

# PAKISTAN

## IDENTITY, IDEOLOGY & BEYOND

Fatima Mullick & Mehrunnisa Yusuf



QUILLIAM

**Quilliam** is the world's first counter-extremism think tank. Located in London, our founders are former leading ideologues of UK-based extremist Islamist organizations. Quilliam aims to generate creative thought paradigms through informed and inclusive discussion to counter the Islamist ideology behind terrorism, whilst simultaneously providing evidence-based recommendations to governments for related policy measures. Our strategic communications work involves research projects, public events, specialist roundtables and media campaigns to empower civil society to work towards improved national cohesion, Muslim integration through respect for scriptural diversity, and encouragement of political pluralism.

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***Pakistan: Identity, Ideology and Beyond***

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## Foreword

In 2009 I arrived in Pakistan as Director of Quilliam, a counter-extremism think tank, to tour its universities and help empower young educated Pakistanis against Islamist extremism. In that month of working with Pakistan's youth, who are incredibly bright and enthusiastic but impressionable too, I learnt much about the country of my forefathers. I learnt of the diversity and complexity of its national make-up and the intersecting of provincial, social and human development grievances that have engendered extremism of various kinds. I found a mixture of sympathetic strongholds for the messages of pluralism and non-violence as well as confusion and ignorance of the threat of Islamist extremism.

Rewind to a decade ago and I was in the same country but with a markedly different aim. In 1999 I came to Pakistan, imbued with the ideas of Islamism propagated by Hizb ut-Tahrir and a strong desire to extend its reach. I was one of the founders of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Pakistan, there to bring Pakistan and its nuclear strength under the banner of Islamist ideology.

Much has changed for me in the time that has lapsed. I spent several years in prison in Egypt which is where I had time to think, question and gain perspective on Islam as a faith as opposed to Islamism the political ideology. The journey of rediscovery led to a new understanding and my renunciation of Islamism. Eventually I began to channel my energies into reversing the tide of the very extremist tendencies I had once helped sow. It is perhaps natural that I would be drawn to Pakistan again, in the hope to undo things past.

The Pakistan of 2009 is vastly different from the one I first visited. For one, the post 9/11 order has given it the status of a key player in the civilisational debate that Islamism and Jihadism pose. The central focus on how Pakistan is where the fight against global terrorism is located and consequently is to be won, has been damaging in that it has obscured its internal complexities. What needs to be understood is that unless the issues within Pakistan are grasped and addressed, the struggle against Islamist extremism both regionally and globally will be lost.

In recent months Pakistan has witnessed 44 suicide attacks costing hundreds of innocent Pakistanis their lives. Earlier this year, the Pakistan Army launched an extensive operation in the Swat valley to cleanse the area of the Taliban. Although necessary, the offensive resulted in the largest population displacement since the partition of Pakistan in 1947. For extremist ideologues, the presence of thousands of displaced people represents potential should the Government fail to adequately provide for the needs of these people and brings home the fact that military actions alone do not suffice in remedying Islamist extremism.

The action taken in the Swat valley illustrated a new found consensus against extremism within the country, uniting the Army, the Government and the citizens of Pakistan. Alongside this is the awakening of a civic conscience in uniting against extremism and terrorism and the work of the media in spreading awareness. There is cause for

optimism and opportunity, for it is this very sentiment that forms the basis of our work in countering extremism and developing narratives that denounce intolerance and promote pluralism. That Pakistan is going through a difficult phase in its 62-year existence is beyond doubt. But equally beyond doubt is the existence of a chorus of voices for change. In working with Pakistan's educated youth not only are we assisting in realising the dream of Pakistan's founders, we are also providing a powerful antidote to extremist and violent thought from within the religion of Islam. Striking the right tenor is essential for finding and building support against extremism. This report speaks to the multitude of voices and ideas, advocating the need to see Pakistan anew, and it is my pleasure to be able to introduce it after such a personal involvement in its genesis.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Maajid Nawaz'. The signature is stylized with large, flowing loops.

Maajid Nawaz  
Director, Quilliam

24 August 2009

## Glossary

<b>Aalim</b>	is a scholar who possesses knowledge of the <i>Qur'an</i> , <i>Hadith</i> , <i>Fiqh</i> and Arabic.
<b>Counter-radicalization</b>	is the effort to inoculate people against the process of radicalization. It differs from de-radicalization in that the former targets those who have not yet been radicalized.
<b>De-radicalization</b>	is a process of renouncing intolerant political ideals, which results in the de-legitimization of said violence.
<b>Fatwa</b>	is an Islamic religious ruling, a scholarly opinion on a matter of <i>shari'ah</i> .
<b>Islamism</b>	is the belief that Islam is a political ideology. It claims that political sovereignty belongs to God rather than the people, that their reading of <i>shari'ah</i> is state law, and that it is the religious duty of all Muslims to create and pledge allegiance to an 'Islamic' state that reflects these principles. Despite its claim that up until the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in 1924 Islam had always existed as a political system, Islamism is in fact a modernist movement influenced by products of modernity such as socialism.
<b>Islamist</b>	is a person who professes belief in Islamism.
<b>Jamaat-i-Islami</b>	is an Islamist political party in Pakistan, Bangladesh and India. Founded in Lahore in 1941 by Sayyid Abul Ala Mawdudi, they believe that Islam constitutes a complete system, and therefore demand the establishment of an 'Islamic' state, with <i>shari'ah</i> (as they interpret it) as state law. They principally differ from Hizb ut-Tahrir in their method of achieving this 'Islamic' state. Rather than a military coup, Jamaat-i-Islami, as a political party, participates within the democratic system in order to work towards their goal. This being said, Mawdudi writes 'Islam does not intend to confine this rule to a single state or a handful of countries. The aim of Islam is to bring about a universal revolution' (Mawdudi, <i>Jihad fi Sabilillah</i> ). Although they are based in the Indian subcontinent, they have branches across the world, including a number of front-organizations in the UK.
<b>Jihad</b>	literally means struggle or to drive away enemies by force. Traditionally it can be seen as a struggle to establish freedom of worship. Islam has set strict moral guidelines for individual conduct in Jihad.



<b>Jihadism</b>	constitutes an aberration of jihad, just as Islamism constitutes a perversion of Islam. Jihadism is violence motivated by the Islamist ideology. It can occur within, or outside, the agreed upon rules of war.
<b>Jihadist</b>	(also referred to as jihadi) is an individual engaged in Jihadism; by contrast a mujahid is an individual engaged in jihad.
<b>Madrasah</b>	in Arabic literally means school. In the Indian subcontinent it has come to mean a school for religious learning (lit.)
<b>MMA</b>	Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (the United Action Front – Urdu) is currently comprised of a coalition of five Islamist parties in Pakistan.
<b>Mujahideen</b>	is plural of mujahid and denotes an individual engaged in jihad.
<b>NWFP</b>	North West Frontier Province
<b>Qur'an</b>	the Holy book of the Muslims.
<b>Radicalization</b>	is a process of adopting intolerant political ideals, which may lead to violence.
<b>Shari'ah</b>	literally means 'path to the water source'. It is the individual and collective moral code that guides the lives of many Muslims. It is not the same as law.
<b>Shi'i (plural Shi'ah)</b>	one of two main branches of Islam, that rejects the first three Sunni caliphs and regards Ali, the fourth caliph, as Muhammad's first true successor.
<b>Sunnah</b>	lexically means 'path' or 'practice'. In Islam, Sunnah is the guiding source for Muslims as it refers to the practice of the Prophet Muhammad in the profession of belief, religious and social practice and ethics.
<b>Sunni</b>	(plural sunniyyūn) is one of two main branches of Islam, differing from Shi'ah in its understanding of the Sunnah and its acceptance of the first three caliphs.
<b>Tabligh</b>	is the propagation and preaching of Islam.
<b>Wahhabism</b>	is a conservative revisionist Sunni movement, which was founded by Muhammad bin Abdul-Wahhab in the 18th century. It is popular in Saudi Arabia and retains a non-ideological, socially conservative, austere and literalist interpretation of Islam. Wahhabis are not Islamists, but when the Wahhabi literalist mindset combines with Islamism, it can lead to Jihadist readings of scripture, resulting in militant Islamism.

## Executive Summary

As a frontline state in global efforts to curb Islamism and Jihadism, Pakistan is the focus of widespread international media and policy attention. Given this locus, it is imperative that Pakistan's role in the global arena be understood in a manner that acknowledges the diversity and complexity of issues impacting its socio-political, developmental and economic landscape. Oftentimes a reductionist approach has been adopted to explain why Pakistan is where it is today. However, this report offers a fresh perspective on how to understand the country's current situation: **by recasting the struggle against Islamism as an ideological rather than a religious debate, and through viewing Pakistan's current dilemmas as symptoms of its troubled identity.** The valuable knowledge gained through Quilliam's extensive on-the-ground work in Pakistan, coupled with its unparalleled insights into the causes, identification and critique of Islamist ideology (gained from years of experience spent inside Islamist movements) have produced paradigm shifting conclusions that have the potential to provide a renewed perspective on the future of Pakistan.

### RECASTING THE DEBATE

A central theme of this report revolves around the need for greater clarity surrounding the Islamist threat to Pakistan. Taking note of the prevailing confusion within the country regarding the specific nature of this threat, Quilliam advocates a paradigm shift in viewing the struggle against Islamism as an *ideological* rather than a *religious* debate.

Such a shift has several important and far-reaching consequences:

- Viewing the struggle against Islamist extremism as an ideological challenge emphasizes the need to diminish the appeal of Islamism through counter-radicalization measures that are able to discredit its arguments on an ideational level, thus depriving such movements of their 'oxygen' by cutting off their supply of potential recruits.
- Recent years have seen the formation of a dangerous divide between those belonging to the Left in Pakistan - who have increasingly come to be seen as averse to religion - and the vast sections of Pakistani society who follow a conservative version of Islam but reject Islamist ideology nonetheless. Uniting people with such differing religious preferences on the basis of their common opposition to Islamism requires such a stance to be seen as an ideological rather than a religious one. This necessitates a clear distinction to be made between the faith of Islam and the political nature of Islamism, such that an understanding exists where rejecting the Islamist agenda does not equate to a rejection of Islam.
- Challenging Islamism on an ideological basis also requires a shift in focus from *madrasahs* to university campuses, as the ideological drivers of Islamist movements are known to hail from the educated classes. New research on the relationship

between militancy, Islamism, state schools and universities has substantiated this point, by deconstructing the well-entrenched narrative that views *madrasahs* as breeding grounds of extremism. In one such study, only 13% of sample Jihadists had acquired *madrasah* education, meaning that 'eighty seven percent did not go to madrasas'.<sup>1</sup> In fact, 'the majority, 62 percent, had attended university'. This percentage is 'even higher than in the United States, where just over half the population has attended college.'<sup>2</sup> Pakistan's burgeoning youth population, which on the one hand represents unbounded potential, has unfortunately become a prime target for Islamist recruitment. Quilliam has thus worked primarily with this target audience, in order to provide young, educated Pakistanis with the necessary tools to reject Islamist arguments.

- Reversing ideological trends within Pakistan requires a focus on citizen-led change. In view of this, Quilliam's projects have been tailored towards empowering the educated youth and civil society actors to seed a social movement geared towards challenging Islamism through a renewed commitment to democracy and a promotion of pluralistic values. Solutions that merely engage with governments directly will inevitably fail to shift the ideological affiliations and leanings of the public, which are a major factor in growing demands for the government to 'Islamize'. Moreover, solutions channelled through government assume that it is the best interlocutor in the ideas debate, which is not necessarily true.

## IDENTITY POLITICS

The second theme in this report is centered on the premise that Pakistan's problems are multivariate, and must be viewed as such. Several important factors, including the relationship between its military and religious classes, its complex geo-strategic concerns, and its troubled experience with democracy, have shaped Pakistan's destiny. However, this report argues that the most notable and cross-cutting of these issues has been the country's struggle to forge a coherent national identity capable of accommodating its rich religious and ethnic diversity. The quest for a national narrative has underscored and amplified a range of other concerns that have plagued the young state from the very moment of its birth in 1947.

Where a Pakistani identity failed, pan-Islamism and separatism are competing to fill the vacuum. Ideological uncertainty on a national level has provided Islamist ideologues the opportunity to gain strongholds within Pakistan, both in terms of recruitment and territorial capture. A single-minded focus by successive governments on uniting the country under the elusive banner of an 'Islamic' state has bred provincial hostilities, encouraged religious discrimination, derailed the country's democratic institutions and stifled secular debate. As a result, the Pakistani state has been forced to provide concessions to Islamists time and again, as witnessed recently by the acceptance of a

<sup>1</sup> Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty First Century* (University of Pennsylvania Press 2008), p.52.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.,p.58.

parallel judicial system in the Swat valley by the government of Pakistan, despite its continued policy of repressing secular nationalist movements calling for greater provincial autonomy under its federation. Such a policy of denying regional autonomy to those who campaign under a secular nationalist banner, yet granting a parallel legal system to those who campaign under the slogan of religion, can only serve to further undermine secularism and democracy as bases for dispute resolution.

## QUILLIAM'S UNIQUE RESPONSE

Recent changes within the country – a vibrant media, a growing determination to rid Pakistan of the Islamist threat, and expanding social awareness manifested in civil society movements – are positive developments that ought to be boosted and sustained. In highlighting these shifting paradigms, this report demonstrates the existence of an ample and highly conducive space for programmatic interventions. Quilliam's Pakistan projects utilize this space, whilst also advocating further interventions to capitalize on these trends. For this purpose, several recommendations and directions for governmental and non-governmental agencies are included in this report.

Quilliam's agenda is not only driven by the need to pursue counter-extremism initiatives in Pakistan, but also by an attempt to provide bold new perspectives on the lens through which the country is understood globally. Hence, in its policy recommendations it focuses on in-country experiences and initiatives that ought to be strengthened. The report also tackles some major policy misconceptions and misrepresentations. It speaks to the fact that Pakistan is *not* a monolith. There are competing ideologies and issues that interact and superimpose upon each other, creating a complex web.

Quilliam will continue to develop its work in Pakistan in line with its strengths – an in-depth understanding of Islamist ideologies, a new and innovative national network of young and enthusiastic Pakistani volunteers who envisage a better future for their country, and a fast developing partnership with non-governmental organisations and civil society personnel who are committed to finding a new voice for Pakistan, one that draws upon democratic values and a respect for diversity. Equally, in recognition that this is a daunting task which requires a concerted domestic and international effort, the report is also a call to action and attention for the contributions that can be made by those in a position to assist Pakistan in overcoming its current predicament.

## Introduction: Pakistan at a Crossroads

“ More than six decades after being carved out of British India, Pakistan remains an enigma. Born in 1947 as the first self-possessed Muslim state, it rejected theocracy; vulnerable to the appeal of political Islam, it aspired to western constitutionalism; prone to military dictatorship, it hankered after democracy; unsure of what it stood for, Pakistan has been left clutching at an identity beset by an ambiguous relation to Islam ”

[Dr. Farzana Shaikh<sup>3</sup>]

The juncture at which Pakistan is currently precariously poised, between rising Islamist militancy, global political and security imperatives, and domestic pressures on the state to deliver services — in fact, to deliver the very ‘promise’ of Pakistan — is a culmination of contemporary history that has made this impasse almost inevitable.

From the very moment of its birth in 1947, Pakistan has struggled to forge a coherent national identity. Largely bereft of the prerequisites of viable nationhood, the country was founded on the premise that Islam would be a unifying force before which all other identities — regional, linguistic, sectarian or otherwise — would pale. The Two Nation Theory, which laid the ideological foundations of the state, claimed that the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent constituted a separate ‘nation’ which bore a distinct and potentially sovereign political identity.<sup>4</sup>

As a result, soon after the creation of Pakistan, the debate within the country about the role of religion in its constitutional and legal framework increasingly came to be based on the notion that Islam has made definite prescriptions about the conduct of state affairs. The vision of Islam as a movement in the constant struggle for political actualization of the ideal *shari'ah* became a state-sponsored idea that found root within

<sup>3</sup> Farzana Shaikh, *Making Sense of Pakistan* (London and New York: Hurst and Columbia University Press, 2009), p.2.

<sup>4</sup> The Two-Nation Theory formed the basis of the 1947 partition of the Subcontinent into modern day Pakistan and India. The architects of the theory were Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817 – 1898) and poet philosopher Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1877 – 1938). Its first articulation is said to be by Allama Muhammad Iqbal's Presidential Address to the 25th Session of the All-India Muslim League on 29 December 1930. He states that ‘The units of Indian society are not territorial as in European countries. India is a continent of human groups belonging to different races, speaking different languages, and professing different religions. Their behaviour is not at all determined by a common race-consciousness. Even the Hindus do not form a homogeneous group. The principle of European democracy cannot be applied to India without recognising the fact of communal groups. The Muslim demand for the creation of a Muslim India within India is, therefore, perfectly justified’.

the political discourse. However, such notions fast began to unravel in face of the uncomfortable reality that a lack of consensus existed amongst South Asian Muslims regarding the 'meaning' of Islam, resulting in competing and often conflicting conceptions of the religious community, the nation, and indeed the proper ends for the exercise of Muslim power in South Asia.<sup>5</sup>

Nonetheless, Pakistan was soon repackaged from being a country for Muslims to being a country for Islam, with Islamist parties such as the Jamaat-i-Islami,<sup>6</sup> who had initially opposed the formation of Pakistan, gaining leverage in the new state through their 'Islamic' posturing. The Jamaat succeeded in lobbying for the Objectives Resolution, which stated, 'Muslims shall be enabled to order their lives in the individual and collective spheres in accordance with the teachings and requirements of Islam as set out in the Holy *Qur'an* and the Sunnah.'<sup>7</sup> That the Objectives Resolution was passed at all is frequently attributed to the political rootlessness of the cohort of politicians seeking legitimacy through recourse to religious grandstanding.

Such pressure group tactics intersected with issues faced by the Government at that time - the provision of resources, India's stance over Kashmir, and hostilities within the country<sup>8</sup> to name a few. Over time a 'country in danger' thus came to be conflated with 'Islam in danger'. Solidarity on the grounds of shared religion, which was initially invoked to bring together disparate ethnicities, linguistic groups, religious sects and classes, and to serve a nation-building function, became a hegemonic narrative that eclipsed all other expressions of identity and thought, and excluded those outside its parameters.

Furthermore, the blending of global politics and geography largely ordained the options open to Pakistan. With established hostilities with India on one side of the divide, and against the backdrop of the Cold War with Western powers opposing the Communist bloc, Pakistan also shares borders with China. In 1979, two pivotal events further sealed its choices: the Islamist Revolution in Iran (contiguous with the country's western boundary) and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (with which it shares a 2,000 kilometre border). As a bulwark against India, Islam had already worked as a powerful

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<sup>5</sup> Shaikh, *Making Sense of Pakistan*, p.2.

<sup>6</sup> The Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) is an Islamist political party founded by Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi in August 1941 in Lahore (in modern day Pakistan). Initially the JI was founded to promote Islamism in British India. Post the 1947 partition the JI redirected its purpose to the establishment of an Islamist state in Pakistan.

<sup>7</sup> The Objectives Resolution was adopted on 12 March 1949 by the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan. Combining the features of Western democracy and Islamism, it formed the basis of Pakistan's constitutional development. It is included in the Annex of the current Constitution of Pakistan.

<sup>8</sup> For instance, the province of Balochistan has witnessed a number of insurgencies since partition. A timeline indicates that there have been five insurgencies to date (1948, 1954, 1961, 1977) with the current insurgency beginning in 2004. Khuram Iqbal, 'Counter-Insurgency in Balochistan: Pakistan's Strategy, Outcome and Future Implications', *Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies*, 15 July 2008, <<http://san-pips.com/download.php?f=pvt0004.pdf>>, [accessed 14 August 2009].

rallying cry. The U.S. definitively packaged Islam as an ideological resistance to the Communist bloc, and the triad the U.S. formed with Pakistan and Saudi Arabia against Communism in the region made it possible for Pakistan to achieve greater ideological proximity and financial ties with Saudi Arabia to buffer against the Islamist Revolution spillover from Iran – giving rise to the sectarian Shi'ah-Sunni divide within its borders.

## THE MULLAHS AND THE MILITARY

Much of Pakistan's 62-year history has been mired in political volatility, with a seemingly never-ending tussle between civilian and military rule. Four military regimes have collectively ruled Pakistan for over 30 years, with brief democratic interregnums marred by inefficiency and accusations of corruption. In this climate of unpredictability, economic aid became a political tool, as each era of renewed international attention and financial bolstering of Pakistan dovetailed with a military regime. As a result, the military was strengthened at the cost of civilian political institutions, by virtue of its role as the almost exclusive interlocutor with the U.S. on military aid, which often determined the course of the associated economic aid. The economic consequences of this have included geo-strategic rent-seeking development strategies and the continued neglect and deferral of structural issues facing the economy.

**“ Successive military regimes have habitually courted Islamist groups to offset opposition from moderate mainstream political parties. ”**

Moreover, successive military regimes have habitually courted Islamist groups to offset opposition from moderate mainstream political parties. Ayub Khan (1958 - 1969), Pakistan's first military ruler, created a precedent for using religion to thwart political opposition by obtaining a *fatwa* against Fatima Jinnah, which stated that a woman could not be the head of an 'Islamic' state. It was during his rule that the Assembly officially renamed Pakistan as the 'Islamic Republic' of Pakistan.<sup>9</sup> Ayub Khan also exempted religious groups, parties and charities from land reforms, ensuring that their properties were not confiscated and were allowed to exceed limits placed on other landowners. General Yahya Khan, who declared martial law in 1969 to become Pakistan's second military dictator, oversaw the division of the country, leading to the independence of Bangladesh. It is commonly said that the Two-Nation Theory drowned in the Bay of Bengal, since religion obviously proved inadequate in defining a nation.

However, the apogee of Islamization occurred during the Zia regime, which, bolstered by U.S. support and Saudi aid, and against the backdrop of war with the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, wreaked havoc on the social fabric and political evolution of the

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<sup>9</sup> Pakistan became an 'Islamic Republic' in 1956 on the occasion of the adoption of its constitution.

country. After summarily hanging the prime minister of the country,<sup>10</sup> Zia conducted a referendum<sup>11</sup> in which people were asked if they supported Islam as the ideology of Pakistan. An affirmative answer was assumed to mean endorsement of the regime. Consequently, all parties except the Jamaat-i-Islami were de-legitimized and scores were arrested and tortured. The press was heavily censored and journalists publicly flogged, the incipient women's movement was attacked, assaulted and arrested, educational syllabi were 'Islamized' to endorse Jihadism, laws were introduced to make adultery a crime against the state, stoning to death was prescribed as a punishment and the testimony of women was reduced to half the value of men. The hundred-year-old blasphemy law was revamped and re-promulgated, leading to a massive increase in allegations and prosecutions. Thousands of *madrasahs* were established across the country, training camps were set up for recruiting and arming men to fight 'jihad' in Afghanistan, and educational campuses became hotbeds for radicalization of the youth.

Through an amendment to the Constitution in 1985,<sup>12</sup> General Zia also elevated the Objectives Resolution from its status of a pre-constitutional document with a long shadow but little juridical impact, into a substantive part of the Constitution, thus providing an Islamist slant to the latter. The Federal Shariat Court and the Shariat Appellate Bench of the Supreme Court were created with specific authority to carry out a judicial review of all laws that were repugnant to the injunctions of Islam, laying the ground for Pakistan's parallel judicial systems. The judgments of the Federal Shariat Court were made binding on all other courts, including the High Courts. The Shariat Court aligned itself with the ideology of the ruler, and in 1981 declared that land reforms were prohibited by Islam. This development declared the political agenda of the Left in Pakistan to be against Islam, thereby recasting the *shari'ah* as an ideological abettor of the status quo. The Constitution was further amended to bar non-Muslims from voting in elections to the general seats of the National Assembly. After the amendment, non-Muslims could only vote for non-Muslim candidates contesting on reserved seats for the religious minorities.

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<sup>10</sup> Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (1928 – 1979) was found guilty of the murder of political opponent Ahmed Raza Kasuri and sentenced to death on 18 March 1978. He was hanged at Central Jail, Rawalpindi on 4 April 1979. Many have claimed that the murder case constituted trumped up charges as Z.A. Bhutto had previously been arrested and released on grounds of contradictions and gaps in evidence. Many view the proceedings of the trial as far from fair as it was a closed door trial and Z.A. Bhutto's request for a retrial were denied.

<sup>11</sup> Chief martial law administrator and President of Pakistan General Zia-ul-Haq held a referendum in December 1984. Essentially, the referendum was meant to legitimate the General's rule to pave the way for his election. Pakistanis were asked whether they wanted to live in a country run on Islamic and *shari'ah* principles. According to the results, more than 95% of votes were cast in favour of Zia-ul-Haq.

<sup>12</sup> Article:2A The Objectives Resolution to form part of substantive provision, <[www.pakistanconstitution-law.com/const\\_results.asp?artid=2A&title=The%20Objectives%20Resolution%20to%20form%20part%20of%20substantive%20provisions](http://www.pakistanconstitution-law.com/const_results.asp?artid=2A&title=The%20Objectives%20Resolution%20to%20form%20part%20of%20substantive%20provisions)>, [accessed 17 August 2009].



The sudden emergence of Pakistan as a frontline state in the 'War on Terror' in the post 9/11 period provided international endorsement for the regime of Pervez Musharraf, Pakistan's fourth military dictator, who had sailed to power after dismissing a democratically elected government in 1999. Under Musharraf's rule, military offensives were launched against supporters of al-Qaeda, the Afghan Taliban, and the nascent Pakistani Taliban, concentrated in the tribal areas in the north western regions of the country. These were zones where the Pakistani state had never had an overt presence or commanded its writ.<sup>13</sup> Such actions killed scores and displaced thousands, pitted groups and tribes against each other, and fractured traditional hierarchies without provision of alternative forms of governance, resulting in chaotic vacuums of order and authority.

The Musharraf regime also ushered in the first provincial government (in the North West Frontier Province, hereafter N.W.F.P.) of an alliance of Islamist parties, known collectively as the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA).<sup>14</sup> By ousting leaders of mainstream political parties from the elections, by disallowing canvassing and election rallies and public talks while creating caveats for the MMA, by placing a bar on non-graduate degree holders from contesting elections, yet accepting *madrasah* certificate holders, and by gouging out a new political party of defectors from leaders of other parties, while leaving MMA constituent parties untouched, the Musharraf regime made the MMA victory probable. This was further aided immeasurably by stories of suffering in Sheberghan prison, Guantanamo Bay, footage from Abu Ghraib and mounting anti-Americanism, and the perception that the Government was a Western stooge, thus casting the MMA vote as a resistance to the global order.

The 2002 election, which brought the MMA into power as the provincial government of N.W.F.P., marked a seismic shift in Pakistan's political landscape. Prior to this, religious parties had a symbiotic relationship with the army - while they fulfilled the army's imperatives across borders, they too relied on the armed forces as a backdoor to political power, as the front door of electoral power remained firmly closed to them. However, the unprecedented independent momentum gained by the Islamist parties upset the balance of power, giving birth to a conflictive standoff for the first time. While the Musharraf regime was selective about which militants it pursued and which it excused, it battled against players who confronted the state through violence, but not against Islamism as an ideology that challenged the nation-state conceptually.

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<sup>13</sup> Promulgated in 1901 by the British Raj, The Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) applied to the Pashtun inhabited Northern territories of British India. The full text of the FCR is available at: <[www.pakistansocietyofcriminology.com/Admin/laws/THEFRONTIERCRIMESREGULATION1901.doc](http://www.pakistansocietyofcriminology.com/Admin/laws/THEFRONTIERCRIMESREGULATION1901.doc)>, [accessed 17 August, 2009]. A set of proposed amendments have been approved by the Government of Pakistan on 13 August 2009.

<sup>14</sup> The Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) or United Council of Action is a coalition of five Islamist groups. Until the 2008 elections, which returned a majority of secular parties, the MMA was the ruling party in the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan. The MMA is opposed to the Pakistani-US collaboration to combat terrorism and extremism and works for the implementation and promotion of Islamism in Pakistan.

Contrary to popular belief, the US did not pave the way for, or usher in dictators in Pakistan – these were indigenous political incursions in the face of Pakistan's national crises. However, consequent U.S. support for these regimes did have severely damaging implications for the development of Pakistan. An important caveat to note is that despite being a nation-state in the modern sense of the word, the distance between the Pakistani nation and the Pakistani state is a distinct reality for the majority of the country. That the Government has been dictatorial, and hence unrepresentative of the people, has increased this distance, enabling imposed governments to be seen as 'foreign', and its rulers as American stooges. A common saying in the country is that its fate is arbitrated by 'Allah, the army and America'.

## THE 'DEMOCRATIC' YEARS

While military-led regimes have allied with Islamist groups to marginalize political opposition, democratic dispensations have often aimed for one-upmanship by promoting their own versions of Islam, with a cumulative stricture against secular discourses. Despite his reputation for pursuing progressive politics and his personal

**“ Increasingly, religion has become the sole marker for the validity and legitimacy of debate. This has diverted attention away from issues of corruption and economic failure, with the main issue of concern becoming the ability of the state to uphold ‘Islamic values’ in public life. ”**

secular inclinations, Pakistan's first elected prime minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, set up the Council of Islamic Ideology, declared a minority sect of Ahmadis as non-Muslims and banned them from Islamic rituals,<sup>15</sup> promoted 'Islamic Socialism', and segregated school curricula based on Islamic sects of Shi'ah and Sunni.

The Nawaz Sharif government<sup>16</sup> proved no better. At the time Musharraf dismissed Sharif's government, he was in the process of tabling a law that would promulgate *shari'ah* as the supreme law of the land,

and declare Sharif as Amir-ul-Momineen – leader of the believers. The much-touted 'Islamic Bomb' was tested under his rule in tit-for-tat nuclear detonations with India, and his government claimed great pride in providing a nuclear asset to the 'Islamic world'.

<sup>15</sup> By way of an Act to amend Article 106 of the Constitution, Ahmadis were declared non-Muslim on grounds that they did not believe in the 'absolute and unqualified finality' of the Prophet Muhammad as the last prophet of God. The amended is worded as follows: 'A person who does not believe in the absolute and unqualified finality of The Prophethood of Muhammad (Peace be upon him), the last of the Prophets or claims to be a Prophet, in any sense of the word or of any description whatsoever, after Muhammad (Peace be upon him), or recognizes such a claimant as a Prophet or religious reformer, is not a Muslim for the purposes of the Constitution or law.'

<sup>16</sup> Nawaz Sharif served two non-consecutive terms as Prime Minister of Pakistan. His first term was 1 November 1990 to 18 July 1993 and then from 17 February 1997 to 12 October 1999.

As a result, despite not commanding a significant vote bank, the Islamist groups have managed to up the ante on religiosity and set the terms of political discourse within the country. Increasingly, religion has become the sole marker for the validity and legitimacy of debate. This has diverted attention away from issues of corruption and economic failure, with the main issue of concern becoming the ability of the state to uphold 'Islamic values' in public life.

Furthermore, the combined effect of the political use of Islam by the state has promoted an aggressive competition for official patronage between and within the many variations of Sunni and Shi'ah Islam. The clerical elite of major sects are focused on building their political parties, creating networks for charity and social services independent of each other, and expanding their own *madrasah* networks. The sectarian groups also raised Jihadist militias for conflicts of choice – Kashmir for some, Afghanistan for others, and domestic battles for others still. Within Sunnis (the majority sect in Pakistan), the competition for a share in power has turned minor theological debates and cultural differences into volatile sectarian divisions.

## PROVINCIAL TENSIONS

Underlining these developments have been the tensions along provincial and ethnic lines that exist within the country. Pakistan is a multi-ethnic state, with ethnic groups further divided into religions, sects, tribes and castes. It is currently divided into four disproportionately sized provinces. Balochistan is the largest in size, the least populated, and the most resource-rich and under-developed. Punjab is large, the most populous, most wealthy and developed. Sindh and N.W.F.P., along with Balochistan, harbour deep grievances against Punjab's domination of resources, policy and army strategic command. Each province has followed a separate trajectory of economic and social development and political evolution. The smaller three provinces had reservations about Pakistan even before the formation of the country and since then have had secessionist movements of various hues. Sindh has a bitter and long-standing conflict with Punjab over water distribution, as the main freshwater source, the river Indus, runs through Punjab before branching off into Sindh.

## ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

Conflicts across Pakistan can be deconstructed to show a singular commonality across all of them, relating to inequality. In the tribal areas, where political parties are banned, mobilization on the basis of religion is one of the few vehicles available for articulating grievances and demands. Many political commentators have pointed out that support for the Taliban in the early years was essentially a stand against the traditional tribal leaders, and confiscation and redistribution of their land was largely responsible for gearing people towards support for extremists. In the northern areas, the workers and labourers are primarily Shi'ah whereas the owners are Sunni. The reverse is true of Jhang. Both these areas feature most prominently in the mapping of sectarian conflicts

in Pakistan. Wealth concentration is the highest in Punjab vis-à-vis other provinces, and there is a common perception of resource capture by the province. Analysts point out that poverty is one of the main reasons that people opt to send their children to *madrasahs*, as they function as soup kitchens, educational institutes, foster homes and places of salvation all rolled into one.

This goes to show that the inability to find redress for social injustices and class inequities often finds articulation through the idiom of religion-based resistance, thus earning a degree of social legitimacy. This then raises the question as to whether people demand 'Islamic rule' as a means to an end, or an end in itself. If avowed religiosity was the marker of an acceptable state, the regime of General Zia (1977 – 1988) would have found popularity. Instead, it remains the single-most condemned and decried era of Pakistan's history within the country. Until these long standing injustices find resolution, and as long as invocation of religion works as the zenith of discourse, radicalization is bound to deepen.

## LOOKING AHEAD

“ As long as we rely on the hammer when a file is needed and press Islam into service to solve situations it was never meant to solve, frustration and disappointment must dog our steps. The sublime faith called Islam shall live even if our leaders are not there to enforce it. It lives in the individual, in his soul and outlook, in all his relations with God and men, from the cradle to the grave, and our politicians should understand that if Divine commands cannot make or keep a man a Musalman (Muslim), their statutes will not. ”

[Justice Munir Commission Report to Enquire into the Punjab Disturbances of 1953<sup>17</sup>]

Beset by a complex array of problems created through a potent combination of history, politics and geostrategic concerns, today Pakistan seems to be floundering on all fronts. Further burdened by the lack of a strong nationalist narrative and a historical failure in harnessing the rich diversity of its people under the banner of an 'Islamic state', the young nation-state appears to be in a great deal of trouble.

However, this by no means suggests that the country has exhausted all avenues to progress. Recent developments have given rise to new hope that Pakistan may still be able to navigate its way out of this current impasse to find its place in the modern world. The country's vibrant media, newly galvanized legal fraternity, robust civil society and a coterie of resilient voices that call for change within Pakistan represent its best

<sup>17</sup> Tarek Fateh, *Chasing a Mirage: The Tragic Illusion of an Islamic State* (Canada: John Wiley and Sons Canada, Ltd, 2008), p.36.

chance in achieving this. Although by no means the loudest voices in the melee, they are impossible to ignore. Furthermore, the growing consensus within the Government and armed forces in taking a stance against Islamist extremism has also created strategic space that can be utilized to broaden the parameters of debate, catalyze reflections and create spaces for alternatives.

Any attempts at moving forward, however, need to first address the question of Pakistan's ideological affiliation and its identity crisis, for the ultimate determinant of the country's stability as a nation-state will be its ability to confidently rebut challenges to its secular foundational principles and to forge new ways of

thinking about its identity. A new consciousness, grounded more firmly in the secular history and pluralistic richness of the Subcontinent, is arguably the best avenue through which Pakistan can overcome its ideological uncertainty and reconcile itself with its diversity. For only when Pakistan makes peace with itself can it hope to provide a better future for its people and make a greater contribution towards the security of the international community.

**“ A new consciousness, grounded more firmly in the secular history and pluralistic richness of the Subcontinent, is arguably the best avenue through which Pakistan can overcome its ideological uncertainty and reconcile itself with its diversity. ”**

## Quilliam In Pakistan

### THE CONTEXT

Quilliam's work in Pakistan began with a simple wish: a desire to reorient Pakistan's future to one that is more peaceful, prosperous and free from the scourge of Islamist extremism. Informed both by an understanding of the country's unique historical context as well as the shifting dynamics experienced in more recent years (as highlighted in the introduction of this report) Quilliam set about expanding the contours of the nascent consensus against Islamist extremism within the country, which

***“ In 2008 alone, over 2,000 Pakistani civilians and security personnel were killed in a total of 63 suicide attacks, and levels of violence remain high in 2009. ”***

has currently forged a fragile unity between state, citizens and the army.

While the Pakistani military has been engaged in intensive operations to purge the northwestern regions of those who disregard the writ of the state and routinely target civilians in their attempts to establish a medieval system of governance, almost no attempt has been made to curb the insidious

spread of the ideology that fuels such militancy. In the post 9/11 period, Islamist ideological groups, both violent and non-violent, targeted Pakistan by flooding it with activists and inflammatory literature. By politicizing Islam, these Islamist groups called for a rejection of democratic politics and spread hatred and discrimination against non-Muslims and members of other Islamic denominations. All this has contributed to a growing culture of intolerance in Pakistan, the most extreme manifestations of which have resulted in terrorist attacks. In 2008 alone, over 2,000 Pakistani civilians and security personnel were killed in a total of 63 suicide attacks, and levels of violence remain high in 2009.<sup>18</sup>

Given these realities, a credible and long-term solution to Islamist extremism can only be sought by winning the struggle for ideas, as military means can only ever be a stop-gap. The majority within Pakistan, one that remains moderate in its outlook, needs to make itself heard. Islam must be reclaimed as a faith from Islamist groups trying to sell it as a totalitarian political project. This can be done by re-casting the struggle as an ideological, rather than religious debate, where the religion of Islam is successfully decoupled from Islamism's ideological agenda. Quilliam's staff, who formerly spent years trying to convince Muslims that Islamism is in fact Islam, are well placed to engage in popularizing the de-coupling of the two. Further, Pakistan's commitment to democracy, however tenuous it may currently seem, needs to be reaffirmed over all forms of authoritarianism, be they military or mullah.

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<sup>18</sup> H.M. Government, 'UK Policy in Afghanistan and Pakistan: the way forward', April 2009, p.11.

## THE VISION

The mainstay of Quilliam's work in Pakistan has been to present a powerful counter-narrative to Islamist ideology and to strengthen democratic and pluralistic forces within the country. However, given the unprecedented nature of such a task, it has been crucial to clearly define the parameters of this work. The most effective way to achieve this has been by first defining what Quilliam is not:

- **Religious Movement**

Arguably the greatest appeal of Islamist ideology lies in the fact that it uses Islam to justify the propagation of certain political ideals. Using verses from the *Qur'an* and Sunnah, Islamist ideologues have persuaded thousands that the Islamic faith instructs its followers to adhere to a rigidly defined worldview and a totalitarian system of political governance. In light of this fact, the most powerful challenges to Islamist arguments are those rooted within Islam itself, whereby the very sources Islamists rely on to justify their stance are used to contradict them. Such counter-arguments naturally hold great resonance with those who follow the Islamic faith. However, when presenting such arguments, it is important to clarify that Quilliam is not a religious movement, and does not aspire to command a following as such. Although Quilliam's line of argument refers often to the words and traditions of the Prophet Muhammad and the teachings of the *Qur'an*, faith is believed to be the personal prerogative of individuals, over which Quilliam has no authority in giving rulings concerning the 'correct' interpretation or practice. Rather, it is by highlighting this very pluralism inherent to Islam for centuries that Quilliam aims to debunk the theo-political totalitarianism espoused by Islamists.

- **Political Party**

Political parties are widely acknowledged as effective vehicles for instigating change. Today Pakistan is home to an array of political parties that wield significant influence in various parts of the country. However, Quilliam does not seek to establish another party, as the focus of political parties is directed mostly towards policy debates. Quilliam's remit has more to do with what we call a 'civilisational debate' - aiming to find answers and forge a consensus on issues more fundamental than policy, such as the nurturing of an enduring democratic culture within Pakistan.

- **Non-Governmental Organization (N.G.O.)**

Most NGOs in Pakistan work in the health, education, or development sectors. Although these organizations carry out a vital function in developing countries, Quilliam's work cannot be classed in the same category as it deals foremost in the realm of ideas.

- **Think Tank**

As the world's first counter-extremism think tank, Quilliam has made giant strides in challenging Islamist ideology from its base of operations in the UK. However, given the fragility of Pakistan's political institutions, operating as a think tank in Pakistan by providing the Pakistani government with policy recommendations does not offer an effective means to influence ideological trends within the country.

**“ Quilliam seeks to direct its efforts primarily towards citizen-led social change aimed at popularizing critiques of the Islamist ideology, de-coupling this from Islam as a faith and promoting a secular democratic framework for resolving political disputes. ”**

Quilliam seeks instead to direct its efforts primarily towards citizen-led social change aimed at popularizing critiques of the Islamist ideology, de-coupling this from Islam as a faith and promoting a secular democratic framework for resolving political disputes. The aim is to thereby bolster Pakistani civil society and empower the educated classes to reclaim the meaning of both Islam and Pakistan. Such efforts are geared towards seeding a home-grown social movement that will in turn influence both the religious and political culture of the country in a positive way.

## THE AUDIENCE

Quilliam's target audience falls under four broad categories:

1. The principal targets are the educated youth in Pakistan, belonging to private and public higher educational establishments. Pakistan has a burgeoning youth population, statistically evidenced by the fact that 63% of Pakistanis are under 25 years of age.<sup>19</sup> Crucial to realising the potential and promise of this demographic is the presence of educational and professional opportunities. Bereft of direction, opportunity and constructive social avenues, Pakistani youth have become an attractive target for recruitment to extremist causes. Quilliam's awareness of this fact forms the basis of its rationale for working in the aforementioned institutions. Added to this is Quilliam's recognition that Pakistan's youth are critical in determining the future course of the country.
2. Vice Chancellors and faculty members of higher educational institutions are known to wield significant influence over their student bodies. Working with such individuals is crucial, for not only do they act as conduits for access to students, but can also actively participate in countering Islamist extremism by taking note of it on their campuses and implementing initiatives to curtail it.

<sup>19</sup> United Nations Development Programme (hereafter U.N.D.P.) Youth in Pakistan Statistics, <<http://www.undp.org.pk/undp-and-the-youth.html>>, [accessed 14 August 2009].



3. Pakistan has a rapidly evolving civil society. There are many spirited activists ranging from human rights persons to media personnel who have consistently challenged the state whenever it has attempted to clamp down on constitutional freedoms. The recent Lawyers' Movement, which resulted in the reinstatement of Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry, is a prime example of the strengths of civil society activism. Young people have also come to work together on issues of civic interest, an example of which is a rubbish collecting drive in Lahore. One of the participants of Responsible Citizens said: "Everybody keeps blaming the government, but no one actually does anything. So we thought, why don't we?"<sup>20</sup> Quilliam aims to harness this momentum in society when working towards creating a social movement.
4. Quilliam advocates a strong media strategy to communicate and place its message. Its designation as a target audience is based on the understanding of the media's influence. Pakistani media has mushroomed over the last five years. A recent International Republican Institute (I.R.I.) public opinion poll indicates that the Pakistani public ranked media institutions at 89%, which is the highest in favourable opinion of country institutions.<sup>21</sup> Quilliam's work has thus far received widespread media attention, both through print and broadcast media.<sup>22</sup>

***“ Bereft of direction, opportunity and constructive social avenues, Pakistani youth have become an attractive target for recruitment to extremist causes. ”***

## THE STRATEGY

- **Strategic Communication**

Quilliam views its work as a struggle for ideas, for which effective communication, to inspire and result in action, is imperative. For this purpose Quilliam employs strategic communication. Although there is no standard definition for this concept, strategic communication constitutes certain elements which combine to form an

<sup>20</sup> Sabrina Tavernisey, 'Young Pakistanis Take One Problem Into Their Own Hands', *The New York Times*, 18 May 2009, <[www.nytimes.com/2009/05/19/world/asia/19trash.html?\\_r=1&pagewanted=all](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/19/world/asia/19trash.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all)>, [accessed 10 August 2009].

<sup>21</sup> I.R.I. Public Opinion Poll 2009, <[www.iri.org/newsreleases/pdfs/2009%20May%2011%20IRI%20Pakistan%20Index,%20March%2027-30,%202009.pdf](http://www.iri.org/newsreleases/pdfs/2009%20May%2011%20IRI%20Pakistan%20Index,%20March%2027-30,%202009.pdf)>, [accessed 03 August 2009].

<sup>22</sup> Details of media coverage available on Quilliam website: <[www.quilliamfoundation.org/pakistan-university-tour.html](http://www.quilliamfoundation.org/pakistan-university-tour.html)>.

‘influence strategy.’<sup>23</sup> It is widely acknowledged today that terrorism ‘is essentially strategic communication in the purest definition.’<sup>24</sup> By combining communication of a message with action, strategic communication achieves proactive behaviour. Quilliam’s use of this concept is meant to encourage activism against Islamist extremism.

- **Clarifying the Terms**

Taking note of the prevailing confusion within Pakistan regarding the history and characteristics of Islamist ideology, a central component of Quilliam’s work involves the clarification of concepts in order to raise awareness amongst Pakistanis about the aims of Islamist groups, and to equip them with the appropriate arguments to challenge this ideology.

**Islamism** is the belief that Islam is a political ideology. It claims that political sovereignty belongs to God rather than the people, that their reading of *shari’ah* is state law, and that it is the religious duty of all Muslims to create and pledge allegiance to an ‘Islamic’ state that reflects these principles. Despite its claim that up until the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in 1924 Islam had always existed as a political system, Islamism is in fact a modernist movement influenced by products of modernity such as socialism.

Just as extremists can be found within any faith or political persuasion, today we

“ *Unlike Islamism, the Islamic faith does not define any one way of engaging in politics, but rather encourages difference, diversity and pluralism, both in faith and in politics.* ”

witness the rise of extremists who use Islam to justify their actions. Islamists can either be of the violent Jihadist or non-violent kind. While most would agree that Jihadism is criminal, it is important to remember that legal, non-violent Islamism is also a problem as it breeds intolerance within society against any kind of difference. The way to tackle Jihadism is through the forces of law and order, but the way to challenge non-

violent Islamism, which also inspires Jihadism, is through debate within civil society. It is important to challenge the myth propagated by Islamists that Islam is a pre-defined political ideology. In fact, unlike Islamism, the Islamic faith does not define any one way of engaging in politics, but rather encourages difference, diversity and pluralism, both in faith and in politics.

<sup>23</sup> Dr. Emily Goldman, ‘Strategic Communication: Theory and Application’, *US State Department*, June 2008, <[www.ndu.edu/CTNSP/Strat\\_Com/Goldman\\_Plenary.pdf](http://www.ndu.edu/CTNSP/Strat_Com/Goldman_Plenary.pdf)>, [accessed 11 August 2009].

<sup>24</sup> Richard J. Josten, ‘Strategic Communication: Key Enabler for Elements of National Power’, Summer 2006, <[www.carlisle.army.mil/DIME/documents/iosphere\\_summer06\\_josten.pdf](http://www.carlisle.army.mil/DIME/documents/iosphere_summer06_josten.pdf)>, [accessed 11 August 2009].

- **Hands-On Approach**

Influencing ideas and changing trends requires a deep level of sustained engagement. Therefore, Quilliam has adopted a hands-on approach to its project delivery. Quilliam Director Maajid Nawaz has been very much at the forefront of activities in Pakistan, personally conducting several lectures and workshops over a number of months. In a country like Pakistan, where there is a dearth of credible leaders and inspirational figures, such an approach has struck a chord, as it has instilled a sense of confidence that the key figures aiming to instigate this movement are easy to access and approach.

- **Partnerships and Networking**

Quilliam strongly advocates partnering with local organizations. Such partnerships enable it to draw upon local expertise and knowledge, as well as provide in-country ownership for its work. Quilliam's partnership with a local youth development NGO called Bargad<sup>25</sup> has proven highly beneficial for organizational and networking purposes. Bargad's aims to promote peace, justice and cooperation amongst youth are commensurate to Quilliam's in that there is a shared target audience and an agreement over core principles central to both organizations.

Quilliam also focuses on networking with Vice Chancellors and faculty members as well as students. These networks are essential for the long-term sustainability of Quilliam's message, and are instrumental in the creation of a social movement within the country. Quilliam intends to supplement these networks with networking tools, including an online forum and website through which young people and other interested individuals can collaborate.

- **Inter-provincial Interaction**

Quilliam firmly believes in the importance of promoting greater interaction between Pakistan's provinces. Through provincial representation it aims to build bridges between young persons from various regions across the country. It is hoped that these exchanges will help mitigate hostilities between the provinces (particularly those that are home to separatist groups) by dispelling provincial stereotypes and creating opportunities for constructive dialogue.

- **Capacity-Building**

Intensive workshops held with students and faculty members build the capacity of young educated Pakistanis. They train target audiences to identify and counter

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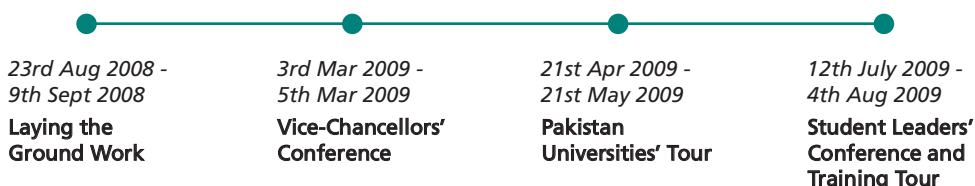
<sup>25</sup> Bargad Homepage, <<http://www.bargad.org.pk/>>.

extremist ideologies. These workshops also provide opportunities for direct engagement with individuals from a variety of backgrounds. It is hoped that these individuals will form the basis of a new social movement.

- **Popularizing the Message**

Through the production and dissemination of print and multimedia literature packs at key events and locations, Quilliam aims to popularize its core message amongst various sections of Pakistani society. Frequent media coverage of its work is another way in which Quilliam reaches out to a wider audience of Pakistanis living within and outside the country.

## A Brief Overview of Quilliam's Work



The Quilliam Pakistan Project was initiated in August 2008. From 23rd August to 9th September 2008 Quilliam embarked on its first tour of the country to lay the foundations for its future work. Through personal visits to university and college campuses Quilliam staff fine-tuned their understanding of the prevailing atmosphere and conditions at higher educational institutions and proceeded to build a rapport with key faculty members.

During this trip, a partnership was established with Bargad, a local youth development N.G.O. based in the Punjabi city of Gujranwalla. Quilliam's first joint project with Bargad involved the organization of a '*National Conference on Peacebuilding and Women Leadership Development on Campuses*', held from 3rd – 5th March 2009. The Conference brought together Vice Chancellors and prominent faculty members from across the country to share their views and experiences on various themes of the complex phenomenon of radicalization. Towards the end, an action plan to combat radicalization on campuses was developed, to which conference participants pledged their support. Quilliam was warmly received by those present, and was invited on to several campuses to engage directly with students on this issue.

From 21st April – 21st May 2009, Quilliam conducted a nationwide tour of university campuses, spanning all four provinces of Pakistan, along with a series of student training workshops. Director Maajid Nawaz delivered 21 lectures during the course of the tour, reaching a total of over 5,000 students. Speaking of his personal experiences within an Islamist organization and the journey he undertook to eventually recant his ideas, Nawaz engaged with these students to discuss the threats from Islamism that Pakistan faces today. Bargad Director Sabiha Shaheen accompanied Nawaz on the tour, speaking to students about the various opportunities available to them after university, and how Bargad would facilitate them in fully realizing their potential.

The universities' tour received an overwhelmingly positive response from students, with each campus bringing forth individuals who supported Quilliam's counter-extremism message and offering their services in furthering our cause. Over 1,000 students signed up to volunteer for future Quilliam activities. News of the tour reached many in Pakistan and abroad as the Quilliam campus events received widespread media

coverage in both local and international press. Aaj TV,<sup>26</sup> one of Pakistan's most popular television channels, aired a special documentary on Quilliam's pro-democracy work in the country. Maajid Nawaz was interviewed by various media outlets, and a documentary produced by the BBC prime time current affairs programme generated interest amongst audiences in the UK.<sup>27</sup>

Building on networks and relationships established thus far, Quilliam returned to Pakistan in July 2009. In partnership with Bargad once again, a five day conference was organized in the bustling city of Lahore. The '*All Pakistan Student Leaders' Conference on Peacebuilding in Campuses*', held from 20th – 24th July 2009, brought together student leaders of various political parties from across the country. Additionally, Quilliam arranged a series of training workshops to build the capacity of students who had expressed an interest in volunteering for Quilliam. Such prolonged interaction with students was the initial step in cementing a social movement amongst the student population.

From the very outset the people of Pakistan have provided the impetus for the format and direction of Quilliam's work. For this reason, Quilliam is committed to carrying out ground-level research with its target audiences on relevant issues in Pakistan. The research project conducted during the universities' tour was the first of its kind, providing Quilliam with valuable insights into how students across Pakistan currently think and feel about their situation.

The next section outlines the methodology employed in carrying out this research, with the following section discussing the significant findings of the project. In taking such initiatives, Quilliam hopes to highlight important future avenues for engagement in the country.

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<sup>26</sup> AAJ TV Online, <[www.aaj.tv](http://www.aaj.tv)>, [accessed 17 August 2009].

<sup>27</sup> A documentary on Quilliam's Pakistan universities' tour was aired on *BBC Newsnight* on 23 June 2009.

## Research Methodology

Two sets of questionnaires were distributed at the end of each Quilliam event during the universities' tour. The first was intended to provide the basis for an external evaluation of Quilliam's work in the country. The second was designed to assess students' views on extremism and the wider situation in Pakistan regarding religion, state, nationalism and politics. All questions were posed in English and composed and analysed by the Karachi-based research institute, Pakistan Institute of Labor Education and Research (PILER).<sup>28</sup>

Due to unavoidable resource and time constraints, questionnaires were only distributed amongst students of the Punjab; it was felt this would provide a high quality local case study that would highlight the wider views of Pakistani youth, whilst being an important step in carrying out similar research projects in other areas of Pakistan. Across the Punjab, lectures were held by Quilliam at 12 different educational institutions.<sup>29</sup> From these events, a total of 1,244 sets of questionnaires were returned, although not all students elected to answer all of the questions posed. Those who completed the questionnaires were college students studying for either BA or MA level degrees. Data was collected through a random sampling method given that conference attendees varied in terms of numbers, demographic, and their educational specialisation.

The questionnaires targeted the educated youth from both public and private institutions. As mentioned in the previous section, the importance of this target audience is consolidated by demographic statistics which indicate that Pakistani youth, or the under 25s, constitute an incredible 63% of the total population.<sup>30</sup> An understanding of this exponentially expanding age group's potential, yet also promise, is imperative if Pakistan is to successfully embark on the struggle for ideas. The educated youth unfortunately exist in an environment where there is potential to develop into Pakistan's future extremist ideologues. Conversely, and more optimistically, the educated youth also possess the promise to spearhead the sort of citizen-led movement which Quilliam is working to construct.

The questionnaires posed seven questions, and were carefully designed to obtain personal information relating to students' class, ethnicity, gender and locale — whether rural or urban. Contained within these variables were the following categories: class — working class, lower middle class, upper middle class, well off/rich; ethnicity — Punjabi, Pukhtoon, Sindhi, Balochi, Saraiki, Muhajir, Hazara, Kashmiri, Giligiti, Chitrali; and locale — urban/city, town, rural/village. Subsequently, these variables were cross referenced with students' broader views and perceptions pertaining to religion, state, nationalism and politics in an attempt to identify correlations and map trends.

<sup>28</sup> PILER Homepage, <<http://www.piler.org.pk/>>.

<sup>29</sup> For a full list of the cities visited and those cities Quilliam intends to visit, please see the map contained at the beginning of the report.

<sup>30</sup> U.N.D.P. Youth in Pakistan Statistics, <<http://www.undp.org.pk/undp-and-the-youth.html>>, [accessed 14 August 2009].

The importance of the questionnaire design was twofold. *First*, multiple choice questions were posed which simply required students to circle the appropriate response. The key issues being investigated were: views on the separation/fusion of religion and politics, compatibility of Islam and democracy, views and practices determining valid religious authority, and the vision and role of faith-based groups. The answer options were selected through a process of consultation between PILER and Quilliam. Different responses were given weighted averages, which in turn enabled students to circle multiple answers. PILER was then able to add together the scores. As a result, averages were developed for each response question as opposed to an overall average. This quantitative method was seemingly the most fitting as it enabled large numbers of questionnaires to be processed and analysed statistically. In addition, it facilitated pictorial representation of data in pie chart form which naturally increased the accessibility of the significant findings.

*Second*, multiple questions were incorporated which could act as indicators of class. Students were asked to indicate their income group, which ranged on a sliding scale from working class to elite, as well as their parents' occupation. This design ensured that individuals' class specification was independently verified - a procedure which in turn provided a guarantee of the research's accuracy.

### Limitations

As with all research, several problems were encountered whilst collecting data and it is acknowledged that there are inevitable methodological limitations. Despite the sample being random, true random sampling was marred by the fact that attendance at the conferences was voluntary; as a result, we can infer that those in attendance expressed a personal inclination to attend, presumably founded upon interest in the subject matter. Furthermore, although questionnaire respondents were both male and female, due to the higher number of women's colleges visited within the Punjab region, female respondents are disproportionately represented within the data. It is anticipated that this over-representation may directly affect the significant findings, perhaps reducing the overall perception of extremism on campuses, given that extremism tends to be the preserve of environments where there is a male presence. Due to the inability to make the research wholly systematic, the significant findings should be assumed to highlight trends across Pakistan as opposed to being directly proportional.

In addition, the data cannot be said to be totally representative of all those in attendance at the events, given that students would have had to stay for the entirety of the workshop in order to complete the questionnaires which were distributed at the end. It is possible that some students either chose, or had to, leave the workshop early. In the case of those who chose to leave early, it is possible that they disagreed with Quilliam's efforts. Therefore those individuals harbouring strong thoughts and feelings may in some cases have not been sufficiently represented in the research findings.



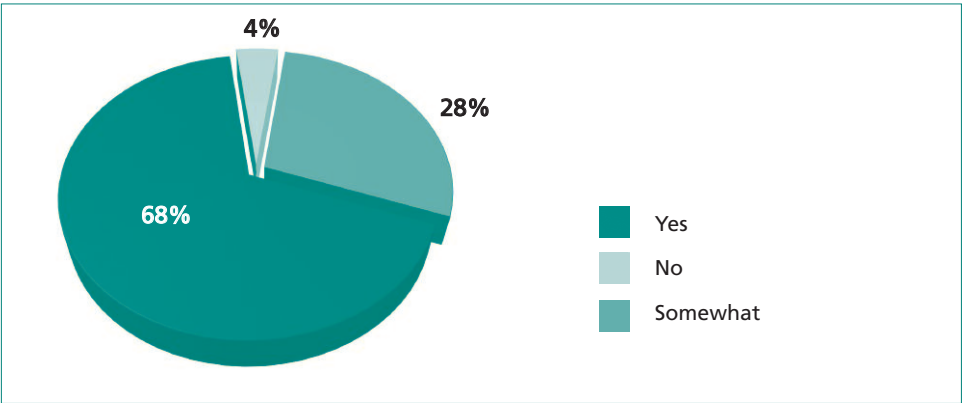
Whilst every effort has been made to cross reference individuals' personal profiles with their responses within the questionnaires, true accuracy has been marginally hampered by some students electing not to disclose characteristics such as ethnicity, despite the anonymity offered by the questionnaires.

Finally, Maajid Nawaz's talk and the questionnaires were both in English whilst the subsequent discussion with the students was conducted in a mixture of English, Urdu, and Punjabi. As a result, there is a possibility that those students not fully proficient in English may have misunderstood key terms used in the questionnaires. If this has occurred, there is a slight possibility it may have marginally affected the research data.

## Significant Findings

Between 21st April and 21st May 2009, Quilliam succeeded in collecting 1,244 sets of completed questionnaires from students during lectures held on 12 campuses across the Punjab region of Pakistan. Included are the most important questions posed, along with a detailed analysis of the significant findings. This evaluation synthesizes the two sub-divisions within the questionnaire. That is, it first analyses students’ viewpoints holistically, and subsequently cross references the respondents’ personal profiles and demographic details with their viewpoints in an attempt to evaluate the impact of the three key variables: gender, ethnicity, and class.<sup>31</sup> Where the findings are represented numerically they denote the number of respondents out of the total of 1,244 received for evaluation.

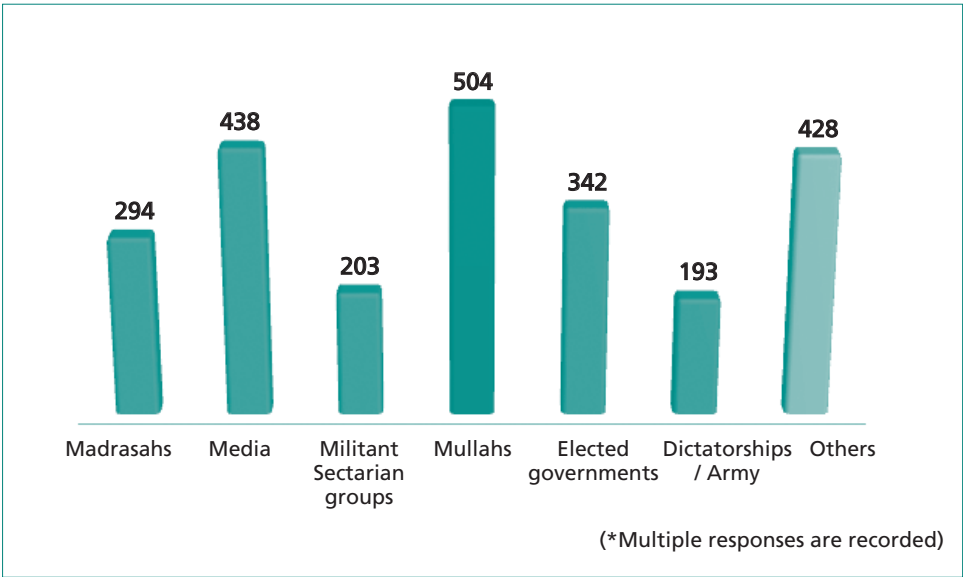
### 1. Do you think religion has been misused in Pakistan?



**68%** respondents felt that religion is misused in Pakistan, whilst a further **28%** believe that it is misused ‘somewhat’. Only **4%** respondents believe that religion has not been misused. Interestingly, the gender variable appears to slightly impact upon findings. **70%** of male respondents believe that religion is certainly misused as opposed to **65%** of female respondents. **33%** females, as opposed to **23%** of males, believe that religion is misused somewhat. In addition, just **2.28%** females felt religion is not misused as opposed to **6.55%** males. As previously mentioned, with regard to the methodological limitations, the selection sample was somewhat distorted due to the high number of women’s colleges visited in the Punjab. It is likely that this may have impacted upon results, as those women in single sex educational establishments are less likely to have been exposed to extreme Islamist elements. It is well documented that extremism, more often than not, tends to be problematic amongst males.

<sup>31</sup> Detailed data tables included in the Appendix.

2. What do you think is responsible for the misuse?



**504** out of a total of 1,244 respondent, cited the mullahs<sup>32</sup> as central in the misuse of religion, **438** cited the media, **342** identified elected governments, **294** respondents believed that *madrasahs*<sup>33</sup> are responsible, **203** respondents stated that militant sectarian groups are responsible for misuse, **193** identified dictatorships and the army, and **428** student respondents lay blame on others, which includes the current government, American and Indian agents and foreign agencies.

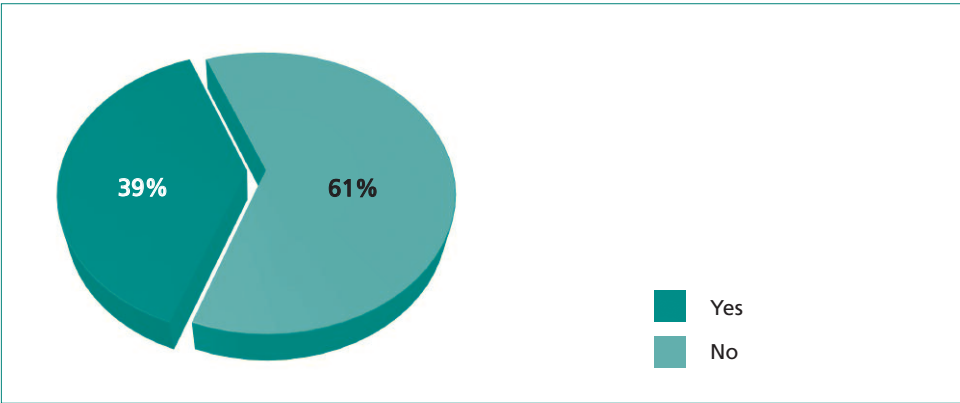
When the students’ responses were cross-referenced with their personal profile, there were relatively few differences exhibited according to the key variables. The gender variable failed to highlight any key differences in perception, although more females than males felt that the media was culpable for the misuse of religion in Pakistan.

Disaggregation of the data on the rural/urban variable failed to provide any real differences in opinions. Similarly, the class variable and income indicators had little impact upon an individual’s perception of extremism.

<sup>32</sup> A Muslim male head of the mosque who is educated in Islamic theology and religious law.

<sup>33</sup> In the Pakistani context, a *madrasah* is a religious educational establishment.

3. Do you think national politics should be kept separate from religion?



**39%** of student respondents believe that religion and politics should be kept separate whilst **61%** disagree. Interestingly, of all the variables, the gender variable had the greatest influence upon results, with **36%** females believing religion and politics should be kept separate, compared to **42%** males. Conversely, **64%** females and **58%** males believe that religion and politics should not be separate. The class and rural/urban variables exerted little influence on findings.

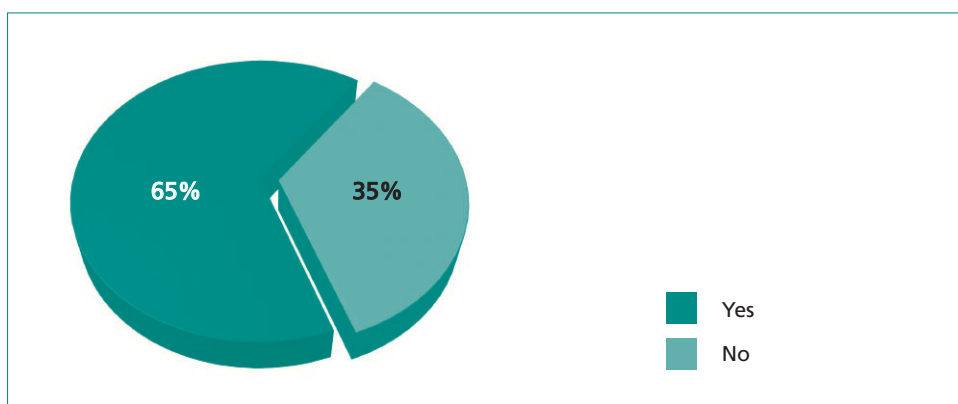
These findings highlight one of the biggest challenges Quilliam and other organisations may face in Pakistan - addressing and engaging with those **61%** students who do not believe that religion and politics should be separated. Quilliam could adopt a two pronged approach; Initially investigating students views to clarify the role of the state to govern people, and the exact role of religion in the political sphere. Through organization of further discussions, and the distribution of more questionnaires, Quilliam could challenge students to consider and debate their own personal position on such matters. This could extend to asking students whether religious principles should inform state and politics, or, if the individual practice of religion should be restricted to the personal sphere.

Through deepened intellectual engagement and through provision of a solid counter-narrative, Quilliam could encourage and plant the seeds for a change in attitudes and opinions over time. There is much evidence to suggest that such an approach would be beneficial. For example, it is clear that some students hold contradictory views on religion and politics: on the one hand they believe that religion has been misused in Pakistan, yet on the other they believe religion and politics should not be distinct and separate. Moreover, many also hold elected governments more responsible than military dictatorships for the misuse of religion, indicating a certain degree of indoctrination by the military. In highlighting these contradictions, Quilliam could challenge such stances and propose alternatives: the separation of religion and politics, which would allow not only Muslims, but people of all beliefs and persuasions to freely practise their faith.

Conversely, Quilliam can work more closely with the **39%** students who affirm the separation of religion and politics. Such statistics infer receptiveness towards Quilliam's message. Indeed, Quilliam has already begun to draw on these students by encouraging them to assist with various activities in Pakistan. In the most recent tour of Pakistan, Quilliam invited volunteers to attend workshops in support of their efforts.

However, there is a need to continue organising training workshops that educate this set of students in the complex history of Islamist thought and history, to construct solid arguments in favour of their already held beliefs. Quilliam could work to further entrench their views, encouraging and supporting the co-existence of religion and politics as opposed to supporting monolithically secular arguments which hitherto have been ill-received in the country and have tended to ignite aggression. Quilliam is well-equipped to do this; its directors personally believe in the possibility of practicing the Islamic faith whilst simultaneously upholding liberal anti-totalitarian principles. Essentially, what is required to drive and empower these students is synonymous with the very agenda Quilliam couches.

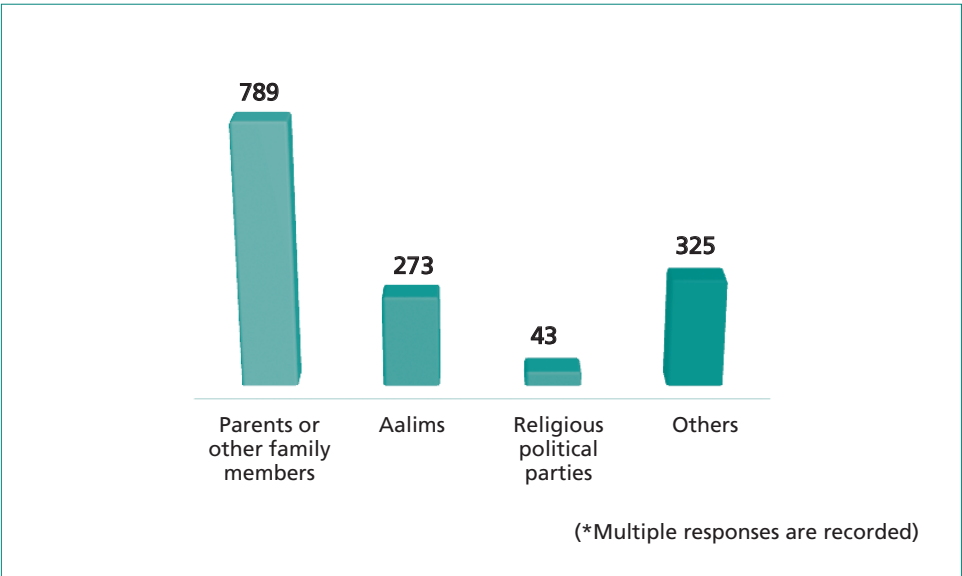
#### 4. Do you think Islam and democracy can coexist together?



In total **65%** student respondents believe that Islam and democracy are compatible whilst **35%** believe they are incompatible. Key variables of gender, urban/rural divide and income appear to exert little influence on respondents.

These figures significantly reinforce the need for and commitment to democracy, and therefore speak to a space for nurturing democracy.

5. Who do you take your personal religious queries to?



Statistics collected reveal that contrary to popular perceptions, a majority of respondents (**789**) took their personal religious queries to their parents or a family member. In addition, another **273** said they seek advice from an Aalim.<sup>34</sup> Those authorities whom one would have expected Pakistanis to turn to in fact seem to hold little legitimacy with respondents. Only **43** respondents stated reliance upon religious political parties and **325** cited others such *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* sources.

In terms of the impact of variables, fewer respondents (**154**) from the rural areas consult their parents on religious matters than in the urban areas (**517**). This can perhaps be justified by the lower education and literacy levels in those areas outside the main urban conurbations.

The gender variable wields considerable influence upon findings, with **508** females as opposed to just **208** males relying upon parents and family. This discrepancy perhaps reflects closer female-family ties and also a lack of female access to alternative sources of authority.

The various income groups indicated by respondents highlights the fact that students from the upper middle classes (**431**) placed the greatest reliance on parents or other family members.

These findings demonstrate the extent to which the educated youth rely upon societal level support. In order to further disseminate its message, Quilliam could broaden its

<sup>34</sup> The word Aalim is the singular of Ulema which means scholar. In a religious context Aalims are Muslim juristic scholars versed in several fields of Islamic studies.

focus by not only targeting the educated youth, but also those within their immediate environmental circle, upon whom they directly rely, such as their family. There are two potential ways in which Quilliam could pursue its intervention in Pakistan. First, Quilliam could work directly with parents through a broad social approach. It could research whether parents attend religious forums and congregations that then influence their children. Second, the heavy reliance upon parents could point towards limited access to authoritative sources – Quilliam’s interventions could provide access to alternative thought.

A broader engagement could be furthered through workshops, seminars, public discussions, radio broadcasts, television programs, internet material, and the production of CDs and cassettes. To broaden its message, Quilliam could strategically deploy young professionals in the media, who could convey ideas in Urdu via regional language newspapers, television, and radio.

## Reframing The Public Space In Pakistan

### RAISING AWARENESS

Various described as a “frontline in the war against terror”, a “breeding ground for militancy” and “the most dangerous place in the world”<sup>35</sup>, Pakistan has been the focus of widespread international attention in the post 9/11 years. The battle against Islamist terrorism, many believe, will be won or lost within its borders. However, with the passage of time, a dangerous gulf had begun to emerge. While the international media would all too often reduce Pakistan’s deep complexity to its relationship with terrorism, there seemed to be a resistance within the country towards accepting that such a problem existed at all. Thrust suddenly into the international limelight, many Pakistanis struggled to come to terms with the way their country was being portrayed. A lack of clarity on the historical roots of Islamist extremism in the country and the specific role of foreign intervention in exacerbating this problem forced many to take recourse in conspiracy theories to make sense of Pakistan’s predicament.

That a culture of conspiracy has been rife in Pakistan is a fact hard to refute. Pakistani journalist Obaid-Chinoy writes ‘If you spend any time in Pakistan, you realize that it’s a land full of conspiracy theories: 9/11 was a Jewish Mossad plot; the Pakistan army is killing innocent Muslims in Waziristan at the behest of the Americans...many Pakistanis believe that the hunt for the al-Qaeda leader is just an excuse for the United States to intervene throughout the Middle East and Central Asia and that bin Laden will not be found until the Americans have conquered the entire Muslim world (sic). These anti-U.S. theories are given a boost on the streets with the circulation of Abu Ghraib torture images and when former inmates at Guantanamo give lurid accounts of American guards desecrating the *Qur’an*’.<sup>36</sup> Several other commentators have also reinforced this point.<sup>37</sup>

However, such attitudes are better understood when taking note of the lack of transparency of information within Pakistan. Several turbulent events in the country’s history, including the assassination of one of its most ruthless dictators, General Zia-ul-Haq, and twice-elected Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, have been shrouded in mystery. To date no credible information as to the identities or affiliations of those who are

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<sup>35</sup> Such statements have been made by world leaders including U.S. President Barack Obama and U.K. Prime Minister Gordon Brown.

<sup>36</sup> Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, ‘Pakistan: In the land of conspiracy theories’, *Frontline/World*, 24 August 2005, <[www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/blog/2005/08/pakistan\\_in\\_the.html](http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/blog/2005/08/pakistan_in_the.html)>, [accessed 07 August 2009].

<sup>37</sup> Bengali, ‘Beyond Conspiracy Theories’, *The Dawn*, 15 December 2008, <[www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/beyond+conspiracy+theories-sal](http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/beyond+conspiracy+theories-sal)>, [accessed on 07 August 2009], Cowasjee, ‘Sixty-one years down the line’, *The Dawn*, 17 August 2008, <[www.dawn.com/weekly/cowas/20080817.htm](http://www.dawn.com/weekly/cowas/20080817.htm)>, [accessed 06 August 2009].



responsible for these deaths has been made available. This lack of knowledge has come to be supplanted by conspiracy theories that range from blaming foreign elements the likes of RAW (Research and Analysis Wing, India's external intelligence), the Central Intelligence Agency (US) or Mossad (Israeli Intelligence). The pervasiveness of this attitude is evidenced in a 2003 Report produced by the World Bank; it was found that some Pakistani youth viewed the promotion of iodized salt as a governmental conspiracy to promote family planning.<sup>38</sup> The results of an I.R.I. public opinion poll<sup>39</sup> conducted a few months after the Mumbai attacks in November 2008 revealed that 42% believed that the RAW/India were responsible for the attacks, 20% cited America and only 1% thought Pakistan was responsible.

This culture of conspiracy has fed into a culture of denial about the internality and actuality of the problems that Pakistan faces. In this vein, there has been a tendency to dismiss Jihadist terrorism and Islamist extremism as an import from the United States. In an aptly titled article, 'In Pakistan, the blame game only compounds our troubles' in *The Independent*, Pakistani Columnist Almeida writes, 'Nowhere, at least in the vernacular media, is there talk of what some Pakistanis have pieced together in recent years: a toxic brew of militancy is emerging in Pakistan in which earlier identities and separate ideologies may no longer be relevant, and it's gone unnoticed by a media that clings to the fears of the past – India, the US.'<sup>40</sup>

**“ When asked if they felt that religious extremism was a serious problem in Pakistan, 74% [of Pakistans] replied yes, the highest percentage since September 2007. ”**  
**- IRI Public Opinion Poll**

However, there are suggestions that this perception is shifting. Once again, the I.R.I. Pakistan Public Opinion Survey of March 2009 illustrates these changes, with its findings establishing a change in trends - 'Although only 10% of respondents cited terrorism as the most important issue, the March 2009 poll registered rising concern

over terrorism in general. When asked if they felt that religious extremism was a serious problem in Pakistan, 74% replied yes, the highest percentage since September 2007. The highest percentage yet, 69%, agreed that the Taliban and al-Qaeda operating in Pakistan was a serious problem, while 45% said that they supported the Pakistani Army

<sup>38</sup> The World Bank, 'Final Report: Study to Assess Attitudes towards sensitive messages in Pakistan', 29 December 2008, <[www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSCContentServer/WDSP/IB/2006/11/03/000310607\\_20061103115722/Rendered/PDF/37836.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSCContentServer/WDSP/IB/2006/11/03/000310607_20061103115722/Rendered/PDF/37836.pdf)>, [accessed 12 August 2009].

<sup>39</sup> I.R.I. Public Opinion Poll 2009, [www.iri.org/newsreleases/pdfs/2009%20May%2011%20IRI%20Pakistan%20Index,%20March%2027-30,%202009.pdf](http://www.iri.org/newsreleases/pdfs/2009%20May%2011%20IRI%20Pakistan%20Index,%20March%2027-30,%202009.pdf), [accessed 3 August 2009].

<sup>40</sup> Cyril Almeida, 'In Pakistan, the blame game only compounds our troubles', *The Independent*, 31 March 2009, <[www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/cyril-almeida-in-pakistan-the-blame-game-only-compounds-our-troubles-1657992.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/cyril-almeida-in-pakistan-the-blame-game-only-compounds-our-troubles-1657992.html)>, [accessed 27 July 2009].

fighting the extremists in the N.W.F.P. and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, another all time high.<sup>41</sup>

In Quilliam's interactions with young Pakistani students, an oft repeated issue was whether Pakistan should claim ownership of the problems it currently faces. Many agreed that taking responsibility would be the only way to find an effective solution. The space created with this shifting perspective should be used to bolster counter-extremism measures, along with the understanding that a more mature approach towards foreign policy needs to be adopted by Pakistanis. While it is true that various countries have intervened in Pakistan's domestic politics on several occasions, the Pakistani government has also pursued interventionist policies elsewhere. The most obvious example of this is the 'strategic depth' policy that Pakistan relentlessly pursued in Afghanistan.<sup>42</sup>

## RECLAIMING SECULARISM

“ You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed that has nothing to do with the business of the State. ”  
[Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah<sup>43</sup>]

In his Presidential Address to the Constituent Assembly shortly after the birth of Pakistan, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, founder of Pakistan, laid the basis for a future secular state. However, successive decades of military rule, interrupted by short bursts of uneasy democracy, succeeded in reversing this vision by creating a state obsessed with proving its 'Islamic' credentials through a smothering of all other paradigms of debate. With time, the very concept of secularism came to be reviled by large sections of the country, furthered greatly by the mistranslation of the Urdu word into '*ladiniyyat*', which literally means 'irreligiosity'.<sup>44</sup> In a deeply religious place like Pakistan, a word which denotes an antipathy to religion has naturally been rejected by many. The Arabic word

<sup>41</sup> I.R.I. Public Opinion Poll 2009, <[www.iri.org/newsreleases/pdfs/2009%20May%2011%20IRI%20Pakistan%20Index,%20March%207-30,%202009.pdf](http://www.iri.org/newsreleases/pdfs/2009%20May%2011%20IRI%20Pakistan%20Index,%20March%207-30,%202009.pdf)>, [accessed 03 August 2009].

<sup>42</sup> Iqbal Ahmad Khan, 'Time to shun the past', *The Dawn*, 22 July 2009, <[www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/14-time-to-shun-the-past-01](http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/14-time-to-shun-the-past-01)>, [accessed 17 August 2009].

<sup>43</sup> Presidential Address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan at Karachi, 11 August 1947, <[www.pakistanspace.tripod.com/archives/47jin11.htm](http://www.pakistanspace.tripod.com/archives/47jin11.htm)>, [accessed on 12 August 2009].

<sup>44</sup> Mahnaz Ispahani, 'Can Pakistan Be Saved?', *Council of Foreign Relations*, 16 June 2003, <[www.cfr.org/publication/6052/can\\_pakistan\\_be\\_saved.html?breadcrumb=%2Fbios%2F4604%2Fmahnaz\\_ishpani%3Fgroupby%3D3%26hide%3D1%26id%3D4604%26filter%3D2003](http://www.cfr.org/publication/6052/can_pakistan_be_saved.html?breadcrumb=%2Fbios%2F4604%2Fmahnaz_ishpani%3Fgroupby%3D3%26hide%3D1%26id%3D4604%26filter%3D2003)>, [accessed 12 August 2009].

for secularism, '*almaaniyyah*', an abstract noun derived from '*aalam*' or 'world', is a better rendition.

Notwithstanding, there is a strong body of work which claims that secularism alone can rejuvenate Islam. As Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im explains in *Islam and the Secular State*,<sup>45</sup> the concept of an 'Islamic' state entered Muslim discourse in the post-colonial period. He maintains that Muslim hostility to secularism arises from the fact that it is conflated with the exclusion of religious life. However, this is a flawed understanding, because without a secular state apparatus there is a very real danger of the promotion of one view over all others, thereby exhausting the possibility of Muslims to profess their faith as they choose.

**“ Despite Pakistan’s muddled politics, religion has never been a mass political motivator. This is evidenced by the fact that given the opportunity to vote, the Pakistani electorate has always chosen to vote along secular lines. ”**

There is now an urgent need to reopen the debate regarding secularism in Pakistan, not least because a secular state presents the best opportunity for the country to unite its astonishingly diverse populations. Examples from the country's history provide encouraging signs that such a project is possible.

For instance, despite Pakistan's muddled politics, religion has never been a mass

political motivator. This is evidenced by the fact that given the opportunity to vote, the Pakistani electorate has always chosen to vote along secular lines.<sup>46</sup> As Haqqani notes, 'A large number of otherwise practicing Muslims have demonstrated through the ballot box time and again their desire to embrace pragmatic political and economic ideas.'<sup>47</sup> I.R.I. public polling data reinforces this observation, with 77% of respondents selecting democratic government when presented with a choice between a stable and prosperous Pakistan run by a military dictatorship or a democratic government that led to an unstable and insecure country.

Furthermore, no progressive movements that have coalesced around people's rights have invoked religion to strengthen their argument, unless protesting a law passed by the state with a narrow, regressive interpretation of Islam. The peasant movements for land rights, the women's movement, the labour movement, and ethnic/nationalist movements are all cases in point. Most recently, Pakistan has witnessed the Lawyers'

<sup>45</sup> Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, *Islam and the Secular State* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2008).

<sup>46</sup> Note that the 2002 success of the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal is the only exception to this trend, 'In fact, Pakistan's last parliamentary elections in 2002 were the only time in the country's 60-year history - it has had 10 parliamentary elections - when Islamist parties had a strong showing. This was fueled by the government marginalizing the secular parties, as well as a backlash to the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 and the ousting of the Taliban from Kabul'. Chietigj Bajpae, 'Pakistan's extremism starts at the top', *Asia Times Online*, 27 February 2008, <[www.atimes.com/atimes/South\\_Asia/JB27Df02.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/JB27Df02.html)>, [accessed 03 August 2009].

<sup>47</sup> Husain Haqqani, *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005), p.311.

Movement for independence of the judiciary. The movement enjoyed the active participation of lawyers of all hues, a broad range of civil society actors and political parties – including the Islamist parties and their student groups. It is noteworthy that implementation of *shari'ah*, Islamization, *Qazi* courts<sup>48</sup> and such featured nowhere in their demands, considering the movement was centered around law. In fact, the government's decision to create *Qazi* courts in the Malakand division as part of the peace deal in Swat earlier this year found no support from the Lawyers' Movement or its stalwarts.

Having said this however, it is important to remember that religious slogans still have the ability to mobilize the streets and create social and political unrest in Pakistan. Open discussion and debate are also hampered by the fact that many Pakistanis feel burdened by a moral dilemma when speaking about matters concerning religion – they do not want to be accused of somehow speaking against God or Islam. The country's strict blasphemy laws have ensured that such inhibitions remain ever present.

**“ A support for plurality of discourses needs to be encouraged, so that the dangerous polarization witnessed in recent years between those who claim to belong to the Left and those who view them as anti-religion can be bridged. ”**

In this climate, it is imperative for the Pakistani state to distance itself from using Islam to gain political mileage and to work towards redressing historical obstacles put in place by previous governments, such as discriminatory laws and policies which provide state patronage to particular ideologies.

Quilliam aims to work towards reclaiming the meaning of secularism, in order to facilitate the growth of secular spaces within the country. A support for plurality of discourses needs to be encouraged, so that the dangerous polarization witnessed in recent years between those who claim to belong to the Left and those who view them as anti-religion can be bridged. Furthermore, Pakistanis need to be provided with the confidence to believe that taking a stance against Islamism or demanding secular rule is not an un-Islamic practice, but rather is perfectly compatible with the teachings of Islam.

## SHIFTING THE FOCUS

The locus of *madrasahs* as the epicentre for the indoctrination and creation of Jihadist militants gained popularity post 9/11. Commentators, security analysts and scholars alike propagated the perspective that Pakistani militants draw from the poor and are the products of the *madrasah* system that serves to indoctrinate them with the Jihadist

<sup>48</sup> A *Qazi* is a muslim judge who renders decisions according to the *shari'ah*.

mindset.<sup>49</sup> This perspective has also gained popularity within policy discourse in the international arena.<sup>50</sup> In contradistinction, there is now a growing body of literature that is challenging this discourse, not least because the militant profile belies poverty and *madrasah* schooling. For instance, Christine C. Fair categorically states that the above mentioned viewpoint is untenable, purely because it is 'inconsonant'<sup>51</sup> with the findings of terrorism literature.

Conceptualizing and understanding this shift is important because it has important policy ramifications. The majority of non-violent Islamist recruitment occurs in universities among the educated classes of society, not in the *madrasahs*. What is needed is a more nuanced perspective that is premised on the complexities within the Pakistani education system. Part and parcel of this is recognizing the impact of the Pakistani curriculum in state schools as well as the misrepresentation of enrolment figures in *madrasahs*.

- **The relationship between Jihadism and state schools**

Sareen writes 'One of the great myths and misconceptions about the 'jihad' phenomenon is the role played by *madrasahs* in propagating the jihad culture inside Pakistan. While there is no doubt that the *madrasahs* have played an important role in inculcating jihadi fervour among their students, the real nurseries of jihad have been the Pakistani state schools. Shifting the blame onto the *madrasahs* is politically convenient for the Pakistani state. The use of jihad by the state for achievement of foreign policy goals is also glossed over by giving undue attention to the proliferation of *madrasahs* and focusing on them as nurseries of terror.'<sup>52</sup> Superimposed on this is the issue of education institutions linked to sectarian groups, a legacy of Zia's alliance with the US during the time of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Indeed there is a chain of Jamaat affiliated institutions that operate around the country, an example of which is Lahore's well-known Punjab College of Commerce, which is owned by a Jamaat financier. Statistics also lend credible support to this observation. Pakistani journalist Amir Rana has found

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<sup>49</sup> Jessica Stern, 'Pakistan's Jihad Culture', *Foreign Affairs*, 79 (2000), 115-126; Peter Singer, 'Pakistan's Madrassahs: Ensuring a System of Education Not Jihad', *Brookings Institution Analysis Paper*, No.14, (Washington D.C.: Brookings, November 2001); International Crisis Group, Pakistan, 'Madrassahs, Extremism and the Military', *Asia Report* 36 (Brussels, Islamabad: I.C.G., July 29, 2002).

<sup>50</sup> National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, 'What to Do? A Global Strategy' in '*The 9/11 Commission Report*', July 2004, pp.361 – 398, <[www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report.pdf](http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report.pdf)>, [accessed 13 August 2009].

<sup>51</sup> Christine C. Fair, 'Who are Pakistan's Militants and Their Families?', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 20:49 – 65 (2008).

<sup>52</sup> S. Sareen, *The Jihad Factory: Pakistan's Islamic Revolution in the Making* (India: The Observer Foundation, 2005), p.36.

that a 'list of martyrs from six jihadi organisations indicates that student martyrs from schools and colleges outnumbered those from *madrasahs* by nearly five times.'<sup>53</sup>

- **Refuting the poverty-militancy connection**

Christine C. Fair's empirical research proves invaluable in challenging current policy perspectives on *madrasah* reform. Her findings are to be found in her book *The Madrassah Challenge: Militancy and Religious Education in Pakistan*<sup>54</sup> as well as an article entitled 'Who are Pakistan's Militants and Their Families?'<sup>55</sup> and are summarized as follows:

1. Not only are Jihadists well educated by Pakistani standards, they also hail from families that are well educated. Sageman establishes a similar conclusion in the statistical analysis contained in his latest work, *Leaderless Jihad*, where he relates that only 13% of sample Jihadists attended *madrasahs*, which means that 'eighty seven percent did not go to *madrasahs*'.<sup>56</sup> He goes on to mention that 'the majority, 62 percent, had attended university'.<sup>57</sup> In fact, this percentage is 'even higher than in the United States, where just over half the population has attended college'.<sup>58</sup>
2. The channels of recruitment for Jihadists happen to be 'mosques, *tabligh*, friends and family'.<sup>59</sup> Fair caveats that *madrasahs* may be more important for other kinds of militants such as sectarian terrorists and suicide attackers.
3. State schools are equally important as *madrasahs* in terms of the production of militant mindsets.

“ In so far as Islamism is concerned, some madrasah students may provide cannon fodder for Jihadism, but the violent and non-violent ideologues are invariably educated to a relatively high degree. ”

<sup>53</sup> S. Sareen, *The Jihad Factory: Pakistan's Islamic Revolution in the Making*, p.36.

<sup>54</sup> Fair, *The Madrassah Challenge: Militancy and Religious Education in Pakistan* (United States Institute of Peace Press, 2008).

<sup>55</sup> Fair, 'Who are Pakistan's Militants and Their Families?', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 20:49 – 65 (2008).

<sup>56</sup> Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty First Century*, p.52.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, p.52.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, p.58.

<sup>59</sup> Fair, 'Who are Pakistan's Militants and Their Families?', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 20:49 – 65 (2008).

- **Statistical misrepresentation**

With respect to misrepresentation of figures of enrolment, an analysis of World Bank Policy Research is instructive.<sup>60</sup> At the outset the authors point out that 'bold assertions, based on reports and articles, are being made about high and increasing enrolment in Pakistani religious schools in recent years. This rise is attributed to an increasing preference for religious schooling among families or the lack of other viable schooling options for the household.'<sup>61</sup> Given the importance placed on the subject by policy makers in Pakistan and those internationally, it is troubling that none of the reports and articles reviewed base their analysis on publicly available data sources or established statistical methodologies. The findings of the report establish a difference of an 'order of magnitude from those reported by and in the media'. The picture that emerges from the report is complex. For instance, the presence and absence of private schools impacts on the rates of enrolment. The report does establish that the 'madrassa movement coincided with resistance to the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan [and] is supported by the 1998 data from the population census.' However 'there is no evidence for religiosity or house-hold preference-based models of madrassa enrolment'.<sup>62</sup> Essentially the paper cautions against using improper sources as well as percentage representations as these skew the data. The authors rightly emphasise that in terms of global security issues 'absolute numbers matter.'<sup>63</sup>

- **A new paradigm**

Fair's work establishes a new point of reference for research, which is the household. In her research survey on Pakistani militants she found that a vast majority of households were aware of their family member's decision, but there was conflict within households over the decision to support the family member's choice. Because there was no unequivocal approval of such a choice, Fair suggests that researching household dynamics is a potential way forward in discouraging individuals from joining Jihadist movements.

Such findings only make sense when the growth of Islamism is viewed as the growth of a theo-political ideology, and not as a growth in religious fundamentalism per se. As was the case with Communism and other ideologies, it is the educated people who both form and join ideological movements. In so far as Islamism is concerned, some *madrasah* students may provide cannon fodder for Jihadism, but the violent and non-violent ideologues are invariably educated to a relatively high degree.

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<sup>60</sup> 'Religious School Enrolment in Pakistan: A look at the Data', *World Bank Working Paper Series*, No. WPS 3521 (February 2005).

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> 'Religious School Enrolment in Pakistan: A look at the Data', *World Bank Working Paper Series*, No. WPS 3521 (February 2005).

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

## ENGAGING THE MEDIA

“Pakistan is not Saudi Arabia, Saddam-led Iraq or Taliban-led Afghanistan - one of its strongest civil institutions is a news media that relentlessly pursues the country's failures, with journalists routinely speaking out against the government, extremists, and the notion of a theocratic state, among other things”

[Madiha Sattar<sup>64</sup>]

There is no doubt that an effective media strategy forms an essential part of the global fight against Islamism and Jihadism. In the Pakistani context the growing vibrancy of the media – from print journalism to broadcast — creates new imperatives and a need for strategic direction. The exponential growth in the media sector has been a result of Musharraf's 2002 liberalization programme, with the Pakistani media now representing limitless potential. The media boom also accounts for the increasing awareness and culture of political debate within Pakistan. It is this quality of the media and the growing space available to it in Pakistan that needs to be harnessed to successfully combat the spread of Islamist ideologies. Mentioned earlier in this report is the public perception of the media, which according to figures from a recent I.R.I. poll is highly positive. The respondents to the poll indicate an 89% favourable opinion.<sup>65</sup>

### FACTS AND FIGURES

*Increased media space – 40 private Pakistan owned TV channels, 170 FM stations.*

*A pluralistic media featuring national, regional and international television*

*Newspaper circulation of 3 million*

*20 million Internet users*

In April 2009, an amateur video of a girl from the Swat Valley being flogged by members of the Taliban flooded the television sets of the Pakistani nation and galvanized a fragile anti-Taliban consensus, its visual representation making real the threat of increased Talibanization in the country. It is this sentiment that needs to be built upon. Of course challenges

to this do exist. For instance, Madiha Sattar notes that 'It is clear by now that Pakistan's press and its political analysts include religious conservatives who see the Taliban as upholders of the faith and nationalists who view Taliban violence as a justified reaction to American drone attacks. This is especially true of the Urdu press, which reaches far

<sup>64</sup> Madiha Sattar, 'Pakistan's media crucial in fight against extremists', *The Huffington Post*, 23 April 2009, <[www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/04/23/pakistans-media-critical\\_n\\_190178.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/04/23/pakistans-media-critical_n_190178.html)>, [accessed 04 August 2009].

<sup>65</sup> I.R.I. Public Opinion Poll 2009, <[www.iri.org/newsreleases/pdfs/2009%20May%2011%20IRI%20Pakistan%20Index,%20March%207-30,%202009.pdf](http://www.iri.org/newsreleases/pdfs/2009%20May%2011%20IRI%20Pakistan%20Index,%20March%207-30,%202009.pdf)>, [accessed 03 August 2009].



more people than its English counterpart. However, that only makes more crucial the continued freedom of liberal commentators to show the Pakistani people what a theocratic, violent state would mean for their lives'.<sup>66</sup>

Islamist extremists and terrorist groups have successfully used the media as a propaganda tool.<sup>67</sup> In fact, militants have exploited the power of radio in the northern areas of Pakistan, earning them the name of 'FM Mullahs'. This method of communication has proven to be effective not only because of its cost viability but because 'historically and culturally, Pashtuns are a radio society. Now they are an FM society...In the words of Marshall McLuhan, the medium is the message, and the Taliban have been wisely exploiting this medium.'<sup>68</sup> The positive news is that community-led and local initiatives have arisen in response to these propaganda channels,<sup>69</sup> an example of which is Radio Khyber in the tribal Khyber Agency and Radio Burraq in Peshawar and Mardan.

An article appearing in the *Christian Science Monitor* considers the positive opportunities afforded by the media to empower Pakistani citizens. This could involve community messaging to communicate a message of anti-extremism and counter-terrorism. 'Imagine a video and film campaign on many of Pakistan's 35 television networks that mourned the lost lives of innocent victims and elevated the heroism of first responders and local officials. Just the stories of those faithful Pakistanis who were killed in the Marriott hotel bombing last year alone would generate massive revulsion against terrorism. Denial could no longer be the convenient response.'<sup>70</sup>

Quilliam has maintained a strong media component through profiling of its work. It also intends to upscale its media led initiatives through the organization of a mass public awareness campaign, particularly within the local/provincial press to generate awareness about Islamist propaganda as well as develop a campaign using the influence of pop music icons who have been quite successful in transmitting anti-terrorism messages. An example of this is the 'Yeh Hum Naheen' (Say No to Terrorism)<sup>71</sup> song,

<sup>66</sup> Sattar, 'Pakistan's media crucial in fight against extremists'.

<sup>67</sup> Corman & Schiefelbein, 'Communication and Media Strategy in the Jihadi War of Ideas', *Consortium for Strategic Communication*, 20 April 2009, <[www.comops.org/article/119.pdf](http://www.comops.org/article/119.pdf)>, [accessed 13 August 2009].

<sup>68</sup> Khan, 'FM Mullahs spread the Taliban's word', PK ON WEB, 07 June 2009, <[www.pkonweb.com/2009/06/07/fm-mullahs-spread-the-talibans-word](http://www.pkonweb.com/2009/06/07/fm-mullahs-spread-the-talibans-word)> [accessed 6 August 2009].

<sup>69</sup> Note that jamming of radio channels has proved unsuccessful because of the relative ease of broadcasting. An F.M channel can be broadcast from a motorbike on the run. Likewise, banning a channel is ineffective and may lead to anger that can be exploited by extremists.

<sup>70</sup> R. Barton, 'Bring 'people power' to Pakistan', *The Christian Science Monitor*, 19 May 2009, <[www.csmonitor.com/2009/0519/p09s01-coop.html](http://www.csmonitor.com/2009/0519/p09s01-coop.html)>, [accessed 06 August 2009].

<sup>71</sup> 'Yeh Hum Naheen: Say No to Terrorism', <[www.yehhumnaheen.org/cc.php?finalpage\\_os=index.php](http://www.yehhumnaheen.org/cc.php?finalpage_os=index.php)>, [accessed 06 August, 2009].

which gained popularity within the country. Within this ambit Quilliam also seeks to work with media personnel on covering extremism and counter-terrorism related issues.

## Going Forward: Directions and Policy Recommendations For Government

One of the key aims of this report has been to view Pakistan from a holistic perspective. This has been achieved through the adoption of a broad approach, the ambit of which extends outwards from merely a narrow focus centered on counter-extremism. These broader attributes include developmental, sociological and economic issues. The rationale for this approach not only stems from the acknowledgement that military action has to be augmented by programmes that aim to counter the ideology of Islamist extremism, but is also reinforced in the conversations that Quilliam had with the youth in education campuses nationwide. A further impetus is to be found in the trend mapping research component of Quilliam's Pakistan project.

A number of key issues and themes are addressed in this section, including the import and export of terrorism, differential experiences with terrorism in Pakistan's provinces and the 'Af-Pak' Strategy that forms the basis of U.S. policy towards the region. A framework of reference is established for each of the issues to build a case for why it is imperative to acknowledge and establish action in these areas. These are followed by policy

directions aimed at the United States and United Kingdom governments. It is our view that these directives can fine-tune current counter-extremism initiatives in the area. Implicit in the directives is the view that Pakistan requires a long-term strategy which would encompass various aspects of its socio-political, developmental and economic landscape if it is to have any hope of successfully rolling back the Islamist mindset that threatens to plague its future generations.

***“Pakistan requires a long-term strategy which would encompass various aspects of its socio-political, developmental and economic landscape if it is to have any hope of successfully rolling back the Islamist mindset that threatens to plague its future generations.”***

### NUANCES WITHIN THE PAKISTANI LANDSCAPE

When analyzing the complex issues faced by Pakistan, it is of utmost importance not to view the country as simply a monolith. In reality, Pakistan's provinces have had differential experiences that have impacted their experiences with various shades of extremism. Grasping these distinct trajectories has wide-reaching policy implications. If Pakistan's internal landscape continues to be viewed in uniform terms, efforts to curtail the spread of Islamism will be far from effective. Quilliam has had direct experience with this difference, as support for its message has varied greatly according to region. While there was an overwhelming majority of people who expressed solidarity with Maajid Nawaz during his talks with students at various campuses in the Sindh province, further up in Mirpur, which is ironically a place known to be the epicentre of immigration to Britain, Nawaz experienced overt hostility to the West and America.

In the Punjab province, the southern belt (south and south-west) harbours a relatively stronger culture of Islamist extremism. The combination of factors that fuel this include economic disparities, high unemployment rates in the youth demographic and sectarianism. Journalist and author of a number of books on Pakistan's militant organisations, Amir Rana maintains that sectarian divides and recruitment into extremist movements have a symbiotic relationship. Southern Punjab has a large number of *madrasahs* and its state schools have been infiltrated by sectarian hardliners who are responsible for indoctrinating and training young Punjabis. It is suggested that proximity to Indian borders feeds sectarianism.

In contradistinction, the N.W.F.P.'s experiences with Islamist extremism are completely different from those of the Punjab. Here, the geographical proximity with Afghanistan, as well as shared historical and tribal ties have been instrumental in driving recruitment into Jihadist movements. In addition, Zia-ul-Haq's alliance with the United States during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan brought to this region a proliferation of schools that specialized in training young men for 'jihad' in Afghanistan.

Sindh and Balochistan have remained largely shielded from the type of extremism experienced by both the Punjab and the N.W.F.P. However, political violence in these provinces has been related to demands for provincial autonomy. Whilst the ideologies may not be shared, the confluence of the use of violence is troubling all the same. There is evidence to suggest an exchange between extreme Islamist organisations – 'in recent years the jihad culture has also spread to interior Sindh. This was an area where mysticism and Sufi Islam held sway in the past'.<sup>72</sup> Further 'jihad-based religious organisations are now addressing all the problems of the people, whether religious or civic in nature, as they push for their acceptance as an alternative to political groups'.<sup>73</sup> Recognizing these internal differences provides a nuanced understanding from which to formulate policy and strategy to address Islamist extremism within the country. Overcoming the spread of this ideology entails a broader set of reforms which, although not traditionally associated with counter-extremism measures, are important in securing the success of such initiatives.

### Recommendations:

- The U.S. and U.K. governments should pursue a more informed and in-depth conceptualization and understanding of the differences between the provinces and their experiences with Islamism.
- Greater provincial participation and inclusion should be encouraged by providing platforms through which grievances can be aired and addressed.

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<sup>72</sup> S. Sareen, *The Jihad Factory: Pakistan's Islamic Revolution in the Making*, p.45.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

## PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY

Pakistan has had a long and troubled history of provincial tensions. The aggressive centralization policies pursued by the government at the cost of providing autonomy to the provinces has led to severe consequences for Pakistan, perhaps none more so than the dismemberment of the country in 1971. After several years of harbouring grievances against the central government, the territory formerly known as 'East Pakistan' rallied for independence from 'West Pakistan', leading to a bloody civil war which cost many lives and ended in the creation of Bangladesh.

***“The aggressive centralization policies pursued by the government at the cost of providing autonomy to the provinces has led to severe consequences for Pakistan, perhaps none more so than the dismemberment of the country in 1971.”***

Although provincial autonomy under the federation was later enshrined in the 1973 Constitution, the central government seemed to have learned no lessons from the bloody debacle of 1971. While federal in nature, the Constitution contained a strong bias in favor of the centre, leaving the provinces only a small number of areas over which they could legislate. This arrangement allowed the Punjab province, home to the central government, domination over decisions pertaining to policy and army strategic command. It also denied the other provinces a taxation mandate, thus severely restricting their sources of revenue. In subsequent years reforms to grant greater provincial autonomy have remained largely unimplemented and controversial.

One of the bitterest areas of dispute has been that of the unequal distribution of resources. The smaller three provinces - Sindh, Balochistan and N.W.F.P. - have long since resented the disproportionate control wielded by Punjab over resource distribution. For instance, the supply of natural gas from Balochistan to the rest of the country did not earn it any royalties until 1980, a full 27 years after supply was started in 1953. In fact, the people of Balochistan were not even granted supply of the resource until 1986, and to date, the Baloch only make up 3.4% of the country's total gas consumers.

Successive military intrusions into the administrative affairs of provinces and unilateral decisions on mega-projects have further exacerbated tensions. The proposed Kalabagh dam project has been the source of bitter contestation, with the rest of the provinces opposing the proposal by Punjab, and Sindh threatening a civil war if it were initiated.

Added to these tensions is a growing resentment at what some analysts have referred to as the 'Punjabization' of Pakistan – a cultural hegemony that disregards the proud cultural and linguistic traditions of Pakistan's varied ethnic communities. Such repression has helped to strengthen loyalty to one's province over loyalty to the country as a whole, and has hardened the divide between people of different ethnicities.

Needless to say, this has dangerous implications for the future of the country. Festering grievances have fuelled separatist insurgencies increasingly marked by violence. A study conducted by the Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies entitled 'Counter-Insurgency in Balochistan: Pakistan's Strategy, Outcome and Future Implications' documents an

increase in militant outfits as well as training camps for Baloch militants. Increasingly nationalist groups, some of whom demand nothing less than independence from Pakistan, are employing the use of violence and extremist slogans such as 'Death to Pakistan', due to anger over the marginalisation of their demands.

***“ Increasingly nationalist groups, some of whom demand nothing less than independence from Pakistan, are employing the use of violence and extremist slogans such as ‘Death to Pakistan’, due to anger over the marginalisation of their demands. ”***

Many Punjabi and Pashtun students residing in Balochistan spoke out at Quilliam events about the insecurity they currently feel due to the prevalence of discrimination and violence on ethnic lines. In recent months, several Punjabis have been killed in Balochistan as 'revenge' for the Punjab's historic exploitation of the province. This has led some commentators to go so far as to predict a possible 'Balkanization' of Pakistan, whereby following the same trajectory of over-centralization, the country would eventually fragment into smaller entities.

It is interesting to note however, that while the central government has persistently refused to grant autonomy on provincial lines, it has ceded the same space on 'religious' lines, as witnessed most recently through the peace deal in Swat valley, where a parallel judicial system was accepted by the state.

Thus, in order to prevent people from seeking out other rubric in which to couch their demands, and to diffuse the very real hostility among student groups of various ethnicities that Quilliam interacted with, it is important to tackle ethnic antagonisms by providing platforms for grievances to be aired, accepting demands for autonomy, and undertaking measures for more equitable resource distribution.

### **Recommendations:**

- All political parties are currently in agreement over the need for provincial autonomy, and the government of Pakistan should take advantage of this momentum to implement Constitutional provisions across the country, as it has committed to do in Balochistan.
- Assistance should be extended to the Pakistani government in implementing decentralization and provincial reforms that reflect the views of key nationalistic parties.
- The U.S. and U.K. governments should support inter-provincial dialogue. They should desist from becoming actors in the federal provincial conflicts as the Bretton Woods institutions have repeatedly done.

## 'AF-PAK' STRATEGY

“The Af-Pak nexus constitutes one of the most complex international emergencies in the history of modern day conflict. Teasing out the intersecting structural and circumstantial dynamics, and providing a useful perspective on the prospects for a resolution of the crisis, remain daunting tasks. ”

[ Robert Matthew<sup>74</sup>]

President Obama introduced the Af-Pak strategy on 27th March 2009. At the heart of the strategy lies the goal 'to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al-Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and to prevent their return to either country in the future...'<sup>75</sup>, to be achieved via a multidimensional methodology that includes a regional approach, capacity building and training, emphasizing national and civilian participation and pledging greater resources. The method to achieving these goals also includes a trust building exercise that generates a sense of a long term commitment by the U.S. in both countries. However, as is explained later, there are elements of the strategy that undermine this trust building exercise.

Notwithstanding its multidimensional approach, the strategy has a number of flaws. Chief amongst its criticisms is the lumping together of Afghanistan and Pakistan as a single challenge despite there being individual policy directions for both. Construed as a regional approach that views Afghanistan and Pakistan in a mutual relationship, the viability of the approach has been criticised in U.S., Pakistani and Afghan circles alike. U.S. reservations on the functionality of Af-Pak revolve around the increase in assistance to Pakistan despite its past record of inadequate spending, for as Ahmed Rashid notes, of the \$11.8 billion provided to the Musharraf regime, 80% was used to purchase military equipment to be used in a possible confrontation with India.<sup>76</sup> Also, there appears to be a growing articulation of the fact that continuing air strikes not only give rise to hostility due to the violation of sovereignty of Pakistani territory but also because the civilian casualties caused by such attacks feed the angst and anger of Pakistanis, thus providing new fodder for militant ranks.

From the Pakistani perspective, the Af-Pak strategy militates strongly against Pakistani interests and the reasons for this are threefold: the regional approach that views Pakistan and Afghanistan in the same nexus; conditionality on assistance; and

<sup>74</sup> Robert Matthews, 'Af-Pak: Playing the fundamentalists' game', *FRIDE Comment*, May 2009, <[www.fride.org/download/Com\\_AfgpakII\\_playing\\_ENG\\_may09..pdf](http://www.fride.org/download/Com_AfgpakII_playing_ENG_may09..pdf)>, [accessed 18 August 2009].

<sup>75</sup> White House Briefing, 'What's New in the Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan', 27 March 2009, <[www.whitehouse.gov/the\\_press\\_office/Whats-New-in-the-Strategy-for-Afghanistan-and-Pakistan/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Whats-New-in-the-Strategy-for-Afghanistan-and-Pakistan/)>, [accessed 18 August 2009].

<sup>76</sup> Jean Paul Blanchard, 'Renowned Journalist Ahmed Rashid Discusses US Policy in Afghanistan and Pakistan', *The Stanford Review*, Volume XLII, Issue 4, April 3, 2009.

continued drone attacks on Pakistani territory. Pakistan and Afghanistan are two distinct and sovereign countries with unique developmental and historical trajectories. Despite Pakistan's turbulent history, marked by military interference in politics, provincial conflict manifested in insurgency and the likes, it has an advanced state infrastructure and functioning rule of law. Afghanistan, on the other hand, has remained in a state of war. Although it is true that the northern areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan have a porous cultural and human exchange, it is insufficient to provide the basis for a shared perspective. In fact, in promoting this link the Af-Pak strategy legitimates a national security interest long pursued by the Pakistani government but which has proved highly detrimental to Pakistan's internal security – 'a collaborative relationship with the Afghan Taliban and Islamic terrorists is deemed essential by significant factions of the army and I.S.I. so as to check Indian ambitions in both Kashmir and Afghanistan.'<sup>77</sup> Promoting an established status quo therefore undermines beneficial progress. Indeed, Quilliam's experience and understanding of the ideology of Islamist groups reinforces this observation as it can be explained in the rubric of pan-Islamic solidarity, thereby promoting the interests of an Islamist state.

Af-Pak's committal of resources to capacity building through increased economic assistance will be through 'direct budget support, development assistance, infrastructure investment and technical advice on making sound economic policy adjustments.'<sup>78</sup> However, conditions will be attached to the funds provided under economic assistance. This conditionality has been heavily criticized, for although Pakistan's past inabilities in the adequate and responsible distribution of assistance have become apparent, conditionality can have a detrimental effect on Pakistani citizens. For instance Satti recognises that conditions are needed to prevent the squandering of assistance (for which the chances are always high) but equally such conditions can diminish the ability of the government to negotiate on behalf of its citizens. Hence, will the government for instance 'have the clout to make Washington accept its peace deals?'<sup>79</sup> Some critics have thus argued that the attachment of conditions erodes the trust between Pakistan and the United States, thereby frustrating one of the strategic aims towards overcoming the 'trust deficit' between both countries.

There is significant hostility around the use of drone attacks in the tribal areas of Pakistan. It is generally agreed that this course of action undermines the human development elements of the strategy that envisage social development through the creation of zones of opportunity. Burki expresses this anomaly, stating that there is 'considerable focus on winning the hearts and minds of the people who are

<sup>77</sup> Robert Matthews, 'Af-Pak: Playing the fundamentalists' game', *FRIDE Comment*, May 2009, <[www.fride.org/download/Com\\_AfgpakII\\_playing\\_ENG\\_may09..pdf](http://www.fride.org/download/Com_AfgpakII_playing_ENG_may09..pdf)>, [accessed 18 August 2009].

<sup>78</sup> White Paper of the Interagency Policy Group's Report on U.S. Policy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan.

<sup>79</sup> Zeenia Satti, 'A new dawn for Af-Pak?', *The News*, 30 March 2009, <[www.thenews.jang.com.pk/daily\\_detail.asp?id=169832](http://www.thenews.jang.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=169832)>, [accessed 18 August 2009].



economically and socially very backward... but by using unmanned aircrafts — the drones — to hunt and eliminate suspected terrorists, it is producing collateral damage<sup>80</sup> that sharply undercuts any gains that might be made. It is well worth mentioning that this view is reinforced in American circles as well. For example U.S. State Department official David Kilcullen cites this concern.

*“ The inherent contradictions in the aims of the Af-Pak strategy serve to undermine or negate any benefits that may be accrued to the strategy. ”*

The inherent contradictions in the aims of the Af-Pak strategy serve to undermine or negate any benefits that may be accrued to the strategy. Its current form as a strategy that combines two distinctly different countries with differential recommendations for each, but with a central view point of regionalism, will not serve the interests of either Pakistan or Afghanistan.

### Recommendations:

- The Af-Pak strategy contains a broad focus on economic, developmental and institutional assistance. However both countries are at vastly different economic, developmental and institutional stages. It is recommended that the Af-Pak connection **only** be utilized for mutual security concerns rather than the broader social development agenda.

## AID DISTRIBUTION

Despite being a key recipient of U.S aid, generous economic contributions have failed to facilitate progress and human development indicators remain quite low; the country ranks 139 out of 179 countries on the United Nations Development Program's 2008 Human Development Index.<sup>81</sup> A historical assessment indicates that the United States' aid distribution policy has too often been dictated by short-term security aims and has therefore failed to foster any long term, or sustainable solutions for Pakistan.

The Indo-Pakistan conflicts of 1965-1971 led the United States to suspend nearly all aid to Pakistan, as well as to India, whilst under the Carter administration all aid (except food aid) was terminated as a result of Pakistan's development of the uranium enrichment facility. Throughout the Cold War, Pakistan received increased aid donations from the U.S. as a result of its geo-strategic position and potential to act as a bulwark against the spread of Communism. From 1980 to 1990, the U.S. gave Pakistan \$3.1 billion in economic assistance and \$2.19 billion in military assistance.<sup>82</sup> As concerns grew over the country's nuclear ambitions, the 1985 Pressler amendment to the Foreign

<sup>80</sup> Shahid Javed Burki, 'A welcome change', *The News*, 09 June 2009, < [www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/13+a+welcome+change-za-01](http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/13+a+welcome+change-za-01)>, [accessed 18 August 2009].

<sup>81</sup> 'Pakistan 2008 Statistical Update', Human Development Reports, *United Nations Development Program*, <<http://www.cfr.org/publication/18749/#1>>.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

Assistance Act was implemented; this act bound presidents to confirm that Pakistan was not in possession of a nuclear weapon for the fiscal year in which aid was being distributed.

However, whilst aid policy has been incoherent and governed by U.S. strategy, it has also been poorly directed. As Lawrence Korb has described, aid distribution has been marred by a 'lack of accountability, transparency, coordination, and short-sightedness.'<sup>83</sup> In total, **60%** of aid from the United States has been distributed under the guise of the 'Global War on Terrorism'.<sup>84</sup> However, it is doubtful whether these funds have filtered directly through to fund military equipment. There have been reports of the U.S. simply allocating its aid budget in blank cheque form, directly to the military. In addition, whilst **15%** of aid was channeled directly to the government of Pakistan in an effort to free up funds for humanitarian courses, evidence indicates that a mere **2%** of Pakistan's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is spent on education and only **0.5%** of GDP on health.<sup>85</sup> Ultimately, poor U.S. efforts to monitor aid budget expenditure have led to a lack of accountability over direction funding, and have entrusted large budgets to the military, which is renowned for its misuse of funds, disregard for the democratic process, and lack of accountability to the people.

**“ Whilst 15% of aid was channeled directly to the government of Pakistan in an effort to free up funds for humanitarian courses, evidence indicates that a mere 2% of Pakistan's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is spent on education and only 0.5% of GDP on health. ”**

In her study of the military's misappropriation of funds, Ayesha Siddiqi notes that inevitably aid finds its way into the military fraternity and is subsequently used for the personal benefit of the military cadre.<sup>86</sup> Indeed, this was recently substantiated in media reports which quoted anonymous American military officials who claimed that up to **70%** of aid was unaccounted for.<sup>87</sup> It has also been widely claimed that aid money has

<sup>83</sup> Lawrence Korb, 'U.S. Aid to Pakistan', *American Progress Center*, <[http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2007/12/korb\\_pakistan\\_testimony.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2007/12/korb_pakistan_testimony.html)>, [accessed 20 August 2009].

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Lawrence Korb, 'U.S. Aid to Pakistan'.

<sup>86</sup> Ayesha Siddiqi, *Military Inc.: Inside Pakistan's Military Economy* (United States: Pluto Press, 2007).

<sup>87</sup> Declan Welsh, 'Up to 70% of aid to Pakistan 'misspent'', *The Guardian*, 27 February, 2008, <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/feb/27/pakistan.usa>>, [accessed 17 August 2009].

been used to build the luxurious homes of military officers in Islamabad.<sup>88</sup> In treating the military as an autonomous entity, and bypassing important civilian institutions, the United States is undermining civilian efforts and merely consolidating decades of military dominance over the country's political process. This lack of monitoring and consideration for broader social and economic entities within Pakistan is ultimately stalling the U.S.'s own strategic objectives.

Perhaps where this is most directly related to the United States' key aims is in the area of growing Islamist extremism. There is evidence to suggest that poorly directed aid distribution, and a lack of humanitarian concern for those who have been displaced as a result of military incursions in areas such as the Swat Valley and Waziristan, have in fact provided further ammunition for the Islamist recruitment cause. Relatively little aid has gone toward economic development, institution building, or education assistance despite the fact that improvements in these areas are key to curbing extremism, which is known to thrive in the absence of development. This concern is further substantiated through reference to the N.W.F.P — where al-Qaeda and the Taliban thrive — where there are some of the world's lowest human development indicators. Increasing development is essential if extremism is to be tackled. In addition, it is likely that poor governance has allowed Saudi Arabia to channel generous funds to *madrasahs* teaching *Wahabbism*; the connection between *Wahhabism* and Islamism is well documented.<sup>89</sup>

#### Recommendations:

- Aid budget expenditure should be more tightly monitored, as failure to hold the recipients of aid accountable in the past has led to detrimental consequences.
- The US government needs to re-define the role of the Pakistani military. Social civilian institutions should be empowered through giving them greater control over aid distribution.
- More of an emphasis should be placed on fostering free and fair trade, which would in turn encourage private investment. Local and small emerging entrepreneurship has not been encouraged as much as it might.

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<sup>88</sup> Declan Welsh, 'Up to 70% of aid to Pakistan 'misspent.'"

<sup>89</sup> *Wahhabism* is a conservative revisionist Sunni movement, which was founded by Muhammad bin Abdul-Wahhab (often mistakenly referred to as Abdul Wahhab) in the 18th century. It is popular in Saudi Arabia and retains a non-ideological, socially conservative, austere and literalist interpretation of Islam. *Wahhabis* are not Islamists, but when the *Wahhabi* literalist mindset combines with Islamism, it can lead to Jihadist readings of scripture, resulting in militant Islamism.

## LOOKING INWARDS

“ At the heart of Pakistan’s foreign and security policies lies India and at the heart of our India policy lies Kashmir, Pakistan’s jugular vein as the country’s founder described it. ”

[Iqbal Ahmad Khan<sup>90</sup>]

Pakistan’s relationship with India, both geographical and historic, has cast a deep shadow over the definition of its foreign and security policies. Apart from wielding significant influence over the social and economic development trajectory of the country, this relationship has provided the basis for the military’s continued stranglehold over the corridors of power.

The central premise of Pakistan’s national security is the doctrine of strategic depth, and is typified by the harbouring of militant Islamist groups by the military as a strategic tool against India. ‘The attainment of ‘strategic depth’ has been a prime objective of Pakistan’s Afghanistan policy since the days of General Zia-ul-Haq. The asymmetries of strategic depth and offensive military capability give India an operational advantage, and create a situation in which India’s conventional ground forces could be defeated only by Pakistan’s tactical nuclear forces.’<sup>91</sup>

Along with the doctrine of strategic depth is the fact that Pakistan’s army has continued to command a large chunk of budgetary resources for its development. Recent figures state that the defence budget forms 4.5% of the GDP, which is almost double that of India’s. In a developing country, such a percentage reflects the de-prioritization of development expenditure, examples of which include health and education. The army justifies this budgetary allocation on grounds of the protection of Pakistan’s national security, of which India constitutes a salient threat.

Although there are reasons that account for Pakistan’s viewing of India as hostile to its interests, an example of which is India’s reneging of its commitment to hold a plebiscite in Kashmir, it is equally clear that Pakistan’s sponsorship of the “jihadi” genie<sup>92</sup>, as well as prioritisation of its defence forces in place of development have served to tarnish its image internationally as well as posing the gravest threat to its internal security. There

<sup>90</sup> Khan, ‘Time to shun the past’, *The Dawn*, 22 July 2009, <[www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/14-time-to-shun-the-past-01](http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/14-time-to-shun-the-past-01)>, [accessed 17 August 2009].

<sup>91</sup> Pakistan Military Guide, <[www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/pakistan/intro.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/pakistan/intro.htm)>, [accessed 17 August 2009].

<sup>92</sup> Manjeet S. Pardesi, ‘Peace and Conflict in India-Pakistan relations: Implications for East Asia’, *Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies Commentaries*, 17 March 2004, <[www.dr.ntu.edu.sg/bitstream/10220/3946/1/RSIS-COMMENT\\_120.pdf](http://www.dr.ntu.edu.sg/bitstream/10220/3946/1/RSIS-COMMENT_120.pdf)>, [accessed 17 August 2009].

have been a number of opportunities in the past where the reconsideration of this doctrine should have occurred, from the partition of East Pakistan to the Kargil debacle in October 1999, but Pakistan has thus far failed to engage in that internal dialogue.

Looking at the current state of security in the country it is imperative that Pakistan moves away from the past into a future where its policies and strategies mirror its internal reality as opposed to the happenings in its regional neighbourhood, notably India. Ahmed M. Quraishi states that ‘decades of this India-fixation unintentionally brought Islamabad within the Indian ‘cultural sphere of influence.’ Example: as the Cold War raged between Islamabad and New Delhi, some Pakistani singers, musicians, and actors began

**“ It is imperative that Pakistan moves away from the past into a future where its policies and strategies mirror its internal reality as opposed to the happenings in its regional neighbourhood, notably India. ”**

flocking to India for what they perceived to be better career opportunities. No Indians were running toward Pakistan in return. Cynics in New Delhi were telling their foreign visitors that ‘the prodigal children were finally coming home.’ In the eyes of the world because of the influence of Indian satellite television, Pakistan was developing all the trappings of an Indian satellite state, culturally speaking. And in world politics, perceptions matter most.<sup>93</sup>

Pakistan has to begin taking seriously its developmental challenges, and find alternative ways to manage and define its relationship with India. The way forward must be grounded in the language of peaceful coexistence. One way of achieving this is for Pakistan to engage in a meaningful dialogue about its identity crises. Continuing to define its existence in the matrix of Indian influence and power will impede any efforts towards progress.

### Recommendations:

- The annual military budget should be focused more on internal security problems.
- More of an emphasis should be given to promoting regional dialogue and strengthening trade ties in order to mitigate hostilities between India and Pakistan.

## LAND REFORMS

Land is a productive asset in that it creates wealth and sustains livelihoods. Land ownership is an important source of security against poverty in rural Pakistan. Notwithstanding, in a country where agriculture accounts for 42% of full time employment and 23% of GDP, with 67.5% of the rural population depending on agriculture for sustenance, landownership remains highly inequitable. A large majority

<sup>93</sup> Ahmed M. Quraishi, ‘Strategic Depth Revisited’, *The Newline*, March 2002, <[www.newline.com.pk/NewsMarch2002/viewpoint.htm](http://www.newline.com.pk/NewsMarch2002/viewpoint.htm)>, [accessed 17 August 2009].

of rural households either do not own land at all or do not own enough for subsistence. Hence rural poverty remains extremely high. In addition to economic power, land defines social status and political power in local contexts, and it structures relationships both within and outside the household.

Without secure access to land and means of production, the poor of Pakistan are compelled to live within short-term horizons that degrade resources and fuel a downward spiral of poverty. Poverty is thus exacerbated and entrenched by the unequal power relations that the poor experience in their daily lives.<sup>94</sup>

To date, three sets of land reforms have been undertaken by the state in Pakistan. General Ayub Khan initiated the first set of reforms in 1958. While placing limits on individual holdings, a caveat allowed landlords to put names of family members on title deeds, hence retaining its ownership and control, and made generous allowances for fruit orchards, livestock farms and stud farms, and left land owned by religious and charitable institutions untouched. Because of these exceptions, the reforms did not make a significant dent in rural power structures. 4.5% of total farm area of the country was resumed and redistributed.<sup>95</sup>

The second set was instituted by the Z.A. Bhutto government in 1972, which while rescinding other previous exemptions, maintained the limit only on individual holdings. Of the 18,000 landlords with holdings over the prescribed limits, land was resumed from ten percent of owners. Of this, 52% was distributed to beneficiaries, the rest was declared unfit for allotment. The shortcomings were acknowledged by the government and the third land reforms were announced in 1977, ostensibly to transform land holding and agriculture in Pakistan. However, General Zia deposed the prime minister shortly after and forced the government out in a military coup, putting an end to the land reform process.<sup>96</sup>

Land has been an important site for people's struggles. A number of movements have coalesced around the demand for land rights, from the Hari Sangat<sup>97</sup> (Hari Peasants movement) in the past, to Okara and Sahiwal<sup>98</sup> farmers and peasants in recent times. In the current crisis of the Swat Taliban movement, researchers and media persons documenting experiences and ethnographies of the internally displaced people

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<sup>94</sup> Adapted from S. Khattak and N. Brohi, 'Women and Land Rights in Pakistan: A Synthesis Report', *SDPI* (Islamabad, 2008).

<sup>95</sup> N. Brohi, 'Land Reforms in Pakistan: A Gendered Appraisal', *SDPI* (Islamabad, 2007).

<sup>96</sup> N. Brohi, 'Land Reforms in Pakistan: A Gendered Appraisal', *SDPI* (Islamabad, 2007).

<sup>97</sup> A movement instigated by landless peasants demanding reforms in the Sindh Tenancy Act as well as the agriculture sector, enabling the ownership of land by peasant farmers so that they can till the land to its fullest potential.

<sup>98</sup> Both Okara and Sahiwal are located in the Punjab province. Peasant farmers came together to protest changes in the systems of cultivation from sharecropping to payment of rent in cash. The military has used brutal force to quell this movement. See Human Rights Watch, 'Soiled Hands: The Pakistan Army's Repression of the Punjab Farmers' Movement', 20 July 2004.

highlighted how the Taliban garnered local support by speaking of land ownership and dislodging traditional 'malik' landowners. 'The Taliban in Swat have forced wealthy landowners out, and, in an ersatz land reform, passed the abandoned plots to the tenants who manned them.'<sup>99</sup>

The future of land reforms in Pakistan is complicated by a number of factors. Under the auspices of General Zia in the 1980s, the Supreme Court, after validating the coup against Bhutto and condemning him to death, also declared (his) land reforms un-Islamic.<sup>100</sup> In addition, the contemporary landscape features diversified portfolios of capital holding, mobile forms of wealth, land fragmentation and mechanizing of agriculture which will make such a reform enterprise more difficult. Notwithstanding, the ownership of productive resources is critical in alleviating social and economic inequities. The grievances and frustrations being expressed in movements for land and agricultural reform, if unanswered, will provide raw material for exploitation by extremists.

### **Recommendations:**

- The government of Pakistan should innovate sustainable ways of distributing resources equitably, as subsidies and cash transfers cannot be a long-term solution in the way that land allocation can.
- The government of Sindh has, as of August 2009, announced land distribution to female farmers. This should accompany a package deal that would make such ventures viable, such as loan and farm extension facilities. This should also be replicated elsewhere in the country as well.
- The U.S. and U.K. governments should support economic policies that work to bridge the gap, and not insist on financial measures that impact the poor negatively in the way structural adjustment programs have done in the past.

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<sup>99</sup> Emi Foulk, 'Taliban's Popularity Linked To Perception It Will Lift Pakistanis From Poverty', *The Huffington Post*, 5 July 2009, <[www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/05/07/talibans-popularity-link\\_n\\_191952.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/05/07/talibans-popularity-link_n_191952.html)>, [accessed 19 August 2009].

<sup>100</sup> In 1981, the Federal Shariat (Islamic) Court held that Islam disallowed forcible acquisition of any property by the State, including for redistribution. Although appealed the decision was upheld by the Appellate Division of the same court.

## DEEPENING DEMOCRACY

“ The roots of Pakistan’s democracy deficit can be traced to the very foundation of the state. For nine years after Pakistan’s creation, the Constituent Assembly was unable to agree on a constitution. The biggest stumbling block was the refusal of the powerful political, bureaucratic, and military elite of the province of Punjab to accept the principle of one man, one vote. ”

[Rashed Rahman<sup>101</sup>]

Although military interference in democratic politics has severely stunted the growth and promotion of participatory government and governance in Pakistan, democratic governments themselves have been wrought with corruption and inefficiency. Both military and democratic rulers have used religion as a tool to legitimate their government. The record of social development under both military and democratic governments in Pakistan has been far from satisfactory. In addition, the reception of aid by military governments has been used to expand the defence capabilities of the country as opposed to promoting development.

The representatives of democratic parties in Pakistan belong to the political elite - a trend that can be traced to partition. The Muslim League,<sup>102</sup> which was at the forefront of the movement for the creation of Pakistan, drew largely from a set of landed aristocrats. In addition, the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) has fostered a culture of dynastic politics through the transfer of political leadership to successive generations of the Bhutto family, thus ensuring the family’s continued retention of power. Such a political culture does not allow political participation for the majority of Pakistanis, most of whom are poor. Low literacy rates (Pakistan’s literacy rate is 50%<sup>103</sup>) further preclude meaningful inclusion in the political process. The democratic deficit in Pakistan is a result of decades of military rule, corruption and ‘democratic’ parties that have failed to uphold the values of democracy.

The February 2008 elections have returned a democratic government to Pakistan tasked with a formidable agenda. Despite notes of optimism, its tenure has by no means been easy. A case in point has been the reinstatement of the Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry,

<sup>101</sup> Rashed Rahman, ‘Undermining Democracy’, *21st Century Authoritarians*, June 2009, <<http://www.underminingdemocracy.org/pakistan/>>, [accessed 20 August].

<sup>102</sup> The Muslim League was founded in 1906 in British India and became the driving force behind the creation of Pakistan as a Muslim state. It has continued to have a presence, albeit small, in India, but in Pakistan it formed the country’s first government, although this was later overthrown in a coup. Since 1947, one or more factions of the Muslim League have been in power in most of the civilian governments of Pakistan.

<sup>103</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), Education in Pakistan, 2007, <[stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=121&IF\\_Language=eng&BR\\_Country=5860&BR\\_Region=40535](http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=121&IF_Language=eng&BR_Country=5860&BR_Region=40535)>, [accessed 20 August 2009].



which was a product of a long and protracted civil society movement, featuring lawyers and citizens alike. The lifting of curbs on the media space (ironically imposed by Musharraf's government, which was initially responsible for liberalizing the media) has been instrumental in building public awareness and consensus on issues such as the growth of extremism in the country, and is a feature of the democratisation of information.

The need to nurture and deepen democracy as a primary imperative is reflected in 'Pakistan's strategic importance, its possession of nuclear weapons, and its role as a base for both domestic and transnational militant groups...' <sup>104</sup> Secular and democratic politics will also help curb the influence of religious parties. Indeed Pakistan's voting record (aside from 2002) indicates that the overwhelming majority vote for secular parties. 'The influence of Islamists in Pakistan can perhaps be best contained through democracy. During elections, a majority of Pakistani voters repeatedly demonstrated that they do not share the Islamist vision for the country. Despite the MMA's unprecedented electoral performance in 2002, the alliance garnered only 11% of the total votes cast; the Islamist vote as a percentage of total registered voters has been more or less stagnant since the 1970s. The strength of the Islamists lies in their ability to mobilize financial and human resources. Islamists run schools, operate charities, and publish newspapers; moreover, they are able to put their organized cadres on the streets. Thus, in the absence of democratic decision making, Islamists can dominate the political discourse.' <sup>105</sup>

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### Recommendations:

- The government of Pakistan has initiated a series of steps that could potentially strengthen democracy. These include progress on talks with Baloch nationalist parties; land distribution programs and allowances to political parties in tribal areas. These measures should be boosted, while direct channels, such as local governments and devolution programs, should be built up as the delivery arm of the state and as 'incubators' for grass-root political leadership development.

<sup>104</sup> Rashed Rahman, 'Undermining Democracy', *21st Century Authoritarians*, June 2009.

<sup>105</sup> Husain Haqqani, *'Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military'* (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005), p.327.

- Political parties should commit to the 'spirit' of democracy and hold inter-party elections. A culture of tolerance of dissent should be promoted, starting with the reorganization of student youth wings. This should involve a purge of all violent tendencies and the promotion of constructive dialogue in their stead.
- International assistance should be directed to democratic reform and the strengthening and capacity building of civilian institutions.
- A free and vibrant media is the hallmark of democratic government. In this regard Pakistan's media presents great potential. However, the democratization of information must be accompanied by regulation in order to ensure responsible reporting. Although there have been efforts to regulate the media through the following proposal: 'national code of journalistic ethics; develop a proposal for an independent media complaints commission and ensure that journalists across the country receive long-overdue wage increases'<sup>106</sup> these efforts have yet to come into fruition. Urgent action is recommended in this area.
- As a democratic tool, the media can be enlisted in order to build awareness on counter-extremism related issues. In order to build the capacity of the media and to ensure the credibility of communications it is recommended that a media watchdog be created and tasked with monitoring Islamist propaganda messages. The watchdog can also educate public broadcasters to understand the consequences of carrying such messages.

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<sup>106</sup> Anonymous, 'Pak Media Summit backs Mode of Ethics, Self-Regulation', *The Nation*, 6 August 2008, <[www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Lahore/06-Aug-2008/Pak-media-summit-backs-mode-of-ethics-selfregulation](http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Lahore/06-Aug-2008/Pak-media-summit-backs-mode-of-ethics-selfregulation) [accessed on August 07 2009].

## Conclusion

In its exploration of the issues and themes that interact to illuminate Pakistan's present scenario, as well as teasing out emerging trends that offer space for dialogue and development, this report informs key players in the field of counter-extremism about the threats and opportunities existent within the country. The dominant discourse in the report is that of an ideological struggle intertwined with identity politics, that is, Pakistan's troubled relationship with the formation of a secular democratic national narrative which would do justice to the range of diversities within it. This identity contention has been a critical factor in the rising tide of intolerance, and hence extremist tendencies.

Although ambitious in its analysis and the views proposed, there is substantive research that forms the basis of the views and recommendations prescribed in this report. The cautions against reductionist views of Pakistan are meant to drive home the point that Pakistan cannot be cast into a *monolithic* analysis by the very nature of the issues presented herein. It would be impossible to synthesise the tapestry of themes and issues to present a singular dimension which can form the basis of policy and programmatic interventions. Implicit in the report is the understanding that although the formulation of policy directions is made easier by combining and grouping different issues that have shared roots (an example of which is the 'Af-Pak' strategy), such an approach has the effect of undermining or making void efforts to tackle Islamist extremism. In other words, Islamist extremism in Pakistan can be viewed as an *ideological frontier* nurtured by identity problems, compounded by provincial, ethnic and sectarian strife and further exacerbated by a lack of democratic forums that enable the articulation of legitimate grievances and opportunities for human development. Because the factors that feed such a mindset are multiple, it is difficult to formulate a strategy that is singular in its focus. The response to these problems must therefore be multi-pronged.

Keeping this in mind, the report highlights an emerging public space that provides an opportune and potential platform from which to propose and implement programmes on countering the ideologies that have successfully exploited and manipulated the people of Pakistan. It is this knowledge that is utilized to put forward directions and policy recommendations for governments and civil society actors to pursue.

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## Appendix

Question 1 – Do you think religion has been misused in Pakistan?

	Male		Female	
	Count	%	Count	%
<b>Yes</b>	375	70.22	429	65.2
<b>No</b>	35	6.55	15	2.28
<b>Somewhat</b>	124	23.22	214	32.52
<b>Total</b>	534	100	658	100

Findings depicting the respondents answers cross referenced with their gender.

	Working class		Lower middle class		Upper middle class		Well off / rich		Elite	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
<b>Yes</b>	123	66.85	166	69.75	405	66.94	89	66.42	14	63.64
<b>No</b>	8	4.35	16	6.72	21	3.47	4	2.99	1	4.55
<b>Some-what</b>	53	28.80	56	23.53	179	29.59	41	30.60	7	31.82
<b>Total</b>	184	100	238	100	605	100	134	100	22	100

Findings depicting the respondents answers cross referenced with their class.

	Urban/City		Town		Rural/Village		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
<b>Yes</b>	519	68.74	74	59.68	177	67.05	770	67.37
<b>No</b>	27	3.58	2	1.61	17	6.44	46	4.02
<b>Some-what</b>	209	27.68	48	38.71	70	26.52	327	28.61
<b>Total</b>	755	100	124	100	264	100	1143	100

Findings depicting the respondents answers cross referenced with the rural/town/urban variable.

Question 2 – If 'yes' or 'somewhat', who do you think is responsible for the misuse?

	Male	Female
	Count	Count
Madrasahs	129	165
Media	162	276
Militant Sectarian groups	120	83
Mullahs	221	283
Elected governments	139	203
Dictatorships/Army	91	102
Others	218	210
Total	1080	1322

Findings depicting the respondents answers cross referenced with their gender.

	Working class	Lower middle class	Upper middle class	Well off/ rich	Elite
	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count
<b>Madrasahs</b>	41	57	154	36	4
<b>Media</b>	50	85	241	56	2
<b>Militant Sectarian groups</b>	28	54	96	23	2
<b>Mullahs</b>	64	107	273	49	10
<b>Elected governments</b>	52	64	186	29	9
<b>Dictatorships/Army</b>	28	48	97	18	3
<b>Others</b>	56	89	165	41	6
<b>Total</b>	319	504	1212	252	36

Findings depicting the respondents answers cross referenced with their class.

	Urban/City	Town	Rural/Village
	Count	Count	Count
<b>Madrasahs</b>	205	26	52
<b>Media</b>	294	45	81
<b>Militant Sectarian groups</b>	129	21	52
<b>Mullahs</b>	345	42	101
<b>Elected governments</b>	226	34	73
<b>Dictatorships/Army</b>	125	21	42
<b>Others</b>	223	41	78
<b>Total</b>	1547	230	479

Findings depicting the respondents answers cross referenced with the rural/town/urban variable.

Question 3 - Do you think national politics should be kept separate from religion?

	Male		Female	
	Count	%	Count	%
<b>Yes</b>	224	41.87	234	35.89
<b>No</b>	311	58.13	418	64.11
<b>Total</b>	535	100	652	100

Findings depicting the respondents answers cross referenced with their gender.

	Working class		Lower middle class		Upper middle class		Well off/ rich		Elite	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
<b>Yes</b>	70	38.67	94	39.33	233	38.64	49	37.40	9	40.91
<b>No</b>	111	61.33	145	60.67	370	61.36	82	62.60	13	59.09
<b>Total</b>	181	100	239	100	603	100	131	100	22	100

Findings depicting the respondents answers cross referenced with their class.

	Urban/City		Town		Rural/Village	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
<b>Yes</b>	290	38.36	50	40.32	96	36.50
<b>No</b>	466	61.64	74	59.68	167	63.50
<b>Total</b>	756	100	124	100	263	100

Findings depicting the respondents answers cross referenced with the rural/town/urban variable.

## Question 4 - Do you think Islam and democracy can co-exist together?

	Male		Female	
	Count	%	Count	%
<b>Yes</b>	325	61.90	441	68.37
<b>No</b>	200	38.10	204	31.63
<b>Total</b>	525	100	645	100

Findings depicting the respondents answers cross referenced with their gender.

	Working class		Lower middle class		Upper middle class		Well off / rich		Elite	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
<b>Yes</b>	108	61.02	160	67.51	391	66.05	84	65.12	12	54.55
<b>No</b>	69	38.98	77	32.49	201	33.95	45	34.88	10	45.45
<b>Total</b>	177	100	237	100	592	100	129	100	22	100

Findings depicting the respondents answers cross referenced with their class.

	Urban/City		Town		Rural/Village	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
<b>Yes</b>	501	67.61	75	60.48	165	63.46
<b>No</b>	240	32.39	49	39.52	95	36.54
<b>Total</b>	741	100	124	100	260	100

Findings depicting the respondents answers cross referenced with the rural/town/urban variable.

## Question 5 - Who do you take your personal religious queries to?

	Male	Female
	Count	Count
<b>Parents or other family members</b>	281	508
<b>Aalims</b>	170	103
<b>Religious political parties</b>	27	16
<b>Others</b>	157	150
<b>Total</b>	653	777

Findings depicting the respondents answers cross referenced with their gender.

	Working class	Lower middle class	Upper middle class	Well off / rich	Elite
	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count
<b>Parents or other family members</b>	105	133	431	100	16
<b>Aalims</b>	48	68	134	20	4
<b>Religious political parties</b>	13	7	15	7	1
<b>Others</b>	35	48	98	16	2
<b>Total</b>	201	256	678	143	23

Findings depicting the respondents answers cross referenced with the rural/town/urban variable.

	Urban/City	Town	Rural/Village
	Count	Count	Count
Parents or other family members	517	86	154
Aalims	169	25	73
Religious political parties	22	8	11
Others	130	15	47
Total	838	134	285

Findings depicting the respondents answers cross referenced with the rural/town/urban variable.

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