GREASE
Religion, Diversity and Radicalisation

Country Report

Pakistan

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This Country Report offers a detailed assessment of religious diversity and violent religious radicalisation in the above-named state. It is part of a series covering 23 countries (listed below) on four continents. More basic information about religious affiliation and state-religion relations in these states is available in our Country Profiles series. This report was published by GREASE, an EU-funded research project investigating religious diversity, secularism and religiously inspired radicalisation.

Countries covered in this series:
Albania, Australia, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Malaysia, Morocco, Russia, Slovakia, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

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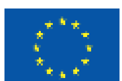

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The EU-Funded GREASE project looks to Asia for insights on governing religious diversity and preventing radicalisation.

Involving researchers from Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Oceania, GREASE is investigating how religious diversity is governed in over 20 countries. Our work focuses on comparing norms, laws and practices that may (or may not) prove useful in preventing religious radicalisation. Our research also sheds light on how different societies cope with the challenge of integrating religious minorities and migrants. The aim is to deepen our understanding of how religious diversity can be governed successfully, with an emphasis on countering radicalisation trends.

While exploring religious governance models in other parts of the world, GREASE also attempts to unravel the European paradox of religious radicalisation despite growing secularisation. We consider the claim that migrant integration in Europe has failed because second generation youth have become marginalised and radicalised, with some turning to jihadist terrorism networks. The researchers aim to deliver innovative academic thinking on secularisation and radicalisation while offering insights for governance of religious diversity.

The project is being coordinated by Professor Anna Triandafyllidou from The European University Institute (EUI) in Italy. Other consortium members include Professor Tariq Modood from The University of Bristol (UK); Dr. H. A. Hellyer from the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) (UK); Dr. Mila Mancheva from The Centre for the Study of Democracy (Bulgaria); Dr. Egdunas Racius from Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania); Mr. Terry Martin from the research communications agency SPIA (Germany); Professor Mehdi Lahlou from Mohammed V University of Rabat (Morocco); Professor Haldun Gulalp of The Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (Turkey); Professor Pradana Boy of Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang (Indonesia); Professor Zawawi Ibrahim of The Strategic Information and Research Development Centre (Malaysia); Professor Gurpreet Mahajan of Jawaharlal Nehru University (India); and Professor Michele Grossman of Deakin University (Melbourne, Australia). GREASE is scheduled for completion in 2022.

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GREASE - Radicalisation, Secularism and the Governance of Religion: Bringing Together European and Asian Perspectives

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Introduction

Few countries in the world have as intertwined, instrumental and interesting a relationship between the state and religion as the 'Islamic' Republic of Pakistan does. Pakistan was built on the premise of the 'Two Nations Theory'. This theory specifies that Muslims and Hindus in India are "two distinct communities that could not coexist within a single state without dominating and discriminating against the other" and hence could not live together peacefully (Bennett, 2018, pp. 659-699). Ayesha Jalal (2011, p. 1) explains that when the British Raj began, "the political map of the subcontinent did not reflect the religious affiliations of its peoples" but by the time it came to an end, such "rivalries" were at the forefront of "Indian politics" and eventually mass violence in 1947. What is important to know about why and how Pakistan was founded is that "religion appears to have been the determinant of nationality" (Jalal, 2011, p.1). The process and trauma of Partition, in Jalal's (2011, p. 1) work is paralleled with that of "a holocaust unprecedented even in the blood-stained annals of India's past" where not just Muslims and Hindus but also "Sikhs and Muslims" engaged in mass slaughter, mob and communal violence - amongst other crimes.

Estimates suggest that anywhere between "200,000 and 2 million" people died and around 14 million left and fled their homes to move across the two newly created states within months after Partition was declared. This is "the largest transfer of populations in recorded history" (Jalal, 2011, p. 1). Hindus and Sikhs left Pakistan to move to India and Muslims left India to move to what Pakistan's Founding Father referred to as "a maimed, mutilated, and moth-eaten Pakistan" (Jalal, 2011, p. 426; Doshi and Mehdi, 2017). Jalal (2011, p. 1) says that although there are "various theories" that attempt to deconstruct "these cataclysmic events", "they raise more questions than they answer". The various theories as Jalal (2011, p. 1) mentions include the explanations of "Indian Muslims" having perpetually had "a separate and identifiable community" – meaning they "never wholly assimilated into their Indian environment" – and the divide and rule tactics of the British Raj that permanently created communal fissures in British India. References to publications that explore the two explanations in more detail are available in Jalal's (2011, p. 1) book titled 'The Sole Spokesman Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan'. That is owing to the "most striking fact about Pakistan", which is that "it failed to satisfy the interests of the very Muslims" and citizens of other faiths - as this report will go on to iterate - who brought it into existence[1] (Jalal, 2011, p. 2). This is not to imply that all Muslims in British India were for the idea of Pakistan. Ali Usman Qasmi and Megan Eaton Robb

[1] Mahler (1998) says that in the eyes of many people, this is due to Jinnah's passing away that happened "only a few days after the first anniversary of independence" and the subsequent "leadership vaccum" that some see as the root cause of "many of the country's subsequent political and financial problems". Even so, Jalal (2011) sees Partition as the most important causal happening to which many of the said issues can be directly linked with.

(2017) have edited the book titled 'Muslims against the Muslim League: Critiques of the Idea of Pakistan' to explore this unexplored side of the Pakistani Movement.

The legacy of Islam in Pakistan is one that is dogmatic and nationalistic in ideology and marred with violence and polarization in practice. Originally founded as West Pakistan (contemporary Islamic Republic of Pakistan) and East Pakistan (contemporary Bangladesh) in 1947, the Pakistan that is known to the world today was classified as an 'Islamic Republic' under its first Constitution in 1956 (prior to this, the Government of India Act, 1935, was adhered to as the de facto Constitution), about 9 years after its founding. Pakistan has had three Constitutions. They were signed into existence in 1956, 1962 and finally 1973. Currently, Pakistan adheres to the Constitution of 1973.

Ayesha Jalal (2014, p. 3) terms the separation of West and East Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh a "traumatic dismemberment of the country in 1971". This was two years prior to the first coup d'état in Pakistan. Although the Constitution of 1956 was abrogated under the first military dictatorship (it is to be noted that all four military dictators held the office of the President rather than the Prime Minister of Pakistan) of Field Marshal Muhammad Ayub Khan in 1958, its preamble - which was largely influenced by the Objectives Resolution of 1949 - left lasting impacts on Pakistan's relationship with Islam to date. To name a few important legal examples, its influence can be seen in the three constitutions of Pakistan, as well as the Shariah Ordinance of 1988 (Islamic Research Institute, International Islamic University, Islamabad, 1988).

The Objectives Resolution of 1949 is one of the most legally important documents in Pakistan's history. Not only did it set forth the jurisprudential foundations for future constitutions to adopt but it also laid down principles on how certain religious rules would steer the nation's political and moral conscience. Through the Eighth Amendment of 1985, it was officially incorporated within the Constitution of 1973. It stated that the "principles of democracy, freedom, equality, tolerance and social justice" would be practiced "as enunciated by Islam" and under "the authority which He has delegated to the State of Pakistan" (The Objectives Resolution, Article 2(A), 1949). Despite having received cautionary disapproval from 21 out of 75 members of the National Assembly who came from religious minority backgrounds - including NA members Prem Hari, Sris Chandra Chattopadhyaya, Chandra Mandal and Kumar Datta - and found the resolution less pluralistic than they had hoped for, it was voted into existence by the Muslim majority in the National Assembly.

The religious tensions that began during the early developmental stages of Pakistan as a nation were only exacerbated with time. Samina Yasmeen (1999, p. 185) sheds light on the "corollary" between" traditionalists" who initially argued against "artificially created boundaries" for what they described as a more universal "ummah" and insisted post-Independence that "the relationship between the state and Islam" was "non-negotiable" and "modernists" who pressed for a "separation of the state and societal

religious values" so that Pakistan would be a more pluralistic "state for Muslims but not an Islamic state". The two sides were not as secluded from one another as they may seem, though. Yasmeen (1999, p. 186) points out that historically, "the modernists" catered to more traditional notions "into the construction of Pakistani statehood", especially to preserve their political standing in a young Pakistan. One of the examples that she provides is that of Pakistan's first military dictator - who had a relatively 'Westernised' and 'modern' outlook - or perhaps, reputation as he was still very much an army-centric nationalist - paradoxically "declaring Pakistan an Islamic Republic Republic in the 1962 constitution" (Yasmeen, 1999, p. 186). His successors General Yahya Khan (Pakistan's second military dictator) and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (Pakistan's first civilian Chief Martial Law Administrator who later turned against the military) took similar actions toward Islamization that suited their political careers (Yasmeen, 1999, p. 186). Hence, Pakistan is currently "seen as having been created for Muslims" with a strong character infused with "an Islamic identity" where "sharia" is supposed to be "the only source of knowledge" for determining how the state functions (Yasmeen, 1999 p. 185).

Both civilian and military rulers intensified the pace, form and amount of religious nationalism - and in many ways, radicalization - in Pakistan legally, socially and politically. This notably includes the tenures of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto as the first civilian Chief Martial Law Administrator (1971 to 1973), the Prime Minister of Pakistan (1988 to 1990 and 1993 to 1996) and the military dictatorship of General Zia-ul-Haq (1977 to 1988), amongst a rather long list of leaders who endorsed religiously radical views to foster their political career through Islamist popularity. Lieven (2011, p. 18) says that General Zia's dictatorship attempted to "develop Pakistan through enforced adherence to a stricter and more puritanical form of Islam mixed with Pakistani nationalism" whereas Bhutto – who started off his political career as the first civilian dictator of Pakistan and later turned towards anti-establishment politics, "tried to rally the Pakistani masses behind him with a programme of anti-elitist economic populism, also mixed with Pakistani nationalism". Lieven (2011, p. 18) concludes that "they all failed". Initially, non-Muslims made up around 23 per cent of the total population. Today, that figure stands at barely around 3 per cent in a country that was historically home to Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims and Sikhs; the exact population of non-Muslims in Pakistan is contested as they claim to be underrepresented in the census counts (Hoodbhoy, 2021). In Karachi alone, the Hindu population dwindled from "46.6% to less than 1%" from 1941 to 1951 (Rahman 2012, p. 303).

Jalal (1990. p. 287) says that "despite Islam's egalitarian creed", Pakistani "Muslims remain divided by class, caste, tribal and clan affiliations, to say nothing of the inherited differences of rank and privilege". She adds that "the vast majority of Pakistani Muslims retain an unconscious attachment to local traditions and symbols, not uncommonly of Hindu origin" whether they consciously realise it or not (Jalal, 1990. p. 287). She terms it a "syncretic weave" and observes that it is easy to recognize in "the Punjab, Sind and Bengal, where for centuries before partition Muslims and

Hindus had lived cheek by jowl - resisting as well as adopting one another's social mores" (Jalal, 1990, p. 287). She observes that in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (former NWFP), Hindus were largely "outnumbered by Muslims" and hence "Islam had to accommodate the customs of a largely tribal and pastoral people" (Jalal, 1990, p. 287). From the 1950s to date, Pakistan has incessantly – as a state and a society – adopted ideological and empirical instruments of intolerance towards both Muslims who do not adhere to the status quo as well as non-Muslims on the whole. This is not just a social dynamic that is observable from the ongoing violence against Shias and religious minorities but also in non-violent indications[2] of intolerance and radicalization. Farahnaz Ispahani (2015, p. 2) says, "the right of religious minorities to live in peace" has been breached over the years by "communal majoritarianism" that lies "at the heart of Pakistan's policies".

Religious minorities, as well as non-Sunni sects commonly attempt to flee the country or make efforts to 'blend in' within their communities due to threats including but not limited to sectarian violence, militant attacks, vigilante crime including mob lynching, land grabbing, accusations of blasphemy and terrorism[3]. Sectarian violence is defined as: "a particular form of ethnic conflict, where conflict is motivated at least in part by the ascriptive identities—identities inherited by birth—of those involved" (Kalin and Siddiqui, 2014, p. 4). An exhaustive discussion of what the "contested" term 'terrorism' means is available in Alex Schmid's (2011, p. 74) chapter titled 'The Definition of Terrorism', where he puts forth "legalistic (inter)governmental definitions". He lists the substantial elements (one or more of which may be ticked for a particular case study) of a definition on terrorism as:

"1 the demonstrative use of violence against human beings;

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[2] According to Pew Research Center's (2010) report titled '*Concern About Extremist Threat Slips in Pakistan*', "even though Pakistanis largely reject extremist organisations, they embrace some of the severe laws advocated by such groups". For instance: "more than eight-in-ten support segregating men and women in the workplace, stoning adulterers, and whipping and cutting off the hands of thieves" (Pew Research Center, 2010). Additionally, around "three-in-four endorse the death penalty for those who leave Islam" (Pew Research Center, 2010). This is not to conflate the ordinary Pakistani citizen with an extremist though. Most Pakistanis do notably "differ sharply" from terrorists and extremists "when it comes to a tactic associated with both groups: suicide bombing" with "fully 80% of Pakistani Muslims" rejecting it as a way "to defend Islam" (Pew Research Center, 2010). This is "the highest percentage among the Muslim publics surveyed" and has risen sharply with only "35%" of Pakistani Muslims adhering to this belief "six years" as per Pew (2010). Still, even though most Pakistani Muslims do not defend suicide bombings, the former indications do point towards a certain level of religious conservatism when it comes to penalizing measures as well as gender roles. For instance, "88%" of Pakistani Muslims voted in favour of a wife having to "always obey her husband", "53%" opted for "equal inheritance rights", "85%" voted in favour of "converting others" as "a religious duty" and an overwhelming "98%" said that "all or most of their close friends are Muslims" (The World's Muslims: Religion, Politics and Society, 2013, pp. 93-127).

[3] Pakistan ranks 10th on the 2021 Global Terrorism Index (Vision of Humanity, 2022). Although there is some backlash against quantitive measures of terrorism and socio-political issues, this report turns towards quantitative data - as complementary to qualitative research - because it provides an objective, undemonstrative analysis that helps decipher the social reality and "behaviour patterns" of extremists,, especially on a macro level (Fowler, 1980). Together, the mixed method approach leads to a 'scientific' and 'critical' enquiry within the social sciences (Curini and Franzese, 2020).

2 the (conditional) threat of (more) violence;
3 the deliberate production of terror or fear in a target group;
4 the targeting of civilians, non-combatants and innocents;
5 the purpose of intimidation, coercion and/or propaganda;
6 the fact that it is a method, tactic or strategy of waging conflict;
7 the importance of communicating the act(s) of violence to larger audiences;
8 the illegal, criminal and immoral nature of the act(s) of violence;
9 the predominantly political character of the act;
10 its use as a tool of psychological warfare to mobilise or immobilise sectors of the public." (Schmid, 2011, p. 74).

More content on the various types of terrorism and extremism (the two are not to be conflated) can be found in the 'Handbook of Terrorism Prevention and Preparedness' (Schmid, 2021).

Ayesha Jalal (2014, pp. 1-8) comments on Pakistan's perpetual longing for "national moorings" and says that "the displacement of history by an ill-defined Islamic ideology" has led to an overstatement of polarities between Muslims and non-Muslims in the region and thus resulted in a religio-national "homogenous category". She further states that "Pakistanis receive schooling in ideology" that is intended to strengthen faith in "constructed national myths" and tends to "deny the welter of heterogeneities within the country itself" (Jalal, 2014, p. 8). It is in light of this particular kind of nationalism, intolerance and escalating levels of violence and mass polarisation fuelled by religious sentiments that Pakistan has become increasingly radicalised.

The report aims to discuss the nuances and facets of religious diversity, tolerance (of the lack thereof) and radicalization in Pakistan. It utilises a mixed-method (qualitative and quantitative) approach. It will initiate with an overview of the socio-demographics in Pakistan - with a focus on religious and ethnic diversity and sectarianism. Then, it will look into Pakistan's legal, institutional and sectarian history relating to radicalization, as well as its school education system. Subsequently, it will lay out the various challenges that Pakistan faces in regards to radicalization i.e. religious militancy, terrorism and religious sentiments. Finally, it will shed light on state policies aiming at countering the said radicalization. Overall, it aims to provide a sense of how religion plays out in Pakistan, a country that is known for its resistance to celebrating or even accepting religious heterogeneity in jurisprudence, socio-politics and policy - both in ideology and practice.

Socio-Demographics of Pakistan: An Overview

Pakistan is a post-colonial, multi-ethic country located in South Asia. It was founded on August 14th, 1947 during the Partition of India and independence from the British Raj (Dalrymple, 2015). The founding father of Pakistan is Quaid-e-Azam (meaning 'the great leader') Muhammad Ali Jinnah. It is neighboured by Iran on its Western end, Afghanistan on its Northwestern and Northern end, India to the Southeast and Southern end and China to the Northeastern end. Previously known as West Pakistan, it now consists of what remained after East Pakistan (modern-day Bangladesh) broke away from West Pakistan following the War of 1971 that Pakistan lost.

It has around 770,880.0 sq. km of land and a population of around 225,199,929 (World Bank, 2022a; 2022b) people. Women constitute around 48.5 % of this population (World Bank, 2022b). It is the fifth most populated country in the world (World Population Review, 2022c). The official language of Pakistan is English and the national language is Urdu. Although Urdu is a functional language in Pakistan, less than 8% of the country identifies it as their first language. Many ethnic languages are spoken in Pakistan (roughly 70-80) including - but not limited to - Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto, Farsi, Brahui, Hindko, Balti, Kalasha, Hazargi and Shina (Parekh, 2017; Ethnologue: Languages of the World, 2022).

The four provinces of Pakistan are Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Islamabad is the capital city and federal territory and Karachi is the largest city and industrial cosmopolis in the country with access to the Arabian Sea. Pakistan also administers the autonomous territories of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan (Toponymic Fact File Pakistan, 2019, p. 3).

Pakistan adheres to a federal and parliamentary form of government with three branches of government: legislative, executive and judicial. Islam is the state religion. Pakistan has had four military coups and dictatorships. Although the Pakistani military is not directly governing Pakistan currently, it is heavily involved in state affairs. The military is also known to have taken a swift turn towards 'Islamization' with General Zia's dictatorship (Yasmeen, 1999, p. 187). Freedom House (2022a; 2022b) places Pakistan at 37 under the category of "partly free" for "people's access to political rights and civil liberties" and the rights of religious minorities. Their report considers surveys on both civilian and military governments in Pakistan. A more detailed analysis can be found in the following link: https://freedomhouse.org/country/pakistan/freedom-world/2022.

Pakistan's ethnic heterogeneity includes Punjabis, Sindhis, Muhajirs (immigrants who migrated from various parts of India during Partition in 1947), Balochis, Hazaras, Pashtuns, Brahuis, Potoharis, Kashmiris, Kalash, Chitralis, Shina, Kohistanis, Baltis and

many other minority groups[4]. Pakistan's multi-layered ethnic diversity is a cause of contention. Ethno-nationalist groups and insurgencies, notably the ongoing Baloch insurgency, often reveal cracks in Pakistan's national identity formation and governance.

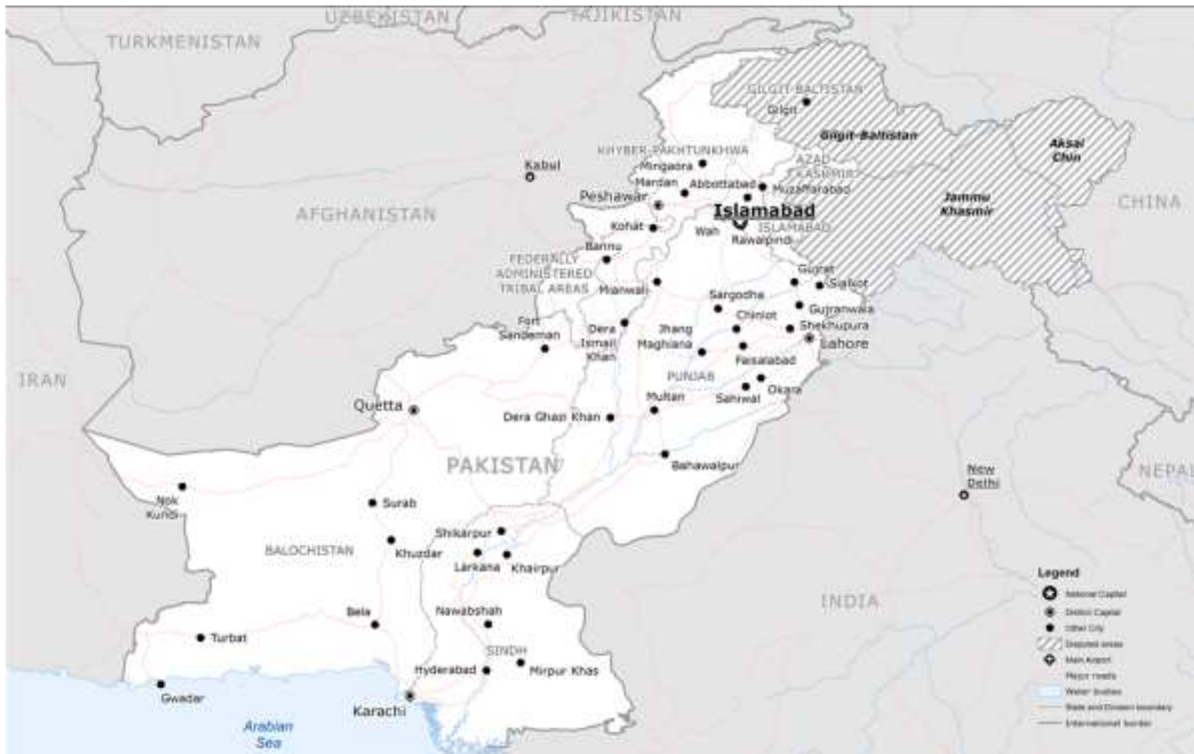
Pakistan is home to the second largest population of Muslims in the world. Muslims comprise 96.5 per cent of the Pakistani population, with the majority adhering to the Sunni Hanafi school of Islamic jurisprudence and a small population following the Shafi school of jurisprudence (World Population Review, 2022b). There are four schools of jurisprudence within Islam: Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi and Hanbali. The three main Shia subsects are: Zaidis, Ismailis and Ithna Asharis. Within both the Sunni and Shia sects, there are many further sub-sects. Around 15-20 per cent[5] of Muslims in Pakistan are adherents of the Shia sect (Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life: Mapping the Global Muslim Population, 2009a). This includes the "Hazara, Ismaili, and Bohra, a branch of Ismaili" communities (Home Office, 2021, p. 11) There are other religious beliefs like the mystical Sufism (which attracts followers of Sunni and Shia sects, as well as non-Muslims in the Indian subcontinent) and revivalist and reformist movements. Overall, this leaves a very small - and dwindling - population of religious minorities outside of the Islamic faith. Michael Kugelman (2014) said that Pakistan is, "arguably one of the deadliest countries for Shias outside the Middle East". Pakistan is not just unsafe for Shias alone at this point. Having been socio-politically indoctrinated as a society and state, Pakistan has proven to be unsafe for anyone who comes close to questioning the overarching narrative of Islam in Pakistan.

As part of the Indian subcontinent, the region has a history of fostering diverse religio-political ideologies that co-existed at many junctures. "Pre-colonial identities were fuzzy, unclear. People used to negotiate with multiple identities and movements. So there was no contradiction in a Hindu visiting a Muslim shrine or vice versa. The Hindu/Muslim, as we understand them today, was yet to be crystallised. Things began to change with the colonial state, with the arrival of modernity," said Ali Usman Qasmi as cited in (Khalid, 2021). He also points toward Pakistan's state-led turn towards a performative practice of Islam that would propel the Pakistani people towards openly and indicatively displaying their religious practices to be part of a community Qasmi as cited in (Khalid, 2021). This meant that citizens of Pakistani society had to practice religion publicly and openly to show their adherence to the 'Islamic' norms that were being set. This has been particularly visible since General Zia-ul-Haq's military dictatorship and 'Islamization' of the country from 1977-1988 (Khalid, 2021). However, this report hopes to go beyond (rather, before) the Zia Era to trace the legal

[4] Pakistan has not officially conducted many censuses. To read more about the ethnic distribution of Pakistan from the 1998 census, please consult Umair Javed and Ijaz Nabi's (2018, p. 9) paper titled 'Heterogeneous fragility: The case of Pakistan'.

[5] Some say that the percentage lies at around 25 per cent but this report prefers the more conservative estimates keeping in view the growing communal violence and intolerance within Pakistani society.

precedents that paved the way for Pakistan's future in religious diversity, radicalization and counter-radicalization.



(Map of Pakistan, 2021)

Historical Background of State Organised Religion Relations

Pakistan's role in organising religion as a state has a lot to do with its quest for finding and establishing "its identity" (Jaffrelot, 2002, p. 7). This is because, since Partition, it has been trying to mark "a separate identity and legitimacy", especially to set itself apart "from India" (Ali, 2011, p. 25). This is not just because of the political division that Partition and the Two Nations theory created but also because ever since Pakistan came into existence, it "attached no such glamour and romance to its past civilisation and culture as India" (Ali, 2011, p. 25). The early formative years of the country were politically chaotic – to say the least, with three constitutions being adopted due to the instability caused by "a number of political crises" and lack of a consistently systemic or institutional leadership (Ali, 2011, p. 26). Although the beginnings of a particularly nationalist Islam can be traced back to the movement that led to the creation of Pakistan and the Objectives Resolution, 1949 – as mentioned in the introduction – it was after the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971 that both civilian and military rulers in Pakistan consciously latched onto this ideology "to legitimise their political power" (Ali, 2011, p. 26). This was also a form of face-saving and an attempt – a poor one - at national integration after the defeat and humiliation that Pakistan faced in 1971.

During the 1970s, political instability contributed to an "instrumentalisation of religious divisions in society", "discrimination of minorities into legislation" and "militarization of the region, with a proliferation of arms and trained fighters turning to violence to settle conflicts" and led to an upsurge of "violent attacks against minority groups in Pakistan" (FIDH/HRCP, 2015, p. 5). Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was one such figure who resorted to appeasing the "religious establishment" to consolidate his political power (HRW, 1993). His highly politicised "appeals to Islam" included putting a ban on "alcohol shops and bars" in 1977 whilst justifying his (personal) drinking during his political campaign for the 1977 elections as: ""Yes, I do drink alcohol, but at least I don't drink the blood of the poor"" (HRW, 1993; Paracha, 2011; Hanif, 2016). Whilst religious minorities were not prohibited from consuming or trading alcohol under this ban, Bhutto's Janus-faced turn towards Islamization for political gains set the tone and environment of the country to be intolerant of activities that the state may or may not consider righteous.

This sense of righteousness requires conformity and compliance from religious minorities. For instance, when in the summer of 2018, Pakistan faced an intense heat wave during Ramzan - with the "Pakistan Meteorological Department" officially sending out cautions for people to stay hydrated, Pakistan's "Ehtram-e-Ramzan [Respecting Ramadan] Ordinance" was not relaxed even for labourers, sanitation workers, sewage workers, street cleaners etc. - around 80% of whom are Christians and the rest are mostly Hindus - despite their physically demanding work environments (Shahid, 2018; Dunne, 2021; AFP/France 24, 2022). This Ordinance was passed by General Zia in 1981 and laid out "fines and prison terms of up to three

months" for anyone who ate or drank "publically" during the month of Ramzan (Shahid, 2018). In 2017, the "Senate Standing Committee on Religious Affairs" extended the amount for fines from "Rs 500 to Rs 25,000" (Shahid, 2018). The religious minority community practices caution as they have faced violence for openly eating in Ramzan before. In 2016, "an elderly Hindu man" was physically assaulted by a police constable for eating his food, which had been given to him as charity, publicly in Ramzan (Henderson, 2016; Shahid, 2018). Even though Bhutto's alcohol ban and Zia's ordinances on respect for Ramzan were hailed by many Pakistani Muslims as the right steps to take Pakistan towards an 'Islamic' direction, in practice, they plunged the country into radicalization.

In the 1980s, incidents like "violent sectarian attacks" quickly "became ever more commonplace" (FIDH/HRCP, 2015, p. 5). It was during this time that attacks targeting "the Hazaras in Balochistan (an ethnic minority within the Shia community)" became frequent and account for a major motive of contemporary militant groups in Pakistan including "Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), Al-Qaeda, and Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan" - the latter of which is "a subset of the Pakistani Taliban" (FIDH/HRCP, 2015, p. 5; CISAC, 2022). A comprehensive map of their allegiances with other groups can be found as follows: http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/maps/view/pakistan_un. The FIDH/HRCP (2016, p. 4) report titled 'Assessment of Pakistan's compliance with GSP+ obligations (2014-2015)' notes that there are "serious concerns" pertaining to "hate speech, inter-sectarian violence, and negative stereotypes of ethnic or religious minorities" within Pakistani "school textbooks", as well as in Pakistan's "discriminatory laws". This is a cause of concern for religious minorities as they continue to face issues like "forced conversions" and "impunity for crimes committed against" them (FIDH/HRCP, 2016, p. 4).

The state of Pakistan's sanitation workers, the victims of unremitting forced marriages and religious conversions are topics of serious and urgent concern. Sanitation workers, especially from religious minorities, were denied social security during the Covid pandemic and have historically been denied protection from "pollutants" and hazardous chemicals in their line of work (AFP/France 24, 2022). The most troubling concern though is that sanitation jobs are seen as 'lesser', "impure" jobs in the eyes of the Muslim population and thus add to the social stigma that further weakens the position of religious minorities in Pakistan (AFP/France 24, 2022). In 2017, "Muslim doctors sparked outrage and protests in Umerkot" for declining to handle the case of "a Christian sewage worker overcome by toxic gases" because according to them, "they could not touch his soiled body because they had to remain pure during Ramadan" (AFP/France 24, 2022). Pakistani sewage workers are recklessly thrown into everyday situations where their health is in direct danger (AFP/France 24, 2022). Pakistan is not just divided into castes within the Muslim populace but also follows a caste system in which religious minorities lie at the bottom. In the case of "Hindu groups" that "converted en masse to Christianity" in the "late 19th and early 20th century", they are viewed as "non-caste" (Butt, 2020, p. 237). People who are seen as such find

themselves socio-economically stereotyped and stuck in vocations and professions that involve manual labour in dire conditions. Even though the country's socio-economic and political system is entrenched in the caste system, "Christianity, rather than caste" has "become the historical basis for one's social and political identity" and is largely impacted by "multigenerational legacies of caste" that command "how wealth, land, and other forms of power were passed down across social groups within the country" (Butt, 2020, p. 237). These legacies do not favour religious minority communities in Pakistan, to say the least.

This religious ostracization has been "institutionalised", with "job adverts from public bodies" describing "cleaning jobs" for ""non-Muslims"" (AFP/France 24, 2022). A local NGO identified "300 such announcements" over the course of a decade (AFP/France 24, 2022). Additionally, workers in this field are paid "less than half the legal minimum" wage (AFP/France 24, 2022). An award-winning lawyer and politician from the Christian community, Mary Gill James, described the process as "a vicious circle" owing to the prevailing class, caste and religion-based "poverty" that bars "many Christians from providing an education for their children, who have no choice but to turn to the same occupation" with a lack of upward social mobility (AFP/France 24, 2022).

When it comes to the state's role in organising religion-oriented *relations*, perhaps one of the most glaring displays of religious discrimination can be spotted in Pakistan's forced marriages through forced religious conversions. One of Pakistan's Parliamentarians from the religiously right-wing Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Pakistan (Fazl) political party married a 13/14-year-old girl in 2021 (Wasim, 2021). Underage girls who come from religious minorities are under increasing threats of forced conversions, forced marriages and abuse. According to Reuben Ackerman's (2018, p. 1) research that includes data collected from various local human rights watch groups and charities in Pakistan, "between 20 to 25 Hindu girls are forcibly converted every month" in Pakistan.

Studies indicate that around one thousand girls have to go through this every year in Pakistan, with almost all culprits being exempt from accountability, with the state deliberately holding its silence and passiveness (Ackerman, 2018). In such cases, when the victim's family seeks help from the police, they "often turn a blind eye to reports of abduction and forced conversions" and the family is oftentimes prevented from filing "a First Information Report" that is also at risk of mishandling (Ackerman, 2018, p. 1). The case is typically presented by the judiciary – either due "to fear of reprisal from extremist elements" or because of their personal conservatism - as that of a girl who has 'willingly' converted to get married (Ackerman, 2018). Matters are worsened in an environment where certain religious institutes like the "Minhaj-ul-quran, routinely and as a matter of official policy" encourage religious conversions and stipulate rewards for them (Ackerman, 2018, p. 2). Religious conversions have been "equated" with "Haj-e-Akbari, or the greatest religious duty to Muslims" (Ackerman, 2018, p. 2). Furthermore,

there is a lack of aid or help offered to the victim, who is "largely left in the custody of her kidnapper throughout the trial process" and has to endure "threats" of all kinds to not take a stand against the perpetuator and to present it as something that she agreed to (Ackerman, 2018, p. 2). Furthermore, "many religious institutions, local mosques and seminaries" accept "the word of the abductor" over the girl's and hence the victim is "often ignored" and not provided with a proper "investigation" (Ackerman, 2018, p. 2). Many of the perpetuators are connected to either religiously or politically powerful individuals or political parties and enjoy their patronage over such proceedings that are deemed corrupt, to say the least.

The Council of Islamic Ideology - which began in 1962 as a consulting body and was recognised in the Constitution of 1971 is now a powerful advisory body that goes beyond just providing 'advice'. In recent years, it has ruled that child marriage is Islamically allowed, women can be hit 'lightly' and has actively denounced scientific measures such as DNA tests for providing judicial proof of sexual abuse towards women, especially those who are victims of child marriages and forced conversions (Nangiana, 2013; Abbasi, 2016). They especially advocated for child marriages happening under the authority of a familial patriarch. This is particularly damaging to the endangered position of religious minorities in the country.

Legal background

Although civilian and military rulers both turned towards this ideology politically – as can be noticed in decisions taken by Bhutto, General Zia, Ayub Khan and Yahya Khan, it was during General Zia's dictatorship that this ideology became regionally and internationally important to the extent that it still precedes Pakistan's global reputation. Even though during the dictatorships of Ayub and Yahya Khan 'radical' sentiments were popping up for the idea of Islamization of the country especially because the said dictators were seen as 'too Westernized' by some critics, they did not fully unfold until the late 1970s and 80s as that is when a full-fledged Islamization began in the country.

Thereon, Islam became more than just a political tool or form of nationalism; it officially became a barometer of one's 'Pakistaniyat'. If one had to prove that one was a die-hard, 'true' Pakistani, one had to be a Muslim. During General Zia's dictatorship, religious education seminaries known as madrassahs were officially supported by the state "to garner the religious parties' support for his rule and to recruit troops for the anti-Soviet war in Afghanistan" (Stern, 2000, pp. 118-119). Within Pakistan, the socio-political, as well as economic conditions, changed drastically for religious minorities within a decade of General Zia's rule.

An ordinance is not passed as a bill through Parliament but is instead "a law promulgated by the President, when the National Assembly is not in session, in

exercise of the powers vested in him by Article 89 of the Constitution" (Senate of Pakistan, 2020a). General Zia's ordinances were brought into effect during martial law with his use of the said Presidential reach; he "used presidential ordinances to replace part of the Pakistan Penal Code with Islamic jurisprudence and punishments" (International Crisis Group, 2015, p. 2). Jalal (1990, p. 323) explicates that "blunting criticisms against the military's silent colonisation of the administration and, by virtue of legal and extra-legal economic privileges" and justifying the basis of military rule "required a powerful but innocuous remedy". Therefore, Zia spearheaded a social "campaign for an Islamic moral order" where he would "restore the sanctity of the chador (or the veil) and' the chardivari (or the· home) - those well-known symbols of female honour and the security of the Muslim family" (Jalal, 1990, p. 323). This state-led manoeuvre that made women - especially from religious minorities - the direct target and "focal point" of Zia's move that helped cement the "legitimacy of his regime without unduly taxing the sensibilities of Pakistan's male-dominated society" was a "draconian" and "discriminatory" pathway (Jalal, 1990, pp. 232-324; Zia, 2009, p. 30). Through the Hudood Ordinances, the state managed to dangerously obscure "the distinction between adultery and rape" and plunged Pakistan's socio-legal ethos towards "faith-based politics", the "brunt of" which was "borne by women and religious minorities" (Jalal, 1990, pp. 232-324; Zia, 2009, p. 30).

The Hudood Ordinances "criminalised all consensual sexual intercourse between adults outside marriage" and stipulated that for "rape (zina bil jabr) and zina cases, the Hadd punishment was stoning to death if the offender was married and mandatory public flogging if unmarried" (Constitution of Pakistan, 1979; International Crisis Group, 2015, p. 2). Until that point, "only adultery had been illegal, although a female accused of adultery was not punished under the law" (International Crisis Group, 2015, p. 2). Furthermore, if a woman wanted to claim that she had been sexually assaulted, she had to bring forth four male *eyewitnesses* "of good character" to "verify" her claims in the eyes of the law (Imran, 2005, p. 88). If she could not do so, she would be "considered guilty of fornication or adultery under the Zina Hudood Ordinance" (Imran, 2005, p. 88). Rahat Imran (2005, p. 90) points out that the said "violation of human and gender rights" did not exclude religious minorities even though the Hudood Ordinances were part of "Islamic laws". She said that the Hudood Ordinances laid out the same conditions and punishments for religious minorities even though they should have been "exempted on religious basis" (Imran, 2005, p. 90).

The FIDH/HRCP report states that (2015, p. 7), with Zia's "establishment of a parallel legal system" in the form of Shariah Courts that was later "reorganized" into a "centralised" Islamic system known as the "Federal Shariah Court", the law, "all legislative acts and judicial pronouncements" became associated with a strict, literal interpretation of Islam. Naturally, this meant that religious minorities or even those who disagreed with the state's narrow and singular interpretation of what Islamic laws were would be marginalised. Over time, this judicial set-up "effectively weakened the jurisdiction of the Superior Courts in Pakistan" and has been termed ""super-

legislature"" with its authority that bypassed that of Pakistan's judiciary (FIDH/HRCP, 2015, p. 7). Therefore, the said administration and upholding of the said ordinances is "by definition discriminatory" towards minorities and dissenters (FIDH/HRCP, 2015, p. 7).

Within religious minorities, there are further branches of minorities that are the target of social stigma that leads to "segregation" and "exclusion" of Christians who have a "Dalit ancestry" the latter of which is associated with "untouchability" in the Indian subcontinent's socio-religious disposition (Singha, 2022, p. 2). General Zia also brought about "an amendment to the electoral system, altering the 1973 constitution" and thereby setting up "separate electorates for non-Muslims in national and provincial assemblies" so that they could only vote for and choose non-Muslims as "their own representatives from across the country and/or the provinces" (Yasmeen, 1999, p. 189).

The FIDH/HRCP (2015, p. 7) report further notes that when "religiously-mandated punishments (which include hanging, amputations, and other corporal punishments)" came into effect in the 1980s and were made applicable to the acts of "drinking alcoholic beverages, theft, prostitution, adultery, and bearing false witness", as well as when the "law of Evidence" was brought into effect in 1984, "both non-Muslims and women" were put in a position of severe disadvantage. Pakistani religious minorities have historically faced discrimination in regards to many other facets of adhering to other faith. This includes - but is not limited to - "employment", "land grabbing and evacuee property", "personal status laws", not being able to bury their deceased in 'Muslim' graveyards, lack of "representation" in Parliament, Pakistan's education system (as will be discussed later), "forced and coerced" marriage, tax-based discrimination and "faith-based violence" (FIDH/HRCP, 2015, pp. 9-12). Pakistanis are required to openly state their religion on identity documents, especially if they want to pursue a public service career, vote, or be witnesses to a marriage.

Whilst the aforementioned is a rather odd amalgamation of Islamic, judicial and local laws, rules and social norms prevailing over Pakistan, the Taliban 'rule' in KPK, especially in Swat and Waziristan, in the early 2000s was extremely intolerant of religious minorities - to another scale altogether (Bergen and Tiedemann, 2015). 155 Sikh families were forced out of their homes - that the Taliban dismantled - in Aurakzai Agency because they refused to pay jizya (tax for non-Muslims), the Christian community was severely intimidated and a statue of Buddha from the 7th Century was violently ravaged (it was restored later); the Taliban also demanded that the Hindu community should "wear a yellow badge" to identify and highlight its members (Minority Rights Group, 2009; Kalvapalle, 2018).

Institutional Framework

Pakistan's Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony (2022)'s website states that it "was created in October 1974". Its "Mission Statement" is defined as: "Manage, facilitate and promote inter/intra-faith harmony and tolerance amongst different segments of society as per injunctions of Islam" (Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, 2022). The list of 'policies' on its website is limited to its blueprint for Hajj and Umrah (Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, 2022). Its plan for "Interfaith Harmony" that targets both policy and law-making includes - amongst other goals, caretaking of the places of worship for minority religions, supporting "religious tourism", re-establishing sites of worship including Shewala Teja Mandir and Gurdwara Choa Sahib Jehlum in 2019, celebrating the 550th birthday of Baba Guru Nanak (he founded Sikhism), maintaining the "Minorities through Minorities Welfare Fund" to restore religious places of worship for minorities and launching the 'visa-free' "Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib Corridor" for Sikh pilgrims of India and Pakistan in 2019 (Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, 2022).

Considering some of the goals stated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, it may seem like Pakistan might have facilitated its Sikh population but records indicate violent activities of militant and terror groups targeting the Sikh community, especially in KPK under the Taliban. The Ministry has been criticised for not making a "real effort" to 'centralise' "mosque management and religious edification of imams" and for also not taking on a fresh role from its previous one ("since the 1950s") pertaining to handling pilgrimages, "zakat management", Islamic studies and research" etc. (Hussain and Butt, 2021, p. 59). This changed when in 1977, the management for the "(welfare of) overseas Pakistanis" was moved to the Manpower Division and the Ministry regained its authority on "religious affairs" (Hussain and Butt, 2021, p. 59).

In 1977, some other changes significant were made to the Ministry. The Council of Islamic Ideology was established as the primary "policy" group for the government's functioning (Hussain and Butt, 2021, p. 59). However, critics claim that for more than two decades, the Ministry was incredibly "ineffective" and more "symbolic" and "politicised" than practically useful (Hussain and Butt, 2021, pp. 59-64). It is said to be lacking a "grassroots level" of influence where it would otherwise be "working with social communities, mosques, and education" services to promote interfaith diversity (Hussain and Butt, 2021, p. 64). This is to a great degree because of the void of "a shared national vision about religion and its potential role in creating a balanced society" and the various factions and sectarian groups that have been unable to come to an agreement on the role of Islam in Pakistani society and its relation with religious diversity (Hussain and Butt, 2021, p. 66). This reflects in their "conflicting ideologies", especially on functional matters that speak to the "political and financial" aspects of religious jurisprudence (Hussain and Butt, 2021, p. 66). Pakistani mosques "rely" on their "communities" for finances and hence are under the influence and patronage of their finances rather than the state to some degree (Hussain and Butt, 2021, p. 67). In

other words, there is a lack of unison and resolve in the Ministry's approach towards the socio-political and economic well-being and in many cases, social rehabilitation for members of religious minorities that are marginalised. The Annual Budget Statement of Pakistan and its ministerial distributions for the past two years and a prediction for 2023 can be accessed in the following link: https://www.finance.gov.pk/budget/Budget_2022_23/Annual_Budget_Statement_English.pdf.

Sectarianism

"If you want to observe a man — who has never prayed five times in his life — instantly rediscover his religion, watch his daughter plead her case for marrying a man from a different sect."
M. Bilal Lakhani (2013)

"Sectarian identities", says Muhammad Qasim Zaman (1998, pp. 689-690), "are in the process of not just being revived but, in many ways, also constructed and redefined" in Pakistan. Since Pakistan "professes to be an Islamic state", the directives of Islam within the political entity of Pakistan are not to be "merely observed in the state but enforced by it" (Zaman, 1998, p. 692). Zaman (1998, p. 692) points out that due to a lack of agreement on "which school of Islamic law" would have jurisprudential precedence and "how that would affect those who do not recognize its authority" are perpetually unaddressed concerns in Pakistan, a majoritarian discourse has hegemonized the functioning of the state and society. Additionally, keeping in view that Pakistan as part of the Indian subcontinent has a history of religious diversity, the critical question of whether there even needs to be one particular school of jurisprudence or a specific religion to take precedence has seldom received adequate attention or critical inquiry on a national level. To understand the sectarian 'conflict', in Pakistan, Islamic history has to be very quickly reviewed. Kalin and Siddiqui (2014, p. 5) state that the "Shia-Sunni split" occurred after the demise of Prophet Muhammad in 632 AD. Shias prefer to endorse "a privileged status of leadership for the family of" the Prophet whereas Sunnis prescribe religious authority to " the person deemed by the elite of the community to be most capable" to lead it (Kalin and Siddiqui, 2014, p. 5). This led to the Sunni-Shia contestation of who should be the Caliph (which would further determine future leadership for times to come) and this hierarchical dispute is unresolved till date.

Zaman's (1998, p. 690) explanation of authority that rests on "vast quantities of sometimes scurrilous polemics always ready at hand", shows that a "sectarian identity" can easily be morphed into one based on "perceiving, or imagining, the existence of threats to it". Needless to say, sectarianism - not just between adherents of the Sunni and Shia sects, but also *within* sub-sects of the two - in Pakistan is based on a deeply exaggerated sense of otherization. This sense of otherization is deepened through

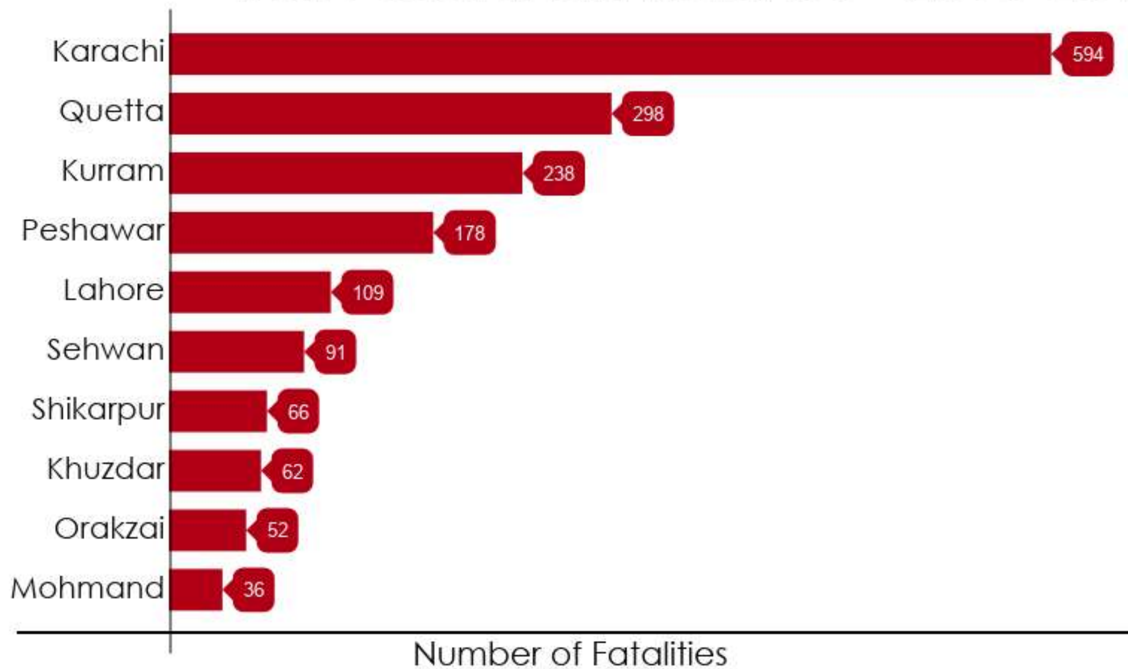
propaganda and mutual social exclusion. Zaman (1998, p. 690) observes that "since the early 1980s", "sectarian organisations in Pakistan" have been manufacturing and distributing publications on "sectarian identities" where the focus is on "the threat or the actual use of violence" as a tactic to counter similarly crafted information by contending groups.

There are other reasons why sectarianism has been on the rise over the years in Pakistan. These include - but are not limited to - "exclusivist sectarian affiliations" of "mosques and madrasas", many of which are "sponsored" by "organisations" that aim to propagate their views on a dogmatic and radical scale (Zaman, 1998, p. 690). This is also visible in the curriculum that Pakistani schools teach. This highly sectarian style of school teaching - conjoined with social practices such as intra-sect marriages and same-sect socialising etc. has made Pakistan a radically sectarian society. This seems to play out "in a milieu of considerable social and economic volatility to radicalise a long-standing but often dormant sectarian conflict" that is open to exploitative means that may easily drive it towards violence (Zaman, 1998, p. 690).

The said sectarian "milieu" is not confined to rural areas, as can be misconstrued at times. Zaman (1998, p. 690) demonstrates that through "the effort of urban sectarian organizations", "the growth of a new, urban, textbased and relatively standardized religious identity" has been facilitated. Hence, sectarianism and its core issue of "legitimate authority" are present in Pakistan's urban, rural and tribal areas. In the 1980s, the divide between the Shia and Sunni communities came to the forefront of not just the functioning of the Pakistani government but also international ideological funding. On the one hand, General Zia's Islamization program of a socio-political, legislative and madrassah-based indoctrination to support the 'jihad' against the Soviets in Afghanistan "privileged particular schools of extremist Sunni thought" that were "orthodox" (Kalin and Siddiqui, 2014, p. 3-4). On the other hand, the Iranian government sent financial assistance to "Pakistani Shia clerics who had finished and returned from their studies in Najaf and Qom" to set up "their own religious seminaries" (Kalin and Siddiqui, 2014, p. 3-4). Thus, many of the Sunni and Shia organisations that were created as a result of the said activities and counter-measures came to hold radical and violent beliefs, with some actively engaging in sectarian militancy over the years (Kalin and Siddiqui, 2014).

The graph below shows the rising rate of sectarian violence. Kalin and Siddiqui (2014, p. 4) note that from "2009 to 2013", the frequency and magnitude of sectarian attacks and killings is "three times' the "annual rate during the 1990s". Annually, "more than one thousand people" were either "killed or injured" in the violence during the said years that amounts to around "one hundred incidents per year" (Kalin and Siddiqui, 2014, p. 4). In addition to the sectarian violence, Pakistan's hardline political Sunni groups have launched campaigns to declare Shias as blasphemous. In late 2020, for "the first time", "three prominent groups within Sunni Islam — Deobandi, Sufi Barelvis and Salafists" hosted multiple rallies within a week in Karachi where they *demanded*

"violent action" against the Shia community and openly called them ""infidels"" (Mirza, 2020). Blasphemy cases are also a point of serious concern because they contribute to the rising sectarianism in Pakistan.



A graph tracing the increase in sectarian violence in various cities and agencies across Pakistan (Center for Research & Security Studies, 2021).

Some sectarian organisations have been banned in Pakistan due to their involvement in "militant attacks" (Kalin and Siddiqui, 2014, p. 3). For instance, Kalin and Siddiqui (2014, p. 3) note that the "anti-Shia Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP)" that functions as a political entity was "involved in militant attacks" and hence got banned around 2001/02. Its rival organisation, the "Sipah-e-Mohammad Pakistan (SMP)" which is a "Shia extremist group" that was engaged in violence was also banned (Kalin and Siddiqui, 2014, p. 3). The SSP attempted to relaunch under different names in later years and "contested elections in 2013" despite being a proscribed organisation (Kalin and Siddiqui, 2014, p. 3). Its militant wing "Lashkar-e-Jhangvi" has very close ties to the Pakistani Taliban and has a record of causing "much of the sectarian violence occurring in Pakistan today", which includes a culture of blasphemy-based threats and violence towards Shias and Barvelis - the latter of which is a "subsect(s) of Sunni Islam" (Kalin and Siddiqui, 2014, p. 3).

Pakistan's Education: A Faith-Based Project

"'...we know the other by the self, also the self by the other'"

(Durrani and Dunne, 2009, p. 217)

Pakistan's school books adopt an "identity-construction lens" that strictly promotes "a single identity as a naturalized defining feature of the collective self" (Durrani and Dunne, 2009, p. 215). Even though Pakistan is an ethno-religiously diverse country, the education syllabus avails "religion (Islam) as the key boundary between the Muslim Pakistani 'self' and the antagonist non-Muslim 'other'" (Durrani and Dunne, 2009, p. 215). In other words, the syllabus makes it clear that to be Pakistani means to be a Muslim and that too, of a particular type. Pakistan's education sector(s) can be viewed in three categories: private, public and religious (madrassahs and dars).

Public schools in Pakistan adhere to a "national curriculum" that is manufactured by "the Curriculum Wing of the Federal Ministry of Education" and handed over to "the four provinces" (Durrani and Dunne, 2009, p. 217). The Curriculum Wing has the authority to make changes to the syllabus and content of the textbooks "under the Federal Supervision of Curricula and Textbooks and Maintenance of Standards of Education Act, 1976" (Durrani and Dunne, 2009, p. 217). The Pakistani political establishment has maintained its authority and a strict "version of social reality" of nationhood in the country (Durrani and Dunne, 2009, p. 217). Private schools adhere to similar syllabus for Pakistan Studies and Islamiyat but are slightly less censored.

Notably, Durrani and Dunne (2009, p. 218) point out that this sense of a "national identity" does not come naturally and should not be taken as "a 'given' entity" and is instead" naturalised through state institutions—the family, the school, the workplace, the media, and the army" and "mass compulsory education", especially for school-going age groups. Durrani and Dunne (2009, p. 218) explain that "the curriculum is the battle-ground" for reinforcing "relations of power" for those who are in powerful factions. In Pakistan's case, this is done through the "state-sanctioned superimposition of Islam" as a barometer and a parting between being a good Pakistani and the 'other' (Durrani and Dunne, 2009, pp. 222-224). The textbooks place great emphasis - through jingoistic and militaristic "religious imagery" - on battles that were fought by "Hindus and Muslims" in opposition to one another " in history before and after the partition of India" (Durrani and Dunne, 2009, p. 225).

As per Durrani and Dunne (2009, pp. 217-218), nationalism is the act of establishing patriotism by "eliminating all kinds of differences based on ascriptive features—ethnicity, religion, language, gender, sexuality, social class—that divide populations internally" and heavily relies on the idea of the 'other' as the "outsider". The kind of society or "imagined community" that a nationalistic approach endorses is not "all-inclusive", but rather premised on "internal hierarchies" that seep through "ethnicity, gender, religion, race, and class" (Durrani and Dunne, 2009, p. 218). Durrani and Dunne (2009, p. 218) hence term nationalism "a technique of power" where "dominant groups" are at the top of the socio-political scale (Durrani and Dunne, 2009, p. 218).

Nationalism is thus also equated with Jihad and the idea of martyrdom is ideologically ingrained. Additionally, the traits of Muslims are depicted as "victorious, heroic, passionate, and masculine" whilst Hindus are shown as "cowardly, defeatist, and feminine" (Durrani and Dunne, 2009, p. 225). This has led to the instilling of "national insecurity" through the spread of the "myth of an ever-looming enemy ready to harm Pakistan" in the form of India, America, non-Muslims or some other entity beyond a generic understanding of geopolitics in the region (Durrani and Dunne, 2009, p. 226). This has led to a heightened sense of "religious intolerance", especially when considering the "universal human values" of students for exclusionary examples such as "aid" relief for non-Muslim victims of natural disasters in Pakistan (Durrani and Dunne, 2009, p. 228). All the "heroes" in the textbooks are solely "Muslims" who receive adulation "for their pan-Islamism" (Durrani and Dunne, 2009, p. 229). The syllabus, "while unifying Pakistani Muslims" makes sure to ostracise Pakistani non-Muslims and non-Muslims in other countries", especially in America and India (Durrani and Dunne, 2009, p. 230)". Non-Muslims in Pakistan are thus seen as part of the country but not as equal "citizens" (Durrani and Dunne, 2009, p. 231).

This sense of otherization also targets and vilifies Muslims who may not exercise Islamic "customs" within Pakistan in liaison with the inter-generational tradition of belief and practice (Durrani and Dunne, 2009, p. 231). Durrani and Dunne (2009, p. 231) point out that "impious", "'bad Muslims'" (as per the standards that are inculcated in the textbooks) are shown as "internal enemies" of Pakistani nationalism and culture - for instance when they do not "send their kids to mosques", do not "fast" during Ramzan, do not offer daily Namaz, do not recite religious texts and seem to "run away from religion" (Durrani and Dunne, 2009, p. 231). It is little wonder then that "social cohesion" within Pakistan is incredibly difficult for religious minorities within and outside the Islamic faith (Durrani and Dunne, 2009, p. 231). Another kind of educational set-up that plays an influential role in constructing an Islam-only based Pakistani identity is the madrassah schooling system.

Madrassah-based education is a dated tradition in the history of the Indian subcontinent but it was from the 1980s onwards that Pakistani madrassahs increased drastically in number and actively preached extremist ideology (Singer, 2001). Whilst the idea is not to defame the madrassah system, scholars and analysts witnessed a rather radical ideology being spread to strengthen the jihad against the Soviets in Afghanistan in the late 1980s. In the absence of functional schooling that the Pakistani state has failed to provide, the masses (excluding those who can afford private education) turned towards the madrassah system as a more viable option for their children to receive relatively low-cost and consistent education (Singer, 2001).

Madrassahs of this kind sometimes also provide weaponry and ammunition as part of "physical training in their regimen" and "lessons on political speechmaking (where anti-American rhetoric is memorised)" to young children, who are "cut off from contact with their parents for years at a time" (Singer, 2001, p. 3). P. W. Singer (2011, p. 2)

mentions a madrassah called "Dur-ul-Uloom Haqqania" that is located in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as one such institute that produced multiple extremist militants, some of whom went on to join and lead the Afghan Taliban and the Haqqani Network (Singer, 2001, p. 2; Bezhan, 2018). It gained political patronage despite producing a dangerous amount of terrorists and militants and promoting violent jihad, religion-based hatred and "martyrdom through suicide attacks" (Singer, 2001, p. 3).

The graduates from such madrassahs "form an integral recruiting pool for transnational terrorist and conflict networks", such as the 055 Brigade led by Osama Bin Laden in Afghanistan (Singer, 2001, p. 3). The Pakistani establishment tends to view these radicalized Jihadists as serviceable for their Jihadist campaigns in "Kashmir and Afghanistan" but the violent result of the home-bred terrorists is a lack of "security both inside Pakistan and abroad", mass religious intolerance on a grassroots level, a state "imprimatur to violence" and "sectarian conflicts" (Singer, 2001, p. 3). The students who join militant groups are "sent abroad to serve in conflicts in Kashmir, Afghanistan, Chechnya, and a number of other wars" that tend to invoke religious discord and are therefore of enormous "strategic and tactical" utility to their militant groups (Singer, 2001, p. 3). Singer provides the example of how "in 1997, when a Taliban offensive stalled", the Haqqania Madrassah closed for the public and "sent its entire student body across the border to fight, helping the attack to succeed" (Singer, 2001, p. 3). Overall, the syllabus in all three categories of pedagogy needs serious revision.

Violent Religious Radicalisation Challenges: Cautions for Pakistan's Future

Pakistan has historically been through recurring, prolonged and frequent periods of political instability and civil-military discord for decades. However, the ill-boding and instrumental factor that has been consistent through the years is not detached from civil-military relations (quite the opposite) in Pakistan but definitely one that needs to be seen as a challenge in its own entity: violent religious radicalization.

There are "at least" 60 violent militant and terrorist groups, most of which follow a "rigidly conservative" ideology in Pakistan and have "a virtually seamless network" through which they join forces for "joint operations" (Weinbaum, 2017, p. 38). These groups are mostly "sympathetic to the TTP" and have also "carried out" several operations i.e. attacks on their behalf in the country (Weinbaum, 2017, p. 38). The religious violence that Pakistan has been subjected to in the last twenty years is largely linked with "militant elements" that have been allowed to "expand domestically and spread their roots in the society" (Weinbaum, 2017, p. 38).

That is precisely why it is essential to study the entities that actively - and passively sometimes - manoeuvre the country towards a radically violent outlook that perceives religious minorities as the supposedly inimical 'other'. The South Asian Terrorism Portal (2017) lists that around 3923 terror attacks (including suicide attacks and bomb blasts) took place in Pakistan in 2013 whereas the lowest number of 150 was in 2000. Although in the past few years violent attacks stemming from religious radicalization have reduced, Umbreen Javaid (2022, p. 706) says that it is "a multifaceted and multi-layered phenomenon" that manifests itself as something beyond violence alone i.e. "sectarianism, Shariah (Islamization) movements, Talibanization, and a multitude of Jihadist organizations".

Terrorist groups like the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) have been perceptibly active from around 2020 onwards regardless of the COIN operations (SATP, 2017a; 2017b). These operations pushed militant groups, especially TTP, to seek "shelter inside Afghanistan", for them to return to Pakistan later. One of the most pivotal moments for the Pakistani state's engagement with terrorist groups is the "Doha deal of February 29, 2020" - that was supposed to serve (with Pakistan acting as the facilitator) as a supposed peace negotiation between the United States and the Afghan Taliban to end the war in Afghanistan - the result of which not only was the Afghan Taliban's "dominance in Afghanistan" but also an alarmingly "emboldened TTP" in Pakistan; this comes without surprise as both the groups share an overarching doctrine (SATP, 2017a; 2017b). The TTP happens to have very "close ties" with the Afghan Taliban (SATP, 2017a; 2017b). The TTP Emir Noor Wali Mehsud - in the context of "his group's new vision of separating the ex-FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas) region, which is now merged with KP, from Pakistan" openly "reiterated

his pledge of allegiance to Afghan Taliban leader Maulvi Hibatullah Akhundzada and asserted that the TTP is a branch of the Taliban in Pakistan" (SATP, 2017; Mir 2022).

The TTP's "new rhetoric" is in line with the Afghan Taliban's in that both the groups are against a strict "fencing" of the Durand Line or acknowledgement of it "as a legal border" and the TTP "seems to have been energised with the Taliban's takeover and looks stronger than before" (SATP, 2017a; 2017b; Mir, 2022). As soon as Kabul fell to the Afghan Taliban in August 2021, they went on to release "senior TTP leaders" from incarceration and established "de-facto political asylum and freedom of movement within Afghanistan — from which the group is directing its campaign of violence in Pakistan" (Mir, 2022). Hence, the extent and "depth" of the relationship and ideological commonalities between the two groups were reiterated "after the Taliban's August takeover" in 2021 (Mir, 2022). The TTP stated that their Afghan counterpart (if that may be said) "is not only a model insurgency, but also the mothership of their movement" (Mir, 2022).

This has led to "various splinter factions" such as "the Hakimullah Mehsud Group, Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, and Hizb-ul-Ahrar" as well as "the Saifullah Kurd faction of Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ)", "the Al-Qaeda in the Indian Sub-continent (AQIS) factions of Amjad Farooqi and Ustad Ahmad Farooq" also forming alliances with the TTP (Mir, 2022). Another dangerous terror group in the region is IS-KP (Islamic State-Khorasan Province), which is responsible for "388 civilian killings" in bomb blasts and suicide attacks targetting religious minorities "between 2015 and 2022" (SATP, 2017a; 2017b; Mir 2022). To put it simply, the number of terrorist incidents may have declined in the past few years (compared to the early 2000s) but the tacitly escalating threat levels, from manifold domestic and regional terror outfits and militancy remain high. They are a point of urgent concern and caution for the state and its citizenry.

Table 4: Comparison of Terrorist Attacks and Fatalities in Pakistan (2009-21)[1]

Year	No. of Terrorist Attacks (%Change)	No. of Killed (% Change)
2009	Baseline year (2,586 attacks)	Baseline year (3,021 Fatalities)
2010	18%↓	4% ↓
2011	7%↓	18%↓
2012	20%↓	14%↓
2013	**9%↑**	**19%↑**
2014	30%↓	30%↓
2015	48%↓	38%↓
2016	28%↓	12%↓
2017	16%↓	10%↓
2018	29%↓	27%↓
2019	13%↓	40%↓
2020	36%↓	38%↓
2021	**42%↑**	**52%↑**

(Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS), 2021, p. 21)

Religious Militancy in Pakistan

Religious militancy, its roots, outcomes and countering measures in Pakistan are not comprehensively studied or recorded by the government, which has led to a lack of "statistical information" on "sectarian affiliation", "sectarian political representation", "sectarian social distance", "sectarian allegiance and violence initiation" in their statistical research on a provincial and district level (Kalin and Siddiqui, 2014, p. 7). Christians and Shias are common targets of sectarian attacks. In October 2008, "Catholic schools and their staff" were coerced into closing down due to "violence and intimidation" in Swat, KPK, for instance (Institute on Religion and Public Policy, 2008, p. 4). In the same month, a mob vandalised a church "near the India-Pakistan border" and held "anti-Christian" demonstrations and a "social boycott" (Institute on Religion and Public Policy, 2008, p. 4). In May, around 500 members of the Christian community in Charsadda, KPK were given threats to either convert to Islam or "become the target of "bomb explosions"" (Institute on Religion and Public Policy, 2008, p. 4). There have been many cases since, of violence and mob lynching but very few databases of such attacks exist within the country.

For Shias, "cities such as Quetta and Karachi" are "relatively" more dangerous as they have been the site of frequent "sectarian clashes" and terror attacks, especially for the

"Hazara Shia community" in Balochistan (Kalin and Siddiqui, 2014, p. 4). Around half of the victims of sectarian killings in 2013 were Hazaras (Kalin and Siddiqui, 2014, p. 4). A Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) member has called Shias """the greatest infidels on earth""" and demanded the state to adhere to the said label; the TTP and Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) have used similar slogans towards the Shia community in Pakistan (Hussain, 2012). In August 2012, a bus was stopped in Gilgit and passengers were asked to display their identity cards. Those whose ID cards stated that they were Shias were "executed by armed militants" (Hussain, 2012). In March 2013, Karachi's Shia-populated neighbourhood called Abbas Town was the target of a deadly bomb blast that claimed the lives of 45 people and left 135 people severely wounded (Dawn, 2013).

The anti-Shia militancy has been termed "a slow-motion genocide" in Pakistan (Ebrahim, 2012). According to a PEW survey, around 53% of Pakistanis believe that Shias are Muslims - as compared to 84% in Afghanistan and 77% in Bangladesh (Pew Research, 2012). Many members of the Hazara and Christian communities have fled abroad to seek asylum or relocated within the country (Kalin and Siddiqui, 2014, p. 4). Although many reports trace militant attacks targetting religious minorities to the early and mid-2000s, recent years have seen spikes in this kind of targetted discrimination and persecution. In 2020, for instance, there was a rapid surge in religiously targetted murders, blasphemy cases and what has been termed as the deliberate institutional erasure of "the buffer which kept away Sunni hardliners from the Shias" (Mirza, 2020).

The TTP has a violent history of suicide attacks targetting Christians - including one in a public park in Lahore in March 2016, that killed 74 people and left 300 injured on Easter (CISAC, 2022). The Pakistani Taliban are responsible for killings that target the Sikh community (which forms less than 1% of the total population) in Pakistan. In April 2016, they murdered a follower of the Sikh faith (who was in political opposition to the government at the time) and said that they would continue with the killings until their preferred version of Islam was practiced across the country (Ahmed, 2016). ISIS-K (Islamic State Khorasan) also has involvement in one of Pakistan's most fatal bomb blasts that targetted a Shia mosque in Peshawar in March 2022 (Khan and Masood, 2022).

In May 2019, ISIS-K "created a separate Pakistani chapter" that targets Hazaras in Balochistan and Sikhs and Christians in KPK (Khan and Masood, 2022). In January 2021, 11 coal miners from the Hazara community were brutally killed in Mach, Balochistan by ISIS attackers (Hashim and Akhter, 2021). Previous persecution-based violence by "Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Islamic State (IS)" includes bomb blasts, target killings and suicide attacks aimed at the Hazara community in Balochistan over the years by both religious militancy and ethnic insurgency groups (Walsh 2013; UK Visas and Immigration, 2022a). In times to come,

Pakistan will continue to face serious issues in curtailing not just the TTP and ISIS-K but also the Punjabi Taliban and militants (Abou Zahab, 2020).

Policies and Practices Addressing or Preventing Radicalisation in Pakistan

Kalin and Siddiqui (2014, p. 6) state that "despite the aforementioned religious fragmentation", "institutional authority, religious clerics and scholars" can play an influential role in helping the country overcome religious radicalization and polarisation. This can be done by directing "people's beliefs about social norms" toward a more tolerant social life (Kalin and Siddiqui, 2014, p. 6). Clerics are at the centre stage of the said process, given the power they hold that caters to the masses "through their sermons at mosques and imambargahs or in their pedagogical role in religious seminaries" (Kalin and Siddiqui, 2014, p. 6).

In Pakistan's case, religion goes hand in hand with politics and religious leaders often hold positions as political leaders; hence their power and influence are twofold (Kalin and Siddiqui, 2014). Historically, there have been some instances when clerics agreed to promote a message of religious diversity, such as the "nine-point code of conduct" signed by "leaders of the Sunni Barelvi and Ahl-e-Hadith sects and Shia Ahl-e-Tashih sect", under the facilitation of the state at the end of 2013 (Kalin and Siddiqui, 2014). Kalin and Siddiqui (2014, p. 6) also shed light on a "statement" offered by the "Pakistan Ulama Council" that prohibited labels like "infidel" from being used for a particular sect although the effectiveness of such statements - keeping in view real-life implications - is debatable.

They also mention "a sect-free mosque in Islamabad" that was established by a "local businessman" so that people would pray in harmony despite sectarian differences (Kalin and Siddiqui, 2014, p. 6). A PIPS (2018, pp. 14-15) report mentions an "agreement on sectarian harmony" by the government of Gilgit Baltistan as a step forward. The National Action Plan of 2014 which was supposed to be a state-led initiative to counter extremism and terrorism in the country in response to the 2014 APS terror attack by the Pakistan Taliban that claimed the lives of around 141 school children did not live up to expectation (Salahuddin, 2016). The reason behind its failure is attributed to "the limited ambit of political will" of political leaders (Salahuddin, 2016).

NAP has been criticised for a lack of implementational effectiveness, with experts tracing "resources and access" that are freely provided to "militants and extremists" and the resultant increase in "highly coordinated and brazen attacks", especially in 2016 (Salahuddin, 2016). Additionally, many "hardliner religious right parties" have refused to join the NAP's goals - despite the aftermath of the APS attack - because they do not agree with a standardised style of "registration" for religious entities, "curriculum reform" and "financial" checks (Salahuddin, 2016). Salahuddin (2016) further adds that the state's outlook is "nothing short of timid and docile", with many "proscribed" outfits "moving freely, holding rallies and public gatherings, openly inciting hatred and bigotry, and being given airtime". The NACTA (National Counter

Terrorism Authority) has also been denounced for its lack of goal-oriented implementation and a self-exaggeration of its functionality (Salahuddin, 2016).

Since the early 2000s, some of the policy and reform based programmes that have come into effect include The Pakistan Madrassah Education Board Ordinance, 2001, the Madrassah Reform program, 2002 and the Madrassah Voluntary Registration and Regulation Ordinance, 2005 (Khan and Waqar, 2021, pp. 275-276). However, the said projects faced similar issues as NACTA did, with a lack of effectiveness and funding, as well as a clash with madrassah administrators. The Ministry of Interior, with the consent of the federal cabinet, published the National Internal Security Policy (NISP) 2014-18, which was tasked to NACTA for implementation (Khan and Waqar, 2021, p. 280). The NISP emphasised the "need for developing a national narrative" so that "non-traditional threats" could be combated in alliance with "religious scholars, the intelligentsia, educational institutions, and the media" (Khan and Waqar, 2021, p. 280).

The country's "largest COIN and counterintelligence operation" - Zarb-e-Azhb, has been espoused by the state as affirmation of its sincerity in countering terrorism by actively pursuing "a mass exodus of militants" but it is not void of complications and crises such as "mass" internal displacements, civilian casualties, disenfranchising laws such as the "1901 Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR)" and a political and economic gap between the centre and the tribal agencies and frontier regions of Waziristan (Weinbaum, 2017, pp. 43-45; Akins, 2018). The main objective of the operation was as per the "InterServices Public Relations (ISPR), the Pakistan military's public affairs wing", to wipe out both domestic and non-native terrorists in former FATA's North Waziristan (Weinbaum, 2017, p. 43). This mainly included TTP and al-Qaeda militants - the latter of which was assisting the former to "carry out attacks in Pakistan" in return for al-Qaeda members being provided "TTP safe areas" (Weinbaum, 2017, p. 43).

A brief compilation of the Pakistani army's COIN operations is as follows:

"2001–02: Operation Al Mizan (The Balance) in South Waziristan
2007: Operation Sherdil (Lionheart) in Bajaur
2008: Operation Zalzala (Earthquake) in South Waziristan
2008: Operation Rah-e-Haq (The True Path / Faith) in Malakand and Swat
2009: Operation Rah-e-Rast (The Correct Path) in Malakand and Swat
2010: Operation Rah-e-Nijaat (The Path to Salvation) in South Waziristan" (Nawaz, 2011, p. 8).

Conclusion

Pakistan's current and future counter-radicalization and counter-terrorism policies and legislation should be directed toward the TTP (and its various factions) and splinter groups, the Haqqani Network, IS-KP, al-Qaeda and the neighbouring Afghan Taliban. Additionally, Pakistan will also have to tackle the growing social amalgamation of groups that may have initiated as an exclusively 'social', 'protest' movements but are swiftly becoming religiopolitical entities, like the Barelvi-adherent Tehreek-e-Labbaik (TLP) Pakistan. For Pakistan to remotely move beyond violent radicalization and its manifestations in all forms in the long run, it would first have to agree to a common grounds for its political leadership to move towards some mutually beneficial goals, including:

- Stop strictly differentiating between the *religious* and the *political* in terms of extremist aims. Some entities fulfil religious outcomes through political participation while some reach political outcomes through religious (and at times, non-political) endeavours; others can be exclusively religious or political. The religious and the political though, are incredibly intertwined in Pakistan; like two sides of the same coin. To say that a group is of utility for geostrategic or political gains and to deny its religiously extremist approach has time and time again proven to be futile for Pakistan's law and order situation, as well as social de-radicalization. If a particular group is religiously extremist, it should not be given a levy for being relatively less politically extremist (and vice versa) because the two domains of extremism mutually fulfil one another.

- Stop waiting for potentially violent groups to commit violence when they overtly manifest extremist tendencies beforehand; this includes sleeper cells that play a role in urban terrorism in Pakistan.

- Stop viewing *terror* and fear as merely a method to an objective alone as some extremist groups view it as a way of governance, as can be observed from the Taliban's incredibly violent history in KPK. Terror and fear can be the goal - and not just a blueprint for power – as in the case of many radically violent groups.

- Start collecting official data on radicalization, terrorism and extremism and reduce censorship on academic institutes and universities, even if they are critical of the state's policies regarding terrorism. The country's academic and research community needs easily accessible (without needing the consent of politicians) primary data and archives to conduct proper research.

- Stop encouraging religious polarisation (even if it is passive or quietest), especially on a political and legislative front. This also includes a sense of "even-handedness in relation to native religions" and "positive inclusion of religious

groups", some of which that may not be as well known as others (Modood, 2005, pp. 9-10).

- The state should responsibly and academically **define** concepts like terrorism and extremism so that the masses know who or what exactly is being referred to as a 'terrorist' or 'extremist' - and who or what is not. Unifying against extremism might even help Pakistan establish a national narrative to unify the masses.

- Accept the Pakistani state's agency and miscalculations from the past and present rather than find scapegoats (such as refugees) to blame them on. Completely denying them or blaming them on *foreign conspiracies* (especially without evidence) is not an accountable approach to take and leads to harsh divisiveness on all fronts - locally, regionally and internationally.

- Pakistan needs to generate a national policy - not just in theory but in implementation too. On a global platform, Pakistani officials deliver what is expected of them as 'representatives' of the country but domestically, Pakistan lacks clarity on what it wants for itself from the War on Terror. This needs to change and a determined *political will* needs to be created and followed.

- Keeping in view the aforementioned point, as Nawaz (2011, p. 25) cautions, "given the tenuous civil-military relationships of the past and the frequency of coups d'état", it should be the utmost priority for the state to bring "civilian capacity in the CT arena". This would lead to a more clear-cut, democratic and transparent process whereby civilians (including academics and researchers) will ideally be able to "direct and work with" counter-terrorism officials (Nawaz, 2011, p. 25). Nawaz (2011, p. 25) says that if the country does not head in the said direction, "history may repeat itself".

In recent retrospect, albeit, the events of August 2021 indicate that history may already - in fact - be repeating itself. It is up to the Pakistani political leadership to decide if it will let the past run its course twenty years after or if serious recalibration will be made for a possibly different future: one where the country could perhaps possibly break away from the religio-political loop it may have concocted itself decades ago.

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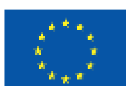

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