



## Youth Extremism in Pakistan – Magnitude, Channels, Resident Spheres and Response

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**Abstract:** *This paper attempts to address religious extremism and the factors confounding its conceptual and definitional understanding within the existing reality of Pakistan. It particularly highlights and analyzes the demographic magnitude of extremists' potential, inspirations, channels and geographical location of extremism in the country. These areas have been ignored in the extant literature on extremism in Pakistan. The conclusions respond to the reviewed issues besides proposing a contextualized definition of religious extremism. A few broad policy suggestions are also offered, including a generalizable framework to measure holistic spread of extremism in Pakistan to meaningfully respond to the situation.*

**Keywords:** *Pakistan, religious extremism, youth, definition, inspirations, channels, processes*

### Introduction

Youth attitudes are rarely studied in Pakistan as a conscious policy measure to be able to address needs of this segment of the society. The discourse on militancy exclusively examined from the perspective of youth has received even lesser attention.<sup>1</sup> On the contrary, the most widely discussed risk associated with Pakistan's demographic profile is the threat of millions of young,

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<sup>1</sup> For list of some relevant youth studies, see Ayesha Siddiqua, "Red Hot Chili Peppers Islam – Is the Youth in Elite Universities in Pakistan Radical?" (Heinrich Bölle Stiftung, 2011), p. 6, available at [http://www.pk.boell.org/downloads/Red\\_Hot\\_Chilli\\_Peppers\\_Islam\\_-\\_Complete\\_Study\\_Report.pdf](http://www.pk.boell.org/downloads/Red_Hot_Chilli_Peppers_Islam_-_Complete_Study_Report.pdf) (accessed 8 December 2014).

impoverished, and unemployed people succumbing to the blandishments of extremism.<sup>2</sup> A worrisome dimension of the evolving character of violence is the fast expanding scope of traditional ages of terrorists from between 15-24 years previously to 10-30 years currently.<sup>3</sup> By implication it has created a surge in numbers of youth, rising to alarming proportions from 52.66 million / 29 % to 75 million/ 41 % of a total citizenry estimated to be around 184.35 million.<sup>4</sup> About one-half of this population comprises females. Such a bloated youth presence suggests that the direction this critical mass of the demographic segment chooses to take the country will inevitably become Pakistan's destiny,<sup>5</sup> which not only underscores the need to study all challenges confronting the country with the youth duly factored in but also the urgency for their sustained engagement.

Furthermore, an added problem generated by the literature dealing with extremism is the proliferation of a plethora of expressions, like fundamentalism, fanaticism, salafism, radicalism, latent radicalism, violent takfirism, and obscurantism, to mention a few. The impact has been an intellectual haze, evident from interchangeable use of these terms that in many ways is factually incorrect.<sup>6</sup> Some analysts hence argue that "lack of consensus on definitions makes it difficult to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon, complicating efforts aimed at countering extremism".<sup>7</sup> Besides, other than an odd effort there is no attempt made in any of the available studies on youth to estimate the magnitude of extremism in Pakistan. The geographical references of extremism have been identified (e.g., by Moeed as well as Winthrop and Graff), but these are too broad (i.e., province or nationwide), to be of any empirical value.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, while Ayesha Siddiq, a leading Pakistani scholar, has alleged the existence of latent radicalism among the country's youth as a consequence of the dominant religious narrative,<sup>9</sup> this view is not believed to be wholly true. Instead, there are multiple lenses and sources that play a defining role in building a worldview of the Pakistani youth who are amenable to violent extremism that the referred study clearly fails to highlight. This paper is an attempt to address all of these issues.

It first proceeds with a conceptual discussion of extremism and its various dimensions to establish a theoretical frame of reference. Section II outlines the demographic profile of Pakistan and attempts to identify the youth population that is vulnerable to extremism. The next section details

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<sup>2</sup> Moeed Yusuf, "A Society on the Precipice? Examining the Prospects of Youth Radicalization in Pakistan," in *Reaping the Dividend: Overcoming Pakistan's Demographic challenges*, (Michael Kugelman and Robert M. Hathaway, eds, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2011), p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> 'Youth' in this paper is based on the ages (10-30 years) of apprehended militants and suicide bombers in Pakistan.

<sup>4</sup> Nargis Mazhar, "Population, Labour Force and Employment," *Pakistan Economic Survey 2012-13* (Pakistan Ministry of Finance, 2013), p. 157, available at [http://finance.gov.pk/survey\\_1213.html](http://finance.gov.pk/survey_1213.html) (accessed 8 December 2014).

<sup>5</sup> Yusuf, "A Society on the Precipice? Examining the Prospects of Youth Radicalization in Pakistan." p. 77.

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g. Manzar Zaidi, "The Radicalisation Process," *The Dawn* (Feb 2011).

<sup>7</sup> Abdul Basit and Mujtaba Muhammad Rathore, "Trends and Patterns of Radicalization in Pakistan," *PIPS Research Journal Conflict and Peace Studies* 3(2)(2010).

<sup>8</sup> Moeed Yusuf, "Prospects of Youth Radicalization in Pakistan: Implications for US Policy" (Brookings Institution – October 2008), available at <http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2008/10/pakistan-yusuf> (accessed 8 December 2014); Corrinne Graf and Rebecca Winthrop, "Beyond Madrassas: Assessing the Links between Education and Militancy in Pakistan" (Brookings Institution, 2010), available at <http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2010/06/pakistan-education-winthrop> (accessed 8 December 2014).

<sup>9</sup> Siddiq, "Red Hot Chili Peppers Islam – Is the Youth in Elite Universities in Pakistan Radical?"

multiple lenses and sources that build the worldview of Pakistanis who are generating enclaves of violent extremism. Its key feature is an explanation of the pathways to counter extremism. While the discourse here implicitly touches drivers of extremism in Pakistan, it does not by design dwell upon these due to existence of extensive scholarship on this issue. In Section VI, an effort is made to locate prevailing coverage of extremism. The conclusions among other respond to the reviewed issues. Foremost is the attempted definition of religious extremism followed by a suggested methodical framework to measure its holistic spread and a few policy recommendations to address the situation.

### Religious Extremism – Theoretical Discourse

Mubarak Haider in his book *Tahzeebi Nargissiat (Narcissism from Civilization)* ascribes the notion of extremism within Islam to the thought of the ‘chosen ones’ and the ‘perfect people’. He notes “[t]his is a diseased thought that lends bias, prejudice and a sense of narcissism ... and these feelings always lead to intolerance and gender violence.”<sup>10</sup> In a sociological framework, extremism refers to political ideologies that oppose a society’s core values and principles. For example, exploring the cultural-extremism nexus, Elaine Pressman finds ‘extremism’ to be a culturally relative term in that extremist beliefs are dependent on the cultural perspective since the person who holds views which are considered to be ‘extreme’ within one cultural context or time may not be considered to hold ‘extremist’ beliefs within another cultural context or time. He therefore suggests that “[n]orms and values are intricately bound up in the definition of ‘extremism.’”<sup>11</sup> However, other than emphasizing culture and temporal differentials as the context changers, his discourse falls short in defining extremism. In liberal democracies, extremism is applied to any ideology that advocates racial or religious supremacy and/or opposes the core principles of democracy and human rights,<sup>12</sup> such as the multiform political extremism in Florida.<sup>13</sup>

Extremism is often mixed up with radicalism, which indicates the extent of its being misunderstood as a distinct approach or attitude. Hasan Askari views radicalization as the mindset and orientation of people and groups advocating and supporting drastic changes in society and the political system based on their interpretation of Islamic religious scripture and traditions.<sup>14</sup> This definition is akin to one described above in the political domain. Manzar Zaidi on the other hand, connotes extremism

<sup>10</sup> Xari Jalil, “Giving Context to Religious Extremism,” *Pakistan Today* (19 Jun 2011), available at <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2011/06/giving-context-to-religious-extremism/> (accessed 8 December 2014).

<sup>11</sup> D. Elaine Pressman, “Risk Assessment Decisions for Violent Political Extremism 2009-02,” (Canadian Centre for Security and Intelligence Studies, 2009), available at <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/2009-02-rdv/2009-02-rdv-eng.pdf> (accessed 13 Nov 2014).

<sup>12</sup> Peter Neumann, “Prisons and Terrorism Radicalisation and De-radicalisation in 15 Countries,” (International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR), 2010), available at <http://icsr.info/publications/papers/1277699166/PrisonsandTerrorismRadicalisationandDeradicalisationin15Countries.pdf> (accessed 8 December 2014).

<sup>13</sup> “Extremism in Florida: The Dark Side of the Sunshine State,” (Anti-Defamation League, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, 2011), available at <http://www.adl.org/assets/pdf/combating-hate/ExtremismFloridaINSIDE.pdf> (accessed 8 December 2014).

<sup>14</sup> Hasan Askari Rizvi, “Radicalization and Political System of Pakistan,” in *De-radicalization and Engagement of Youth in Pakistan* (M. H. Nuri, et al, eds., Islamabad Policy Research Institute), p. 12.

as radicalization, which he defines “as a process whereby originally moderate individuals or groups of individuals become progressively more extreme in their thinking — and possibly their behaviour — over time.”<sup>15</sup> Robert Mandel refers to radicalization as an increase in and/or reinforcement of extremism in the thinking, sentiments, and/or behaviour of individuals and/or groups of individuals.<sup>16</sup> Ayesha’s definition of ‘latent radicalism’ as a “tendency to be exclusive instead of inclusive vis-à-vis other communities on the basis of religious belief, departs from others. She nevertheless excessively employs extremism and radicalism interchangeably.”<sup>17</sup> Carefully viewed, Zaidi, Mandel and Ayesha are only synthesizing the contours of extremism. The defining lines between extremism and radicalism are subtle and are overlapping, yet the two represent distinct zones, with extremism generally, but not necessarily, occurring earlier than radicalism or any one of them happening at a time.

The definition of extremism by Tomas Precht “as immoderate uncompromising views and measures beyond the norm” appears plausible but is equally subjective. His observation that “for the most part, extremist groups pose a threat to public order, but not to national security” is also intriguing.<sup>18</sup> Empirical evidence, such as the Mumbai attacks, the militant raid on Pakistan Army Headquarters in October 2009, suicidal strikes at air bases or other sensitive installations do not validate this assertion. A particular feature of religious extremism that is generally ignored is its persistence and virulence which provokes ‘reactive’ religious violence, terrorism, and even terrorist movements.<sup>19</sup> Evolving Bareilvi militant assertiveness in Pakistan and behavioural transformation among scores of Muslims to reciprocate in kind or emulate heroism of perceived martyrs in response to the kinetic killing of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in Iraq in June 2006, the mysterious death of Osama Bin Laden consequent to US special forces raid on 2 May 2011 and the burning of Quran by Terry Jones in Florida during 2011 exemplify reactivity nuances of religious extremism.

Uniquely, ‘extreme’ and ‘extremism’ have been expounded by Uwe Backes to mean something which is the ‘farthest out.’ He opines that there is “nothing beyond the extreme; extremes cannot be increased, they embody something which cannot be surpassed or exceeded.”<sup>20</sup> In effect, Backes is merely conflating extremism with a measurement instrument without providing a precise definition as well as the determining attribute of extremism. Likewise, the term extremism is used to describe methods through which political actors attempt to attain their aims, that is, by using means that “show disregard for the life, liberty, and human rights of others” i.e., by resorting to violence. Many

<sup>15</sup> Zaidi, “The Radicalisation Process.”

<sup>16</sup> David R. Mandel, “Radicalization: What does it mean?” in *Indigenous Terrorism: Understanding and Addressing the Root Causes of Radicalization among Groups with an Immigrant Heritage in Europe* (Thomas M. Pick, Anne Speckhard, Beatrice Jacuch, eds., IOS Press, 2010).

<sup>17</sup> Siddiq, “Red Hot Chili Peppers Islam – Is the Youth in Elite Universities in Pakistan Radical?” pp. 12, 25.

<sup>18</sup> See Tomas Precht, “Home Grown Terrorism and Islamist Radicalisation in Europe: From Conversion to Terrorism” (Danish Ministry of Justice, Dec 2007).

<sup>19</sup> Arshi Saleem Hashmi, “Pakistan: Politics, Religion & Extremism,” (Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS) Research Papers, May 2009), available at [http://www.ipcs.org/pdf\\_file/issue/RP20-Arshi-Pakistan.pdf](http://www.ipcs.org/pdf_file/issue/RP20-Arshi-Pakistan.pdf) (accessed 8 December 2014).

<sup>20</sup> See Uwe Backes, “Meaning and Forms of Political Extremism in Past and Present,” *Central European Political Studies Review* 4 (2007).

governments therefore refer to terrorists as “violent extremists.”<sup>21</sup> The imposition of *shari’a* in neighborhood and armed confrontation with the state by clergy and students of Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) and Jamia Hafsa Madrassa in Islamabad during July 2007 was violent extremism in the operational sense, and religious vigilantism in terms of an intent “to enforce the *sharia* apart from the hand of the state.”<sup>22</sup>

Religious extremism vastly differs from its ideological equivalents. For example, fundamentalism for religiously imbued minds means belief and loyalty to the fundamental sources and a value framework of a faith.<sup>23</sup> While in political Islam, it refers to resistance to modernity and strict adherence to a literal interpretation of sacred texts.<sup>24</sup> Some connote it as an orientation to the world that is anti-intellectual, bigoted, and intolerant,<sup>25</sup> which “rejects all forms of *ijtihad* (simply reasoning), opposes all forms of hierarchy within the Muslim community, including tribalism or royalty, favour, excluding Shia from participation in the polity, and takes a very restrictive view of the social role of women.”<sup>26</sup> Professor Khurshid Ahmad, a known Muslim scholar, calls these definitions a “reductionism that emphasizes, out of all proportion, the ‘pathological’ or ‘economic’ situations”, hence “is flawed, deceptive and unhelpful.”<sup>27</sup> He considers extremism a product, not of the mainstream historical tradition of Islam, but of modern politics and the modern state that the West itself has produced.<sup>28</sup>

In the sub-continent, the term fanatic was used by W.W. Hunter during the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century for Sayyid Ahmad to characterize his Tauheed (oneness of Allah), war waging upon all infidels, spirit of revolt against the British Rule and declaring India as ‘*dar-ul-harb*’ (‘house of war’).<sup>29</sup> In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the backdrop furnishing the contemporary setting was the Deoband-Tribal nexus against the British, rooted in the new and exciting politics of anticolonialism and pan-Islamism, galvanized by the start of First World War.<sup>30</sup> Fanaticism is hence different from extremism and fundamentalism, in terms of its contextualized drive directed at political adversaries while the other two are generally understood to be religiously motivated.

<sup>21</sup> See Neumann, “Prisons and Terrorism Radicalisation and De-radicalisation in 15 Countries.”

<sup>22</sup> Joshua T. White, “Vigilante Islamism in Pakistan: Religious Party Responses to the Lal Masjid Crisis”, *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology* 7 (2008), available at [http://www.hudson.org/content/researchattachments/attachment/1319/white\\_vol7.pdf](http://www.hudson.org/content/researchattachments/attachment/1319/white_vol7.pdf) (accessed 8 December 2014).

<sup>23</sup> As’ad Abukhalil and Farid Esack, “The US, the Muslim World and an Islamic Response,” *Policy Perspectives* 5(1) (2008), available at <http://www.ips.org.pk/the-muslim-world/1003-the-us-the-muslim-world-and-an-islamic-response> (accessed 8 December 2014).

<sup>24</sup> Mustafa Aydin, “De-legitimizing Religion as a Source of Identity-Based Security Threats in a Global World,” *Connections-The Quarterly Journal* (Winter 2006), p. 11, available at <http://procon.bg/article/de-legitimizing-religion-source-identity-based-security-threats-global-world> (accessed 8 December 2014).

<sup>25</sup> Malise Ruthven, *Fundamentalism: The Search for Meaning* (Oxford University Press USA, 2004), p. 7.

<sup>26</sup> Hashmi, “The Arabist Shift from Indo-Persian Civilization & Genesis of Radicalization in Pakistan.”

<sup>27</sup> Khurshid Ahmad, “Terrorism and War against Terrorism: Some Fundamental Issues,” *Policy Perspectives* 3(2) (2006), available at <http://www.ips.org.pk/global-issues-and-politics/1125-terrorism-and-war-against-terrorism-some-fundamental-issues> (accessed 8 December 2014).

<sup>28</sup> Ga Pervaiz, “Political Islam and the Media,” *Policy Perspectives* 4(2)(2007), available at <http://www.ips.org.pk/pakistan-and-its-neighbours/1005-political-islam-and-the-media> (accessed 8 December 2014).

<sup>29</sup> W. W. Hunter, *The Indian Muslims* (Sang-e-Meel Publications, 1999), pp. 52-53, 58-60, 63.

<sup>30</sup> Sana Haroon, *Frontier of Faith: Islam in the Indo-Afghan Borderland* (Hurst & Company, 2007), pp. 93-98.

Apart from exposing the confusion prevailing in existing scholarship on the theoretical aspects of extremism, the above discourse clearly establishes differentiation among synonyms of religious extremism. Besides, it reveals a propensity to define extremism with a bias and partiality. That reiterates the need for an original construction of the term to help pragmatic analyses and meaningful response formulation.

### Demographic Profile of Pakistan

Because Pakistan has not conducted a census since 1998, estimating the country's total population size is an inexact science.<sup>31</sup> The Pakistan National Institute of Population Studies assessed the population to be 184.35 million in May 2014 (which is used here as the standard measure), locating 71.07 million in urban and 113.28 million in rural areas.<sup>32</sup> Excluding the 0-14 age group, 40% of the population falls in the category of youth, using the criteria set out at the beginning of the article.<sup>33</sup> In terms of aging, with a median age of 21.0 years old, Pakistan stood in 139<sup>th</sup> place out of 196 countries in 2009.<sup>34</sup> In 1988, the proportion of people in the age range of 15-65 was 53% while it will be 67% in 2030, with the majority being those between 15 and 30 years of age. The economic surveys therefore project that Pakistan is becoming younger.<sup>35</sup> This longevity in youth will be significant in consequentially shaping youth attitudes, *inter alia*, due to the continuously rising age at marriage over the last several decades and the accompanying increase in the gap between generations.<sup>36</sup> Besides being populous, Pakistan is also the most urbanized nation in South Asia with city dwellers making up 38% of its population, which increased from 58.74 million in 2008 to 69.87 million in 2013.<sup>37</sup> The year 2030 is expected to be a major landmark in Pakistan's demographics wherein for the first time in its history, the urban and rural population in Pakistan are projected to be evenly constituted, 50% each.<sup>38</sup>

In 2005, more than half of the total urban population of Pakistan lived in eight urban areas: Karachi, Lahore, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi, Multan, Hyderabad, Gujranwala and Peshawar.<sup>39</sup> This trend, which continued well into 2014 at a rate of 3 percent per annum, means that a youth population of 25 million and 50.22 million is currently located in urban and rural areas, respectively; most are

<sup>31</sup> Michael Kugelman, "Pakistan's Demographics: Possibilities, Perils, and Prescriptions," in *Reaping the Dividend: Overcoming Pakistan's Demographic Challenges* (Wilson Center, 2011), p. 6, available at <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/ReapingtheDividendFINAL.pdf> (accessed 8 December 2014).

<sup>32</sup> National institute of Population Studies, "Introduction to NIPS," at <http://www.nips.org.pk/> (accessed 11 May 2014).

<sup>33</sup> See note 3 above.

<sup>34</sup> UN DESA, "Country Ranking by Median Age," at [http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/WPA2009/WPA2009\\_WorkingPaper.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/WPA2009/WPA2009_WorkingPaper.pdf) (accessed 9 December 2014).

<sup>35</sup> Norina Bibi, "Population, Labour Force and Employment," *Pakistan Economic Survey 2010-11* (2011), pp. 153-4, available at [http://www.finance.gov.pk/survey/chapter\\_11/12-Population.pdf](http://www.finance.gov.pk/survey/chapter_11/12-Population.pdf) (accessed 8 December 2014).

<sup>36</sup> The singulate mean age at marriage of females rose from 16 to 22.8, and of males from 18 to 26.4, between 1961 and 2007. For details, see Zeba A. Sathar, "Demographic Doom or Demographic Dreams: Pakistan at the Crossroads," *Reaping the Dividend: Overcoming Pakistan's Demographic Challenges*, p. 33.

<sup>37</sup> Mazhar, "Population, Labour Force and Employment," p. 160.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Nausheen Saba Nizami, "Population, Labour Force and Employment," *Pakistan Economic Survey 2009-10* (2010).

unemployed.<sup>40</sup> Within this grouping, up to 10 million are estimated to be child laborers,<sup>41</sup> six million are unemployed youth (15-25 ages) and 3.40 million come from the unemployed labor force.<sup>42</sup> In general, the unemployment phenomenon is believed to be more of urban and male issue in Sindh and KP (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) while rural in Punjab, with Balochistan experiencing no significant change.<sup>43</sup>

An important aspect within this calculus is the considerable surge of the unemployment rates during 2010-2011 of three age groups between 15 and 29 including females. This may impact internal migratory patterns, especially in Punjab; other provinces are least likely to experience net change in in-outflows in the short term. Cumulatively out of 25 million in the major urban centres of four provinces, and some 10 million in rural Punjab, approximately ten million youth including child labourers as well as those unemployed and underemployed emerge as relatively more susceptible to extremism.<sup>44</sup> In case trust in the present system is analyzed from the perspective of the youth, rampant disillusionment exists across the board among today's youth, which believe the government has failed to deliver on countless occasions due to inept policies and politicians.<sup>45</sup> All these cohorts can be considered to be in grave peril in that they are starved of education and productive opportunities, and are vulnerable to manipulation by those who do not have their best interests at heart.<sup>46</sup> These numbers constitute a menacing dimension if also viewed from the prism of 'latent radicalism' wherein radicalism [or extremism] may not necessarily be confined to the poor and less educated but found with equal intensity among affluent classes.<sup>47</sup>

### Pathways of Youth Extremism

Pathways to extremism are not simple to define nor are they presumed to be linear in terms of occurrence. Conceptually, however a possible construct that welds together the whole process of extremisation in Pakistan comprises four fundamental elements - societal mindset, inspiration, channels and resident spheres (Figure 1).

<sup>40</sup> UNICEF, "Pakistan Statistics," at [http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/pakistan\\_pakistan\\_statistics.html](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/pakistan_pakistan_statistics.html) (accessed 9 December 2014).

<sup>41</sup> Reuters, "Millions Pushed into Child Labour in Pakistan," *The Express Tribune* (7 February 2012), available at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/332927/millions-pushed-into-child-labour-in-pakistan/> (accessed 8 December 2014).

<sup>42</sup> United Nations, "Youth Unemployment Rate, Aged 15-24, at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mdg/SeriesDetail.aspx?srid=630> (accessed 9 December 2014).

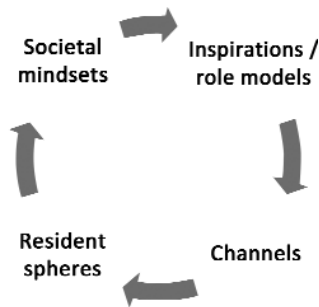
<sup>43</sup> Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, "Labour Force Participation Rates and Unemployment Rates by Age, Sex and Areas, 2012-2013," at [http://www.pbs.gov.pk/sites/default/files/Labour%20Force/publications/lfs\\_Annual\\_2012\\_13/t14-pak.pdf](http://www.pbs.gov.pk/sites/default/files/Labour%20Force/publications/lfs_Annual_2012_13/t14-pak.pdf) (accessed 9 December 2014).

<sup>44</sup> Zubair Chaudhry, "Unemployment and the PM's Youth Programme," *Express Tribune* (15 December 2013), available at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/645852/unemployment-and-the-pms-youth-programme/> (accessed 8 December 2014).

<sup>45</sup> Husham Ahmed, "Identity Crisis Haunts Pakistani Youth!" *The Statesmen* (2 Feb 2010), available at <http://www.thestatesmen.net/news/identity-crisis-haunts-pakistani-youth/> (accessed 9 December 2014); Sadaf Basharat, "Craving for Change: Educated Youth, Perception Survey Report" (Peace Education and Development Foundation, 12 August 2012), available at <http://pead.org.pk/Craving-for-Chang.pdf> (accessed 9 December 2014).

<sup>46</sup> "Pakistan: The Next Generation Report," (British Council, November 2009), p. 2, available at <http://www.britishcouncil.pk/programmes/society/next-generation> (accessed 9 December 2014).

<sup>47</sup> Siddiq, "Red Hot Chili Peppers Islam – Is the Youth in Elite Universities in Pakistan Radical?" p. 26.

**Figure 1 - Pillars of extremism in Pakistan**

Source: Author's construction

### *Societal mindsets*

As a nation-state, some have described Pakistan as a collection of mere images, and hence a distortion of reality; few have labeled it an unimagined nation, yet others have termed Pakistan an unachieved nation.<sup>48</sup> Manzoor Ahmed constructs Pakistan as a contradiction, arguing that the country has been either anti-intellectual or non-rational for ages. The people have a proclivity for sentimentalism, can be quickly provoked and have a mindset that cannot sustain a long and involved rational argument.<sup>49</sup> In part this popular mindset is inspired by a thinking mode that feeds on the conceptualization of social issues, including religious one, through a domain of binaries bordering on contradictory behaviors. Binary-framing schema are found among almost all societies; however while among Pakistanis it is an ingrained element of their organic traits, elsewhere or in Western popular discourse attitudinal distinction is confined to stereotyping certain issues.<sup>50</sup>

Consequently, the framework for understanding religious practice is generally seen through the binaries of informal–formal, common–elite, authentic–superstition, and orthodox–heterodox, amongst others. For example, it is a fact that poorer Pakistanis were actually less likely to support extremist groups than more affluent, better educated people.<sup>51</sup> Yet it is equally true of Pakistanis that alongside militants they favor some of the severest sentences for socioreligious crimes. A poll conducted in 2009 found broad support for harsh punishments: 78% favored death for those who

<sup>48</sup> Muhammad Feyyaz, "Ethnic Conflict in Sindh" (PILDAT Background Paper, October 2011), available at [http://www.pildat.org/publications/publication/Conflict\\_management/EthnicConflictinSindhOctober2011.pdf](http://www.pildat.org/publications/publication/Conflict_management/EthnicConflictinSindhOctober2011.pdf) (accessed 8 December 2014).

<sup>49</sup> Manzoor Ahmed, "Pakistan : Aporia of its Kind," in *Pakistan: The Contours of State and Society* (Soofia Mumtaz, Jean-Lucm, Imran Anwar Ali, eds., Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 61.

<sup>50</sup> For dominant narratives on Islamism and Islam, see David Belt, "Islamism in Popular Western Discourse," *Policy Perspectives* 6(2)(2009), available at <http://www.ips.org.pk/islam-and-the-west/1084-islamism-in-popular-western-discourse> (accessed 8 December 2014).

<sup>51</sup> Rob Crilly, "Poverty Does Not Breed Extremism in Pakistan, Study Finds," *The Telegraph* (20 May 2011), available at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/pakistan/8526473/Poverty-does-not-breed-extremism-in-Pakistan-study-finds.html> (accessed 8 December 2014).

leave Islam; 80% favored whippings and cutting off hands for crimes like theft and robbery; 83% supported stoning adulterers and 71% favoured institutionalization of religious judges.<sup>52</sup> Even the youth from upper-middle class backgrounds tends to view the world from a black and white lens, amply demonstrated in a large youth sampling from leading universities of the country. The respondents clearly subscribed to a ‘clash of civilizations’ paradigm and, in spite of their privileged position, were unable to rise above their bias towards regional or global competitors.<sup>53</sup> It will be recalled that while the high-profile assassination of Governor Salmaan Taseer shocked many in Pakistan, not all condemned the murder. Indeed, thousands rallied to the assassin’s (Mumtaz Qadri) defense lionizing him for his “religious honor and integrity, especially the so called moderate barelvi clergy.”<sup>54</sup> *The Washington Post* reporting of the incident is instructive:<sup>55</sup>

While many factions have lauded the slaying [of Governor Taseer], the peace-promoting Barelvi sect has spearheaded mass rallies to demand the release of the assassin, a policeman. Because most Pakistanis are Barelvis, their stance is challenging the belief long held among liberals here – and hoped for by nervous U.S. officials – that the Muslim majority in this nuclear-armed nation is more moderate than militant.

### ***Inspiration and Extremist Role Models***

Given the dominant role of religion in social narratives and Pakistan’s status as an ideological state, inspirations generating religious extremism have ensued either directly from the proponents of a particular doctrine (some of which have transformed into larger movement(s)) or the ideologies propagated by external actors to further local interests. The leading examples of the former category are Mawlana Syed Abul Ala Mawdoodi, Haq Nawaz Jhangvi and Hafiz Saeed; all have radically shaped religious discourse in Pakistan.<sup>56</sup> Other than these people, the active jihadi ideologue collectivity in Pakistan spans an array of figures. Few have attained more fame than Fazalullah, Mawlana Aziz, Abdul Rashid Ghazi and Mawlana Samiulhaq. Dr Farhat Hashmi is likewise perceived as a religious bigot with increasing access to female space both in and outside Pakistan.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>52</sup> The Pew Global Attitudes Project, “Pakistani Public Opinion: Growing Concerns about Extremism, Continuing Discontent With U.S.,” (Pew Research Center, 13 Aug 2009 Pew Research Center, available at <http://pewglobal.org/files/pdf/265.pdf> (accessed 9 December 2014).

<sup>53</sup> See Siddiq, “Red Hot Chili Peppers Islam – Is the Youth in Elite Universities in Pakistan Radical?”

<sup>54</sup> “The Flip Side of the Coin – Sunni Tehreek Plans to Provide Killer Legal Assistance,” *Pakistan Today* (10 Jan 2011), available at <http://www.pakistanoday.com.pk/2011/01/10/city/lahore/the-flip-side-of-the-coin-sunni-tehreek-plans-to-provide-killer-legal-assistance/> (accessed 9 December 2014); “Sunni Tehreek’s Protest against Qadri Verdict Turns Violent,” *The Express Tribune* (3 Oct 2011), available at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/265857/sunni-tehreeks-protest-against-qadri-verdict-turns-violent/> (accessed 9 December 2014).

<sup>55</sup> Karin Brulliard, “In Pakistan, Even Anti-violence Islamic Sect Lauds Assassination of Liberal Governor,” *Washington Post* (29 Jan 2011), available at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/01/29/AR2011012904706.html> (accessed 9 December 2014).

<sup>56</sup> See, e.g., Joy Aoun, et al, “Religious Movements, Militancy, and Conflict in South Asia” (Center for Strategic and International Studies, July 2012), available at [http://csis.org/files/publication/120713\\_Aoun\\_Religious\\_Militancy\\_Web.pdf](http://csis.org/files/publication/120713_Aoun_Religious_Militancy_Web.pdf) (accessed 9 December 2014).

<sup>57</sup> See Khalid Ahmed, “Daughters of Al Huda,” *The Express Tribune* (August 21, 2010), available at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/41523/daughters-of-al-huda/> (accessed 9 December 2014).

Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), an Islamist party similar to the Arab Muslim Brotherhood that Mawdoodi founded in 1941 at Lahore, possesses perhaps the most powerful and organized youth force in the form of the Islami Jamiat Talaba (IJT) in all higher educational institutions of the country. Over time, the source of its inspiration has transcended from the charisma of its erstwhile leader to the organizational appeal that it injects among vulnerable sections of freshmen and women joining colleges and universities. The IJT is widespread, authoritative, and violent, and knows nothing but to preach their radical version of Islam and build the JI's strength.<sup>58</sup> The Thunder Squad, the IJT armed wing designed to neutralize opponents, and the Allah's Tigers - a vigilante group of hooligans raised in early 1990s whose task was to attack cultural events it deemed 'un-Islamic' - outside campuses (disbanded by the JI in the mid-1990s), exemplify a level of violence that the IJT can pursue.<sup>59</sup> It draws its organizing philosophy from the JI's platform which "has built a coherent ideological case for global Islamic revivalism - a revivalism that includes the defense of violent jihad, but without identifying [itself] clearly with militant struggle."<sup>60</sup> Like IJT, Jamiat Talaba Arabia (JTA) is another youth arm of JI that is composed of students from a vibrant madrasa network operating under the banner of Rabitaul Madaris Al-Islamia. Other experiments by JI to mobilize youth through Shabab-e-Milli - its youth wing, and earlier through the somewhat controversial and later disowned 'Pasban' remained far from becoming as effective. Two of the four militant groups created by the JI i.e., Hizbul Mujahideen and al-Badar Mujahideen, are still active in Indian-held Kashmir, which facilitated the participation of IJT and JTA members in fighting in Kashmir and Afghanistan.<sup>61</sup>

The real spirit to vitalize JI youth lay in the person of Qazi Hussain Ahmed, Ameer-e-Jamaat for four terms in a row and Professor Khurshid Ahmad.<sup>62</sup> While the inspirational leadership of Qazi Hussain was characterized by a passion for jihad and a gift of gab, Professor Ahmad provided intellectual input to sustain the spiritual skeleton of the organization, including IJT. He has founded two institutions, namely, the Institute of Policy Studies Islamabad and the Islamic Foundation Leicester, UK and edits Jamaat's monthly, Tarjuman-ul-Quran. Qazi Hussain Ahmed, who was described the patriarch of the transnational jihadists and held responsible for stoking the fire of civil wars in Afghanistan and beyond which eventually spilled over into Pakistan, played a pivotal role

<sup>58</sup> Zahid Shahab Ahmed and Rajeshwari Balasubramanian, "Extremism in Pakistan and India: The Case of the Jamaat-e-Islami and Shiv Sena," (Policy Studies 50, Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, Colombo, 2010), available at [http://www.rcss.org/publication/policy\\_paper/Policy50.pdf](http://www.rcss.org/publication/policy_paper/Policy50.pdf) (accessed 9 December 2014).

<sup>59</sup> Nadeem F. Parachi, "Bleeding Green: The Rise and Fall of the IJT," *Dawn.com* (16 August 2012), at <http://www.dawn.com/news/742642/bleeding-green-the-rise-and-fall-of-the-ijt> (accessed 9 December 2014).

<sup>60</sup> Husain Haqqani, "The Ideologies of South Asian Jihadi Groups," *Current Trends in Islamic Ideology* (2005), available at <http://www.camegieendowment.org/2005/04/13/ideologies-of-south-asian-jihadi-groups/5uc> (accessed 9 December 2014).

<sup>61</sup> The other two groups are Hizb-e-Islami and Jamiatul Mujahideen. Hizbul Mujahideen primarily operates in Kashmir but also has a network in Pakistan. Muhammad Amir Rana, "Evolution of Militant Groups in Pakistan," *Conflict and Peace Studies* 4(2) (Apr-June 2011).

<sup>62</sup> Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, "Prof Khurshid Ahmed," at <http://jamaat.org/beta/site/page/44> (accessed 9 December 2014). Qazi Hussain Ahmed was active member of IJT during his student life, and remained patron of Shabab-e-Milli as well as Pasban before it finally parted ways with JI. S. Athar H. Rizvi, "Seminar Recalls Contributions of Three Subcontinental Luminaries," *Saudi Gazette* (March 22, 2013), available at <http://www.saudigazette.com.sa/index.cfm?method=home.PrintContent&fa=regcon&action=Print&contentid=20130323158071&simplelayout=1> (accessed 9 December 2014).

in ideologising<sup>63</sup> the religious youth during his command tenures of the JI, which also saw a large participation of IJT and JTA members in Afghanistan and later in Kashmir Jihad. It would be remiss however not to highlight his change of heart in later years that was clearly visible from his affirmative recognition of societal radicalisation as a national threat, during an interview in late November 2010, by declaring extremists (mainly the Taliban) to be “inflexible in pursuing a fixated agenda of Islam.”<sup>64</sup> How much his legacy persists in motivating the present generation of youth cadres of JI to participate in violent jihad is difficult to ascertain. There is nevertheless a nigh incarnation of Qazi Hussain - Siraj al-Haq the present head of JI, who shows a similar zeal, reflected in part by his public statements to wage jihad against US in case of an invasion of FATA and in part by his stern resentment against the textbook revision project by the KP government.<sup>65</sup> He is assessed to be a formidable surrogate to keep youth engaged in violent undertones.<sup>66</sup>

Punjabi Sunni hardliners follow the teachings of Mawlana Haq Nawaz Jhangvi, which arose out of the perceived cultural discrimination against the working Sunni class by local Shia landlords in the Jhang district of Punjab province. The primarily economic move against the Shias assumed sectarian and cultural dimensions when the entrepreneurs of this Sunni movement like Haq Nawaz Jhangvi (1952-1990) emphasized the cultural differences between the Sunnis and Shias to attribute the poverty of rural Sunni serfs to the cleverly manipulated sociocultural order that the Shi'ite landlords had imposed on the poor Sunnis for their own benefit.<sup>67</sup> Jhangvi and his affiliates who had “inherited the legacy of Deobandi Seminary went to the extent of reiterating the Deobandi position of 1940 that Shias should be declared non-Muslims and Kafirs.”<sup>68</sup> Commencing with the founding of Anjuman Sipah-e-Sahaba (ASS) in 1970s which became Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) in September 1985 to finally emerge as Ahl-e-Sunnat Wal Jamat (ASWJ) during 2002, the entire spiritual odyssey of the deeply religious Jhangvi was built on hatred of the Shias who he thought indulged in disrespect of or calling out names of sahaba (companions) of the Prophet Muhammad.<sup>69</sup> In particular, he detested the eclectic influence of Shi'i Sufi philosophy on Sunni Islam at local levels and avowed to challenge Shias culturally at all levels.<sup>70</sup> The underlying philosophy of the SSP was to purify Islam from heretical Sufi practices and defend Sahaba from its opponents, which was originally aimed at Shias but later also placed Barelvis, in the category of adversaries.<sup>71</sup> Glimpses of his sectarian philosophy have become part of the enduring appeal of

<sup>63</sup> Dr Mohammad Taqi, “COMMENT: Qazi Hussain Ahmad: The Jihadist Patriarch,” *Daily Times* (January 10, 2013), available at <http://archives.dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/10-Jan-2013/comment-qazi-hussain-ahmad-the-jihadist-patriarch-dr-mohammad-taqi> (accessed 8 December 2014).

<sup>64</sup> Qazi Hussain Ahmed, “Maududi’s Conception of Jihad and Radicalisation (Interview by the Author in Mansoorah, Lahore 18 November 2010).

<sup>65</sup> Qaiser Butt, “Shrinking Space: K-P Govt Shelves Plans for Textbook Reforms: JUI, JI Protested against Revised, Secular Syllabus,” *The Express Tribune* (6 April 2012), available at <http://tribune.com.pk/author/965/qaiser-butt/page/21/> (accessed 8 December 2014).

<sup>66</sup> Comments by a key member of JI youth network (name is withheld on request), Lahore (7 February 2013).

<sup>67</sup> Ashok K. Behuria, “Sunni-Shia relations in Pakistan: The Widening Divide,” *Strategic Analysis* 28(1)(2004), pp. 157 – 176.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> South Asia Terrorism Portal, “Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan,” at <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/terroristoutfits/Sp.htm> (accessed 9 December 2014).

SSP, including its violent body Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), which labels the SSP (or now ASWJ) putatively as non-violent and non-aggressive towards its opponents. The unyielding strength of the SSP and the LeJ can be judged from the resolve of its present leadership, as indicated in their firm commitment to constantly seek out and persuade their opponent “that he is mistaken.”<sup>72</sup> Deobandi madrassa students in particular and Deobandi youth in general are the centre of their inter/intra sectarian appeal. For Shia youth, spiritual sources are personified by the theology of the Najfi and Qum schools.

Within the Salafi stream of thought, Hafiz Saeed is the foremost name and founder of the Markaz al-Dawa-wal-Irshad (Centre for Preaching and Guidance - MDI) which he along with Dr. Yousuf Abdullah Azzam and Professor Zafar Iqbal established to propagate an ideology integrating missionary work and jihad during the mid-1980s.<sup>73</sup> It participated in the Afghan jihad under the same name, but in 1993, MDI divided its activities into two related but separate organisations: MDI proper continued the mission of proselytization and education.<sup>74</sup> In December 2001, Hafiz Saeed renamed MDI to be Jamaatud-Dawa (JuD), a larger umbrella organization to sustain missionary pursuits, and created a military component, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), which henceforth focused on jihad in Kashmir. Saeed’s son Talha Saeed and son-in-law Hafiz Khalid Waleed are the emerging faces of JuD, who along with six higher echelons in leadership hierarchy have recently been targeted under an expanded sanctions regime by the US for continuing terrorist activities in Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, Nepal, Bangladesh and other regions.<sup>75</sup> Hafiz Saeed and his group primarily hail from the Ahle Hadit confession, “a sub continental movement vaguely beginning in the 8<sup>th</sup> Century that grounds its tradition in a belief of the advent of the Hadit (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad) into this region directly through various sahabas during the life time of Prophet, hence are called ‘Ahle Hadit’ (bearer of sayings of the Prophet)”.<sup>76</sup> Hafiz Saeed was educated in Saudi Arabia, therefore he had no financial constraints when he launched MDI.<sup>77</sup> What particularly distinguishes the ideological leanings of Hafiz Saeed from contemporaries is his organizational commitment to the integrity of Pakistan and his opposition to Deobandis’ militancy against Bareilvis; JuD and LeT instead insist that Pakistani Muslims are all brothers, irrespective of their sectarian dispositions. In sociopolitical terms, such resolve has translated into some key impacts on ground. First, it has maintained discernable support for Hafiz Saeed, both from Islamabad and from ordinary Pakistanis, evident also from his custodial releases by superior courts.

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Dr. Thomas K. Gugler, “Jihadism in Pakistan: Going Global” (unpublished paper), available at [http://www.academia.edu/2122078/Jihadism\\_in\\_Pakistan\\_Going\\_Global](http://www.academia.edu/2122078/Jihadism_in_Pakistan_Going_Global) (accessed 8 December 2014).

<sup>74</sup> C. Christine Fair, “Lashkar-e-Tayiba and the Pakistani State,” *Survival*, 53:4 (2011), pp. 29-52, available at <http://www.iiss.org/en/publications/survival/sections/2011-2760/survival—global-politics-and-strategy-august-september-2011-66cf/53-4-06-fair-2-578e> (accessed 8 December 2014).

<sup>75</sup> Arif Qoreshi, “Hafiz Saeed’s ‘Son’ and ‘Son in Law’ Included into the FTO,” *The Fortress* (10 September 2012), available at <http://www.thefortress.com.pk/hafiz-saeeds-son-and-son-in-law-included-into-the-fto-2/> (accessed 8 December 2014).

<sup>76</sup> Muhammad Feyyaz, “Facets of Religious Violence in Pakistan,” *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis*, 5(2) (2013), pp. 9-13.

<sup>77</sup> Aoun Sahi, “Dawa, Jihad, Charity or All?” *The Jang-News Weekly* (16 April 2012), available at <http://jang.com.pk/the-news/apr2012-weekly/nos-15-04-2012/spr.htm#6> (accessed 8 December 2014).

Secondly, his message of jihad in Kashmir has nationwide appeal, not only among Ahle Hadit student movements such as Talaba Jamaatud Daawa and Ahle Hadith Student Federation (ASF), as well as lay youth like the Ahle-Hadith Youth Force and Jamaat-ul / Tehreekul Mujahideen, but also among Deobandis and Bareilvis youth who form the overwhelming segment of its recruitment.<sup>78</sup>

The Daawa school system has grown in strength with the current number of schools as high as 500 throughout Pakistan.<sup>79</sup> It is difficult to estimate the present number of students in Dawa schools; it was around 35,000 during 2007.<sup>80</sup> Engagement in social work and participation in natural calamities during the earthquake of 2005 and floods in Pakistan during 2010 allowed the organisation to permeate into the lower strata of the society.<sup>81</sup> Besides, JuD has instituted training camps for its members with sight and hearing impairment, most of them young. Presently, the number of these members runs into thousands. There are 1,500 in Lahore alone that regularly attend JuD resource persons lectures in which they are taught about society and religion. JuD also teaches these disabled youth the affairs of the world to foster awareness in “what is happening in Kashmir, Palestine and what is the role of India, America and Israel in these issues,”<sup>82</sup> Umm-Talha, wife of Hafiz Saeed, is also giving *dars* (lesson) for women at JuD’s main mosque, the Masjid Qadsia in the Chauburji neighborhood of Lahore.<sup>83</sup> Unlike several identical organisations, JuD has never experienced a leadership split of any consequence since its founding; Hafiz Saeed has continued as the ideological head of JuD.

The TTS (Tehrik-e-Taliban Swat) under Fazalullah which has its origin in the TNSM (Tehrik Nifaz Shariat-e-Muhammadi), was the principal showpiece of the TTP (Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan) at its peak during 2007-2009. Considerably waned in the wake of military operations, Fazalullah, now leading the TTP, commands strong influence among a extremist constituency of the sectarian and *jihadi* zealots.<sup>84</sup> In the same way Mawlana Aziz and his late brother Ghazi from Lal Masjid remained on *jihadi* epics as the much revered religious symbols but subsequent to military operations have become history.

Nicknamed the father of the Taliban for his role in educating many of the Afghan students who rose up to capture Kabul in the 1990s,<sup>85</sup> Samiul Haq, leading his faction of Jamiat Ulmae-e-Islam (JUI), is noteworthy in terms of his outreach to violent extremists. He has mentored thousands of jihadi youth who are part of the ranks of the Afghan and Pakistan Taliban. As a political leader but most significantly as the chancellor of the Darul Uloom Jamia Haqqania (DUJH) Akora Khattak, which houses up to 4000 students and is ranked among the leading Deobandi seminaries in the

<sup>78</sup> See Fair, “Lashkar-e-Tayiba and the Pakistani State.”

<sup>79</sup> Gugler, “Jihadism in Pakistan: Going Global.”

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Waqar Gillani, “Able Partners: JuD’s Deaf Wing Camps Are Quite Productive,” *The Jang-News Weekly* (16 April 2012), available at <http://jang.com.pk/thenews/apr2012-weekly/nos-15-04-2012/spr.htm#6> (accessed 8 December 2014).

<sup>83</sup> Gugler, “Jihadism in Pakistan: Going Global.”

<sup>84</sup> For a detailed account of Fazul-ul-llah, see Muhammad Feyyaz, “Political Economy of Tehrik-e-Taliban Swat,” *Peace and Conflict Studies* 4(3) (2011), pp. 37-60.

<sup>85</sup> “Samiul Haq Renounces Support for Polio Immunization,” *Pakistan Today* (22 Jul 2012), <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2012/07/22/national/samiul-haq-renounces-support-for-polio-immunisation/> (accessed 8 December 2014).

country,<sup>86</sup> Samiulhaq influences youth mindsets markedly as evinced by his methods and content of instruction (DUJH is dubbed the ‘University of Jihad’). Pakistan’s FIA has claimed that the plan to assassinate Benezir Bhutto was hatched at this seminary.<sup>87</sup> Another somewhat less discussed but still prominent religious scholar is Farhat Hashmi, whose controversial theology has earned her censure from a large body of ulema (religious scholars) for allegedly cultivating narratives of al-Qaeda in Muslim women.<sup>88</sup> Her interpretations are marked by the doctrinal stance of Ahl-i Hadith, which rejects most customary practices and intermediaries to privilege foundational texts and individual religious responsibility.<sup>89</sup> Some observers therefore worry whether the conservative Islamic activism of al-Huda’s (Hashmi’s Institute) could lead to endorsement of, or participation in, radical forms of Islamic extremism. A few fear that a generation of South Asian girls will follow Dr Hashmi’s extremist teachings.<sup>90</sup>

In addition to the aforementioned, two key sources in the public arena engendering extremists are madrassas and public schools. Apart from being dubbed as recruitment centres for militancy, madrassas are increasingly becoming a source of a new social order. Its commissioning religious leadership is “not necessarily well-versed in religious scholarship but is enthusiastic in instrumentalising Islam by increasingly becoming assertive and uncompromising in projecting their own form of *Shari’a*.”<sup>91</sup> It is not uncommon hence to find turf wars among competing ideologues and their young followers in urban locales to gain control of the mosques of rival sects through land acquisition<sup>92</sup> and coercively eliciting political clientele in universities by armed youth wings of student organisations.

The discussion here should not obscure the fact that madrassas alone are responsible for producing youth power elites. Some experts (such as Christine Fair, Pervez Hoodbhoy, Asim Ijaz Khwaja, Tahir Andrabi, Jishnu Das and Tristan Zajonc) have challenged assumptions of these schools as major militant hubs.<sup>93</sup> According to Anatol Lieven, a majority of known Pakistani

<sup>86</sup> For details, visit Darul Uloom Jamia Haqqania, “Akora Khattak,” at <http://www.jamiahaqqania.edu.pk/> (accessed 8 December 2014).

<sup>87</sup> “View: Blackguards of Fanaticism Silenced Bashir Bilour,” *Daily Times* (December 29, 2012), available at <http://alisalmanalvi.wordpress.com/tag/sami-ul-haq/> (accessed 8 December 2014).

<sup>89</sup> Faiza Mushtaq, “A Controversial Role Model for Pakistani Women,” *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal* (4) (2010), available at <http://samaj.revues.org/3030> (accessed 8 December 2014).

<sup>90</sup> Khalid Hasan, “Quake God’s Punishment for ‘Immoral Activities’: Farhat Hashmi,” *Friday Times* (1 November 2005), available at <http://archives.dailytimes.com.pk/national/01-Nov-2005/quake-god-s-punishment-for-immoral-activities-farhat-hashmi> (accessed 8 December 2005).

<sup>91</sup> Saeed Shafiqat, “Praetorians and the People,” in *Pakistan: Beyond the Crisis State* (Maleeha Lodhi, ed, Columbia University Press, 2011), p. 101; Huma Yusuf, “Sectarian Violence: Pakistan’s Greatest Security Threat?” (NOREF Report, 9 August 2012), available at <http://www.peacebuilding.no/Regions/Asia/Pakistan/Publications/Sectarian-violence-Pakistan-s-greatest-security-threat/%28language%29/eng-US> (accessed 8 December 2014).

<sup>92</sup> “One Killed as Jamaat-ud-Dawa and Sunni Tehreek Fight over Mosque,” *The Express Tribune* (2 July 2011), available at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/200553/one-killed-as-jamaat-ud-dawa-and-sunni-tehreek-fight-over-mosque/> (accessed 8 December 2014).

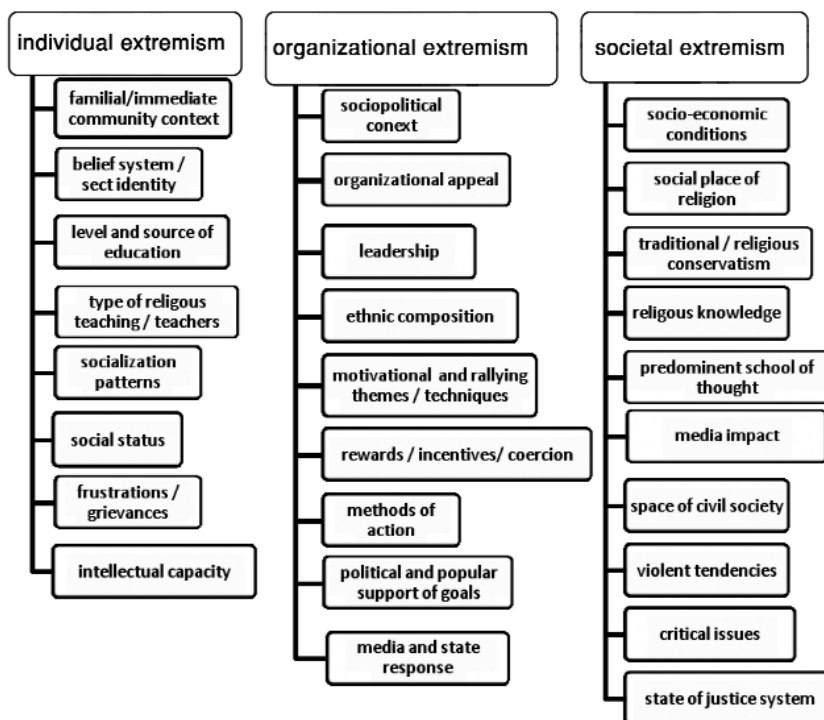
<sup>93</sup> See Tahir Andrabi, et al, “Religious School Enrolment in Pakistan: A Look at the Data” (unpublished paper, 2005), available at <http://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/akhwaja/papers/MadrassaCERNov05.pdf> (accessed 8 December 2014); Tahir Andrabi, et al, “The Madrasa Myth,” *Foreign Policy* (June 2009), available at <http://foreignpolicy.com/2009/06/01/the-madrassa-myth/m> (accessed 8 December 2014); Robert O’Neill, “Learning from Pakistan,” *Harvard Kennedy School Magazine* (Winter 2010), available at <http://www.hks.harvard.edu/news-events/publications/hks-magazine/archives/winter-2010/learning-from-pakistan/> (accessed 8 December 2014); Jayshree Bajoria, “Pakistan’s Education System and Links to Extremism” (Council of Foreign Relations Backgrounder, 7 Oct 2009), available at <http://www.cfr.org/pakistan/pakistans-education-system-links-extremism/p20364> \*accessed 9 December 2014; “Ideas on democracy, free and peace” (Future Youth Group, 2009), available at <https://fygpakistan.wordpress.com/>; K. K. Aziz, *The Murder of History* (Vanguard Books Pvt Ltd, 1993); Husham Ahmed, “Identity crisis haunts Pakistani youth,” *The Statesman* (Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010), available at <http://www.thestatesmen.net/news/identity-crisis-haunts-pakistani-youth/> (accessed 8 December 2014); “History taught in Pakistan challenged,” *Times of India* (3 Feb 1999), available at [https://groups.google.com/forum/#!topic/alt.india.progressive/bJaInlTYO\\_Q](https://groups.google.com/forum/#!topic/alt.india.progressive/bJaInlTYO_Q) (accessed 8 December 2014).

terrorists have in fact attended government schools and quite often have a degree of higher education. He pins the basis for Islamism on the urban lower middle classes rather than the impoverished masses,<sup>94</sup> for in Pakistan, the rural masses can occasionally be stirred up to the furious panic by the cry of ‘Islam in danger.’<sup>95</sup> For instance, LeT draws its recruits not from madrasas but from universities, colleges and among unemployed youths.<sup>96</sup>

**Channels and Resident Spheres**

Individual, organizational and societal extremism in Pakistan can be understood to comprise the elements shown in Figure 2. The frames in the figure reveal sources cultivating extremism in individuals, groups or the society at large. The process to become violent extremist may be direct (or instant), graduated or forced, and is determined by the perspective (opportunity or motive) being espoused by those adapting to extremism. Among others, mainly the family, madrassas, mosques, individual ideologues and society feed the human resource to violent organizations (Figure 3).

**Figure 2 – Determinants / Elements of Religious Extremism**



Source: Author’s compilation

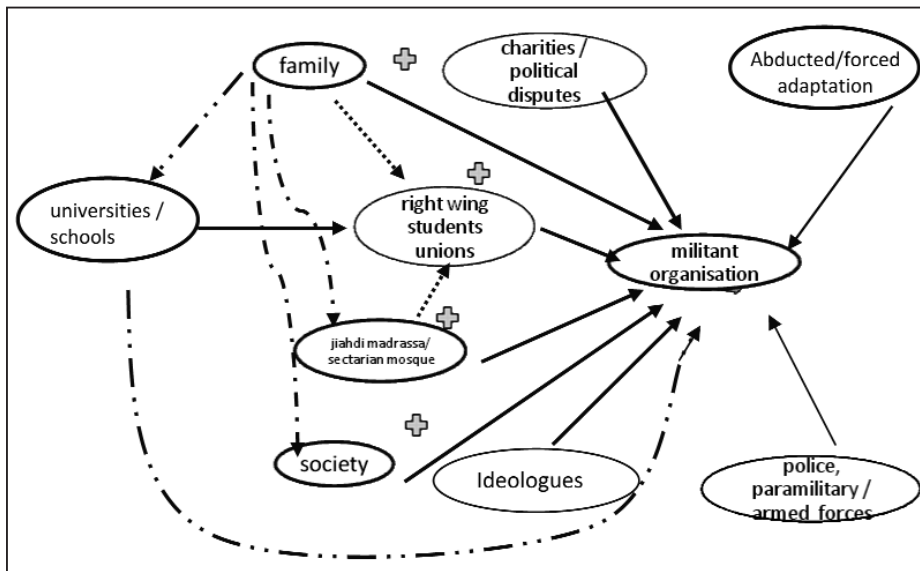
<sup>94</sup> Anatol Lieven, *Pakistan – A Hard Country* (Public Affairs, 2011), p. 160.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 127-28.

<sup>96</sup> See Fair, “Lashkar-e-Tayiba and the Pakistani State.”

The opportunity incentives i.e., prospective gains steered by economic and ideological factors or motives paradigm informed by grievance(s), constitute the dominant motivational frameworks in micro-macro decisionmaking to join rebel organizations.<sup>97</sup> More fertile constituencies that readily fall for militant organizations are madrassa students and local (tribal) youths followed by college students or those unemployed motivated by the appeal of glamour, feelings of revenge, financial incentives, and religious beliefs. The local cell of the organization acts as the recruiting hub. Recruitment exploits family and clan loyalties, tribal lineage, personal friendships, social networks, madrassa alumni circles, and shared interests.<sup>98</sup> For instance, almost all religious seminaries, fugitives and youth section of religious movements were the first to join the ranks of the Taliban during 2003. After entrenching itself firmly in the FATA during 2003, the reach of terrorist groups gradually expanded to adjacent settled areas (the southern districts of KP) into its hinterland; later they engulfed all major and medium-sized urban centres of the country.<sup>99</sup>

**Figure 3 - Sources and channels for extremists**



Source: Author's compilation

It is difficult to classify with precision which of the channels are most common; madrassas known for jihadi products, armed religious student unions and militant organisations can be described generally as the more frequented routes to violent extremism. In most cases, however,

<sup>97</sup> For an explanation, see Henrik Urdal, "A Clash of Generations? Youth Bulges and Political Violence," (UN Doc. UN/POP/EGM-AYD/2011/10 (2011), p. 1, available at [http://www.un.org/esa/population/meetings/egm-adolescents/p10\\_urdal.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/population/meetings/egm-adolescents/p10_urdal.pdf) (accessed 8 December 2014).

<sup>98</sup> Major Shahid Afsar, Pakistan Army; Major Chris Samples and Major Thomas Wood, U.S. Army, "The Taliban: An Organizational Analysis," *Military Review* (May-June 2008), available at [http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/AIWFC/COIN/repository/Understanding\\_Taliban\\_Organization\\_Mil\\_Review%28May-Jun08%29.pdf](http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/AIWFC/COIN/repository/Understanding_Taliban_Organization_Mil_Review%28May-Jun08%29.pdf) (accessed 9 December 2014).

<sup>99</sup> Muhammad Feyyaz, "Conceptualising Terrorism Trend Patterns in Pakistan – an Empirical Perspective," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 7(1) (2013), available at <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/243/html> (accessed 9 December 2014).

family alone accounts for the grooming of siblings into jihadi mindsets. Practically, this dimension of channeling has not received as much attention for policy and reform agendas by the state and non-state development institutions. The state's responses to extremism are at best limited to easily available cosmetic solutions rather than addressing the deep-rooted problem – the social environment for violence and radicalization.<sup>100</sup>

### Physical Spread of Youth Extremism

Lieven pointedly indicates urban areas as potential breeding spots of extremism with selective encroachments in the rural regions, such as in central and southern Punjab, in KP and the FATA.<sup>101</sup> He mainly identifies two radical forces that, according to him, have established a long-running presence in parts of the countryside i.e., Sunni sectarian extremists of the central and southern Punjab, as well as other Islamist Taliban groups in KP and the FATA.<sup>102</sup> Amir Rana claims that over 100 militant and Taliban groups and foreign terrorist networks are operating in and from the tribal areas of Pakistan, having grown from 26 during 2009.<sup>103</sup> Besides the Taliban, other non-state actors involved include a spectrum of militant organizations – some operating under control of the TTP, others loosely affiliated with it. The TTP now boasts having franchises in all four provinces of the country. Each province has a regional commander (located mostly in provincial capitals) who coordinates the planning, organization and execution of contemplated acts independently or in cooperation with other militant groupings. At the local level, provincial chapters of the TTP give primacy to their particular tribal or ethnic identity, even though they cooperate with other provincial chapters in terms of operations when required.<sup>104</sup> Foreign fighters of Afro-Asian origins comprising financiers, logisticians and technical tentacles belonging to 'al-Qaeda and Associated Movements' (AQAM) such as *Qaeda al-Jihad* etc. and elements of the Eastern Turkestan Islamic Movement are also reported present in the FATA.<sup>105</sup> Further, there are numerous cell-centric outfits, almost amorphous and unknown to each other, operating on individualistic impulses and theological interpretations that have nominal associations with major terrorist organizations and accept no central authority.<sup>106</sup>

<sup>100</sup> Akbar Nasir Khan, "Radicalisation and State Response," *The Friday Times* (21-27 Jan 2011), available at <http://www.thefridaytimes.com/21012011/page7.shtml> (accessed 8 December 2014).

<sup>101</sup> Lieven, *Pakistan – A Hard Country*, pp. 127-28.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Amir Rana, "What is Young Pakistan Thinking?" *The Express Tribune Blogs* (2 Sep 2010), <http://blogs.tribune.com.pk/story/1342/what-is-young-pakistan-thinking/>; Muhammad Amir Rana, "Taliban Insurgency in Pakistan: A Counterinsurgency Perspective," *Conflict and Peace Studies* 2(2)(2009), pp. 9-31.

<sup>104</sup> Feyyaz, "Facets of Religious Violence in Pakistan."

<sup>105</sup> Muhammad Rana, Safdar Sial and Abdul Basit, *Dynamics of Taliban Insurgency in FATA*, (PIPS Publications, 2010), pp. 57-58; Mansur Khan Mahsud, "The Battle for Pakistan: South Waziristan - Militancy and Conflict in South Waziristan" (Counterterrorism Strategy Initiative Policy Paper, New America Foundation, 2010), available at [http://newamerica.net/publications/policy/the\\_battle\\_for\\_pakistan\\_south\\_waziristan](http://newamerica.net/publications/policy/the_battle_for_pakistan_south_waziristan) (accessed 9 December 2014);

Wajahat Ali, "China Says Terrorists from Xinjiang Hiding in Pakistan," *Daily Times* (29 May 2004); South Asian Terrorism Portal, "FATA Timeline 2003," at <http://www.satp.org/> (accessed 9 December 2014).

<sup>106</sup> Feyyaz M. Pasha, "Osama's departure and its aftermath for Pakistan," *pkarticleshub.com* (6 May 2011), <http://www.pkarticleshub.com/2011/05/06/osama%E2%80%99s-departure-and-its-aftermath-for-pakistan/> (accessed 9 December 2014).

Outside the FATA, the government was able to register around 24,000 madrassas during December 2011,<sup>107</sup> leaving countless more seminaries as unregistered. There are 83 illegally constructed mosques and seminaries in Islamabad alone.<sup>108</sup> In Balochistan, its provincial capital Quetta leads the figures with 573 religious schools, Khuzdar has 206, Pishin 117, Chaghai 105 and Loralai 109.<sup>109</sup> The figures are believed to be staggering in other Pakhtun districts of northern Balochistan. Quetta is the operational centre of scores of Baloch armed groups, Afghan Taliban, LeJ Balochistan and Iran-based Jundullah. In KP, in addition to its southern districts which are considered religiously dogmatic, the influx of more than 2.5 million Afghan refugees, perhaps a million of them now naturalised as citizens of Pakistan (carrying Pakistani identity cards), served to change the socio-demographic fabric of the frontier regions.<sup>110</sup> The ethnic Pakistanis, if not all, those residing in KP and Balochistan bordering Afghanistan, having common lineage, therefore cannot remain indifferent to the sufferings and tribulations besetting their ethnic brethren. The resultant pain and anguish is shared and manifested in varying degrees, including religious extremism. Darul Aloom Haqqania is the largest seminary located in KP, which has churned out a major part of the Afghan Taliban leadership in addition to those from the FATA. Only 3,343 seminaries are registered with the government, but the actual number is not known.<sup>111</sup> The schools and madrassas run in Afghan refugee camps by Deobandi clergy are yet to be recorded, but are estimated to be at least 100. It may be noted that the JUI (F) and JUI-Sami, (two factions of the Deobandi political parties) ran over 65 per cent of all madrassas in Pakistan (in KP and northern Balochistan) until 2007.<sup>112</sup> One of the largest, Darul Aloom madrassa in Balochistan, was annually enrolling 1,500 boarders and another 1,000 day-students a few years ago.<sup>113</sup> At present, more than half are controlled by the Deobandi JUI-F and are evenly scattered throughout the province, including Baloch-dominated areas. While in government earlier as well as now, the Deobandis have poured resources into their madrassa network to consolidate and expand their political hold over the province.<sup>114</sup> It is important to note that since the collapse of Taliban rule in Afghanistan, Balochistan province became a major centre of anti-Shi'a militants.<sup>115</sup>

<sup>107</sup> "Madaris Not Registered to be Considered Illegal after Jan 1: Rehman Malik," *Associated Press of Pakistan* (19 December 2011), available at [http://app.com.pk/en/\\_index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=171165&Itemid=2](http://app.com.pk/en/_index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=171165&Itemid=2) (accessed 13 November 2014).

<sup>108</sup> "The Trouble with: Madrassas in Pakistan," *The Express Tribune* (January 25, 2012), <http://tribune.com.pk/story/326941/the-trouble-with-madrassas-in-pakistan/> (accessed 9 December 2014).

<sup>109</sup> "18,352 Registered Madrasahs in Country, NA Told," *Dawn* (12 Sep 2011), available at <http://www.dawn.com/news/658520/18352-registered-madrassahs-in-country-na-told> (accessed 9 December 2014).

<sup>110</sup> Are Knudsen, "Political Islam in South Asia" (Chr. Michelsen Institute, 2002), available at <http://www.cmi.no/publications/file/796-political-islam-in-south-asia.pdf> (accessed 9 December 2014).

<sup>111</sup> "18,352 Registered Madrasahs in Country, NA Told."

<sup>112</sup> "Pakistan: Karachi's Madrasahs and Violent Extremism" (Asia Report N°130, International Crisis Group, 29 Mar 2007), available at <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/south-asia/pakistan/130-pakistan-karachi-madrassas-and-violent-extremism.aspx> (accessed 9 December 2014).

<sup>113</sup> William Dalrymple, "Inside Islam's 'Terror Schools,'" *New Statesman* (28 March 2005), available at <http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/international-politics/2014/04/inside-islams-terror-schools> (accessed 9 December 2014).

<sup>114</sup> "The State of Sectarianism in Pakistan," (Asia Report N°95, International Crisis Group, 18 Apr 2005), available at <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/south-asia/pakistan/095-the-state-of-sectarianism-in-pakistan.aspx> (accessed 9 December 2014).

<sup>115</sup> Husain Haqqani, "'Weeding out the Heretics': Sectarianism in Pakistan," (01 Nov 2006), at <http://www.friendskomer.com/forum/f137/sectarianism-pakistan-must-read-article-59650/> (accessed 9 December 2014).

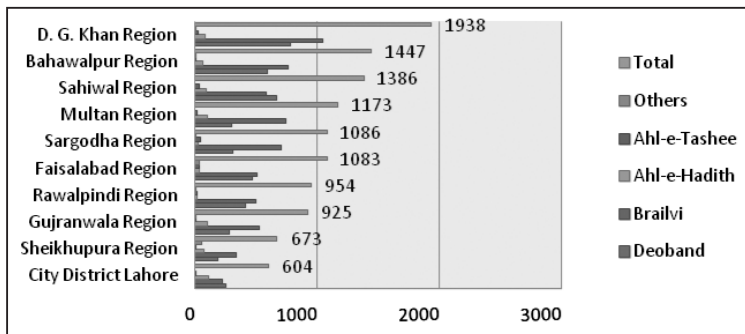
Punjab is the largest province of Pakistan. All major sectarian terrorist groups (ASWJ, LeJ, SeM), Salafist-Wahibi-Deobandi militants (JuD, LeT, TTP Punjab) and Kashmiri fighters, are present there. The highest concentration of religious organizations is in this province, where 107 organizations have their headquarters. The provincial capital Lahore, described as the capital of religious organizations, is the only city in South Asia where at least 71 religious organizations operate. Multan is the second major hub in the province where 18 religious organizations have their headquarters.<sup>116</sup> Besides, in Punjab, areas of religious extremism can be determined from the rapid growth of seminaries between 1975 and 2001 in major districts (see Table 1 below). From a total of 2715 in 2001, these grew to a total 11269 in the next decade, more than 400 percent, including proliferation to new areas and regions belonging to all the sects most notably Deobandi, Bareilvi and Shia (Figure 4). With some variations, at present Punjab has the largest number of madrassas — 12,903. Except for Lahore which has 1,110 madrassas, the heavy concentration is situated in the southern districts of the province.<sup>117</sup> A worrisome aspect is that 90 per cent of foreigners studying in religious seminaries across Punjab have expired visas.<sup>118</sup>

**Table 1 – Growth of Seminaries in Punjab 1975-2001**

Division	1975	1980	1985	1990	1994	2001
Bahawalpur	278	417	598	795	883	971
D. G. Khan	153	217	297	363	411	397
Multan	45	102	179	212	325	363
Lahore	75	120	170	219	323	356
Rawalpindi	58	85	119	157	169	186
Sargodha	75	98	130	148	149	164
Gujranwala	52	66	96	131	140	154
Faisalabad	?	?	?	?	112	124
<b>Total</b>	<b>736</b>	<b>1105</b>	<b>1589</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2512</b>	<b>2715</b>

Sources: Zaman (1998: p. 710), Herald (2001d)

**Figure 4 - Sect Wise Breakup - Deeni Madrassas in Punjab 2010**



Source: Punjab Police 2010

<sup>116</sup> Rana, “Evolution of Militant Groups in Pakistan.”

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

In Sindh, Karachi is the centre of extremist ideologues and operatives. It is also Pakistan's crime capital with a seamy underbelly of arms, drugs, land mafia, contract killers, extortionists and kidnappers, involved in a business estimated around Pakistani Rs 4,000 and Rs 5,000 crore annually.<sup>119</sup> The city has bled persistently for about two decades on account of ethnic, political, sectarian and other reasons.<sup>120</sup> By contrast the Taliban and other religious extremists kill tiny numbers in Karachi.<sup>121</sup> But infiltration by ideologues inimical to the interests of the state and violent jihadis has added complexity into the already fluid and explosive environment of the urban areas of Sindh.<sup>122</sup> Other than a handful of JI and Ahle Hadith seminaries, the vast majority of Karachi's sectarian and jihadi madrasas follow the Deobandi confession and are associated with the Wafaq al-Madaris al-Arbiya, the Deobandi madrassa union.<sup>123</sup> Many Karachi leaders state that over 60 percent of the seminarians in the city are Pakhtun and Afghan (Deobandi) madrassas. Recently a madrassa was shown on TV training troubled youths as suicide-bombers for al-Qaeda and the Taliban.<sup>124</sup> It is also the regional seat of TTP Sindh, Pakistani Jundullah, Pakistan Sunni Tehrik, and Afghan cartels, among others.

Ironically most of the nation's universities have also seen widespread intimidation, threats of mass violence, and interference with examinations, faculty hiring, and admission of new students, by heavily-armed radical religious organizations.<sup>125</sup> During March 2010, the death of a student for playing music inside his dormitory room at the hands of a student wing of the Jamaat-i-Islami sparked riots and clashes between rival student factions, prompting the authorities to close down all educational institutions on the campus of the University of Engineering and Technology, Peshawar.<sup>126</sup> In another instance, IJT's hooliganism at Punjab University following the assassination of one of their former activists in May 2012 created a big commotion.<sup>127</sup> In June of the same year, intimidation and harassment of students and teachers in the Philosophy Department of Punjab University by activists allegedly belonging to IJT caught the attention of national media, which was termed as alarming by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan.<sup>128</sup> Experiencing similar practices

<sup>119</sup> Qaswar Abbas, "Karachi: World's Most Dangerous City," *India Today* (27 Aug 2011), available at <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/worlds-most-dangerous-country/1/149333.html> (accessed 8 December 2014).

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> "Violence in Karachi, Into the Abyss," *The Economist* (27 Aug 2011), available at <http://www.economist.com/node/21526919> (accessed 8 December 2014).

<sup>122</sup> Feyyaz, "Ethnic Conflict in Sindh."

<sup>123</sup> "Pakistan: Karachi's Madrasas and Violent Extremism."

<sup>124</sup> Khaled Ahmed, "Too Weak to Attack North Waziristan", *Friday Times* XXIV(37) (October 26 - November 01, 2012), available at <http://www.thefridaytimes.com/beta3/tft/article.php?issue=20121026&page=2> (accessed 9 December 2014).

<sup>125</sup> Patrick Belton, "Democracy In Pakistan: A Legacy Of Democratic Failure (2/3)," *WindsOfChange.com* (Oxford Democracy Forum, 6 May 2004), at [http://www.windsOfchange.net/archives/democracy\\_in\\_pakistan\\_a\\_legacy\\_of\\_democratic\\_failure\\_23.html](http://www.windsOfchange.net/archives/democracy_in_pakistan_a_legacy_of_democratic_failure_23.html) (accessed 12 November 2014).

<sup>126</sup> Ali Hazrat Bacha, "UoP Closed after Student's Death Sparks Riots," *Dawn* (Mar. 20, 2012), available at <http://archives.dawn.com/archives/74451> (accessed 9 December 2014).

<sup>127</sup> Xari Jalil, "Campus Politics Turns Bloody," *Dawn* (May 23, 2012), available at <http://www.dawn.com/news/720717/campus-politics-turns-bloody> (accessed 9 December 2014).

<sup>128</sup> Zohra Yusuf, "Armed Jamiat Fanatics Attack Students & Teachers at PU," *Viewpoint* (30 June 2011), available at <http://www.viewpointonline.net/2014/06/armed-jamiat-fanatics-attack-student-teachers-at-pu/887-armed-jamiat-fanatics-attack-students-teachers-at-pu> (accessed 9 December 2014).

in the past, the University of Karachi was forced to issue a code of ethics for the students on the commencement of the new academic session in January 2013, which among other things specifically addressed the use of force, intimidation or interference in the university's administrative affairs.<sup>129</sup> Finally, in ascertaining the physical spread of extremism, household women should not be ignored as they constitute a major target audience amenable to manipulation by the media, as well as dictated socio-religious ethos transmitted by male family heads.<sup>130</sup>

### **Conclusion and Policy Suggestions**

The paper has reviewed youth religious extremism in Pakistan delineating the contexts, demographics, inspirations and resident spheres of its occurrences. It finds that the phenomenon has firm roots in the society; however, no given definition fully captures its manifest character due to conflicting social nuances and the absence of bipartisanism in defining it. The literature views extremists as diseased, immoderate, inflexible or irrational actors, at times mixing conservatism as well as sentimental attributes of society with religious narratives. To the contrary, the stakes involved e.g., esteem, reputation, ambitions, money, power and life, plainly defy these assertions warranting a revisit to the fundamentals of definitional aspects. Also, this skewed approach towards youth extremism limits the spectrum of policy responses. Likewise, the narratives, inspirations and motivational themes employed by extremist organizations and their ideologues are so skillfully harmonized with topical grievances and frustrations of the society that these have become deeply ingrained as a regular feature of social life in Pakistan. Only a reasoned, articulate and structurally coherent policy response can meaningfully address these. It should, it is suggested, envisage youth religious extremism in Pakistan as a rational belief position underpinned by an internalized worldview that seeks clout, revenge and deliverance. It is expected that interventions predicated on this suggestion will help craft policy options which will be consistent with realities, hence are expected to be result oriented.

The number of violent extremists is an insignificant fraction given the demographics of the country. However, those vulnerable to extremism including women are assessed to be sizeable due to a burgeoning youth population deprived of opportunities, and the urban areas is their primary abode. The type of extremism they may espouse will depend upon the religious or sectarian community they belong to in addition to the prevailing degree of religiosity and cultural conservatism at home. The state and family units are unlikely to insulate such large youth population, more specifically the males, from developing intimate interactions with groups and organizations who can meet their psychosocial, spiritual and material needs, as no coherent anti-extremism policy exists at any level, barring efforts by a handful of civil society organizations. Due to longer exposure periods, social trends of late marriages have also implications for attitude formation and warrant matching attention. A national policy and action plan is required by integrating relevant ministries,

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<sup>129</sup> Associated Press of Pakistan, "KU Issues Code of Ethics for Students," *The Nation* (19 January 2013), available at <http://nation.com.pk/karachi/19-Jan-2013/ku-issues-code-of-ethics-for-students> (accessed 9 December 2014).

<sup>130</sup> "Pakistan: The Next Generation Report," p. 14.

constitutional bodies, religious forums, think tanks, and academic institutions to decisively transform extremist mindsets and practices consistent with popular beliefs, values and norms. The Ministry of the Interior and the Council of Islamic Ideology, are considered appropriate forums to initiate a national youth anti-extremism policy having inbuilt structural linkages with education and domestic security policies. A few short and long term measures are suggested to materialize a moderate, conflict free and progressive youth in Pakistan.

### *Short-term Measures*

The family, public schools, colleges, public universities, mosques and madrassas have emerged as the key channels to spawn extremism among youth. In the reformation drive, both by the government and non-state agencies - local as well as foreign, the family which is the building block of society, should become the prime focus of attention. The NGOs and development organizations should strategize family as the agent of societal change. For this purpose, pilot projects can be initiated in selected districts of southern Punjab and KP, as well as the restive suburbs of Karachi, later enfolding affluent families. The corrective discourse should comprise an assessment of existing tendencies, frustrations and aspirations which should be translated into short-term development programmes aimed at ensuring their stable social security and access to an informed source of knowledge, both secular as well as religious. Within the target communities, families housing the age groups between 10 and 19 years should be viewed with priority.

Students in colleges and universities unions are adults, and therefore should be allowed their political rights which in many ways provide an effective forum to vent frustrations and sustained engagement. Consequently, ban on student unions should be lifted. Nevertheless there is a need to revisit and redraw a charter for ethical conduct of students as has been recently initiated by Karachi University. Deprivation of opportunity for just expression is antithetical to the democratic norms and values for which this country is struggling so hard.

The state's intervention in mosques is tantamount to interference in individual faith. Yet this is inevitable to regulate malpractices, including spread of hate and violent ideologies by these otherwise peaceful abodes. However a minimalist approach is suggested that desires the governing committees of the mosques and their imams (religious leaders) to evoke ways to harmonize an objective message of Islam with emerging challenges faced by society to make religious practices simple and more practicable, rather than ritualistic, besides creating space to forge solidarity among diverse schools of thought for the collective good. The Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior, should become the lead agencies to undertake this initiative after careful planning and formulation of implementation strategies. Here too the context of a specific approach is proposed which can be subsequently expanded to the entire country.

The use of force against extremist criminals should be resorted to where required only as a last resort. Theoretical constructs like religious intelligence – the branch of cultural intelligence responsible for obtaining and analyzing information about the sacred beliefs and its impact on security operations, should be frequently dovetailed into planning by experts at the interior

ministry, intelligence agencies and law enforcement agencies for operational efficiency. An organizational framework comprising multidisciplinary sources is proposed to help identify empirical swell of extremism for analysis, targeting and policy formulation:

- i) Government higher secondary schools in all four provinces – Islamabad, Gilgit-Baltistan, the FATA, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir, especially in the provincial capitals as well as major cities;
- ii) Selected jihadi madrassas and mosques in the country;<sup>131</sup>
- iii) Militant organisations, groups and networks from all confessions;
- iv) Publishers and readership of jihadi (religious and sectarian) publications, literature, dailies, monthlies, quarterly journals etc.
- v) Mainstream as well as right-wing political parties having sectarian and jihadi agenda and their membership;
- vi) Student armed wings of politico-religious parties in major universities;
- vii) Armed as well as frustrated citizenry from sectarian conflicted areas;
- viii) Training camps operated by militant organizations in FATA and border regions of Afghanistan;
- ix) Sympathetic constituencies of militant groups, especially unemployed youth in less as well as least developed areas of the country, especially those adjoining FATA in KP and Balochistan;
- x) B areas of Balochistan;
- xi) Peace-enforcing lashkars/armed groups and armed peace committees ;
- xii) Selected girl schools in the conservative areas of Punjab, KP and northern Balochistan.
- xiii) Madrassas and schools run in Afghan refugee camps.

### ***Long-term Measures***

Cultural pluralism should be attained by rediscovering and assimilating narratives of forgotten folk history, moderating ‘*Either*’ and ‘*Or*’ impulses, but most essentially defining ‘*Pakistaniat*’ based on citizenship. The basic spirit being proposed, which might appear radical to Pakistani nationalists, should be achieved by prioritizing Pakistanis first rather than Pakistan first. It is contended that the real centre of gravity of a nation is its people which provide vibrancy to national ideals. Territory, governments and sovereignty all owe their inspiration to the aspirations of citizenry which these bodies of the State stand for.

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<sup>131</sup> Jihadi madaris are those seminaries that have a history of producing students to fight in Afghanistan and Kashmir; for example, among many others, Jamia Haqqania Akora Khattak and Jamia Binoria in Karachi are two prominently referred to organizations. Qaiser Butt, “Mortal Threat: Reforming Education to Check Extremism,” *The Express Tribune* (January 15, 2011), available at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/104066/mortal-threat-reforming-education-to-check-extremism/> (accessed 9 December 2014).

Second, the narratives predicated on counterarguments to those espoused by extremists have not yielded any results. In the light of the definition proposed at the outset, there is a need to radically alter this mindset by replacing it with a concordance approach. This necessitates thorough understanding of the ideologies propagated by militants and later harmonizing those into countering strategies in order to pave the way for engagement. The key difference in this approach vis-à-vis customary counterextremism responses is that it does not dismiss an opponent's claim as implausible but instead approaches it in a rational fashion. There can be several variations of operational methodologies to handle such a discourse; however all of these should be based fundamentally in a spirit of concordance. The Good Friday agreement in Northern Ireland is an apt example of such an approach.

In order to assimilate religious minorities into mainstream life, rhetoric of interfaith harmony may not work anymore. The best available model for this purpose are the contents of a letter written by Prophet Muhammad to the monks of St. Catherine Monastery in Mt. Sinai (630 CE), reproduced hereunder. In its expanded interpretation this framework of interfaith harmony may also be used to provide safeguard to other non-Muslim minorities e.g., Qadianis, Hindus etc.

This is a message from Muhammad ibn Abdullah, as a covenant to those who adopt Christianity, near and far, we are with them. Verily I, the servants, the helpers, and my followers defend them, because Christians are my citizens; and by Allah! I hold out against anything that displeases them. No compulsion is to be on them. Neither are their judges to be removed from their jobs nor their monks from their monasteries. No one is to destroy a house of their religion, to damage it, or to carry anything from it to the Muslims' houses. Should anyone take any of these, he would spoil God's covenant and disobey His Prophet. Verily, they are my allies and have my secure charter against all that they hate. No one is to force them to travel or to oblige them to fight. The Muslims are to fight for them. If a female Christian is married to a Muslim, it is not to take place without her approval. She is not to be prevented from visiting her church to pray. Their churches are to be respected. They are neither to be prevented from repairing them nor the sacredness of their covenants. No one of the nation (Muslims) is to disobey the covenant till the Last Day (end of the world).

In the same vein, there is a need to reintroduce Deeniyyat (the study of other religions), in addition to Islamiyyat (Islamic studies) in schools and university education managed through consensual processes among the higher education commission and provincial text books boards coupled with representation from civil society through a phased programme. The Planning Commission of Pakistan, the Islamic Council of Ideology or the Islamic University Islamabad could coordinate national efforts and institutionalize the whole process by providing necessary mechanisms and procedural pathways to secure this end.

The process of dialogue against extremism has so far been confined to speeches by public figures, clergy and intellectuals on key national days. The situation demands novelty in strategic thinking by initiating revolutionary steps. It is proposed that ideologues representing violent movements, such as Hafiz Saeed, sectarian clergy and leadership of banned organizations should be allowed and urged to express their viewpoints publically on the version, sources and rationale of sharia'h, religious or sectarian thought they propagate. Since sectarianism is rampant in the country with Shias being the principal victims, Shia clerics and intellectuals should take the lead to create awareness about their religious beliefs through structured and highly advertised media programmes, encompassing also historical, legal and theological areas of real or perceived friction and confrontations with those of the Sunni majority. For this purpose, it is essential that an environment be created to allow for safe debate.

To contain the formation of youth 'bulges' in urban centres, a two-prong strategy – selective rural urbanisation of Punjab and manipulative approach i.e., discretely controlled nationwide internal migration – can prove effective. This will reduce if not prevent risks of collusion of rural adults with urban-based religious extremists.

Finally, it is recommended that out of the 25 million people in the major urban centres of the four provinces, and some 10 million people in rural Punjab, the youth segment of the unemployed and underemployed – six million – should receive first priority for rehabilitation. These elements can cause social unrest and violence which, if mistaken for religious violence can compound response strategies with higher risks of societal disturbances. Child labour should be declared to be a social evil, warranting coordinated efforts for its complete elimination. The government cannot do it alone, but must be complemented by support from local and international donor and development agencies.

At this juncture Pakistan is on its way to democracy. Despite some critical inadequacies, it boasts the existence of a free and vibrant media that explains why an Arab spring-type social typology does not manifest here. Besides, political participation is on the rise due to gradually sustaining political processes and the emergence of accountability mechanisms. Further, the country presents its surprising underlying stability, rooted in kinship, patronage, and the power of entrenched local elites.<sup>132</sup> While these indicators bode well for the future, it must be emphasized that Pakistan is also a highly complex and diverse country of competing religious traditions, varied social landscapes, deep political tensions, and historical patterns of violence.<sup>133</sup> Consequently, interventions to deal with the menace of religious extremism ought to be informed by local conditions assimilating all its symmetries and contradictions. The scenario presented is menacing, but it is not insurmountable.

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<sup>132</sup> See Lieven, *Pakistan: A Hard Country*.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

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