower-middle class backgrounds and brought into elite universities as part of the policy to provide opportunities to the less affluent. They were included to gauge the impact of education on the mindset of youth from less affluent backgrounds. The respondents comprise 47% females and 53% males. The age bracket ranged from 16-31 with the majority in the range of 21-25.

The majority was domiciled⁷ in Punjab: 39.8%, followed by Sindh: 36.8%; Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: 4.4%; Islamabad: 3.1%; Baluchistan: 1.3%; Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA): 0.5%; Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK): 0.3%; Gilgit-Baltistan: 0.2%; and, 13.5% did not respond.

Figure 2: Declared mother tongue



Fifty-two percent listed Urdu as their mother tongue; 21% Punjabi; 12% Pushto;

5% Sindhi; 2% Saraiki; and 8% others. This did not necessarily mean that they spoke their mother tongue – 84% spoke Urdu at home; 40% English; 25% Punjabi; 6% Sindhi; 6% Pushto; 2% Saraiki; and 1% Baluchi.⁸ Urdu, traditionally a language of socioeconomic mobility, has been replaced by English especially amongst the upper and upper middle classes. In Pakistan, the choice of language spoken at home or amongst peers also fits into the urban versus rural debate. Those living in cities tend to speak either Urdu or English. Nevertheless, the low number of youth speaking other national languages can also be attributed to the lack of development of the areas where these languages are spoken due to which fewer students from these areas are enrolled in these universities.

NCA and IBA are public institutions that were selected because of their standing as elite institutions in terms of performance in specific fields; the others are private sector institutions. NCA is a primary institution for fine arts and architecture and IBA is a centre of excellence in management studies.

Why Study a Particular Group?

A popular notion in Pakistan is that poverty fuels radicalism. It was essential to explore this to determine whether radicalism or political conservatism was limited to a particular social class. Another generalization pertains to linking radicalism with conservative or traditional norms such as wearing a hijab or a beard. Admittedly, one of the reasons that led to this study was seeing conservatively dressed youth in elite universities in Pakistan. It seemed like an odd choice for these young people with access to resources, good education, and international exposure to opt for an orthodox religious ideology. Why were they opting for social, cultural and political

conservatism? Evidence of youth being drawn to the message of televangelists such as Zaid Hamid, who propagate the need for *khilafaat* and *jihad* against India support the view that they are influenced by religious ideas and even puritanical ideology. Such attitudinal changes are important to decipher and understand because these attitudes will shape their thinking and relationship with their own kind and others in the future. It was also essential to unpack the nature of this conservatism-radicalism and apply a nuanced approach in interpreting the results.

Furthermore, there is a tendency to stress on the correlation between radicalism and poverty, lack of education and/or *madrassah* education. This simplification of a social phenomenon prevents us from understanding what is happening in Pakistan, especially amongst the youth. Such an understanding is vital to envisage the future direction of the young minds of the country.

Parameters and Design of the Survey

A survey versus qualitative interviews approach was adopted to be able to reach out to a relatively larger number of youth. The survey was based on a questionnaire and involved informal discussion and interaction with the respondents. The questionnaire was divided into three parts:

1. Personal information
2. Personal preferences
3. Political opinion

This information was used to analyse effects of socioeconomic status on thinking. The primary research question was whether a better socioeconomic and educational background resulted in one's challenging traditional religious, political and geo-political bias.

Six themes were explored by the survey:

1. Categorization of self
2. Social norms
3. Structured religious behaviour
4. Perception of religion
5. Domestic politics
6. Perceptions of threat

The length of the survey (143 questions) posed a problem, as students were initially reluctant to spend additional time on filling the questionnaire. However, this design was imperative to fully capture thought processes, sense inherent contradictions and pick out the nuances. A well-defined strategy was also necessary due to the sensitivity of participants towards certain issues. For instance, the management of Beaconhouse National University refused to allow the survey, as they were concerned about the institution's image. They also thought that the students might not be able to do justice to the questions. The institution was withdrawn from the sample due to the proclivity of the management to produce 'safe' results. This study can best be described as an experiment in analysing young minds in a particular environment.

Detailed Survey Results

The survey results reveal that the youth have a multi-layered and multifaceted mindset. It would thus be unfair to consider this a definitive response to the question of whether or not the sample group was radical in thinking.

Latent Radicalism

Studying radicalism in a society is a difficult issue especially when there is no clear definition of the term. Is it being religious or observing religious rituals? Is it about being socially conservative? Or should it be

defined as a mindset that encourages violence against others on the basis of a different religious, political or ethnic identity? A major shortcoming of most existing studies is that there is no clear definition of radicalism. The CCE study, for instance, talked about 69.9% respondents claiming that there was radicalism amongst the youth without explaining how such a conclusion was drawn. In most cases, people tend to define radicalism as a peculiar social attitude. A popular trend, especially after 9/11, is that radicals are sympathetic to militancy or militant organizations or favour religion. From this standpoint, we may not find the youth in most samples as fitting the category.

Radicalism must be carefully defined. The opinions of the youth in elite institutions hint to a latent or passive radicalism. This can be defined as the tendency to be exclusive instead of inclusive vis-à-vis other individuals and communities because of religious beliefs. In its extreme form, this religious bias can provoke people to violence. In some respects, this attitude is similar to west European fascism except that this was rooted in political ideology rather than religious belief. In this study, the majority of respondents made a clear distinction between the Muslim world and Pakistan as representative of the Muslim world and 'other' civilizations. Added to this is the inability of self-analysis and a tendency to lay blame elsewhere. Though this outlook may not necessarily make one violent, it is a fertile breeding ground for latent violence or active radicalism. Although it is not necessary that conservatism will lead to violence – and in this case the youth are likely to weigh the cost of abandoning their privileged statuses to actively participate in *jihad* – the possibility cannot be ruled out. Examples such as the hijackers involved in 9/11, the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) – Al-Qaeeda operative Omar Saeed Sheikh, or the 23-year-old Nigerian Umer Farouk

Abdulmutallib who tried to blow up an airliner, are examples of young Muslim men from affluent backgrounds being involved in terrorist activities. These cases underscore the fact that radicalism may not necessarily be confined to the poor and less educated. In fact, radicalism is the product of a peculiar mindset and it is this mindset that requires attention.

A Case of Liberal-Religiosity

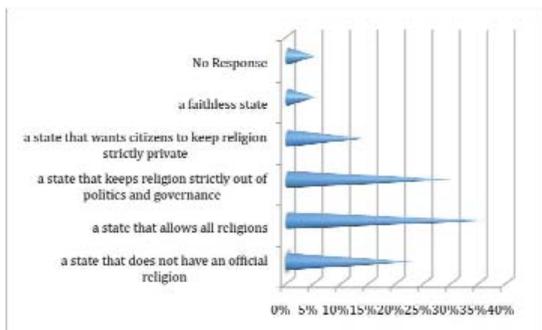
An overview of Pakistan's journey towards religiosity was necessary to establish the fact that the survey sample denoted one end of the social spectrum of Pakistani society – it is labelled here as liberal-religiosity. This attitude is defined as one in which individuals exercise their choice in following traditional behavioural patterns. While they may hold liberal views on certain issues, they could have a conservative or even radical perspective in other matters. This is because they have choice as well as freedom of opinion. The upper class, upper-middle class and a select segment of the middle class belong to this section of society. At the opposite end of the spectrum are the latent-radicals whose social choices are pre-determined as they have lesser space to exercise choice. The lower class, lower middle and majority of the middle class are situated at this end of the scale.

Attitude towards Religion and Religious Identity

Representing the affluent segment of society, the respondents were deeply connected with their religious identity; this is not the norm of western-liberalism. Majority of the respondents (94%) believed in God and religion and 56% were opposed to the idea of Pakistan becoming a secular state. A number of options were provided to ascertain how secularism was

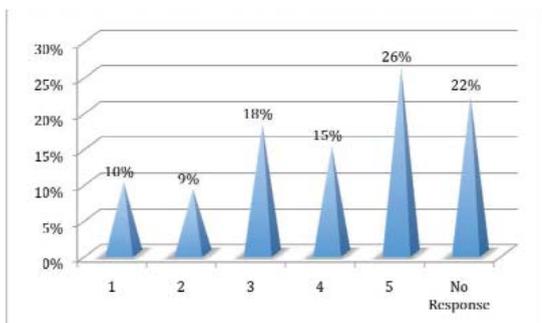
interpreted. The majority considered secularism as a condition in which state allows all religions to operate without associating with a single one.

Figure 3: What is a secular state?



When asked if they were religious, 85% said yes, 14% no and 2% did not respond; 84% said they prayed. A further clarification regarding how many times they prayed showed the following results.

Figure 4: How many times do you pray?



Ninety-three percent of the respondents fasted, 80% had read Islamic history, and 95.39% had read the Quran. A further clarification showed that 50.33% had read the Quran with translation as opposed to 47.37% who had not. Another 49.67% said they read Islamic books. Though 81% respondents did not read literature of militant organizations, 16% said they did. Though following religious rituals is not

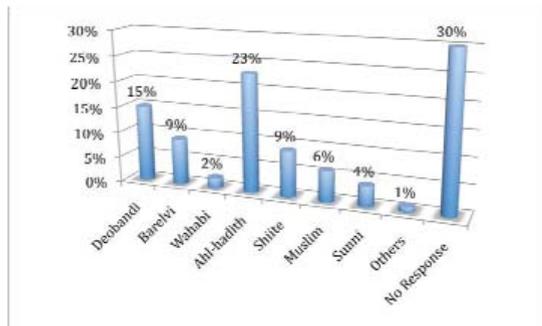
proof of religiosity, it indicates a leaning towards religion and religious practices inherent in the socio-cultural system. A large number (88%) considered Islam to be their primary identity.

An inclination to follow religious norms was evident. Almost half the respondents were in favour of the policy of prohibition of liquor and 74% felt that sale of alcohol should not be allowed for the government to generate additional revenue.⁹ This is surprising as the majority of the respondents are from affluent backgrounds – a class not known for its strict adherence to religious moral norms. In Pakistani society, liberalism is mostly interpreted in cultural terms as the freedom to pursue a certain lifestyle popularly understood as a ‘western’ lifestyle. It is an open secret that despite the prohibition on alcohol it is easily available to the elite. This lifestyle conflicts with the views expressed in the course of the present survey. Another example relates to the response to a question regarding gender segregation in society. About 33% believed that segregation prevented immoral activities while 57% did not agree with this proposition.

The general tendency is to subscribe to conservative and often puritanical religious tenets, which have also permeated cultural identity. This was obvious in the questions regarding the state ruling against Ahmadis. The Ahmadis were declared non-Muslims by the state during the 1970s and have suffered persecution since. About a hundred Ahmadi worshipers were killed in a mosque in Lahore on 28 May 2010.¹⁰ Another twelve people were killed on 31 May 2010 when terrorists attacked Ahmadis under treatment after the first attack in a local hospital in the city.¹¹ This bias was reflected in the youth, the majority of whom agreed with the government’s decision to declare Ahmadis to be non-Muslims. Interestingly, quite a visible part of this sample (62%) also

considered Shiite to be non-Muslims. This could possibly be due to their sectarian identity as quite a large proportion was a mix of Sunni, Deobandi and Ahl-e-Hadith.

Figure 5: Sect of the respondents



Diehard religious clerics, especially those that belong to militant Islamic groups like Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) do not consider Shiites as Muslims and sectarian tensions have been on the rise in Pakistan in the last two decades. Saleem H. Ali's study on *madrassah* education in Pakistan points towards the fact that orthodox religious attitudes harbouring on extremism inculcated in *madrassah* students are in reality reflected through their sectarian bias (Ali, 2009). Considering this sample group, we could extend Ali's conclusions to other socioeconomic classes too. However, it would be worthwhile to use a larger sample to examine the degree of sectarian bias in other socioeconomic groups.

Responses to questions regarding religious-political identity exhibited similar conservatism. Majority of respondents considered the Muslim Ummah to be a concrete reality – this could indicate that they were sympathetic to the conditions of Muslim in other parts of the world. Half the respondents considered Islam integral to their national identity. The affiliation with religion had a political expression as well since the majority of respondents considered Islam to be the right formula for governance and believed that Islam could

offer an alternative form of social justice.

These responses indicate an emotional connection with religious identity that in itself is neither good nor bad but clearly reflect how religion is part of the national narrative in Pakistan. The respondents, nevertheless, were conscious of their social status. For instance, despite associating with religious identity, they were not inclined to become religious scholars – a vocation that the elite generally do not care to join. The respondents were by no means irrational or narrow-minded – 81% did not believe that the Taliban could bring social justice. The majority (73%) considered Al-Qaeda to be a terrorist organization; 67% felt that Pakistan should declare Al-Qaeda to be a terrorist organization. The respondents did not favour other militant organizations either and believed that all *jihadi* outfits ought to be banned. Majority of respondents supported the military operation in Swat.

Should this then be taken as a sign of liberal thinking or do these answers merely reflect the influence of media, especially electronic media? In the last ten years, Pakistan has witnessed an increase in television channels that primarily broadcast political commentaries and talk shows. The programmes have contributed tremendously in opinion formation in the country, particularly in building a sense of nationalism amongst the urban population. Youth from the upwardly mobile segment of society have turned increasingly nationalist. They generally disapprove of terrorism directed against Pakistan and Muslims and are keen to subscribe to a top-down national perspective. Terrorism hurts them as it negatively influences the image of the country. It is considered a major impediment to economic development, and attaining the same level of geo-political significance as India or other upwardly mobile countries. This attitude towards terrorism does not necessarily allow one the perspective to perceive the connection between this brand

of nationalism and latent-radicalism as a factor which eventually leads to terrorism. The devastation caused by terrorist attacks and its projection in the media result in anxiety amongst the general public; the youth are also affected and, so, reject groups identified with violence. However, it cannot be assumed that the rejection of the Taliban illustrates a deeper understanding of the causes of violence. A popular perception in the country created by segments of the media is that the Taliban are actually not Muslims. Thus, even if people are anti-violence their anger is not directed towards the Taliban or any particular group of religious bigots.

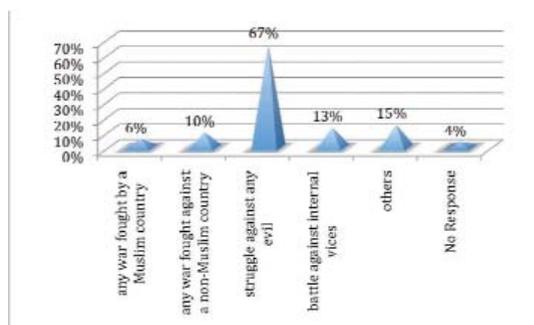
These responses may not by themselves give a clear indication of the group's position on radicalism since the majority of respondents may not actually practice what they professed. The opinions on *madrassahs* or the politics of *madrassah* education in Pakistan is a case in point – 63% respondents were against abolishing *madrassah* education. The majority also believed that *madrassah* reforms were being imposed by the US, and were a ruse to manipulate traditional institutions. Similarly, 31% – a visibly large number did not subscribe to the idea that *madrassahs* were fanning sectarian hatred and violence.

Such responses were strange coming from youth who themselves opted for secular and modern education pointing to the influence of popular media. The respondents were unable to make a connection between their own views and radicalism. Most believed that poverty and religious ideology were the drivers of terrorism. When asked which socioeconomic class was involved in *jihadism*, most believed it was the poor. The two responses indicate that they did not think their peers would resort to violence in the name of religion.

The responses to questions on *jihad* did not display a close-mindedness or extremist viewpoint. Most of the respondents felt it was

a struggle against evil; also, a struggle against social evils inside the country. Sixty-five percent didn't believe that *jihad* was a constant militant struggle, a notion popularly held by the *jihadists*, and 62% said that private citizens or non-state actors should not be allowed to wage *jihad* (in reference to military conflict). For further clarification, they were asked if the state was the sole authority for launching a military campaign or *jihad* against a perceived enemy. The majority agreed with this proposition. This display of open-mindedness also extended to the question of whether shariah should be re-interpreted; 51% believed that it should. However, the majority wanted the task of re-interpretation to be left to trained theologians or legal experts with knowledge of religion. This response falls in line with the general pattern of understanding of Islamic jurisprudence in the society, especially amongst the elite who have traditionally considered religion as the forte of the religious class.

Figure 6: How do you define jihad?

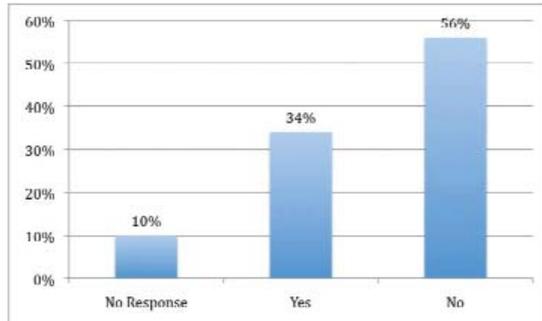


Political Attitudes

It would be unfair to review the earlier opinions in isolation. Latent radicalism or an attitude, which harbours exclusivity, reflects in other areas as well, especially political perception. The responses of the sample group regarding domestic politics did not reflect a predominant attitude of questioning the popular or the State perspective. The

majority were not keen to challenge existing socio-political norms of the State and society. One clear example relates to the question regarding the issue of secularism and Pakistan. The majority were not inclined to question the State's linkage with religion.

Figure 7: Should Pakistan become a Secular State?

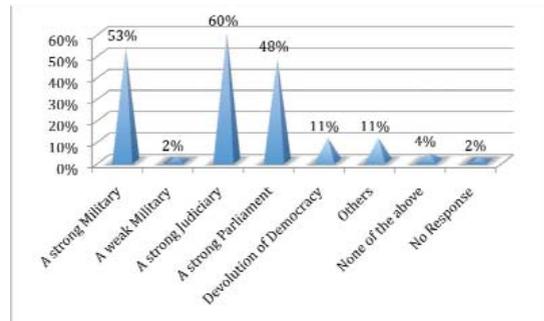


The majority of the sample was also averse to any 'out of the box' thinking on political issues especially that pertained to altering the existing structure of the state in any form such as creating new provinces. They opposed the idea of new provinces and were of the view that newer provinces would weaken nationalism; 79% were opposed to the idea of Baloch making a separate state. Conservative-nationalism was evident from responses regarding the military; a majority of the respondents considered the military to be a national force, a view that is contested by minority ethnic groups and nationalist leadership of smaller provinces. Instead of the outright rejection of the military's role in politics, majority believed that the military's role in politics was acceptable under certain circumstances – another indicator of conservative political views.

Sixty-six percent were averse to placing the notorious military intelligence organization, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) under civilian control. This question was significant since controlling the ISI seems to be one of the critical matters that may indicate the relative strength of civilian

institutions vis-à-vis the armed forces. In any case, quite a large proportion of respondents felt that Pakistan's survival depended upon a strong military. A lot of people opted for the judiciary too – possibly an outcome of the lawyers' movement in which students, especially from elite institutions, played a role.

Figure 8: Pakistan's survival depends on?



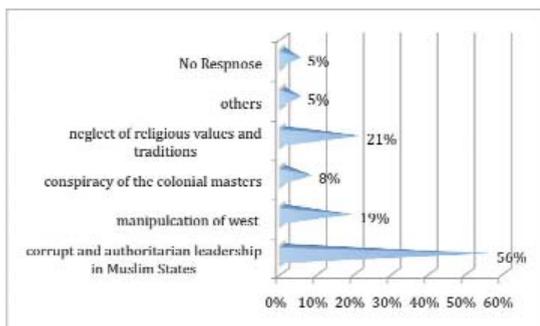
Interestingly, fewer opted for strengthening of Parliament or devolution of democracy. The opinions on politics are similar to those in the earlier cited studies. Not surprisingly, the majority (80%) consider politicians corrupt.

Although the majority did not agree with the proposition that a military government was more capable of solving the country's problems, quite a large number did favour the military. Forty percent of the respondents did not think that imposing military rule was an act of treason, which in the 1973 Constitution, is punishable by death. This reflects the gradual erosion of faith, especially amongst the upper and upper-middle class, in the political process. A very small percentage believed that politicians were better than generals. The respondents were quite disconnected from the political process; a large number were not affiliated with a political party, nor did they want to become members of one. Their families were also not associated with political parties. Depoliticization of

the population dates back to Zia-ul-Haq’s days when restrictions were imposed on student unions and trade unions; these two bodies are traditionally nurseries for politicians. Most of the respondents belonged to the politically well-connected segment of society, which is generally averse to the political party process. Though these statistics reflect the unwillingness of the present and future generation of the elite to invest in the political process, the educated youth definitely desire change; this is partly reflected in the choice of leader who, they believe, should govern Pakistan. Since Imran Khan of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) seems to challenge the current questionable political leadership, the bulk of respondents opted for him. In a response to another question regarding whom would they prefer as Pakistan’s leader, the majority supported Imran Khan and, to a lesser extent, Pervez Musharraf.

Given Imran Khan’s views, this choice seems conservative; however, it could be driven by a general conservatism as well as an understanding that politics and corruption are linked. Indeed, a large number of respondents considered corruption as one of the worst problems faced by the country. Corrupt leadership was also believed to be a major factor for the perceived backwardness of most Muslim states.

Figure 9: What is the reason for the backwardness of the Muslim Ummah?



The earlier responses may reflect a sense of frustration amongst this set of youth with the current state of the country’s politics. However, their inability to imagine that politics could bring about changes in the state reflected the general apoliticization of the youth, especially amongst the middle and the upper-middle classes, the very segment of society that have the knowledge, exposure and social comfort to become politically active and bring change.

Regional and Global Issues

The perception of the outside world was not very different from the views about their own country. There was little inclination to challenge the views generally held by powerful stakeholders. The questions posed can be broadly categorized: (a) approach towards India, (b) approach towards the rest of the world, and (c) attitude towards the Muslim world. The responses will be presented accordingly.

India – Viewing the Enemy

Being Pakistan’s traditional enemy, an anti-India sentiment is well entrenched in the country’s national narrative. This was most obvious from the question regarding the threat to Pakistan in which India figured significantly; 69% were of the view that India is the greatest threat. Therefore, it was not a surprise that the majority considered the two-nation theory to be valid. This is despite the fact that the separation of East Pakistan in 1971 partly challenged the assumption that created Pakistan. Perhaps, the reason for such political conservatism is owed to the nature of education of history, particularly relating to the State itself. The history curriculum taught in schools over-emphasizes the two-nation theory. Similarly, the history of the people of Pakistan begins with the advent of Muslims in the region in 715 AD, and the

1971 partition of Pakistan is explained primarily as a Hindu conspiracy to break up the country.

There was, however, a level of ambivalence with respect to India; this could be due to a general understanding that improved relations were essential for the country's and region's peace and stability. Nevertheless, the underlying tone was that of suspicion of the larger neighbour. For instance, though 53% did not believe that Pakistan should adopt an aggressive stance towards India and 57% believed that Pakistan and India could live relatively peacefully, they were not willing to compromise on issues such as handing over Lashkar-e-Tayyaba's leader Hafiz Saeed to India. This response could be based on a desire for Pakistan to be considered an equal rather than being coerced by the larger neighbour. In the context of Indo-Pak relations, Hafiz Saeed symbolises the issue of terrorism between the two neighbours.

The youth, who formed part of the sample, belong to the segment of society which has greater access to the world including India. The upper and upper-middle classes have been the main beneficiaries of the peace initiative started by the two states after 2004. However, the suspicion of India runs so deep that the 'enemy' perception has not improved much. The most significant part of national memory relates to the breakup of Pakistan in 1971 with the final blow being dealt by New Delhi; 38% held India responsible for Pakistan's break up which means for launching the war which gave a fillip to the civil war in the Eastern wing. This is despite the fact that being products of a better schooling system, the respondents had a better picture of the domestic political issues which caused the crisis in 1971. This mistrust is further highlighted by the belief that India wanted to ultimately eliminate Pakistan. Given the perceived Indian designs on Pakistan and

popularity of the concept of India's hegemony, 71% of the sample was unwilling to trust India in the long-term. The depth of insecurity from India is evident in the responses regarding the causes for the poor state of bilateral relationship. Over the years, the India-Pakistan rivalry has also acquired ideological overtones.

A sense of rivalry is apparent when asked to compare the status of Pakistani youth vis-à-vis Indian youth; 48% were of the view that the Indian youth were no better than Pakistan's. This was clearly a result of a sense of competition because otherwise the respondents believed that India was economically and socially better off than Pakistan. Since economic conditions have a bearing on social development, it could be extrapolated that the earlier response was driven by the same sense of competition that state functionaries have. This in itself is not necessarily an evidence of radicalism, however, it is part of the conservative national narrative which directly feeds into latent-radicalism.

Attitude towards the West

Besides India, another area where the views of this set of youth were unaffected by their better education and exposure, related to the West. Since the majority of the respondents grew up during the late 80s and the 1990s, their worldview seems to have been shaped by the domestic debates on various international crises. This generation has had an exceptional access to information and thus is more exposed to the media debates which have largely been suspect of the west. A popular notion in Pakistan, generated primarily by the media, is that the crisis facing Pakistan is owed to some conspiracy by American or Israeli intelligence. Moreover, the 1990s witnessed major world events/crises such as the Palestinian intifada, American attack on Iraq, and the predicament in

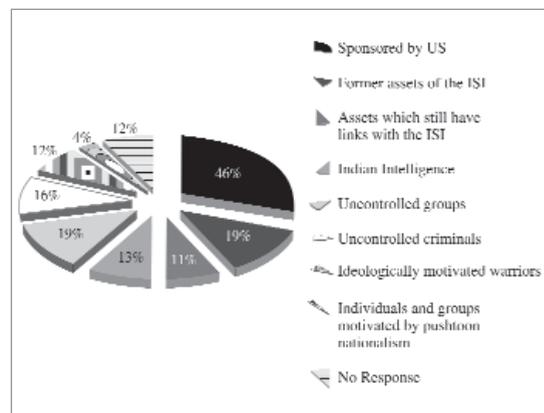
Bosnia and Chechnya in which Muslims appear to be in a crisis. To top it all, the tension that emanated from the Danish cartoon controversy has formulated a negative opinion of the West which was obvious when the respondents identified the biggest threat to the Muslim Ummah. Only 7% respondents were willing to look inwards and hold themselves and their own politics and socioeconomic problems responsible.

Since the beginning of the war on terror (WoT), public perception in Pakistan regarding the US has deteriorated exponentially. This anti-West or anti-US sentiment feeds directly into the latent-radicalism amongst the public, particularly the youth. Due to the popular notion of the US as an imperialist force which must be resisted, there is a tendency of the media to project the Taliban and the *jihadists* as an anti-imperialist force. A segment of, what was known as the liberal-left, also tends to look at the *jihadists* as a force whose religious ideology may not meet the approval of the left, but their agenda of fighting the US gets a sympathetic hearing, especially after the American intervention in Afghanistan and the drone strikes in Pakistan. Interestingly, the opinion formation regarding the US or the West is not based on critical analysis of various issues. The public in general is willing to endorse the notion that the WoT is an American ploy to take control of Pakistan's nuclear weapons or to destroy the only Muslim nuclear weapon state in the world. Given the nature of debate on US-Pakistan relations, bulk of the respondents (83%) were convinced that continued American presence was harmful for Pakistan's security and 62% felt America was the bigger threat to the country's security.

Not surprisingly, the beginning of the new century is marked with heightened suspicion of the US amongst average Pakistanis. The war in Afghanistan or WoT

in general is not considered Pakistan's war. This is despite the spate of terrorist attacks within the country. A possible explanation for such seeming disconnect is because the popular perception regarding Taliban is that these are elements parachuted into Afghanistan to harm the country. The respondents of this survey echoed this opinion as well; 46% were willing to believe that the Taliban were sponsored by the US.

Figure 10: Who are the Taliban?



In response to a more pointed question regarding the creation of Taliban, 77% were of the opinion that they were created by the US. Seventy-one percent were of the view that American withdrawal from Afghanistan would have a positive impact on the region.

Pakistan and the Islamic World

One of the reasons for selecting this particular sample for study was due to the relative concentration of the seemingly liberal segment of the population amongst this particular group. As mentioned earlier, while a lot of youth in these elite institutions have now adapted conservative attire, the bulk continues to freely follow a western-liberal life style. However, their attire and habits cannot be deemed as representing socio-political liberalism or absence of ideological conservatism. The

majority of respondents appeared sympathetic to the idea of a Muslim Ummah (Muslim nationalism).

Figure 11: What is the reason for the backwardness of Muslim Societies?

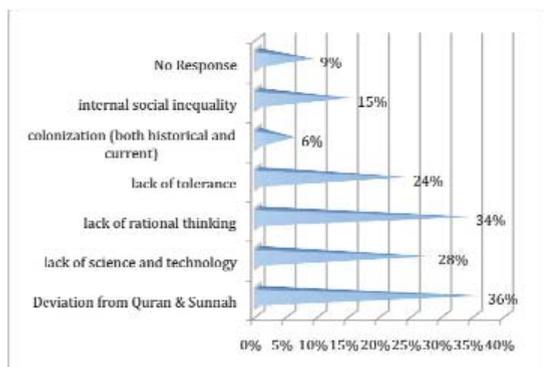


Figure 12: Why is democracy not a strength in most Muslim countries?

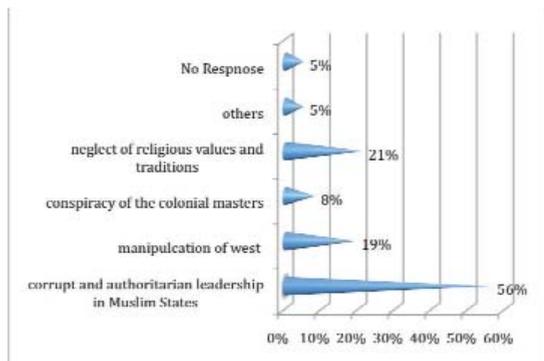
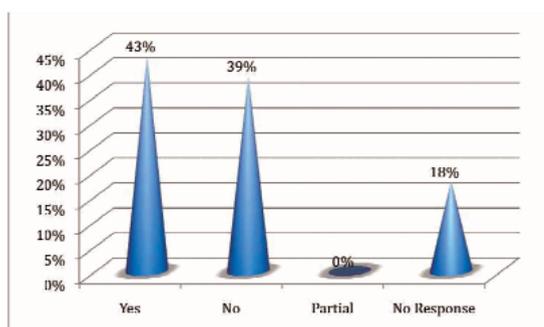


Figure 13: Did Iran and Libya break the bond of Muslim Ummah by disclosing Pakistan's name as a source for their acquisition of nuclear materials and knowhow?



Explaining Latent Radicalism – The Four Waves

In the case of the sample under analysis, the multiple layers of conservatism – social, religious, political and geo-political – are easily observable. The youth from financially secure backgrounds or those studying in these institutions, which gives them an opportunity to a better future, are as prone to the overall rise in conservatism, and in some cases latent radicalism, as the rest of the society. Over the years, Pakistan's society has undergone four distinct waves of conservatism:

- 1947-77
- 1977-90
- 1990-01
- 2001-to date

First Wave: 1947-77

Religion is deeply rooted in State and society, religious identity being the basis of the country's creation in 1947. During these years, the State and society were systematically injected with doses of religious narrative, especially in politics. The anti-Ahmadi riots during the 1950s, the constant reference to Islam by both the civilian and military leadership culminating with religiously motivated laws and rules by the Bhutto government set the scene for further Islamization brought later by General Zia-ul-Haq's government. The Munir Report on the anti-Ahmadi riots held in Punjab in 1953 indicated how political parties, including the Muslim League, indirectly supported Majlis-i-Ahrar-i-Islam¹² which was responsible for fanning riots.¹³ A senior police officer, Qurban Ali, stated before the Justice Munir Commission that the Ahrar were keeping the anti-Ahmadi movement and sentiment alive so they

could capitalize on it later and build greater influence in society. These events, which resulted in the first martial law in the country, were the beginning of the trend towards religiosity that was demonstrated at the lower rungs of the society but with support provided by the ruling elite.

No political force (civil and military) tried to curb the religious right or provide an alternative narrative. Partly because the ruling elite, especially the educated 'salarial' class which was not particularly religious was uncomfortable with the religious discourse, there was a tendency to appease religious clerics or the religious political groups and parties. The 'Objectives Resolution 1949' was one of the first cases of such accommodation. The document laid out the grand plan of Pakistan's state as a religious entity that would confine itself to the principles of Islam. Moreover, it became the guiding principle for all three constitutions of the state. Initially, the first military government of General Ayub Khan made some effort to keep religion away from politics by declaring the country in the 1962 constitution a republic rather than an Islamic republic. However, in face of public pressure the general had to withdraw from his stance. The liberal-educated elite of the country could not stop the onslaught of religious right especially when they had voluntarily surrendered the right of ownership of religious discourse. The lack of educated input into religion left it to be defined by the right-wing religious elite or the army of illiterate mullahs. Those, who could challenge the religious right such as Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, also surrendered to the religious right and its discourse in the name of political expediency. Bhutto was responsible for declaring the Ahmadis non-Muslim, introducing prohibition and changing the weekly holiday from Sunday to Friday.

Second Wave: 1977-90

From the perspective of the ascendancy of religious right narrative, General Zia-ul-Haq's military government (1977-88) can be considered as a watershed in Pakistan's social and political history. Zia's Pakistan used American encouragement, support and assistance to build the religious right, especially create *jihadis* that could fight the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. The decade of the 80s established the religious right and enhanced their influence over social norms in the country. Zia played a major role in transforming both State and society by bringing religion into both. In the former, he brought changes to the economic and legal systems of the country through the introduction of his controversial '*Nizam-e-Islam*' (system of Islam). Laws such as the Hudood Ordinance primed the society towards a divine logic of gender disparity. A glaring example of such disparity pertains to a legal case in 1983 of Safia Bibi, a 13-year-old blind girl, who was allegedly raped by her employer and his son. She, however, was convicted for adultery under the Zina Ordinance whilst the rapists were acquitted because she could not provide four male witnesses to bear out her claim as postulated by the new law.¹⁴ The society, on the other hand, was influenced through enforcing religion through the introduction of an institution of *Nazim-e-Salat* (prayer manager) meant to enforce religion on people and push faith from the domain of private to public. Similarly, over 800 changes were brought about in the academic textbooks in the period from 1977-79. Although many liberal scholars protested, the textbooks were never changed.

Some of the changes, especially the top-down enforcement of religion was resisted by the liberal-educated elite. However, the 1980s is known for bringing about the following changes:

- shrinking of the size of people with

- liberal values or who were willing to treat religion as a matter of personal faith.
- increasing distance between the liberal ruling elite and the ordinary people (in any case, the liberal ruling elite always kept a distance from religion thus losing any control of the religious discourse). While the former maintained their distance from religious discourse, the latter were drawn towards religion through government propaganda and greater activity of the religious right.
 - initiation of the middle and upper-middle class towards religion. Since religion was supported by the State, a lot of people in the civil and military bureaucracy began to adapt to religious views. Military officers in particular joined social movements such as Tableeghi Jamaat.
 - transformation of the overall social environment from being open to becoming closed and more laced with the ideology of the religious right.
 - shifting emphasis of the societal discourse from secular politics to a puritanical representation of Islam.

Religiosity was perpetuated further through a parallel process of turning society towards becoming apolitical and the adoption of neo-liberalism as a guiding principle for the economy. Hence, the only dominant discourse pertained to religion. Although people resisted Zia's enforcement of religion, his efforts managed to bring a subtle change in the environment which became much more obvious in the third phase.

Third Wave: 1990-2001

Although there are hardly any studies available to link the rise in religious

conservatism with the Zia period, the impact cannot be discounted. The propagation of religion through print and electronic media, the publicity of the Afghan war, conscious co-option of the public through proliferation of Deobandi and Wahabi *madrassahs* (representing puritanical Islam) and Islamizing the overall social environment is bound to have left an impression on people. Moreover, the process of Islamization did not end with Zia's death in a mysterious air crash in 1988. *Jihad* was still popular at state level and was aided and abetted by the army and its intelligence agencies. It was during this decade that conservative religious forces began to engulf the society and market puritanical Islam. The popularity of preachers like Farhat Hashmi and others who converted the upper class, upper-middle and middle class women and households to puritanical interpretation of Islam, grew rapidly in most urban centres.

The process of a greater move towards religiosity in a cosmopolitan city like Karachi or a metropolis such as Lahore began during this period. This was a decade when religiosity expanded through a top-down process rather than just bottom-up. The increase in the number of hijab-wearing or burqa-clad women (both young and old) started during the 1990s and continues to date. The excellent analysis of Al-Huda by Pakistani social scientist, Sadaf Ahmed, talks about how the organization was involved in Islamic revivalism amongst the urban Pakistani women, especially from the upper crust of the society. Al-Huda is part of those institutions that penetrated households and for various reasons revived the faith of individuals in puritanical interpretation of religion and made religiosity fashionable. Women, who earlier followed a western life style, changed the way they lived. There were even cases where mothers were driven to religiosity by their daughters (Ahmed, 2009).

The Tableeghi Jamaat (TJ) was another organization-cum-movement that gained greater popularity during this period. The TJ is a social force which encourages Muslims to not only join them, but also propagate Deobandi Islam in the world.¹⁵ TJ teams are known for traveling all over the world in pursuance of their organizational objectives. They also hold an annual congregation in Lahore which is known all over the world. The TJ's influence can be estimated by looking at the number of respondents who had attended its annual congregation. While 67% said that they had heard of TJ, 21% also claimed that they had been to its annual congregations. Apparently, TJ creates the perfect ideological climate which could later benefit militant organizations. Interestingly, analysts do not tend to clearly see the connection between social movements like Al-Huda and Tableegi Jamaat and militancy in the country. The significance of such movements cannot be undermined since they increase the societal threshold for accepting norms and values that may otherwise be rejected or challenged by those subscribing to liberal norms.

It was during this period that the military establishment used the media to propagate incompetence of the political parties and actors. There was a constant reference to corruption of politicians on the basis of which four governments were sacked. The propaganda and the general inefficiency of the political system made the youth highly sceptical of politics. This attitude led to an apolitical approach, which meant that they were unwilling to challenge the stereotypes, be it religion, society, education or politics.

Fourth Wave: 2001-to date

The tragic events of 9/11 mark another major milestone in the society's journey towards greater religiosity and latent radicalism. A number of events such as the

American bombardment of Afghanistan, Iraq's invasion, and ethnic profiling by western countries played a role in pushing the people, especially youth, towards subscribing to the 'clash of civilizations' framework. Unlike the 'children of lesser gods', member of the ruling elite or people from the upcoming middle class felt affected by their negative profiling outside their own country. Profiling in the West after 9/11 produced an identity crisis, especially amongst the youth. There was a growing consciousness of being ostracized and not being treated as equals. This sense of inequality also made the bulk of population in most Muslim states conscious of the fate of people suffering in various conflict zones, particularly in the Middle East, Russia and India. Moreover, a sense of insecurity and identity crisis was bolstered by a sense that Pakistan was being targeted. This obviously resulted in an upsurge of nationalism mired in the country's religious identity.

The above developments took place in a politically repressive environment. During these years, the State governed mostly by a military dictatorial regime, clamped down on relatively liberal political forces and built linkages with parties of the religious right. The military and its intelligence agencies also continued to tactically engage with militant outfits. There was growth of religiosity bordering on radicalism on the one hand, and a growing chasm between the self-acclaimed liberal ruling elite and the rest of the population on the other.

The above-mentioned developments have a deep impact on society and in making it socially more conservative. A trend towards religiosity was also found amongst those surveyed for this study. The sample, however, was difficult to analyse since there were variations in their attitude towards matters that affected personal life versus issues relating to politics and geopolitics.

Conclusion

Societal attitudes are a response to multiple events and forces that are taking place in a society, its region and the world at large. The developments that took place in Pakistan and geo-political developments, have impacted the socio-political attitude of its people, especially the youth. In Pakistan, there is a tendency to bifurcate society into the liberal and the conservative or religious. People accepting religious norms are considered conservative or religious. Those that don't are considered liberal and secular. Furthermore, a popular assumption is that religious conservatism or radicalism is directly linked to poverty and underdevelopment. The results of this survey-based study question the above assumptions. It is based on examining the attitudes of youth in elite universities who are defined as a group with greater access to resources and opportunities. The existing literature on the subject has not looked specifically at this group.

Based on the survey results it can be concluded that there is a rise of latent-radicalism amongst these youth. One of the popular perceptions about Pakistan is that radicalism, which forms the basis of terrorism, is a trend most likely to be found amongst *madrassah* going youth or those educated in public sector schools. Although the leadership of militant organizations has links with *madrassahs*, radicalism is not a phenomenon confined only to religious seminaries. In fact, militant organizations are keen to recruit relatively educated youth. These could also be converted far more easily to the *jihadi* agenda on the basis of ideology rather than being lured by money or other resources. However, the latent-radicalism highlighted in this study, does not necessarily drive an individual towards terrorism. This study does not argue that the majority of these youth will go on to become militants.

Nevertheless, they suffer from a closed mind or are prone to exclusivity rather than inclusivity. The 'us' versus 'them' divide compounded with greater insensitivity towards social and political issues has created an elite generation which may be incapable of mending fences with other groups. Being affluent, these youth may have a greater stake in not turning towards active militancy. But then, cases such as Faisal Shehzad or Afia Siddiqui can always happen. These two cases, in fact, indicate the possibility of latent radicalism transforming into radicalism and militancy.

This study did not find that access to a better education necessarily produced better quality thinking. Besides the fact that the youth are generally apolitical and feel insecure in geo-political terms, their attitudes also reflected a growing aversion to reading books and attaining deeper knowledge. They are products of neo-liberalism which generates a market-driven attitude, a greater militarism, and ignorance of societal or cultural traditions. Reading books, which is one means of acquiring knowledge and information, has reduced dramatically and is replaced with modern gadgetry such as computers, mobile phones, etc. While embracing new technology is necessary, it has generally changed the thinking pattern of youth all over the world. The negative impact of reduced reading habits becomes even more serious in societies facing conflict. This lack of knowledge feeds into building barriers between individuals.

The sample exhibited a great sense of nationalism and affinity with their religious identity. Such attitudes are linked with their perception that their country and religion is under attack. The majority identified the threat to the country and the Muslim world as coming from an external source, particularly the West. Nationalism meant that they were unwilling to be

introspective and look at domestic reasons behind the problems being faced by the state and society. As for the attitude towards religion, a general affinity for religious identity did not necessarily indicate greater knowledge or understanding of religion. Irrespective of whether or not an individual actively embraced religious values and rituals, most respondents were keen to own the politics of religion. Their approach towards religion, religious identity, politics of the state or geo-political issues was quite conservative. In fact, it reflected almost the same bias as one would find amongst less privileged youth. Such bias does not necessarily come from knowledge of religion. In fact, like majority of Pakistanis the elite youth are ignorant about religion. The politics of religious identity does not necessarily indicate greater ownership of religion or an active involvement in the religious discourse.

Respondents followed popular trends as far as their opinion on political issues was concerned. During the process of undertaking the survey I did not find that the respondents were not capable to answer questions, as was feared by the BNU management. They were not briefed about any particular ideological preference. They were asked to use their imagination and understanding of these issues. One of the primary trends was the sensitivity towards the country's negative image. Resultantly, most responses for questions around popular issues had predictable answers.

However, the meat was in the answers to questions that drew out the perception regarding identity issues, be it national or religious. The division between the 'self' and the 'other' followed the same pattern as is generally prevalent in the society irrespective of socioeconomic background. The respondents subscribed to a clash of civilizations paradigm and in spite of their privileged position were unable to rise

above their bias towards regional or global competitors.

This set of youth was also caught inside the identity crisis which seems to have enveloped Pakistan and the Muslim world, especially after 9/11. Clearly, the respondents, despite being products of elite school systems and universities, were not exposed to a more mature analysis regarding various issues. The thinking generally reflected the same conservatism and preference for military, a lack of understanding of democratic principles and rejection of the political system without making an effort to analyse – as would be found amongst the youth in other classes. They evinced no desire to contribute to the political system through giving funds, which could then result in pressure on a political party to become more accountable.

The survey reflects an increasing conservatism in society. The opinions voiced reflect the changes that have come and are being brought about in Pakistani society. What is most interesting to note, is that the radicalism of the affluent class is far more difficult to define. It is more modern, in fact post-modern, as it replaces the state with a religious identity. In the imagination of these youth there is a Muslim Ummah which is interconnected despite the differences in historical experiences of individual Muslim states. The Ummah has to be guarded by all its members who must contribute towards its growth and security. This mindset was essentially not very different from what was produced by General Zia-ul-Haq's regime during the 1980s. Conservatism, radicalism and extremism are factors that date back to the 80s. Pakistan's government then had encouraged greater religious orthodoxy and entered into partnership with several religious parties. The Zia period is known for creating institutions such as 'Nazim-e-Salat' or the prayer police who would make sure that

male members from every household came and prayed in the neighbourhood mosques. The military dictator also brought changes in the curriculum. It is estimated that over 700 changes were made in textbooks and this was not changed by any of the successive leaders. Furthermore, the continued political instability fed into this process of radicalization and militarization of the society.

These results underscore the need for enlightenment in society through liberalizing the national and religious discourse. Therefore, the underlying conclusion is that radicalism is one of the rising trends in Pakistani society that may not be eradicated unless there is a conscious effort to change the popular narrative. The social changes in Pakistan affect the elite class as much as the underprivileged. The country is gradually turning into a reservoir of extremist views which are not restricted to a particular class or shape. External appearances, such as the attire one opts to wear, are no longer measures to gauge conservative views and an extremist mindset. New radicalism has a modern face. One of the best examples of the aforementioned transformation is in the form of televangelists like Ahmed Qureshi or Zaid Hamid. The latter, in particular, does not require his followers to adapt to a rigid code of dress and conduct. Resultantly, some of his ardent followers include fashion designers like Maria B or pop singers such as Ali Azmat. Hamid, nonetheless, makes up for the absence of conservatism in dress and cultural norms by encouraging his followers to support khilafat as the preferred form of governance and to declare *jihād* against what he calls 'Judeo-Christian' neo-imperialism. These new ideological brands are gaining popularity.

One of the critical areas of concern

pertains to media. Despite fewer restrictions and an increased access to technology, the media has generally adopted a conservative stance that influences society, especially the youth. The media's retrogressive role becomes even more problematic in an environment where society's analytical capacity is sorely inadequate. The mediocre quality of social science in Pakistan contributes to radicalism and sadly, the public sector universities lack the capacity to create a generation of thinkers that could rise above bias.

The Way Forward

The obvious question for the liberal segment of society and the international community is what can be done to stop Pakistan's descent into radicalism? Other than the customary recommendations to invest in education, development and generation of economic activity, this study proposes the following actions:

Long-to-longer term

- Radicalism cannot be fought without altering the popular national narrative. An expert on Pakistan's politics and Associate Fellow of the Chatham House, London, Dr Farzana Sheikh believes that a major shift will require de-linking politics from religion as was envisioned by the founding father Mohammad Ali Jinnah. The present national narrative is based on a tight coupling of religion with the country's national identity. This results in forming a peculiar kind of a worldview. Such a change, however, is not going to come easily. It will require political will and commitment which is absent at the moment. If it is to happen at all, it will only be possible through advocating a

secularism that has roots in Islam rather than a foreign or western construct.

Medium-to-long term

- The narrative on religion in Pakistan predominantly follows two strands: (a) ignorance of religion, or (b) a puritanical interpretation. Although Sufism is also a part of the local culture, the more puritanical versions are gaining popularity in urban environments. This can only change by providing society access to alternative interpretations within the religious discourse.
- It is vital to seek partners in society and amongst religious scholars with the objective of constructing a peaceful alternative. Thus far, religion is largely imagined in terms of stereotypes. For instance, the Bareilvi School of Thought and Sufi Islam are considered more tolerant. However, there is a crucial need to search for the narrative within these schools of thought to inculcate tolerance in society. Research must be conducted to find sources within the different religious traditions, which would then be used to develop an alternative narrative.
- Encouraging inter-faith dialogue with an emphasis on developing understanding between different sects and religions is essential. Youth conferences, festivals, seminars and conferences to explain the 'other' and build confidence amongst various civilizations are essential to avoid a 'clash of civilizations.'
- Public should be edified by facilitating access to alternative views in local languages.

- Since the popular media seems to be predominantly manipulated by radical elements, it is necessary to create alternative media options such as magazines, newspapers, radio programs which promote alternative thinking.

Short-to-medium term

- The international community and Pakistan must cooperate to develop an alternative narrative. This could be achieved through a series of conferences and seminars bringing together moderate Muslim scholars from all over the world to generate a modern message or interpretation of religion which could compete with the post-modernist puritanical narrative.
- Muslim states should cooperate to develop an alternative consensus (of sorts) amongst the Muslim community to stop violence and intolerance.
- Greater interaction between Pakistani students and western scholars and/or diplomats to explain each other's perspective.
- Establish programmes in western universities to educate students in religion and theology. I believe that such an education will be different from what they learn under the influence of puritanical scholars in the Muslim world.

These measures require cooperation amongst the international community and the civil society in Pakistan. Counter-terrorism or military measures are one option. However, latent-radicalism or an end to terrorism requires an engagement between various segments of a society and amongst different societies. It is not George W. Bush's 'crusade' but a softness

of attitude based on building inter-faith and inter-civilizational dialogue and harmony that may help the world succeed in this war.

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¹³ Munir Report: Report of the court of inquiry constituted under Punjab Act II of 1954 to enquire into the Punjab disturbances of 1953. P. 51.

¹⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zia-ul-Haq%27s_Islamization#Adultery_.28Zina.29_Ordinance

¹⁵ TJ is a transnational social movement started in united India in 1926 by Muhammad Ilyas. This is considered as an offshoot of the Deobandi movement to build support amongst people for fighting Hindu revivalism. Its members volunteer to travel to other cities and countries to spread the word of Islam and convert Muslims to Deobandi ideology.

End Notes

- ¹ "Pakistan: Madrasas, Extremism and the Military". International Crisis Group Asia No 36, 29/07/2002.
- ² Tahir Andarabi, Jishnu Das and Asim Ijaz Khwaja, "The Madrassa Controversy. The Story Does Not Fit the Facts". <http://economics-files.pomona.edu/Andarabi/Research/MadrassaStanford.pdf>
- ³ Discussion with Moeed Yusuf (February 2010).
- ⁴ "Pakistan Employment Trends 2011". (Islamabad: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2011). P. ix. http://www.pbs.gov.pk/sites/default/files/Labour%20Force/publications/Pakistan_Employment_2012.pdf
- ⁵ The study had specifically selected two particular samples from IBA, (Karachi) and Iqra University, (Islamabad) to assess whether improving educational environment had any bearing on the ideological and political mindset of students. These two samples pertain to lower-middle class students, who were brought to these universities to improve the exposure of the students, their knowledge base and qualifications. Their thinking, however, did not differ from the rest.
- ⁶ One of the parameters used by the study was to see whether opinions were different in families where the heads were females. About 5% of the sample had females as family heads versus 92% with male heads. However, there was nothing observed which differentiated opinions on the bases of gender.
- ⁷ Domicile, however, does not necessarily reflect the actual ethnicity. Fourteen% listed themselves as Punjabis; 14% Asians; 4% Sindhis; 8% Pakistanis; 3% Pathan; 8% Mohajirs; 8% Muslims; 1% Memon; and 5% Others.
- ⁸ The enhancement in numbers is not a discrepancy but because a large number selected more than one language.
- ⁹ Two questions of similar nature were asked to cater for the confusion in a respondent's mind. Clearly, the trend is that the majority does not support the sale or consumption of alcohol.
- ¹⁰ <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/04-ahmadis-demand-protection-qs-06>
- ¹¹ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/17701/terror-strikes-lahore-12-dead/>
- ¹² Majlis-e-Ahrar-e-Islami was established in 1931 from the remnants of the Khilafat movement in India.

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Gender and Power:

Challenges Surrounding Women's Participation in National Politics

Amina Samiuddin

‘No nation can rise to the height of glory unless your women are side by side with you. We are victims of evil customs. It is a crime against humanity that our women are shut up within the four walls of the houses as prisoners.’¹

Though the importance of gender equality was recognized and identified by the founder of Pakistan Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the ground reality remains that women continue to be subjected to the practice of exclusion, discriminatory laws and customs where the link between home as private and civil society and politics as public defined by social custom is clearly gendered. Related to the public and private divide is the political and apolitical dichotomy which restricts women to an ‘experience of apolitical’ resulting in women’s unique political experience being overlooked (Pomeroy, 2004). Discourses on empowerment have conceptualized different kinds of power where ‘power over’ refers to when power is exercised by dominant groups over marginalized ones (Rowlands, 1995). Culture, identity, religion and violence continue to perpetuate inequality in Pakistan and provide the means to exert ‘power over’ women and control their decision making and mobility, conceptually dividing the world into two separate domains where home becomes the ideological and legitimate space which women are allowed to occupy. These issues are crucial to

understand women's exclusion from politics as they are used to deny women access to their rights where they are deprived of their right to vote, to vote freely or to contest elections. Giving patriarchal interpretations of our social, cultural and religious context more importance than the rule of law creates a disabling environment for the empowerment of women as a consequence of which many women choose not to challenge the status quo because of the envisioned cost associated with such actions, therefore empowerment approaches that only target adult women and those that focus on developing a sense of self and individual confidence and fail to factor in the risks involved will only have a limited impact on women's empowerment. Underlying the use of culture and religion is the internalization of patriarchal ideology where women internalize these norms and beliefs, usually adopted as a form of survival mechanism, and play an active role in reinforcing the existing gender system. Any approach aimed at empowering women therefore needs to take into account both internal and external forces that disempower women and adopt a bottom up and top down approach where the focus should be on women and men at both the micro and macro levels of society. Based on ethnographic research carried out by Shirkat Gah monitoring the 2008 general election, as part of a multi country study² concentrated on two main sites Vehari (Punjab) and Usta Muhammad (Balochistan), and additional data collected from Peshawar (Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa), Faisalabad, Multan and Bahawalpur (Punjab) Pakistan, this paper examines the political participation of women that takes into account their freedom to vote for candidates of their choice, stand for elections and run their own election campaigns. The paper will also investigate factors that compel women to vote in a certain way and

obstacles that deny women the right even to cast their vote thereby completely excluding women from the electoral process.

Historical Background

The public/private space is a social construction that became further embedded in our system during the British colonization of India where the question of women was about the 'political encounter' between the colonizers and the customs of a 'conquered people' (Lateef, 1990:58). With the colonization of India, the protection and maintenance of identity took on utmost importance; 'this was embodied in religious customs and practices which were maintained through supporting the traditional ideal of Indian women' (Lateef, 1990:58). Women, therefore, were seen to be responsible for protecting and preserving the identity of the colonized people. Though the British colonization of India sharpened the division between the public and private world, the divide had already existed before colonization. The system of purdah clearly demarcated the private world as women's domain restricting their freedom and confining them largely within the parameters of home, the general attitude being that women were responsible for looking after household duties (Lateef, 1990:75). This system, justified through religion, culture and custom, sees individuals mainly in their 'social units rather than as single individuals' with rights (Papanek, 1973). Misogynistic interpretations of culture and religion operate as a control mechanism that divides citizenship along gender lines relegating women within the inner domain of home. In Pakistan today, culture, custom and religion continue to be used to justify the maintenance of power structures and deny women their basic rights as citizens restricting them to the

private world. Field research indicates that there are inherent contradictions present in the justification for exercising power over women and that culture, religion and identity remain convenient tools that allow men to remain the 'maalik' (master) and exert control over women.

The degree of power and level of empowerment that a woman has is determined by the social context and gender system that she inhabits (Mason, 2003), therefore when talking about women in Pakistan and considering their political participation it is important to understand that 'women' here does not refer to a singular group or class (Choonara, 2008). The nature and degree of women's oppression and social and political autonomy depends on her class, caste, ethnicity, religion and location. In rural and tribal settings where local customs establish male superiority and patriarchal structures are comparatively strong, women are exchanged, sold and bought in marriage and given limited power and opportunity over their decision-making. In comparison, women who belong to the upper and middle class in urban settings have greater autonomy over their decisions and lives (Bari, 2000). Even occupying the same gender system, women are not a 'uniform undifferentiated group'. Particular women and groups of women enjoy particular rights that originate from identities other than gender such as class, religion and ethnicity (Shaheed & Wee, 2008:21), for example, the lower class associates mobility especially 'unaccompanied mobility' with a loss of prestige whereas the same association does not hold to be true for upper class women (SDPI, 2008). Class also influences education and the economic independence of women in urban settings, whereas in rural areas though the majority of women work to contribute economically, their

contribution does not gain them any additional autonomy (Kazi & Sathar, 2000) or control over their contribution. Empowerment discourses that strongly emphasize access to political structures and other resources such as markets (Rowlands, 1995) fail to factor in the importance of control over these resources which is the key to improving a woman's authority within the family and household. At the two main sites researched, Vehari and Usta Muhammad, the social context that is embodied in 'legal systems, the local geographic community and communities of identification such as religious and ethnic communities' (Mason, 2003) had a strong influence on women's empowerment and access and control over resources. In Vehari, religion and class were important factors that determined the level of a woman's empowerment whereas in Usta Muhammad, Baloch identity was cited as the main reason for the restrictions placed on women's mobility and participation in the public world.

Voting Patterns

The structured space for women to make independent decisions is influenced by the gender system they inhabit and systems of power relations (Shaheed & Wee, 2008:21). Voting patterns in Pakistan are influenced by local power structures such as kinship, *biraderi* and tribalism where the principle of collectivized voting is followed rather than one of individual voting. Family affiliation remains an important basis for casting votes and participating in politics. In Multan, women usually tend to vote for the candidates chosen by their family (Zahoor, 2008). According to Amartya Sen, family can be the greatest source of support or obstruction (Sen, 1983). Family plays a vital role when it comes to women exercising their right to vote, standing for

elections or participating in any form of public life. Khalida Mansoor, a Member of the National Assembly (MNA) from the party Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) in Faisalabad, identified her husband as her source of support who encouraged her to enter politics.³ Similarly, councillors identified family support as playing a crucial role in entering the public world. Irshed Elahi, a councillor at the union level⁴ of local government from Bahawalpur, said that her husband's support was vital for her participating in the public world without which she would not have been able to take part in politics.⁵ However, family is also the greatest source of obstruction denying women the opportunity to get educated, gain employment or to participate as candidates or voters in elections. According to Irshed Elahi, maintenance of the power structure has led men to resort to violence such as acid throwing when women start becoming successful in their field of work. In Vehari feudalism and the system of caste and clan has a major impact on the political affiliation of the people and governance in the area. The two main castes, who are opposed to each other, are the Awan and the Araian. Policies towards other groups and castes in the area are determined by their alliance with or against these two dominant castes. Development in the area depends on the winning and losing candidate,⁶ for example, if a village is supporting a candidate who loses, the opposing candidate who wins will not give funds to develop the area.⁷ Research data indicated that voting is usually decided by the Nazim or influential men in the community who hold a meeting and tell the men who to vote for; the message is then conveyed to the women by their husbands.⁸ In Usta Muhammad with the tribal system dominant, voting is usually decided through tribes, caste and clan. The two leading Baloch tribes are Khosa and Jamali followed by the Jamoot,

Brauhi and Sindhi. A tribe is usually set apart by its "political affluence" which presently is the Jamali tribe (Population Census Organization, 1998:8). Tribes are organized in a way where the tribal head can speak for a few families or the entire village. Candidates usually approach tribal heads or the Sardar who then responds for the tribe. The tribal head then calls a meeting with the *biraderi* in favour of his candidate. The choice of candidate is often based on who presents the chief with the most favours.⁹ Therefore, it is important to note that men also face limitations when it comes to voting freely, however the restrictions that are placed on women are far greater when it comes to accessing and exercising their rights and their participation in the public world. According to the men in Usta Muhammad, when men themselves are oppressed by other men the possibility for the empowerment of women taking place remains virtually non-existent.

Culture

Good governance is established on a citizen's ability to 'claim entitlements in three broad areas: the right to participate in public decision-making; the inclusion of people's needs and interests in policies; and the allocation of resources' (Sever, 2005). Field research suggests that gender plays a large role in one's ability to access these rights and is influenced by culture, identity, religion and violence which provide the means to exert 'power over' women and control their decision making and mobility. The notion of honour and shame is used to victimize women participating in politics. Women who have entered politics have been criticized by their male colleagues who work under the assumption that a woman's place is at home and that once women leave their homes they lose their *izzat* (honour) and respect.¹⁰ Female

councillors in local government are also insulted and humiliated by their community by being called *be-izzat*¹¹ (without honour). The cultural concept of honour is so deeply entrenched in our system that women feel that they have no choice but to follow the dictates of their husbands. The right to vote and choose your representatives freely is denied to women in Vehari. Candidates usually approach influential men in the community who then call a meeting with the other men and decide who the vote should be given to. Women are either pressurized to vote for their husband's choice of candidate or vote because they feel that if the candidate their husband supports loses then the husband would be dishonoured in the community as everyone knew that their husband had been supporting the losing candidate.¹² However, in cases where women head their own households¹³ or where the husband is absent, women have control over their decision on who to cast their vote for. In a discussion with women from People's Colony in Vehari a woman stated that she will cast her vote for the candidate of her choice, and another woman responded '*iss ka banda baahir hai iss liye yeh apni marzi se de sakti hai*'¹⁴ (her husband works away from home that is why she can choose who to vote for). Where the man of the house is absent it opens up possibilities not there for most women allowing them to take control over their decision-making and exercising their right to vote freely.

In Usta Muhammad, Balochistan, where the patriarchal system is especially dominant 'power over' is clearly visible through the use of culture and identity. The status of women is strongly influenced by the social context and the 'ideological or normative system to which their social collectivity subscribes' (Mason, 2003). Women in Usta Muhammad cited Baloch identity as the

reason for their confinement within their home: '*Baloch auraten naheen nikalti*'.¹⁵ Similarly, according to the men, women can only do household work because of the system of *purdah* in place. When it came to voting rights, the men stated that because of the culture in Balochistan women either do not vote or they vote according to the husband's choice.¹⁶ However, there are contradictions present in the justification used for exercising power over women. Culture and identity is effectively used by men to justify isolating women. However, where the contradiction comes in is that in Balochistan over 70% of workers in the fields are women whereas men only constitute 30% of the workers¹⁷, the question of culture and identity does not arise when women in Balochistan are working outside their homes in fields, but the rules conveniently shift when it comes to them getting educated and participating in politics. Similarly, in the 2008 elections the rules were bent because of the potential for clash between the Jamali and Buledi tribes and women were allowed to cast their vote.¹⁸ The use of culture to exercise 'power over' tends to isolate women and cuts off their access not only to resources and the public world but also to women representatives and vice versa. In certain cases, even when women have been allowed to contest, they are largely confined to their homes with their election campaigns run by their fathers, brothers or husbands. Ms Rubaba Khan, an MPA on a reserved seat from Usta Muhammad, was unknown to the women in the area as she never left her house to interact with them.¹⁹ In Faisalabad, Rahila Parveen who was awarded a ticket from Pakistan People's Party (PPP) had to rely on her father to speak on her behalf to gather support due to cultural restrictions.²⁰ Keeping women isolated within their homes impairs their ability to access 'social or political power which highlights the notion of a common

purpose or understanding as well as the ability to get together to negotiate and defend a common goal' (Caubergs & Charlier, 2007). Empowerment as a process requires both individual awareness and collective action (Stromquist, 1995). Restricting women within the '*chaar dawari*' (four walls) of their homes not only restricts their access to information for reflective thinking but also their ability to collectively gather and discuss issues before acting to influence social change.

In Pakistan, there is a particular gendered relationship of power where candidates do not have to address women during the election campaign resulting in a lack of interest of political parties to address and facilitate women's participation. The culture of *purdah* is used by male politicians to deny women the right to cast their votes and the opportunity to participate in the election campaign. During the campaign period, the necessary arrangements where they would have a chance to address the female population were not made. Women in Vehari did not participate in public meetings or joint rallies and were generally mobilized through door-to-door campaigns with the main focus remaining on the men. Smaller corner meetings were arranged in-doors in Usta Muhammad where the candidate's female family member addressed the women, women did not find the venues of these meeting easily accessible and women were mostly mobilized through their male family members. However, for the first time in Usta Muhammad, PPP sent out their female workers to different houses to mobilize women for their vote.²¹ In Peshawar, Qazi Fazlullah - a candidate from Jamiat Ulema e-Islam (JUI-F), referred to the local traditions and practices in Peshawar as the reason why it was difficult for women to vote. Women do not go to polling stations due to strict

purdah. According to Awami National Party (ANP) candidate Ayub Khan, though his party was in favour of women voting, women themselves do not come out of the house to vote.²² However, ANP has been one of the parties that have entered into agreements with local leaders in tribal areas to ban women from voting claiming that traditions in those areas prevent women from leaving their homes. In these areas, female polling agents are stationed outside polling booths not to facilitate women's voting but to bar them from casting their vote. Despite the assurances made to women's equality in their manifestoes, none of the candidates addressed the issue of gender equality. There is a clear power differential where voting power lies with the men resulting in women voters becoming nonessential in the eyes of the candidates. Given the gender system where men decide who to vote for, female candidates also fail to facilitate participation of women voters instead targeting the men for their vote.

Female candidates such as Tehmina Daultana, because of the power differential, also fail to address questions of gender equality running their campaigns on the exact lines as her male colleagues and interacting with the men in the community as once they get the acceptance of the men they automatically get the vote of the women. The audience at her *jalsas* (meetings) is comprised only of men with no separate arrangements made for women to facilitate their participation. Researchers observed women listening from their houses during her *jalsa*, a common sight during male candidate's *jalsas* as women are not allowed to attend. Women in Vehari stated that Tehmina only interacts with the men. Even when there is a death in the community Tehmina would come but only meet the men at the *dera* for condolences.²³ With a clear power differential visible, women candidates aim

for acceptance by the men as they are the ones who decide who to cast the vote for and once they gain the acceptance of the men they automatically get the support of the women. By denying women their right to vote and largely mobilizing them through their male family members, political parties are reinforcing the prevailing cultural settings that discriminate against women. In aiming for acceptance by the men, candidates such as Tehmina Daultana having found a place in the public world continue to sideline women during election campaigns in order to succeed. At other times women who have been allowed to occupy public space but only to act as surrogates are side-lined by the men in their own family and are effectively made irrelevant.

The legal requirement for a Bachelor's Degree introduced by General Pervez Musharraf resulted in women being allowed to contest elections by their family but only to act as surrogates to their male relatives who did not have the necessary qualifications to contest.

Even though they were allowed to contest, they were still largely confined to their homes with their election campaign being run by their fathers, brothers or husbands. Such was the case with Nafeesa Khursheed who was allowed to contest due to the fact that she had a BA degree whereas her husband did not have the qualifications to register as a candidate. The agenda for her campaign was completely mapped and run by the men in her family with no input from her. Similarly, her *jalsas* were also held by the male family relatives. Only when people refused to support her on the account that she did not attend her own *jalsas* did she start making a few appearances with her mother-in-law. As surrogates, women are only allowed to occupy physical space in the public world simply to fulfill a conditionality and present a front at

meetings and at Assembly sessions, whereas the decision making and power behind the position remains with the men. Creating space but not allowing women to utilize it leads to wasted space forwarding the same gender system that disempowers women. Female candidates, even those who are not acting as surrogates, are not seen to constitute a source of support for other women. Where women do break out of the set norm and have entered the public arena the rupture created is not sufficient enough to bring about transformation in gendered relations, which questions the ability of female candidates to potentially bring about change and the role that they play in reproducing the same gendered relations.

Technical Obstructions

Citizenship in Pakistan continues to be divided along gender lines and linked to the private and public dichotomy that recognizes men as playing a role in the public world of politics and employment while women are relegated to the private world as domestic home makers. Women, to this day, continue to face inadequate representation in all levels of decision making - from the household to the political sphere. Culture also prevents women from getting their Computerized National Identification Cards (CNIC) made without which they do not have proof of citizenship and are effectively excluded from participating in society including casting their votes and utilizing their rights as citizens. In certain areas of Pakistan, such as Usta Muhammad, 50% of women do not have a CNIC which is a mandatory for casting votes²⁴, gaining access to government schemes for women and the poor, 'such as safety-nets and poverty alleviation schemes, opening bank accounts and availing micro credit' (Shirkat Gah, 2007:18). Women are not allowed to get their CNIC made due to the

policy of having their photographs on the card, a concept which is considered to be 'improper'.²⁵ In Usta Muhammad and Vehari not having a CNIC was identified as one of the reasons why women could not vote. It was only during the election campaign that Azeem Daultana, a male candidate contesting from Vehari, worked to get women their ID cards made so that they could vote.²⁶ This may have been due to his mother's role in running his campaign. Women have a basic right to be identified as citizens of Pakistan and by denying women the right to get their CNIC, the opportunity to participate in the public world and the political process is also being taken away as without their ID cards women cannot cast their votes. By not taking action, the government of Pakistan is allowing these women to remain virtually non-existent as citizens.

Violence

Gender based violence used by disempowering forces makes it dangerous for women to exercise control over their decision making as independent persons (Shaheed & Wee, 2008:46). Violence is generally used to control all aspects of a woman's life and decision-making and perpetuates the political sphere as well. In Balochistan, men use violence as a mechanism to dominate women. Women are left with no choice but to vote for the candidate supported by their husbands as they are physically beaten if they disobey '*Hamen tou jahan mard kahen ge ham waheen den ge warna un ke danday ko kon rok sakta hai*'²⁷ (we will cast out vote in favour of whomever our men ask us to, how can we stand up to their violence). Approaches on empowerment mention, as a first step to empowering women, developing a sense of self and individual confidence and 'undoing the effects of internalized oppression' (Rowlands, 1995). However, empirical evidence suggests that

it is not always a question of self-confidence but rather of the risks associated with challenging the existing power structure in which women's lives are embedded that play a pivotal role. The women interviewed during the course of the 2008 election campaign period were very clear why they would vote for the candidate chosen by their husbands. The reason for abiding by their husband's choice was not a lack of self-confidence but rather a lack of choice because of the cost they would have to bear for disobedience. However, the mechanism of control used to exert control over women varied depending on the area. Women in Samejee Mohalla area identified physical beatings as a control mechanism whereas women in Tuniya Mohalla identified '*talaq*' (divorce): '*yahaan par talaq bohat hoti hai. Jo aurat shohar ke baghair baahir nikal jae tou iss ko talaq ho jati hai*' (Divorce is common in this area. If a woman goes out without her husband, she is divorced). Men use the threat of divorce to pressure (*majboor*) women to vote for the candidate chosen by them,²⁸ '*aur agar aisay naheen kiya tou woh talaq de den ge*' (if we do not obey, they will divorce us). The fear of divorce acts as an even greater threat than violence. Where women in Samejee Mohalla voiced concern for their daughter's education and bear the beating that they received as a result,²⁹ in Tuniya Mohalla the threat of being left resourceless and stigmatized holds women back from voicing opinions or making decisions that go against their husbands' dictates.³⁰ Women in both these areas may intentionally decide not to utilize opportunities to challenge existing power structures due to the risks and costs that such actions would entail. Their decision not to challenge the status quo does not seem to be linked to self-confidence. The violent nature of the physical beating that they bear where '*bimaar hotay hain aur sukar sukar kar mar jatay hain*' (they fall sick and waste

away)³¹ and the threat of divorce where women will be left without any means of support and protection in a place where women are not even allowed to leave their homes to go to the hospital unless accompanied by a male family member, the risks involved in challenging gender relations seem to be too high.

Religion

A Muslim context provides a highly significant example of power dynamics that actively disempower women. There is a perception within the Christian community in Peshawar that Islam is used more often compared to their religion to oppress women. In a dialogue with women from the Christian community, women expressed the view that their religion does not oppress women whereas in Islam men use Shariah to disempower women and make them their 'slaves'. The reasons given by Christian women for not participating in the election campaign and the criteria for casting their vote was vastly different from those cited by Muslim women. When asked who they would vote for, Muslim women responded that they would vote for the candidate chosen by their husbands due to culture, religious beliefs or violence; Christian women responded that they would vote for the candidate that deserves it: '*jo haqdaar hai*'.³² Religion has played a vital role in barring women from entering the public world. Emphasis on religion in most cases has been politically motivated and has increasingly undermined the status of women and non-Muslims as citizens of Pakistan. Under Zia-ul-Haq the most prejudiced and dogmatic sections of society were encouraged. Since then women and non-Muslims have had to 'confront a hostile environment in which to negotiate their rights' (Hussain, 1997:71). What is also problematic is the internalization of beliefs where men are

viewed to be superior. Through socialization in their appropriate gender role, women internalize these interpretations that maintain the patriarchal system and therefore likely play a role in 'transferring' them through the socialization of their children (Bari, 2000) recreating the cycle of oppression and maintaining the male dominated power structures in society.

Internalized oppression is usually adopted as a 'survival mechanism' but becomes so deep rooted that the 'effects are usually mistaken for reality'. Once women internalize control the use of 'power over' is no longer required (Rowlands, 1995). This was visible in Vehari where women themselves articulated the view that household activities are the main concern of the women whereas men are permitted by religion to work and secure a livelihood. They believe that they cannot disobey their husband's decision on who to vote for because it would be a sin to go against their wishes.³³ On Election Day, even though women have the opportunity to vote secretly they do not defy their husbands dictates as God is watching and disobeying the men would anger God.³⁴ However, what is inherently contradictory in their statement is that there are exceptions to these justifications. Whereas religion limits women to the private world of home, class allows women to bypass this restriction and participate in the public world of politics. Though women in Vehari believed that God had given women domain and responsibility over the household, this justification for denying women the right to choose the candidate they want to vote for, slips from being religious to socio-economic when it comes to women such as Benazir Bhutto and Tehmina Daultana. The same rules do not apply to Bhutto and Daultana as they have the resources to hire servants to look after their households³⁵ leaving us to question whether religion is the bigger barrier to

women's participation or class, or does religion become class based? Irshad Elahi, a councillor from Bahawalpur, quoted conservative interpretations of Islam stating that while Islam permits men to go outside the house and earn a living, women are assigned the main duty of taking care of the house and family. What is unclear is whether she herself held this belief or forwarded these views as norms fearing the consequence of challenging the normative scripture of Islam because at the same time as voicing these beliefs she also engaged in gender equitable interpretations of Islam to legitimize assertion of rights. When told by a male councillor that campaign to end violence against women was un-Islamic, Irshad replied that Islam gave women equal rights. Before the advent of Islam women had no rights and daughters used to be buried alive. Though there is an inconsistency present in her statements, engaging in gender equitable interpretations can open up space for contestation to take place. In a country where too frequently religion is used to legitimize women's disempowerment, it is important to note that it can also be used as a reference point to promote or create an enabling environment for women's participation.

The internalization of beliefs which view men as superior and decision makers has resulted in self-imposed restrictions by women and reinforces the patriarchal ideology resulting in women's continual subordination and confinement within the four walls of their homes. With internalization it is again more a question of creating awareness rather than one of developing self-confidence. Women may have self-confidence but where they hold beliefs such as women who bear the burden of living in a violent marriage are to be admired for being *khandani* (family oriented) and *sharif* (decent) and criticize women who take the initiative to change

their circumstances or take control over decision making,³⁶ requires facilitating or creating the opportunity that brings about a shift in their thinking. Approaches on empowerment mention the cognitive component of empowerment a process where between 'reflection and action a catalytic shift in thinking takes place that questions and ultimately overturns the legitimacy of the existing power structure' (Shaheed & Wee, 2008:19). The cognitive process entails women becoming 'aware of the power dynamics at play in their lives', developing the ability to exert some control over their lives and working collectively to change the power relations operating in their lives (Shaheed, 2009). In the case of Balochistan, women were already aware of the disempowering forces at play identifying violence and the threat of divorce as obstructions to them voting freely, and seemed to be the reason for not challenging the power structure. However, in Vehari, following the dictates of their husbands on the matter of voting was a result of women being afraid to commit a sin or dishonour the men in the community. Women in Vehari were using culture and religion as legitimizations to preserve the status quo believing that '*aurat ko Allah ne ghar ke andar hakoomat di hai*' (God has given women domain over the household).³⁷ Female candidates from Vehari also expressed the view that '*auraton ko aik hadd mein reh kar khudmukhtari milni chaahiye*' (women's empowerment should be limited to within their household). Women should not be empowered to the point where they forget their place.³⁸ In order for change to occur, it is necessary to raise 'women's consciousness of their own internalized sense of subordination' (Batliwala, forthcoming). Women have to start believing that they are entitled to participate in politics and freely decide who the best candidate to vote for is. Individual awareness is fundamental to the process of empowerment. Only once women have

identified the disempowering forces present in their lives and target the areas they want to change can it translate into collective action.

The working definition developed by the Women's Empowerment in Muslim Context Research Programme (WEMC) defines women's empowerment as 'an increased ability to question, challenge and eventually transform unfavourable gendered relations' (Shaheed & Wee, 2008:16). Ethnographic data gathered from Vehari and Usta Muhammad concludes that in cases where justifications came from culture, women were still likely to question power structures. Women in Usta Muhammad were aware of the unfairness of their situation stating that women work harder than men, earn more, look after the household and children, and yet men still keep them oppressed. There was recognition among women that gender rules were different, however, though they were willing to question their situation they were not prepared to challenge the status quo because of the risks involved. Their obedience to their husbands stemmed from a lack of choice as any act of free choice would result in physical violence or divorce where they would be stigmatized and left resourceless. Therefore, where cultural justifications were present women may question the power structures but their decision to challenge gender relations will depend on the risks. However, where religious interpretations are used as justifications and further internalized, women are not even likely to question power structures because by questioning their religious beliefs they would in turn be questioning God. Even though women in Vehari themselves voiced the contradiction present in their belief that women who have the resources to hire others to look after their homes can participate in the public arena they are not going to question

the reality of their situation because for them abiding by their husband's decision is a matter of avoiding a sin. By tying religious justifications to women's subordination, it is no longer a question of rejecting what is permissible by society but a question of rejecting what is permissible by God. In recent developments, however, despite cultural restrictions Mai Jori - a peasant woman - contested the bi-elections on the vacant seat of Balochistan Assembly on 10 March 2010. She was contesting from an area that had been brought into focus in 2008 where women had been buried alive in a case of honour killings.³⁹ During the 10 March bi-elections, Nissa, a community based organization run by a woman, mobilized women to get their CNIC cards made and register for voting. This leads to the question about what is more difficult to overcome in terms of costs of empowerment, the threat of divorce and violence justified through culture, or interpretations of divine law which calls for obedience of wives towards their husbands and links disobedience with sin?

The assassination of Former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto coloured the whole elections and played two contrary roles; while it made some women afraid to come out and cast their vote, it motivated others to come out in large numbers to vote for PPP. Women cited the assassination of Bhutto stating that her death made women afraid and deterred them from participating in politics.⁴⁰ However, Bhutto's assassination also catalysed women to disobey their husbands to vote for her party despite the cost associated with going against the wishes of the male family members. A critical question that needs to be answered is whether women's decision to vote freely has led to a deeper rupture in existing power structures and women taking control over their decision-making.

Women can only be empowered through their own agency, that is, through a process of analysis, reflection and action. Whereas women in Balochistan were aware of the disempowering forces in their lives, it is unclear whether they voted according to choice as an attempt to take some measure of control over their lives or as an emotive response to Bhutto's assassination. Judging from the data available, women were motivated to exercise their right to vote freely not because they felt that they were entitled to it but rather that it was Bhutto's right '*yeh uss ka haq hai*'.⁴¹ Women in Balouchistan felt as if they owed Bhutto something, that she had died for them: '*hamaray liye mari,*' '*bibi ke khoon ko ham vote den gi*'. It was not a rational decision to access and utilize their right to vote but rather a sympathetic response to her death.

Decisions to challenge the status quo are dependent on women's visions of themselves and their potential future as well as their assessment of the potential sources of support that they can mobilize for overcoming obstacles, and the risks and costs such actions may entail. Whereas the women in Usta Muhammad wanted a better future it is not clear whether they believed that one was possible. They believed that women should participate in politics '*magar hamaray illaaqay mein aisa mumkin naheen hai*'⁴² (but this is not possible in our area). Women in Usta Muhammad wanted change to occur, they believed that women had more rights than men and they wanted to fully utilize and exercise their rights to get educated and gain employment if not for themselves for their daughters,⁴³ however they did not believe that one was likely. The individual awareness aspect of empowerment was present, however because of 'power over', the high cost involved in breaking the set pattern women opt not to take action due

to the nature of the beatings and threat of divorce, therefore the prime target for the process of empowerment cannot be limited to just adult women as some writings on empowerment suggest. Such strategies believe that because adult women understand the problems having experienced subordination and secondly transformation in these women is necessary to break the pattern of reproducing the patriarchal system (Stromquist, 1995). What this strategy fails to take into account is that due to the use of 'power over' women may not challenge power structures because of the risks involved. Even if women recognize 'power within' where they become self-aware, in order for a shift to occur in 'political, social and economic power between and across both individuals and social groups (Batliwala, 2007) awareness has to be created among those that are disempowering women and simultaneously legitimizing their disempowerment. Men also need to be targeted because changing the thinking of the women or simply focusing on women does not necessarily guarantee that they will act to change the status quo. The more resistant men are to change, the more obstacles women are likely to face and the less likely they are to act because of the risks in challenging prevailing gender settings. In Vehari however, due to internalized oppression women believed that husbands were the decision makers and only in their absence can women make decisions for themselves. Religion was used by the women themselves to legitimize their absence from the electoral process. In the case of Vehari, women must come to understand their conditions at the micro and macro level, behavioural patterns that create 'dependence, interdependence and autonomy within the family and in the society at large and make choices that may go against cultural and social expectations'. A prerequisite for empowerment therefore is stepping

outside the house (Stromquist, 1995) and creating a non-traditional space which provides women with access to information and ideas where women can get together to 're-examine their lives and their environment' giving them the opportunity to become aware of and decide the changes that they want to make (Batliwala, forthcoming).

The use of culture, religion, violence and the internalization of cultural and religious interpretations that discriminate against women continue to deny women their place in the public world. The Constitution of Pakistan gives every citizen 18 years and over the right to vote; implicit in this law is the right to vote freely. In the 2008 elections, women were either completely denied their right to vote or in cases where they were allowed to cast their votes it did not translate into women exercising free choice in the selection of the candidate bringing into question the legitimacy of the elections. There is a fundamental difference in exercising one's right to vote and one's right to vote freely. In Vehari, though women did cast their votes, the candidate had been chosen by the husband due to the cultural notion of honour or the internalization of religious interpretations that viewed men as the decision makers. In Usta Muhammad, in areas where women were allowed to vote, their decisions were coerced with the threat of violence and divorce and they were denied the right to select the candidate of their choice by their husbands. Where women did defy their husbands to vote for Benazir Bhutto it was not a claim to a right they felt entitled to utilize but an emotional response to the tragedy that had taken place. Ethnographic data suggests in some cases there is no clear barrier between some of the external and internal obstructions. When external obstruction such as culture and religion becomes internalized, women deny

themselves the right to exercise their citizenship rights. The internalization of misogynistic interpretations of culture and religion removes the need for threatened violence while at the same time allows men to retain control over women. These factors, both external and internal, also allow candidates to ignore women as a gender and as citizens of this nation concentrating on those who have the voting power to get them elected. By giving precedence to customs and traditions candidates are also perpetuating women's subordination and violating the constitution which they are supposed to uphold. Only when women are allowed to participate in elections and given autonomy over exercising their right to vote can the electoral process be called a democratic one. At the same time, it is important to note that having the freedom to participate in politics - that is to vote freely, contest elections and run one's campaign does not mean that it will translate into overall empowerment or improve access to other resources. Nonetheless, the exposure gained from participating in the political world and the access to information can have an impact on women's perception of self that can facilitate the cognitive component of empowerment leading to women rejecting the power relations that are operational in their lives.

However, rejecting power relations is only part of the equation of empowerment. Rejection of power relations does not result in action for change. Women may choose not to disrupt power structures because of the cost associated with challenging the gender system. Empowerment approaches therefore must create awareness and include not only those that are disempowered but also those that are responsible for disempowerment to minimize the risks involved in women taking action and creating an enabling environment for the

process of empowerment. The data collected during the election process confirmed many of the impediments that block women's participation but at the same time leaves unanswered several questions: firstly, why when women such as Tehmina Daultana break the norm does not transformation filter down to other women; secondly, does religion become class based that allows women of a certain class to participate while obstructing the participation of others and whether women voting by choice despite family pressure after the assassination of Bhutto brought a change in gender relations in the family and community; and lastly and most importantly, in terms of cost of empowerment, what is more difficult to overcome, culture that justifies violence, threatened and actual, or the internalization of religious interpretations that views free choice as a transgression of religious laws?

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End Notes

- ¹ From a speech delivered by Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah at the Aligarh Muslim University on 10 March 1944.
- ² Women's Empowerment in Muslim Contexts: Gender, Poverty and Democratization from the inside out, is a research consortium led by the South Asian Research Centre of City University, Hong Kong and supported by the UK Development for International Development (DFID). See <www.wemc.hk.com>.
- ³ Interview with Khalida Manzoor (MNA). Faisalabad. 19.03.09
- ⁴ The third tier of the local government consisting of the District, Tehsil and Union Council.
- ⁵ Interview with Irshed Elahi (UC councillor). Bahawalpur. 01.06.09
- ⁶ Profile of Vehari.
- ⁷ Political conditions of district Vehari.

- ⁸ Focus Group Discussion (Female group). Election Monitoring. 557/E B (Semi Rural). 15.02.08
- ⁹ Sajjad Ahmed Abro, Election 2008 Monitoring Report of Usta Muhammad, Shade Organization, 2008.
- ¹⁰ Interview with Irshed Elahi (UC councillor). Bahawalpur. 01.06.09
- ¹¹ Focus Group Discussion. Political participation of UC councillors. 19.03.09
- ¹² Informal Discussion, Election Monitoring, People's Colony (Vehari).
- ¹³ Focus Group Discussion (Male group). Election Monitoring. People's Colony Vehari (Urban). 15.02.08
- ¹⁴ Focus Group Discussion (Female group). Election Monitoring. People's Colony Vehari (Urban). 16.02.08
- ¹⁵ Focus Group Discussion (Female group). Voting/Empowerment. Tuniya Mohalla, Usta Muhammad. 12.02.08
- ¹⁶ Focus Group Discussion (Male group). Voting Rights. Shade Office UC I. Usta Muhammad.
- ¹⁷ District Profile of Jaffarabad.
- ¹⁸ Sajjad Ahmed, Political Participation and Decision Making: Debrief of Election 2008, Usta Muhammad, Shade Organization, 2008.
- ¹⁹ Sajjad Ahmed Abro, Election 2008 Monitoring Report of Usta Muhammad, Shade Organization, 2008.
- ²⁰ Sarsabz Foundation, Election observation, District Faisalabad, 2008.
- ²¹ Sajjad Ahmed Abro, Election 2008 Monitoring Report of Usta Muhammad, Shade Organization, 2008.
- ²² Peshawar Profile Report.
- ²³ Informal Discussion, Election Monitoring, Vehari, 2008.
- ²⁴ Focus Group Discussion (Male group). Voting Rights. Shade Office UC I. Usta Muhammad.
- ²⁵ European Union Election Observation Mission, Islamic Republic of Pakistan Final Report on National and Provincial Assembly Elections 13th Feb 2008. online @ http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/human_rights/eu_election_ass_observ/pakistan08/final_report_en.pdf
- ²⁶ Fareha Arshed and Uzna Khawaja, Electoral Monitoring, Debriefing Meeting Day 2, Vehari 2008.
- ²⁷ Focus Group Discussion. Voting/Empowerment. Samejee Mohalla. Usta Muhammad. 12.02.08
- ²⁸ Focus Group Discussion (Female group). Voting/Empowerment. Tuniya Mohalla, Usta Muhammad. 12.02.08
- ²⁹ Focus Group Discussion. Voting/Empowerment. Samejee Mohalla. Usta Muhammad. 12.02.08
- ³⁰ Focus Group Discussion (Female group). Voting/Empowerment. Tuniya Mohalla, Usta Muhammad. 12.02.08
- ³¹ Focus Group Discussion. Voting/Empowerment. Samejee Mohalla. Usta Muhammad. 12.02.08
- ³² Focus Group Discussion. Election Monitoring. Father's Colony (Urban) Christian Community, Peshawar.

³³ Focus Group Discussion (Female group). Election Monitoring. Peoples Colony Vehari (Urban). 16.02.08

³⁴ Fareha Arshed, WEMC field researcher.

³⁵ Focus Group Discussion (Female group). Election Monitoring. People's Colony Vehari (Urban). 16.02.08

³⁶ Interview with Irshed Elahi, (UC Councillor). Bahawalpur. 01.06.09

³⁷ Focus Group Discussion (Female group). Election Monitoring. Peoples Colony: Vehari (Urban). 16.02.08

³⁸ In-depth Interview. Independent Candidate Nafeesa Asif Khurshid. Vehari (Urban). 16.02.08

³⁹ HumaYusuf, Issue Based Politics, Dawn, 7 March 2010. Available @ <http://archives.dawn.com/archives/19277>

⁴⁰ Focus Group Discussion (Female group). Voting/Empowerment. Tuniya Mohalla, Usta Muhammad. 12.02.08

⁴¹ In-depth Interview. Galba Khurshid. Faisal Colony. Peshawar (Urban). 12.02.08

⁴² Focus Group Discussion (Female group). Voting/Empowerment. Tuniya Mohalla, Usta Muhammad. 12.02.08

⁴³ Focus Group Discussion. Voting/Empowerment. Samejee Mohalla. Usta Muhammad 12.02.08

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