# *Radicalization in Pakistan: Sociocultural Realities*

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Radicalization in Pakistan has occupied the center stage in debates and has become a big concern for governments at national and international levels. This study is an effort to explore sociocultural determining factors of radicalization in Pakistan. This is a qualitative study. Primary and secondary sources were utilized during the research. Experts on the subject, from different professions, were interviewed.

The phenomenon of radicalization in the country and actors, factors, causes and processes involved have not been studied and explored to any considerable extent. Only a few systematic studies on the subject have been conducted so far. Those who have carried out such studies include Tariq Rahman, Ayesha Jalal, Sohail Abbas, Sohail Mahmood, Amir Rana, Shabana Fayyaz and Christine Fair. This qualitative study may be taken as a step further. Though, the writers have addressed the sociocultural factors but only as a part of their studies. This paper exclusively addresses the sociocultural factors of radicalization in Pakistan. For theoretical and sociological concepts in the context of Pakistani society and culture, a few of the pioneering works on sociology were relied upon. They include works by Sabeeha Hafeez, Abdul Qadeer, Siddique Qureshi and the like.

Tahir Abbas has shed light on Islamic radicalism from European perspective. His book, *Islamic Political Radicalism,* contains excellent articles which deal with radicalization's roots and growth in Eurasia. He has elaborated at length the international political factors behind Muslim radicalism.[i] *The Changing Pakistan Society*[ii] by Sabeeha is a classical work on Pakistani society and culture. The questions addressed in the book include the possibility of using folklore as a mechanism of social control, and the concepts needed for the analysis of changing realities of Pakistan's social structure and organizational system. Ayesha Jalal has dealt with the subject in South Asian context in *Partisans of Allah: Jihad in South Asia,*[iii] and, *Self and Sovereignty: Individual and Community in South Asian Islam since 1850.*[iv]

Mahmood's PhD dissertation, *Islamic Fundamentalism in Pakistan, Egypt and Iran* is a scholarly work on radical movements in Pakistan.[v] Rana has produced a number of works on the subject, including *The Seeds of Terrorism*[vi] and *Gateway to Terrorism.*[vii] The former is helpful in understanding the spread and pervasiveness of radicalism in Pakistan. The latter is full of information on radical groups and movements in the country. But Rana's most recent study on the subject is his article, "Jihadi Print Media in Pakistan".[viii]

Haqqani has discussed the ideologies of radical Jihadi groups in South Asia.[ix] Hassan Abbas, in his book, *Pakistan's Drift into Extremism,* has endeavored to tackle a number of themes related to radicalization in Pakistan, like Pakistani radical groups and 9/11.[x] Christine Fair – in her paper, "Who are Pakistan's Militants and Their Families?"[xi] – has discussed some important aspects regarding sociocultural factors of radicalization in Pakistan. In another study, "Militant Recruitment in Pakistan: Implications for Al Qaeda and Other Organizations,"[xii] she has dealt with radicalization and its manifestations in Pakistan and their international connections.

Kaul has dealt with the impact of Islamic radicalization on the civil and military society in Pakistan in "Role of religion in politics: Impact on the civil and military society of Pakistan".[xiii] In his book, *The Failure of Political Islam,* Roy deals with radicalism and radical groups and movements in the Middle East. He also refers to the phenomenon in Pakistan.[xiv] Stern's book, *Why Religious Militants Kill, Terror in the Name of God,* is among the major works on the subject.[xv] She has been visiting religious schools in Pakistan for

the sake of research on the subject. Davis points out the role of educational systems and curricula in contributing towards radicalization in Pakistan and Afghanistan.[xvi]

Chitkara has discussed the phenomenon of radicalization and its causes in Pakistan in *Combating Terrorism*.[xvii] He also deals with different radical organizations. Benazir Bhutto has discussed a number of issues regarding radicalization in Pakistan including its link to Jihad.[xviii] Jamaat-e-Islami of India and radicalization has been addressed by Ahmed in his article, "Between moderation and radicalization".[xix] Dyer and others, in their well-written article, "Countering Violent Islamic Extremism: A Community Responsibility," elaborate four stages of the radicalization process: preradicalization, identification, indoctrination, and action.[xx] Safia Aftab has examined the link between poverty and radicalization in the country.[xxi] This review of the works, however, is not comprehensive because of the constraints, mainly temporal.

Although, cultural anthropologists, Clofford Geertz and David Schneider, argue that "cultural systems must be distinguished from social systems and analyzed, in the first instance, as internally coherent wholes".[xxii] But, drawing a clear-cut line of distinction between social and cultural factors seems to be almost impossible. So, no subheadings are provided to separate the two.

Sociocultural realities involve two categories: (a) domestic society and domestic culture, and (b) global society and global culture. Though, the latter is more relevant vis-à-vis the determinants of radicalization in Pakistan, this paper deals with the former category i.e. Pakistani culture and society. This paper, too, does not intend to discuss at length what does a culture or a society mean.

Sociocultural factors are extrinsic in nature, which means that intrinsic factors are excluded from the study. Moreover, sociocultural factors are only a part of extrinsic factors. Although other factors – such as political, economic, religious, psychological, educational, and ideological – are excluded but discussing their cultural and social dimensions was necessary. That is because all of these types are highly integrated with one another. Society and culture have their political, economic and religious dimensions. One's personality is affected by sociocultural processes. Education also directs and moulds one's socialization process. In fact, personality, society and culture cannot be seen or comprehended in isolation from the above-mentioned components.

Since radical activities do take place within the society, these activities, in turn, become a part of sociocultural factors of radicalization in their own right, e.g. radical newspapers and magazines; and radicals' religious and political gatherings. Such factors, however, are beyond the scope of this paper.

Calhoun has given a suitable definition of radicalism. According to him, it designates "basic or extreme political challenges to established order".[xxiii] The terms of 'radicalism' and 'radicalization' are neutral. They are neither negative nor positive. However, some of the writers use them negatively. Some of them may use radicalism and terrorism interchangeably. Similarly, some may equate radicalism with extremism. But this writer does not think that equating radicalism with terrorism or extremism is appropriate. Some define radicalism as 'political extremism.' That is not an accurate description. Extremism carries its specific connotations. Anthony Judge alludes to the point saying, "'Radical' is somewhat a less negatively-connoted label" than extremist, and is "sometimes used by people or groups to label themselves".[xxiv] Defining radicalism as 'political extremism' means applying those connotations to radicalism without any qualification. Doing so disregards the qualitative difference between the two terms. A conscious effort is made to treat radicalism and radicalization as distinct from terrorism and

extremism. Mentions of terrorism and extremism, however, do occur from time to time because these terms are too deeply related to be avoided here. Dealing with radicalization as distinct from terrorism and extremism, however, does not imply that radicals cannot be extremists or terrorists.

Extremists do not label themselves as extremists. But radicals, sometimes, call themselves radicals. It implies that the term radicalization is not always frowned on, but is used positively as well. Flaherty has given the following characteristics and beliefs of radical groups and movements:[xxv]

   a. There is a sense of futility that anything other than extreme measures will not work.
   b. Destruction of the existing world order is seen as necessary.
   c. Compromise and power sharing are rejected.
   d. A new world order is envisioned.
   e. The end justifies the means.
   f. Impatience and a sense of urgency.
   g. The prospect of violent change has its own appeal.

Culture has very broad meanings. For some, the concept of culture "provides a set of principles for explaining and understanding human behavior".[xxvi] In Hatch's words, culture consists of "conventional patterns of thought and behaviour, including values, beliefs, rules of conduct, political organization, economic activity, and the like, which are passed on from one generation to the next by learning – and not by biological inheritance".[xxvii] Culture also means the customs and beliefs, art, way of life and social organization of particular country or group.[xxviii] Khaled defines culture as the ability of a people to have fun. Much of what we call culture is the creative ways in which a society entertains itself.[xxix] Culture is also defined as 'a system of symbols'.[xxx] Society is defined as a particular community of people who share the same customs, laws, etc.[xxxi] 'Social' refers to anything connected with society and the way it is organized.[xxxii] That culture is a learnt tradition and the main determinant of behavior is a fundamental concept in the filed of cultural anthropology.[xxxiii] An individual's behaviour "is influenced more by the values, norms, and rituals prevalent in the society than by laws".[xxxiv] It implies that it is agreed upon that society and culture do influence attitudes and behaviors. The point to be debated is whether these factors lead toward radicalism? If the answer is positive, then, to what extent? Are they among the primary factors behind radicalization or secondary ones?

When the entire society is on one side, the radicals are on the other. It follows that mainstream sociocultural attitudes, norms, behaviors, and values are not direct causes of radicalizing someone. Fundamental determining factors of radicalization in Pakistan lie somewhere else. However, the country's domestic society and culture may not be seen as totally irrelevant. Sociocultural factors cannot be taken as the best explanation of such phenomenon. Same is the case with Pakistani society and culture. They are not the most important factors behind the phenomenon. The extent to which they are responsible is discussed in the following pages.

Some have argued that structural limitations – marginalization, social exclusion, (self-) segregation and inadequate educational provision – make "the fertile ground within which … radicalism flourishes".[xxxv] One can agree with Richardson that "social, economic, and cultural factors are the underlying risk factors that make a society more or less susceptible to the appeal" of such phenomena. But his assertion that the best explanations are at the level of "the societies that produce them (i.e. terrorists),"[xxxvi] is questionable. He may be asked whether all of the societies and cultures have become conducive to radicalism and terrorism. It is a well-established fact that individuals and groups from the developed modern societies, including the US and the UK, have adopted and promoted radical ideologies and practices. In Kuper's

observation, many of the authors believe that culture is the main determinant of behavior.[xxxvii] It seems to be true generally, but not in case of radical behavior. If culture was indeed the main determinant of radical behavior, then the majority would have gone radical.

Pakistan's sociocultural structure is changing. Complex processes of social transformation are underway. But the problem is the direction of change which is positive only partly, and negative in general. Something has gone wrong with the process of change. The change tends to be more in favor of the radical forces than peaceful sociocultural agents. Increase in the levels of radicalization over the decades shows that social change overall has been in favour of radicalism. Our society is changing very rapidly; changes caused by globalization are among reasons behind radicalization, remarks Rahman.[xxxviii]

Javed is of the view that historically, the climate of this part of the world has been very moderate. The books written in the last millennium by Muslim authors – such as 11th century saint Syed Ali Hajveri and the like – are replete with moderate thoughts and ideas, and messages of peace and love for humanity, he underlines. "After the decades of 1960s and 70s, however, circumstances took a U-turn and extremism and radicalism came to the fore,"[xxxix] regrets Javed. Commenting on the ongoing process of sociocultural change, Khaled writes: [xl]

> The Seminary won over the shrine around which Pakistani culture had accreted. What came later was a wholesale removal of culture. A high water mark was achieved in the 1990s when the population actually began to feel the duress behind the change. The change was called Talibanization.

Dynamics of social change in Pakistan reflect a mix of four types of conflicts: (a) between culture and ideology[xli] (b) between subcultures and national culture (c) between economic development and cultural preservation, and (d) between Islamization and moderation. These conflicts are elaborated further in the following pages.

It is irresistible to disagree with Kemp's assertion that "the rise of radicalism in Afghanistan and Pakhtun tribal areas of Pakistan is rooted in the disintegration of tribal and state structures; and the increased influence of religiously orthodox foreign elements…."[xlii] Disintegration of tribal structure is not a cause of increase in radicalism in the said areas of Pakistan. In fact, the opposite is true. The radical groups have weakened and partly damaged the tribal structure in these areas.

It is assumed that "human beings … exhibit a wide variety of behavioral forms as a result of the process of socialization or enculturation".[xliii] In a study, majority of the radicals is found to be less sociable people, "keeping mostly to themselves".[xliv] Individuals with poor cultural attainments are more vulnerable than others to be attracted by radical ideas. Radicals may be regarded as unsociable individuals who have not gone through a proper socialization process. They do not enjoy socializing with other people. Their concepts of enjoyment and happiness seem to be entirely different from those of the remaining society. They practically deny social engineering on part of the state by attempting to destroy existing sociopolitical order. Constitutional provisions have not been promulgated in their true spirit in Pakistan. Thus, the social contract has been violated. Sanaullah Baloch, a former senator, is among the leading Baloch leaders who have made frequent demands for a new social contract.

Increase in the number of radical groups and their activities, alludes to the fact that our socialization process is flawed. It is, at least partly, responsible for that increase. Weaknesses in our socialization process are a contributing factor to radicalism and violence in our society. The family has an important

role in the function of socializing children. Parents are becoming increasingly negligent with regard to their responsibility of their children's proper socialization. Proper socialization of the children cannot take place unless their psychological needs are fulfilled. Parents send their children to nurseries when they are too young. They do not get parents' due attention and love.[xlv] It causes anxiety among them from the very beginning. Shortcomings of this type are a factor contributing to violent attitudes and behaviors. Our socialization structure and process have failed in training the potential radicals in a desirable direction. Home chaos affects the process of socialization negatively. A family is like a small society and home environment has a basic role in the process of socialization.

Some may tend to assume that all radicals have a poor social conscience, or totally lack one.[xlvi] However, that is not the case. Most of them have acquired a very well-refined social conscience, but they disregard or suppress it against their higher commitment to a 'superior' cause.

According to Parsons, for their persistence, social structure must perform four functions: (a) adaptation, (b) goal-attainment, (c) integration, and (d) pattern-maintenance or tension management. He further explains: [xlvii]

> For the evolution of more differentiated structure to be successful there must be adaptive upgrading, inclusion and value generalization…. Inclusion refers to processes (such as extension of the franchise) that produce commitment by people to the new more specialized structures. … Values must be generalized or stated more abstractly in order to legitimize a wider range of activities.

But, the process of inclusion has suffered problems throughout Pakistan's history. Exclusion or 'perceived exclusion' has caused antagonism among the excluded towards existing social, political and economic structures. Definitions of a 'patriotic Pakistani' are too narrow to accommodate any kind of value-generalization. Pakistani society lacks in institutions "necessary for ensuring an individual's basic rights and security".[xlviii] Some of the social and political structures and institutions are, at least partly, supportive of radical activities and ideologies. Pakistani media, for example, in some cases consciously and in others unconsciously, has been propagating and advertising things which promote radicalism.[xlix]

Media is one of the powerful tools used for directing the socialization process. It is imparting such things which lead readers and viewers to think about radicals sympathetically.[l] It glorifies the radicals, probably inadvertently. With the passage of time, some of the readers and viewers may tend to become radicals themselves. Pakistani media has always been there as a factor in the increase and spread of radicalization.[li] The role of the media is one of the five determining factors of spread of violence after 9/11, enumerated by Farhana.[lii] Some elements in the media succeed in suppressing reports and news covering social and cultural activities.[liii] Abdul Qadeer observes that the cultural changes

> induced by the spread of radio, television, videos, and telephone follow a dualistic path, reinforcing and reinventing some beliefs and practices while displacing others. It may be said right away that Pakistani society's response to the new 'mediums' is demonstrably affected by the 'messages' they bear.[liv]

Our society is paternalistic. Beating or killing someone is taken as a symbol of courage. Such acts are presented by the media in a manner that encourages people to commit similar acts.[lv] "I believe the media has played a major role in promoting violence in Pakistan, the Urdu media in particular, and the English media to a lesser extent," asserts I.A. Rahman.

To de Tocqueville, a true democracy requires a culture where ideas and values support liberty of association, press, and religion etc.[lvi] But the press in Pakistan does not enjoy freedom as compared to the media in developed democracies. That also adds to the existing suffocation in society.

Pakistan's education system has not been able to play its due role in inculcating desirable sociocultural values among the people. The syllabi rarely incorporate lessons on such subjects. Our traditional culture and historical social values, attitudes and behaviors are getting lost in the shadows of the past. One example is our folklore.[lvii] It is known "little to the Pakistan's general public and even to many of our academics".[lviii]

Pakistan's folk culture may be taken as the opposite of radicalism. There seems to be no room for radicalism in it. A visit to Cultural Heritage Museum, Islamabad may suffice to prove that. The museum is a magnificent effort to display maximum possible aspects of the sociocultural realities of Pakistan. A part of the museum consists of a library where an invaluable collection of cultural writings is preserved. These writings contain almost all types of folk literature which are full of love and peace. It is suggested that study of folklore can be used as a mechanism of social control. And, social control, Sabeeha says, is "one of the available mechanisms for coping with change".[lix] It may be derived from this point that studying and teaching folklore can help the de-radicalization effort.

Folklore mirrors values and fantasies of a society. It is an "aesthetic product" of the society.[lx] Sabeeha has urged the need to introduce folklore as an independent subject of study in educational institutions. She assumes that the study of folklore will bridge the gap between generations and "improve the identification of the younger people with their indigenous roots…."[lxi] The study of folklore involves interaction between the old and the young. The old know folklore and recite proverbs, riddles, magical episodes, legends, the sagas, superstitions and the like. She further explains: [lxii]

> The young…will be in a position to acquire deeper insights into the ways older people think, feel and act. This would help initiate a dialogue between the younger and the older people, which would be an important step towards bridging the gap between generations.

Dyer explains that "those with weak social ties may benefit from the solidarity that extremist [and radical] groups provide".[lxiii] "Accepting the cause leads people to become increasingly isolated from their former lives" i.e. society, Dyer writes. Radicals are not entirely isolated from society. They have social ties and use these ties "to spot, assess, and encourage potential recruits to follow the same path".[lxiv] Moreover, "Converts' social connections with other like-minded individuals can strengthen this dedication".[lxv]

Although, material norms are important in Pakistani society in their own right, but in some cases they are overwhelmed by reflexive norms.[lxvi] The individuals with a strong tendency towards reflexive norms and a dislike for material norms are more prone to adopting radical ideas. It is not implied here that reflexive norms are something negative. Though negative norms are dangerous and push individuals towards ideologies like radicalism, positive norms may also function in the same direction.

Social insecurity is also a factor, because of which many individuals see no future for themselves. That makes it easier for them to be radicalized. Injustice is an important determinant of radicalism.[lxvii] Social injustice also refers to status-centric values. Some of our social values are status-centric which do not fit into the framework of a harmonious society. Propertied and wealthy classes receive a highly privileged

treatment. The rich and influential show disrespect with impunity to the poor and the lowly. Such values have caused frustration among those who are deemed to have a lower social status. And, frustrated individuals or groups are always vulnerable to be caught up in radical ideologies and groups. Nobody feels comfortable with a lower social status and, consciously or unconsciously, keeps looking for some avenue to an improved status in society. Radical groups and organizations provide a window of opportunity to such individuals. The fewer the opportunities to improve one's status, the more the vulnerability for such people to be radicalized.

A culture of corruption is another factor. Prevalence of corruption in every sphere of life may lead an individual to a stage where s/he starts abhorring society and thinking of teaching a lesson through radical means to at least some of the people he thinks responsible. Widespread corruption in law and order systems and establishments in Pakistan and frequent violent attacks against the police – police stations, check posts and mobiles – may be interlinked.

Fighting against the government is seen as an act of courage and bravery in our society. In other words, carrying out radical activities against government forces has a social value. Radicals also carry out suicide attacks. Certain cultural and social norms justify suicide and equate it with martyrdom, points out Saif.[lxviii]

In Pakhtun culture, aggressive attitudes and behaviors are prominently visible as compared to Punjabi culture, comments Chaudhry.[lxix] These aggressive attitudes and behaviors fan radicalism, he explains. Upbringing is very tough here, tells Mehsud, who is a Pakhtun himself and belongs to the tribal area. In some pockets of the tribal regions, some children's games involve violence. Boys go for playing and come back home in the evening with injuries, sometimes with broken skulls, because of stoning one another as a part of their game, informs Mehsud.[lxx] Javed comments:[lxxi]

> About Pashto culture it is stated that it is generally radical. But if you look at their legends like Rehman Baba and Khushhal Khan Khattak, it seems as if they were from Punjab. They were all peace-loving and moderate people. However, there is no doubt that their lifestyles and culture have played a role in the increase of radicalization to the levels we experience these days.

A recent study conducted at University of the Punjab, Lahore, finds that social anxiety plays a fundamental role in extremism.[lxxii] "Extremist recruiters can identify a population disaffected with society" and use it to serve their cause, writes Dyer.[lxxiii] "In … universities, they (extremists) can find curious individuals who question society…," he notes.[lxxiv] "Our society has isolated the religious community," for example, "how can a Hafiz-e-Quran settle himself? What kind of economic opportunities does the society offer him? In fact, most of the religious community is not integrated into the economic system," comments Saif. This fact helps them embrace radicalism, he explains.[lxxv] In his opinion, an individual becomes radicalized when his/her rights are not protected, when s/he is deprived of his/her fundamental rights. A deprived person spends the whole of his/her energy to get his/her rights.[lxxvi]

A question may arise that if political, economic and social deprivations constitute any cause of radicalization why do they not result into a widespread mass revolutionary movement. The answer is that the above-mentioned and other deprivations have not inspired huge number of individuals for such a movement. And, in the absence of any mass revolutionary

movement, individuals radicalized on these bases join the ranks of whatever radical groups they find operating around.

Radicalism – use of force for political ends – is a way to compensate for powerlessness, deprivation and despair. It improves the status of the radicals. The ingredients[lxxvii] of such a status are power,[lxxviii] privilege[lxxix] and prestige.[lxxx] An assumption by Sabeeha is worth noticing: [lxxxi]

> In the process of comparison, one consciously weighs one's deprivations against one's material possessions, and attempts to compensate them either by asserting one's possession of certain aspects of social status (power, privilege or prestige) or by acquiring the material possessions.

But, what would one's response be if such attempts to compensate do not succeed. Logically, one may be allured towards radical means to compensate for deprivations.

Conspiracy theories are widely believed in the society. Stereotypes persist in different social circles and have generated a culture of stereotypes in Pakistan regarding certain national and international issues. Superstitions and magical thinking are also widespread in our society. The radicals exploit these weaknesses to serve their cause.

Perceptions and misperceptions sometimes lead to blame-others syndrome. The syndrome is deeply entrenched in Pakistani society.[lxxxii] "Cultural patterns structure both thought and perception," says Hatch.[lxxxiii] In Pakistan, perceptions of politics and the world, particularly the West, are so structured by cultural patterns that many of the Pakistanis possess a negative image of the West and domestic and international politics. These perceptions, domestic and international, sometimes unconsciously and sometimes consciously, have pushed many individuals towards radical circles.

Opportunities and facilities for recreation are extremely insufficient. Most of the population lives in villages where there is no concept of recreation. Recreational activities are insufficient even in urban areas. An overwhelming majority cannot afford to travel to the available recreational cites. Furthermore, spending money on recreational and cultural activities is generally frowned upon as it is seen as a luxury and profligacy. Many people view sports as a negative activity in FATA[lxxxiv] and other parts of the country. A society where there is no room for cultural activities like singing, dancing etc., will become nothing other than radical, comments Javed.[lxxxv] "Our (Pakistanis) concept of a 'human being' is wrong; we do not realize that cultural activities are as important for a human being as other aspects of human life," he adds.

Becoming a member of a radical group also affords opportunities which are no less than alternatives to recreation. The young tired of monotony in their lives, while working with their farmer and artisan parents or at factories and shops, feel almost excited while travelling from city to city and country to country for organizational, training and operational purposes. Many of them go outside their home district or province for the very first time after being recruited by such groups.

Human beings are impressionable; they can be influenced easily. Cultural adaptability leads individuals both ways, constructive and destructive. The former strive to make contribution or to achieve certain goals through peaceful means. The latter pursue their cause through use of force. If the relationship between culture and personality remains positive, the individual becomes a peaceful citizen, otherwise a

violent one. The level of violence varies. In Pakistan, in many cases, the relationship between culture and personality suffers from serious deficiencies in a way which drives individuals into radicals' folds.

Radicals in Pakistan are inspired more by the foreign societies and cultures than by their own. In other words, they have acculturated radical attitudes and behaviors. Because of the acculturation process, Pakistani culture, particularly in FATA and NWFP, has changed to a large extent. It has acquired characteristics of foreign cultures where people have been fighting protracted civil or international wars, Afghanistan being the most immediate example. Other Central Asian and Middle Eastern states may also be named.

Cultural anomalies are normally frowned upon. But, there are some exceptions. Silverman describes an interesting example.[lxxxvi] Mary Douglas worked, Silverman writes, on a central African tribe, the Lele, in 1975. Douglas observed that pangolin was very important for the tribe. The animal possessed both animal and human characteristics. Unlike other animals, for example, it tended to have one offspring at a time. It spent some of its time on land and some in water. Putting it into the classification of land water creatures was problematic. Because of these and other reasons, the Lele treated it as something special. Despite being an anomaly, it became more important than other creatures for the tribe. Radicalism in Pakistan is an anomaly. It is frowned upon in major segments of the society. But, exceptions are also there. There have been reports of some tribesmen and neighbors seeing off suicide bombers off with beating drums.

Pakistan consists of areas historically dominated by foreign culture, which came here with the invaders. The invaders in general used raw power ruthlessly against the local populations. Over the centuries, these populations, barring a few exceptions, and their generations have gotten used to looking at themselves as powerless and helpless. In fact, their powerlessness was major reason that emboldened foreign invaders. Now these populations have tasted power and its awful effectiveness in bringing about events and influencing the course of politics and other aspects of state and society. Some of the individuals and groups are attracted so much to the use of this newly-acquired power that they have adopted it as a method of directing the sociopolitical and economic changes in a 'desirable' direction. The point may be made that domination of foreign cultures for centuries has affected the thinking of some of the individuals in a way which causes spread of radicalism.

The assertion that a 'monoculture' is emerging out of globalization – which "attacks local cultures and thus deprives societies of their ability to remain tied to traditional roots"[lxxxvii] – seems to be true in Pakistan's case. The radicals do proclaim their commitment to resist the monoculture, which they hold is 'highly influenced' by western cultural values. That is why the process of radicalization in Pakistan has strong international linkages. The radicals believe that their religious and cultural values are under attack.

Like political culture, Pakistan's economic culture is also a factor in radicalization. The economic classes in the country can be categorized as poor, lower-middle, middle, upper-middle, rich and ultra-rich. The poor suffer from a sense of deprivation and the middle class from relative deprivation. This sense of deprivation further intensifies for those who are unemployed or underemployed. Unemployment leads to radicalism, too. In a study Fair interviewed 141 Pakistani families of Shaheeds who served and died in Kashmir or Afghanistan. She focused upon households of the Shaheeds who died from 1990 onward. She made efforts to exclude the Shaheeds from the Soviet-era. About three-quarter of the *Shaheeds* were either unemployed or underemployed.[lxxxviii] In FATA, where radicalization is at its peak, no employment

opportunities exist and sometimes the entire family depends on a single breadwinner.[lxxxix] In this situation, "the temptation for young people to get involved in…religious extremism is strong".[xc]

Rapid modernization and changing economic conditions are "conducive to instability and traditional means of making sense of the world…."[xci] Richardson elucidates further that "if the structures are not in place to absorb … young men into the work force, they are likely to have time to contemplate the disadvantages of their position and to be available to be mobilized behind a cause that promises to change it".[xcii]

Many of the rich and ultra-rich have thrived on exploitation of the weak. Middle and poor classes resent the wealth of the rich which is mainly perceived to be ill-gotten. This resentment potentially may lead an individual to think about revenge on part of the week and unprivileged. In this way, our economic culture is contributing towards the process of radicalization as it incorporates deprivations and lack of opportunities for the young. Talking about the pre-9/11 scenario, Farhana describes "frustration in different socio-economic groups" as a factor for spread of violence.[xciii]

Education as a social process is also another factor of radicalization. Our education system and society as a whole are responsible for not inculcating fundamental social attitudes in the young to give a positive direction to their energies. Through proper education and training they can be turned into desirable social beings, possibly social workers.

There are three types of education systems – private English-medium institutions, public institutions and *madrassas* (seminaries) – in Pakistan. Rahman has classified Pakistani schools into four major categories i.e. *madrassas,* Urdu-medium, elitist English-medium and cadet colleges.[xciv] These different systems actually represent and are meant for different social and economic classes. In fact, there is a world of difference among their curricula, infrastructures, and fee and salary structures. Rahman reported an average cost of 5,714 rupees (including boarding and lodging) per student per year in madrassas, 5,500 rupees (only tuition) in Urdu-medium schools/colleges, 96,000 rupees for 'A' Level and 36,000 (only tuition) for other levels in English-medium and 90,061 (all facilities) in cadet schools/colleges.[xcv]

Same is the case with treatment of the students by faculty and staff. Corporal punishment for students in public schools and seminaries is a common practice. The staff also frequently insults them. Students of these two types of institutions suffer from a sense of relative deprivation. They leave or complete their education with their self-esteem and self-respect seriously damaged, if not completely destroyed. As they mature, their sense of relative deprivation gets intensified when they find themselves unable to compete with the graduates of English-medium institutions and cadet schools and colleges for employment and other opportunities. In some cases, that forces them to commit suicide. When such deprivation can lead someone to end his own life why can it not lead him/her to radicalization?

Social sciences play a significant role in spreading moderate values and practices and strengthening moderate attitudes and behaviors. But, in Pakistan, social sciences have not gained any considerable attention of the state and society. Though, departments of social sciences exist in a number of universities, they are extremely ignored. It seems that the powerbrokers ignore social sciences purposefully, probably because they see social scientists as a potential 'evil' who can question the status quo and malpractices of the ruling elites.

Pakistan's political culture,[xcvi] an undemocratic one, is essentially a factor of radicalization in the society. Although, constitutionally and legally, all of the inhabitants enjoy equal political opportunities, practically that is not the case. Some of the social strata are deprived of their political rights. The sense of political deprivation is so entrenched in some of the groups and regions that it has led people to resort to use of force. They want to alleviate or eliminate their political deprivation through violent means. In this way, our asymmetric political culture is a direct cause of radicalization among the deprived. Tribal areas may be taken as an immediate example.

Siddique Qureshi opines that various factors have promoted a political culture of conflict and dissension. As a consequence, "our political culture is in a state of flux where violence, intolerance and authoritarianism prevail".[xcvii] Pakistan's political culture believes in "buy, cheat or muscle your way into public office and then simply relax".[xcviii]

The country has been facing political crises throughout its history. Before a crisis settles down, another is in the making. This crises-ridden political culture has played havoc with the maintainability of peace and harmony among communities. The people largely lack trust in the political leadership and institutions. In this situation, any call for resorting to radical means carries greater attraction. Such a scenario provides fertile ground for radicalism to flourish.

The political leadership has always made lofty claims regarding national progress. Political parties have been frequently making promises to take the nation to unparalleled heights if and when they are voted into power. But each time the actual outcome has been the exact opposite of the lofty claims. It is the same story with the military army rulers who missed no opportunity to make promises and win sympathies of the people in order to strengthen and prolong their rule. The people expected a better outcome every time and were always let down by the ruling elite. This led to 'perceived deprivation' among certain groups. The 'perceived deprivation' caused anxiety and frustration. Apparently, that too has contributed towards radicalization in the country.

Radicalism spread alarmingly after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Iranian Revolution. *Mujahideen* from all over the world came to fight against the Soviets, most of them passed through and/or stayed in Pakistan. Many of them settled here permanently. They played a significant role in radicalizing local groups. Tribesmen in FATA have been influenced throughout history by the effects of events in Afghanistan.[xcix]

The state is committed to promoting a national culture in Pakistan. Some perceive that as an onslaught against their respective subcultures. Thus, at a lower level, subcultures or provincial cultures are in competition with the national culture. As Abdul Qadeer observes, "national culture has been the most controversial dimension of the notions of Pakistan".[c] Khaled has rightly observed that "culture is affected by what the state wants to do with the identity of the people who live in it. The state may change popular culture to set the population apart from the population of a neighboring 'enemy' state".[ci]

Pakistan is a Muslim-majority country. Islam is an indispensable characteristic of Pakistani society and culture. Although people take pride in being Muslims and tend to observe Islamic festivals and rituals, a true Islamic spirit is largely missing. An overwhelming majority is unaware of the true meanings of Quranic injunctions and commandments. It is oblivious to what kind of human beings does Islam wish them to be. The reasons of this obliviousness are many, including:

a) *Language problem:* Despite the fact that they can recite Quran fluently, the masses do not understand Arabic.

b) *Sectarian approach:* Muslim preachers are mainly concerned first with their respective sects and vested interests and only after that with Islam, if at all. Driven by the primary concerns for their sects and personal benefits they tend to preach a very selective set of Quranic verses. The phenomenon is decades old, at least. This sectarian approach towards "religion of peace" has resulted in the emergence of the exact opposite of what the religion ordains. This approach has caused countless bloody conflicts and abject disharmony among the social strata.

c) *Political use of religion:* Religion has frequently been used for political ends. Politicians and rulers have seldom missed an opportunity to exploit religion and the religious-minded communities in order to serve their political interests. "Politically motivated interpretations of Islam" are made for "opportunistic reasons".[cii] Every sixth in 517 Pakistanis interviewed, who went for *jihad* in Afghanistan, responded positively to the question: "Had some people used you in the name of religion?"[ciii] Hasan observes that sectarian intolerance and extremism were "the direct result of indoctrination pursued according to political agendas".[civ] Religious groups have been armed time and again for political reasons. Arming non-state actors is the worst way of radicalizing them. In other words, the state itself is among those who are responsible for radicalization. The clergy has played a 'decisive role' in radicalization in FATA.[cv]

While I was working on this paper, a boy – no older than 10 – passed through the street, singing one of the most famous verses by Iqbal:[cvi]

> *Shaheed ki jo maut hey wo qaum ki hayat hey* (The death of a martyr is a nation's life).

The child may be inspired by the idea of dying a martyr's death. But the question is, how closely or remotely the child's concept of martyrdom is related to that of Iqbal's. Apparently, the child's concept of a martyr is influenced by the militants. These inculcations are a result of the efforts made by the state to promote a *jihadi* culture for certain purposes, e.g. fighting against the Soviets to liberate Afghanistan in the 1980s. Out of context *Jihadi* speeches, sermons and songs have become a part of the religious culture. In a survey study, Fair finds that 44 percent of the *jihadis'* recruitment was motivated by religious gatherings and 42 percent through friends or family.[cvii]

In many cases, the concept of religion is extremely distorted. Pakistan's religious culture, though labeled as 'Islamic' is widely un-Islamic. Islamic teachings are frequently misinterpreted which in turn lead to the spread of un-Islamic, and sometimes anti-Islamic, values and practices.

In the name of Islamization of society and culture, certain cultural and social values, activities and norms have been discouraged or suppressed. Islamization has been a 'national cause' pursued by the state as well as some of the groups and organizations. In the process, some of the sociocultural values, norms and activities, which promoted and supported peace and harmony in society, were also targeted. In a way, the efforts towards Islamization on part of the state and non-state actors distorted the culture in such a way that it became somewhat accommodative towards radical ideologies and practices. That resulted in many people condoning radical violent activities. The reason behind why efforts of Islamization led to such consequences is best explained by Sabeeha:[cviii]

> Islamization presupposes certain operating realities, e.g., the exisiting [sic] laws, norms, customs and rituals are not functioning in accordance with the Quranic prescriptions. If these are repugnant to Islam, they would need to be corrected in order to bring them in conformity with it. This would necessitate raising and investigating research questions such as "Which of the ingredients of the Pakistani norms, values, rituals and customs are un-Islamic?" Though often raised, this question does not seem to have been investigated so far.

Islamic teachings which promote modernity and moderation are widely neglected and understated. Very selective of Islamic values and norms are being preached by different quarters. As a result, the Islamic discourse[cix]

> … has not only grown to be puritanical, but also restrictive of individual liberty. It has recast the folk order in a conservative mold, shedding its tolerant spiritualism and investing it with literalism. It is decidedly antimodern in the sociocultural sphere although willing to tap into the economic benefits of technology.

Religious culture has tilted towards intolerance and violence. In this culture, petty politics, motivated partly by economic factors, continues to take place. Occupying mosques forcibly is a common practice. People from one sect seize mosques held by people belonging to other sects. Generally, very selective portions of Islamic teachings are preached to create a certain type of religious social environment which in turn supports the preachers and safeguards their economic and other personal interests. A large part of the religious community is responsible for creating and intensifying such a culture. Religion as a factor in the socialization process is frequently used to emotionalize and sentimentalize people.

Religion is not a factor in radicalization. Rather, it is being used as a tool by the radicals for recruitment and to indoctrinate the recruits. The religious elite "has increased the price tag of what he wants people to do and all other aspects are conveniently ignored".[cx] "Illiterate *mullas* and masses" are one of five major determinants of violence," observes Farhana.[cxi] Another study reveals that most of the people use religion for personal interests.[cxii] Religious circles, directly or indirectly, support "maintenance of unjust socioeconomic structures, social attitude and behavior".[cxiii] Moreover, radicalism is not promoted only in the name of religion, secular communities, parties and organizations are also engaged in radical practices.[cxiv]

**Conclusion**

The study suggests that Pakistan's sociocultural realities are a factor behind radicalization, but remain an indirect cause than a direct contributing factor. Direct causes of radicalization in Pakistan could be identified as Government policies, political expediencies and international actors. Sociocultural factors revolve around our culture of education, which is extremely skewed; religious culture, which is polarized and sectarian; and economic culture, which is widely unequal. Authoritarian and undemocratic attitudes and institutions are also among the factors. Religion, media and education have been used as tools of radicalization by the state and non-state actors.

The questions which need to be addressed further include (a) what is the social psychology of Pakistani radicals? (b) how are home chaos and radicals' socialization linked? (c) what is the role of foreign media as a factor of radicalization in Pakistan? (d) how have global society and global culture contributed towards radicalization in Pakistan? In addition, a new subject, of 'Sociology of Radicalization', has to be explored and established in order to comprehend the phenomenon in an efficient manner.

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