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Research**

Message from National Coordinator

I am honoured to announce the publication of first issue of National Counter Terrorism Authority's official bi-annual journal, the Pakistan Journal of Terrorism Research. One of the main functions of NACTA is to conduct academic research on relevant topics of terrorism studies which include counter terrorism and counter violent extremism. Though the issuance of the journal is a mandatory part of the Authority's Act but its publication was delayed in the past owing to multiple reasons.

I am sure that with the help of Research and Data (R & D) Wing, we will make it a regular feature of NACTA in future. It will definitely help in promoting research based important topics relating to NACTA's mandate and scope involving national and international think-tanks and scholars.

Therefore, the first issue of Pakistan Journal of Terrorism Research is an effort in this direction. The journal is being published within NACTA's own resources by its officials in collaboration and coordination with other academics. I hope that the quality of research would further improve through consistent and concerted work of R & D Wing.

I would like to congratulate the editorial team and advisory board for their hectic efforts in publishing this issue.



Mehr Khaliq Dad Lak
National Coordinator, NACTA

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Editor's Note

Pakistan has been facing a myriad of challenges of extremism and terrorism. Over the years, countless lives have perished in terrorism related incidents across the country. Moreover, Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) including provincial Counter Terrorism Departments (CTDs) and police have also incurred heavy losses in numerous counter terror operations. The dynamic nature of terrorism and extremism has not only complicated the situation but also made it extremely challenging for LEAs to fight the menace on multiple fronts.

The first edition of National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) journal, therefore, unfolds central issues confronting the state and the society; and how they are perceived at different fora. As the key function of the Authority pivots around counter violent extremism and counter terrorism, hence, preference is given to the articles which carry similar themes in accordance with the mandate and scope of the Authority.

The main objective of publishing this journal can be viewed on multiple levels. First, it is an effort to reach out to national and international audience and inform them about the role which NACTA is playing in dealing with the threat of violent extremism and terrorism. Second, the journal covers the principal features of the authority under NACTA Act 2013. This will encourage independent researchers and those working in different think-thanks to contribute and debate various topics appearing in the issue. Third, the journal shall definitely facilitate the scholarly debate and easing out the difficulty in deciphering various topics and moot points concerning counter terrorism and counter violent extremism.

The articles, in this issue, have strong policy making recommendations to curb extremism and terror tendencies which have taken various forms and manifestations in our society. There is a direct correlation between extremism and terrorism. The former is nurtured in a particular environment of social action where thinking patterns are channelized and intolerance becomes a norm in listening to divergent views and accepting others' arguments with open mind. Such short-sightedness may lead an individual towards radicalization and finally to the commission of an act of terrorism.

The articles in the journal have been contributed by the officials working in the Authority as well as private researchers and scholars, national or international, working in similar organizations. The contents of these articles vary on a wide spectrum ranging from trends of radicalization in Pakistani youth to analysis of women participation in terror related incidents in the country. Apart from it, the journal contains valuable information on online avenues of terror and different visual means adopted by Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) to trap innocent minds for recruitment. Furthermore, it also includes a theoretical study of militant jihad in the context of Ibn Taimiyyah's philosophy with an attempt to dovetail it with the prevailing situation in the country. Lastly, it also examines the elements of violence in different ethno-national movements in Sindh and Balochistan provinces and their implications on non-violent sub-national struggles.

These contributions will definitely enhance the reach and scope of the journal to cover transnational issues such as terror financing and other related matters which would provide practical policy guidelines to government departments at different levels.

With this conviction, NACTA journal is being introduced and we believe that it will open new avenues in exploring different aspects of violent extremism and terrorism.

Radicalization of Educated Youth in Pakistan: Traits, Narratives and Trends

Abdul Basit

Abstract

Around 64 percent of Pakistan's population is below the age of 30 years, which is expected to rise to 230 million by 2030 and 280 million by 2050. This makes youth the most important demographic group in Pakistan. In recent years, growing radicalization among the country's educated youth has raised new counter terrorism and extremism challenges. Educated youth's quest for significance, self-worth and the desire to serve a higher purpose in life have pushed a radical fringe towards militancy. Religious-political parties, missionary organizations and modern Islamist networks have, intentionally or unintentionally, facilitated movement of vulnerable youth from non-violent to violent-extremism. Social media has also lowered entry barrier of youth's participation into militancy. This paper has defined and conceptualized radicalization of educated youth in Pakistan's context and identified main traits that account for it. The second section details major narratives, such as Ghazwa-e-Hind, Caliphate and the Black Flags of *Khorasan* which militant organizations have exploited to radicalize the educated youth. The final section offers some policy recommendations to overcome radicalization among the educated youth.

Key terms: Youth radicalization, Pakistan, Caliphate, Ghazwa-e-Hind, Khorasan, Education

Introduction

Pakistan has the largest population of young people ever in its history, making it one of the most youthful countries in the world and second youngest in South Asia. Of the 207 million population, around 64 percent is below the age of 30 years, and 29 percent is between the ages of 15-29

years.¹ This youth bulge is projected to continue at least for the next three decades and can either be an asset or a liability depending on how effectively this segment is integrated in the society.² So, youth is the most important demographic group in Pakistan and also the most impressionable.

Radicalization of educated youth is dangerous because militants with higher education are better positioned to plan sophisticated attacks, infiltrate elite government and military circles, and facilitate increased connections between Pakistan-based groups and transnational jihadist groups.³ Deprived and confused youth, particularly those who cannot find answers to their problems are most vulnerable to extremist propaganda. There is a lot of ambiguity on several issues in youth's mind and there is no one to answer them.⁴

The vigilante killing of Mashal Khan, a journalism student of Mardan's Abdul Wali Khan University on fake blasphemy charges in 2016, recruitment of Naureen Laghari by the Islamic State (IS), a student of Liaquat Medical College Hyderabad, to target Sunday Easter services in Lahore in 2017, and the targeted killing of a college professor by his student over alleged "anti-Islam" remarks in Bahawalpur in March 2019 underscore the extent and depth of youth radicalization among Pakistan's educated youth. Similarly, the cases of IS-inspired militant cell, Saad Aziz

¹ "Pakistan currently has largest youth population of its history: UNDP report," *The News*, May 3, 2018.

² Raheem ul Haque, "Youth Radicalization in Pakistan," Peace Brief, *United States Institute of Peace*, February 26, 2014.

³ Madiha Afzal, "University education and radicalization in Pakistan," *Livemint*, April 16, 2018.

⁴ Madeeha Anwar, "Pakistan's Emerging Threat: Highly Educated Youth Gravitate to Radicalization," *Voice of America*, May 6, 2017.

network, and Al-Qaeda (AQ)-linked Jamaat-ul-Ansar Al-Shariah (JAS) — involving educated militants from colleges and universities— indicate the ingress of global jihadist groups in Pakistani universities and higher education institutions.

Barring a few studies, majority of the research on youth radicalization has not defined the phenomenon in Pakistan's context. Particularly, radicalization of educated youth is a data-scarce subject in Pakistan as much of it is assumed rather than demonstrated. Moreover, the bulk of the existing research on the topic is survey-based rather than an in-depth examination of various emerging trends of educated youth's radicalization in the country. Radicalization is not a static but a dynamic phenomenon, so such survey-based studies have a shelf-life notwithstanding their important insights into the subject-matter. Therefore, a fresh examination of the ideological narratives that underpin radicalization of educated youth, their traits and trends is warranted.

A Survey of Existing Literature on Youth Radicalization in Pakistan

Research on youth radicalization in Pakistan has debunked the madrassa-militancy, poverty-terrorism and illiteracy-radicalization arguments.⁵ Winthrop and Graff have demonstrated that (growing) religiosity is a poor predictor of radicalization in Pakistan. Religiosity is often conflated with radicalization in Pakistan.⁶ Similarly, conservatism, opposition to liberal

⁵ Moeed Yusuf, "Radicalism Among Youth in Pakistan: Human Development Gone Wrong?", *Pakistan National Human Development Report (NHDR) 2015, United National Development Pakistan (UNDP)*, November 2014, 12.

⁶ Rebecca Winthrop and Corinne Graff, "Beyond Madrassas: Assessing the Links between Education and Militancy in Pakistan," Working Paper 2, Centre for Universal Education, *Brookings Institute*, June 2010, 16.

ideas, support of *Shariah*, females wearing *hijabs* and men sporting beards in large numbers tell us very little about youth radicalism.⁷

Aamir Rana has found that majority of Pakistani youth (92 percent) considered religion an important factor in the life. At the same time, 79 percent of them did not consider that the Pakistani Taliban were serving Islam and 85 percent believed suicide terrorism was prohibited in Islam.⁸ The simultaneous embrace of Islamic identity and rejection of Islamist militancy indicates that an individual's religiosity does not tell us much about radical attitudes.

Aisha Siddiqa has discovered that educational backgrounds of youth have no causal link with radicalization in Pakistan. Youth absorb radical ideas because they become part of the popular culture without necessarily understanding their underlying message and also due to the fact that alternative discourses are not available.⁹ Siddiqa makes an important distinction of hybrid religious and socio-political attitudes in which people are moderate in one dimension and conservative in the other.¹⁰ Radicalism, Siddiqa opines, is a by-product of a popular culture in which social, political and religious conservatism have been normalized cutting across educational and socio-economic divides.¹¹

⁷ Abdul Basit, "Countering Violent-Extremism: Evaluating Pakistan's Counter-Radicalization and De-radicalization Initiatives," *IPRI Journal* 15, No. 2 (Summer 2015), 47.

⁸ Muhammad Amir Rana, "Radicalisation in Pakistani Youth," *Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia, accessed May 30, 2019, <http://www.searctt.gov.my/featured-articles/59-radicalisation-in-pakistani-youth>

⁹ Aisha Siddiqa, "Red Hot Chili Pepper Islam—Is the Youth in Elite Universities in Pakistan Radical?" *Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung*, September 15, 2010: 13.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 25.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 14.

Moeed Yusuf has examined youth radicalization as process along a radical continuum which has different stages instead of treating it as a set of characteristics and behaviours. These stages are never neatly distinct and an individual may move back and forth between different stages, may never move from pre-radicalization to actual radicalization or may never progress beyond a particular level.¹² Yusuf posits that in Pakistan's context education alone is a poor predictor of someone's radicalization. His findings categorize most of the Pakistani youth in pre-radicalization stage on the continuum and outlines frustration with poor socio-economic conditions, lack of governance, weak writ of the state and politico-ideological environment created by state's pro-militancy policy for regional interests in Kashmir and Afghanistan as main causes of youth radicalism.¹³

Farhan Zahid has detailed the socio-economic and educational backgrounds of educated militants in Pakistan. His analyses have focused on pro-Islamic State militants of Saad Aziz network involved in assassinations of noted social worker Sabeen Inam, the Vice-principal of Jinnah Medical and Dental College Debra Lobo and the attack on the Ismaili Shia community in Karachi.¹⁴ Militants involved in this network were from affluent, urban backgrounds and had degrees from the Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Sir Syed University of Engineering and

¹² Moeed Yusuf, "Radicalism Among Youth", 5.

¹³ Yusuf, "Radicalism Among Youth", 14.

¹⁴ Farhan Zahid, "Radicalisation of Campuses in Pakistan," *Counter Terrorists Trends and Analyses* 9. No. 11 (November 2017): 12-15.

Technology (SSUET) and the University of Karachi. These militants were tech-savvy, over-ambitious and self-radicalized.¹⁵

A similar but more expansive analysis by Huma Yusuf has discussed trends driving youth radicalization at campuses, such as university-based student cells of militant organizations. According to Yusuf, urban Islamist institutions like Al-Huda, Hizb-ut-Tahrir (HT) and Tanzeem-e-Islami (TI) have contributed to youth's spill over into violent-extremism.¹⁶ According to her, given the absence of youth-specific strategies in Pakistan's counter-terrorism and extremism framework, educated youth's radicalization is likely to continue.¹⁷

Finally, Raheem ul Haque holds promotion of closed and homogenized self-identity in Pakistan's national narrative as the main cause of youth's radicalization. Haque sees this permeation of militant ideologies forming a pyramid, whose top is occupied by terrorists, middle by religious-political organizations and the bottom by missionary Islamist outfits. In tandem, they create an enabling social environment for growth of radical tendencies among the youth.¹⁸ The lack of alternative narratives and world views coupled with a distorted historical curriculum that glorifies militant jihad and limited employment opportunities also push youth towards radicalization in Pakistan.¹⁹

¹⁵ Farhan Zahid, "Tahir Saeeen Group—higher degree militants," *Conflict and Peace Studies* 7, No. 2 (July-December 2015): 151-161.

¹⁶ Huma Yusuf, "University Radicalization: Pakistan's Next Counter Terrorism Challenge," *CTC Sentinel* 9, No. 2 (February 2016): 4-8.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Haque, "Youth Radicalization".

¹⁹ Ibid.

Against this backdrop, this paper examines the radical ideological narrative shaping educated youth's worldview in Pakistan as well as characteristics and major trends prevalent among them. The conclusion offers some policy recommendations as well. The paper has utilized published primary and secondary sources like profiles of prominent radicalized youth, book chapters, journal papers and newspaper reportage. Interviews of subject experts and government officials have also been conducted to enhance the analysis. The terms radicalization and extremism have been used interchangeably though there exist subtle distinctions between them.

Defining and Conceptualizing Traits of Educated Radical Youth in Pakistan

Haque defines youth radicalization in Pakistan as, “an exclusive Islamic identity—meaning youth identifying through their religious identity over nationality—combined with a broader movement comprising of militant, religio-political and missionary organizations.”²⁰

For Siddiqa, youth radicalism in Pakistan is “the tendency to be exclusive vis-à-vis other communities on the basis of religious beliefs.”²¹ Siddiqa upholds that this may not be manifested in behaviour but in extreme forms could lead to militancy, which she describes as “latent or passive radicalism.” It exists as a worldview and attitude in which the individual develops a bias against “the religious other.”²²

²⁰ Haque, “Youth Radicalization”.

²¹ Siddiqa, “Red Hot Chili Pepper Islam”, 23.

²² Ibid.

Yusuf defines it as, “youth perception on religiosity, their exclusionary thinking, religious intolerance, a level of sympathy for—at least lack of active opposition to—Islamist violence among pockets, an us vs them conception of the world, and frustration with conditions in the country.”²³

Haque’s classification of various radical agents on the radicalism continuum as loosely-coupled, bridge and encapsulating models are quite instructive in conceptualizing educated youth’s radicalization in Pakistan.²⁴

The **loosely-coupled model** facilitates interaction between the sympathizers, supporters and militant organizations in a shared space. Generally, worship places, religious congregations, community platforms and educational institutions are targeted by militant organizations for potential recruits. The recruiters look for vulnerable youth who come here in search of spirituality, to atone for past sins and serve a higher purpose in life. Missionary organizations and modern Islamist institutions such as Tableeghi Jamaat (TJ), Tableeghi Ijtima (TI), HT and Al-Huda have allowed for such interactions between political and militant activists with lower level sympathizers.²⁵

The **bridge model** comprises of those institutions and organizations which close the distance between aspiring jihadists and militant organizations.²⁶ In Pakistan’s context, religious-political parties such as Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) and its students wing Islami Jamiat-e-Talba (IJT) as well as Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam Fazal-ur-Rehman (JUI-F) and Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam Sami

²³ Yusuf, “Radicalism Among Youth”, 14.

²⁴ Haque, “Youth Radicalization”.

²⁵ Haque, “Youth Radicalization”.

²⁶ Ibid.

ul Haq (JUI-S) have acted as conduits and political guides for aspiring radical volunteers to different militant organizations like the Afghan Taliban, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM), Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ). These organizations are part of the broader Deobandi mosque-madrassa network, comprising of missionary and charity organizations. More radicalized individuals and factions from these organizations have gravitated towards radical-militarism as well.

The **encapsulating model** denotes creation of an entire social network to constitute a large organization. Such organizations comprise of missionary outfits that disseminate the ideological narratives, charity arms which deliver social goods and services to win sympathies of the society, political wings that participate in politics and the militant arms which engage in militancy.²⁷ Groups like Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) and Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) fit in this categorization.

For instance, JuD comprises of a preaching arms with the same name. It has a network of academies, madrassas and mosques as well as a humanitarian relief NGO, the Falah-e-Insaniat Foundation (FIF). The group has a political party, the Milli Muslim League (MML), as well.

Similarly, JeM has a chain of mosques and madrassas spread throughout Pakistan, particularly in south Punjab. The organization has a charity arm Al-Akhtar Trust and its own flagship publication Zarb-e-Momin to disseminate its ideological narrative. JeM was closely linked with influential Deobandi madrassa Jamia Binoria in Karachi as well. The founder of Jamia Binoria, Mufti Nizam-ud-Din Shamzai, was JeM chief

²⁷ Ibid.

Masood Azhar's mentor and helped him found the militant outfit after his release from Indian custody.²⁸

Traits of Educated Radical Youth

Given weak causal links of madrassa education, poverty and religiosity with radicalization, the traits outlined by Gambetta and Hertog (2016) might elucidate radicalization of educated Pakistani youth: i.e. disgust, cognitive closure, in-group and out-group distinction and simplism. Arguably, personality traits determine (or are correlated to) political attitudes and perceptions.

a) Disgust

It refers to exclusivism, conservatism, rejection of innovation and a puritanical approach to politics, culture and religion. Majority of the issues related to disgust are linked with notions of religious morality and purity. In this frame of mind, outsiders are deemed to have a corrupting influence.²⁹

Purity and orderliness are the main concerns of the Islamists. Notions like “*takfir*” (excommunicating Muslims from Islam) are invoked to purify the Muslim community.³⁰ For instance, Islamic State's massacre of the Yazdi community in Iraq after declaring the self-styled Caliphate in Iraq in June 2014. Disdain for modernity as Westernism, secularism as an anti-thesis to Islamic norms of politics and governance and rejection of innovation as “*bid'ah*” are other examples of disgust.

²⁸ Farhan Zahid, “Profile of Jaish-e-Muhammad and Leader Masood Azhar,” *Counter Terrorist Trend and Analyses* 11, No. 4 (April 2017): 1-5.

²⁹ Deigo Gambetta and Steffen Hertog, *Engineers of Jihad*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2016), 130.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 131.

The discourse of Muslims' decline and poor state of affairs in South Asia was divided between the modernist and the traditionalists. The modernists like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan advocated embracing science and technology and learning English to rise again as a community. He was founder of the Aligarh movement and created a university with the same name to promote scientific learning, critical thinking and a culture of research. He also advocated the need to rethink, revive and restructure the religious ideas, practices and identity.³¹

The opposing view was of the traditionalists like Maulana Shibli Numani, Maududi and others who termed learning of English, science and technology as adoption of Western culture. The traditionalists were disgusted with these notions and advocated reverting back to ways of Muslim forefathers to regain the lost glory. The traditionalist founded *Deoband* madrassa and *Nadwatul Ulama* to restore *Shariah* system.³² In 1947, Pakistan inherited this debate between modernists represented by British trained bureaucracy and traditionalists represented by the traditional *Ulema*. This polarization has continued in Pakistan in one form or the other.

b) Cognitive Closure

Cognitive closure refers to quest for order, structure and certainties. It encompasses "intolerance of ambiguity," a notion introduced in connection with authoritarianism. Moreover, it constitutes a very narrow

³¹ Fatima Sajjad et al., "De-radicalizing Pakistani Society: the receptivity of youth to a liberal religious worldview," *Journal of Peace Education* 14, No. 2 (2017): 4.

³² Fatima Sajjad et al., "De-radicalizing Pakistani Society".

and intolerant view entailing political conservatism, hierarchical and authoritarian vision of social order.³³

The cognitive closure provides traditionalists with a unity of mind and purpose. It reduces a complex world full of chaos, disorder and disruption into neat structures allowing them to rationalize their message with articulation.³⁴ Traditionalists hate a world in flux where room for diverse and multiple identities and co-existence of competing narratives is possible. To evade this complexity, they evoke the tradition of earliest forefathers (*Salf Salihin*) as the purest form of Islam and emphasize on puritanical interpretation of *Quranic* texts and the Prophetic tradition of *Ahadith* (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad).

Militants' rejection of *Sufi* Islam as *bid'ah* and stress on literalism underscore this trend in the Pakistani context. Likewise, opposition to women's inclusion in public sphere and incorporation of minorities in the mainstream by granting them equal rights are seen as conspiracies against Islam and Pakistan. The slogan of "Islam in danger" or "war on Islam" are invoked to block any efforts that can challenge this closed and tunnelled mindset.

c) *In-group and Out-group Distinction*

This trait relates to an introvert and strong communal bonding whereby any outside intrusion whether in the form of ideas or people is strongly resisted. All kinds of externalities are deemed negative and are perceived to have a corrupting influence.³⁵

³³ Gambetta and Hertog, *Engineers of Jihad*, 132.

³⁴ Ibid, 133.

³⁵ Ibid, 134.

Individuals with a high cognitive closure like groups with impermeable boundaries. In-group prejudices and negative attitudes to out-group can push people to carryout violence against any perceived or real threat.³⁶ This mindset generates a constant sense of fear and insecurity that “Islam is in danger.” This type of introvert culture which closes the doors on flow of fresh ideas and information generates conspiracy theories.³⁷

Cognitive closure is positively linked with aggressive actions against the out-group. The high need for closure predisposes people to see inter-group relations in “us vs them” way that encourages competition.³⁸ For instance, Islamists reject Western culture and defend their in-group keeping it doctrinally or at least culturally pure. *Salafist’s* preference for ‘*al wala wal bara*’ (disavowal and loyalty) which command loyalty towards community of pure Muslims and rigidly dismisses social contact and cooperation with everyone else.³⁹

d) *Simplism*

It pertains to a black-and-white conception of the world seeking simple and unambiguous answers. This outlook exists on binaries of good-and-evil, right-and-wrong, Muslims vs non-Muslims etc. A cursory view of militant organizations’ literature and manuals reveal their penchant for simplism.⁴⁰ Over-simplification in one’s beliefs can lead to ideological extremes. This trait is particularly high among suicide bombers who are

³⁶ Gambetta and Hertog, *Engineers of Jihad*, 134.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 147.

indoctrinated with the belief that they are martyr-heroes who are glorifying Islam with their sacrifices and will get paradise and 72 virgins in return.⁴¹

Islamists propagate the over-simplistic notion that revival of *Shariah* and Caliphate will automatically fix several complex issues ailing the Muslim world. They do not offer operational details of how the *Shariah* system will work and how a consensus will be created within multiple Islamic schools of thought who qualitatively differ with each other in their interpretation of *Shariah*. Likewise, different militant groups fail to explain how non-state violence will create a unified global Caliphate when the global jihadist movement is internally divided between AQ and IS and various militant organizations in different parts of the world have suffered internecine and infighting.

Narratives Driving Radicalization among the Educated Youth in Pakistan

Ideological narratives cut across the literate, semi-literate and illiterate divide among the youth in Pakistan. These narratives appeal to different youth groups for different reasons. As radicalization literature indicates that there is no fixed template that predicts process of radicalization. Likewise, there is no fixed or linear trajectory that outlines possible route to radicalization. In fact, there are multiple pathways and one person's entry into and trajectory towards radicalization may bypass several stages of pre-radicalization while there could be several others who may never progress beyond a particular point or stage on the radicalism continuum. Similarly, an individual may entertain ideological extremism but may not exhibit tendency towards behavioural violence, while others could be

⁴¹ Ibid, 148.

ideologically less extreme but due to their trigger happy nature may indulge in physical violence.⁴²

The ideological indoctrination of an individual or a group of individuals would qualitatively differ across geographical and social contexts. For some, revenge for the lost relatives in drone strikes or counter-terrorism operations may become the reason to join militancy, while for others, narratives could be the medium helping them in overcoming their identity issues, such as an urge for belonging, self-worth, empowerment and atonement from the past sins. So, what is more important is to know how these narratives are conveyed and by whom.

Generally, narratives are framed in a way to be emotionally appealing, easy to understand as well as short and crisp. Long and difficult theological discourses throw people off. In the age of social media, people's attention is very short, so the message has to be conveyed eloquently in a short period of time. It should appeal to aspiring radicals' wishes, aspirations, fears and expectations and more importantly provide them with answers to questions buzzing in their minds. Also, narratives should propose a solution to existing problems.

The most prevalent narratives that different militant and radical groups in Pakistan have used to recruit educated youth are: *Ghazwa-e-Hind*/Anti-Indian, Caliphate, the Black Flags/Banners of *Khorasan* and anti-Americanism.

⁴² Yusuf, "Radicalism Among Youth", 5.

a) *Ghazwa-e-Hind*

The narrative of *Ghazwa-e-Hind* refers to an eschatological end of times discourse describing the final battle that will occur in Al-Hind (the Indian Sub-continent) in the jihadist propaganda. Groups like JeM, AQ and its affiliate Al-Qaeda in the Indian Sub-continent (AQIS) have used this narrative to exploit local conflicts like Kashmir to attract recruits for anti-India and pro-Kashmir militancy.⁴³

A famous Pakistani televangelist Zaid Hamid has also popularized the *Ghazwa-e-Hind* narrative in his video speeches and television programmes. He is quite famous among a segment of Pakistani youth who follow him on social media and consume his YouTube videos. Several Facebook pages having thousands of followers have been created in the name of *Ghazwa-e-Hind*.⁴⁴

The concept of *Ghazwa-e-Hind* is based on three *Ahadith* of the Prophet Muhammad which point to a final apocalyptic war that will take place in India. They speak of the conquest of India as follows:

- i) It was narrated by *Thawbaan* that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “There are two groups of my *Ummah* whom Allah will protect from the Fire: a group who will conquer India, and a group who will be with

⁴³ Husain Haqqani, “Prophecy and the Jihad in the Indian Sub-continent,” *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, Hudson Institute, March 27, 2015.

⁴⁴ Amber Rahim Shamsi, “Will the real Zaid Hamid please stand up?” *Express Tribune*, May 9, 2010.

- ‘*Eesaa ibn Maryam.*’ Narrated by *an-Nasaa’i* (no. 3175) and Imam Ahmad in *al-Musnad* (37/81), *Mu’sasat ar-Risaalah edn.*⁴⁵
- ii) It was narrated that *Abu Hurayrah* said: The Messenger of Allah promised us that we would conquer India, so if I am martyred I will be among the best of the martyrs, and if I return then I am *Abu Hurayrah* the freed (protected from hellfire).⁴⁶
- iii) “Some people of my *Ummah* will invade India and Allah will enable them to conquer it, until they bring the kings of India in chains, and Allah will forgive their sins. Then they will return to *ash-Shaam* (Syria) and they will find ‘*Eesa ibn Maryam* in Syria.” Narrated by *Na’eem ibn Hammaad* in *al-Fitan* (p. 399).⁴⁷

b) Caliphate

The Caliphate narrative has been around in Pakistan militant landscape since the 1990s but it was popularized by Hizb-ut-Tahrir (HT) after 9/11 when the group started spreading its tentacles in the country and furthered by the Islamic State of *Khorasan* (IS-K) after its emergence in 2015.⁴⁸ The revival of Caliphate has been promoted as a way out of current predicaments that ail the Muslim world, in general, and Pakistan, in particular. It refers to the thirty years rule of four rightly guided companions of the Prophet Muhammad; Abu Bakr (632–634 CE), Umar ibn al-Khattab (634–644 CE), Usman ibn Affan (644–656 CE) and Ali ibn Abi Talib (656–661 CE).

⁴⁵ Hasan refers to a *Hadith* which is reliable but whose narrators have not attained the highest degree of accuracy but they are known for their trustworthiness. Such a *Hadith* is also devoid of both anomaly and defect.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Declan Walsh, “Allure of ISIS for Pakistanis Is on the Rise,” *New York Times*, November 21, 2014.

In the 1990s, anti-Shia militant groups such as *Sipah-e-Sihaba* Pakistan (SSP) and *Lashkar-e-Jhangvi* (LeJ) used the Caliphate narrative not as a system of governance but as an ideological tool to attract young Pakistani Sunnis and justify militant violence against Shias.⁴⁹ So, framing of the Caliphate narrative was very narrow and explicitly anti-Shia.

After 9/11 and with the advent of HT in Pakistan's religio-political landscape, Caliphate was promoted as system of governance whose adoption would revive Muslim world's lost glory. HT always presented itself as a political party and its framing of the Caliphate was pan-Islamist, not sectarian in nature. HT's utopian concept was to bring about a revolution in Pakistan through a bloodless coup and then export this revolution to other parts of the Muslim world. HT explicitly targeted educated young men and women in colleges, universities and higher educational institutions. HT attracted a large number of educated youth in its fold and penetrated Pakistan's security institution and bureaucracy as well.⁵⁰

The arrival of IS took the Caliphate narrative to a whole new level. It was presented as a global concept and the narrative expanded from anti-Shia to anti-*Sufi* militancy as well.⁵¹ Moreover, while *Deobandi* militancy underpinned the Caliphate narrative in the 1990s, the post-2014 narrative was spearheaded by *Takfiri-Salafism*. From 2014 to 2018, IS urged the young men and women to pledge oath of allegiance to the self-styled

⁴⁹ Abbas Rashid, "The Politics and Dynamics of Violent Sectarianism," *The Transnational Institute (TNI)*, December 1, 1996.

⁵⁰ Muhammad Amir Rana, "Hizbut Tahrir in Pakistan: Discourse and Impact," *Pak Institute for Peace Studies*, October 2018.

⁵¹ Umair Jamal (Lecturer of International Relations at the Forman Christian College), interviewed by author, Pakistan, May 20, 2019.

caliph Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi.⁵² However, after territorial losses in Syria in 2019, IS declared a new *Wilayah* (province) in Pakistan and appointed a former Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) commander Dawood Mehsud as its new emir.⁵³ In this new phase, the Caliphate narrative has urged its supporters and sympathizers to take revenge for the lost Caliphate in Iraq and Syria.⁵⁴

c) *The Black Flags of Khorasan*

As a concept, *Khorasan* is an apocalyptic vision that drives many Sunni radical groups around the world with a belief that at the onset of the End of Times, an army of the *Mujahideen* (Islamist fighters) carrying black flags will rise from Central Asia, Afghanistan and Pakistan.⁵⁵ This narrative has been supported by a saying of the Prophet Muhammad narrated by the classical Hadith scholar *Ibne Majah* (570-632), which talks about the carriers of black banners or flags from the land of *Khorasan* representing true Islamic believers towards the End of Times. He reported that the Prophet said, “If you see the Black Banners coming from *Khorasan* go to them immediately, even if you must crawl over ice, because indeed amongst them is the Caliph, *Al Mehdi* [the Messiah] ...and no one can stop

⁵² Abdul Basit, “IS Penetration in Afghanistan-Pakistan: Assessment, Impact and Implications,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 11, No. 3 (2017), 19-39.

⁵³ Ayaz Gul, “Islamic State announces Pakistan province,” *Voice of America*, May 15, 2019.

⁵⁴ Jeff Seldin, “IS Claim Video Shows Reclusive Leader, Calls for Revenge,” *Voice of America*, April 29, 2019.

⁵⁵ Asif Ullah Khan, “Why Khorasan is Such a Potent Call to Islamist Arms,” *The Wire*, February 24, 2017.

that army until it reaches Jerusalem.” It is worth mentioning, though, that some Islamic scholars contest the authority of the *Hadith*.⁵⁶

Because of this *Hadith*, jihadists believe that Afghanistan-Pakistan region is the place from where they will inflict a major defeat against their enemies in the Islamic version of the Armageddon. This army of the *Mujahideen* will help revive the global Islamic Caliphate and Muslims will once again become the global leaders. Ultimately, according to this utopian vision, this movement will lead to the End of Time (Day of Judgement) as a result of a battle between ‘good and evil forces’ where the latter will be defeated, and God’s judgment will prevail.⁵⁷

d) Anti-Americanism

Pakistan features among the countries with highest levels of anti-Americanism in the world at all levels of state and society. The transnational allure of anti-Americanism is particularly appealing to college and university students in Pakistan. A Pew Survey of August 2014 showed that 59 percent of Pakistanis had negative view of the US.⁵⁸ Pakistani youth across all segments of society believe that US has betrayed Pakistan and the former has abandoned the latter after its objectives were achieved.⁵⁹ The US intervention in Afghanistan and war in Iraq are also highly unpopular among Pakistan’s youth.

⁵⁶ Mohamed Bin Ali, “Jihad’ in Syria: Fallacies of ISIS’ End-Time Prophecies,” *S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies*, July 30, 2014.

⁵⁷ Colleen Curry, “See the Terrifying ISIS Map Showing Its 5-Year Expansion Plan,” *ABC News*, July 3, 2014.

⁵⁸ “A Less Gloomy Mood in Pakistan,” *Pew Research Centre*, August 27, 2014.

⁵⁹ Madiha Afzal, “Of Pakistani Anti-Americanism,” *Brookings Institute*, November 19, 2013.

Both local and global militant groups have exploited the anti-US sentiments in Pakistan in their recruitment campaigns.⁶⁰ The US is framed as the ultimate evil which is leading the war against Islam. The US drone strikes in Pakistan's tribal areas along the border with Afghanistan, Navy SEALs operation in Abbottabad to kill Osama Bin Laden, NATO helicopters' attack on paramilitary Frontier Corps' (FC) check post in Salala and killing of the two Pakistanis by a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) contractor, Raymond Davis, in Lahore have created a deep seated mistrust of the US in Pakistan.⁶¹

In Pakistan, there are several conspiracy theories about American troops' presence in Afghanistan. For instance, Pakistanis allege that under the garb of war on terror, the US is after Pakistan's nuclear programme.⁶² The continuous concerns raised from different American quarters about the safety and security of Pakistan's nuclear weapons and their potential theft by the militant groups have only strengthened the anti-US conspiracy theories.⁶³

Emerging Trends from Radicalization of Educated Youth

a) Students Cells of Militant Organizations

Three factors explain increasing levels of radicalization and recruitment at college and university campuses in Pakistan. First, as madrassas faced increased scrutiny from the government under the National Action Plan

⁶⁰ Hassan Abbas, "How Drones Create More Terrorists?" *The Atlantic*, August 23, 2013.

⁶¹ Hussain Nadim, "Neither Friend Nor Foe: Pakistan, the United States, and the War in Afghanistan," Working Paper, *Lowy Institute*, September 2017.

⁶² Michael Kugelman, "Four Pakistani Conspiracy Theories That Are Less Fictitious Than You Think," *War on the Rocks*, March 25, 2014.

⁶³ Sabrian Tavernise, "US Is a Top Villain in Pakistan's Conspiracy Talk?" *New York Times*, May 5, 2010.

(NAP), militant organizations shifted their attentions towards college and university campuses. Second, IS has focused more on cities thus further enabling recruitment and radicalization of educated youth.⁶⁴ In the age of social media, militant organizations look for college and university educated youth who could run their propaganda operations on the Internet, recruit people and raise funds online. Third, inclusive recruitment strategies by IS have lowered the entry barrier into militancy for several educated youth in Pakistan.⁶⁵

According to Farhan Zahid, jihadist cells linked with different militant organizations have been discovered in different reputed institutions and universities such as University of Karachi, Punjab University (PU), International Islamic University (IIU), NED University of Engineering and Technology, Institute of Business Administration (IBA) and Bahauddin Zakariya University (BZU), among others.

After 9/11, Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) faced internal dissections for not taking a clear stance on US intervention in Afghanistan.⁶⁶ JI's student wing, the Islami Jamiat-e-Talba (IJT), in University of Karachi led by Atta ur Rehman formed a pro-AQ militant faction *Jandullah*. This faction was involved in a series of attacks on security forces and government installations in Karachi.⁶⁷ Rehman was a student of statistics at University of Karachi. Likewise, the mastermind of the Mehran Naval base attack in

⁶⁴ Yusuf, "University Radicalization", 1. Cities offer more lucrative targets to militant outfits and increase the security maintenance costs for the security agencies. Moreover, terrorist attack in the cities attract immediate media attention.

⁶⁵ Madeeha Anwar, "Pakistan's Emerging Threat: Highly Educated Youth Gravitates to Radicalization," *Voice of America*, May 6, 2017.

⁶⁶ Ali K. Chishti, "How Jandullah became Al-Qaeda," *The Friday Times*, November 14, 2014.

⁶⁷ Saad Rasool, "IJT and Educational Militancy," *Pakistan Today*, September 21, 2013.

May 2011, Shahid Khan, was also a former member of IJT and a prominent leader of the organization. He was a working journalist and held a masters in Political Science degree from the University of Karachi.⁶⁸

Similarly, two brothers, Dr. Akmal Waheed and Dr. Arshad Waheed, hailing from JI's Pakistan Islamic Medical Association (PIMA) were arrested in 2004 on accusations of treating AQ and *Jandullah* militants.⁶⁹ The Waheed brothers recruited a large number of the IJT activists from different educational institutions of Karachi and moved them to South Waziristan. They were arrested and released by Pakistani authorities in 2006 after which they moved to South Waziristan. In 2006, Arshad was killed in a US drone attack, while Akmal moved to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with his family where he was sentenced to three years in prison for communicating with senior AQ members.⁷⁰

In 2013, another AQ linked cell of International Islamic University (IIU) students was busted in Islamabad. The cell was active since 2007 and carried out a number of terrorist attacks in collusion with Al-Qaeda, including the assassination of former minister for minorities and the Pakistan People Party (PPP) lawmaker Shahbaz Bhatti.⁷¹ It was led by Abdullah Omar, a student of Sharia Law at IIU and son of a former military officer Colonel Abbasi. He was assisted by two brothers Hammad

⁶⁸ Ziaur Rehman, "Taliban Recruiting and Fundraising in Karachi," *CTC Sentinel* 5, No. 7 (July 2012), 9.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ "Drone deaths underline IJT's Jihadi Links," *The News*, November 22, 2014.

⁷¹ Asad Haroon, "Al-Qaeda presence in Islamabad and has Sleeping Cells, says a report of government of Pakistan," *Dispatch News Desk*, February 19, 2014.

Adil and Adnan Adil who were also students of IIU's *Shariah* Law department.⁷²

Likewise, another AQ linked nine-member cell was neutralized in Lahore's Punjab University in 2013. Once again, the nexus between IJT and AQ surfaced.⁷³ The post-arrest investigation revealed that AQ members were hiding in Punjab University's hostel with IJT's help.⁷⁴ Six of the nine arrested militants were suicide bombers, two collaborators with expertise in information technology and IED production, as well as the coordinator of the cell. The cell members held their meetings on campus.⁷⁵

In 2015, a self-initiated pro-IS cell of university student was dismantled in Karachi following the attack on a bus of Ismaili Shia community in Safoora Chorangi in which 46 people were killed. The ringleader of the cell, Saad Aziz, was a graduate of Pakistan's famous business school, the Institute of Business Administration (IBA), and hailed from an upper-middle class family. Other members of this cell such as Azhar Israt and Allure Rehman, were engineering graduates from SSUET and the University of Science and Technology (NUST). Another cell member, Hafiz Nasir held a master's degree in Islamic studies from University of Karachi.⁷⁶ This cell was also involved in targeted killing of noted social

⁷² Farhan Zahid, "Al-Qaeda's Islamabad Cell," *Centre for Research and Security Studies*, January 28, 2015.

⁷³ "Al-Qaeda suspect arrested from PU hostel," *Pakistan Today*, September 17, 2013.

⁷⁴ Ali Usman and Asad Kharal, "Punjab University: Consensus against IJT grew from al Qaeda man's arrest," *Express Tribune*, December 4, 2013.

⁷⁵ Asad Kharal, "Startling Revelations: Nine Al-Qaeda suspects arrested," *Express Tribune*, September 11, 2013.

⁷⁶ Sadaf Ayub, "Why does a university-educated student turn to terrorism?" *Dawn*, April 8, 2017.

workers Sabeen Mahmood and Debra Lobo, a US citizen, then working as vice principal of Jinnah Medical and Dental College.⁷⁷

Aziz was member of IBA's religious society Iqra where Rehman introduced him to TI and subsequently to an AQ operative Abu Zar who recruited him in 2010.⁷⁸ In 2011, Aziz went to North Waziristan where he was trained by Ustad Ahmed Faruq, the deputy chief of AQIS and a graduate of Punjab University himself.⁷⁹ On his return to Karachi, Aziz started his own cell and planned attacks with operational autonomy and liberty.⁸⁰

b) Nexus of Religious-political Parties with Militancy

Religious-political parties which in the 1980s and 1990s had links with Afghan jihadist groups and sectarian outfits, intentionally or unintentionally, have served as conduits for conversion of radical youth from non-violent to violent extremism. Right after 9/11, their inaction or confused stance on Pakistan's decision to side with the US in the war on terror and a soft corner for TTP and other such groups encouraged youth from within these parties to switch sides from so-called 'good Taliban' to 'bad-Taliban'.

Jl's links with different militant organizations dates back to the Afghan Jihad when it supported Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hizb-i-Islami. The Kashmir-focused militant group Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM) is considered Jl's militant wing, a charge that party denies. As many as twenty-three

⁷⁷ Nazila Syed Ali and Fahim Zaman, "Anatomy of a murder," *Herald*, September 25, 2016.

⁷⁸ Hussain Nadim, "Pakistan's New Breed of Militants," *Foreign Policy*, June 9, 2015.

⁷⁹ Ustad Farooq was eliminated in a US drone strike in South Waziristan in 2015.

⁸⁰ Sidra Roghay, "The many shades of Saad Aziz," *The Friday Times*, June 5-7, 2011.

most wanted AQ members, including the mastermind of 9/11 attacks Khalid Sheikh Muhammad, were arrested from homes of JI leaders in different parts of Pakistan.⁸¹ As mentioned above, JI's student wing IJT played the role of a bridge in facilitating graduation of several educated radicals into militancy.

Likewise, JUI (F) and JUI (S) have remained political guide and conduits for radical youth towards militancy. For instance, the former deputy chief of TTP, late Waliur Rehman was member of JUI (F) before turning towards militancy.⁸² In 2013, he was killed in a drone attack in Miranshah, capital of North Waziristan Agency.⁸³ Similarly, militant commander and head of his own faction Hafiz Gul Bahadur was previously affiliated with JUI (F).⁸⁴

Likewise, late Maulana Sami-ul-Haq's JUI (S) is well known for its links and support for the Afghan Taliban.⁸⁵ Sami was considered the spiritual father and ideological mentor of the Taliban movement.⁸⁶ Several members of Taliban's *Rahbari Shura* (executive council) studied in Sami's Jamia Haqqania in Nowshera district.⁸⁷

⁸¹ Imtiaz Gul, "Transnational Islamist Network," *International Review of Red Cross* 92, No. 880 (December 2010), 3.

⁸² Mansur Khan Mehsud, "The new, new face of the Pakistani Taliban," *Foreign Policy*, April 30, 2010.

⁸³ "Pakistan Taliban: Senior leader 'killed in US drone strike," *BBC*, May 29, 2013.

⁸⁴ Sadia Sulaiman, "Hafiz Gul Bahadur: A Profile of the Leader of the North Waziristan Taliban," *Terrorism Monitor* 7, No. 9 (Jamestown Foundation, April 2009).

⁸⁵ "Father of the Taliban calls on China to aid Afghan peace talks," *South China Morning Post*, October 28, 2018.

⁸⁶ Ali Mustafa, "Who was father of the Taliban?" *TRT World*, November 6, 2018.

⁸⁷ "Mulla Omar didn't study at Haqqania, but many other Taliban leaders did," *The News*, November 3, 2018.

c) *Modern Islamist Networks*

Some missionary organizations and Islamist networks operating in Pakistan's urban spaces have played a bridging role in movement of aspiring radicals from non-violent to violent extremism.⁸⁸ These organizations have provided spaces and platforms for interaction between militant recruiters, facilitators and would-be radicals. Given stark similarities in the worldviews and ideological outlooks of these organizations and militant groups, the more overambitious youth from within these organizations have gravitated towards militancy.⁸⁹ The tussle between the old and new generation within these organizations could also be a reason that the more rebellious and critical youth have defected to militant organizations. The new generation considers the old one as status quo oriented, outdated and complacent.

A case in point is of TI, an urban missionary organization, whose members have joined different militant organization. TI has been in the crosshair of fierce competition between AQ and IS for educated recruits in the main Pakistani cities to spread their networks. TI has long called for establishment of an Islamic Caliphate in Pakistan. For instance, members of Saad Aziz cell had links with TI.⁹⁰ The main financier of this cell Adil Masood Butt, who ran the College of Accountancy and Management Sciences (CAMS) in Karachi, was a former member of TI.⁹¹ Similarly, two

⁸⁸ Author interview with Saba Noor, Lecturer at the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, National Defence University (NDU), Pakistan, on May 5, 2019.

⁸⁹ Mehwish Rani (independent researcher working on extremism and terrorism in Pakistan), interviewed by author, May 4, 2019.

⁹⁰ Farhan Zahid, "Pakistan's Tanzeem-e-Islami and Its Troubled Extremist Links," *Terrorism Monitor* 15, No. 21 (Jamestown Foundation, November 2017), 5-7.

⁹¹ "Al-Qaeda financier arrested in Karachi's Defence raid," *Pakistan Today*, September 17, 2015.

other financiers, Sheeba Ahmed and Khalid Yousaf Bari, were also TI members.⁹²

Likewise, members of a neutralized AQ cell in Karachi (JAS) were former members of TI. The leader of JAS, Abdul Kareem Saroosh Siddiqui, is a drop out from University of Karachi's Applied Physics department. This cell was involved in a string of terrorist attacks in Karachi, including the abortive assassination attempt on the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) leader Khawaja Izhar-ul-Hasan and killing of a retired military officer Colonel Tahir Zia Nagi.⁹³

HT has also faced defections of its overambitious members to AQ. In 2016, a splinter of HT, *Saut-ul-Ummah*, was in connection with AQ and its affiliate *Hayat Tahrir al-Sham* to create a similar franchise in Pakistan. However, these efforts did not succeed and this splinter cell was neutralized.⁹⁴ HT primarily focuses on Pakistan's educated youth in colleges, universities and higher education institutions. It romanticizes the idea of the Caliphate as the ideal rule which offers the youth a panacea out of current predicaments. The group operates with great secrecy in Pakistan to avoid arrests and crackdowns.⁹⁵

HT particularly gained notoriety for making inroads in Pakistan's security institutions and bureaucracy. In 2011, a serving officer of a Law Enforcement Agency (LEA), Muhammad Ali, who opposed Pakistan's

⁹² Naimat Khan, "Terrorist moms," *Friday Times*, December 25, 2015.

⁹³ Roohan Ahmed, "What we know about Ansar-ul-Shariah Pakistan," *Sama Digital*, September 9, 2017.

⁹⁴ Jawad R Awan, "Saut-ul-Ummat rings alarm bells in Pakistan," *The Nation*, February 27, 2016.

⁹⁵ Tariq Pervez (former head of Pakistan's National Counter Terrorism Authority / NACTA), interviewed by author, May 15, 2019.

counter-terrorism alliance with the US was arrested with four other officers for having links with HT. In 2003, HT established link with a specialized force unit and in 2009 recruited several officers, including their senior.⁹⁶

In April 2015, Punjab's Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) arrested an assistant professor of the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) for his links with HT.⁹⁷ Similarly, in October 2015 Karachi police arrested Owais Raheel for distributing HT's pamphlets in the mosques of city's elite residential areas like Clifton and Defence.⁹⁸ Likewise, in December 2015, Punjab's CTD arrested three professors and a student from Punjab University on suspected ties with HT.⁹⁹

Conclusion

The radicalization of educated youth in Pakistan is directly correlated to state's pro-militancy policies in the past which fostered a conducive environment for growth of radicalism. A revision of strategic paradigm which has afforded physical and ideological spaces to different militant groups is needed. Mere doctrinal shift in counter-terrorism and extremism policies at the tactical level can deliver temporary respite but for a long-term solution structural reforms are necessary.

The current youth bulge in Pakistan is likely to continue for the next three decades. By 2030, Pakistan's population is expected to rise to 230 million and to 280 million by 2050. Youth is the most important population

⁹⁶ Yusuf, "University Radicalization", 6.

⁹⁷ Sher Ali Khan, "Global connections: The crackdown on Hizbut Tahrir intensifies," *Herald*, February 12, 2016.

⁹⁸ Yusuf, "University Radicalization".

⁹⁹ "Two more PU teachers, student held for links with Hizbut Tahrir," *Pakistan Today*, December 15, 2015.

segment in Pakistan and it will either become an asset or a liability depending on how we develop this human capital. Following recommendations offer some policy areas where focus is needed to curb youth radicalization.

i) Violent vs Non-violent Extremism

The policy discourse on radicalization in Pakistan needs to be expanded from violent-extremism to non-violent extremism. In the light of foregoing analysis, it is quite clear that due to identical ideological outlooks, non-violent extremist organizations such as TI and HT have faced defections of their members to militant groups. Violent and non-violent extremism are two sides of the same coin: one is action-based extremism, the other is value-based extremism. Goals of violent and non-violent extremists are more or less the same. Likewise, both have similar political and ideological narratives. As such, non-violent extremists do not rule out violence, but de-emphasize it as a matter of strategy, not principle. Targeted policy-interventions are needed to plug existing gaps in the operations of these organizations along with initiating a dialogue for internal reforms.

ii) Counter Narratives

Threat of cyber radicalization in Pakistan is real and requires monitoring of cyber communities where extremist narratives are discussed, disseminated and promoted. Militant recruiters easily reach out to students through social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Telegram and Instagram. There are around 40 million Internet and as many as 32 million Facebook users in Pakistan. Social media has lowered the entry barriers of youth's participation in militancy. Pakistan's counter-extremist responses have to

factor in strategies dealing with dissemination of radical narratives in social media and cyber space.

Pakistan's education system does not equip students with critical thinking to question the sources of information and look for alternative discourses to find their answers. There is a need to build a national counter-narrative and cultivate an environment of open conversations on issues considered taboos in Pakistan.¹⁰⁰ Alternative narratives promoting pluralism, inclusivity and diversity presenting a moderate outlook of Islam should be promoted.¹⁰¹

iii) Evidence-based Research on Radicalization

There is very little data available in Pakistan to carryout evidence-based research on radicalization and de-radicalization and to empirically map the success or failure of de-radicalization initiatives. State should allow rigorous profiling of terrorists that could lead to generalizable conclusions about the process of radicalization in Pakistan.

iv) Liberal-religious Education

Given Pakistan's conservative religious framework any alternative discourse offered in secular framing will be rejected by a large majority.¹⁰² However, if the same message pertaining to pluralism, inclusivity, tolerance, respect for diversity and religious freedom are packaged in a religious framework with quotes from Quran and the Prophetic traditions, such as there is no compulsion in the religion, people are more likely to

¹⁰⁰ Madiha Afzal ,”Education and Attitudes in Pakistan: Understanding Perception of Terrorism,” Special Report, *United States Institute of Peace*, April 2015.

¹⁰¹ Siddiqa, “Red Hot Chili Pepper Islam”, 8.

¹⁰² Fatima Sajjad et al., p. 17.

accept, absorb and adopt such messaging. Secularly oriented counter narratives are bound to fail as seen in the past with former President General (retired) Pervez Musharraf's initiative of enlightened moderation. In 2018, the launch of counter-extremist narrative *Paigham-e-Pakistan* endorsed by more than 1,800 religious scholars is an encouraging step.¹⁰³ There is a need to work on its operational strategy which should ensure its judicious implementation throughout the country.

Abdul Basit is an Associate Research Fellow (ARF) at the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR), a constituent of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore.

¹⁰³ "Paigham-i-Pakistan," *Dawn*, January 18, 2018.

Women in Islamist Terrorism in Pakistan

Farhan Zahid

Abstract

Women have been playing roles in different capacities while being part of terrorist organizations across the world. This study points out the current trends of women's involvement while analysing different roles they play in perpetrating acts of terrorism. The cases discussed in this article were selected to provide an insight into women and terrorism in Pakistan. Examining such roles would allow researchers and policy makers to devise strategies and formulate guidelines for a counter violent extremist framework.

Key terms: Women, Islamic Terrorism, Pakistan, Women's role in terrorism

Introduction

Involvement of women in terrorism is as old as the advent of modern terrorism, starting by the end of 19th century. Women played some crucial roles in all four waves of terrorism as elucidated by David Rappoport. It is apparent that women continue to play some part in terrorism incidents in the current wave i.e. the religious one. The earliest terrorist organizations of the modern terrorism era had held women in decision making positions and were part of the high command. Vera Figner of Noradnaya Volya (People's Will) is still remembered for introducing revolutionary terrorism in Czarist Russia. Figner led the organization and masterminded the assassination of Czar Alexander II in 1881.

During the anti-colonial movements, the tactic of terrorism was widely used by terrorist organizations in Ireland, Vietnam, Algeria and elsewhere. Women played minor and supportive roles in those terrorist campaigns.

Algerian FLN (National Liberation Front) had women amongst its ranks and played substantial roles in planting bombs in cafes frequented by Europeans in Algiers and Oran during early 1960s. The rise of the left wing terrorism during 1970s and 1980s once again brought women in terrorism. The European terrorist organizations Red Army Faction (RAF), Communist Combatant Cells (CCC) and Red Brigades had scores of women in their ranks and at high level positions. It is pertinent to mention here that RAF, as the terrorist organization, was co-founded by Ulrike Meinhoff and Gudrun Ensslin, two key leaders of the organization who perpetrated scores of terrorist attacks across West Germany in 1970s. Peruvian women of Andean-Indian origin played major roles in Shining Path. The Central Committee of the militant organization had at least eight women. Around 40 percent of Shining Path militants were women¹.

The rise of Islamist terrorism after the end of Cold War in 1991 paved the way for establishment of domestic, regional and global Islamist terrorist organization in five continents. Unlike previous eras and waves of terrorism (as postulated by David Rappaport) no Islamist terrorist organization has allowed women to play substantial role; though women have remained part of the organizations at a peripheral level.

Literature Review

A number of studies have been conducted in this connection to figure out the issue of growing Islamist extremism among Pakistani youth. At government level, the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), an organization established in 2008 to formulate counter terrorism and

¹ Nathaniel C Nash, "Lima Journal; Shining Path Women: So many and so Ferocious", *New York Times*, September 22, 1992.

counter violent extremism strategies, devised National Counter Extremist Policy Guidelines comprising of six pillars including Rule of Law and Service Delivery, Peoples Engagement, Media Involvement, Integrated Education Reforms, Rehabilitation, Reintegration and Renunciation Programs. NACTA also worked on National Narrative but this endeavor has not yet been approved by the federal government. Another initiative by NACTA in connection with CVE measures is media and youth engagement programs, promotion of cultural activities for countering violent extremism and coordinating efforts with provinces and madrasas boards for the mainstreaming of religious seminaries in Pakistan.

As far as research on the subject matter is concerned, a number of scholars and researchers have studied the topic. In his work on youth radicalization in Pakistan, Moeed Yusuf identified enablers such as education because of change of curricula during the Islamization Process under General Zia ul Haq's military rule (1977-88). Text books were used as conscious efforts to promote Islamist ideology. Madrasahs were also provided with funds and a mushroom growth of religious seminaries was allowed to take root. Subjects, such as Islamic and Pakistan studies, were used for indoctrination while eulogizing the concepts of militant jihad against a neighbouring country. The curricula were even inserted with texts inciting religious and sectarian violence. Yusuf also extensively discussed socio-economic deprivation as an enabler but debunked it as many militants and radicalized youth are from affluent backgrounds. He identified overarching

politico-ideological environment as the principal connector where the state fails to demobilize its resources and plug alternatives².

Prominent author and researcher, Dr Ayesha Siddiqa, in her study ‘Red Hot Chili Pepper Islam’ analyzed whether better education and access to resources made any different thinking patterns as far as the issue of Islamist radicalization is concerned. She concluded that youth responded to popular opinions expressed through the media or on the basis of inherited bias; and those respondents from affluent backgrounds showcased thought patterns close to bordering on radicalization. Her study presented that Pakistani youth from well-off socio-economic background appear to fluctuate between being socio-culturally liberal; having closed approach in matters pertaining to geo-politics, geo-strategy and identity politics³.

In his study on drivers of radicalization while using life stories model, Farhan Zahid interviewed former militants (*jihadis*) and analyzed that many considered *jihad* as idealism but they soon get disillusioned. Religion was used as a Club Model and *jihadis* experienced peer-pressure in signing in for *jihad*. Madrasas may not directly send individuals for *jihad*, but can help radicalize individuals by providing students with an environment where they can meet people. College-going students are eager to pursue war, if their area is somehow connected to the area of fighting, such as Indian occupied Kashmir (IoK). Bad economic conditions of family too can force individuals end up in circumstances

² Moeed Yusuf, “Radicalism Among Youth in Pakistan: Human Development Gone Wrong?”, *Pakistan National Human Development Report (NHDR) 2015, United National Development Pakistan (UNDP)*, November 2014.

³ Aisha Siddiqa, “Red Hot Chili Pepper Islam—Is the Youth in Elite Universities in Pakistan Radical?” *Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung*, September 15, 2010.

where they are wooed by the *jihad* ideology. Education is no guarantee that individual would not join *jihad*⁴.

In a similar vein, Iram Khalid and Mina Ehsan Leghari (2014) studied the phenomenon of radicalization in southern districts of Punjab province. They observed the focus of youth towards religious and radical organizations in southern districts of Punjab, a considerably alarming occurrence. They also found South Punjab as the centre of radical activities of Islamist extremist groups. According to authors, the groups are highly manipulative and capitalizing on economic and underdevelopment issues prevailing in southern Punjab⁵.

Women in Terrorism in Pakistan

With the commencement of Global War on Terror (GWOT), a plethora of Islamist terrorist organizations turned against the state amid the state's response of joining the US-led alliance against Al-Qaeda based in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan. Islamist terrorist organizations of various sorts such as Islamist Kashmiri, sectarian, and Afghan *jihad* veterans had worked with Al-Qaeda and developed a close bond during Afghan Taliban period (1996-2001) as Afghan Taliban regime welcomed all Islamist terrorist groups even those proscribed in Pakistan. A number of Islamist terrorist groups sent their militants to receive training at camps outsourced by Afghan Taliban to Al-Qaeda. Elements from Harkat ul Mujahedeen (HuM), Harkat ul Jihad-e-Islami (HuJI), Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) and

⁴Farhan Zahid, "Choosing the Path of Islamist Extremism: Case Studies from Pakistan", Research Paper, *Sustainable Development Policy Institute*, October 2018, <https://sdpi.org/publications/files/Choosing-the-Path-of-Islamist-Extremism-Case-Studies-from-Pakistan.pdf>.

⁵ Iram Khalid and Mina Ehsan Leghari, "Radicalization of Youth in Southern Punjab", *Journal of South Asian Studies* 29, No. 2 (July-December, 2014): 537-551.

Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) had been to Afghanistan and worked closely with Afghan Taliban during their fight against Northern Alliance forces in eastern and northern parts of the country. Most of these groups fought under the umbrella of Brigade-055, an Al-Qaeda auxiliary, during the invasion of Mazar-e-Sharif and other battles against Northern Alliance.

The situation changed after the fall of Afghan Taliban regime and the Islamist militant groups moved to Pakistan where they helped Al-Qaeda's on-the-run high profile leaders to find safe havens. The role of women had started to develop during this period as we see how the Islamist terrorist organizations in collusion with likeminded Islamist political parties of Pakistan provided safe shelters to Al-Qaeda rank and file.

Female students of Jamia Hafsa (linked with Red Mosque in Islamabad) played a central role before the situation had worsened and finally culminated in a special forces' operation against the Islamist militants hiding inside the Red Mosque in July 2007. Later, a number of Jamia Hafsa female students pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the Emir of Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS), in a video statement released in 2014. A number of other cases have emerged in which women rendered support in both active and passive manners.

Raison d'être of this research

The primary reason of this research is to examine the role of women from the counter violent extremism perspective. Women, in developing countries, play a crucial role of active parenting and character and personality development of children. Terrorist organizations are also part of the same society and have a fair idea about the significance of women's

role in parenting in development of a particular mind-set. Hence, it is imperative to study the current trends of women radicalization which is eventually paving the way for some women to play a part in terrorism. Examining such roles would allow researchers and policy makers to devise strategies and formulate mechanisms for a counter violent extremist framework.

Methodology

The research is based upon qualitative analyses of existing data on women in terrorism in Pakistan, taking multiple case studies into account, interviews, examining magazines of Islamist terrorist organizations' women wing, and newspapers for collection of data on terrorist incidents involving women.

The study relies on primary sources i.e. the books, articles and papers written and published by the *jihadi* organizations and ideologues. Some interviews were also conducted with former members of jihadi organizations in Pakistan, hence becoming the secondary sources for the research. Moreover, discussions with prominent scholars, researchers, and experts were also arranged to better understand the ideological concepts presented by the *jihadi* ideologues in Pakistan.

Women in Terrorism in Pakistan: Roles and Levels of Participation

The case of Pakistan is interesting in a sense that a number of local and global Islamist terrorist organizations operating in the country have been able to utilize females as human resource and allow radicalized and like-minded women to play some levels of roles in supportive, logistics, planning and master-minding acts of terrorism in the country. The roles

played by women associated with Islamist terrorist groups can be divided into three major categories:

- Active roles in planning, and perpetrating acts of terrorism in Pakistan
- Individual roles while remaining in touch with the Islamist terrorist organizations such as providing shelter and logistics to on-the-run high profile terrorists
- Women involved at institutional levels in proselytizing especially where selective political organizations somehow train and indoctrinate female students and workers to play their supportive roles as wives, daughters, and sisters of *jihadis*, and most importantly rearing children to become *jihadis*.

In Support Roles

A number of women members of Islamist political party Jamaat-e-Islami remained active in providing safe refuge to Al-Qaeda militants. These women were aided by their male family members but at times the women came forward and played crucial roles. For example, in Karachi women members of Jamaat-e-Islami received dead bodies of Al-Qaeda militants killed in police encounters and managed their burial in local graveyards⁶. Women also facilitated the transfer of families of Al-Qaeda leaders and rank and file to safe locations and at times to their home countries. Legal help was also arranged by women to incarcerated Al-Qaeda prisoners.

An important case in this regard is the arrest of two high value Al-Qaeda commanders from the house of Sabiha Shahid, the wife of Shahid Ali

⁶ Islamabad based senior journalist, interviewed by author, April, 2019.

Khan, the former captain and goalkeeper of National Hockey team of Pakistan in 2002, from the suburbs of Karachi. Sabiha was an active member of Jamaat-e-Islami's women wing in Karachi. The arrests were considered breakthrough in leading towards the eventual arrest of the 9/11 mastermind Khalid Shaikh Mohammad (KSM) in 2003 from Rawalpindi. The militants were arrested by law enforcement agencies after a severe two-hour long gun battle in which both sides fiercely fought in the wee hours of the morning. Though the family of hockey player was arrested but released later because of unknown reasons. According to one account, the third militant, though injured in the crossfire, somehow managed to escape the scene⁷.

Another incident indicating the support role of women in sheltering Al-Qaeda's on-the-run leaders was of Farzana Abdul Qudoos. Farzana's name, a district leader of Jamaat-e-Islami, touched the world headlines when the 9/11 mastermind was arrested from her house in Westridge locality of Rawalpindi district of Punjab province, just few miles away from capital Islamabad. Farzana's husband, Abdul Qudoos, was also an active member of Jamaat but could not rise in the ranks as high as his wife. The raid was conducted in the early hours of March 1, and was a joint venture of Pakistani law enforcement and intelligence agencies and Federal Bureau of Investigation. According to Khalid Shaikh Mohammad's biographers, in their book "The Hunt for KSM", the arrest from the house of Farzana was the result of a tip off from US intelligence agencies to their Pakistani counterparts. The apprehension of KSM was a major success in on-going GWOT. Surprisingly, a woman was providing

⁷ Hassan Mansoor, "Two Qaeda Suspects Caught after Gun Battle, One Escapes", *Daily Times*, March 2, 2002.

shelter to the world's most wanted terrorist and a mastermind of a major terrorist attack in the history.

In Active Roles

A number of women have remained active participants of Islamist terrorist organizations in Pakistan. One of the most notorious and world renowned is the case of Dr. Aafia Siddiqui. Dr. Siddiqui belonged to a highly religious family based in Karachi. Her whole family was associated with an Islamist political party, Jamaat-e-Islami⁸. Siddiqui studied at prestigious universities including Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), University of Houston, and Brandeis from where she received her doctorate in neuroscience. Siddiqui was suspected of her involvement in 9/11 attacks because during interrogation, KSM revealed her name as a courier and a financier. She married her second husband, Ammar al-Baluchi, after divorcing the first one on returning to Pakistan immediately after 9/11 attacks.

Her husband, Ammar al-Baluchi, worked closely in procuring toxic materials required for developing Chemical and Biological Weapons (CBW) from black-market for maximizing the fatalities of allied forces in Afghanistan. Finally, she was apprehended by US military in Ghazni province of Afghanistan and later tried in New York and sentenced to 86 years of imprisonment.

⁸ Jamaat-e-Islami is one of the mainstream Islamist political parties in Pakistan. Jamaat was founded by Abul A'la Maududi, a self-taught scholar in 1941. Jamaat has been accused of aligning with Al-Qaeda and not condemning Islamist terrorism in Pakistan. Khalid Shaikh Mohammad (KSM), the mastermind of 9/11 attacks, was arrested from the house of a leader of Jamaat Abdul Qudoos. Besides the arrest of KSM, scores of other Al-Qaeda high value targets have also been arrested from residences of Jamaat leaders and workers in Pakistan.

Another interesting case is of Umme Hassan, wife of militant Islamist cleric Abdul Aziz of Red Mosque of Islamabad. Umme Hassan, whose real name is Majida Younis, is also the principal of Jamia Hafsa, the controversial female seminary located in Islamabad. Hassan played a central role in indoctrinating and instigating Jamia Hafsa students for conducting violent protests in Islamabad and attempted to shut down beauty parlours, massage-centers, and barber and CD shops before the Red Mosque operation, initiated by Special Forces of Pakistani Army in July 2007 in which a total number of 103 people, both militant and Special Forces, were killed.

Hassan delivered lectures and hate-speeches against religious minorities and Shia and *Sufi* sects of Islam and openly propounded her ultra-radical views. She is believed to have radical Islamist views much harsher than her husband, the Imam of Red Mosque. Commenting on Malala Yousafzai, the Nobel Peace laureate, Umme Hassan said, "There is some problem with this child. She was not given the proper education. We think this was all a drama to malign Islam. Such conspiracies never work, they just make us stronger." Hassan is open and candid about his praise for Taliban, as she said, "I am proud of the Taliban, because they have brought America and its allies to their knees⁹." Considering the role of 'true' Muslim women, Umme Hassan believes that:

- Muslim women must marry *Mujahedeen*
- Muslim women have a responsibility to raise children in accordance with *Shariah* laws

⁹ Zunaira Zaki, "A Battle for Young Souls from Behind the Veil", ABC News, October 11, 2013.

- The children must be prepared for *jihad* from the beginning and Muslim women bear this very important responsibility
- During times of *jihad* the women must play their role in safeguarding the interests of *Mujahideen* and raise children even if their husband are off to *jihad*¹⁰

In a vengeful manner Hassam instigated female students to lodge protests and students reacted violently and created havoc in the city after the assassination of Emir of *Sipah-e-Sahaba* (anti-Shia organization) in October 2003¹¹. A total of seven people lost their lives in the subsequent violent incidents perpetrated by female students of Jamia Hafsa. They also burnt down a *Sufi* Shrine, police vehicles and a cinema.

In December 2014, a group of female students from Hafsa Mosque pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, self-proclaimed Caliph of Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS). The Hafsa students released a video message¹² supporting the cause of al-Baghdadi and urged Pakistani Islamist militants to join the ranks of ISIS and support the Caliphate. The girls also invited Caliph Abu Bakr to take revenge of Red Mosque operation conducted in 2007¹³.

Umme Hassan endorsed the Hafsa students' decision of supporting ISIS, she said,

“The girls [students] were justified in declaring support for the

¹⁰ Islamabad based journalist who had earlier interviewed Umme Hassan, interviewed by author, October 22, 2017

¹¹ “Azam Tariq Gunned Down in Islamabad”, *Dawn*, October 7, 2003.

¹² TV Monitor Project, “Students At Islamabad's Jamia Hafsa Call To Support ISIS, Avenge The Death of Bin Laden”, *Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI)*, November 25, 2014, <https://www.memri.org/tv/students-islamabads-jamia-hafsa-call-support-isis-avenge-death-bin-laden>.

¹³ Shakeel Qarar, “Report cites Lal Masjid, Jamia Hafsa ‘Waging War’ against the State”, *Dawn*, January 8, 2015.

Islamic State because no one came to their rescue when they were attacked and humiliated in July 2007 by enemies. The female students were not only bewildered but also grief-stricken because their dear ones were brutally killed. The video released by them is a result of that frustration as they seek a saviour, who can assure them of being protected and not being thrashed and humiliated as has been done to them in the past”.¹⁴

The case of Tashfeen Malik is another case study of female violent extremism. Though the terrorist attack perpetrated by Tashfeen and her husband did not occur in Pakistan but Tashfeen’s radicalization did happen to take place in Pakistan at a religious seminary known as Al-Huda International.

Tashfeen Malik and her husband Syed Rizwan Farooq killed 14 people in a mass shooting at Inland Regional Center for people with developmental disabilities. Tashfeen studied at Al-Huda’s Multan branch before getting to her US born husband and moving to the US. The couple pledged allegiance to Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS) before the terrorist attack and the ISIS proudly claimed responsibility of the attack. The Al-Bayan radio of ISIS stated, "We pray to God to accept them as martyrs"¹⁵. The couple posted their allegiance on Facebook just before the attack.

The most important active role was the creation of Shaheen Force which is to work as Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS)’s women wing.

According to a statement released by Umaima Hassan Ahmad, the wife of

¹⁴ ““Baghdadi our Caliph and Omar our Ameer”, *The News*, December 9, 2014.

¹⁵ Faith Karimi, Jason Hanna and Yousuf Basil, “San Bernardino Shooters ‘Supporters’ of ISIS, Terror Group says”, *CNN International*, December 6, 2015.

Al-Qaeda Emir Ayman al-Zawahiri,

“I advise you to raise your children in the cult of *jihad* and martyrdom and to instil in them a love for religion and death.... each woman would raise her child to be a new Saladin by telling him 'it is you who will restore the grandeur of the Islamic nation and you will liberate Jerusalem' ”.¹⁶

Afinda Bint-e-Ayesha is designated as the *Emira* of the force by Umaima who would herself act as a patron. The new all-women force is said to have plans for training 500 female suicide bombers for perpetrating terrorist attacks in Pakistan.¹⁷

Most recent case was of Noreen Leghari, a medical student from Hyderabad, who was cajoled by the ISIS-*Khurasan* online propaganda to join the group. Leghari joined an ISIS Cell based in Lahore, got married to one of the cell members and opted to become a suicide bomber before the cell was busted by law enforcement agencies in 2016.

Institutional Role

The third level of involvement of women in violent extremism in Pakistan is at institutional level i.e. the role of women-only preaching and proselytizing organizations in the promotion of Islamist radical thoughts for violence. These organizations are mostly based in urban centers of Pakistan. This is in fact the most crucial and pivotal support level as most of the above mentioned roles were acted upon by women either as part of these female organizations or somehow associated with them. Such institutions/organizations have means and support for promoting the

¹⁶ “Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri’s Wife Predicts Muslim Spring”, *The Telegraph*, June 8, 2012.

¹⁷ Vicky Nanjappa, “Shaheen Force: Al-Qaeda’s New Women’s Wing in the Sub-continent”, *One India*, February 3, 2015.

Islamist causes and radicalizing young and educated women. These institutions have been working for the last twenty years and alleged to have links with Islamist terrorist groups because of a number of terrorist incidents indicating their involvement.

It is therefore pertinent to discuss some of the cases of female preaching and proselytizing organizations which have been repeatedly accused of radicalizing women in Pakistan.

Jamia Hafsa

As discussed earlier, while elaborating the role of Umme Hassan and her students of Jamia Hafsa, Islamabad, an all-female seminary affiliated with controversial Red Mosque, it is essential to shed light on the role of the institution involved in radicalization of female students. On November 24, 2014, almost four months after the proclamation of Islamic State by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the female students of Jamia Hafsa in a video message pledged allegiance to Caliph Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The very act was heavily criticized but endorsed by the management of Jamia Hafsa and the Red Mosque prayer leader Abdul Aziz. The girls of female seminary were previously known for supporting Al-Qaeda and Taliban but their sudden change of *jihadi* patrons was indeed surprising. The spokesperson in the said video openly swore allegiance while stating that,

“We praise Allah, who granted us the Emir of the believers, Mullah Muhammad Omar, and the Caliph of the Muslims, Shaikh Abu Bakr al-Husseini al-Qureshi al-Baghdadi. This is a message from the students of Jamia Hafsa.....We implore all our *Mujahedeen* brothers to unite ranks. Do not heed the propaganda of the infidels

and the hypocrites. Oh Allah, install the Islamic Caliphate regime in Pakistan and everywhere.”¹⁸

The pledge of allegiance clearly demonstrated the institutional role of Jamia Hafsa in setting a new benchmark for future role of women in the *jihadi* landscape of Pakistan. This also allowed ISIS to start playing a new role amid the substantial support base provided by the female students of Jamia Hafsa, sitting in the heart of Islamabad. Maulana Abdul Aziz, the controversial cleric of Red Mosque, stated that he “respects Islamic State because of similarity in their missions and has no repentance over supporting IS”.¹⁹

Female students of Jamia Hafsa are known for their ultra-radical Islamist views and remained actively involved in incidents of violence against police, burning of Sufi Shrine, CD and barber shops and kidnapping of Chinese massage-parlour workers in Islamabad. The support they receive from the institution provides an impetus for their destructive spree and ideological assistance for Islamist terrorist organizations like Afghan Taliban and ISIS.

Al-Huda International

Another female seminary known for disseminating highly provocative material is Al-Huda. Founded by former Jamaat-e-Islami activist Farhat Hashmi in 1994, Al-Huda strives to reinvigorate medieval Islamist ideals, which Al-Huda founder and CEO, Hashmi, considers ‘pure and true Islam’

¹⁸ TV Monitor Project, “Students at Islamabad’s Jamia Hafsa Call to Support ISIS, Avenge the Death of Bin Laden”, *Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI)*, November 25, 2014, <https://www.memri.org/tv/students-islamabads-jamia-hafsa-call-support-isis-avenge-death-bin-laden>.

¹⁹ Azam Khan, “No Regret Over Supporting IS, says Lal Masjid cleric”, *Express Tribune*, December 15, 2014,

to women of upper-class and upper-middle class²⁰. Al-Huda promotes a method of teaching and syllabus that seems to impart positive imaging and branding of extremist ideologues. Mostly women are wives, daughters, and sisters of country's business community, bureaucrats, military officers, politicians and judiciary who attend the sessions on regular basis in main cities of Pakistan. Al-Huda's international branches are located in UAE, Canada, US, and UK.

Al-Huda trained girls have remained part of some major terrorist plots in the world. The notorious San Bernardino shooter, Tashfeen Malik, was an Al-Huda graduate. Tashfeen and her husband pledged allegiance to Islamic State's Caliph Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi after killing 14 people and injuring another 21 on December 2, 2015 at San Bernardino County in California.²¹ It is also allegedly reported that some of Al-Huda graduates joined global Islamist terrorist organizations such as ISIS. It is not clear how many Al-Huda girls departed for Syria in support of ISIS. At least four Canadian girls of Al-Huda's Mississauga branch left their families to join ISIS in 2015.²²

Lahore based Bushra Cheema and her accomplices' flight to Syria in order to join Da'esh in January 2016 had shocked Pakistani society. Bushra Cheema, Irshad Bibi and Farhana left for Syria with their 12 children, leaving their husbands behind. According to Punjab police sources, all

²⁰ Former Al-Huda student, interviewed by author, Islamabad, October 22, 2017.

²¹ Greg Botelho and Ralph Ellis, "San Bernardino Shooting Investigated as 'Act of Terrorism'", *CNN International*, December 5, 2015.

²² "Four Female Students Who Sought to Join ISIS Attended Mississauga School", *CBC*, December 8, 2015.

three studied at Al-Huda International²³. Bushra left for her husband a two-minute-long voice message, indicating her intentions, “I love God and his religion, and I want to die a martyr’s death. If you can’t join us then at least pray for your wife and children to die in *jihad*”.²⁴

According to Sadaf Ahmad, who wrote her PhD dissertation on Al-Huda, the students are “very intolerant and judgmental toward people who were different from them”.²⁵ The Al-Huda’s *raison d’être* is to raise a whole new generation of Islamist mothers who inculcate ultra-orthodox Islamist values from the cradle to their children instating a peer group in radical Islamism.

Zikra Academy

Apart from institutional role in radicalization of women in Pakistan, a number of small institutes are also involved in terrorism financing through women. Zikra Academy’s name, a small institute of religious sessions (Dars) for women of influential families, came to surface after the ISIS-linked cell massacred 43 Ismaili-Shias in Karachi in 2014 (Safoora Goth carnage). As per police investigations, the women of Zikra Academy were involved in bankrolling the cell. The Academy was established by wife of Khalid Yousaf Bari, a retired engineer of Pakistani International Airlines (PIA), and wife of Adil Masood Butt (owner of College of Accounting and Management Sciences) also involved in financing of Islamist terrorist

²³ Benazir Shah and Rimmel Mohyidin, “Punjab Law Minister says Pakistan is Fighting Alongside IS Wont be Allowed Back Home”, *Newsweek Pakistan*, January 20, 2016.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Khaled Ahmed, “Daughters of Al-Huda”, *Express Tribune*, August 21, 2010.

cell²⁶. The organization had membership of twenty women including wife and mother in-law of Saad Aziz, the militant involved in Safoora Goth tragedy. All of them were from upper-middle class and involved in distributing and disseminating Islamic State videos and literature along with arranging marriages among the group. During their Dars sessions, the fund collection was also done and the amount was handed over to the militants²⁷.

Analysis and discussion

Terrorist groups operate in an iceberg like manner as one could only see the tip of it whereas most of it remains submerged. The terrorist networks operate in a similar fashion as the support network remains underground and at times undetected even after the frontline operators are eliminated or arrested. Women involved in Islamist terrorist are part of that underground, submerged and most of the time undetected network.

Women have remained part and parcel of modern terrorism. There is nothing substantially new with regard to the role of women as far as the case of Pakistan is concerned. At the *jihadi* landscape in the country, women play crucial roles as logistician, financiers, and an active roles in different capacities. Most importantly, all-female proselytizing (*Dawah*) organizations play critical roles not only in indoctrinating women but also in preparing them for would-be wives, sisters, and mothers of *jihadis*.

The cases discussed in this article were selected to provide an insight into women and terrorism in Pakistan. The worrisome aspect is the

²⁶ Faraz Khan, "Assistants of Terror: How Women Raise Funds for Da'ish in Karachi", *Express Tribune*, December 21, 2015.

²⁷ "Police Uncover Women-led Islamic State Fund Raising Network", *News International*, December 22, 2015.

radicalization of women at quite a large scale in Pakistan. Substantial growth of female Islamist institutions and their subsidiaries, acting as conduits of women radicalization, is indeed alarming. Another issue to ponder over is about the *jihadi* mothers. Islamist seminaries such as al-Huda are meant to Islamize and radicalize would-be mothers. The intended target is to raise a new generation of *jihadis* from the very beginning. Other institutions like Jamia Hafsa are endeavouring to broaden the scope and widen the active role of women at *jihadi* landscape of Pakistan. There have been number of known cases where women acted as facilitators, fund raisers, and logisticians of terrorist networks in Pakistan but more of a problematic is the issue of women being radicalized through organized and well-funded institutions.

Conclusion

The issue of growing radicalization in Pakistan is a matter of grave concern irrespective of genders. Female radicalization issue should be given priority as its effects may last decades and would be much more difficult to contain. A concrete reformation drive for madrasas initiative under National Action Plan (NAP) umbrella is something immediately required. Moreover, it is high time for provincial governments to adopt policy measures recommended by NACTA's National Counter Extremism Policy Guidelines (NCEPG) which may be implemented in line with execution mechanism as described in the document. Furthermore, the policy makers need to take steps for addressing the issue of female radicalization at all levels in society.

Dr. Farhan Zahid earned his PhD in Terrorism Studies from Vrije University Brussels (VUB), Brussels, Belgium. He writes on counter-

terrorism, al-Qaeda, Pakistani al-Qaeda-linked groups, ISIS, Islamist violent non-state actors in Pakistan, jihadi ideologies and the Afghan Taliban. He has authored "Roots of Islamic Violent Activism in South Asia", (2014), "From Jihad to al-Qaeda to Islamic State", 2015; and "The Al-Qaeda Network in Pakistan", (2015)

Elements of Violence in Jeay Sindh Tehreek (JST) and Balochistan National Movement (BNM): A Comparative Analysis

Faisal Ali Raja

Abstract

Ethno-national movements, on the whole, start with some grievances which if left unattended may aggravate and provide a platform for public mobilization. Once such rallying takes place and people start following the calls of main leaders who raise these issues continuously, the passive response of the government becomes a moot point among the members of these ethnic based national movements. Lack of political far-sightedness and immaturity hamper resolution of such issues which often take the shape of a localized struggle. As these movements become prominent at provincial and national levels, the political class joins them vociferously and its reverberations in support of the just calls of the movement leaders are heard in provincial and national assemblies. The key demands, though genuine on multiple counts, are then used as bargaining chip for political leverage and negotiations. Once a political party, formed on the basis of ethno-national struggle, is squeezed on different grounds it may turn violent on account of multiple factors often leading to situations where public disturbances are created and sustained for longer period of time. In the paper, two different ethnic based irredentist movements have been studied to observe the underlying factors which have pushed some of their leaders to insurgency, violence, turbulence and lawlessness. The study provides a yardstick which can be readily used in order to judge whether a movement will remain non-violent or resort to disorder in future.

Key words: Nationalist, Movement, Violence, Force, Insurgency, Political

Introduction

Soon after independence, unrest persisted in different parts of the country

bordering on various socio economic and cultural based identity issues¹. Two different ethno-national movements have been selected for study on account of their geographical location and violent course of action during their propagation and projection. These include Jeay Sind Tehreek (JST) and Balochistan National Movement (BNM)². Each of these ethno-national movements has its own territorial limitations and unique environment leading to adoption of brutal means which may or may not be envisaged at the time of their conception and establishment. Moreover, different types of violent ethnic, social and political movements have also been studied in order to see whether any pattern exists for providing a specific comparison base.

There are four main stages of development through which a movement transforms into a violent force. First, when the movement starts losing the heterogeneous character in terms of large and diverse participation, its decision making processes and protests also change drastically. The leaders then feel that violence is not immoral³. Second, the role played by

¹ Shaikh Ayaz, "A Leaf from History: A History of Ethnic Violence", *Dawn*, October 30, 2016.

² Here it is pertinent to mention that the Balochistan National Movement (BNM) refers to different ethno-political dispensations in the province which include Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF), Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), Lashkar-e-Balochistan (LeB), Balochistan Republican Army (BRA), Balochistan Student Organization – Azad (BSO-A), United Baloch Army (UBA) etc and does not carry any relevance to a political party formed by Ghulam Mohammad Baloch under the same title. Mr. Ghulam Mohammad got his early education at Soro (Mand, Balochistan) where he was influenced by Fida Ahmed Baloch, a famous member of Balochistan Student Organization (BSO). He had been affiliated with Baloch national struggle since 1992. He was detained on a number of occasions by security forces in the province. He played an important role in the release of a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) representative, John Solecki, who was kidnapped in 2009 from Quetta. He established Balochistan National Movement (BNM) in 2004 and remained its head till his killing in 2009. His death entailed severe law and order incidents across the province.

³ Erica Chenoweth and Adria Lawrence, eds., *Rethinking Violence: States and Non-States Actors in Conflict*, (London: The MIT Press, 2010), 149.

security forces also determines when or for how long the movement may remain non-violent⁴. A sudden harsh attitude of Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) and brutal tactics employed by the forces can push an ethno-nationalist movement's senior command or certain elements therein towards violence. Third, different methods of protests employed by such a movement enhance chances of its being falling into a peaceful course of action. The less diverse the protest base, greater is the probability that an ethnic movement may not remain nonviolent since the leaders perceive that violence is a better option⁵. Lastly, if the repression inflicted against such movements translates into militarization or throw them in complete disarray then chances of their turning to violence also increase to a greater extent.

Five important parameters have been defined to conduct the comparative analysis of these movements. First, the participatory base of these ethno-national movements has been categorized into low, medium and large in terms of its active and passive members⁶. Second, the geographical region where acceptability of the ethno-national movement is clearly apparent has

⁴ Ibid, 150.

⁵ Ibid, 147.

⁶ These benchmarks have been discussed with different police officers especially those posted in Sindh and Balochistan provinces. They maintain that in order to make a meaningful comparison we need both qualitative and quantitative parameters. These factors are based on their recommendations and suggestions. During the discussion they also alluded to different reasons why they think these areas are essential for such type of study. Four reasons were cited by them. First, they think that such a comparison pattern is possible and very much practical. Second, they believe that such an analysis may bring out the true picture of terror in Sindh and Balochistan provinces and highlight the overlapping areas where elements of violence in these two ethno-nationalist movements converge together or diverge from each other. Third, such an exercise can carry concrete recommendations for Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) to chalk out plans for action against such violent person(s) in a proactive manner. Lastly, the local, provincial and regional nexus of multifarious agents of violence may also come under spotlight during such an exercise.

been termed as low, moderate and high. Third, the state reaction and its subsequent response further propel them to use different types of weapons and tactics which are bracketed as simple, simple-complex and complex. Fourth, number of demands accepted by the government on account of variegated protests launched by the senior members or leaders of these movements is also differentiated into three categories. Lastly, number of incidents of violence or terror in which a member or members of these movements are involved over a considerable period of time⁷.

In the end, we have made certain recommendations which can provide a framework of active engagement of these ethno-national movements on different levels.

Literature Review

Mathew Joseph maintains that ethno-national-movements exhibit majority of violent acts in the world. It can be divided into two main categories with one based on manifestation of cultural identity and the other on geographical boundary concentration. He further elaborates that efforts to assimilate ethnic groups in mainstream politics have largely been a futile

⁷ The data has been partly taken from police officers and partially viewed from online sources on terrorism. The Counter Terrorism Departments (CTDs) in Sindh and Balochistan have provided active assistance along with Crimes Branch of Sindh Police in gathering and interpretation of the data. The primary data pertains to cases registered against different JST factions and their conviction. Moreover, number of killings of JST field commanders and/or leaders or members has also been obtained from them. The data indicates geographical concentration of various JST groups especially JSMM and JSQM along with method of their operation and target selection. The officers of Crimes Branch Sindh also allude to the external influence on JSMM whose key leaders have been hiding either in Afghanistan or trying to obtain assistance from other neighbouring countries. The data also points towards the nature of activities of members of these groups and according to the police officials the activists keep on changing their memberships among different splinter groups of JST. Sometimes they become affiliated with Jeay Sindh Students Federation (JSSF) and at times they appear among rank and file of the JSMM or JSQM respectively.

exercise⁸. Moshe Gammer says that a nexus exists between severe socio-economic conditions, high religiosity and group grievances with ethnic mobilization⁹. A.Guelke states that problem with ethnic-movements is not solely based on minorities seeking separation from a state but can be strongly linked with the attitude of dominant and majority groups¹⁰.

Luis De la Calle develops an argument that nationalist violence is a product of unresponsive political elites and nationalists to attract supporters through unlawful means. He elaborates how Basque nationalists turn violent whereas Catalan nationalists remain non-violent during their struggle. Moreover, a number of attractive options are available to nationalists when they do not find legal remedy to their problems. These factors coupled with state repression help in emergence of radical violent sub-groups which attract considerable membership with passage of time¹¹.

Wendy Pearlman indicates that a cohesive movement can remain non-violent whereas those which disintegrate often produce violence on account of mutual competition. In such movements hierarchical structures are too weak to dictate terms to its members¹². Charles King asserts that violence is on the rise after the end of superpower competition. He explains the breakup of different states along with rise of ethnic cleansing

⁸ Mathew Joseph C., eds., *Understanding Pakistan: Emerging Voices from India*, (Routledge Publishers, 2017), 53-54.

⁹ Moshe Gammer, eds., *Ethno-Nationalism, Islam and the State in the Caucasus: Post Soviet Disorder*, (Routledge Publishers, 2008).

¹⁰ A.Guelke, *The Challenges of Ethno-Nationalism: Case Studies in Identity Politics*, (Palgrave Macmillan Publishers, 2010), 1-3.

¹¹ Luis De la Calle, *Nationalist violence in Post-war Europe*, (Cambridge University Press, 2015), 1-2.

¹² Wendy Pearlman, *Violence, Non-Violence and Palestinian Movement*, (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 3-8.

groups in African countries¹³. Eiko Maruko says that violence has been a function of pressure tactics, ideology and a systemic deep-rooted-episodic historical cycle. She also talks about violence specialists in Japanese culture who are completely entwined with national politics¹⁴.

Nick Brooke talks about nationalists in Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland. He then differentiates these movements on account of violence and non-violence. He explains how Irish Republican Army (IRA) uses terror to achieve a political objective whereas in Wales and Scotland political means are adopted to arrive at political ends¹⁵. James Hughes maintains that right to self-determination and an effort to maintain territorial integrity of Russian Federation leads towards secessionist tendencies among main Chechen ethnic nationalist groups¹⁶. Beata Huszka says that framing of political rhetoric and discourse is an important indicator whether a movement will remain violent or non-violent¹⁷.

Charles D. Brokett et al elaborate underlying factors contributing towards violence including socio-economic grievances, false consciousness and political opportunities. They even establish correlation between state repression and mass political activity with the end result that state use of monopoly of violence may or may not result into violent political response. The protest-repression dynamics is also explained in the

¹³ Charles King, *Extreme Politics: Nationalism, Violence, and the End of Eastern Europe*, (Oxford University Press, 2010) , 4-5.

¹⁴ Eiko Maruko, *Ruffians, Yakuza, Nationalists: The violent politics of modern Japan (1860 – 1960)*, (Cornell University Press, 2015).

¹⁵ Nick Brooke, *Terrorism and Nationalism in United Kingdom: The Absence of Noise*, (Springer International Publishing, 2018), 3-8.

¹⁶ James Hughes , *Chechnya: From Nationalism to Jihad* , (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 15-16.

¹⁷ Beata Huszka, *Secessionist Movements and Ethnic Conflicts: Debate Framing and Rhetoric in Independence Campaigns*, (Routledge Publishers, 2013) , 1-3.

research¹⁸. Kavin E Grisham discusses phases of conflicts and transformation whereby a movement can drift from militancy to militancy-cum-politics and finally to a purely political field. He also delves upon contentious politics and how does it impact the collective political struggle leading towards violence and guerrilla warfare¹⁹.

Mehmet Orhan describes the conditions under which political violence takes root in one of the most democratic countries in the Middle East. Three types of movements have been elaborated including Radical Turkish Left movement, Islamist movement and Kurdish movement respectively. The leaders of these movements have challenged the state power in different manner with Radical Turkish Left movement has limited itself to latent violence within a span of thirty years (1960-1990) whereas Islamist movement has remained non-violent and is still challenging the state through passive means. Nonetheless, Kurdish movement has gone through different phases and is today characterized with terrorism in the country. The study sheds light on the elements of political violence in Kurdish movement, formation of its actors and their subsequent line of actions. The author has tried to touch upon political violence in three categories namely social movements, conflicts and war or terrorism²⁰.

Chares Demetriou et al spell out how radicalization takes root among the members of political movements pushing them towards violence and highhandedness. The authors clearly distinguish it from guerrilla warfare

¹⁸ Charles D. Brockett and Sidney Tarrow, *Political Movements and Violence in Central America*, (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 2-10.

¹⁹ Kavin E Grisham, *Transforming Violent Political Movements: Rebels Today, What Tomorrow?*, (Routledge Publishers, 2015), 28-31.

²⁰ Mehmet Orhan, *Political Violence and Kurds in Turkey: Fragmentations, Mobilizations, Participations & Repertoires*, (Routledge Publishers, 2016), 1-11.

and maintain that state has a critical role in emergence, development and decline of political violence. They also clarify how the competition among political elements leads towards radical thinking which in turn pushes them towards political violence²¹. Daniel Patrick indicates that the end of totalitarianism and persistence of ethnicity hold the key to political conflicts in years to come²².

Charles Tilly et al maintain that three important themes are defined in terms of contentious politics. First, it always occurs in clusters. Second, once contention starts in certain key localities it diffuses to other places. Lastly, contention produces different waves which may be termed as political movements, social movements, revolutions, insurgencies and civil wars²³.

Ali Riaz et al make clear that violence is the main feature of South Asia which has been used by state, non-state actors and public as a form of resistance. Out of the political violence, emerges religion-inspired extremism, ethnic movements and ideology-based hostilities²⁴. Ravinder Kaur argues that violence has been perpetrated in the name of religion and ethnicity. Resultantly, the founding fathers of three countries namely Nehru, Jinnah and Senanayake would not be able to recognize their present day independent states. He then explains ethno-national movements started

²¹ Chares Demetriou, Lorenzo Bosi and Stefan Malthaner, eds., *Dynamics of Political Violence: A Process Oriented Perspective on Radicalization and Escalation of Political Conflict*, (Routledge Publishers, 2014), 140-144.

²² Daniel Patrick, *Pandemonium: Ethnicity in International Politics*, (Oxford University Press, 1993)

²³ Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, (Paradigm Publishers, London, 2005), xii-xiii.

²⁴ Ali Riaz, Zobaida Nasreen & Fahmida Zaman, *Political Violence in South Asia*, (Taylor & Francis, 2018).

by Tamils in Sri Lanka, Sikhs in India and Shias in Pakistan²⁵.

Upinder Singh points out that violence has traditionally been used to reshape political strategies in India²⁶. Joseph Thomas expresses that movements of sixties and seventies employed violent tactics when encountered by extreme repression. Violent means in name of self-defence was perpetrated in western countries and these practices were in vogue in mid-seventies. Many radical political groups emerged who eventually engaged the states militarily leading towards tactical moderation of violence during political protests in eighties. The cycle of violence culminated in nineties with emergence of new actors of violence who confronted state repression and fought their way to a semblance of normalcy. The author asserts that political violence is deeply rooted in ideological, geographical and historical basis. The political violence is the collective attack within a political community against a political regime²⁷. Laural Weldon makes a point that social movements indicate democratic representation despite the absence of formal mechanisms²⁸.

Basis of Research

The raison d'être of taking up this study is to analyze the underlying factors by which two different ethno-national movements in distinct areas are targeting ethnic populations in urban and rural centres of Pakistan. Moreover, the circumstances under which some of the elements of these

²⁵ Ravinder Kaur, eds., *Religion, Violence and Mobilization in South Asia*, (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005), 7-10.

²⁶ Upinder Singh, *Political Violence in Ancient India*, (Harvard University Press, 2017), ix-xi.

²⁷ Joseph Thomas, *Social Movements and Violence*, (Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 2001), 38-48.

²⁸ S.Laural Weldon, *When Protests make Policy: How Social Movements Represent Disadvantaged Groups*, (University of Michigan Press and Arbour, 2011), 1-5.

movements turn more violent than the others are also examined and debated.

The leading factors which can pacify these ethno-national movements and make them nonviolent following a purely political path have also been discussed at length. The state response in their reintegration into social fabric and the current tactics employed by them need to be further scrutinized and surveyed. Furthermore, we have also inspected the essence of transformation of ethno-political movements into armed violence in the political arena. Given the unique situation of the region and with an active war theatre in the neighbouring country, we want to see how such situation impacts these movements and puts a restraint on state response in acute political agitations.

Methodology

It is a qualitative and quantitative research paper in which interviews have been conducted with different police officers serving in Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). These officers form a focus group through which we have deduced first-hand experience of violence based actions of the elements of two ethno-movements and state response to it.

These officers have remained posted in those districts where footprints of the elements of these ethno-national movements are quite prominent and the officials have direct knowledge about the organizational structure of different splinter groups affiliated with these movements, their mode of operations, recruitment processes and coordination with other violent groups. Moreover, they are also privy to the registration of cases against the leaders/members of these movements and have supervised the

investigation, interrogation and interviewing of the elements involved in multiple violent acts.

Apart from it, online sources of terrorism have also been explored thus providing us important avenues for data collection on the bench marks devised for comparison between elements of violence of these movements.

Jeay Sindh Tehreek (JST)

The genesis of Sindh nationalist movement dates back to the initial post-independence years against One Unit concept envisaged by the government at that time²⁹. The different stages of JST evolution are enumerated below:

GM Sayed and other Nationalists

The Jeay Sindh Tehreek (JST) was established by Ghulam Murtaza Sayed in 1972³⁰ although seeds of its foundation were laid in early 1960s. Jeay Sindh Student Federation (JSSF) was also formed in 1966³¹. Born in 1904 at Sann (Jamshoro), Sayed joined active politics in 1929 when he was elected vice president of Karachi Local Board. In early 1932 he moved to Hyder Manzil, a bungalow in the vicinity of Soldier Bazar in the cosmopolitan city. He formed a couple of political parties soon after independence such as Sindh Progressive Party (1947) and Sindh Awami Mahaz (1953) respectively. He was detained in his house under different politico-military regimes. His abode became a hub of anti-One Unit movement in the province. He also invited Sheikh Mujib to Hyder Manzil

²⁹ "Flash back: One Unit: A dark chapter in our history," *Dawn*, October 16, 2011.

³⁰ Nadeem F. Paracha, "Making of the Sindhi identity: from Shah Latif to GM Sayed to Bhutto," *Dawn*, September 15, 2015.

³¹ Tahir Amin, *Ethno National Movements of Pakistan*, (Institute of Policy Studies, 1988), 64.

to show his support for the cause of Bengali nationalism in 1970. He also assisted Mujib in the preparation of his Nishtar Park public meeting during the latter's stay in Karachi. Among other leaders who frequented at his place include Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, MA Khuhro, Shaikh Abdul Majeed Sindhi, Ali Mohammad Shah Rashdi, Ghulam Mustafa Shah, Ibrahim Joyo and many others. Moreover, his abode was used as the headquarters of Pakistan Oppressed Nations Movement (PONM) in 1990s as well³².

GM Sayed vis-à-vis ZA Bhutto

GM Sayed was a staunch pro-Pakistani who supported Pakistan movement but turned against the very ideology owing to heavily loaded Punjab based politicking in the early years of independence. Sayed's rivalry and hate for Z.A Bhutto was an open secret as he believed that the latter was working for the elitist politics which had been weakening the foundations of the country. The JST gave another touch to Sindhi nationalism and as a result the movement focused on getting an independent homeland for Sindhis on basis of their distinct ethnic composition, culture, language, heritage, natural resources and geographical area³³. The idea of Sindhudesh was thus coined to attract maximum public support on the issue.

Disintegration of JST and its Untrained Lower Cadres

Lack of training of lower cadres of JST resulted into its disintegration into

³² Priha A Syed, "GM Sayed historic Hyder Manzil to be demolished for plaza," *SAMAA TV*, July 5, 2019.

³³ Priha A Syed, "GM Sayed historic Hyder Manzil to be demolished for plaza," *SAMAA TV*, July 5, 2019.

smaller groups which continued till the death of JST founder in 1995³⁴. An unsuccessful attempt was made to put these groups under Jeay Sindh Supreme Council (JSSC) which too could not produce positive results. One of the splinter groups of JST, Jeay Sindh Muttahida Mahaz (JSMM), has been involved in sabotage activities including bomb blasts, cracker attacks and other violent means with multiple cases registered against its members/leaders in different districts in the province³⁵. Similarly, Sindh Taraqqi-Pasand Party (STP), established by Dr Abdul Qadir Magsi, which believes in non-violent means and a pro-parliamentary-approach although certain elements of STP are in favor of armed struggle to achieve the objectives, was once part of Jeay Sindh Student Federation (JSSF) during early 1980s³⁶.

Relationship between JSMM and JSQM

JSMM chief, Shafi Muhammad Barfat, parted ways with Dr Magsi in late 1990s on basis of latter's proclivity towards pro-parliamentary stance. JSMM was followed by other factions including Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz (JSQM) which drew attention on account of effective shutter down strike calls on various issues in the province³⁷. However, police crack downs on the members of JSQM have led to loss of its support base in the province. Many elements in JSSF blamed their leadership for being complacent on ethno-nationalist politics and leading a carefree life without effectively

³⁴ Hanif Samoon, "Romance of Sindhu Desh fast fading away as workers desert nationalism," *Dawn*, August 17, 2017.

³⁵ "Seven JSMM activists indicted in terrorism case," *Dawn*, November 14, 2018.

³⁶ Muhammad Hussain Khan, "Qadir Magsi urges JSMM to give up armed struggles in Sindh," *The Dawn*, December 3, 2014.

³⁷ Amar Guriro, "Mystery of the missing persons," *The News*, December 21, 2014.

advocating the key ethnic issues³⁸.

On 17 January, 2019, one hundred and fifteenth (115) birth anniversary of GM Sayed was celebrated in which Sindh United Front (SUF), Awami Jamhoori Party (AJP), National Democratic Party (NDP), Jeay Sindh Muttahida Mahaz (JSMM), Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz (JSQM) along with Jeay Sindh Liberation Front (JSLF) participated. Though they eulogized Sayed's struggle for a pluralistic and peaceful society in Sindh but all these groups failed to converge on a single point agenda³⁹. Apart from tribal feuds taking place on regular intervals in the second largest province of Pakistan, armed gangs and sectarianism have also taken roots in the interior Sindh where elements of erstwhile JSMM are operating under fake identities⁴⁰. A Freedom March was organized in 2012 in Karachi to commemorate the services of martyrs of JSQM leaders and workers. It continued for few years before new factions started appearing in the main body of JSQM⁴¹.

Factors pushing JST factions towards Violence

There are four important aspects which contributed towards violence in Jeay Sindh Tehreek. First, a lot of factions appear soon after the formation of JST. As a result of it, members with both feudalistic back ground and working class came into the mainstream⁴². A kind of tussle between them

³⁸ Hanif Samoon, "More party members quit Jey Sindh Quami Mahaz," *The Dawn*, March 22, 2018.

³⁹ Qurban Ali Khushik, "GM Sayed described a founding leader of Pakistan," *Dawn*, January 18, 2018.

⁴⁰ Nadeem F. Paracha, "Making of the Sindhi identity: from Shah Latif to GM Sayed to Bhutto," *Dawn*, September 15, 2015.

⁴¹ Hassan Mansoor, "JSQM 'Freedom March' ends peacefully," *Dawn*, March 24, 2014.

⁴² Sohail Sangi, "Analysis: Sindhi nationalist stands divided," *Dawn*, December 4, 2014.

leads towards further fragmentation and disintegration of the movement⁴³. The presence of Sindhi prime minister at the time of formation of the JST might have also eclipsed its objectivity and pushed some disgruntled factions towards violence and armed struggle. Moreover, these groups must have the example of armed Bengali nationalism before them which ultimately resulted into carving out an independent country from East Pakistan. Hence these elements were simply toeing the example of *Mukti Bahini* in their struggle for formation of Sindhudesh⁴⁴.

Second, the movement occupied a political space in post 1971 period when a natural room was available for such activity. GM Sayed's inherent disliking for Bhutto also minimized chances of attracting PPP workers towards JST and cashed in on the available political vacuum during Bhutto's trial and his subsequent execution on court orders⁴⁵. Hence, it failed to get an impressive political momentum in post 1977 scenario.

⁴³ According to Mr. Javid Akbar Riaz, former Deputy Inspector General of Police, Larkana (2018-19), majority of the members of these groups come from middle class like teachers, masons and menial workers. However, their lethality and reach have been curtailed due to infighting and lack of room provided to them by Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). The leaders of PPP have traditionally been avoiding Sindh card, except in acute situations, so that JST or factions thereof may not get any benefit out of it. Moreover, there are certain elements of different Sindhi tribes such as *Jatois*, *Bijaranis*, *Mehrs*, *Sanjranis*, *Umrans* etc settled in Sindh and Balochistan provinces, and hence have become an active linkage between splinter groups of JST and Baloch Liberation Army (BLA). The main leaders of different factions of JST have either gone abroad or moved to undisclosed locations where they cannot supervise their groups properly. The DIG also alludes to a tacit collusion between JST and its different factions with Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) in limited pockets in Hyderabad and Karachi but that too borders on financial benefits and personal gumption rather than on a clear understanding of political ideology or ethnicity. According to him only two incidents of cracker attacks were reported in Larkana division on the eve of General Elections 2018 which again point towards their reduced capability to carry out any major act of subversion. The emergence of Rasool Bux Palejo has also attracted many members of JST and they have joined his party on one pretext or the other.

⁴⁴ Nadeem F. Paracha, "Smoker's corner: Back to GM Sayed?" *Dawn*, March 10, 2012.

⁴⁵ Nadeem F. Paracha, "Making of the Sindhi identity: From Shah Latif to GM Sayed to Bhutto," *Dawn*, September 15, 2015.

Third, as the state response becomes more acute and severe, and as cases were registered against the members or elements of different factions of the movement, a disparate course of action was adopted⁴⁶. Fourth, the movement penetrated into the educational institutions and youth started participating in it. Different factions of JST staged violent means to register their responses on provincial issues. Many young activists parted ways with main stream factions of JST as they believed that the veteran leaders are either complacent or not doing enough to propagate the movement's key points in an effective manner. Many even accused their leaders for becoming passive in face of state repression and highhandedness⁴⁷.

Balochistan National Movement (BNM)

The Balochistan National Movement takes on different shades which can be divided into four distinct phases. These phases have been elaborated below:

Preservation of Independence of Kalat

The first phase started when Kalat was annexed into Pakistan in 1948⁴⁸. Earlier, three other princely states⁴⁹ namely Kharan, Las Bela and Makran

⁴⁶Ghazi Salahuddin, "Sorrows of Sindh," *Indus Asia Online Journal*, March 23, 2014, (accessed on June 27, 2019)

⁴⁷ "Sindh Government orders police to crack down on nationalists," *The News*, December 2, 2013.

⁴⁸ Abdul Majeed Abid, "The question of Kalat," *The Nation*, December 21, 2015.

⁴⁹ The Balochistan Archives maintain that at the time of partition nearly 15 princely states fell in the territorial ambit of Pakistan whereas remaining 550 were situated within the geographical boundaries of India (Bharat). In pre-partition India these princely states constituted 40 percent of the geographical area of united India and contributed to about 23 percent of its total population. Moreover, four out of 15 princely states were in Balochistan at the time of independence.

had acceded to Pakistan⁵⁰. However, the accession was resented by Khan of Kalat⁵¹ and other Baloch leaders. The merger of Kalat into Pakistan and imprisoning of key leaders alienated different tribes and their elders. The Kalat Assembly even resisted its merger into Pakistan⁵². As the constituent assembly initiated One Unit plan, the Baloch leaders opposed it as they feared that it would eclipse their identity and characteristics. Hence, the first phase can be termed as the preservation of independent identity of state of Kalat. It continued till the early years of 1960s when Parari movement was launched to oppose military and naval bases in the province and Marris, Bugtis and Mengals took leading part in it⁵³.

Reformation of Baloch Insurgency

The second phase started in post 1971 debacle, when a natural power vacuum was created after fall of Dhaka. The Baloch insurgency ravaged for four years which was tackled militarily through political manoeuvring as its base was wide in terms of participation and geographical expansion. It was finally ended in year 1977 with fall of political regime in the

⁵⁰ Ibid

⁵¹ The Balochistan Archives indicate that nearly sixty Baloch tribes are present in Balochistan with seventy *sardars* overlooking the tribal day to day matters. Among prominent *sardars* include *Marris, Bugtis, Mengals Jamalis, Rinds* etc. Nonetheless, Khan of Kalat holds a supreme place among all the *sardars* of Balochistan. He is the leader of national *jirga* which is constituted to decide major incidents of tribal feuds and disturbances in the province. He is considered to be Khan of all Khans in the area. The tribal system was set up during the reign of Mir Chakar Khan Rind. The Brahvi speaking Khan of Kalat was subdued during British era in the subcontinent when his powers were severely curtailed. Though he used to decide inter-tribal contentions and British intervened only when they felt threatened due to some major incident of violence in the region. Presently we have 35th Khan of Kalat living in exile in United Kingdom. Prince Mohammad, his only son lives in Quetta and is married in *Bugti* tribe. Both father and son seem to be at loggers head with each other.

⁵² Sheikh Aziz, "A leaf from history: Reclaiming Balochistan peacefully," *Dawn*, October 5, 2015.

⁵³ Gloria Caleb, "Decades of unease with the center," *Dawn*, July 13, 2006.

country⁵⁴. The Baloch Peoples Liberation Front (BPLF) and Baloch Student Organization (BSO) were established during this period.

Evolution of Middle Class based Insurgency

The third phase started in 2001 and it resulted into renewal of old Baloch nationalist organizations including Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF). It was the first time that decision making in a national movement came into the hands of middle class and was no longer confined to Baloch sardars⁵⁵. Though the BLF has been targeting security forces since 1968, nonetheless, these attacks took a different shape in post 2006 scenario when Allah Nazar was released from prison. The latter is head of BSO (Azad) which he founded in 2003⁵⁶.

A spate of terror attacks have been conducted against varying selection of targets including security forces, public, ethnic population, journalists etc. It has also resorted to kidnapping of locals for intimidation and coercion. In 2017, fifteen bullet ridden bodies of Punjabis were found in Kech district who were being smuggled illegally to Europe through Balochistan which was subsequently claimed by BLF. Apart from it, the organization was also involved in killing of Chinese in the province especially in Gwadar and its environs. The insurgency is still going on especially in Baloch areas with assistance of local population and other terror outfits⁵⁷.

Looking at historical evolution of such nationalists, the strict state measures have somehow controlled the insurgency; nonetheless, it has

⁵⁴ Ravi Shekhar Narain Singh, *The Military Factors in Pakistan*, (Illinois: Lancer Publishers, 2008), 192.

⁵⁵ Dr. Younas Ahmar, "Why is the current Baloch national movement different from the rest?" *Dawn*, November 6, 2016.

⁵⁶ Tariq Khosa, "Ballot or the Bullet?" *Dawn*, April 15, 2013.

⁵⁷ Tariq Khosa, "Ballot or the Bullet?" *Dawn*, April 15, 2013.

transformed it from an-elite-based-grievance movement to a purely middle-class-based insurgency. The fact that Allah Nazar Baloch first established BSO (Azad) before taking over BLF, speaks volumes about the required focus of the present provincial government and LEAs operating in Balochistan⁵⁸.

Explosive mix of Religion and Insurgency

The religious seminaries have been playing a critical role for last two decades in the province. Balochistan has the highest per capita seminary density in Pakistan⁵⁹. However, emergence of religious extremist organizations in Balochistan has given it a different flavor. A series of attacks against Hazaras in and around Quetta resulted into massive protests against *Lashkar-e-Jhangvi* (LeJ), a violent extremist and anti-Shia group⁶⁰.

The border area between Iran and Pakistan has also become turbulent due to cross border incursions from both sides. An upbeat in the border situation has been observed in recent years where religious nationalist groups like *Jaish al-Adl* (JA) are active. It was also discovered that a kind of nexus was developing between BLF and religious extremist groups for cooperating in attacks execution and targeting⁶¹. The political government has taken a number of initiatives to solace ethno-nationalist groups through reconciliation process which needs to be consistently implemented and reviewed to get any positive outcome from it.

⁵⁸ Mahvish Ahmad, "Balochistan: Middle-Class rebellion," *Dawn*, June 5, 2012.

⁵⁹ Muhammad Amir Rana, "Religion, Nationalism and Insurgency in Balochistan," *Dawn*, July 14, 2019.

⁶⁰ "We are the walking dead: Killings of Shia Hazara in Balochistan, Pakistan," *Human Rights Watch*, June 29, 2014.

⁶¹ This fact has been narrated by the police officers who were posted in Balochistan and have conducted investigation of terrorism related cases in the province.

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Baloch Insurgency

The CPEC project has given a different dimension to the overall security dynamics of the province. BLF vows to target these projects as they believe that it will turn them into minority and are against the interest of Baloch population⁶².

Analyzing elements of violence in JST

The JST was initially a peaceful movement and its founder wanted to operate and educate the masses without amassing street power for violence. The slow alienation of low cadres of JST and its subsequent disintegration may be cited as the leading reasons of violence in the movement. Many die hard members of the JSQM abandoned it after they found out that the senior command had compromised on the chief demands and agreed to settle their differences with state on account of complacency and passive attitude. Dr Abdul Qadir Magsi, chairman Sindh Taraqqi-Pasand (STP), has been advocating caution on the state response and he professed non-violence even if severe repressive action is perpetrated by the state. He stepped down from STP Chairman in 2018 citing massive rigging in the elections⁶³.

Sindhudesh Liberation Army (SDLA)

Sindhudesh Liberation Army (SDLA) or Sindh Liberation Army (SLA) surfaced in 2002 in Sindh proclaiming to be affiliated with JSMM and was

⁶² Khurram Iqbal, "Significance and Security of CPEC: Pakistani perspective," *China Institute of International Studies*, No. 66, (September 14, 2017).

⁶³ Sanjay Mathrani, "STP Chairman Qadir Magsi stepped down," *Daily Times*, July 31, 2018.

involved in a multiple terror activities⁶⁴. For example, on December 26, 2010, the railway services were suspended in which four persons were injured when a track was struck by two explosions in Hyderabad. It was followed by similar explosions on railway tracks in other cities of the province⁶⁵.

Role of Shafi Muhammad Barfat

Shafi Muhammad Barfat, leader of JSMM, belongs to Jamshoro and is believed to be hiding somewhere in Afghanistan and providing necessary guidance to SDLA. The operation chief of SDLA is reportedly Darya Khan who is leading the sabotage activities. Sindhudesh Liberation Army (SDLA) is comparable with Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) in terms of its objectives and goals. It vows to keep Sindh an independent territory since it has its own ocean, agriculture, minerals and other natural resources.

Area of Operation of SDLA

The area of operation of SDLA encompasses both urban and rural districts including Hyderabad, Nawabshah, Karachi, Jamshoro, Shaheed Benazirabad, Mirpur Mathilo, Sangar, Naushero Feroze, Sukkur, Ghotki, Larkana, Kotri, Tando Hyder, Badin, Thatta, Shahdat kot, Ranipur, Moro, Dorki, Khairpur, Dadu and Qazi Ahmed respectively. If we categorize the type of targets chosen by the group, we can include transportation/communication networks, financial/business institutions, foreigners,

⁶⁴ Muhammad Hussain Khan, "Sindhudesh Revolutionary Army claims twin blasts targeting Rangers in Larkana," *Dawn*, July 31, 2016.

⁶⁵ "Blasts on Railway tracks posing new threats," *Dawn*, December 27, 2010.

educational institutions and private citizens/property⁶⁶. In 2014, Jeay Sindh Muttahida Mahaz (JSMM) announced a province wide strike which got positive response from interior Sindh and urban areas as well. The strike was initiated in the back drop of nabbing eighteen persons involved in cracker attacks on multiple targets in Sindh. Moreover they also protested against Pakistan Protection Ordinance along with killing of members of JSMM in police encounters⁶⁷.

Scrutinizing Attacks by SDLA

The period can be divided into two phases. The first phase starts from 2002 and ends in 2006. The second one sets-in in 2010 and continues till 2018.

Analysis of Attacks (2002-06)

From 2002-06 nearly 120 cracker attacks, bomb blasts and other acts of sabotage were reported in Sindh province. Most of these acts were aimed at destroying the railway tracks and transmission lines. In one of such incidents, two police men along with a journalist were wounded in Nawabshah when a railway track was blown with a bomb. The police responded to the explosion at the site and while inspection another bomb went off resulting into the injuries⁶⁸.

Analysis of Attacks (2010-17)

A total number of 61 major attacks have been documented from 2010-17.

⁶⁶ "National Consortium for the study of terrorism and responses to terrorism, a center of excellence of the US Department of homeland security" *Global Terrorism Database*, University of Maryland, 2018.

⁶⁷ "JSMM called for Sind-wide strike draws mixed response," *Dawn*, April 10, 2014.

⁶⁸ "Three hurt in blasts near Nawabshah," *Dawn*, August 17, 2004.

Most of these attacks (55 percent) took place in 2012. A gory retaliatory attack was reported in Nawabshah in 2012 when five gunmen killed six passengers and wounding many in an act of indiscriminate firing in a Punjab bound bus near Qazi Ahmed. Subsequently, the death toll increased to nine. Reportedly the gunmen after the act announced that they had avenged the killing of Muzaffar Bhutto and other JSMM leaders who died in custody of law enforcement agencies⁶⁹.

The last known main attack was conducted in July 2017 in Steel Town area of Karachi when an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) strike resulted into damaging of road infrastructure with no casualties reported. It was later revealed that Sindhudesh Liberation Army (SDLA) was involved in the incident and they wanted to target the Chinese engineers' convoy on the road⁷⁰. It has given a different dimension to their choice of targets⁷¹.

The geographical area of operation suggests that SDLA is more active in interior Sindh as compared to its northern or southern districts. This clearly suggests that the presence of SDLA is quite wide spread and sparse encompassing southern most districts like Thatta and an array of northern districts bordering Balochistan as well.

Lethality of Attacks by SDLA

An overview of elements of violence in JST and its subsequent factions indicate that they lack the wherewithal to launch an impressive attack against the state and its institutions. Their most lethal attacks were reactionary and in retaliation to killings of its members and leaders. They

⁶⁹ "Bus attacked near Nawabshah, seven killed," *Dawn*, May 25, 2012.

⁷⁰ "Chinese engineers escaped IED blasts in steel town," *Dawn*, July 11, 2017.

⁷¹ Imtiaz Ali, "Chinese engineers working on power plants hurts in bomb blasts," *Dawn*, May 31, 2016.

are pretty much confined to their respective areas of operations in terms of geographical limitations which again points towards extent of their local tentacles and networking. Barring few exceptions, majority of their leadership is in Sindh though their movement is restricted and they operate tactfully like leaders of main irredentist Baloch groups who are believed to have support from outside the country. Moreover, many violent groups in JST are eclipsed by Sindh Awami Tehrik (SAT), launched by Rasool Bux Palejo who tried to indoctrinate the Sindhis with his own brand of nationalist politics⁷².

Analyzing elements of violence in BNM

There are five main-stream insurgent groups active in Balochistan namely Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF), Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), Baloch Republican Army (BRA), United Baloch Army (UBA) and Lashkar-e-Balochistan (LeB) respectively. These groups operate in different areas drawing tribal and local support through various cross-section of Baloch society.

Apparently BLF is the only group which claims to have support of Balochi middle class whereas other groups are being spearheaded either by Baloch sardars or their relatives. The BLF leader has expressed his desire to cooperate with other insurgent groups as well. Apart from it, many other smaller insurgent groups are present in the province including *Baloch Raaji Aajoi Sangar* (BRAS) which cooperate with other groups frequently for different tactical operations. We need to discuss each one of them in terms of their mode of selection of targets, numbers, tactics and

⁷² Shaikh Aziz, "Palejo-a leader of unique political legacy," *Dawn*, June 8, 2018.

operations⁷³.

Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF)

BLF has used complex means of tactics for its attacks inside the province. It has employed both kinetic and non-kinetic means to take up arms against the state to continue the insurgency. Among these tactics include Improvised Explosive Device attacks, bomb blasts, ambush assaults, rocket propelled attacks, kidnapping and targeted killings. Nearly 43 main attacks have been documented, believed to be carried out by BLF since 2007, in which military installations, military convoy, police stations, police posts or police vehicles have been targeted. Majority of these incidents took place in Kech, Buleda, Gwadar, Tump, Mashkai, Pasni, Parwan, Awaran, Turbat, Mand, Quetta, Khuzdar, Parom and other places in southern Balochistan⁷⁴. In one of the deadliest attacks in 2015, twenty laborers belonging to Punjab were gunned down in a pre-dawn attack in Turbat. Apart from military and police targets, they have been focusing on damaging government properties for coercion and intimidation. BLF, along with Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), is one of the strongest insurgent groups in the province⁷⁵. Currently, Allah Nazar Baloch leads the group.

Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA)

BLA was initially led by Baalach Marri who was subsequently replaced by his brother Harbiyar Marri in 2007. The latter is in exile and operates from outside to control the group. The latest attack on the Chinese

⁷³ Naziha Sayed Ali, "Situationer who's who of Baloch Insurgency," *Dawn*, June 01, 2015.

⁷⁴ "National Consortium", *Global Terrorism Database*.

⁷⁵ Saleem Shahid, "Twenty laborers gunned down in Turbat," *Dawn*, April 12, 2015.

Consulate in Karachi was also conducted by BLA last year, claimed by its field commander Aslam Baloch who was subsequently killed in Afghanistan⁷⁶. The group has conducted attacks on varying types of targets including transportation, business, police, government, military, utilities, private citizens and their properties and educational institutions as well. Twenty-five major attacks documented by local police and levies forces since 2005 indicates that it operates in districts such as Turbat, Bolan, Dera Bugti, Mach, Kalat, Quetta, Khuzdar, Harnai, Hub and Karachi⁷⁷. In June 2015, BLA blew up Quaid Azam Residency in Ziarat in which one policeman was also killed. As per reports four men on motorcycles entered the residency and destroyed the building. Many old materials along with wooden structure were destroyed during the incident⁷⁸. Recently it has been declared a terrorist entity under Specially Designated Global Terrorist category⁷⁹.

United Baloch Army (UBA)

The group surfaced with the leadership of Mehran Marri who formed it after having cultivated differences with Harbiyar Marri. In other words it's a breakaway faction of BLA. The group is active since 2011 and used multiple means to achieve its targets. It has focused on private citizens, property, military, police, utilities, educational institutions, transportation and businesses. It operates in a wide area including districts Sibi, Dera Bugti, Quetta, Mastung, Lehri, Dera Murad Jamali, Dasht, Kohlu, Nushki

⁷⁶ Saleem Shahid, "Banned BLA leader killed in Kandahar suicide attacks," *Dawn*, December 27, 2018.

⁷⁷ "National Consortium", *Global Terrorism Database*.

⁷⁸ "Quaid residency blown up by BLA," *Dawn*, June 16, 2013.

⁷⁹ Kamran Yousaf, "US declares Balochistan Liberation Army a terrorist group," *The Express Tribune*, July 2, 2019.

and Mach respectively⁸⁰. UBA attacked two passenger buses in Mastung in 2015 in which nearly 22 people were killed and scores were injured⁸¹. Similarly another attack in Sibi on Jaffarabad Express claimed 16 lives⁸². These attacks were condemned by BLA and BRA as they feel that these tactics are counterproductive.

Balochistan Republican Army (BRA)

Formed in 2007 with Brahamdagh Bugti as its leader, BRA operates in Dera Bugti, Dera Murad Jamali, Kech, Naseerabad and Jaffarabad. It aims limited targets including military, police, private persons, transportation and utilities⁸³. It employs different types of violent means including IEDs, landmines, grenades, small combat arms and rocket launchers. Nearly ten major attacks can be attributed to BRA including an attack on security forces convoy in Kech district in 2015 in which eight personnel expired and scores were injured. A similar attack in 2014 on a security convoy claimed nine lives as well. Though limited in resources and numbers, the group has a significant imprint in the area around Dera Bugti.

Lashkar e Balochistan (LeB)

Bahwal and Javed Mengal are considered to be the main leaders of the group whereas the former is stationed in London⁸⁴. Formed in 2009, LeB has been operating in central part of the province including districts Hub, Loti, Turbat, Dera Bugti, Mastung, Kachlak, Karachi and Lahore. Among

⁸⁰ "National Consortium", *Global Terrorism Database*.

⁸¹ Saleem Shahid "Gunmen storm two coaches near Mastung, butcher 19 passengers," *Dawn*, May 30, 2015.

⁸² Syed Ali Shah, "Sibi train blast death toll reaches 16," *Dawn*, April 8, 2014.

⁸³ "National Consortium", *Global Terrorism Database*.

⁸⁴ "DOPEL: Database of people with extremist linkages", accessed June 17, 2019, https://www.dopel.org/dopel_analysis.htm.

its chief targets include police, transportation, educational institutions, private citizens and property, utilities, military and government structures⁸⁵. At least nine major incidents of terror have been reported since 2009. Its main recruitment tool is tribal affiliation and Balochistan Student Organization-Azad (BSO-A) which also provides human resource base to other insurgent groups as well.

Comparing Baloch Insurgent Groups with SDLA

SDLA when compared with Baloch insurgents groups provides some overlapping areas in terms of tactics, weapon choice, target selection and recruitment mode. However, a stark difference is observed in terms of non-kinetic means, lethality of attacks, cooperation and coordination with other groups in operation execution and completion.

Moreover, tribal affiliation provides another different flavor to the battle hardened Baloch groups. The geographical spatiality between SDLA and Baloch groups is also quite differentiating.

Wide range of Target Selection

The Baloch insurgent groups are more adept in target selection which is indicative of their trainings and mutual cooperation with each other. As a result their choice of target varies on a wider spectrum with Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) on the one end to ambushing security forces in central and southern districts of Balochistan on the other.

They have even ventured to attack Pearl Continental Hotel in Gwadar in

⁸⁵ "National Consortium", *Global Terrorism Database*.

broad daylight with heavy presence of security personnel in the area⁸⁶. They have also resorted to killing of Punjabis and Pashtuns on basis of ethnicity and in retaliation of encounters of their members and field commanders.

Proficiency in Weapon Handling

The Baloch insurgent groups are quite proficient in use of different weapons including short and long range arms for engagement. The SDLA has been using bombs or crackers to inflict damage to transportation or communication networks and in rare cases they have employed closed armed combat weapons to kill passengers on basis of ethnicity to avenge deaths of their leaders.

External Assistance Factor

Interestingly majority of leaders of Baloch insurgent groups operate from outside. Many of them have taken refuge in London, Afghanistan and other European countries on one pretext or the other. Whereas selective SDLF leadership is believed to be in Afghanistan and is in contact with members and/or field commanders of the group.

Kinetic and Non-Kinetic Tactics

The tactics employed by Baloch insurgent groups fall in both kinetic and non-kinetic categories. They have launched a vigorous campaign on social media against military and local administration. Moreover, they have extended the battleground to cosmopolitan cities of Europe and adopted innovative non kinetic measures to highlight the issues through pasting

⁸⁶ “Five people killed in Gwadar PC attack; Army concludes clearing operation,” *Dawn*, May 12, 2019.

banners on public transportation and hotel entrances⁸⁷. Such tactics have not been adopted by SDLF. Interestingly in both cases many voices can be heard who advocate non-violence and are part of the current political reconciliation process.

Systematic Co-ordination and Co-operation

In Balochistan, National Party held power for almost two and a half years and tried to calm down the insurgency in tone and tenor⁸⁸. Where as in Sindh, presence of Pakistan People's Party (PPP), the arch rival of JST, has not let it grow out of its basic structure. The best opportunity for JST was when Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was imprisoned but it could neither initiate any reconciliation nor come up with a rapprochement with senior members of PPP⁸⁹.

Furthermore, the raging magic of Rasool Bux Palejo especially in central Sindh never provides JST any room for transferring its message to local population. The latter was a man of his own making and he tried to introduce a local ideology rather than export it from an alien land. He therefore nurtured an indigenous narrative and followed a path of non-violence without giving credence to any of the acts of violence of JSMM or JSQM.

In Balochistan, all insurgent groups not only conduct joint trainings but have also approached religious extremist organizations for support and coordination.

⁸⁷ Naveed Siddiqui, "British High commissioner summoned over malicious Anti Pakistan slogan on London cabs," *The Dawn*, November 3, 2017.

⁸⁸ Syed Ali Shah, "Three political parties to form collation government in Balochistan," *Dawn*, May 17, 2013.

⁸⁹ Nadeem F. Paracha, "Making of the Sindhi identity: From Shah Latif to GM Sayed to Bhutto," *Dawn*, September 15, 2015.

Therefore, the extent and level of collaboration between Baloch insurgent groups is superior to that of SDLF⁹⁰.

Effectiveness of Human Resource Mobilization

The BSO-A provides recruitment input to many groups whereas Jeay Sindh Student Federation (JSSF) in central area are unable to match with the pace of human resource requirement of JST and its different factions or cannot indulge themselves impressively in mass mobilization. Lately a demonstration by JSFF was staged in front of press club Karachi for lifting of ban on students union in Sindh and give due rights to its people⁹¹.

Political overtures to Insurgent Groups

The government has offered a number of packages for pacifying the disgruntled ethno-political elements in Balochistan but no such offer has been made for Sindh where a continuous low intensity spell of sabotage

⁹⁰ According to SSP CTD Balochistan, there exists no material evidence of cooperation, coordination and training of different violent ethno-nationalist groups on a single platform nonetheless ample intelligence is present which suggests that these groups are actively engaging with each other in target selection and its pointation thus extending human and logistical assistance in operation execution especially in areas where accessibility of one group is limited or curtailed. The external and internal material aid is essential to carry out attack against law enforcers and military establishments. Recently, Khan of Kalat, Mir Suleman Dawood Jan Ahmedzai, while forming a council of Independence of Balochistan, boasts that he has active support of many like-minded/friendly countries who would cooperate and help him in achieving the end objective of the council. According to the police official, there are many factors indicating the clear intervention of foreign powers in Balochistan. First, Kulbhushan Jadhav the Indian spy agent, was arrested from Mashkel near Chaman border in 2016 who was specifically tasked to perpetrate anarchy in the province by extending maximum support to different insurgent groups. Second, the Chinese are developing Gawadar as part of CPEC project and India wants to establish Chabahar (Iran) port city for the very purpose so that it can siphon off maximum benefits of the trade. Moreover, India is also looking for an alternate route of trade with Afghanistan so that current leverage of Afghan-Pakistan transit trade can be minimized.

⁹¹ Saher Baloch, "Footprints: Kill and dump in Karachi," *Dawn*, December 14, 2014.

continues for quite some time now⁹².

JST-BNM Comparison Matrices

We have developed two matrices for JST-BNM comparison in which ten variables have been labelled including Numbers, Weapon Handling Expertise (WHE), Target Selection (TS), Outside Support (OS), Internal Dissention (ID), Mutual Cooperation (MC), Geographical Area (GA), Kinetic (KAs) and Non Kinetic attacks (NKAs) respectively⁹³.

Groups	Numbers	TS	WHE	OS	HRM
JSQM	Low	Simple	Low	Not Known	Low
JSM	Moderate	Complex	Moderate-Complex	Low	Moderate
BLA	Moderate	Complex	High-Complex	High	Moderate
BRA	Moderate	Complex	Low-Complex	Moderate	Low
UBA	Moderate	Complex	Low-Complex	Moderate	Moderate
BLF	High	Complex	High-Complex	Moderate	High
LeB	Moderate	Simple	Low-Complex	Low	Low

Matrix 01: Comparison among different Sub Nationalists Groups on Numbers, TS, WHE, OS & HRM

In Matrix 01, BLF stands out from the rest of the groups in terms of Numbers, Target Selection, Outside Support and Human Resource Mobilization. The main reason is that its top leadership operates from within the province and rarely ventures into neighbouring countries for refuge. Moreover, it has effectively engaged the youth and locals in carrying out different operations in Baloch areas. Apart from it, it has

⁹² Saleem Shahid, "Plan for peaceful Balochistan approved," *Dawn*, August 7, 2015.

⁹³ Here it is essential that we define these variables properly. The numerical strength ranges from low, moderate and high (less than 500, between 500 and 1500, beyond 1500). Similarly if the members of a group can choose multiple targets then they fall in the category of complex otherwise they are simplex in terms of their choice of targets. The weapon handling expertise is also divided into four categories namely, Low, Low-Complex, Moderate-Complex, and High-Complex respectively. On the similar lines, Outside Support and Human Resource Mobilization have been divided into Low, Moderate and High groupings.

shown its desire to work with other Baloch insurgent groups for cooperation and coordination.

In a video interview in 2015, Allah Nazar Baloch debunked the news of his death and vowed to work with other insurgent groups to achieve their common objectives⁹⁴.

Groups	Internal Dissention	MC	GA	NKAs	KAs
JSQM	High	Low	Medium	Low	Low
JSMM	Moderate	Low	Medium	Moderate	Moderate
BLA	Low	Moderate	Large	Moderate	Moderate
BRA	Low	Moderate	Large	Moderate	Moderate
UBA	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
BLF	Low	High	Moderate	High	High
LeB	Low	Low	Moderate	Low	Low

Matrix 02: Comparison among different Sub Nationalists on ID, MC, GA, Kinetic/Non Kinetic Attacks

In Matrix 02, the Internal Dissention denotes the level of disintegration within a group and/or formation of sub groups or splinter groups from a main sub nationalist structure. The dissention is highest in JST sub groups as compared to BNM related factions. Similarly mutual cooperation is defined when these groups seek assistance from others in conducting different terror operations. The non-kinetic attacks are those made in an irregular manner and through utilization of internet-social media based techniques.

Again, BLF surpasses all other groups in terms of kinetic/non-kinetic attacks. According to a study, BSO-Azad utilizes social media (Facebook) most effectively among all groups in Pakistan⁹⁵. Moreover, these matrices suggest that insurgent groups thrive on public cooperation and support. A

⁹⁴ "Pakistan's Most Wanted Balochistan Fighter is Alive", *NMF News*, November 30, 2015, video.

⁹⁵ Jehanzeb Haque, "Banned outfits in Pakistan operate openly on face book," *Dawn*, September 14, 2017, accessed July 25, 2019, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1335561>.

group whose leadership also comes from the local population can not only survive for longer period of time but also execute most complex attacks against the LEAs. BLF seems to fall in this particular category.

Implications of violence for non-violent ethno-national struggles

Drawing conclusions from these violent ethno-national movements one can record their implications of apparently non-violent sub-national struggles. The Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) is one of such political dispensations which has so far been nonviolent and has opted for the political path for its struggle for the rights of Pashtuns. Though there are visible possibilities of outside support to PTM on multiple levels nonetheless they seem to keep their struggle as nonviolent as possible since any element of violence may trigger a severe state action against them. The recent incident at a check post at Khar Qamar also points towards the same episode which ultimately resulted into registration of terrorism cases against its key members with multiple arrests⁹⁶.

The success of these violent ethno-national movements is still not exemplary and in some cases many insurgent groups have either disintegrated or joined ranks of other violent structures. Moreover, nonviolent movements have relatively higher chances of survival than that of violent ones as heavy finances are involved along with persistent resolve of its leaders.

Finally, non-violence has a kind of soft power associated with it. Such power is going to define the future national movements and their

⁹⁶ Francesca Marino, "The changing narrative of Pak Army against PTM," *ANI*, May 26, 2019.

acceptability among nations⁹⁷.

Conclusion

Ethno-national movements, in the age of social media based activities, have complex structures. A dynamic approach is, therefore, needed to attract, assimilate and encourage its command to shun the differences through resolution of their key demands. The leaders and members of these movements should be properly engaged by local politicians by providing them sufficient space for political activity and activism. Such movements need to be encouraged to coexist with mainstream national narrative through participation in economic, educational, social, cultural and sporting activities. Lastly, in case of any violence, a legal course of action is essential to deal with the elements involved in sabotage and lawlessness.

Mr. Faisal Ali Raja is a Police officer of Police Service of Pakistan at Senior Executive position. He is a Fulbright Scholar and holds a Masters of Public Administration degree from School of International & Public Affairs, Columbia University. His research interests are Cyber security, Police reforms, Security dynamics in digital world, International security policy etc.

⁹⁷ Rahimullah Yusufzai, "The Future of the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement," *The Arab News* (Pakistan Edition), May 7, 2019.

Ibn Taimiyyah and Militant Jihad

Munir Masood Marath

Abstract

This article while delineating upon definitional quagmire of religion in sociological perspective seeks to explore the distinct nature of Islam in terms of its non-secular character. It is in this backdrop that it focuses upon Ibn Taimiyyah's philosophy from three fundamental trajectories namely 'anti-secular approach to religion', 'Islamic legal system' and 'militant *jihad*' and further seeks to suggest that modern trends in contemporary political Islam owe a lot to his dynamic scholarship. However, it further argues that contemporary militants undertake a selective approach towards his philosophy to explore grounds to seek theological legitimacy to their acts of violence.

Key Words: Religion, Secularism, Jihad, Taqleed, Ijtihad, Shariah

Religion, despite its antiquity amongst different world phenomena, has not been able to come out of definitional predicament. It may have different meanings for different people. Some may be prostrating before the idols, some may be worshipping the different phenomena of nature, some may resort to solitary meditation, yet focussing on a common purpose - to achieve the essence of their respective belief system. Although the major area of academic interest has been the religions which believe in the existence of God, though with different metaphysical attributes, yet there are still such religious beliefs which do not give place to the idea of any supreme metaphysical authority and thus, render the quest for a universal definition of religion, a far cry. This definitional confusion emerges subsequent to classification of different belief systems on the basis of their approach towards different metaphysical phenomena. For instance, those who repose faith in supernaturalism believe in the presence of some

diffuse forces which determine the good or bad influence on the events of life whereas Animists believe in active and living spirits shaping their life events. Theists whether monotheists or polytheists believe in the existence of God whereas Buddhists believe in reaching higher state of conscience on the basis of sacred principles.¹ Anyhow, the sociologists define religion in terms of an approach to what one feels as supernatural². The sociologists have been interested to discover the form of religion which may have unifying effects in a society and they call such religious belief system as Civil Religion.³ The functionalist theorists like Emile Durkheim identify religion as a tool of human socialization instead of human-God relations⁴. There are still others like August Comte who believe in religion as an evolutionary stage with which the march of history has become redundant and believe that if in the advancement of history religion survived, it survived only as a religion of humanity, entirely secular in nature⁵. Since the terminology like ‘sacred’ and ‘profane’ occupies central position in the sociological explanations of the religion, therefore, sociologists focus on defining these terms with the purpose to find the universal values of all religions. They define the ‘sacred’ as something relating to supernatural phenomena which can be achieved through some rituals whereas ‘profane’ as something part of the ordinary life⁶.

¹ Ian Robertson, *Sociology*, (New York, 1987), 399-401.

² Ronald, Johnstone, *Religion and Society in Interaction: The Sociology of Religion*, (Eaglewood Cliffs, 1975), 20. Also see: Paul B. Horton and Chester L. Hunt, *Sociology*, (Singapore, 1984), 265; Robertson, *Sociology*, 398.

³ Robert N. Bellah, “American Civil Religion in 1970s”, in *American Civil Religion*, ed. R.E. Richev and D.G. Lones, (New York, 1974), 255-272. Quoted in: Horton and Hunt, *Sociology*, 267.

⁴ Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Form of Religious Life: A Study of Religious Sociology*, (New York, 1912). Also see: Horton and Hunt, *Sociology*, 267.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 266-267.

⁶ Durkheim, *The Elementary Form*. Quoted in: Robertson, *Sociology*, 398.

Notwithstanding the academic value of these sociological studies, Islam as a religion seems to be somewhat distinctive since it does not bifurcate between the spiritual and temporal life. Islam literally means submission to the will of God and since the will of God is all encompassing, covering all spheres of human activity, therefore, the life is taken as a compact whole in the chemistry of Islam. The non-secular contour of Islam becomes explicit from a tradition of the Prophet Muhammad wherein he is reported to have declared the whole earth a mosque⁷.

It is in this theoretical perspective, drawing upon three political foci of Ibn Taimiyyah's philosophy namely, anti-secular approach to religion, Islamic legal system and militant *Jihad*, an attempt has been made to develop a case that being a blend of tradition and modernity, his philosophy proved out to be instrumental in modernizing the subsequent Muslim thought mainly through independent reasoning in the religious context but at the same time contemporary militant outfits follow a selective approach towards his philosophy to explore theological grounds to legitimize their violent actions.

Firstly, with Ibn Taimiyyah maintenance of justice is the foremost function of the government. State and religion are mutually inclusive and function in support to each other. Religion suffers in absence of the power of the state (*shawkah*) whereas without a disciplined body of the laws, the state becomes a symbol of tyranny⁸. Furthermore, he looks back to the following *Quranic* verse which not only explains the basis of his theory of *Jihad* but also underlines his non-secular approach towards religion: "He

⁷ Tirmizi, (Salat), Nasai (Ghusal), Ibn Maja.

⁸ Richard Bonney, *Jihad: From Quran to Bin Laden*, (New York, 2007), 119.

(Prophet) orders them with that which is good and forbids them that which is bad”⁹. This verse reflects non-secular character of Islam as enjoining good and forbidding evil is not rituals specific rather covers all aspects of life. This feature of Ibn Taimiyyah’s political philosophy has been carried through the ages by the Muslim scholars as well as the fundamentalist movements in the Muslim lands. A similar view point has been expressed by Dr. Muhammad Iqbal when he says that if religion is divorced from politics, the government whichever form it may have, will degenerate into naked tyranny¹⁰. On the practical side, we find different instances where anti-secular approach can be found even in the issues of constitutional import¹¹.

The idea of anti-secularism made Islam a potent ideological movement and went a long way in repelling the impact of Sufism which had crept into the Islamic philosophy, adversely affecting its dynamism. Modern Islamic movements opted for this idea as a driving force to accomplish their missions in the name of reviving the past glory of Islam. It is argued that the Prophet Muhammad returned from heavens to control the forces of history¹². Muslim Brotherhood (*Ikhwan*) and Jamaat-e-Islami developed

⁹ *Al Quran*, 7:157

¹⁰ Muhammad Iqbal, *Bal-i-Jibreel*, (Taj Company, Lahore, 1935).

¹¹ We can cite the debate generated by secularism in the 1st Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on the eve of the presentation of the Objectives Resolution, 12th March, 1949 which aimed at making a reference to the Divine sovereignty in the Constitution of Pakistan. A Congressite member Mr B.K. Dutta criticized the Resolution on the plea that religion and politics were two distinct regions of mind and the Objectives Resolution was an attempt to intermingle them. However, a distinguished Pakistani professor responded this argument that ‘religion to Muslims was not like a Sunday suit which can be put on while going to a place of worship and put off in daily life.’ For details see: G.W. Chaudhary, *Constitutional Development in Pakistan*, 2nd ed (London, 1959), 39-41.

¹² Quoted in Dr Muhammad Iqbal, “The Spirit of Muslim Culture”, in Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, (Oxford University Press, London,

their philosophies of *jihad* on the non-secular view of religion. Naturally, credit goes to Ibn Taimiyyah who, in the medieval period of history, highlighted this dimension of Islam and made it easy for the subsequent Muslim intellectuals to comprehend this idea otherwise terminology of political Islam might have been alien to us.

Secondly, Islamic legal structure owes a lot for its evolution to this Hanbalite theologian who challenged the finality of all four schools of Sunni Muslim jurisprudence and claimed the authority of *Mujtahid* for himself and thus, revolted to the idea of the blind following (*Taqleed*) of these recognized schools of jurisprudence. Anyhow, the prevalent degenerated conditions of the Muslims in the backdrop of the extinction of the Abassid Caliphate provided legitimacy to his ideas.¹³ Needless to say that his opposition to *Taqleed* left everlasting imprints on the subsequent Muslim scholarship and opened the doors of modernization for the Muslim thought through *Ijtihad*. In 18th century, Ibn Abd al-Wahab regarded the blind following of any concept as a sign of the days of ignorance¹⁴. Likewise Shah Waliullah in India made denunciation of *Taqleed* and emphasized upon the rational reinterpretation of religion.¹⁵ However, it still requires an in-depth inquiry to ascertain whether it was the influence of Ibn Taimiyyah working behind the approach of these religious scholars or it was the common tree of teachers in Madina which was behind the common thinking of both afore-mentioned scholars of 18th century. There

1934), accessed October 20, 2008, <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/works/prose/english/reconstruction/index.htm>.

¹³ Muhammad Iqbal, "The Principal of Movement in the Structure of Islam" in Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought*.

¹⁴ Ibn Abd al Wahhab, *Masail' Al Jahiliya*, Abu Maryam Isma'eel Alarcon, Trans., 3-28.

¹⁵ Cited in Aziz Ahmed, *Studies in Islamic Culture and Indian Environment*, (Oxford, 1964), 201.

is no denying the fact that Muhammad Hayya Al-Sindi, one of the teachers of Ibn Abd al Wahab, had a profound influence on his student to denounce the commentaries of the four Sunni Imams.¹⁶ Since, Shah Waliullah was the student of Abul Tahir Al-Kurani, a teacher of Al-Sindi, therefore, it may lead us to presume that the similarities between Ibn Abd al Wahab and Shah Waliullah had their roots in a common source of learning¹⁷. However, the fact remains that the 18th century puritanical view of religion depicts strong impressions of Ibn Taimiyyah's thought.

Ibn Taimiyyah's theory of law is based on the view that *Shariah* has a paramount position in the structure of Islamic government and it is beyond anyone's mandate to make amendments in *Shariah* as is evident from the Quran itself¹⁸. Moreover, his law theory serves as a window to his views regarding the grounds of rebellion against those rulers who forgo *Shariah*¹⁹. The contemporary militants selectively subscribe to this content of his theory to ascribe justification to their acts of violence.

Thirdly, if fundamentalism is a devotion to the traditional basics of the religion, then Ibn Taimiyyah being nostalgic of the pristine glory of Islam and optimistic of its rejuvenation was a fundamentalist. In his views, the revival could only be possible if essence of Islam - enjoining good and forbidding evil²⁰ - which elevates its adherents to the status of the best

¹⁶ John Voll, "Muhammad Hayya Al-Sindi and Muhammad Ibn Abd al Wahab: An Analysis of an Intellectual Group in Eighteenth-Century Madina", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 38, No. 1 (1975).

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ "Judgement rests with Allah alone - He has ordained that you should worship none but Him: This is the [one] ever-true faith; but most people know it not." *Al Quran*, 12:40. For Ibn Taimiyyah's views, see *Letter Seven* of Ibn Taimiyyah to Sarjawaz, the King of Cyprus.

¹⁹ See (*Fatwa*) decree of Ibn Taimiyyah against the Mongol rulers.

²⁰ *Al Quran*, 3:110.

nation- is put in practice as a collective effort of the Muslim community. Since *jihad* is an instrument to attain this essence, therefore, the very nature of *jihad* itself becomes collective as every believer is supposed to perform this collective duty in one form or the other.²¹ Ibn Taimiyyah refers to a tradition of the Prophet who is reported to have said: “Whoever of you sees wrong being committed let him change it with his hand (by force); if he is unable to do that, then with his tongue, and if he is not able to do that then with his heart.”

To him, *jihad* being collective in its spirit provides grounds for the ideological bifurcation between the believers and non-believers and it becomes religious duty of the believers to enjoin good and forbid evil in the society²². Moreover, *jihad* surpasses even all religious rituals and obligations in importance for the attainment of essence of the faith.²³ However, for Ibn Taimiyyah, the militant side of *jihad* (*Qital*) was more important than the peaceful struggle. He, on the basis of having weak transmission-linkage, challenged the authenticity of the tradition of the Prophet wherein the Prophet was reported to have ascribed lesser importance to *Qital* as compared to peaceful and internal sort of

²¹ Though Jihad is *Fard Kafaya* but forbidding wrong by heart is the duty of every believer since it demands no extra effort. Ibn Taimiyyah, *Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil*.

²² He refers to the Quranic verse: “Fight against those who - despite having been vouchsafed revelation - do not believe either in Allah or the last day, and do not consider forbidden which Allah and His Messenger have forbidden, and do not follow the religion of truth [which Allah has enjoined upon them] till they agree to pay Jizyah with a willing submission, and feel themselves subdued”, *Al Quran*, 9:29. Also see Ibn Taimiyyah’s *Letter Seven* to the King of Cyprus

²³ Ibn Taimiyyah, “Governance According to Allah’s Law in Reforming the Ruler and his Flock” (*al-Siyasa al-Shariyya fi Islah al-Rai wal-Raiyya*), in Bonney, *Jihad*, 116.

struggle.²⁴In order to prove his contention he made reference to traditions of the Prophet highlighting the importance of militant *jihad*. The Prophet is reported to have said: “Fasting without interruption and spending the night in continuous prayer were the only acts equal to militant *jihad*.”²⁵

Anyhow, though having a puritanical view of religion, his theory of *jihad* is a blend of moderation and fundamentalism in modern sense of the term. According to Ibn Taimiyyah, *jihad* provides two-fold blessings to the one who wages it: victory in this world and martyrdom which is the best form of dying. It is the same source from which modern fundamentalists draw inspiration of militant *jihad*.²⁶ However, he lays down following principles in his theory of militant *jihad* as well:

One, he views *jihad* as defensive not an offensive struggle. He takes reference from the Quran which says: “and fight in the way of God those who fight you but do not commit aggression: God loves not the aggressors.”²⁷ If the Islamic state is attacked or threatened by the enemy forces, the status of *jihad* is changed from *Fard-e- Kafaya* to *Fard-e-Ayn* (obligation for all capable of it) as happened in the Battle of Trench (5 AH). Moreover, since enjoining good and forbidding evil is the basic assignment for which the Muslim nation has been raised so encouraging good should be done in a noble way and forbidding evil must not be

²⁴ Ibn Taimiyyah, “The Criterion between the Allies of the Merciful and the Allies of the Devil”, in Bonney, *Jihad*, 117.

²⁵ Bukhari, Muslim. Also see: Ibn Taimiyyah, “Governance According to Allah’s Law in Reforming the Ruler and his Flock” (*al-Siyasa al-Shariyya fi Islah al-Rai wal-Raiyya*), in Bonney, *Jihad*, 116.

²⁶ Ibn Taimiyyah, “Governance According to Allah’s Law in Reforming the Ruler and his Flock” (*al-Siyasa al-Shariyya fi Islah al-Rai wal-Raiyya*), in Bonney, *Jihad*, 116.

²⁷ *Al Quran*, 2:190.

executed in a corrupted manner.²⁸ It is in this context he advocated kind treatment to prisoners of war (POWs) and drew inference from the *Quranic* verse: “And who give food-however great be their own want of it- unto the needy and the orphan and the captive”.²⁹

Two, he developed general principle that the task of enjoining good and forbidding evil be performed provided the benefit outweighs the loss and the benefit and loss be calculated in terms of *Shariah*.³⁰

Three, since, the implementation of punishments on those violating the limits prescribed by Allah constitute a part of forbidding wrong, therefore, it is the duty of the scholars and the rulers (those in authority) to ensure the enjoining of good and forbidding of evil. It is the duty of those in authority to ensure the enjoining of good and forbidding of evil and in return it is their right even if they happen to be unjust that they be obeyed until they maintain prayers.³¹ Anyhow, obedience of those in authority will be conditional to their obedience to the God.³² Briefly speaking, as have been discussed earlier, Ibn Taimiyyah developed a general principle by issuing a decree against the Mongol rulers that if rulers forego *Shariah* and do not maintain prayers, *jihad* against them becomes obligatory as they no longer deserve to command obedience of the Muslims. In modern history, Anwar

²⁸ Ibn Taimiyyah, *Enjoining Right and Forbidding Wrong*, Salim Abdallah Ibn Morgan, Trans.,3-4.

²⁹ *Al Quran*, 76:8.

³⁰ Ibn Taimiyyah, *Enjoining Right and Forbidding Wrong*, Salim Abdallah Ibn Morgan, Trans.,6-10.

³¹ Tradition of the Prophet in *Muslim*.

³² Ibn Taimiyyah made reference to the address of Abu Bakr, the first caliph on being elected to the office of caliph: “O’people! The strongest among you is the weak as far as I am concerned until I take peoples right dues from him (and give to the rightful owners). Obey me as long as I obey Allah and if I disobey Allah, I have no right to your obedience”.

al-Sadat, the Egyptian President, was killed on this premise by the militants. Nevertheless, this pretext of his assassination was dismissed by Grand Mufti of Al Azhar Shaikh Jadd-ul-Haq on the grounds that Ibn Taimiyyah's decree was in a particular context which was developed by him on the basis of his observation of a Mongol army camp where he found no arrangements for prayers and even no *Muaddin* and Imam to lead the prayers.³³

The fact remains that Ibn Taimiyyah had an enormous influence on the subsequent Muslim movements especially since the dawn of 18th century. Though Ibn Abd al Wahab distanced himself from his theory of right to rebel against the rulers, not following *Shariah* but later on the Wahabi movement attracted towards his philosophy when they felt to overthrow their rulers labelling them as unbelievers.³⁴ His views that since the purpose of *jihad* is to establish the word of Allah, therefore, whoever obstructs should be fought against, still provide pretext to the militants to resist the rulers in the Muslim countries as they accuse them of following the line of the unbelievers instead of establishing *Shariah*. Moreover, reference to Ibn Taimiyyah by the contemporary militants testifies that his philosophy, though selectively, is still providing grounds to search for legitimacy to their acts of violence. For instance, Bin Laden referred to his philosophy many times in his statements.³⁵

³³ Bonney, *Jihad*, 290-292

³⁴ Natana DeLong Bas, *Wahabi Islam. From Revival and Reform to Global Jihad*, (New York, 2004), 256. Quoted Bonney, *Jihad*, 121.

³⁵ Bonney, *Jihad*, 122-123.

Conclusion

To sum it up, three broad conclusions may be drawn; Firstly, his political theory is embodiment of moderation and fundamentalism. He laid down certain principles of militant *jihad* on the one hand and challenged the practice of blind following of four recognized schools of Muslim jurisprudence and thus opened the doors of *Ijtihad* on the basis of independent reasoning on the other. Secondly, his political theory provided a ground for the subsequent movements like Wahabi movement to develop their theory of right to rebel against the rulers in the Muslim lands who do not follow *Shariah* in its entirety. Thirdly, notwithstanding their selective approach, modern fundamentalist movements draw on his theory of *jihad* in search of legitimacy for their acts.

The author is a graduate from London School of Economics (LSE) and has done PhD in Political Islam. He can be reached at munirmarath@yahoo.co.uk.

Visual Propaganda on Social Media: Narratives of Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan

Saif ur Rehman Tahir

Abstract

The article analyses content of Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan's (TTP) official social media channel 'Umar Media' and enlists the visual core narratives of the content. The study suggests that majority of content depicts a tailored interpretation of Islam to justify the brutal actions and label Pakistan as an infidel state calling for its destruction. The TTP has been able to exploit the religious narratives and exhibit a fabricated representation of the state which is critical to comprehend the peril of online radicalization and recruitment to develop an effective mechanism to counter TTP's public appeal.

Key terms: Tehreek e Taliban, Pakistan, Media, Social Media, Visual Propaganda.

Introduction

Information variation and communication rank amongst chief objectives of all terrorist organizations. Religious Terrorist groups like Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) have been broadcasting their ideologies through various means to justify their acts based on violence¹. The use of social media particularly Twitter by these organizations denotes the menacing nexus of terrorist organizations, social networking sites and technology. Social media offers them a major capability to exert explicit impact on their audience through variance of narratives². It enables them to maintain an intricate network of

¹ Anne Aly, "Brothers, Believers, Brave Mujahideen: Focusing attention on the audience of violent jihadist preachers", *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, February 26, 2016.

² Levi J West "#jihad Understanding Social Media as a Weapon" *Security Challenges* 12, No. 2 (2016).

communication that entails directives and glorifying stories for operational successes and recruitment. However, the usage of social media by terrorists is not an old phenomenon. In last two decades, presence of extremist elements on social media has multiplied many folds. In 1998, there were only 10 or 15 websites linked to different terrorist factions. However, the number increased greatly when the figure of such sites reached 4,000 in 2005³. The advent of new social media tools such as Instagram and Twitter provided them the edge over other means of communication. The ease in content discretion and interactive communication has enticed terrorists to use such communication tools for spreading propaganda to large segment of population. In 2018, Facebook claimed to have removed 14 million pieces of content apparently posted by terrorists⁴. Hence, these new social media applications now provide a significant platform for terrorist recruitment, radicalization, networking as well as passing on instructions and operational plans to their current and prospective supporters.

Social media is also substantial to terrorists for several reasons; most significant is self-preservation. Unlike usual sites entailing domain and costly hosting, Facebook and Instagram offer a vibrant and interactive interface which is cheap and effective. Likewise, privacy of the content and admin approval to join the group made it possible to uphold control

³ M. B. Al-Shishani, "Taking al-Qaeda's Jihad to Facebook", February, 2010.

⁴ Lisa Vaas, "Terrorists told to hijack social media accounts to spread propaganda", *Naked Security*, Sophos, November 12, 2018, accessed July 15, 2019, <https://nakedsecurity.sophos.com/2018/11/12/terrorists-told-to-hijack-social-media-accounts-to-spread-propaganda/>

over content as well as monitor activities and discussions in the group⁵. It aids foremost-resolve of terrorists including recruitment, radicalization and spreading the ideology to enhance their support. According to a media expert, “The Internet is the enabler that acts as a catalyst for the radicalization lifecycle”⁶. Without social media, message dissemination and access range of terrorist organizations will be deeply curtailed. The radical indoctrination now completes in months and, in many cases, less than it. The constructed propaganda helps in locating the prospective recruits who later on are instructed to join exclusive private groups where they are prepared for possible action⁷.

Visual Propaganda

Propaganda has been an indispensable tool in warfare; however, with time, the complexity has evolved in it. Jowett and O’Donnell define propaganda as the “Deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and divert behaviour to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist”⁸. Media, as mass influencer, is an effective component of propaganda. Many studies suggest that terrorism and media have a symbiotic relationship as terrorists see it as a potential tool to publicize their philosophy. Social media, as part of its newly-

⁵ J. Bumgarner and M. Mylrea, “Jihad in cyberspace”, *PoliceOne*, March 23, 2010, <http://www.policeone.com/communications/articles/2025862-Jihad-in-cyberspace/>.

⁶ J. Bardin, “Cyber Jihadist Use of the Internet: What Can Be Done?”, *Treadstone 71*, 2010, <http://treadstone71.com/whitepapers/CyberJihadistUseoftheInternet.pdf>

⁷ P. Holtmann, “No threat at first sight: Invisible terrorist environments on Facebook and Youtube”, *University of Vienna*, March, 2011, <http://www.univie.ac.at/jihadism/blog/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Philipp-Holtmann-No-threat-at-first-sight-Invisibleterrorist-environments-on-Facebook-and-Youtube.pdf>

⁸ Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, (Sage Publications, 1999).

fangled and sturdiest component, is also the most lethal weapon. In present-day age, it has emerged as a vital part of a terrorist's visual propaganda. It helps in dispersal of strategic content as well as the dissemination of featured visual graphics laying foundation for a comprehensive narrative that later can affect the masses. This narrative building and effective dissemination through social media has helped in the past many terrorist groups like ISIS to validate their actions. Due to its effectiveness and mass reach, ISIS, its affiliates and sympathizers were estimated to have 46,000 Twitter accounts with outreach of more than 200,000 tweets per day. The figure, despite operative control and recurrent content blockage, appears to enhance continually⁹. The narrative, transmitted through social media, is quite significant as not only it helps in building the image of the terrorist organization but also aids in the recruitment. However, for a comprehensive reach, a compact narrative will create a proper impact¹⁰. Since September 2001, terrorist organizations, through constant outreach, have successfully been able to establish their narrative; a well-defined emblem of *jihad* all over the world especially in western countries.¹¹

Visual content, as essential share of communication, has a wider appeal. With visual aid, social media has made its impact more noticeable and prominent as it grabs people's attention and retention for a longer period of

⁹ Berger and Morgan, "The ISIS Twitter Census", *Brookings Institute*, March 2015.

¹⁰ Kenneth Payne, "Winning the Battle of Ideas: Propaganda, Ideology, and Terror", *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 32, No. 2 (2009), 109-28.

¹¹ Gabriel Weimann, "Terrorism in Cyberspace", *Woodrow Wilson Centre* (2015), 197-198.

time¹². All businesses as well as government and corporate sectors are striving to visualize their strategic content for an effective communication. The two-way transmission of social media applications is providing platforms to share visuals to promote key interests through propaganda¹³. It has enabled the conflict ridden parties to engage directly without passing through traditional mass media. Hyunjin Seo, for instance, gives a detailed analysis of visual communication in the areas of conflict¹⁴. The study maintains that both sides in a conflict use visuals for self-portrayal and advance propaganda against their opponents. Similarly, the recent Syrian war has been a perfect case study for optical propaganda where the visuals of atrocities by government and rebels circulated online on different social media platforms to target, influence and radicalize people.¹⁵

The practice has now been adopted by extremists all over the world. The Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) in Pakistan is a test case in this regard. The organization is using visuals against an ethnic community, igniting its emotions as well as making a strong anti-state sub nationalist appeal. Resultantly, PTM had to be cautioned properly on its social media campaign so that it reduces its anti-state narrative dissemination drastically.¹⁶

¹² Baruah Dowerah, "Effectiveness of Social Media as a tool of communication and its potential for technology enabled connections: A micro-level study", *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications* (2012).

¹³ Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Hyunjin Seo, "Visual Propaganda in the Age of Social Media: An Empirical Analysis of Twitter Images During 2012 Israeli-Hamas Conflict", *Visual Communication Quarterly* (2014).

¹⁵ "Syria war: What we know about Douma 'chemical attack'" *BBC*, July 10, 2018.

¹⁶ "Time is up: DG ISPR warns PTM leadership in press conference" *Dawn*, March 29, 2019.

Social Media and Radicalization

In Islamic extremism, radicalization refers to ‘progression towards terrorism in the name of Islam’, however it should be viewed in the context of *Salafist* political ideology. The notion of radicalization contrasts from one society, culture and religion to another. For west, it includes denial of fundamental values such as human rights, liberty, freedom and gender equality¹⁷. Today, amongst the prime concerns in Europe is the rising aptitude of extremism in Muslim youth. According to Rabasa, the major reason behind emergence of hostile feelings in western Muslim youth is ‘Identity crisis’. The study suggests that western Muslims struggling for identity quest ultimately ends up with teachings of radical *Salafist* school of thought that offers pragmatic solution to mundane issues. The identity of *Ummah* is offered which provides a strong association regardless of place and nationality to the confused youth¹⁸.

The rudimentary assumption of the *Salafi* thought is based on a strong appeal against western atrocities committed against the Muslims and the alliance of Muslim rulers with the west. Hence, radical resentment is not personal rather it rages against the embedded phrases in the narratives. The very postulations are being used and are still in practice to radicalize, recruit and train their prospective followers. Social media offers a greater opportunity for dissemination of the narratives and extremists take no time in grabbing the opportunity to exchange views on political, cultural and social domains. Today, the Islamic radicals have become shrewder in the

¹⁷ Angel Rabasa and Cheryl Benard, *Eurojihad: Patterns of Islamist Radicalization and Terrorism in Europe*, (Cambridge University Press, 2014).

¹⁸ Ibid.

usage of technology and enhancing its impact for creating a greater appeal. The researchers like Rabasa and Benard maintain that its major part consists of a connector and an identifier who encourage potential terrorists. Once the target is spotted, the rest takes place through personal influence and interaction¹⁹.

In Pakistan, the extremist content came to spotlight in 1980s after the invasion of USSR on Afghanistan. Pakistan pledged to support Afghans which propelled it towards *Jihadi* organizations through western support. The *Jihadi* literature was one of the most crucial documents of the time. Various publications of different languages were initiated by *Jihadi* organisations spreading the narrative of one *Ummah* and *Global Jihad*²⁰. However, with evolving technology and government restrictions, the focus later shifted towards social media. It is believed that Al Qaeda was amongst the first militant organizations to establish its foothold in the digital media domain. Many websites were initiated by the group with focus on spreading narratives and its achievements²¹. The advent of social media and interactive communication gave these organizations freedom to interact, engage and recruit people. However, after the state action against radical Islamic organizations, they camouflaged their digital identities. Facebook, as the most frequently used social media platform, has now emerged as hub of all extremist activities. Amongst the major strategies of the terrorist organizations nowadays is to create a Facebook page for a

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Kiran Hassan, "Social Media, Media Freedom and Pakistan's War on Terror", *The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs* 107, No. 2 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1080/00358533.2018.1448339>.

²¹ Zafarullah Khan, *Cyberia: A New War Zone for Pakistan's Islamists*, (Georgetown University Press, 2014).

good cause attracting mass following. Later, they start posting ideologically inspired extremist content on it. The digital traffic and web followers promote the page admin and facilitate it to reach to masses in a limited time frame without violating any policy.²²

Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan (TTP)

The Taliban movement was launched in Afghanistan by Pashtun students of Afghan descent studying in Pakistani religious seminaries against civil war that swamped the country after soviet withdrawal. Taliban made their presence felt by capturing Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan in 1996. For a war torn country, the movement was seen as harbinger of peace, hence its popularity increased and crossed international borders²³. As Taliban consolidated their regime in Kabul, they started revealing orthodox notions and rigid religious interpretations that belittled their entire rule. Mullah Umar, supreme leader of the movement, met Usama bin Laden, the leader of Al Qaeda. Similar to a strict ideology of Al Qaida, Taliban imposed an orthodox version of Islam in Afghanistan. The process disturbed the tranquillity after the successful transition of Taliban rule in the centre. Many strict Islamic laws were later on imposed by *Amr bil Ma'ruf wa Nahy an al Munkar* (Department of Promotion of Virtue and Eradication of Vice) which ensured its implementation. The Taliban later expanded their control to areas of other ethnic minorities including Tajik and Hazaras and effectively ruled the country from 1996 to 2000. The presence of Al Qaida and other Islamic radicals were deeply ostracized by

²² "Understanding the Militant's media in Pakistan outreach and impact", (Pak Institute of Peace Studies, 2010).

²³ Ashok K. Behuria, "Fighting the Taliban: Pakistan at war with itself", *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 61, No. 4 (2007): 529-543.

international community. Many sanctions were imposed, however, these measures did not help and the country remained entrenched in the claws of the radicals who were following an extreme rightist version of Islam.

The twin towers attack in 2001 jolted the Taliban reign. The US attack in the same year forced Taliban to withdraw from major cities and seek hideouts in the peripheral areas. The groups of Al Qaeda and Taliban sneaked into Pak-Afghan tribal areas. Later on, these groups, belonging to different ethnicities, settled there. Al Qaeda decided to spread its influence in Pakistan that was later minimized by Pakistani state through operations and arrests. The Taliban in Pakistani bordering areas engaged the allied forces through guerrilla tactics²⁴. Meanwhile, religious-ideology-inspired-madrassas mushroomed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Tribal areas, Sindh and Punjab further producing their sympathizers and followers. These madrassas were initially set up in Zia's regime to accommodate growing bulge of Afghan refugees which were subsequently converted to centre of ideological indoctrination.

The renegade militants hiding in border areas of Pakistan established a local chapter of Taliban to maintain rule of Islam in the area. It turned into a deadliest militant organization in 2007 after Baitullah Mehsud took command and named the organization as 'Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan'. Today, as an aide of Al Qaeda, it has close relations with Afghan Taliban. However, unlike their counterparts in Afghanistan, they have made efforts in attacking state of Pakistan and Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) by tagging them as mercenaries and allies of the west. Along with their footprints in major cities, TTP seems to have presence in tribal areas and

²⁴ Behuria, "Fighting the Taliban".

extending its influence to Balochistan and other regions including urban Sindh²⁵. The emphasis of the organization pivots around three points;

1. Reinforcing *Shariah* law in the country
2. Combating allies and the United States in Afghanistan unless they retreat.
3. Fighting a defensive battle against Pakistani LEAs.

Ultimately, the organization wants to replace the Pakistani government and establish *Shariah* law all over the country. To counter its activities, Pakistan Army has launched many operations since 2014 which have weakened the capacity of the organization. However, it remains a potent threat in the country.²⁶

Umar Media of TTP

After 2014, TTP appeared on internet through their official channel ‘Umar Media’. However, due to government actions and blockage of content, the activities of TTP and Umar media are primarily not visible. According to a recent report, TTP now has focused on print material and personalized e-communication channels such as WhatsApp to avoid government disruption. Despite odds, Umar media is still its official channel and the disseminator of its philosophical narratives. Government of Pakistan and the Ministry of Interior are striving to tackle the hate speech and extremist content on social media. However, attacks like Safoora Goth and the surge

²⁵ Roohan Ahmed, “CTD arrests key commanders of TTP”, *SAMAA News*, January 29, 2019, <https://www.samaa.tv/news/2019/01/ctd-arrests-key-commander-of-ttp-fazlullah-group-in-karachi/>.

²⁶ Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC), “Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan”, *Stanford University*, (2018), <https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/tehr-i-taliban-pakistan>.

in online extremism cases indicate that strategy of TTP has evolved into a complex mechanism that requires combined efforts from state and society. Many recruitment cases have been reported in the past and the situation is grim as Pakistan is on the verge of a nightmare in the form of returnees from Syria and Iraq who had been radicalized and recruited mostly online for various *Jihadi* purposes²⁷.

Given significance of visuals on social media platforms for fulfilling TTP's agenda of recruitment and spreading ideology, the study analyses visuals of Umar media posted from January to November (2018) on twitter. The content has been retrieved from internet achieves. Majority are in Pashto with English subtitles except few statements which are issued in Urdu and Arabic. The study tends to shed light on the key narratives off TTP's visual propaganda to point out the most effective online recruitment mode.

Method

The content analysis as a methodology has been incorporated to retrieve narratives from visual content shared by Umar media on Twitter. By definition, "the content analysis is a method of analyzing written, verbal or visual communication messages. Its analysis allows the researcher to test theoretical issues to enhance understanding of the data"²⁸.

The period January-November 2018 was chosen as the visual propaganda by TTP was rigorous at that time. Moreover, many prominent online

²⁷ "Iran lures Pakistani Shias to fight its war in Syria", *The Arab Weekly*, September 16, 2018, accessed June 24, 2019, <https://theArabweekly.com/iran-lures-pakistani-shias-fight-its-war-syria>.

²⁸ Stephen Cavanagh, "Content analysis: concepts, methods and applications", *Nurse Researcher*, (1997).

recruitment cases emerged in the period highlighting the success of penetration of extremist content among urban middle class. A total number of eleven videos from the period were recovered and analysed. The visual content was examined repeatedly to classify the major narratives.

Categorization of Narratives

Following coding scheme has been employed to categorize the online media content. The Grounded theory approach was adopted in streamlining the prominent narratives. Constant comparative method was put to practice in which all visual contents were examined comprehensively.²⁹ Later on, narratives were identified and divided into four categories as enumerated below:

1. The righteous apostle of Allah
2. Avenging Evil to Establish Islam in Pakistan
3. Setting Personalized Battlefields in the Age of Graphics
4. Mortality salience

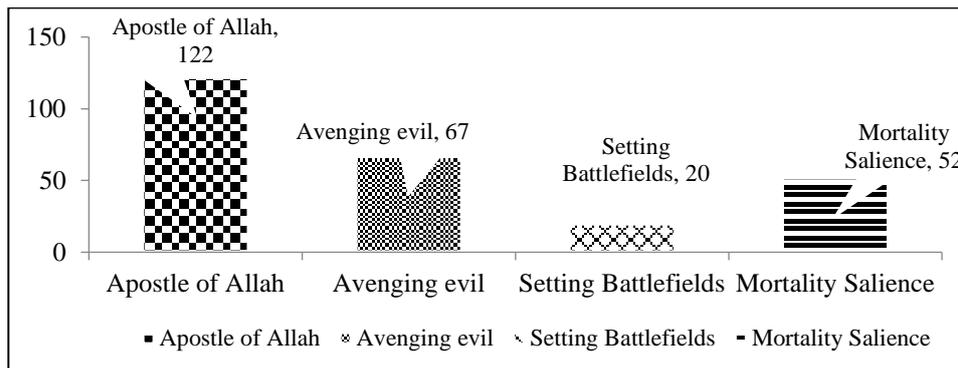
The content distribution of narratives in the videos is given in Table 1:

Narrative	Duration (Min.)	Percentage
Righteous Apostle of Allah	122	47
Avenging Evil to Establish Islam in Pakistan	67	26
Setting Personalized Battlefields in Age of Graphics	20	7
Mortality Salience	52	20
	261	100

Table 1: Narratives in Umar Media Videos

²⁹ A. Bryant and Charmaz, *The SAGE Handbook of Grounded Theory*, (Sage Publications, 2007).

The same has been depicted in graphical formation where y-axis indicates the duration (in minutes) and x-axis signifies different categories of narratives.



Graphical representation of Table 1

The ‘Righteous apostle of Allah’ covered the visuals relating to portrayal of Pakistani Taliban as harbinger of *Shariah* and righteous amongst all. The ‘Avenging Evil to Establish Islam’ encompasses visual rhetoric against state of Pakistan and Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) as western operated mercenaries to destroy the Islamic identity of the society. Whereas ‘Setting Personalized Battlefield in the Age of Graphics’ covers the visual content directed towards youth; western Muslims in particular, showing a glamorized version of battlefield and offering a better experience than the virtual reality platforms.

Lastly, ‘Mortality Salience’ skirts around visual content concerning glorification of *Mujahideen* and suicide attackers in particular who have been given significant importance as the main element of the organization’s war against the state and LEAs.

Prominent Narratives in TTP Propaganda Videos

In view of prominent narratives in visual content of Umar media (as shown in the table 1) ‘Righteous Apostle of Allah’ has been the most prominent narrative taking a major share of 47 per cent followed by ‘Avenging Evil to Establish Islam in Pakistan’ (26) and ‘Mortality Salience’ (20) respectively. Whereas, ‘Setting Personalised Battlefields in the Age of Graphics’ constitutes about 7 per cent of the total content viewed.

1. **Righteous Apostles of Allah** Among primary narratives indoctrinated in the visual contents is the portrayal of Pakistani Taliban as ‘Righteous Apostles of Allah’. The narrative is set through various methods inciting emotional appeal to the viewers. Most of these videos start with recitation of three *surahs* including Tauba, Muhammad and Anfal that contain directives about *jihad* and verdicts regarding warfare³⁰. The *Quranic* recitation about *jihad* with visuals of battle preparation by Pakistani Taliban have been used to establish that TTP is following *sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad and the instructions of Allah by receiving essential military trainings for battle against the enemy of Islam. The emotional appeal is further intensified by showing TTP members offering prayers and seeking Allah’s help as well as performing basic



Image showing TTP fighters praying in Battlefield

³⁰ Aboul-Enein Sherifa Zuhur, “Islamic Rulings on Warfare”, (October, 2004).

rituals of Islam during training even in harshest of climates³¹. The use of white and black flag in the meetings along with scenes of *shahadah*, the basic component of Islam, refers to a *Hadith* about end of times stating, “The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “When the black flags come from Khurasan, go to them, for among them is the Caliph of Allah, the *Mehdi*³²”. The *Hadith* is amongst several prominent prophecies of the end of times revealed by Prophet Muhammad describing an Islamic army that will rise from *Khurasan* (areas constituting major part of present-day South Asia) that will later aid Jesus and *Mehdi*, the promised Messiah in the final battle against evil. Hence to further strengthen the association, the TTP even named its sniper division as ‘Helpers of *Mehdi*’³³.

It is pertinent to mention that TTP does not consider this battle as temporary that will end after victory against Pakistani state rather it establishes that it is indeed the battle for victory of Haq (truth) in the world. Hence their present defeat and government’s hostile actions are ephemeral, TTP’s victory is destined; both in this world and hereafter³⁴.

2. Avenging Evil to Establish Islam in Pakistan

Another narrative incorporated in visuals is that Pakistani state and its affiliated LEAs are forerunners of western agenda in the region and are responsible for atrocities against Muslims all over the world. Videos of mosques destruction and killings of the religious scholars such as Mufti

³¹ “Hata la takun fitna: New message from TTP; Until there is no discord #3”, *Umar Media*, April 13, 2018, video.

³² Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad and ‘Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, *al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-Sahihayn*, 1st ed. (Beirut, Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1990).

³³ “Almodoun lil qital: New message from TTP; The stomach for Fighting #2”, *Umar Media*, December 27, 2017, video.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

Shamizai³⁵ have been incorporated in it, blaming Pakistani army and the state for all such actions. The issues highlighted in this regard are destruction of Jamia Hafsa in Islamabad and the kidnapping and handing over of Dr. Afia Siddiqui to United States. Words like *munkar* (apostate), *taghooti taqat*³⁶ (Evil force), *kuffar* (Infidels) and Naapaak Fauj (Immoral Army) have been used



Image from the video showing state of Pakistan as US ally

frequently in both speeches and religious hymns. In a widely recited Urdu hymn, the phrase '*Fauj shariat ki Munkar hai, Deen islam ki dushman hai*³⁷' (Army is apostate and the enemy of Islam) has been repeated various times by ranking leaders of TTP. The argument is enhanced further by repeating statements like '*Ye Ghulam hai dollar k*' (these are seekers of dollars) establishing Pakistan LEAs as paid mercenaries. Hence to avenge atrocities against Muslims and to destroy Pakistan, *jihad* is cited as the only solution.

To validate *jihad* against LEAs, concept of '*murtad*' has been used frequently for the soldiers and members of LEAs. A *murtad* (apostate) is defined as 'the conscious abandonment of Islam by a Muslim in word or through deed', which is considered as a heinous crime in Islam punishable

³⁵ "Religious scholar Shamzai shot dead", *Dawn news*, May 31, 2004, <https://www.dawn.com/news/394536>.

³⁶ "Hatta la takun fitna: New message from TTP; Until there is no discord #2", *Umar Media*, October 21, 2018, video.

³⁷ Ibid.

only by death sentence³⁸. Hence, by labelling Pakistani soldiers as *murtad*, TTP justifies the killing of Muslim soldiers in the name of *jihad (Qital)*³⁹. Moreover, TTP considers it the only viable and approved way of warfare in the region. According to leaders of TTP they will continue the struggle till the destruction of the Pakistani state and wiping out of evil from the country as indicated in a video ‘*Hatta la Takun a Fitna*’ (Till the chaos ends).⁴⁰

3. Setting Personalized Battlefields in the Age of Graphics

Technology, today, is considered as modern day revolution, transforming world into virtual reality. However, introducing violent content especially in video games comes as the biggest peril. The psychological transformation through



violence based video games has been established by many researches⁴¹. Once a person becomes an addict of violence, he/she seeks comfort in it in practical life. This premise is being exploited by the terrorist organizations as well.

³⁸ Rudolph Peters, “Apostasy in Islam”, *Die Welt des Islam* 17, No. 1 (1976): 1–25, doi:10.2307/1570336.

³⁹ “New message from TTP: Healing Balochistan #2”, *Umar Media*, March 29, 2018, video.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Patrick M. Markey and N. Markey, “Violent Video Games and Real-World Violence: Rhetoric Versus Data”, *Psychology of Popular Media Culture* 4, No. 4 (October 2015): 277-295.

By presenting youth a first-hand experience of battlefield, terrorist organizations such as ISIS have been quite successful in recruiting westerners and executing the lone wolf incidents all over Europe and North America⁴². The same phenomenon is replicated by TTP. Visuals containing use of heavy military equipment against LEAs followed by guerrilla and sniper trainings of militants are broadly incorporated in the videos⁴³. By presenting scenes of battlefields and display of latest weaponry and equipment, TTP is giving a blatant message to youth worldwide to join them for a more personalized experience. In a way they are guaranteeing that it is more thrilling and exciting than virtual reality.

4. Mortality Salience

The issue of martyrdom has been pivotal in Islam. For a staunch Muslim, death is ultimate success and if it comes in struggle for Islam, it becomes the ultimate triumph. Hence acknowledging that the world is short-lived, and real life lies after death, one strives to do deeds that are required to make life better in hereafter. From this premise, concept of 'Mortality Salience' takes root. Knowing world is temporary and death is inevitable, modulates one's mind and makes him question his/her beliefs. The calamity worsens in case of urban Muslims especially ones residing in west who are in a tight spot due to their quest for identity. The situation is used by Islamic terrorist organizations who offer them an identity and a base. Belgian expert on terrorism explained this phenomenon as, "The terrorist organizations are giving them what the Belgian government can't

⁴² Ahmed Al-Rawi, "Video games, terrorism, and ISIS's Jihad 3.0", *Terrorism and Political Violence* 30, No. 4 (2018): 740-760, doi: 10.1080/09546553.2016.1207633.

⁴³ "Hatta la takun fitna", *Umar Media*, October 21, 2018, video.

give them – identity, structure. They don't feel Moroccan or Belgian. They don't feel part of either society”.

TTP has now adopted the same notion for the propagation of their agenda. The militants have been glorified and made symbol of success and tranquillity. In many videos, people associated with TTP calls others to join the same cause



Visual from the video stating struggle against the state of Pakistan fight and asking others to make it a life purpose

as it is the best of both worlds. The suicide attackers, as the main component of the organization, are highlighted and shown as the prestigious position holders. The message is reinforced by showing their routine and proximity with the important leaders and their support by religious scholars. They have also been hailed in the religious hymns. Termed as ‘*Ghazian*’ (victors) and ‘*Fidayeen*’ (those who sacrifice their lives for Allah), the suicide attackers are eulogized as occupying a most prestigious position among rank and file of TTP⁴⁴. In almost all videos, the LEAs of Pakistan are shown as tyrant and *jihad* against a tyrant is deemed necessary and vital. The notion is further supported by media statements of former government/military officials who describe the atrocities of the state and question the legitimacy of their actions⁴⁵. Hence, it makes an

⁴⁴ “(Ibtal Ummat) New message from TTP; Champions of the Nation #2”, *Umar Media*, February 14, 2018, video.

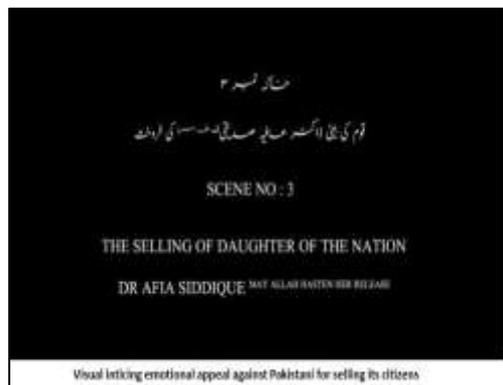
⁴⁵ “Fatarbisu: New message from TTP; Then Wait #2”, *Umar Media*, February 4, 2018, video.

appeal to an ordinary person seeking the true meaning of Islam who can easily fall in TTPs' trap of limited interpretation.

Significant narrative for recruitment of TTP

The narratives proposed by TTP in Umar media videos are substantial and seemingly successful in recruiting prospective candidates for various activities. These narratives are in-line with historical perspectives and religious acknowledgements to give their propaganda legitimacy and their heinous brutalities justification. In a critical historical discourse of the narratives cited in the videos and confessions from inspired *Jihadis*⁴⁶, it seems obvious that 'Mortality Salience' narrative in TTP videos ranks above all in influence. Questioning the very premise of identity and the mortal reality of the social life, it accentuates the emotional appeal and the notions of mayhem.

In case of western Muslims and people from urban middle class of Pakistan, identity crisis is a major concern. Caught amid the struggle of modernity and religion, the confusion seeps into their behaviour. The terrorist organizations such as



TTP target them by establishing depiction of strong identity and structure. By showing disillusioned youth a view that lies beyond the traditional concept of nation and identity, leads ordinary people and draws attention

⁴⁶ Raza Rumi, "Interview with a suicide bomber", *Huffington Post*, October 6, 2016, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/an-interview-with-a-suicide-bomber_b_10387052.

towards ideology of terrorists. TTP has incorporated the very principle in its visual contents. Recent incidents of online radicalization and the involvement of urban middle class in the incidents such as Safoora Goth and the lone wolf attacks in US indicates that the threat has evolved into a complex state and it will become ominous if not curtailed effectively.

Conclusion

Although TTP calls itself harbinger of Islam and proponent of unity of Muslims, the very notion appears blemished as its activities are marred by violence and barbaric acts which are against the teachings of Islam. The culture of tolerance and compassion appear to be reversed by *Takfeeri* interpretations under which minorities and adversaries are victimized and exterminated. Termed as *kafir* (infidel) and *murtad* (apostate), Muslims and Non-Muslims are equally persecuted, and all is justified through selected works from *Ahadith* and Quran.

The tempting ‘Mortality Salience’ appeal, incorporated in visuals by TTP, seems promising to prospective recruits as it tends to answer most of their queries. The narrative of ‘Avenging Evil to Establish Islam in Pakistan’ reinforces brutal activities by labelling the state of Pakistan and LEAs as working on behest of the west. This perception is appealing to people from Pashtun belt whose immediate relatives or distant family members have lost their lives due to US intervention in Afghanistan. The Islamist narrative of ‘Righteous Apostle of Allah’ indicates a familiar version to the viewers in Pakistan who see themselves as citizens of a country created in the name of Islam. The influence of TTP’s visual content depends upon religious exposure and personal affiliation with the organization. However,

a clear majority in Pakistan has overwhelmingly rejected the narratives of TTP due to extent of brutalities committed in the past years. Still, belief in mortality apotheosis, confusion of identity and the religious attachment is vital for Pakistani youth who are caught amid the identity crisis in present age.

The visual propaganda of Umar media can be highly beneficial for TTP as it can easily instigate feelings of discontent against the western intervention in the Islamic world including Pakistan. Moreover, it exploits anger and fear of ordinary Muslims as well as manipulation of identity and culture, presenting the violent and brutal narrative as a just and a most viable solution.

Today, the concerns of ethnic and religious communities need to be addressed on priority basis in the country. Also, the government should take effective steps to limit the reach of common citizens to extremist contents. Moreover, LEAs and intelligence agencies should work on countering the narratives and ideologies of the terrorist organizations rather than relying on hard core measures alone. If addressed rightly, counter narratives can curtail the developing menace of online extremism which will otherwise increase to ominous proportions.

Saif-ur-Rehman Tahir is a researcher with interest in social media and identity, anthropological domains of media and visual communication. He is former faculty member and trainer Bahria University and Pakistan Navy War College.

IS and AQ Inroads in Pakistan and Future Implications

Farhan Zahid

Introduction

Despite much havoc in Middle East during last five years, the South Asian theatre of Global War on Terror (GWOT) has remained at a crossroads. It is because of two essential reasons. Firstly, a plethora of Islamist terrorist groups still operating and perpetrating acts of terrorism and secondly coupled with it the country continues to be of pivotal importance for global, regional and local Islamist terrorist groups because of its rich *jihadi* landscape. Simply put the importance of Pakistan in terms of growth, presence, and existing strengths of jihadist cadres continue to persist.

According to official figures, currently a total of 71 terrorist organizations operate in the country (Proscribed organizations' list)¹ and most of these are Islamist terrorist groups of varied range from global, regional, sectarian, *jihadist*-Kashmiri, caliphlists, *jihadist*-Afghani, and anti-Iranian *jihadist* groups. Despite its global nature, Pakistan remains at the center stage of global *jihad* movement. Torch bearers of *jihadist* movement Al-Qaeda was born in Pakistan in 1989, whereas founders of Al-Qaeda-splinter, Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS), Abu Musab al-Zaraqawi and Abu Mohammad al-Maqdisi, had spent times in Pakistan-Afghanistan region during early 1990s. Hizb ut Tahrir (HT), another global Islamist group, has some presence in urban centers and academic institutions of Pakistan and HT time and again attempts to infiltrate Pakistani security institutions. Hence, the region remains fertile for recruitment and gaining influence for global Islamist terrorist groups. Pakistan's western neighbour

¹ NACTA. "List of Proscribed Terrorist Organizations in Pakistan", *National Counter Terrorism Authority*, <https://nacta.gov.pk/proscribed-organizations/>.

afghanistan is battling a wide array of Islamist terrorist groups, some having influence in Pakistan as well.

In view of the existing situation the article aims to analyze the current status of Al-Qaeda and ISIS branches and the inroads they intend to develop in the region and the conditions under which these groups might strengthen and continue to benefit from the rich *jihadi* landscape of Pakistan; and finally the article would draw attention towards implications amid the current situation.

Al-Qaeda and Islamic State making inroads in Pakistan

The rich *jihadi* landscape of Pakistan offers global as well as regional groups a lucrative prospect. Pakistan is of paramount importance for Al-Qaeda-Central (AQ-C) as it operates from Pakistan-Afghanistan region along with its various subsidiaries. Similarly IS-Central

(IS-C) is also keen to establish its base of operations, recruit and gain influence in Pakistan. Both ISIS and Al-Qaeda have been vying for stewardship of global *jihadism*, well inside Pakistan and attempting to make further inroads. Both global Islamist terrorist groups have been able to spread their tentacles and develop a network of franchises in Pakistan.

Al-Qaeda attempted to stay afloat in Pakistan after the rise of its splinter ISIS in June 2014 with the fall of Mosul city and the subsequent proclamation of Islamic Caliphate. With its long presence and influence among Pakistan Islamist terrorist groups the AQ-C appeared worried with the surfacing of IS-*Khorasan* and since then the AQ-C has been endeavouring to renew, strengthen and bolster its position in Pakistan. In order to do so, AQ-C launched its South Asia Chapter, the Al-Qaeda in the

Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) in September 2014. Apart from this initiative Al-Qaeda also recognized a local group Jamaat Ansar al-Sharia Pakistan (JASP) as its affiliates. The JASP remained involved in number of terrorist attacks in Karachi involved in killing of police officers and workers of overtly secular political parties like Muthada Qaumi Movement (MQM).

The AQIS was AQ-C's response to IS-C after it launched its local chapter IS-K in July 2014. The Al-Qaeda Emir, Ayman al-Zawahiri, himself appeared in a video introducing Asim Umar, a veteran *jihadi* of Indian origin. The two vowed to strike terror in South Asia.

The AQ-C's rationale was to reinvigorate itself and avoid giving space to IS-K to gain ground from the *jihadi* landscape of Pakistan. Simply put AQ-C sends a stay-away message to IS-C from its home turf displaying its resolve to stay put and sustain its oldest and strongest network.

The Fall of AQIS

Despite its serious efforts to sustain its network and to compete with IS-K the AQIS has hitherto not been able to function and get desired results for Al-Qaeda. Its endeavors to make further inroads in Pakistan have not been very successful. The AQIS start was ambitious with attempted hijacking of Pakistan Navy frigate PNS Zulfiqar in September 2014 but it could not further its ambitions and several of its networks have been busted by law enforcement and security forces operations in Karachi. It rather suffered some major losses.

The losses resulted from sustained counter terrorism actions of Karachi police's Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) in the city. Some of the most-wanted AQIS terrorists were arrested by CTD Karachi and the

organization could not manage to launch a series of further attacks, though sporadic terrorist attacks were reported. In November 2018 AQIS Emir of Sindh province Umar Jalal Chandio alia Kathio was arrested from Karachi's Gulshan-e-Iqbal locality. Chandio inspired the terrorists involved in Safoora Goth incident in 2015. Another of its senior member Tahir Minhas was defected to IS-K. Chandio was involved in masterminding the massacre of 47 members of Ismaili-Shia community near Safoora Goth in the suburbs of Karachi. Chandio's wife is also said to be an active member of AQIS¹. According to a senior police officer of Karachi police:

“Jalal was associated with Al Qaeda's Arab network while Haji Sahib (code name) was active in Karachi and the Wadh area of Balochistan where mainly Baloch youths were involved in kidnapping for ransom, terrorism and attacks on NATO forces' containers².”

Another major AQIS member Ahsan Mehsud alias Roshan was arrested from Karachi in March 2018. Mehsud was involved in planning to assassinate secular party Muttahada Qaumi Movement (MQM) leaders in order to create chaos in the city. He was also close to Safoora Goth incident mastermind in spite that it was an IS-K operation³. The AQIS operations in Afghanistan remain negligible but it continues to work under the umbrella of Afghan Taliban insurgents. The Emir of AQIS, Asim Umar, is also believed to be based in Afghanistan. In Afghanistan the US

¹ “AQIS ‘high profile’ militant held in Karachi”, *Dawn*, November 20, 2018, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1446665>.

² Ibid.

³ Imtiaz Ali, “‘Most wanted’ AQIS militant said to be close aide of Safoora carnage convicts arrested”, *Dawn*, March 2, 2018, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1392746>.

forces discovered and raided one of the biggest terrorist training camps of AQIS in Kandahar province in 2017.

In Afghanistan, AQIS remained active alongside Afghan Taliban but its performance level was abysmal. In one operation in Nimroz province the AQIS and Afghan Taliban militants killed a US serviceman Sgt. Leandro Jasso in November 2018, during a gun battle. The clash showcased AQIS presence in Afghanistan and it has become evident Al-Qaeda militants are embedded with Afghan Taliban-led insurgency. Despite its presence in Afghanistan and pledge of loyalty to Afghan Taliban, Al-Qaeda appears not to publicly advertise its presence in Afghanistan perhaps because of Afghan Taliban pressure as the Taliban delegations routinely hold peace talks with US government⁴.

Albeit all these losses, the Al-Qaeda's alliance with Afghan Taliban remains intact⁵. This is in fact a non-starter for any positive dialogue leading to conclusion. One gun battle with Afghan security forces in Ghazni, in March 2019, 31 AQIS fighters died fighting alongside Afghan Taliban forces⁶. This phenomenon and other collusions clearly indicate a high end cooperation between Al-Qaeda and Afghan Taliban.

⁴ Thomas Joscelyn, "US serviceman killed during battle with Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan", *Long War Journal*, Nov 27, 2018, <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2018/11/us-service-member-killed-during-battle-with-al-qaeda-in-afghanistan.php>.

⁵ "Twenty-second report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2368 (2017) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities", UN report submitted to UN Security Council, *United Nations*, <https://undocs.org/S/2018/705>

⁶ Bill Roggio, "Afghan military kills 31 AQIS fighters in Ghazni", *Long War Journal*, March 31, 2019, <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2019/03/afghan-military-kills-31-aqis-fighters-in-ghazni.php>.

IS-K's consistent attempts

On the other hand the IS-K, the local branch and so called Walayat-e-Khorasan of IS-C has been attempting to gain grounds in order to make inroads in Pakistan and Afghanistan during last five years. Initially the IS-K fared better and appeared to make inroads in the region. The IS-K was able to lure in support of local Pakistan Islamist terrorist groups and three Pakistani organizations, previously aligned with Al-Qaeda, namely Tehreek-e-Khilafat Pakistan, Jundullah and TTP (Shahidullah Faction) joined hands with IS-K and pledged allegiance to IS Caliph Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi⁷. Apart from these local groups the Afghanistan based Islamic Movement of Afghanistan (IMU) previously allied with AQ-C along with Uighur and Chechen jihadists in Afghanistan pledged allegiance to IS-K⁸. Since its surfacing in Pakistan the IS-K has claimed responsibility of 11 terrorist attacks with some terrorist attacks having fatalities rate as high as 149 fatalities.

With this start the IS-K was all set to gain from *jihadi* landscape of Pakistan. This came to a halt when four of its first Emirs were killed in US drone strike over a period of three years. Hafiz Saeed Khan Orakzai in July 2016, Abdul Haseeb Logari in April 2017, Abdul Sayed Bajuari in July 2017 and Abu Saad Erhabi (deputy Emir) in Aug 2018 were killed in consecutive counter terrorism campaigns of US and Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) in eastern provinces of Afghanistan.

⁷ Farhan Zahid, "Al-Qaeda's Future in Pakistan amid the rise of Islamic State", *Terrorism Monitor* 12, No. 20 (Oct 2014), <https://jamestown.org/program/al-qaedas-future-in-pakistan-amid-the-rise-of-islamic-state/>.

⁸ Merhat Sharipzhan, "IMU declares it is now part of the Islamic State", *Radio Free Europe*, Aug 6, 2015, <https://www.rferl.org/a/imu-islamic-state/27174567.html>.

The IS-K stabilized itself after Aslam Farooqi, a former militant of Pakistani Islamist terrorist group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) was appointed Emir of *Khorasan* province in 2017. This development did not last long for IS-K as the Walayat got divided because of the increasing internal rifts between Pakistan-origin fighters and local Afghans and Central Asian *jihadis* part of IS-K. The latter did not trust Farooqi because of his past credential of LeT and formed their own faction under the leadership of Maovia Uzbeki while settling in northern provinces of Afghanistan. Amid this situation the IS-K has two active factions one based in eastern provinces (Nangarhar, Paktia, Paktika and Kunar) and the other one under Uzbeki is based in Balkh and Badakhshan provinces.

Despite these rifts and internal tensions the IS-K in Pakistan has hitherto remained upfront in perpetrating acts of terrorism in southern Sindh and Baluchistan provinces. Especially in impoverished and Afghanistan-neighbouring Baluchistan province the IS-K has been able to create havoc during last five years. In one recent suicide attack in Mastung district of Baluchistan, the IS-K killed 150 people during an election rally in July 2018. The election candidate Mir Siraj Raisani was also killed in the terrorist attack.⁹

Amid this situation, the Baluchistan police made a major breakthrough by killing Mufti Hidayatullah, the emir of IS-K in Balochistan in an encounter in Kalat district of Balochistan province on July 20, 2018. Two other IS-K

⁹ Syed Ali Shah, "Suicide bomber responsible for Mastung attack identified: CTD", *Dawn*, July 19, 2018, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1421124>.

militants were also killed¹⁰.

The IS-K presence in Sindh province was further thwarted by the arrest of three IS-K militants from Karachi in September 2018. According to the CTD Karachi official statement, the three Islamist terrorists were linked to broader IS-K's broader network in Pakistan and the suspects in custody were involved in generating funds by involving in target killings and kidnappings for ransom in Karachi. The CTD official further stated that four more suspects belonging to the same IS-K Karachi cell are still at large and claimed to have killed two IS-K commanders. The police also recovered Rs 10 million ransom money from their possession. According to police the IS-K cell members used to kidnap people from Karachi and had connections in Afghanistan as most of their victim's relatives received calls for ransom from Afghanistan¹¹.

Despite these setbacks, the IS-K is still attempting to capitalize the rich *jihadi* landscape of Pakistan. According to a senior counter terrorism department official of Sindh police, the IS-K is pursuing its recruitment drive in Sindh province especially in universities colleges of Karachi. He further said that the IS-K is involved in spreading its ideology through social media and through a network of Islamist individuals working in cells to introduce IS-K's message to local youth both men and women. The IS-K network in Karachi has been able to lure in a number of recruits and some of them even made their way to join IS-C ranks in Syria and Iraq whereas a number of them have travelled to IS-K strongholds in

¹⁰ Mohammad Zafar, "Security forces kill Islamic State Baluchistan chief in Kalat", *Express Tribune*, July 20, 2018, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1762901/1-security-forces-kill-islamic-state-balochistan-chief-kalat/>.

¹¹ "Three 'IS militants' arrested in Karachi", *Dawn*, September 13, 2018, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1432557>.

Afghanistan's eastern provinces and in Pakistan's Balochistan province where some districts such as Mastung experiencing IS-K's influx¹².

In last few years a number of cases have indicated that the IS-K has successfully recruited from radicalized young, urban, middleclass and educated youth in Karachi and other urban centers of Pakistan. Recent cases of business graduate Saad Aziz and his cell mates (involved in massacres of Ismaili-Shia community members), medical student Noreen Leghari who attempted to join IS-K as suicide bomber, and Bushra Cheema a radicalized Islamist woman who attempted to flee to Syria along with her family are indicative of growing IS-K network and showcased its persistent efforts to establish a base in Pakistan.

Future implications

Having suffered serious setbacks and losses both IS and Al-Qaeda could still cause serious implications in near future. Both are global terror entities with resources and broad agendas. With no counter violent extremist strategy in place to execute, Pakistan could face a resurgence of Islamist terrorism in upcoming years keeping in view of the withdrawal of US forces, collapse of order and tranquillity in Afghanistan, and regrouping of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) currently based in Pakistan-Afghanistan bordering regions. In case of a civil war in Afghanistan after the withdrawal of US forces, the Islamist terrorist groups could regroup.

The recent announcement of establishing of Walayat-e-Pakistan by IS's official Amaq Media on May 15 has indeed showcased IS's resolve to gain some ground in Pakistan amid all difficulties in developing a strong

¹² Sindh Police CTD official, interviewed by author.

network. It indicates that IS-K is hell-bent on making Pakistan one of its key post-Caliphate areas and part of strategic plan for relocation or developing strong network. The severe economic disparities and high level of unemployment in Pakistan needs no elaboration and coupled with a radicalized environment with a wide range of Islamist terrorist groups already functioning in almost every corner of the country in fact provides impetus to both Al-Qaeda and IS to broaden their network of affiliates and strengthen their core. The establishment of a separate Walayat is also alarming because IS-C appears to reinvigorate itself and for that it has chosen Pakistan as a strategic choice.

AQIS amid its several losses and not much substantial progress in terms of terrorism has hopes in shape of Afghan Taliban. On the eve Eid ul Fatar after the end of Ramzan the AQIS Emir Asim Umar issued a statement congratulating Afghan Taliban over the successes in defeating the ‘Americans’ despite their superior technological might. In the same statement Umar criticized IS and expressed full confidence in Afghan Taliban leadership¹³. This statement and Taliban reluctance of condemning Al-Qaeda regardless of talks with the US government negotiations team indicate that Afghan Taliban cannot be trusted and violence in the region is there to stay in Afghanistan. For Afghan Taliban abandoning Al-Qaeda may be a matter of ideological concerns but for Al-Qaeda tagging along Afghan Taliban is a matter of survival.

¹³ Thomas Joscelyn, “Senior Al-Qaeda official praises Taliban’s ‘victory’ in Afghanistan”, *Long War Journal*, June 13, 2019, <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2019/06/senior-al-qaeda-official-praises-talibans-victory-in-afghanistan.php>.

Conclusion

Both Al-Qaeda and Islamic State have profound interests in South Asia in general and Pakistan in particular. Both have been trying hard to make further inroads notwithstanding difficulties. In recent times the security situation in Pakistan has slightly improved and Al-Qaeda and its regional allies are on the retreat whereas IS-K has achieved some successes in perpetrating mass casualty terrorist attacks in Pakistan. Much is still to be done as situation appears to be changing in neighboring Afghanistan. The growth of IS-K and AQIS are matters of concern and both organizations are linked with global terrorist groups. The withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan would be a crucial moment as that would be the time that these organizations would not be left with much further hindrance to grow. Both Pakistani and Afghan security successes are linked to US drone strikes and other counter terrorism measures. The case of IS-K is self-explanatory as it has not been able to stand on its feet comfortably because of continuous decapitation tactics used by the US security strategists. AQIS has also been facing similar issues. Hence, much is dependent on US policy decisions for the region in near future.

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