



CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL
AND STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

SISA Report no. 2 - 2013

The New Frontiers: Militancy & Radicalism in Punjab

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4 February 2013

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Abstract

This paper looks at militancy and radicalization in Punjab – North, Central and South – the three sub-regions of the largest province of Pakistan.

The key argument of this study is that radicalization is a greater issue in Punjab than militancy primarily because militants tend to groom people for battles outside the country or the province. Thus, there is violence in the province but those figures are not commensurate with the actual amount of radicalization that takes place in Punjab. It is also observed that poverty is an important contributory factory. However, it's the new capitalist and middle class that plays an important role, just as it had happened in Iran. The only difference being that Iran was more focused and 'together' in terms of religious ideology which Pakistan is not.

It is the people with greater access to opportunities that bankroll and support the militant forces. The Punjabi society was always pre-radical in its psychological constitution. However, over time this attitude has enhanced. Now, radicalism is the future of this province. The business and trading community is latent-radical in its thinking and tends to use forces of radicalism to negotiate power and enhance its own strength. In fact, the militant and radical forces have emerged as the new power brokers that have sufficient clout, fire power and nuisance value to negotiate with the state. The jihadis and radical Islamists have replaced the traditional feudal in Punjab.

The new frontiers

After the brutal attack in October 2012 on Malalay Yousafzai, the young Swati girl who protested against the Taliban and in favor of her right to education, many in Pakistan thought that this could be Pakistan's moment to build a consensus to fight the Taliban and eradicate the menace of terrorism from the country. But the moment was soon lost with people asking questions about the viability of such an operation. The immediate mobilization of the military in response to an attack on the young girl was certainly not practical. However, there was some expectation of some proactive movement to show the state's resolve in fighting the forces of terror.

Dispatching troops to North Waziristan, perhaps, is not the only indicator of the state's resolve. In fact, from a military standpoint, this is quite impractical unless the gaping holes in security are plugged without which the security forces cannot proceed to counter the Afghan Taliban or the Pakistani Taliban. The holes refer to the huge support base of militancy that has developed in the heartland of Pakistan, Punjab. The province, which is considered the largest in terms of the number of people and is politically most potent, is infested with numerous jihadi outfits that support the Taliban based in the tribal areas from time to time. An attack in North Waziristan on the Haqqani network is certainly not possible without tying

loose ends such as dealing with the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) that operate in partnership with the notorious Punjabi Taliban who operate within Punjab and have in the past attacked various military and security targets as well as civilian targets such as Sufi shrines. The popular myth about the Punjabi Taliban is that these are factions broken away from militant outfits that do not necessarily contest the Pakistani state. Interestingly, there is no formula as to how to stop jihadis from leaving the main outfits and joining the Punjabi Taliban or the larger TTP.

More important, the differentiation between friendly jihadi groups and unfriendly Punjabi Taliban is an artificial one. In fact, Pakistan's vulnerability in stemming the Taliban tide in the north will only increase due to the presence of the various jihadi organizations in the rest of the country, especially Punjab. The Punjabi jihadis are critical of the war in Afghanistan and western presence in the region. This is not just an objection to foreign presence in a Muslim country but is part of a larger war they hope to fight in establishing supremacy of Islam according to their interpretation and imagination. Moreover, the Punjabi jihadis have spread their tentacles in other part of the country as well. Hence, it is important to understand the operations of these outfits, their nature and how they impact the society and politics of the most important province of Pakistan. This report argues that without addressing the problem of jihadis in Punjab the larger problem of the war on terror couldn't get resolved.

Jihadis in Punjab

Although Punjab has witnessed incidents of terror in the past seven to eight years, militancy is not new to this region. The leadership of most all jihadi outfits based in the province fought during the Afghan war of the 1980s and have old links with the Afghan Taliban. These groups never disappeared even after the end of the Afghan war as these were used on other fronts like Indian Kashmir or they went and fought in Bosnia, Chechnya and other places of their own accord. During the mid-to-late 1990s there were about seventy-two jihadi organizations in Punjab. As the pressure increased on Islamabad to deal with extremists operating on its soil, especially towards the end of the 1990s and after 9/11, a lot of the small organizations merged into bigger ones and the jihad industry got re-structured. Resultantly, there are now about six to seven big outfits that are mainly headquartered in Punjab and broadly represent four schools of thought in Islam: Wahabi, Deobandi, Barelvi, and Fiqh Jafriya (Shiite).

The Deobandi Militants

The Deobandi militants refer to jihadi outfits who subscribe to and are guided by Deobandi ideology, which, in turn derives its strength from the revivalist movement started in Deoband, India by a Muslim scholar Shah Waliullah (1703-1762). The movement aimed at reforming Islamic practices with the purpose of improving the depravation and poor conditions of Mus-

lims. One of the ideas was to stop people from Sufi practices which were seen as taking Muslims away from Islam.

Later, this ideology was used in the 1980s to incite people to jihad against the Soviet troops in Afghanistan. The two jihadi outfits that can be served as the ‘mothership’ of jihad in South Asia are the Harkat-ul-Jihad-ul-Islami (HUJI), which was established in the early 1980s by Pakistanis in Afghanistan, and the Sipha-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP). While HUJI had a clear role to fight a jihad, SSP was established to counter the growing influence in the region of the Iranian revolution that took place in early 1979.¹ Local notables and the intelligence agencies of the state supported Maulana Haq Nawaz Jhangvi, a Deobandi mullah based in Jhang, to propagate against Shiism. Later during the early 1980s, the SSP recruits were also sent to Afghanistan to fight. Nevertheless, SSP continued to play a significant political role in the area and has never ceased to be a political party that participates in electoral politics as well.

But in mid-1990s the SSP split into two with some of its leaders forming the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) which over years gained the reputation of a brutal militant and terrorist organization. Due to the sectarian content of their ideology the Deobandi militant groups – the SSP, LeJ and their various offshoots like Harkat-ul-Mujahidden (HuM) and Harkat-ul-Ansar (HuA) – are viewed as a security risk. The LeJ, in particular, is considered as a lynchpin of Al-Qaeeda in Pakistan.² This was probably one of the reasons another outfit called Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) was established in 2000 by military intelligence agencies. It was carved out of HuM and funded with money from Al-Qaeeda. While Maulana Fazlur Rehman Khalil, who was a Pushtoon, continued to head HuM, Maulana Masood Azhar – a Punjabi – was given the leadership of JeM and was asked to focus on Kashmir and not to target the Shiite population. Khalil had refused to downplay his group’s sectarian agenda. This created an impression that JeM was primarily meant to fight the war in Kashmir. However, at this juncture, the divide is not so clear and the JeM is involved in Afghanistan as well.³

Within Punjab, the influence of the Deobandi militant outfits is concentrated in South Punjab with pockets in North Punjab as well. These are areas with relatively greater Barelvi or Sufi influence. Incidentally, these areas are primarily rural or with relatively smaller urban centers surrounded by semi-urban centers and rural areas. The Ahl-e-Hadith have greater relevance in larger urban centers or areas of greater economic affluence. Comparatively, Deobandism and Barelvism are closer to traditional forms of religion and so are popular in areas that are relatively less developed. A major difference between Deobandis and Barelvis, however, is that Deobandis reject bowing to graves. These various outfits survive on the basis of resources generated from their own operations and help from segments of the state and from sources abroad such as in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States. Most of these outfits got their initial funding from the Middle East and the Gulf.

Ahl-e-Hadith/Wahhabi Militancy

The Ahle-Hadith in Pakistan is also referred to as Salafi or Wahhabi. These are puritans and claim to be closer in belief and practice to early Muslims. The Pakistani Salafis, popularly known as Ahl-e-Hadith, were relatively different from the Arab Wahhabis. However, according to Pakistan's renowned Islamic scholar and former Chairman of the Islamic Ideological Council (IIC) Prof. Khalid Masud, this group of people drew close to the Saudis after 1979.⁴ This was a period when Saudi Arabia was searching for credible partnerships in the Muslim world to counter the Iranian influence and subvert any effort by Tehran to replicate its revolution in other countries. This was a period of ideological transformation of the Ahl-e-Hadith, who then grew ideologically closer to the Arab Salafis.

In the early 1980s when the Saudi distributed their money for the jihad in Afghanistan the Ahl-e-Hadith had less influence. The group was concentrated in small pockets in the urban centers and Masud considers them akin to the British protestants that represented the crucial link between capitalism and religion in the UK. This was a puritan-revivalist group that had an outreach in the urban centers. The limited outreach is one of the reasons that the various Ahl-e-Hadith groups couldn't attract a major portion of Saudi money distributed at that time. However, according to Khalid Ahmed, who has written at length on sectarian violence in Pakistan, the Saudis did divert some money to the Pakistani Salafis.⁵ Riyadh told Islamabad to spend the bulk of the seed money, which the Saudis had given to Pakistan for its zakat fund, to Ahl-e-Hadith.⁶ Later, during the early 1990s Saudi funding helped in setting up a headquarters of the Salafi militant outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) in Muridke, Central Punjab. Masud, who has closely studied this phenomenon, notes that the LeT is being driven by suave and educated middle class leadership aimed at penetrating different segments of the society, especially at critical positions. It is, therefore, that the LeT agrees to get close to the security establishment by focusing its attention on Kashmir. The LeT and its subsidiary, the Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) earned the reputation of being dedicated to Kashmir. This is the main Ahl-e-Hadith militant network. Another Ahl-e-Hadith militant group is Tehreek-ul-Mujahideen (TuM) which has receded in terms of its following. It was established in 1989 as a militant wing of Jamaat Ahl-e-Hadith and at time was considered one of the wealthiest jihadi organizations in Pakistan. While it engaged itself in Kashmir, it also ran operations in Afghanistan. From its high point in the early 2000s it declined gradually probably due to the absence of state support or that it got eliminated and merged into LeT as part of jihadi restructuring after 9/11.⁷ In the past couple of decades the LeT/JuD network has consolidated itself in Central Punjab with growing pockets of supporters in North Punjab. These are two regions with growing urbanization, education, and not least; exposure to modernity, which, in turn, requires a more modern approach to religion.

Barelvi Militancy

The Barelvi school of thought derives its inspiration from its founder Ahmed Raza Khan (1856-1921) and is sympathetic to Sufi Islam. This basic ideology emphasis on the importance of the prophet Mohammad and is opposed to Wahhabi and Deobandi ideology. The bulk of the people in Pakistan and Punjab still subscribe to this school of thought. The major difference lies in the notion of jihad. Since the Barelvis were not inclined towards aggressive jihad, as advocated by Deobandi and Wahhabi outfits after 1979, its supporters did not get any share of financial resources or support from the Pakistani state or other states. Although Barelvi madrassas are in greater number than those of other ideological schools, Barelvisim seems to have lost its power especially in the past two to three decades.

It was in the last decade that Barelvi scholars like Maulana Fazl Kareem began to develop a militant arm. This move was also provided some support by the state's security apparatus in a bid to develop a counter-force to the Deobandis. However, this activity is still at a nascent stage.

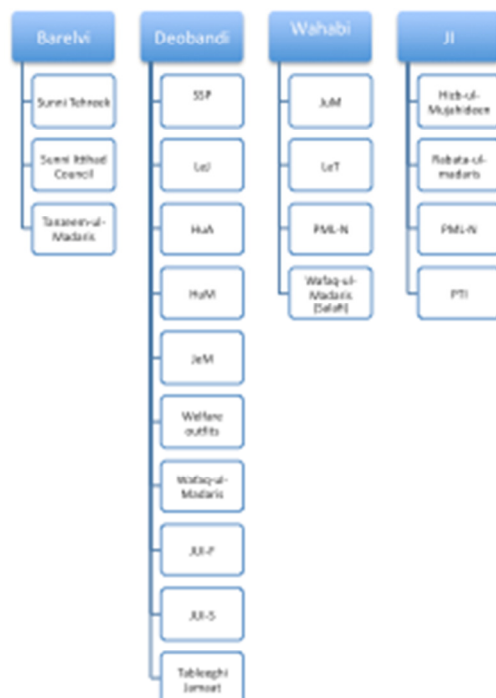
Shiite Militancy

Shiite militancy in Pakistan dates back to the early 1980s. Encouraged by the Iranian revolution and funded by Tehran, the Shiite scholars established the Tehreek-e-Nifaz-e-Fiqah Jafriya (TNFJ). Later, in the 1990s, a militant outfit was also established in the name of Sipah-e-Mohammad (SeM) which was engaged in targeted killing of Sunnis especially in urban Punjab and Sindh. Being outnumbered the TNFJ or SeM does not engage in mass killing like the Deobandi outfits.⁸

A brief account of these outfits was necessary because these are fundamentally of a different nature than the Afghan Taliban. These jihadi outfits are well integrated in the socio-political system which gives them tremendous outreach in the society. A glance at Chart 1 will show that each of the militant outfit is actually part of a family of organizations that include religious and political parties, the madrassa and welfare organization network and other subsidiary organizations. This adds to their other strength that the leadership of militant organizations in Punjab is middle class – ranging from lower-middle to middle class. This means that it will have greater impact in attracting people into the fold from the lower and middle classes.

Chart 1

The Militant Network



Mapping Radicalism in Punjab

Analyzing militancy in Punjab is not an easy task. In case someone is searching to establish a linear connection between militancy and radicalism, the data does not really help. This means that unlike Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province, which after 2001 has experienced consistent terrorist attacks, Punjab's data on terrorism is less impressive. Glancing through the comparative data in table 1 below it is apparent that, though the number of reported attacks in Punjab has increased, it still trails behind other regions such as Baluchistan, Sindh and KP.

This, however, does not mean that the province is not under risk. It is important to look at the extent of radicalism or latent-radicalism in the province. This is necessary due to the fact that radicalism is a prerequisite for violence. Radicalism, in fact, is the ignition of extremism and terrorism. What makes Punjab-based militant outfits different from those in KP and the tribal areas is that these tend to depend more on developing a radical base which can lay around for a while before getting deployed on different fronts. This model is different from Fazlullah's in Swat who began to transform the society early on which brought him into conflict with the state and parts of the local community. The Punjab militant base tends to develop partnerships, just like the military. These ideological assets are deployed selectively. Thus far, the tradition was to deploy these outside the country. Lately, it seems to be a mix of foreign operations and internal welfare activities they employ to enhance their outreach.

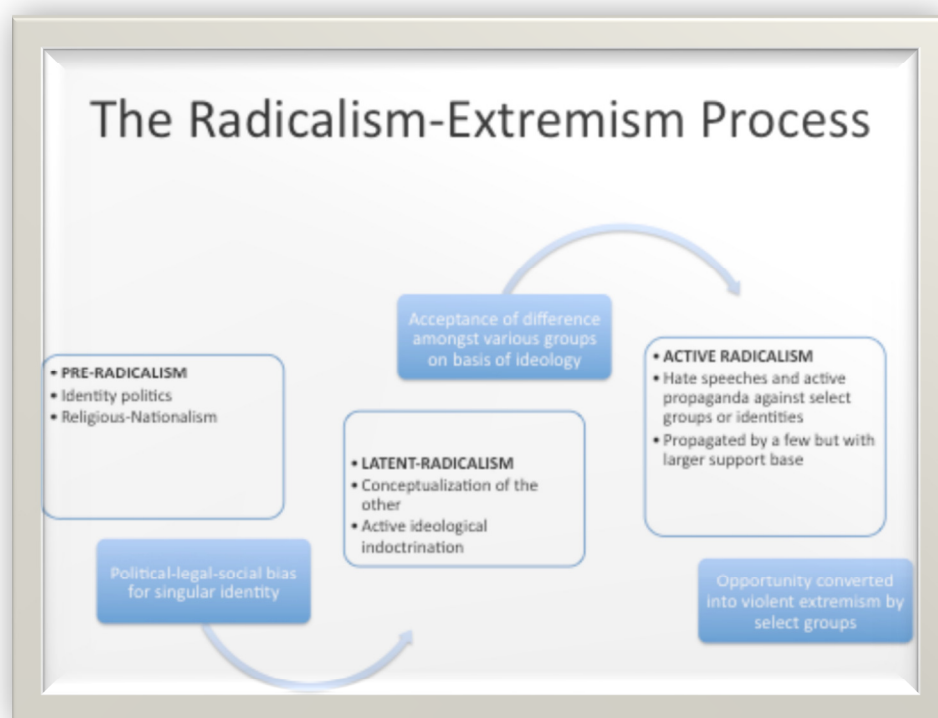
Table 1

Terrorism in Pakistan - 2009/2010 Comparison			
Region	Terrorist Attacks	Injured	Killed
KPK	60% decrease	49% decrease	42% decrease
FATA	28% increase	37% increase	40% increase
Gilgit-Baltistan	160% increase	16% increase	46% increase
AJK	no change	70% decrease	76% decrease
Islamabad	40% decrease	51% decrease	50% decrease
Punjab	34% increase	33% increase	26% increase
Karachi	288% increase	181% increase	258% increase
Sindh (excl. Karachi)	200% increase	329% increase	66% increase
Baluchistan	7% decrease	4% increase	43% increase
<i>Source: Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies, Islamabad</i>			

The data on Punjab to assess the extent of radicalism is at best imperfect. The number of madrassas, the attacks against minorities, especially sectarian and religious minorities, and the financial and ideological network make up some of the indicators. However, there is no consolidated data available. This, then, makes it necessary to get a sense of how radicalism is being built-up in the province at large through an assessment at the local level. It is a fact that today Punjab serves as a safe haven for the above-mentioned militants, their partners from the tribal areas in the north and the radical support base. These outfits do not necessarily engage in a lot of violence at home to avoid the risk of being noticed. Very recently, some of these outfits seem to be going on a drive to mainstream themselves through re-branding and emphasizing on their welfare activities. This does not mean that these will deviate from their objective or become *normal* like any social or political entity. But there is always the risk of these elements hiding themselves better and radicalizing the society without people giving much attention to it.

While travelling around and researching in Punjab, and interviewing people, especially NGOs working on de-radicalization, it was obvious that there is no standard definition of radicalism. For instance, many define certain types of radical or latent-radical attitudes as nothing but an element of ‘growing conservatism’, which, in their minds, needn’t evoke the same response as radicalism. For others, unless there is violence a kind of behavior cannot be categorized as radicalism. So, it is necessary to define the issue before approaching the problem. Defining radicalism is important also because it is an essential ‘cog in the wheel’ as far as extremism or even violent extremism is concerned. Radicalism is more in the realm of the essential thought process that can then translate into violent extremism. It can be defined as the tendency to exclude or include people on the basis of faith or certain core sets of belief and advocate discrimination on that basis. It is at later stages that such attitude or perspective can mature into active discrimination and even violence.⁹ Extremism and violence is an outcome of radical ideology and mindset. In fact, extremism, which can be defined as a method of using violence to support an ideology, is a means to an end. It is the culmination of a process that begins with the pre-radicalism stage (see chart 2).

Chart 2



The first stage is marked with buildup of a peculiar environment that supports singular ideological narrative and discourages pluralism. This is called the pre-radicalism stage. Here, political use of religion becomes a norm or even grundnorm. Depending on how a political and social system supports the anchoring of a particular ideology or grundnorm, the society moves

to the next stage of latent-radicalism. At this stage, a certain belief system is consciously and deliberately generated which puts people in peculiar and separate boxes in terms of their identity. Although many consider this as conservatism, this is actually latent-radicalism. People do not necessarily get violent but their perception of the 'other' begins to change. They tend to believe in discrimination on the basis of an ideology or faith as a natural process. Popular myths are developed to condemn the 'other' and psychological barriers are created against certain population groups or in favor of your own kind. There is a tendency to be exclusive instead of inclusive vis-à-vis other communities on the basis of religious belief. Such an attitude forces people to develop bias against an individual, a community, a sub-group or a nation on how faith is interpreted for them.

The third stage is active radicalism where individuals or group of people begin to actively advocate discrimination and targeting of the 'other'. A society graduating to this stage would experience a proliferation of violence against targeted group to meet ideological objectives. Radicalism itself may not result in violence but it is a key driver for violence. Inspired by a peculiar ideology, individuals and groups could target the 'other' but without necessarily involving the entire population. Those committing acts of violence, however, depend on the larger society and even the state for sympathy and support. The journey from pre-radicalism to radicalism which then leads to violence depends on a number of push and pull factors. Poverty, poor governance, inequitable distribution of resources, lack of education or prevalence of poor quality of education that encourages negative indoctrination, partnership between the religious right and the state, and geo-political conditions are some of the many factors that drive the radicalism process. There is no one explanation for a society to adopt this path. All these factors are in abundance as far as Punjab is concerned.

Before embarking on a detailed analysis of radicalism and extremism in Punjab it is important to understand the territorial dimensions of the place. Punjab has an area of 205,344 sq. km with approximately 55.06 percent of total population estimated at 187 million. Population wise, it is the largest province of the country divided into three parts: (a) north, (b) central, (c) South. However, a different category has been used for this paper mainly because not all districts and divisions fall in the geographical zones designated for them. For instance, South Punjab refers not just to the southern divisions but to some of the western administrative divisions as well. So, the classification used here is geographical division integrated with cultural and linguistic divisions. Thus, the three sub-regions are: (a) Potohar Punjab – north, (b) Punjabi Punjab – central, and (c) Saraiki – South and West. However, the terms will be used interchangeably.

As it will be discussed in greater detail in the following subsections, the Saraiki speaking areas have a distinct pattern of radicalization as compared to the other two sub-regions. Howev-

er, it is important to note that Punjab as a region has stronger element of ‘religionism’ that makes it fertile for latent radicalism and radicalism. The region first experienced religious violence in 1947. This was not random violence but an expression of power brokering by the stakeholders who used religion as a primordial identity to negotiate power and push out Sikhs and Hindus living in this region. Punjab, in fact, was one of the key provinces of Pakistan to experience, what the Israeli sociologist Uri Ram laid out, as weak-nationalism/strong-religionism. This is one of the four heuristic models that explain the linkage between nationalism, secularism and religionism. It is about the manner in which political legitimacy is gained through different blends of politics and religion.¹⁰ The model, which is ascribed to Pakistan, and Punjab in particular, describes a polity which is governed by communal identity.¹¹ The Punjabi and other migrants from India that suffered during the process of migration brought their own bias to the politics of the region and added to the existing sense of communalism.

The weak-nationalism/strong-religionism combination led to the development of radicalism in the province which will be discussed in greater detail in the following subsections.

Militancy and Radicalism in Potohar Punjab

Geographically, this area represents North Punjab, which starts from Attock (bordering on KP) up until the right bank of river Jhelum. The administrative divisions that fall in this region include Attock, Rawalpindi, the federal territory Islamabad, Chakwal, and Jhelum. This region has largely served as recruiting ground for the military dating back to the British who turned to this alternative after 1857. Within Punjab this region has another significance of being the frontline region to another frontline region, the KP province after 1979. This means that this area saw significant traffic of mujahideen from every outfit including Al-Qaeeda. A prominent Al-Qaeeda leader Khaled Sheikh Mohammad was captured from the house of a Jamaat-e-Islami member in Islamabad. The Arab militant organization still has some influence in the region as its spokesman lived in the capital city Islamabad and sources have reported the presence of its sympathizers in districts like Attock.¹² Not surprisingly, a suicide bomber in Attock attacked the car carrying the former Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, in July 2004. This was one of the nineteen deadly terrorist attacks carried out in the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi from 2003 – 2010. What’s threatening is the networking of the Deobandi networks like LeJ, SSP and JeM inside the relatively more secure capital city. Besides carrying out several high-value attacks like against the Danish embassy and the Marriot hotel in 2008, these outfits have the capacity to congregate people and show their political strength as well. Reportedly, the SSP took out a rally in Islamabad in 2006 which had about 5,000 people. A similar act was repeated in the second week of November 2012.¹³

This sub-region has both Deobandi and Ahl-e-Hadith outfits operating in pockets and in co-operation with the new and old local elite – the business-trading community, state bureaucra-

cy, and traditional religious leaders. This was primarily a Barelvi/Deobandi area with a network of shrines located in the region some of which are significant such as Bari Imam and Golra Sharif. However, the Deobandi and Ahl-e-Hadith outfits seem to be increasing their presence in the area including those surrounding the above-mentioned Sufi shrines. According to the journalist Mujahid Hussain, between the LeT and JeM the two outfits run over a hundred madrassas in the Islamabad-Rawalpindi region.¹⁴ A noticeable trend in the area is that of Barelvi mosques being forcibly occupied by Deobandis. This activity is taking place with the help of the local land mafia. Important political figures like the PML-N MNA Nawaz Khokhar or MPA Aqeel Anjum are involved in helping the Deobandi outfits occupy mosques. This, it is believed, is part of a quid pro quo between the political influentials and the militants. The two forces have developed a partnership in which they help each other. While the big land grabbers, which include the real estate tycoon, Malik Riaz, seek the help of these outfits to occupy land or get people forcibly evicted, the former provide them political cover and legitimacy to expand their influence. The land grab business and real estate in all of Punjab is closely tied with militant and radical organizations.

But the SSP and LeJ are not the only organizations that the land mafia and its patrons partner with. The Lal Masjid clergy, which was forcibly evicted from the mosque in 2007 after the military operation, was rehabilitated by Malik Riaz. The real estate tycoon not only spent Pak Rs. 15 million on the reconstruction of the mosque, but he also housed Maulana Abdul Aziz, his wife and the madrassa girls in his housing scheme in Rawalpindi and also provided for about thirty madrassas linked with Lal Masjid that were spread all over Islamabad.¹⁵ According to members of Islamabad police, Ghazi Force, a militant outfit that derives its inspiration from and is connected with Lal Masjid, is today one of the important mafias in the city.¹⁶

It was also noticed that districts such as Rawalpindi are also coming increasingly under the influence of LeT/JuD which established the headquarters for its *Difa-e-Pakistan Council* (Defence of Pakistan Council – DPC) in the district. It is not surprising that there were several attacks on the Ahmedi population in Rawalpindi. The JUD seems to have acquired some of the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) network and vote bank in the area. A significant politician from Rawalpindi, who specifically asked not to be notified, was of the view that he himself was forced to join the DPC in order to ‘buy security’. He further added that the Jamaat had lost its support significantly to the JuD.¹⁷ This happened primarily due to the stand which the Ahl—e-Hadith militant outfit took in relation to the issue of fighting aggressive jihad instead of defensive jihad. The JI youth in particular are attracted to JuD. This is also because ideologically, the JI is closer to Pakistani Salafis than the Deobandis.

As mentioned earlier, the Deobandi and Ahl-e-Hadith forces have strengthened themselves also because of the weakness of the Sufi institution. In fact, there is now very little left in

terms of a proactive response from the Sufi households that are themselves engaged in land grabbing business and are, thus, in partnership with many Deobandis. For instance, the spiritual leaders (pirs) of Golra have business deals with local politicians, who, in turn are Deobandi or assist Deobandi outfits. The ideologue and intellectual voice at the Golra shrine, Prof. G. A. Chishti was of the view that the process of the growing power of radical elements was very natural and could not be stopped by the Sufi shrines or the Barelvis due to their inherent weakness.¹⁸ Since the Sufi shrines do not invest in the society and reach out to the followers, they are bound to decay. For instance, despite the plan to build a hospital for philanthropy, which stands incomplete, the pirs of Golra have not managed to finish the project. It is an example of their lack of commitment and not lack of funds. In Chishti's words: "the greatest threat to the Sufi faith is from its leaders". It's their weakness which has encouraged the firebrand Islamists to grow.¹⁹ The additional problem is that instead of stemming the radicalization tide the pirs of the area have even consciously partnered with Deobandi-supporting land mafia goons for financial reasons. Money-making seems to have blurred ideological distinctions.

The militant outfits are not the only source of radicalism in this area. There are other more sophisticated organizations like the Al-Huda network which now has a university in the capital city and is spread in most urban centers of Pakistan, certainly Punjab. This is an educational network for middle class and upper-middle class women to train them about religion, the Koran and hadith, and sharia in general. Farhat Hashmi, who is from Central Punjab, established the Al-Huda network in 1994. Although her religious teachings do not call towards jihad, the rest of the curriculum uses a peculiar interpretation of the Koran, Sunnah and sharia that encourages a radical perspective. In any case, there are others taking non-religious education who were found to have latent-radical tendencies. For instance, in a study conducted in 2010 to assess the socio-political attitudes to youth in elite universities in three major cities of Pakistan, out of which two were in Punjab, it was found that the worldview of these students was not very different from those of madrassa going children in smaller towns and villages.²⁰ Islamabad, which falls in the North Punjab belt, was one of the cities analyzed.

Such an attitude can certainly be attributed to the period of General Zia ul-Haq's rule (1977-88). This period was a major watershed in terms of change in socio-political attitudes. The ten years of Zia not only brought conservatism, it also pushed the society at large towards greater religionism and radicalism. One of the results of such indoctrination can be found in the changing attitudes of people in, for instance, Chakwal district. It is known for a mix of Shiite and Sunni population. The Shiite are considered as an influential minority in this district²¹ which had its taste of terrorism in April 2009 when a suicide attacker blew himself up inside a Shiite Imambargah (Shiite place of worship) killing 24 people and injuring 140. Chakwal has emerged as a critical district where sectarian violence represents growing radicalization. The

anti-Shiite rhetoric was started during the 1980s by SSP-backed mullahs that established Deobandi madrassas in the area. This was probably part of the state policy under General Zia to pressure the Shiite population through Deobandi and Wahabi clergy. But Chakwal became known during the 1990s for Maulana Akram Awan of Tanzeem-ul-Ikhwan (The brotherhood organization)²² and his threat to take out a million-march to Islamabad to demand implementation of Sharia law in the country. The Nawaz Sharif government during the 1990s managed to negotiate a deal with Awan. But what is even more important is the fact that such radicalization took place in a district like Chakwal which is also one of the few significant areas for recruitment into the military. Awan himself was a former army officer. Such ideologues provide a link for understanding radical penetration into the armed forces. The trend is worrying also because there were several serious attacks in Rawalpindi on military targets that in itself raises the issue of radical penetration in the military.

Militancy and Radicalism in Punjabi Punjab

Terrorist attacks have happened in other parts of Punjab too – such as Central or Punjabi speaking Punjab. It is also one of the strongholds of the LeT/Jud network. The Ahl-e-Hadith religious and militant network has a stronger footing in this sub-region than the Deobandi organizations.

This sub-region includes all divisions and districts that fall between the left bank of the river Jhelum to the right bank of river Sutlej – Gujrat, Lahore, Kasur, Sheikupura, Gujranwala, Sialkot, Narowal, Sargodha, Bhakkar, Faisalabad, Toba Tek Singh, Sahiwal, and Okara. This is also considered as the fastest growing sub-region of the province. Officials at Urban Unit of the Department of Planning and Development, Punjab were of the view that Lahore, Gujranwala, Faisalabad and Sialkot have unmatched growth in the entire province.²³ Lahore in particular has a lot of internal migration from within Punjab and is one of the important financial centers in the region. Faisalabad and Sialkot are important industrial towns which are also the ones experiencing growth. The various districts of the region can be put into two broad categories: (a) large urban centers and their peripheral area – Lahore, Kasur, Sheikhupura, Gujranwala, Sialkot, Narowal, Faisalabad, and Toba Tek Singh – and (b) Small urban centers with their semi-urban areas – Okara, Sahiwal, Sargodha. The difference between the two types is that while the first kind may experience greater windfall of industrialization or urban growth, the second type has more of a rural flavor as it contains larger number of semi-urban centers.

This brief commentary on the socioeconomic conditions is relevant to understand the nature of growth of militancy and radicalism in this part of the province. The poor urban planning and increased migration into the urban centers mean pressure to secure resources. Therefore, it is not surprising that different militant outfits are engaged in extortion and are part of the

land mafia in cities like Lahore, Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Gujrat and other urban centers. A poet and civil society activist in Gujranwala, Dr. Saulat Nagi talked about the JuD being part of the land mafia popularly known as the *qabza* mafia. He talked about how the JuD mosque and madrassa in his area had encroached on precious government land and the small roads around it.²⁴ Such activity is not limited to radical militant outfits. Even Bareilvi mullahs engage in similar activities such as the renowned Bareilvi scholar Tahir ul-Qadri, who divides his time between France and Pakistan. His mosque and madrassa has encroached on public land in a posh locality of Model Town, Lahore. They also partake in facilitating occupation or re-occupation of contested land on behalf of others. The land mafia business provides a window into ‘Religious-Militancy Inc.’

Moreover, the militants also settle disputes and intervene in land disputes for others. The former Chairman National Counter-Terrorism Authority (NACTA), who is reputed for his knowledge on the issue, Tariq Pervez talked about several jihadis from the Deobandi and Ahle-Hadith groups who were involved in dispute settlement or land-grab in Lahore and other cities. According to Pervez, “all you need is a small pickup truck, a few commandoes and weapons and you are in business”.²⁵ This is about the emergence of private contractors with their armies for settlement of disputes, almost as if the state did not exist. The prominent television anchor and experienced political analyst of Punjab, Suhail Warraich is of the view that the militant outfits have replaced the tradition of *pehelwans* (old families of wrestlers) in some of the Punjab cities who used to settle disputes due to the owe of their natural muscle power.²⁶

Ali Cheema, who is an economist and professor at the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), and has worked on land settlement and issues of inequality in Sargodha, was of the view that one of the key issues is the migration of the local elite and their absence from their areas. In the traditional colonial administrative system the local feudal played an important role as a negotiator between the state and people. With the dilution of the traditional feudal system, which seems to be happening all over Pakistan, and is in its advance stages in Punjab, the old feudal is no longer powerful. Citing Sargodha’s example Cheema talked about smaller landowners surfacing during the 1970s. The electoral system in itself has played a key role in diluting old power structures.²⁷ However, there is nothing to fill the gap which creates room to maneuver for militants, who can be considered as the ‘neo-feudal’. But more important, they use this social and political space as local arbiters to attract people into their fold. This gives the militants reason to exist in an area which they later use for other more nefarious activities. For example, in November 2004 there was a terrorist attack in Sargodha on a bus carrying air force officers resulting in the death of seven. There was yet another attack on Shiite procession in July 2010 killing over 20 people. Furthermore, the number of attacks or actual incidents of violence do not necessarily determine the extent of societal out-

reach and influence of these elements. Their presence can sometimes be detected and other times not. For example, in 2010 in Sargodha's case five Americans were captured as they came to the city to meet up with militants and for transport to the tribal areas for terrorist training.²⁸ It is also noteworthy that the head of JuD, Hafiz Saeed is also from Sargodha which means availability of indigenous social networks for propagating the organization's message.

There are three important factors worth considering about this part of Punjab. First, the strategic location of some of its districts – Kasur, Sialkot, Sheikhupura and Narowal – close to the Indian border which makes these a transit route for jihadi organizations especially those operating in Indian Kashmir or India at large. Second, some of these areas are fairly ungovernable and have a high crime rate, such as Sheikhupura. It is considered culturally more violent, known for cattle-stealing type of crimes and has a larger rural base. Although a comparative crime figure for Punjab was not available at the time of conducting field work, a general notion is that Sheikhupura has more cases of homicide than other parts of Central Punjab.²⁹

Third, this area, which is popularly considered as Central Punjab, also has a history of communal violence and suspicion of India, which in itself, is an important factor in successful jihadi propaganda. Ilyas Chattha and Ishtiaq Ahmed's seminal work on violence during partition of India in 1947 sheds light on how communalism is ingrained in the psyche of the local people. It is not just about memory but about how people built their fortunes. The violence in 1947 is actually also a story of the post-independence elite formation in this part of Punjab. Chattha talks about how Hindu and Sikh families were massacred not as a reaction but as a part of a plan.³⁰ It was in this context that religious movements such as Majlis-e-Ahrar set its feet in a post-1947 Punjab and managed to provoke people against the Ahmedis resulting in a violent movement in the early 1950s that could only be quelled through a martial law. According to the famous 'Justice Munir Report' that investigated violence against Ahmedis, Gujranwala was one of the centers of the movement.³¹ Some of the local people that I interviewed for this study talked about how some families and individuals had then enriched themselves in 1947 by looting Hindu families.³² In any case, Gujranwala as a society falls in the latent-radical category. Historically, it was very violent on religious issues and the society generally tends to subscribe to pre-modern norms. Some people like Iqbal Butt, who otherwise work on de-radicalization, do not consider Gujranwala as radical or even latent-radical. He and his family members, who operate a local NGO called 'Burgad' were not even impressed by the fact that a PML-Q MPA Zille Huma was killed by a religious zealot in Gujranwala in February 2007. Her killer Mohammad Sarwar objected to her dress code and the fact that she was holding a marathon in the city that included women as well. The 'Burgad' team was of the view that there were other factors relating to local politics that were responsible for the killing.³³ Others in the city also subscribed to the opinion.

However, there are other factors which shed greater light on Gujranwala's ideological psyche such as the fact that prominent Ahl-e-Hadith ideologues like Ehsan Ilahi Zaheer and even prominent Deobandi religious scholars are popular in Gujranwala. In fact, in the 2002 elections Qazi Hameedullah from the coalition of religious parties, the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) was elected member parliament from one of the constituencies. Members of Sangat, an NGO working on social issues, particularly minority rights, were of the view that, what people call conservatism, was getting reflected in inter-communal relations.³⁴ The Christians in Gujranwala were less comfortable than they were before as there had been a few incidents of people being accused of committing blasphemy. Another important factor pertains to the collusion between the elite and the religious right. Talking to people we realize that out of four national assembly constituencies, there were at least three in which the electable candidates supported either Deobandi or Ahl-e-Hadith school of thought and the attached groups. This is, what I referred to earlier, as the intrinsic link between elite formation and expansion of radicalism in the country. The new or emerging elites in Punjab are latent-radical mainly due to their original socio-economic background, their historical experience, or their pragmatic needs to link up with groups with muscle power.

The elite-radical connection was most obvious in a place like Gujrat and its adjoining districts Lala Musa and Kharian where the influence of Let/JuD has grown in the past decade or so. In July 2012 there was an attack on an army camp near Wazirabad in Gujrat division resulting in the killing of seven soldiers.³⁵ A month later in August 2012 a massive terrorist attack was launched on the Pakistan Aeronautical Complex, Kamra, located in North Punjab. This was the second attack on this facility after 2009.³⁶ Reportedly, in both cases there was some involvement of LeT³⁷ which in itself raises questions about the nature of the outfit's local contacts. In Gujrat people generally deny the presence of any radical and militant elements. People were even reluctant to review the old incident of an Al-Qaeda operative being located and arrested in Gujrat. Ahmed Khalfan Ghailani, a suspect in the 1998 bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, was arrested from Gujrat in 2004.³⁸ Recently, the district police also apprehended five TTP militants in mid-November 2012 from the city.³⁹ The ten journalists that I met with in a group interview completely brushed aside any apprehension regarding any sympathy amongst the local for radical and militant forces.⁴⁰ The argument was that despite its best efforts the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) in Gujrat failed to build a sustainable support base. They had done well in the 2002 elections but were rejected by the people in the 2008 elections due to their linkage with General Pervez Musharraf.

The denial may be due to consciousness amongst the locals for not mentioning something that would give a bad image to the place. But it could also be because of the fact that the Ahl-e-Hadith penetration in the area is at the elite level and has not sufficiently proliferated at the grassroots. Sources from the area talked about JuD's connections to the prominent politician

Chaudhry Pervez Elahi, who is a top leader of the PML-Q. Elahi himself is currently Pakistan's deputy Prime Minister. It was claimed that one of Elahi's sons and other close aides, who were also notable entrepreneurs, regularly contributed money to JuD.⁴¹ Moreover, a former PML-N member of Punjab provincial assembly (MPA) was also linked with JuD and was even questioned for his involvement in one of the attacks on former President Musharraf.⁴² Reportedly, this particular member is also part of the land mafia. In this respect, having connections with militant outfit help especially in Gujrat that suffers from the problem of an overload of mercantile capital which has little capacity to transform into industrial capital. Immovable assets with high financial value are in abundance. Given the fact that most of it is absentee-landlord property, illegal occupation of land has huge potential. Sources also talked about a few villages that were dominated by JuD supporters. These villages were located near the area close to Bhimber, Pakistani Kashmir which is logical for the LeT/JuD network involved in the Kashmir conflict since the early 1990s.⁴³ The support from the elite is a critical issue because it would gradually help in building the base and anchoring the network in Gujrat and adjoining areas.

In Punjab, it is now difficult to find a city or area which has not been touched by some form of radicalism, be it latent or active. However, there are variations that journalist Ashr Rehman tried to explain while comparing Gujranwala and Sialkot. He was of the view that while Gujranwala was inherently radical and people supported militant and religious networks due to conviction, the drivers of latent-radicalism in Faisalabad and Lahore, or even Sialkot were different. Rehman was of the view that Sialkot's greater exposure to the outside world due to its booming sports and surgical goods industry gives it greater sense of liberalism than Gujranwala which has a consumer based industrial base that only caters for the local market.⁴⁴ Indeed, Gujranwala's mainstay is fan making and ceramics. Incidentally, even the fan industry is shutting down with most entrepreneurs in this field moving on to Sialkot. But the exposure is neutralized by Sialkot's location close to India's border. Journalist Aoun Abbas Sahi, who has worked on radical networks in Punjab, said that there were also instances of some political leaders and their families supporting rabid Ahl-e-Hadith madrassas in the city.⁴⁵

Referring to the Ahl-e-Hadith and JuD following in this part of Punjab, the phenomenon is natural since the LeT was established in the early 1990s with Saudi funding at Muridke near Lahore. However, it started in Lahore where it still has a center in the heart of the city. This is probably one of the spots that JuD turns to, to divert attention from Muridke. These days it is claimed by numerous sources including the police that the center at Muridke is not very active, which probably refers to the fact that they may not be imparting military training there. However, this could be part of the larger exercise of re-branding the LeT/JuD leadership, an issue that will be touched upon in later part of the paper. Zulfiqar Hameed, a police officer, who works on counter-terrorism, identified at least eight to ten major major JuD controlled

madrassas in Lahore.⁴⁶ These madrassas, like those of other schools of thought, are critical in radicalizing a part of society. In recent years, there is a tendency to disregard madrassas as insignificant players. Such an assessment is based more on facts pertaining to the involvement of madrassa students' involvement in terrorism.⁴⁷ Looking at the madrassas phenomenon from this lens is problematic as it fails to highlight their contribution in militancy and fanning sectarian hatred.⁴⁸ The madrassa contribution to increasing sectarian divide and resultant violence cannot be ignored. These may not be the sole reason for the growing sectarian divide in Lahore, but the city has certainly witnessed greater sectarian violence than other cities in Punjab (see Chart 3 and table 2). It will be worthwhile to investigate in subsequent research on Punjab as to why Lahore has experienced more sectarian bloodshed than other places, including Jhang –which is considered as the hub of anti-Shiite activity. Perhaps, this is because while Jhang just has the SSP influence, Lahore combines all similar ideologies and biases including Ahl-e-Hadith whose ideology remains anti-Shiite (but it is also necessary to recognize that this is an imperfect data set which is being used here).

Chart 3: Sectarian Attacks in Pakistan, 2009-Nov. 2012

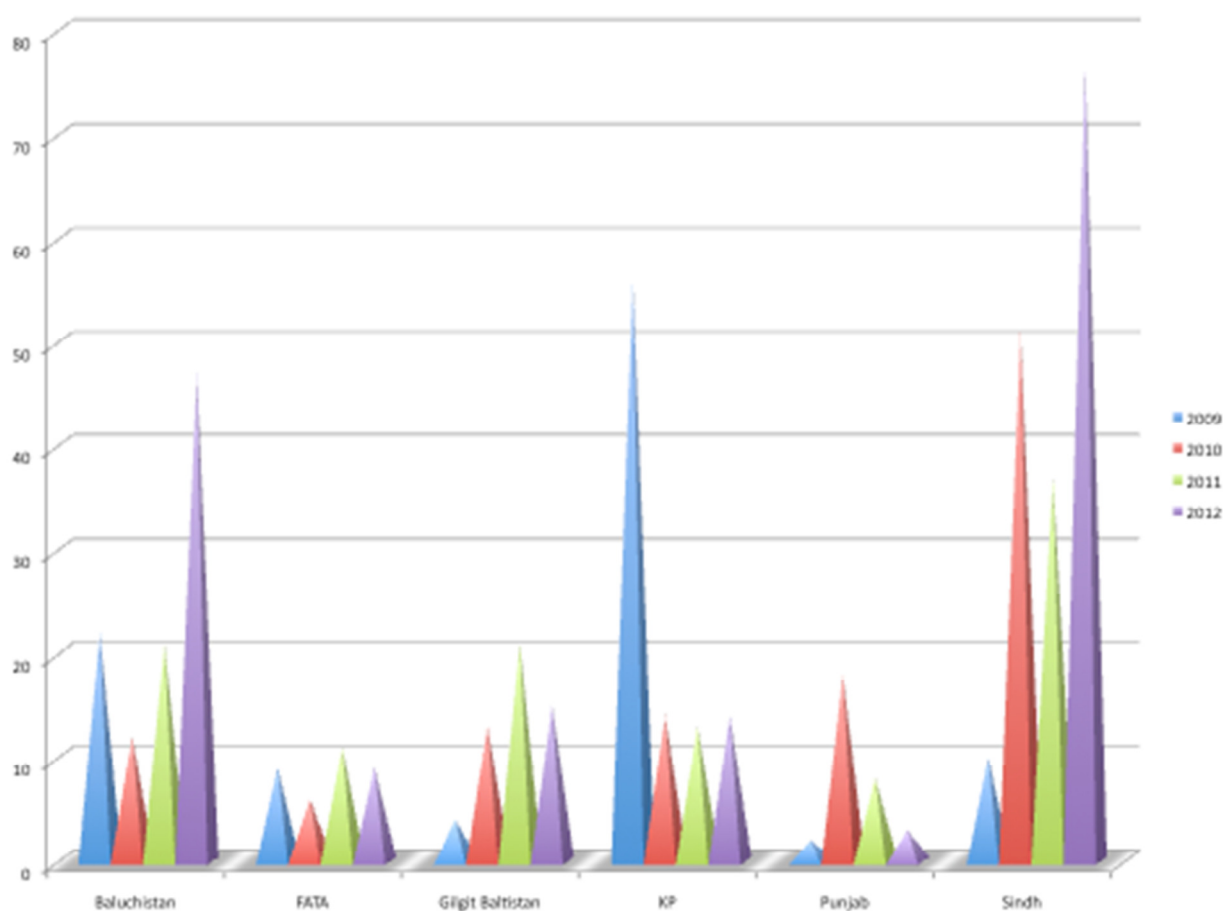


Table 2

Comparative Sectarian Violence Data, 2009 - Nov. 2012					
Attack					
	2009	2010	2011	2012	Total
Bahawalpur	1	2	0	0	3
Bakkhar	0	0	1	0	1
Dera Ghazi Khan	1	0	2	0	3
Faisalabad	0	1	0	0	1
Jhang	1	0	0	0	1
Khanewal	0	0	1	0	1
Lahore	0	9	2	1	12
Mianwali	0	0	1	0	1
Multan	0	0	1	0	1
Pakpattan	0	2	0	0	1
Rawalpindi	0	1	0	1	2
Rahim Yar Khan	0	0	0	1	1
Killed					
	2009	2010	2011	2012	Total
Bahawalpur	1	3	0	0	4
Bakkhar	0	0	0	0	0
Dera Ghazi Khan	32	0	50	0	82
Faisalabad	0	0	0	0	0
Jhang	1	0	0	0	1
Khanewal	0	1	1	0	2
Lahore	0	188	16	1	204
Mianwali	0	0	3	0	3
Multan	0	0	0	0	0
Pakpattan	0	7	0	0	7
Rawalpindi	0	0	0	23	23
Rahim Yar Khan	0	0	0	21	21
Injured					
	2009	2010	2011	2012	Total
Bahawalpur	0	8	0	0	8
Bakkhar	0	0	2	0	2
Dera Ghazi Khan	48	0	100	0	148
Faisalabad	0	4	0	0	4
Jhang	0	0	0	0	0
Khanewal	0	2	1	0	3
Lahore	0	528	101	0	629
Mianwali	0	0	6	0	6
Multan	0	0	0	0	0
Pakpattan	0	25	0	0	25
Rawalpindi	0	0	0	40	40
Rahim Yar Khan	0	0	0	50	50
Source: Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies, Islamabad					

Looking at Lahore it becomes obvious that the radicalization process has many takers. It is a phenomenon that has begun to penetrate in elite circles. While there is an abundance of older-type madrassas, there are newer forms evolving some in the shape of *dars* for upper class and upper-middle class men and women. These are study circles which provide interpretation of the Koran and an understanding of hadith and Sharia. Those who provide a very reactive perspective and interpretation dominate the *dars* circuit. The UK based movement Hizbut-Tehrir is also part of the process. Neelum Hussain a prominent educationist who heads a local NGO talked about the *dars* phenomenon and its impact on society. According to her, these meetings are used to popularize peculiar notions of religious morality. Hussain calls them the ‘women’s piety movements’.⁴⁹ Such developments tend to have long-term impact as a woman’s perspective on life influences her household as well. Similarly, there are study circles for men and a process of their re-conversion to a particular understanding of Islam. For instance, the Deobandi Jamia Rasheediya in Karachi building partnership with the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) to impart religious education to the business community.⁵⁰

Some would argue that the LCCI-Jamia Rasheediya partnership does not indicate an anomalous behavior for two reasons. First, there is a general trend even amongst the Pakistani elite to shift from the inherited secular-liberalism towards greater religionism. This in itself could be an indicator of the impact that years of weak-nationalism/strong-religionism have on a society. This does not necessarily turn them totally radical. However, in the absence of a more plural discourse and interpretation of religion they seem to be succumbing to the available narrative offered by the Deobandis and Ahl-e-Hadith schools of thought. This will not make the people radical but, at least, put the majority in the category of latent-radicals. So, the lecture series or study circles denote modern forms of madrassas that cater to the need of the particular socioeconomic class.

Second, many do not consider the partnership odd but view it as an extension of a natural relationship between the trader-business community and the religious right. Pakistan’s urban centers, particularly in Punjab, have grown around the trading community which is inherently conservative or pre-radical. The traders in Gujranwala, Lahore, Gujrat, Sahiwal, Okara, Renala Khurd, Daska, Sialkot and other small cities are willing contributors to jihadi and religious parties funds. Part of it is a *quid pro quo* as jihadi outfits can return the favor when needed in terms of providing physical protection or support against a rival, if and when required. But more important, this provides a sense of relief and atonement from sins like usury, bribery and cheating that the trading community does. The trader-merchants of Pakistan like the bazaaris in Iran are double-faced in their conduct.⁵¹ Abdul Wakeel Malik, who is from Gujranwala’s trading community, was of the view that traders feel that it’s largely atonement of sins that his community contributes to such funds. Moreover, giving charity tends to build fraternities that have a social standing. So, a person may get greater social acceptance in

the society if he/she has established a mosque or given noticeable amount of charity to a certain fund.⁵² When asked why traders give readily to jihadis and religious parties but do not pay taxes to the government, Wakeel and other traders that were interviewed argued that this was because they do not see the government accountable and giving them their money's worth.⁵³ Ch. Zaheer, who is the president of the fruit seller's association in Lahore, was of the view that traders see the militant outfits at least doing something for the Muslim ummah, especially when they do propaganda and claim to prepare jihadis for Kashmir, Bosnia or other places where Muslims are in trouble.⁵⁴ However, one issue that people do not openly talk about is that these radical networks also encourage traders not to pay taxes to the government. There is mutual benefit in the argument. The traders get religious justification for not paying taxes. The LeT/JuD ideologues, for instances claim that zakat is the only tax that people owe to the state. This is naturally peanuts as compared to actual tax. The militant outfit benefits as it also posits itself as an alternative to the state in terms of receiving funds and other resources. This approach has its benefits such as ensuring some limits on the popularity of these outfits. Since these cater to the moneyed-elite, they would not raise revolutionary slogans and incite people at the grassroots.

The LeT/JuD network has built its power around the trading community in Punjab. The pre-radicalism of the society, especially those with money like the traders, gives the militant outfits great penetration in urban and semi-urban centers a lot of which exist in this part of Punjab. As mentioned earlier, the Ahl-Hadith network has built great influence in this area, particularly in a 200 km radius around Lahore. In the past decade or more, the outfit has spread into Sheikhpura, Okara and Sahiwal districts. Okara, in particular, is interesting because it is also hometown for one of the LeT leaders, Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhawi who is also accused of involvement in Mumbai attacks. The sole survivor of the attacks, Ajmal Kasab was also from district Okara. Apparently, the leader of JuD, Hafiz Saeed is a regular visitor to these districts which are rich in agriculture. There are rich potato and dairy farmers in Okara and Sahiwal who are also good contributors. The JuD is very systematic in its fund-raising. For instance, it has *kissan* (farmer) committees in agriculture rich areas to get contributions in *cash, crop and kind*.⁵⁵ It is also important to understand that the farmers in this part of Punjab are also linked with the market as the new ones (as compared to the traditional landowning elite) tend to have *ahrat* agriculture-marketing business as well to maximize gains. Instead of reducing profits by going through middlemen, these farmers become the *ahrtis* or middlemen themselves. Not surprisingly, Saeed collected over Pak Rupees 20 million from one of his visits in September/October 2012 to Sahiwal. According to local sources from the area, the visits are highly choreographed which means the higher you pay the better access you get to the top leadership of the jihadis. It is capitalizing on jihadi star-power, just like in the media or film industry. Such influence attracts the middle class or the upper middle class who contribute to fund raising activities.⁵⁶ Charities raise money both in the name of jihad and welfare. According to

Amir Rana, the money collection venture is not just about collecting money but also about showcasing.⁵⁷

The Ahl-e-Hadith have considerable social influence in Sahiwal and Okara districts. Therefore, even a seemingly liberal party like the PPP is considering an election alliance with the Jamaat Ahl-e-Hadith in Sahiwal. This does not mean a deal with the JuD but it will get the PPP all Ahl-e-Hadith support in the area during elections, including that of the JuD.⁵⁸ In any case, the militant outfit has expanded its outreach in villages in the area. They now seem to be working on a new strategy of attracting supporters in urban centers through building a network of small and large madrassas in adjoining rural areas or semi-urban centers.⁵⁹ The outfit seems to have increased its fund-raising activity which is increasingly being developed around the need for setting up welfare activities in Baluchistan and Sindh. Interestingly, there is a massive propaganda campaign to re-brand JuD and its Hafiz Saeed as a relief and welfare worker rather than a jihadi.⁶⁰ This could be, as suggested by political commentator Mohammad Taqi, as part of a bid not to raise concern in the US regarding Pakistan military and its activities before American troops leave Afghanistan in 2014.⁶¹ But a more important aspect is that it is generating greater legitimacy for the JuD leadership and similar other characters, which, in turn, will influence the way in which radicalism flows from a pre-radical stage; to latent-radical, and finally radicalism, in the society. The Ahl-e-Hadith presence in Punjabi Punjab, which is popularly referred to as central Punjab, does not mean that it doesn't have Deobandi influence. There are several pockets to Deobandi support in this Punjab as well. However, Ahl-e-Hadith's comparative ascendancy in terms of its influence is commensurate with the growing modernity and urbanization in this sub-region. With greater education and new capital formation in hands of new people, there is probably a greater need for a modern religious discourse that Ahl-e-Hadith ideology offers in a better way than the less suave Deobandi or the pre-modern Barelvi and Sufi discourse.⁶² The current period presents the *end of Sufism* in the country, which, however, is more glaring in north and central Punjab than in south Punjab. The issue will be discussed in greater detail in the following sub-section.

Militancy and Radicalism in Saraiki Punjab

This region, normally referred to as South Punjab, is known for its traditional Saraiki language and culture. This does not mean that people living here are only Saraiki speakers. There is growing number of Punjabis, Mohajirs (Urdu-speaking migrants from India) and other ethnic communities as well. It is also important to note that while the term South Punjab is used for this region, there are areas lying in the west that are also included in this regional classification. The area falling on the left of the river Sutlej, right of river Indus, and some areas between the rivers Indus and Jhelum fall in this region. It includes administrative districts such as Bahawalpur, Dera Ghazi Khan, Rajanpur, Muzaffargarh, Jhang, and Layyah.⁶³ Besides

growing radicalism, this area is also known for a nascent movement for creation of a new province based on language and cultural identity called 'Saraikistan'.

In most available literature, this part of Punjab is referred to as a key recruiting ground for terrorism. Former Inspector-General Punjab Police, Shaukat Javed did not agree with this perspective. He was of the view that available data such as social and regional profile of imprisoned jihadis did not support the notion that majority of militants were from South Punjab.⁶⁴ However, other police officers, who have worked more consistently on terrorism and counter-terrorism such as Tariq Pervez or Sohail Habib Tajik believe that there is greater recruitment from South Punjab. Data is certainly a major issue and its availability could, perhaps, result in better evaluation.

Saraiki Punjab is not significant in terms of incidents of terrorism. Although some acts of sectarian terrorism have happened, the region is not known for a lot of violence. This could primarily be due to the fact that a lot of the Deobandi militant top leadership resides in this sub-region such as JeM's Masood Azhar, LeJ's Mohammad Ahmed Ludhyanvi and Malik Ishaq. Moreover, most Deobandi outfits have their headquarters here. There are other prominent terrorists such as HUJI's Hafiz Ahsan, who is a proclaimed offender in one of the two assassination attempts on General Pervez Musharraf belongs to Bahawalpur. Reportedly, two of the nine assassins in the Mumbai episode also belonged to Rahim Yar Khan. Given that these outfits are concentrated here, they would not like to attract attention towards themselves by carrying out terrorist attacks in the area. It is important to note that the pattern of operations of Punjabi jihadis, particularly those in Saraiki Punjab, is very different from the Push-toon/Afghan Taliban. The Punjab-based militants have thus far focused on recruiting people for jihad in other territories or gently converted people through madrassa education. The Deobandi madrassas are highest in number in Punjab. But within Punjab, the highest number can be found in South Punjab. According to the research work done by Pakistani historian Dr Tahir Kamran, in 1988 595 out of a total of 972 Deobandi madrassas in Punjab were in South Punjab, mainly the three districts of Bahawalpur, Multan and Dera Ghazi Khan.⁶⁵ Similarly, the controlling authority of Deobandi madrassas, *Wafaq-ul-madaris al-Arabiya*, is in Multan. The number appears to have increased later as the 2009 figure in table 3 shows Deobandi madrassas in Bahawalpur division alone to be 637.

Table 3

Madrassas in Bahawalpur Division				
Bahawalpur				
	No of Madrassas	Resident Students	Non-Resident Students	Total Students
Ahl-Hadith	20	317	650	967
Ahl-Sunnat	15	50	505	555
Ahl-Tashee	14	211	190	401
Barelvi	275	5153	9082	14235
Deobandi	290	9742	9999	19741
JI	5	20	20	40
Total	619	15493	20446	35939
Bahawalnagar				
	No of Madrassas	Resident Students	Non-Resident Students	Total Students
Ahl-Hadith	16	265	1019	1284
Ahl-Sunnat	6	0	515	515
Ahl-Tashee	1	1	30	31
Barelvi	146	2948	8924	11872
Deobandi	141	4322	7401	11723
JI	0	0	0	0
Total	310	7536	17889	25425
Rahimyar Khan				
	No of Madrassas	Resident	Non-Resident Students	Total Students
Ahl-Hadith	21	869	410	1279
Ahl-Sunnat	48	1665	1498	3163
Ahl-Tashee	5	218	30	248
Barelvi	249	5353	1087	6440
Deobandi	206	7230	9205	16480
JI	0	0	0	0
Total	529	15365	27595	27610
Grand Total	1458	38264	50565	88974

Source: Police Department Punjab

As is obvious from the above table, Deobandis are not the only ones in South Punjab. There are others as well such as Ahl-e-Hadith and Barelvis. Nevertheless, the comparative number of resident and non-resident students in Deobandi madrassas speak volumes of their capacity vis-à-vis others. The Deobandis have expanded in this region, which was once considered as a hub of Barelvi and Sufi Islam. This is primarily because the Deobandis are closer to the Barelvis in their ideological perspective. It is actually the Ahl-e-Hadith that are relatively new entrants in this sub-region and have limited influence as compared to the Deobandis. This is deliberate as well. Reportedly, a deal was struck in 2008 between JeM's Masood Azhar and JuD's Hafiz Saeed about not upstaging each other in each other's areas.⁶⁶ But in certain areas the Deobandi versus Ahl-e-Hadith areas of influences can be separately demarcated. In Ba-

hawalpur division, for instance, all areas falling on the right side of the main highway between Lahore and Karachi have settlements of indigenous Saraiki people most of whom are either Bareilvis or Deobandis. The newer settlements of Punjabis are on the left who largely subscribe to Ahl-e-Hadith ideology.

Broadly, five factors are considered as essential propellants for the rise in radicalism and militancy in this region: (a) poverty and underdevelopment, (b) feudal-authoritarian socio-political system, (c) geography, (d) history, and (e) power and patronage.

Poverty and underdevelopment as a cause for radicalism is the most popular argument. A Lahore University of Management Science (LUMS) study put the incidence of poverty in South Punjab at 50.1 per cent, West Punjab at 52.1 per cent (this is also included in South Punjab), Central Punjab at 28.76 percent, and North Punjab at 21.31 per cent. The poverty could be due to the varied economic patterns in different parts of Punjab. Agriculture is a dominant activity in South Punjab with almost 55% labor concentrated in this sector as opposed to 27% in North Punjab and 33% in central Punjab.⁶⁷ The fact is that most of the heavy manufacturing industry is concentrated in North and Central Punjab with relatively little industrialization in South and West Punjab. Most of the industry in the poverty-ridden regions is linked with agriculture. But there is a general lack of development in South and West Punjab, an issue also raised by the LUMS study that gauged the various districts of Punjab on the basis of a deprivation index that, in turn, was based on standard of education, housing quality, housing services (provision of utility services) and employment ratio. According to the report, districts such as Rahim Yar Khan in South Punjab ranked the lowest among the 34 districts of Punjab in the deprivation index. The other top 13 districts were also from South and West Punjab. Interestingly, the list of the least deprived districts included Rawalpindi Chakwal, Lahore and Sialkot. The comparative condition of the various districts of Punjab on the basis of social indicators such as immunization, child mortality rate (under 5 yrs), ante-natal care, education and school enrollment also indicate some of the districts of South Punjab such as Rajanpur and Rahim Yar Khan ranking at the lowest as compared to some of the districts of Central and North Punjab. The percentage of boys that never enroll in school, for instance, was 30% for South Punjab, 27% for West Punjab, 12% for Central Punjab and 6% for North Punjab. In case of girls, the figure was 44% South Punjab, 44.5% West Punjab, 23% Central Punjab and 15% North Punjab.⁶⁸

Poverty is generally viewed as a major push factor for militancy. A recent study by an economist for the Pakistan Institute for Development Economics (PIDE) established food insecurity, landlessness as the most significant driver of violence.⁶⁹ Another study done by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad also concluded that violence had increased due to greater incidence of food insecurity in Pakistan where 61% of the 113 districts were

food insecure. Such studies are based on linear linkages that do not take into account certain other critical factors. For example, neither of the study commented on the rise in radicalism and militancy in food secure areas of Punjab. So poverty may be a contributor but not necessarily a major driver towards militancy especially in South Punjab major parts of which are the country's granary. Poverty, however, is a significant factor in forcing people to send their children to madrassas. The religious seminaries, which are considered as less problematic as far as militancy is concerned,⁷⁰ are critical in adding to the radical environment. It is not just a matter of a single child going to a seminary but the entire family eventually getting affected by the child's linkage with the madrassa. These madrassa students are sufficiently indoctrinated and could be deployed in a jihadi battle if and when required. Currently, the seminaries and their students make for local operation in areas of operations. These are the eyes and ears of jihadi outfits.

But the impact of poverty cannot be isolated from the larger problem of the relative political disempowerment. While traditional feudalism as expressed in the form of large landholdings and authoritarian behavior of the local landlord has almost disappeared in other parts of Punjab, such a structure is still present in Saraiki Punjab. There are large landowners and some of the significant ones are pirs as well connected with Sufi shrines. In fact, this Punjab is a peculiar case also because it is considered as a hub of Sufi Islam. The spiritual power of the shrine combined with political and economic power gave the feudal and his family an almost hegemonic control over people. This pattern, however, underwent tension, especially after the 1970s and the 1980s. While Zulfikar Ali Bhutto challenged the power of the tribal and feudal leaders by bringing some change in the political structure, though superficial, Zia's patronage to jihad and religious right further enhanced peoples' space. Relatively greater education and religious education allowed people to challenge the authority of the religious landowner, a title given to the landowning pirs by Sarah Ansari in her seminal work on the pirs of Sindh.⁷¹ A lot of the jihadi leadership from South Punjab fought wars in Afghanistan and have been fighting since. This region is one of the major contributors to jihadis in other regions including Afghanistan. These jihadis acquire a sense of power and self-consciousness that is empowering as far as the socio-political system in their own area is concerned. This also feeds into the suspicion of Sufi and Barelvi Islam in a subtle manner.

In some respects, the jihadis have influenced the political culture of the area and challenged the power, if not the influence, of the pir who have begun to negotiate with jihadi organizations and individual militants as well. One of the glaring examples was in the form of the funeral of Maulana Abdul Rasheed Ghazi, the cleric of the Lal Masjid. Although from a humble background in Rajanpur, the fact that all the big pirs of Saraiki Punjab were eager to participate in his funeral indicated a state of surrender.⁷² There are earlier examples as well such as the story of the creation of the SSP in Jhang. The French political scientist Mariam Abou

Zahab considers the development as a symbol of class war in that area. Although Abou Zahab does talk about Sunni groups supporting SSP,⁷³ her main emphasis is Sunni-Shia rivalry as a class issue. Her argument is that poor Sunni peasants stood up against rich Shiite landowners.⁷⁴ People tend to apply this formula on other places as well such as Bahawalpur which is another hub of sectarian terrorism. Tahir Kamran's analysis on the subject, however, raises the local power political perspective in Jhang strongly. Kamran finds group rivalry as more of an issue than class differences.⁷⁵ A senior bureaucrat also claimed that big entrepreneurs like the owner of Hussnain Construction (known for building roads and big projects) and the Sunni pirs of the Sultan Bahu shrine also supported SSP.⁷⁶ In any case, there is larger number of Sunni landowners in Jhang and Bahawalpur than their Shiite counterparts. The available land data also does not support Zahab's findings. Moreover, if the Shia-Sunni conflict as extension of class warfare were true, there would be violence in other parts of the province as well such as Sargodha where there are important Shiite landowners in the rural parts of the division. Presently the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the Parliament is a Shiite from Sargodha. The Sunni population seems to be dominant in terms of numbers in urban Sargodha. However, sectarian violence is not a defining feature of this division. Local people argue that the one attack on a Shiite praying sight *Imambargah* in 2010 represents an anomaly⁷⁷ and there is no evidence of a major crisis between the two communities.

Indubitably, the Afghan war of the 1980s against the former Soviet Union played a critical role in producing jihadis in this sub-region. A lot of poor and lower-middle class men went for jihad, a development in which the location of the area proved an important factor. Parts of South-West Punjab like Rajanpur are adjacent to Baluchistan. This area referred to as *kacha* is Punjab's tribal area where there are no land records and crime is a major activity. This also serves as a convenient passage to Afghanistan via Baluchistan. Another *kacha* area is along the Indus River on the border of Sindh and Punjab which is one of the favorite hideouts for those engaged in kidnap for ransom. There have been several incidents of kidnap for ransom, some even involving Afghan kidnappers.

The geographical factor is also important from the perspective that there are several Afghan settlements in South Punjab particularly in Bahawalpur. These settlements in district Bahawalpur date back to the 1980s and the 1990s and are mainly located in Deobandi areas. Although a causal relationship has not been established, towns and small cities close to these settlements have experienced an increase in radicalism. But there are other factors as well such as people working in the Middle East and Gulf regions. The emerging middle class and lower-middle class that has benefitted from foreign remittances is also one of the most susceptible to radicalism. So, places like Uch Sharif that are known for its Sufi saints seem to have converted to new ideas and have become a hub of SSP influence.

The Deobandi influence in this sub-region has a history as well. Some of the prominent Deobandi madrassas and scholars are based in Rahim Yar Khan which is also one of the centers of Deobandi madrassas and militant influence. Malik Ishaq, the rabid radical and terrorist live in Rahim Yar Khan. Interestingly, some senior police officers also use the argument of Deobandi historical presence in the region to argue that radicalism is not a new phenomenon and is part of the local culture.

The location or historical trends, however, are secondary factors. The most important is the patronage provided by the state and its agencies to nurture jihadis in this region. Since Saraiki Punjab was more religious in its culture, as compared to the other parts of Punjab, the state supported the conversion of the thought process from softer to more rigid forms. Though it has not happened all over the region and there is still huge following of Sufi shrines, pockets of Deobandi and Ahl-e-Hadith pockets have emerged which also enjoy greater power. The militant outfits today are the neo-feudals in this part of Punjab. They tend to use their authority to hold councils (jirgas) and dispense speedy justice. There is considerable support from the emerging middle class and the trader-merchants of the area who support these organizations to build their own power and influence in relation to the traditional powerhouses or the pirs and landowners.

However, it is also a fact that a lot of this support may disappear if the state opts not to support these elements. The jihadi infrastructure in Saraiki Punjab is expanding despite the accusations that some of the outfits like Jaish-e-Mohammad have a partnership with Al-Qaeda. There are newer madrassas and hidden training camps constructed on main roads which are bound to pose a threat in future. The outfits have also developed economic interests in the area by setting up cattle-farms and other businesses. They will receive a further boost with the government's effort at mainstreaming these organizations. Apparently, the PML-N is negotiating a seat adjustment with the SSP/LeJ for the next general elections. The idea is for the Deobandi outfit to get a few seats in Saraiki Punjab in return for their support to the PML-N in other constituencies of Saraiki Punjab and Central Punjab, especially Faisalabad and Gujranwala.

Besides the Pakistani state, there are other state actors also involved in the mainstreaming process. For instance, it is believed that the Saudi intelligence continues to play an important role in guiding and sustaining some of these outfits. Reportedly, the differences between the two top LeJ leaders were negotiated by Saudi intelligence with Malik Ishaq receiving money and encouraged to contest next elections.⁷⁸ Though not decided as yet, it is speculated that Ishaq may contest elections from his home constituency in Rahim Yar Khan or from Muzafargarh where the LeJ already has good associations with other sitting members of the parliament like, for instance, Jamsheed Dasti of the PPP. The fact of the matter is that the patron-

age provided by the state or states has played an important part in the integration of the jihadi outfits in non-religious political parties. Mujahid Hussain's argument is that members of militant groups have penetrated political parties like the PML-N and are now part of their mid-tier leadership. This assessment may not be too off the mark as militant leadership now has greater acceptance in the society and the political system at large. For example, the head of SSP Bahawalpur is a mid-sized entrepreneur who is keen to contest the next elections. Rao Javed had also contested in bi-elections for NA-184 during which he had exhibited his men in guns. However, no violence was used. More important, the partnership between national parties like the PML-N and SSP will further legitimize these outfits and make these more acceptable than before. According to journalist Abdul Manan, the PML-N has agreed to do a seat adjustment with the SSP in about ten to fifteen constituencies. The SSP aims to gain a few seat in South Punjab at the cost of supporting PML-N in certain constituencies in central and south Punjab.⁷⁹

The marriage of the rising middle class with religious militancy and radicalism in South Punjab will become an increasing challenge for the pirs. This situation is not going to change also because the expectation of the *mureed* (follower) of the pir has changed. The followers do not just desire prayers and blessings but want a share in the material and political influence of the pir. The socio-political trends do not bode well for Sufi Islam that seems to have a compromised capacity to offer an alternative discourse and challenge the religious right. The Barelvis, on the other hand, have begun to adopt a more radical narrative to increase its acceptability in the society vis-à-vis Deobandis and Ahl-e-Hadith.

Some of the new money that has come to South Punjab, particularly in areas like Bahawalpur, Rahim Yyar Khan, Dera Ghazi Khan and Multan belong to people who fall in the pre-radical or latent-radical typology. Dera Ghazi Khan is an interesting case study as it is one of the samples of how Saudi money can determine local politics. This, for instance, refers to the Hafiz Kareem phenomenon who contested elections against the local chieftains, Lagharis in 2008. Senior government officials, who had served in the area, claimed that they did not initially take his influence seriously.⁸⁰ However, he is now a madrassa tycoon with unaccounted for sources of money and influence. The traditional power elite cannot compete with these people in the long term. Lack of financial resources and questionable credibility are two factors in this regard. In this particular case, for example, Kareem has access to greater resources. The Lagharis, on the other hand, can only match this by engaging in bribery and extortion which tends to make them questionable in the eyes of people. The role that Saudi money and influence has played in shaping up local politics and social behavior is a matter for a separate study.

It is a fact that the social face of Punjab is changing. In this sub-region there are now new actors like Jamshed Dasti of the PPP who are latent-radical in their thinking. Their perspective on women's rights, as could be noticed in Dasti's reaction on cases like Mukhtaran Mai, who was gang-raped in that area, indicate his thinking towards religious norms and women's rights. Dasti himself made his fortune through extortion in the oil and gas business in the area. Although popular amongst people, he also denotes changing value system of the society. People like Dasti may not necessarily be part of religious violence, but they are part of encouraging the trend. Dasti himself is known to be close to the SSP/LeJ network. Like the other two sub-regions, this part of Punjab will undergo greater radicalization of all types and levels, especially as the society goes through the process of social and material modernity.

Unfortunately, instead of distancing itself from jihadi elements the military and its intelligence agencies appear to be overseeing the project of legitimizing these non-state actors through highlighting their welfare and relief activities. Mainstreaming of these jihadi elements is the new mantra. However, such action will result in huge costs for the state and society. The ongoing de-radicalization initiatives are weak, some have even failed, mainly because there is no emphasis on generating an alternative narrative. Such a narrative has to be at multiple levels and must engage with religion as well. Unless the ideology is challenged, radicalism will grow unabated.

Conclusion

Pakistan – and Punjab in particular – seems to be in the middle of a change cycle. This means that the state and its intelligence machinery are planning around the 2014 NATO and US pull out from Afghanistan. Since the ISI and the Army is not inclined to attract international attention towards Pakistan as a source of religious militancy, the jihadi outfits are being brought into the mainstream. This could mean that the actual incidence of violence may reduce around the time of the pull out or even later. Also, any violence that will happen would be confined internally against religious minorities. After 2014, such violence will be relegated to, what is deemed by the police and administration in Punjab, as a lesser category of sectarian violence that may not attract attention. However, what is not being examined is the impact of growing radicalism in the country with its source in Punjab or from Punjab-based militant organizations. Currently, radicalism, which can be tapped for violence at any stage, is flowing from Punjab to Sindh and into Baluchistan as well.

It is vital to recognize the fact that the major source of this radical movement via the militant organizations is Punjab. These outfits hold sway with their message of *Ghazwa-e-Hind* (the military campaign to conquer Hind) as an essential religious prophecy, and the need to liberate Muslims who are in bad conditions in other lands such as Myanmar, Palestine and Kash-

mir (Hind not only refers to India but to the rest of the world as well). In any case, there are about 6,000 to 7,000 men from Punjab that operate in the tribal areas-Afghanistan war circuit. In Sindh, the Punjabi outfits have set up operations sometimes in the name of providing relief to flood victims or propagating religion. This also includes setting up madrassas in Hindu dominant areas, even in places without any Muslim population. The Deobandi and Ahl-e-Hadith network is spreading unabated.

Focusing on Punjab, which represents almost fifty percent of Pakistan's population, is rapidly and consistently undergoing a process of radicalization. Perhaps, this is a natural trajectory for Pakistan's society which was exposed to greater religionism right from its birth in 1947. Creating a state in the name of a religious ideology tends to put a society ahead in a proverbial race towards radicalism. However, there are two important elements that seem to have played a critical role in further radicalizing the social space. First, the role of state actors including Pakistan and external players like the US and Saudi Arabia. The actual proliferation of the process of radicalization started during the 1980s in the wake of the Afghan. The war had a huge cost for Pakistan in the form of radicalization, militancy, illegal weapons and drugs. Punjabis from all three regions went and fought the war. Many from South Punjab were even commanders of Afghan war-lord militias. These people were never disbanded but were instead utilized by Pakistan's military and intelligence to wage proxy wars on other fronts. There was a partnership between the military intelligence agencies and the jihadis that also allowed the non-state actors sufficient room to carry out their own objectives.

While the military had its own objectives, the jihadists consolidated themselves, ideologically and physically. The 1990s is essentially the period when the jihadis expanded the definition of jihad from being a defensive war to an offensive war. These jihadis insist upon their right to wage a war since they subscribe to the idea that it is only in an Islamic state where Sharia is implemented that the State has the sole right to declare and conduct war. JeM's leader Masood Azhar has produced a three-volume book that talks about the concept of jihad in the Koran. His thesis replicates a thesis done by a Saudi in 1979/80 under the supervision of Syed Qutb's brother. These jihadis are far more lethal than the Afghan Taliban as they have a more serious expansionist design and are not inward looking in terms of their objectives. These jihadis are also very smart in terms of their adaptability as they can surface or go underground at the moment of their choosing. But more important, these jihadis understand the worth of societal conversion to religionism so that they have a support base that stands behind their project of implementing Sharia and expanding influence abroad.

Therefore, the peculiar evolution of the society is the second most important factor. Many a people have reminiscence about a liberal Pakistan, which seems to be receding. It may be viewed as a natural trajectory since the elite or the emerging elite is now more affected by

years of religionism and exhibit latent-radical tendencies. Radicalism, hence, could also be viewed as a dimension of post-colonialism in Pakistan. Given the absence of a liberal discourse, like in most Muslim countries, radicalism is on the upswing. The new elite, in fact, is far more latent-radical in their thinking. Looking at Punjab it is obvious that radicalism denotes an important shift in social and power political trends. In the region called north and central Punjab it is largely the new money that has brought radicalism with it. The North and Central Punjabis are far more exposed to the world and susceptible to the 'clash of civilizations' argument. There is also an element of the impact of the diaspora, especially in Europe, that has become more unsettled in their countries of residence after 'the war on terror', which is popularly viewed as a war on Islam. Resultantly, these biases add up to those of people living in Punjab. Greater affluence has brought greater confidence and a sense of the ummah which has to be defended. This makes jihadism popular in urban centers and even rural areas.

The above conclusion tends to challenge the general perception that militancy or radicalism is poverty-driven. This is certainly the general impression about South Punjab. Indubitably, the radicalism process affects the poor stratum of society since poor people tend to send their children to madrassas in search of basic sustenance. The seminary is where religious indoctrination happens and seeds of discontent against the 'other' are sown. Any effort to de-radicalize should aim at diverting this stratum away from radicalism. However, it is equally important to understand that radicalism is a very top-down process.

Radicalism is not just about ideology or political goals. It is also about material gains. Given the fact that the militants now have greater muscle power, the new capitalist class or the trader-merchant and business community tends to support these elements for mutual benefits. The land mafia, in particular is deeply linked with the jihadis. There has also been an increase in the cases of kidnap for ransom in which the jihadis are involved. However, these groups in Punjab have not seriously engaged in excessive crime. They have expanded through welfare and relief activities, at least, in certain areas. But more important, with support from segments of the state and other states, money is not in short supply. Furthermore, the madrassas have also turned into commercial ventures and there is an expansion of what can be termed as Jihad Inc.

An important trend pertains to re-branding of some of the jihadi outfits for their mainstreaming. It is usually believed that such an activity will take these organizations away from violence and integrate them into the society and its politics. However, this may prove to be a flawed perception as none of the jihadi organizations have deviated from their basic ideology. These are rational actors with a sensibility to do a cost-benefit analysis. The integration, in any case, will benefit them as more people will convert to their ideology.

It's interesting that while Pakistani policymakers talk of mainstreaming of jihadi outfits, no one has critiqued or evaluated the impact this will have on the society at large. No one has questioned as to what will happen after the society radicalizes. It is almost as if the issue of the ultimate impact is being ignored. For instance, what would be the impact when radicalism crowds out the traditional pluralism of the societies in Sindh and Punjab? Some journalists like Maleeha Lodhi and Anatol Lieven argue that right-wing religionism and radicalism will be challenged by Sufi culture in Pakistan. Lieven, for instance, is of the view that Sufi culture in Pakistan will never allow Talibanization of the country.⁸¹ Punjab and Sindh are two areas known for such a tradition. However, such an assessment does not consider the diminished capacity of Sufi Islam. Popularly, Barelvism is talked about in the same context as Sufi Islam. Not only that these two are different, Barelvism is responding to the challenge of revivalist movements like Ahl-e-Hadith and Deobandism by introducing a rabid edge to their discourse. Although Barelvism revolves around the centrality of the prophet, the recent emphasis on the love of prophet is mainly to attract bigger crowds. Also, Sufi Islam is pre-modern and will get increasingly challenged as material modernity comes to Pakistan.

The most important conclusion of this study is that militancy cannot be checked without countering radicalism. The process has to be stopped and alternatives introduced for which certain recommendations are given in the following sub-section.

Recommendations

Militancy is directly connected with radicalism. Hence, any measures to check or discourage militancy should also address the larger radicalization issue. Here are some recommendations to address the militancy-radicalism problem. The recommendations have been split into sub-categories.

State

The state has an important role to play in the de-radicalization process. There is both an issue of will and capacity which has to be addressed. Will pertains to an understanding by the state that de-radicalization will not happen just through mainstreaming. There is no evidence that any militant outfit has brought any fundamental change in their thinking. A distance has to be brought between the state and its actors. It's not just about battling the militants but allowing these to collapse through a natural process of attrition.

The will has to be accompanied with building-up state and societal capacity to counter radicalization. This will require changes in the curriculum, at least in subjects that do not necessarily involve religion. The autonomy and independence of universities and more scientifically drawn curriculum will help build-up and ideological capacity.

The madrassas need to be regulated on an urgent basis. There are existing laws that require a madrassa to be registered separately from a mosque. Such laws, however, are rarely implemented. Moreover, a mechanism must be built for accountability of the mosque, madrassa and their funding. The amount of money that is brought to Pakistan from abroad and nationally has to be monitored. This could be done under the new anti-terror law that also brings on board terror financing. There should also be a system introduced for accountability of all private education in the country that must include madrassas as well.

There are two other sectors that require capacity building: police and judiciary. Pakistan's record of convicting terrorists is very poor. This is primarily because of the poor capacity of the police to collect evidence. The law enforcement agencies have to be trained in this regard. The other issue pertains to lack of information sharing between various intelligence agencies. For instance, the civilian law enforcement and intelligence agency do not have capability to interpret telecom data. There should be a method to make the facility available to all so that terror can be pursued in time. Similarly, police must be trained properly in fighting terror. A methodology must be developed to check the radicalism-militancy nexus. The police or an agency of the police should link its monitoring to not only acts of violence but also to detect where radicalism has a capacity to develop into militancy. This will help in stopping the problem from happening. This should go hand-in-hand with re-starting a de-weaponization program. The government of Pakistan had started the exercise in the early 2000s but discontinued it by the mid-2000s. Such an exercise must be started again and weaponization to be treated as a serious crime.

The judicial system is extremely poor in convicting terrorists or potential terrorists. There are lacunae in the law of evidence which needs examination and an eventual change. The international community could play a role in training and guiding judges regarding methodologies for treating cases of terrorism and also developing a witness protection program that is non-existent in Pakistan.

Society

Improving state systems have to go hand in hand with developing the capacity of the society to respond to militancy and radicalism. People should be made conscious of forms of radicalism including sectarian violence. In fact, fighting sectarian violence should be inbuilt into the nationalist narrative with programs on television and radio that talk about the need for unity amongst the Muslims and fighting radicalism.

There is also a dire need to develop an alternative narrative within the religious framework so as to challenge radicalism and violence. This process has to be internal and well integrated into the social milieu of Muslim societies. It is important for the process to look indigenous.

Smaller study circles can be developed and linkages sought amongst liberal Muslim scholars who are willing to challenge the radical discourse. The Deobandis and Wahhabis have an influence because of their ability to use modern technology and reach out to people with their narrative. A similar strategy could be used to disseminate the message of peace or an alternative narrative in Islam.

The government of Punjab has a de-radicalization program that has certain flaws such as not offering an alternative narrative to the radical elements. The program needs to be re-structured and well thought out to have better impact.

Meanwhile, diversions are also needed to stop new people from joining radical and militant forces. More than creating work opportunities, it is necessary to establish vocational centers that would create better-skilled people who can then seek jobs in the national or international market. Very recently, there was demand from the Gulf and other Middle Eastern countries for trained mechanics and electricians. Such skills could be developed to make people useful.

Research

Finding credible methods for resolving the problem depends on good analysis, which, in turn, cannot happen with deficient data. Pakistan lacks dependable data. There are some NGOs working on radicalization and terrorism who also suffer from the problem of poor data and analysis. There should be an emphasis on developing a good data set and information on radicalization and militancy.

There are several areas on which more research is required:

- new sources of weaponization of militant groups
- terror financing by the business and trader community
- patterns of sectarian violence in different geographical areas
- education and radicalization
- proliferation of radicalism and militant networks from Punjab to other areas of Pakistan

New information is an essential lubricant for planning a better and comprehensive de-radicalization strategy.

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