Pakistan
Politics, Religion & Extremism

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CONTENTS

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I. Politics, Religion and Extremism

In the last thirty years, scholars of neo-Marxist, feminist and social historians have challenged the older Marxist and functionalist views of religion as a "false consciousness" repressing class struggle or a force for social stability. These new sociologists of religion have portrayed religious institutions and theological worldviews as expressive of class and power struggles, rather than of monolithic ideological hegemony; the interests of the less powerful have been found to be expressed through and in religion.

For many, religion, spirituality and belief contribute to enhancing the inherent dignity and worth of every human being. Religion, however, is sometimes used and abused to fuel hatred, superiority and dominance. The politicization of culture and religion creates an intolerable environment and the rise of religious intolerance is a cause for serious concern.

Much of the literature on the role of religion in politics and religious extremism falls into three major groups. One school of thought believes that religion is always violent, such as Hent de Vries (2002) and Mark Juergenmeyers (2001). De Vries argues that there is no religion without violence of some sort, and no violence without religion of some sort. But De Vries' theory cannot explain why religious conflict is sometimes violent and sometimes does not lead to violence. "Does violence inevitably shadow our ethical-political engagements and decisions, including our understandings of identity, whether collective or individual?" he asks.[1] Juergenmeyer argues that religious violence is a result of people's tendency to see their lives as a struggle between good and evil. He asks: 'why do religious people commit violent acts in the name of their god, taking the lives of innocent victims and terrorizing entire populations?' He argues that this is because people believe they are part of a cosmic struggle between the powers of good and evil - a battle to bring order and peace out of chaos and darkness. The clash between the forces of darkness and light can be understood not as a sacred struggle, but as a real fight which often involves political manoeuvring. He claims that when there is an identity crisis, or problem of legitimacy, threat of defeat; a real world struggle can be conceived as a sacred war where enemies are demonized.[2]

Another school of thought, that includes Daniel Pipes, Samuel Huntington, Bernard Lewis and Jessica Stern, view only Islam and not other religions as inevitably violent. Daniel Pipes, for instance, claims that radical Islam is an ideology incompatible with secular society. Muslims want to force the secular world to submit to their principles. They are thus, "a radical network of terrorists," "terrorists in this world who can't stand the thought of peace," "terrorism with a global reach," "evildoers," "a dangerous group of people," "a bunch of cold-blooded killers," and even "people without a country." [3] However, there surely are better explanations of why religion has become an essential "tool" in politics and its extremist manifestation. For instance, Ted Gurr's model of relative deprivation, mobilization and grievances is extremely relevant to understand the intrusion of religion in politics and the phenomenon of extremism.

It is often said that religious extremists are not the poorest of the poor. However, those

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[1] Vries, Hent De. 2002. *Religion and Violence*. Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press.

[2] Juergensmeyer, Mark. 2001. *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*. Berkeley (California): University of California Press.

[3] Daniel Pipes. 7 October 2002. " The war against Islamic militants", *Human Events,* Vol.58(37): 10

who are most deprived, oppressed, most in need, are not those who usually violently rebel. In fact, all the big names in the list of the culprits in recent history have turned out to be those who were educated and relatively well off. While there have been food riots and peasant uprisings, most often, revolutions and violence have occurred when conditions are better or have been improving, and by those who are not the most deprived. Explanations vary, but generally focus on two propositions. First, deprivation is subjective and a function of a person's perception, needs, and knowledge. To nail deprivation to an objective or absolute lack of something such as freedom, equality, or sustenance, is to ignore the fact that the definition of these shifts according to historical periods, culture, society, position, and person.

The second proposition, deals with these norms. It asserts that we take our presently perceived or expected position, achievements, gratifications, or capabilities as a base of comparison against our wants or needs, or what we feel we ought to have. The gap between wants or ought and gratifications or capabilities is then our deprivation, or *relative* deprivation, in the sense that it depends on our basis of comparison.

The literature on these two principles and on relative deprivation is well organized in Ted Gurr's *Why Men Rebel*[4], which merits discussion. The idea of relative deprivation has been used either to measure fairness, inequality, and social justice, or to explain grievance, social hostility, or aggression. Gurr's concern is relative deprivation as a cause for aggression. Ted Gurr articulated models, suggesting that the gap between expectations and achievement would contribute to the willingness of the people to rebel. In particular, he observed, rebellion was most likely to be fueled by movements on the basis of perceived deprivation. In our

discussion here on religious extremism, the aggressive, violent phenomenon of extremism attests to Ted Gurr's theory that it is actually the gap between the expectations of a regime based on " true" faith and the reality of an "adulterated" regime that lead these self-proclaimed custodians to use violence in the name of religion.[5]

The basic thesis of this paper is based on two theories; one that grievance born of deprivation (either economic or political) is an individual concern that manifests itself collectively. Quite often material and political deprivation is aggregated within specific groups with a homogenous cultural identity. For example, a religious or linguistic minority might suffer disproportionately in a given society, and this form of grievance can lead to unrest across the social lines that distinguish the minority group.[6] In most regions of the world with ethnic and religious movements, which sometimes are of a violent nature, are minorities rebelling against the system. South Asia, however, is unique in the sense that the religious revivalism in extreme

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[4] Gurr, Ted. 1970. *Why Men Rebel*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

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[5] Gurr, for example, explains: "In summary, the primary source of the human capacity for violence appears to be the frustration-aggression mechanism. Frustration does not necessarily lead to violence, and violence for some men is motivated by expectations of gain. The anger induced by frustration, however, is a motivating force that disposes men to aggression, irrespective of its instrumentalities. If frustrations are sufficiently prolonged or sharply felt, aggression is quite likely, if not certain, to occur. To conclude that the relationship is not relevant to individual or collective violence is akin to the assertion that the law of gravitation is irrelevant to the theory of flight because not everything that goes up falls back to earth in accord with the basic gravitational principle. The frustration-aggression mechanism is in this sense analogous to the law of gravity: men who are frustrated have an innate disposition to do violence to its source in proportion to the intensity of their frustrations...."
Ibid. Pp.36-37
[6] Gurr.Ted. 2000. *People versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century*. Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.

forms in all of its troubled areas was initiated by religious majorities.

This brings to the second part of the thesis, which argues that to understand the intrusion of religion in politics and the phenomenon of religious extremism in Pakistan, one needs to understand the element of 'Fear'. One wonders if Winston Churchill realized the sweeping political accuracy of his assertion that "we have nothing to fear, but fear itself."
The common thread that weaves violent political movements together is fear. This is true in the case of violent religious movements. The fear of being deprived of something drives one to act aggressively, while the fear of being left out drive movements against prevalent forces. Although it is neither the only motivating factor for the political manifestation of religious violence, nor necessarily the most obvious, it is conspicuously present at all times. Whenever we ask why people harbour hatred, or why they are willing to kill or die for a cause, the answer invariably is 'Fear'.

Religious radicals are united by fear. Whether they are Christian, Muslim, Jew, Hindu or Buddhist, the fear of being deprived the role and status that they expect and desire to achieve, is the common denominator. Some groups fear change, modernization and loss of influence, others fear that the young will abandon the churches, temples, mosques and synagogues for physical and material gratification. They are especially fearful of education, especially if it undermines the teachings of their religion. They fear a future they will have little control over and one they cannot even comprehend.

Therefore, if relative deprivation can explain the phenomenon of religious extremism among religious minorities, the fear of being deprived the expected status and the inability to achieve a 'desirable' society can explain the rising religious extremism and militancy among the religious majority. South Asian religious majorities suffer from such fear that have often led to extreme and unfortunate occurrences like the pogrom in Gujarat unleashed by the Hindu majority, *jihad* waged by Islamic militants against the "infidels" in Pakistan, or the Sinhalese Buddhist engaging in violence against Tamil Hindus and Christians in Sri Lanka.

The study attempts to investigate whether it is relative deprivation as Ted Gurr suggests or the element of fear that pushed the Muslim majority Pakistan into a cycle of religious violence due to the intrusion of religion in politics. The political, military and religious forces "feared" losing the identity on the basis of which the state was carved out, in addition to the vast majority of people who live on the margins of society and feel deprived of political and economic power, leading to the politicization of religion and its extreme manifestation in the form of violence.

II. Extremism in Pakistan: A Brief History

Part IX, Article 227 of the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan provides that all existing laws shall be brought in conformity with the injunctions of Islam as laid down in the Holy Quran and Sunnah. Further, Article 242 provides that in the application of this clause to the personal law of any Muslim sect, the expression "Quran and Sunnah" shall mean the Quran and Sunnah as interpreted by that sect.[7] The constitution also provides that nothing in the Part outlined above, shall affect the personal laws of non-Muslim citizens or their status as citizens.

The institutional provisions vis-à-vis religion in the Constitution of Pakistan has made religion a politically potent force. Political leaders and military rulers in Pakistan have used religion for political legitimacy and national integration. Besides, religious identities, slogans and symbols have often been used by political parties for political mobilization. The political use of religion has heightened religious antagonism and acrimony, besides creating space for religious militancy and extremism. More importantly, recent years have witnessed a resurgence of religious militancy in Pakistan, with militant fundamentalism emerging under religious extremism.

As in the past, in Pakistan, change and continuity still characterize the development of religious traditions. Pakistan has experimented (to different degrees) with the integration of Islamic legal structures into the running of the nation-state, but in neither, nation has conservative Islam exerted a definitive influence on governance. In today's increasingly shrinking world, religious traditions are transformed and influenced by economic and political change, new media, and altering social expectations. Core religious beliefs and practices will continue to change even in the future, as all living cultures do.

Despite being an Islamic Republic constitutionally, there was a clear division between politics and religion, as well as a distinction between private and public Islam, at least in the formidable years after the creation of Pakistan. Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, in his inaugural address to the Pakistan Constituent Assembly on 11 August 1947, clearly stated that religion was a private affair of the individual and highlighted the equality of religions.

However, the strength of religious groups, who put all their efforts into declaring Pakistan an Islamic state, had been underestimated or perhaps the intentions of the leaders who would take on the reins of Pakistan, were not that obvious because in less than two years after the speech, the Constituent Assembly moved the Objective Resolution[8] on 7 March 1949, pledging to draft an Islamic Constitution. With the secession of East Pakistan, the religio-political parties sought to strengthen the ideological basis for Pakistan and incorporated Islamic injunctions into the 1973 Constitution.

The roots of this crisis of Muslim identity go back to the pre-partition era. The issue of social purity emerged after the decline of Muslim power, when Shah Waliullah and other Muslim revivalists in the sub-continent attempted to preserve the distinct identity of the Muslim community through strict adherence to pure Islam. These

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[7] Interpreting the holy Quran according to their individual sects has created several problems for people belonging to minority sects.

[8] The Objective Resolution stated: "The Muslims shall be enabled to order their lives in accordance with the teachings and requirements of Islam as set out in the Holy Quran and Sunnah"

individuals felt that the Indian Muslims had become socially and culturally "polluted" owing to their close association with Hindus. This thinking translated into the need for distancing themselves from the Hindus through the creation of a separate homeland and pursuing their religion without any extraneous influences.[9] The potentiality of an alliance between 'ulama' and fundamentalist leaders was demonstrated in 1953 when serious rioting broke out in Lahore over the question of whether the members of the Ahmadi sect should officially be regarded as a non-Islamic minority. The issue was of particular importance because of the presence of Ahmadis in senior government positions.[10]

Later, in the 1950s, the leadership of Pakistan's most organized, urban religious group, the Jamaat-e-Islami, and other like-minded parties began to use Islam to foster exclusionary politics and instigate public riots by politicizing the identity question, that is, "Who is a Muslim?"

The Jamaat led a successful movement to have the small Ahmediyya sect (which is doctrinally anathematic to the Jamaat) declared non-Muslim by the state. With the ouster of the Ahmedis from the fold, the tone was set for progressively more intolerant politics. Hasan Abbas defines the Islamization process in the late 70s and 80s under Zia, as the hijacking of the Islamic slogan of the anti-Bhutto agitation and making it his own. He seemed totally committed to the formal and visual performance of all religious rites, while simultaneously being quite flexible on the deeper issue of morality.[11] The religious

parties wholeheartedly supported Zia in this project of "moral purification" of the society, which would, in their opinion, lead to a political society based on Islamic principles. The Jamat-e-Islami was of critical importance to Zia. It was the only party with a committed cadre of loyalists that stood in readiness to counter and blunt any anti-Zia agitation launched by any political force.

Interestingly, the army's redefined role was also an important factor in the Islamization process. They were no longer merely the defenders of the borders, but also defenders of Pakistan's "ideological frontiers". Religious knowledge and commitment became the determinants for the selection process of officers.[12]

With the "Islamization" of the military, Pakistan increasingly became an ideological state. However, there was no single definition available to explain what Islamization was. With a number of sects and varied types of "Islam", the Deobandi school of thought became the official school to look up to for theoretical explanations. With its close resemblance to Saudi Wahabism, Saudi Arabia became the patronizing factor, even though a majority of Pakistanis was and still adhere to the Brelvi/Sufi tradition of Islam.
The educational system was the first casualty under the Islamization process, when on the pretext of providing free education to the poor, madrassas were established all over the country. The degrees that these institutions awarded, qualified young men to preside over Qazi courts or work as Ulema in various departments of the government.

The recognition of the madrassas by the government, led to the emergence of Islamic constituencies, always ready to vote for Islam, as they did when a referendum was held for Zia, where the choice was largely construed as one where the people could either vote for the Quran or not.

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[9] Chengappa, B.M. "Pakistan: The Role of Religion in Political Evolution". *Strategic Analysis* Vol.XXIV(12), IDSA, March 2001. Available at http://www.ciaonet.org/olj/sa/sa_mar01chbO1.html
[10] Taylor, David. 1983. "The Politics of Islam and Islamization in Pakistan" in James P. Piscatori (ed.) *Islam in the Political Process*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. P.191
[11] Abbas, Hassan. 2005. *Pakistan's Drift into Extremism: Allah, the Army and American's War on Terror*. New York: East Gate. P.97

[12] Ibid.P.101

Interestingly, despite the United States' contribution to help Pakistan establish its religious credentials during the Cold War, the US, in the initial years of its engagement with Pakistan, had already recognized the troubling potential of Islamist politics.

Hussain Haqqani, Pakistan's Ambassador to the US wrote in the *Washington Quarterly,* "In a policy statement issued on July 1, 1951, the U.S. Department of State declared that, "[a]part from Communism, the other main threat to American interests in Pakistan was from 'reactionary groups of landholders and uneducated religious leaders' who were opposed to the 'present Western-minded government' and 'favor a return to primitive Islamic principles."[13] However, the US did little to prevent Pakistan from using Islam as state ideology, encouraging religious leaders and "tying the Islamists to Pakistan's military-civil bureaucracy and intelligence apparatus."[14] Thanks to state patronage, religious parties from being mere pressure groups, evolved into well-armed and well-financed forces. They operate outside the framework of the rule of law; and the Islamists have contributed to the disruption of the conduct of foreign policy, especially in India and Afghanistan.

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[13] Haqqani, Hussain. "The Role of Islam in Pakistan's Future". *The Washington Quarterly*, Winter 2004-05, Vol.28(1): 93
[14] Ibid.

III. Extremism in Pakistan: Exploring the Causes

Though the recognition of faith of a particular community as a country's official religion is permitted under international standards for freedom of religion or belief, and thus, is not, in and of itself, problematic. It is the implementation of this right that unfortunately provides one community an edge over the others and hence leads to exploitation and even violence in the name of religion. Such recognition, conferred upon a particular religion establishes an inevitable formal inequality with its concomitant risk of discrimination, irrespective of its degree or severity; and in turn, undercuts national unity, which is necessarily based on perceptions of common heritage and aspirations, to the extent that those outside the religion feel themselves excluded from or at the periphery of the defining characteristic of national identity.

FEAR OF LOSING STATUS ACQUIRED OVER THE YEARS

The birth of radical Islamic groups was a result of the patronage provided by religious political parties, pampered by the state for both domestic and external reasons. These extremists groups enjoyed a special status due to two important factors. First, the Islamists claim that they are the protectors of Pakistan's nuclear deterrent capability (which has also provided the Americans the justification to press Pakistan periodically about its nuclear command and control mechanism) and second, they claim to be the champions of the national cause of securing Kashmir for Pakistan.

These monstrous claims by the Islamists are based on the fact that particularly in the last two decades, they were given the importance that they were not really ready to digest. The secular ruling elite, political parties and bureaucracy assumed that these groups were "too weak and too dependent on the state to confront the power structure".[15] The civil-military oligarchy continued to assume self righteousness in projecting itself as the defender of the state's identity through religious and militaristic nationalism. In the process, the alliance between the mosque and the military, as Haqqani puts it, became powerful, discarding the notion that these groups would only serve the state's nation-building function without destabilizing Pakistan or western countries.

In the post-9/11 scenario, both domestic and external dynamics of the state changed due to change in policy at the highest level. The crackdown on religious groups, and withdrawal of state patronage to religious leaders, their parties, and madrassas, led to frustration and anger within the Islamist groups, which has since placed the very existence of the state in doubt. Neither the religious parties, nor their radical offshoots are ready to give up the command and control they have enjoyed for two decades.

Years of religious rhetoric have influenced the young within the military, bureaucracy, intelligentsia and the society in general, which is their hard earned asset. The fear of losing that status is primary, when related to any other concern or "goal" that these groups might have had in the past. The prevailing situation poses a dilemma for them since they feel that their existence is at stake and in order to ensure their survival, they are willing to go to any length, even if it means drifting away from the ideological boundaries of Pakistan because for them, Pakistan matters only till its establishment supports the idea of an Islamic state. Pakistan without an Islamic ideology, to them, is as evil as any other *un-Islamic* country.

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[15] Ibid. P.89

The Pakistani state which has become an important ideological centre of the global Islamist movement, thanks to the al-Qaeda and Tehrik Taliban Pakistan, who have attained their current status, believing in the success of Jihad against the Soviets. The military-religious alliance believed in the emergence of such a centre. To their surprise, as Haqqani points out, the political leadership in Pakistan always looked at Pakistan's interests in the Islamists as a "politico-military strategic doctrine". This led to the tussle between the military/Islamists and political parties. The confrontation of ideas contributed significantly to preventing Pakistan from evolving as a modern and moderate Muslim state as envisaged by the Quaid, Mr. Jinnah.

The rising extremism, contrary to popular belief, is not a part of state policy, but more of a reactionary strategy on the part of the all-powerful Islamic groups who are not ready to give up the privileged status they once enjoyed and who, by engaging in extremist, militant activities, wishes to display the scope of their power and influence. As long as the confrontation between the state and these groups continues, Pakistan will continue to witness acts of extremism against its own people.

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEPRIVATION

The deteriorating economic conditions, unemployment and lack of freedom of expression within society are all pertinent factors responsible for the growing number of radicals despite the withdrawal of state patronage. Additionally, these religious groups have become independent and financially powerful, especially since they are no longer dependent on the state for providing them financial assistance as it did previously. Therefore, unless the state comes up with some financial incentives for the youth who are frustrated with the present state of things, they will continue to fill up the ranks of the jihadi organizations.

Political deprivation is yet another factor responsible for causing severe unrest within the country. Of the four provinces, Baluchistan has been struggling for political rights and against economic discontentment. Similarly, a lack of political infrastructure in Tribal areas has paved the way for different religious groups to establish their "*Emirates*". These Emirates are well-resourced and equipped with modern weapons. Hence, there is no dearth of people joining them to challenge the state.

LONG PERIOD OF UNDEMOCRATIC AND UNACCOUNTABLE GOVERNMENTS

In order to understand the very complicated issue of religious violence and its political manifestation, one needs to analyze the relationship between the type of regime and religious violence, in the light of historical evidence and events that have taken place over the years. Also, it is important to examine whether in the absence of a democratic form of government, authoritative regimes tend to use religion for political purposes?

In Pakistan, there has always been collaboration between the military dictatorship and religious parties with the exception of Gen. Ayub Khan. Jamat-e-Islami forged an alliance with Zia and the MMA with Musharraf in the initial phase of his regime. In Pakistan's brief democratic history, democratic political parties and religious political parties have always been antagonistic to each other. Whether it is religious politics that prevents them from supporting democratic forces or that religion itself needs an authoritative regime for its complete implementation, both socially and politically, forms the core of the argument on Islam and politics. Pakistani society has undergone a similar process. For long it was under military dictatorship, which tried to suppress all other identities, except either the overarching Pakistani identity or Islamic identity. However, a plethora of ethnic identities exploded in the public arena,

especially with the first general elections, held in 1969. The Bengali identity which had felt suffocated, found an opportunity to break away from the overarching Pakistani identity in the first election itself. Pakistan went through a period of great crisis during the seventies when proto democratic structures began surfacing in the country. It was a period of semi-democratic rule in Pakistan.

General Zia-ul-Haq benefited greatly due to the very obvious opposition of Islamic parties to Bhutto. Interestingly, it was not merely an "Islamic" government that the religious parties were after. From the very beginning of the Bhutto era in 1971, the landlords, military bureaucracy, as well as religious parties realized that they would not "benefit" under the Bhutto regime. It was the rhetoric of the Bhutto government which emphasized economic issues, (even though these remained unfulfilled) that acted as a catalyst of change in Pakistan's political culture by pushing obscurantist religious issues to the background and by highlighting problems of economic redistribution and social justice. Not only did this alarm the capitalists, but also hurt the interests of strong sections of Pakistani political leadership ranging from the Muslim League to the Jamat-i-Islami that had thrived upon obscurantist Islamic slogans which had been used largely to obscure the real social and economic problems.

It has been a fact throughout the checkered history of Pakistani politics, that Islamic parties have never received enough votes to claim a majority in the parliament, not even enough to form a government by alliances. The success of the MMA in Sindh and Baluchistan in 2002 elections was mainly a reaction against the US attack on Afghanistan and its preparation for war with Iraq. The religious parties were well aware of their weakness and saw in the military the only opportunity to achieve their goal. These parties, particularly the Jamat-i-Islami welcomed the military takeover wholeheartedly and it was this mobilization by the Jamat-i-Islami that created the

momentum in General Zia's Islamization process. None of the two sides had a purely religious goal - it was more a matter of gaining legitimacy among the public than anything else. The escalation of the Sunni-Shiite conflict helped General Zia keep the population busy in the debate on the "right" and "wrong" interpretation of Islam. It resulted in the absence of any organized mobilization of the people against the military regime, except a few protests by the political parties soon after the military coup of 1977. Religion came out of people's homes onto the streets and became the source of much violent conflict. It helped Zia, but created a permanent dent in the inner fabric of the society. Pakistan under Zia is a perfect example of the politicization of religion and its violent expression.

It is interesting to note that the use of Islam not only suited the military, but also the secular landlords and capitalists because such deliberations transformed the political debate in Pakistan. The issue of land reforms remained incomplete and the feudal aristocracy secured its future within the military regime. One can say that it was double jeopardy, because it was not only the military dictatorship under Zia, but also the authoritative rule of landed aristocracy in small villages and towns that created a land with very little outlet to the free world.

JIHAD AS A STATE POLICY IN PAKISTAN

Jihad as a state policy in Pakistan gained legitimacy when religious parties were co-opted into the jihadi arm of Pakistan's Army in Afghanistan. It sent out a clear signal that waging jihad was a legitimate political activity. Flushed with Arab oil money, public *zakat* (charity) collections diverted to them and private donations, the "New-Islamists" consolidated their power by glorifying jihad from public platforms, running an extensive network of madrasas and military training centers to raise cadres comprised of youth, and mounting threats to Pakistan's ruling establishment to surrender to their Islamic dictates. The arena

of Jihad thus, expanded to the twin goals of freeing Kashmir from Indian control, and Pakistan from the rule of secular politicians.

CHALLENGES OF "OLD AND NEW ISLAMISTS" IN PAKISTAN

The inherent danger posed by the Islamic groups is that there has been a fundamental shift in their agenda. Simply, there is now a distinction between what can be termed "old" and "new" Islamists in Pakistan. New Islamists (Pakistani Taliban, Jihadi organizations, Islamists), who were initially inspired by Maududi's Islamic liberation theology and later developed their own interpretations, are generally protagonists of political Islam, that is, they seek to transform politics through religion and religion through politics. They are unlike the old Islamists (traditional Islamic madaris/ulemas/Pirs/Sufis and mainly Bralevi religous parties) who were accommodated by the secular elites, and thus, avoided political confrontation. Islamist organizations are based mainly in the economically marginalized and socially traditional regions of Pakistan. The new Islamists were not willing to exercise such an option. The political strategy pursued by the new Islamists in Pakistan was to attempt to capture civil society institutions with a view to eventually capture the state.

The politics of Islam underwent a major change as a result of Zia's decision in 1980 to involve Pakistan actively in Afghanistan's anti-Soviet jihad. As this involvement became deeper, the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate took over full control of implementing state policy on this front. Initially, the ISI acquired the services of Jamat-e-Islami to funnel CIA-procured arms and money to Afghan warlords or as they were popularly called – the Mujahideen (holy warriors). This explains the political power and the creation and involvement of the "New Islamists" in Pakistani politics.

THE ISLAMIST "CAPTURE" OF CIVIL SOCIETY INSTITUTIONS

It is, to say the least, not in the interest of Pakistani civil society to have the Islamists dominate every aspect of the life of the society. It amounts to spreading a cult of violence in Pakistan. The ruling classes, both, military and political, have used these 'mujahideen' to suppress ethnic unrest and to maintain their political hegemony. In Baluchistan, state oppression with or without the support of the feudalists in the province, depending on the nature of the alliance the Centre had with them, made sure that no genuine, nationalist, grassroots political movement could emerge. The political vacuum paved the way for the emergence of religious fanatics who in the name of religion convinced the Centre and feudalists in the area that "religion" alone could counter the ethno-nationalist tendencies in the area.

Whether Bhutto, Gen. Zia or Gen. Musharraf; religious "thugs" were always available to counter the any ethnic movement in Baluchistan. In addition, South Punjab (faced with the Seraiki ethnic problem), the Hazara Shiite minority in NWFP and northern areas were suppressed by these so-called new Islamists under the protection of the center. The cult of violence is spreading fast within Pakistan's civil society without any sign of an abatement of ethnic unrest. Ethnic groups have their own legitimate aspirations which no amount of jihadist mindset (being promoted by powerful vested interests) can suppress.

Ethnic groups, particularly the Sindhis, Baluchis and Muhajirs, have a heightened political consciousness and will not barter away their legitimate aspirations for an illusionary Islamic identity. However, this does not mean that they are not good Muslims. In fact, they are much better Muslims that those selling the 'Islamic' identity to them. Women's rights movements against the *Hudood* Ordinance in

the dark days of Zia's martial law and the lawyers' movement for the restoration of the Judiciary depict yet another facet of Pakistani society which has unfortunately been hijacked by a few obscurantists.

LACK OF A UNIFIED APPROACH TOWARDS *IJTEHAD* WITHIN THE CLERGY

Intrusion of religion in politics is also due to a lack of the Islamic tradition of "Ijtihad" whereby religious clerics render an independent interpretation of the Quran with a view to apply Quranic laws to changing circumstances. Today's Pakistan has several of these so-called " ulema" and religious leaders, but the political power of these leaders does not permit the 'real' religious scholars to articulate a definitive interpretation of the holy text. Moreover, scholars who dare to label the killing of innocent civilians in the name of religion as un-Islamic, face threats and harsh criticism from religious political parties whose most-favoured tool for public mobilization is often a call for jihad against the " infidels". It is also to be noted that the word 'jihad' is being utterly misused by Pakistani religious fanatics.

It is interesting to note that one does not find in the Qur'an the word 'jihad' in the sense in which it is being popularly used, that is, 'holy war'. The word in the Qur'an for war is 'qitaal' and not jihad. The word 'jihad' is used in its literal sense, which is to strive, assert or make efforts. Thus, jihad in the Qur'anic terminology means to assert oneself or to make efforts to promote what is right and to prohibit what is evil. A simplistic and overzealous attempt to introduce the laws of a totally different social formation into the socio-political fabric of a post-colonial, urbanizing, pluralistic society with an increasing breakdown of primary group ties, can neither serve to maintain peace nor meet the ends of justice. On the contrary it breeds violence and contempt for the existing legal system and rule of law.

IV. Politico-Religious Mobilization: Towards an Understanding

In an age denounced by some religious leaders as 'secular', there is irony in the increasing interaction, interplay and convergence between religious and political extremism. In analyzing religious extremism, it is important to understand that religious extremism does not have a single definition. In particular, contrary to what Mark Juergensmeyer and others have suggested, not all religious extremism is a 'species of reaction to liberal modernity or globalization'. It is wrong to assume that religious extremism is a new phenomenon or a late reaction to the processes of globalization (reaction against the liberalizing forces of Benjamin Barber's "McWorld").

The history of religious extremism predates the latest phase of "globalization". Pakistan did not experience a sudden "opening up" after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It was already going through an "Islamic globalization" in the form of a brotherhood with Islamic states, particularly Saudi Arabia on the one hand and Iran on the other, with the US acting as a facilitator, at least between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Unlike the rest of the world, Pakistan got a taste of religious extremism not long after its creation. Though Pakistan had yet to witness its violent manifestation, the induction of Islamic principles into the objective resolution of 1949, gave an edge to the Mullahs in the Assembly. Later, in the 1970s, with a liberal like Bhutto succumbing to the demands of religious parties to declare Ahmedis non-Muslim, the ground for religious extremism had been laid. The Jihad against communism and Zia's accommodation of the religious right, transformed the society from a tolerant Muslim society to one hijacked by the *Deobandi/Wahabi* mindset, led by the Taliban.

Francis Fukuyama however, conceded in one of his most famous and articulate arguments that "One is inclined to say that the revival of religion in some way attests to a broad unhappiness with the impersonality and spiritual vacuity of liberal consumerist societies."[16] This unhappiness was to find its expression, not only in the recourse to religion, but in recourse to religious terrorism. However, while this can be applied to western/developed societies, Pakistan is a different case.

Before the state embraced religion as a tool to legitimize its rule, religion was already deeply embedded in society – the difference lay in its violent manifestation. It was the tolerant, Sufi version of Islam that was most accommodative and has been practiced throughout the sub-continent for centuries. There was no spiritual vacuum that one could identify which was filled by religion and later developed into religious extremism. It was the forced imposition of the philosophy on young minds and people in general that erased any memory of tolerance towards other faiths or even other sects within Islam. Hence Fukuyama's analysis does not fit here.

The question that arises therefore, is that if militant theology is more often a consequence than a cause for militant orientation, then what leads religious groups towards militancy in the first place? Why did religious groups choose violence to improve the lot of their institutions and constituents, resisting repression and gaining political power? One reason could be that religious societies, which favour one group over another, suppressing all other competing sects, encourage furious and fanatical

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[16] Fukuyama, Francis. "The End of History?" *The National Interest,* No.16, Summer 1989: 14

violence. Deobandi patronage by Zia for instance, led to the rift with the Bralvis. He later realized that the Deobandis were not in a majority (unlike today) and thus, had to accommodate the Brelvis till such time as various Deobandi sects had established firm roots in society, thanks to the money pouring in from Saudi Arabia and the state protection extended to groups engaged in establishing madrassas across the country. Sectarian violence between Shia-Sunni increased many times and led to the creation of Shia groups to counter the Sunnis.

The politico-religious nationalisms have been greatly challenged by "extremist" variants. Unlike their forbearers, these variants have several distinguishing characteristics in the Pakistani context. First, they assume the religious identity of the majority as not merely one important aspect of the nation's identity, but as central and overriding, and hence the monopoly of the Sunni/Deobandis – claiming a highly questionable majority, achieved through coercion and terror. Second, they consider ethnic or religious identities to be different from those of the majority, presumptively alien and disloyal, which led to the creation of a tiered conception of citizenship. Third, extremist religious movements are often propagated by movements that believe that communal and even terrorist violence are "normal" and legitimate means of promoting their vision and of keeping religious and ethnic minorities in their (subordinate) position. The political philosophy of the Sipah-e-Sahaba in the 1990s, and in present times, the Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNSM) and Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), is based on the idea of the "survival of the fittest", with the 'fittest' being the followers of their own group. Finally and perhaps most dangerously, religious extremism fosters intense rivalries with other nations that do not share their religious identity. Though Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan is keen on having the sharia implemented only within Pakistan for the moment, al-Qaeda-inspired groups have no problem in extending their "vision" to other areas through force and terror.

As compared to many Islamic countries, Pakistan has been far more 'secular' and 'modern'. Religious orthodoxy did not have a place here. The military dictators, after all, were not religious fanatics (with the exception of Zia). In fact, Ayub resisted the influence of the orthodox 'ulema' and introduced many modern laws. Yahya Khan too, by and large, refrained from invoking religious orthodoxy for legitimizing his rule. Starting from Bhutto until Gen. Musharraf and the present government of Asif Zardari however, have been more accommodative of religious orthodoxy.

The Taliban phenomenon was a natural outcome of the policies of the past. And the madrasas then set up in the North West Province are churning out large numbers of 'Taliban' every year. Though they do not become 'ready-to-kill' fanatics immediately, they have no exposure to the tolerant side of Islam either. Thus, the emphasis is more on cultivating a jihadist mindset than providing truly religious orientation. Most of these madrasas have vested interests as they are under the protection and supervision of religious parties; very few of them are independent, and receive funds from various sources, including some Islamic countries, most importantly, Saudi Arabia.

What's Behind the Mobilization? An analysis of Pakistani politics raises the following questions:

Despite low electoral performance, what has enabled religious parties to monopolize politics or make the mainstream political parties dependent on them? Is it the fear of losing status that forces them to become a part of every political setup in the country, especially with military dictators, as history tells us? Or, is it because of the gap between expectations and achievement of the youth, as Ted Gurr has argued, that they are willing to initiate and engage in all kinds of protests?

As in the case in Pakistan, it is religion that provides the valve for the release of people's pent up anger and frustration against economic and political problems.

DESIRE TO PROMOTE SPECIFIC POLITICAL GOALS

The root causes of identity mobilization are related to the underlying characteristics of politics in a weak state and its susceptibility to the intrusion of outside forces into its body politic. Sectarianism in Pakistan demonstrates that the imperatives of politics in such a state combine with the interests of international actors to entrench identity cleavages in the political process. Instrumentalist and primordial explanations of identity mobilization are insufficient. The behavior of international and state actors, in the context of the structure of state-society relations, is also a causal factor.

Pakistan's suffering because of religious extremism is no secret. In Pakistan, the problem is not simply antagonism towards other religious communities, for instance, violence against the Ahmadis or Christians, but even cleavages within the Muslim community. Hardened religious Muslim groups differ with each other on interpretation which alters according to various sects and often leads to acute forms of sectarian violence. Religion is politicized and used for instigating terrorist acts by two distinct sets of actors in Pakistan, which even though somewhat inter-related, show certain differences with respect to their objectives, areas of operation, and targets of violence.

First, there are sectarian groups belonging to the Sunni and Shia sects of Islam that have been active in terrorist activities which are mostly, but not exclusively directed against the people from the opposite sect. This communal schism on sectarian lines was the direct outcome of the process of Islamization of laws in Pakistan, introduced by President Zia ul-Haq in 1977–88; sectarian violence was very rare before this

period. The Shias, feeling empowered after the 1979 Iranian revolution and embittered by Zia's Islamization programme, created an organization called the Tehrik-e-Nifaz-Fiqah-e-Jaffria[17] (Movement for the Imposition of Shia Law) and protested against the president's policies. They were successful in securing escape clauses in the new Islamized laws for themselves and in having the Shias, in general, exempted from certain aspects of those laws.

Not only did President Zia grow apprehensive about Shia power in Pakistan, but the Sunnis were also agitated at the time. They feared that people might seek conversion from Sunni faith to Shiism in order to seek exemption from zakat (the annual tax of 2.5 per cent on the savings of Muslims to be distributed among the poor) or from other, more rigid Sunni family laws. The vigilante Sunnis therefore, created Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan[18] (Army of the Companions of the Prophet).

The other set of religious extremists believe in a 'grand' agenda, and the movement or network of the residue of the Afghan war. Concerned with a lot more than the Shia–Sunni conflict, this group believes in a constant war between the 'forces of evil' (which includes the US, the West and all those who support these states, including Muslim states friendly with the US and the West) and the 'forces of virtue', such as the al-Qaeda under Osama Bin Laden. The residue of the Afghan Jihad movement leads this group. With assured financial supply, the group vows to bring an "ideal" Islamic system into the country. Though mainstream Islamic political parties in Pakistan, deny any link to the violent agenda of the al-Qaeda, are nonetheless, sympathetic to its objective of establishing a puritanical Islamic system in the country and

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[17] See the official site of the Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Fiqah-e-Jafaria, http://www.tnfj.org/default.html

[18] For detailed information on Jehadi organizations, see Amir Rana. 2007. *A to Z of Jehadi Organizations in Pakistan.* Translated by Saba Ansari. Lahore: Mashal Books.

any violence that takes place is sanctioned as an effort to 'please God'. This behavior explains Ted Gurr's theory of relative deprivation - despite being citizens of an Islamic state, these groups are still not satisfied and content with the level of Islamization of society. They compare their state with the "ideal" Islamic state where Sharia or Islamic laws are fully implemented.

FINANCIAL, SPIRITUAL AND EMOTIONAL INCENTIVES BY LOCALS AND OUTSIDERS

Saudi Arabia erected a number of large global charities in the 1960s and 1970s whose original purpose may have been to spread Wahhabi Islam, but which became penetrated by prominent individuals from al-Qaeda's global *jihadi* network. Of these, the three most prominent charities were the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO; an offshoot of the Muslim World League), the World Assembly of Muslim Youth, and the Charitable Foundations of al-Haramain. All three are suspected by various global intelligence organizations of terrorist funding.[19] From the CIA's interrogation of an al-Qaeda operative, it was learned that al-Haramain, for example, was used as a conduit for funding the al-Qaeda in Southeast Asia. It would be incorrect to regard these charities as purely non-governmental or private, as they are mistakenly called. At the apex of each organization's board is a top Saudi official.

In case of Pakistan, Saudi money and religious ideology have made their presence felt. The proliferation of religious seminaries funded by quasi-Saudi governmental organizations, coupled with Zia's Islamization drive, established Wahabi Islam as the official/high Islam. Under Zia-ul-Haq, a series of rigid and gender-biased 'Islamic' laws were instituted – including the Zina Ordinance, a part of the Hudood Ordinance, Qisas and Diyat Laws, which

eroded women's legal rights, curtailed their freedom of movement, and banished them from the public space by making it difficult for them to participate in activities outside their house.

The International Center for Religion and Diplomacy describes the rise of politico-religious fundamentalism in Pakistan as follows:

(Gen) Zia allowed the Government Departments and the Armed Forces to recruit madrasa graduates to lower posts. This tremendously expanded the career opportunities available to the products of the madrasas. Secondly, Zia, a devout Deobandi, was attracted by Wahhabism. He permitted a large flow of money from Saudi Arabia for starting madrasas to spread the Deoband-Wahhabi ideology. Thirdly, Zia's military regime saw a decline in public investments in the social sector, particularly in education. As a result, in many rural areas, the only affordable schools available to the poor people were the madrasas. Fourthly, helped by the Saudi money, the madrasas started providing free boarding and lodging to their students. Many poor parents chose to send their children to the madrasas. This spared them the responsibility of finding money for their upbringing. The radicalization of the madrasas was a post-1980 phenomenon.[20]

It is unfortunate that that due to Zia's tilt towards *wahabism*, *wahabi* clerics were allowed to exercise tremendous influence within the country, especially with the authorization and support of the Pakistani government and Saudi monarchy to spread their hard-line brand of Islam. Young minds already suffering due to unemployment and poverty, embraced the "spiritual" guidance of the clerics for solace, not knowing that

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[19] See the official website of the United States Department of the Treasury http://www.ustreas.gov/press/releases/js1895.htm (Accessed on 2 April 2008)

[20] See the website of the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy, Washington DC. http://www.icrd.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=105&Itemid=104

the relief they were being handed out would push them instead, on the road to radicalism and religious extremism.

INDIVIDUALS FEELING HUMILIATED FOR VARIETY OF REASONS TO JOIN

Robert Pape, a political scientist at the University of Chicago, conducted a study of suicide bombers titled *Dying to Win* [21] which is based on what Aristotle stated long ago, believing that ambition was a more powerful incentive to sedition and revolution than deprivation. He said: "Men do not become tyrants in order to avoid exposure to cold." The central role of communal humiliation in inspiring terrorism is the key finding of Pape's study. According to him, two factors link Tamil, Palestinian, Chechen, and al-Qaeda suicide bombers. First, they are members of communities which feel humiliated by genuine or perceived occupation (like the perceived occupation of the sacred territory of Saudi Arabia by virtue of the presence of US bases, in the eyes of bin Laden and his allies). Second, suicide bombers seek to change the policies of democratic occupying powers like Israel and the United States by influencing their public opinion – in a sense making the occupying power suffer the same level of humiliation they have felt.

It would be a mistake to treat prosperity as a universal solvent that can deprive jihadists like bin Laden of allies and sympathizers within populations that feel humiliated by foreign domination or by being frozen out of politics. Ultimately, both foreign occupation and domestic autocracy are political problems that must find political, not economic, solutions. The campaigns against jihadism and global poverty are both justified. But they are not the same war. [22]

In case of Pakistan, the mobilization of the common people has been due to the fact that the pre-partition religious parties could not "prevent" Pakistan from becoming a reality despite their resistance. The fundamentalist clerics opposed the concept of Muslim nationalism, which they found contradictory to the concept of Muslim "*Ummah*" which does not need a modern nation-state. After Pakistan came into being, these fundamentalist religious parties suffered from a sense of marginalization, which led to the feeling of humiliation. Therefore, in order to get even with the "anti-Islamic" forces, they argued that since the state was achieved on the basis of Islam, the state should be transformed into an Islamic one. [23] Political mobilization thus started and subsequently, led to the "Objective Resolution" in 1949, passed by the Assembly in favour of Islamic orientation in the affairs of the state.

[21] Bergen, Peter and Michael Lind., "A Matter of Pride: Why we can't buy off the next Osama bin Laden". *Democracy Journal*, IssueNo.3, Winter 2007: 13-14
[22] Ibid.

[23] Bahadur, Kalim. 1995. "Islam, Sharia, Ulama," in Verinder Grover and Ranjanna Arora (eds.) *Political System in Pakistan* (Vol. 4): *The Islamic State of Pakistan; The Role of Religion in Politics*. New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications. Pp. 127-8

V. Politics of Religious Extremism

Haqqani believes that gradually the political commitment to an ideological state evolved into a strategic commitment to the jihadist ideology, both, for regional influence and for domestic reasons. For example, the Pakistani military used Islamist idioms and took the help of Islamist groups to keep out of power the elected secular leaders, supported by the majority Bengali-speaking population. The Bengali rebellion and brutal suppression of the Bengalis by the military followed.[24]

Religion's role in Pakistani politics and its militant manifestation increased several times over after the anti-Soviet Afghan War. The way the Kashmir struggle became more of a religious struggle than a political/territorial dispute, says a lot about the impact of religious extremism.

Of crucial importance for understanding the impact of Pakistani religious extremism on the state's politics is to understand the relationship between religious extremism and violence committed by non-state actors. In particular, religious extremism tends to inspire religious violence and terrorism and also, because of its persistence and virulence, provokes "reactive" religious violence, terrorism, and even terrorist movements.

Most of the literature typically focuses on religious extremism as a phenomenon outside the government, (practical implementation of the religious ideology, most of the things the proponents of religion in politics talk about can not be implemented in modern state, religious parties lack proper skills or mindset that guarantees good governance in modern state system, hence they use either emotional slogans or force to make people accept their

world view and manage to get seats in elections) what happens when the philosophy becomes a reality and taste power, religious extremist parties – when they come to power, use violence as a semi-official instrument of governance and political self-preservation — the MMA used the emotive phrase 'Islam in danger' in the 2002 elections in the backdrop of the US attack on Afghanistan in 2002 and approved the actions taken by militants and the Taliban in the Tribal areas of Pakistan against the "infidels".[25]

This shows that it is equally important to evaluate the impact of religious extremism on democracy. We have witnessed how religious extremism has promoted majoritarian and illiberal conceptions of democracy that weaken the political rights and civil liberties of religious minorities. In other words, it is crucial to grasp the important political role that religion and its extremist variant play in Pakistan, particularly in democratic politics, how these attract political support and exert political influence beyond core supporters and succeed in shaping national politics.

The study demonstrates that the element of 'fear' exists in the religious groups in the Muslim majority state of Pakistan – the fear of losing their identity and status. In order to prevent this from happening, religious groups offered themselves to successive regimes, whether military or civilian, in exchange for their support to the regime. The social purity syndrome led them to later get involved in making the state "completely clean" of "worldly vices".

The project of converting Pakistan into a theocratic c state, initiated by religious

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[24] Haqqani, Hussain. "Pakistan and the Islamists". *Current History,* April 2007, Vol.106(699): 150

[25] Abbas, Hasan. 2005. *Pakistan's Drift into Extremism: Allah, the Army and America's War on Terror*. M.E Sharp Publisher. P.228

parties that opposed the very creation of the new state, has come a long way. But the basic question still remains to be addressed. Having gone through half a century of pursuing the celebrated objective at the cost of fracturing the civil society with violent religious, sectarian and ethnic conflicts, what kind of an Islamic state do they have in the works for Pakistan?

Realistically speaking, there is no ideal model of an Islamic state to go by that can be derived from the political history of the Muslim world. What is sometimes referred to as the original pristine Islamic State, ending with the assassination in 661 AD of Hazrat Ali, the fourth rightly guided Caliph, is a misnomer because the seventh century Hijaz was a tribal society in transition which had not yet evolved into a nation-state. There is no consensus among the Muslims even on the basic question of whether the Islamic state is going to be a hereditary monarchy, a dictatorship or a democratic republic. The founder of Jamat-e-Islami and the chief theoretician of the Islamic state, late Maulana Maududi, maintained that the Islamic state would be a Caliphate (Khilafat), ruled by a caliph as the vicegerent of God, whose duty would be to enforce the Laws of God.[26] While the Maulana explicitly repudiates Western democracy, he remains noncommittal on the method by which the caliph of the Islamic state will be appointed to his exalted office.

In the context of Pakistan, it is of utmost importance to understand that religious philosophy and political violence may not necessarily have a link in theory. In practice, however, there seems to be a strong connection between the doctrine and the politics in the contemporary religio-political situation in Pakistan. For example, Islam, which calls for peaceful coexistence would never appear to be the source of militancy and extremism. But the reality on ground

tells us the story of violence and extremism in the name of Islam in the Muslim world.

It is often said in the West that due to lack of a true democratic system, religious extremism flourishes. One can argue that religious extremism undermines democracy. Ironically, we have seen that at least in one instance in Pakistan, democracy facilitated religious extremism in the form of MMA's rule in the NWFP and Baluchistan through a legitimate electoral process in 2002.[27] It is another issue however, of how the members of the MMA carried out their election campaign – asking the voters whether they wanted to vote for the Quran or America.[28] The recent episode when the *Nizam-e-Adl* regulation in Swat in the NWFP province was passed by the parliament despite progressive, liberal political regimes controlling the center(People's Party) and the province (Awami National Party), is yet another example that democracy is not a panacea to all ills, even though many problems can be attributed to authoritarian regimes.

It is true that successive military governments depended on religious parties for legitimacy in Pakistan. In the initial period after independence, religious parties could not play any significant political role and the state tended to be most secular when it had been most elitist and restrictive. Later, however, long periods of authoritarian rule, helped these scattered religious groups to claim political power under the shadow of the military dictatorship. Therefore, what has exclusively been a conservative group of Islamic fundamentalists, entered the arena of mass-based politics (for example the 1985 party-less elections) as a consequence of democratic openings, even if short-term and politically weak. Unfortunately, the transition to democracy in Pakistan after long periods of military rule, brought into

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[26] See the official website of the Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, http://www.jamaat.org

[27] Abbas, Hasan. Op.Cit. P.23
[28] Ibid. p.228

power, religious parties with a confrontational agenda against the West.

Finally, there are a number of far reaching political consequences of the intrusion of religion in Pakistan's politics. For instance, religious extremism fosters religiously-defined conceptions of national identity that politically unify and mobilize peoples and serve as a benchmark of governmental legitimacy. Religious extremism has undermined democracy by promoting a majoritarian theory and in the words of Fareed Zakaria[29] the practice of "illiberal democracy" that marginalizes and disenfranchises religious and ethnic minorities.

Unfortunately, religious extremism is often considered as merely periodic interruption of the normal course of politics and national political development, rather than a deep-rooted feature of the national political cultures. Religious extremism by its very nature is assumed to operate at the margins of society rather than at the center-stage of national political life, but this leads to a politically crucial and growing alliance between religious extremism and political nationalism.

Except for the relative isolation of some tribal communities in NWFP and Baluchistan, Pakistani society is exposed to the cultural influences of a global urban industrial civilization. Any possibility of the implementation of the Sharia laws seems remote despite the various Islamic pressure groups and religious parties, since the society is more at home with the South Asian version of Islam that they have experienced for generations and are not ready to replace it with anything "foreign", be it Saudi Arabia's version of puritanical Islam or Iran's version of the Islamic state. Aaccording to the NWFP provincial government, the recently signed Swat agreement with the Taliban was to control the law and order situation. On the other hand, if the Taliban resort to violence and go beyond what is agreed upon, President Zardari would have to reconsider the agreement.

Sufism which attracted large numbers of South Asians to embrace Islam, does not believe in extremism of any sort. Pakistani Muslims are desperately looking for miracle that can help them break the cycle of foreign-funded, highly-politicized Islam that is still "foreign" to the 170 million people in this part of the world.

The enforcement of shari'a was never a tradition in any part of the country until Gen. Zia-ul-Haq issued his controversial *Hudood* ordinance because of its anachronisms.

The orthodoxy of the Islamist political establishment in Pakistan, particularly the *Wahabi-Deobandi* Islam, does not have its roots in the soil. This brand of Islam is doctrinaire, virulently intolerant of diversity, misogynist and obsessed with jihad as opposed to the faith and spirituality of ordinary people of Pakistan which is syncretic, tolerant, devotional and blended in the mystical spirituality of the Indus Valley and its languages. Song, music and dance are very much a part of this folk spiritual tradition.

However, it would be naïve to think that religion in Pakistan will cease to exist as a political force; it will be the other way round. It is therefore, important to pursue cooperation rather than confrontation, especially on the part of the policy-makers, to ensure the possibility of a happy synthesis in which ``essential elements of democracy will be conveyed in the vessels of new religious states." It is essential to know the distinction between the religious orthodoxy that we need to fight and the finer moral values of Islam that flourished in the spiritual land of the Indus valley that need to be assimilated. To quote Haqqani, "If Pakistan does not transcend the national

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[29] See Fareed Zakaria, "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy", *Foreign Affairs.* November 1997, Vol.76(6). Pp. 22-43

ideologues and a dominant military, it will remain a perilous entity: a dysfunctional state with nuclear power."

In order to uphold the ideal of a modern progressive state, and to tackle the politics of medieval religiosity in a post-colonial Muslim majority state like Pakistan, a deliberate social engineering initiative is needed. Despite severe limitations in
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understanding, analyzing and defining modernity and progressiveness, there is a huge percentage of moderate, urban civilians within Pakistan's civil society, who have the intellectual quality, organizational ability and experience of social activism and are the only visible social force that can fight the religious orthodoxy and play an effective role in establishing a modern state.

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