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The Specter of Intolerance: Understanding Religious Violence in Pakistan

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Abstract: The role of religion in Pakistani political and civil life has had a defining role in the political development of the nation. The country is now a breeding ground for religious extremism, with militant groups conducting brutal attacks against the Shia, Ahmedi, Christian and Hindu communities of Pakistan. There have been few explanations attempting to describe the problem of religious violence domestically, within Pakistan's borders towards Pakistani citizens. This essay examines how, despite Pakistan's initial conception as a secular state, the country has become haunted by intense religious violence. It links the lack of consensus around national identity with the state's political exploitation of an exclusive and conservative version of Islam that laid the foundation for the development of groups hostile to religious minorities, following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

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Introduction

Since the events of 9/11, the world has focused in on Pakistan, and its role as a nation caught between its obligations to secularism and democracy while confronting the problems of extremism and praetorian rule. Much of the discourse surrounding jihad¹ in Pakistan has been in relation to jihad's effects on other nations and other peoples, including Afghanistan, India, and the United States. However, a significant number of Pakistanis are also victims of the violence that has come of the global jihad, and their lives and livelihoods are arguably in greater danger because they are citizens of a state that both actively and tacitly supports militant groups. These Pakistanis belong to religious minorities in the country, and have been subject to persecution and discrimination because of their peripheral religious status. The violence against them has become so rampant that Minority Rights Group International, in its annual *State of the*

¹ Jihad here is defined in accordance with mainstream Western understandings of the word, as a holy war conducted by Muslim militant groups against infidels.

World's Minorities report for 2007 to 2010, placed Pakistan in the top 10 (out of a ranking of 150 states) of its lists of states violating minority rights (MRGI 2010). There have been few comprehensive analyses describing why religious minorities have and continue be the victims of violence. This study links the lack of consensus around national identity with the state's political exploitation of an exclusive and conservative version of Islam that laid the foundation for the development of groups hostile to religious minorities, following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

This paper argues that the problem of violence against religious minorities begins with Pakistan's initial lack of consensus around a national identity. Mohammad Ali Jinnah and the Muslim League², the founders of Pakistan, needed to create an ideological basis for the formation of Pakistan. Many Indian Muslims were against a separate state for Muslims. Jinnah, in order to mobilize broad support for a separate state, used the rhetoric of secularism and democracy and relied on the symbols of Islam to invoke support for Pakistan. What resulted was a vague understanding of Pakistan as an "Islamic state" – it was not specified whose Islam would represent the state and its people. As a result of this ambiguity, political and military leaders were able to use specific versions of Islam to cement their power. General Zia Ul-Haq used a particularly strict and conservative interpretation of Islam throughout his eleven years as head of state. It was ultimately this version of Islam that pervaded the country's legal and military institutions and was also the version that left little room for the country's religious minorities.

Through Zia's codification of this particular Islam in law, it became the legitimate and correct version, providing fodder for conservative religious clerics and pundits to fuel

² The All-India Muslim League, popularly known as the Muslim League, was the North Indian Muslim political party active from the 1910s to the 1940s that called for the establishment of a Muslim state separate from India.

their own agendas. There were few secular forces in the country strong enough to counteract this pervasion of religiosity in public and political life. The influx of hardline militant groups that rooted themselves in Pakistan following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the subsequent War on Terror found an environment that encouraged and perpetuated fundamentalist agendas, especially ones that viewed “incorrect” versions of Islam as blasphemous/heresy, and a threat to the existing order. These groups were thus able to launch violence against religious minorities that remains unchecked.

Research Design

This paper seeks to explain why religious and sectarian attacks have taken hold of Pakistan such that members of religious minorities feel unsafe when leaving their homes. In order to accomplish this, I will establish that religious-based violence has indeed increased in the country. I will do this by outlining a definition of religious violence: targeted attacks against religious minorities because their faith is not that of the majority group's, which in this case is Sunni Islam. I will utilize sources of data from government documents, human rights groups, and non-governmental organizations. The data obtained from these sources will span the length of Pakistan's history, from 1947-2013.

I believe that multiple explanations must be considered when attempting to explain the problem of religious violence. These explanations include, (1) the initial ambiguous national identity presented by the Muslim League that ultimately resulted in the incorporation of conservative religious elements into state identity, which also normalized a desecular understanding of statehood and citizenship; (2) the role of the state in implementing religious intolerance into law and policy, thus providing militant

groups with the political legitimacy to conduct violence on the basis of religion; and (3) the impact of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in spearheading the rise of global Islamic fundamentalism. These explanations are the ones that appear most frequently in the literature on Pakistan's conservative religious environment, and I believe they are most likely to explain the proliferation of violence that has wracked the country since the 1980s.

The first explanation is the affirmation of an exclusive religious identity by the state, and thus the legal avowal of the inferior status of religious minorities. To fully understand this theme, I will examine the historical trajectory of Pakistani political development, with particular attention to the role of religion in law and policy. Thus, this thesis will provide background information on Pakistani history, beginning with the Muslim League's call for a separate Muslim-majority state, and Pakistani leaders' use of religious rhetoric to mobilize mass support for a Muslim nation-state. This section will rely mostly on secondary historical analyses of Pakistan from legal scholars and historians.

The second explanation examines the presence of conservative interpretations of Islamic law in state law, as a national policy pushed by dictator Zia Ul-Haq; much of this section will be devoted to understanding how the Pakistani government's incorporation of church (or in this case, mosque) into state has allowed for and supported intolerance against religious minorities. I will focus specifically on the 1980s as a period when state legal codes were reformulated to incorporate aspects of conservative interpretations of religious law. Understanding how the state has entwined its claim to legitimacy with religious conservatism is central to explaining religious violence. The state's sanctioning

of intolerant institutionalizations of religion legitimizes the actions of extremist groups, who are then able to justify their violence as part of their moral and religious obligation.

I will also examine the relationship of sectarian groups to the military. Using secondary scholarly analysis, I will attempt to understand the official policies of the military, the country's most powerful institution, against religiously motivated extremists. I will examine whether the military, following United States' orders post-9/11, is actively engaged in dismantling these groups, or if it turns a blind eye to their attacks and even tacitly supports them. Responses by the military to religiously motivated attacks will be analyzed as evidence for this final argument; for example, the military's official sanctioning of certain extremist groups will be cause to accept this, as well as its stream of money to those organizations will also be examined.

The third explanation links the first two with the consequences of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in defining Pakistan's political affairs. This explanation will be examined through socio-historical processes, similar to the methodology that is employed in understanding the first explanation. I will examine the role of the United States, Saudi Arabia, and the Soviet Union in South/Central Asia's politics, paying particular attention to how their interests competed, diverted, and collaborated to create an environment of religious intolerance in the region. Thus, I will examine how the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) funded the rise of extremist groups. There has been significant literature written on this historical trajectory, and I will be utilizing scholarly sources to further argue that the initial rise of extremism would not have occurred were it not for the United States', Pakistan's and Saudi Arabia's sponsorship of religiously conservative militant groups.

After examining the problem of religious violence under this broader, regional umbrella, I will hone in on Pakistan's version in particular. I will argue that the proliferation of madrassas under Saudi Arabia's patronage of exclusivist Islam has and continues to support militant groups with sectarian ideals. These schools radicalize vulnerable youth, instilling in them perceived obligations to fight against infidels both at home and abroad. These religious schools have created an atmosphere of intolerance and persecution that demeans the rights of religious minorities.

All of these factors will be examined in isolation when possible, and will also be examined in tandem with one another. For example, the success of religiously militant groups was at least in part fueled by the state's strengthening of religious conservatism during the 1980s, which implicitly categorized minorities as inferior 'others' in law and public policy. Militant groups could thus make the claim that religious minorities are not Muslims, and have no place in an explicitly Islamic state. The goal of this paper is to ultimately provide an understanding of how these explanations culminated in the creation of a religiously intolerant climate that accounts for the prevalence of violence against religious minorities.

The Plight of Religious Minorities and Sects

A religious minority here is defined as any group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a state whose population possesses religious characteristics different from the majority population. Minority religious groups together compose about 25% of Pakistan's population (Gregory 2012), and are listed in the table on the following page.

Table 1.1 – Demographics of Pakistani Religious Groups (Gregory 2012)

<i>Religious Group</i>	<i>Population in 2012</i>
Shia Muslims	16. 5 million
Christians	3.5 million
Hindus	2-4 million
Zikri Muslims	> 700,000
Ahmedi Muslims	285,000
Sikhs	50,000
Baha'i Faith	30,000
Buddhists	20,000
Zoroastrians	5,000
Mehdi Foundation	< 5,000
Jews	< 100

There have been few explanations attempting to describe the problem of religious violence domestically, within Pakistan's borders towards Pakistani citizens. Since the Soviet invasion of Afghan, militancy has greatly increased in Pakistan. According to the 1998 census, approximately 96 percent of the Pakistani population is Muslim (International Crisis Group 2005). There is as yet no data on Muslim sects in the country as the government prefers to posit an image of the population as religiously homogenous; however, according to unofficial estimates, 75 to 80 percent of the Muslim population is Sunni, and 15 to 20 percent is Shia. Other religious groups include Ahmedi Muslims, Zikri Muslims, Bahai Muslims, Christians, and Hindus. Shias, Ahmedis, and Christians in particular have long been the brunt of targeted attacks, killings, and both *de jure* and *de facto* discrimination (ICG 2005).

While there are Shia religious parties that have engaged in jihad-based militancy, over 70% of those killed in sectarian violence since 1985 have been Shia Muslims (Rana 2005). The number of Shia Muslims that have been killed since 2001 has now reached 4,159 (South Asian Terrorism Portal). The overwhelming majority of these have been the result of bomb blasts in mosques, as well as specific, targeted murders of known

members of Shia communities. Doctors and lawyers are specifically targeted (South Asian Terrorism Portal), likely because they represent the intellectual core of the community.

Ahmedi Muslims are also the subject of attacks and violence; their peripheral status has also been codified in law. Pakistani law does not view Ahmedis as Muslims, despite the sect's own proclamation as Muslim. Not only does the state dismiss the Ahmedis' own definitions of their faith, but has proclaimed them second-class citizens by deeming them non-Muslim. The Ahmedi Muslim community, much like the Shia community, has endured harassment, persecution, and oppression since Pakistan's inception. Their mosques have been set on fire, their graves have been desecrated, and they have been the subject of general violence and discrimination. Ahmedis have often been charged for blasphemy for 'pretending' to be Muslim – i.e., they are not true Muslims under the state's definition, and violate its Islamic norms by claiming to be Muslim. Ahmedis are therefore not even allowed to vocalize their religious identity without fear of imprisonment (Khan 2012; Gregory 2012).

The Hindu community in Pakistan is also small, numbering approximately 1.2 percent of the total population. Hindus report intense harassment and discrimination; they report having secret files placed on their affairs; prohibition from joining the armed forces, the judiciary, or the civil service; and physical violence on their persons, as well as attacks on their temples. Hindu temples are often set on fire in mob displays of anger, and face general physical abuse when they step out into public (Gregory 2012).

The Christian community reports similar harassment. Militant groups including the Taliban have attempted to forcibly convert Christian communities through threats and

violence; there is also evidence that the Taliban have forced Christians in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas to pay Islamic taxes. The Pakistani Taliban in particular has targeted Christians within the past several years. Christian churches have been sprayed with pro-Taliban graffiti. Through 2010-2011, Taliban militants active in Karachi targeted known Christians in violent attacks, killing at least eight and injuring more. In one incident, Christians were dragged from their homes and forced to convert; at least one person, an 11-year old boy, was executed (Gregory 2012; Khan 2012).

Pakistani communities at large are indifferent to the plight of Hindus and Muslims as minority groups and/or engage in harassment, discrimination, and violence towards them; the claims of these non-Muslim groups are different from that of Shias and Ahmedis, who face violence from militant groups who view their eradication as part of their divine obligation. All of these groups are distasteful to a state apparatus that has its stake to legitimacy premised on Pakistan as a Sunni state; thus, the state does not provide them adequate protection from human rights abuses. Minority sects are in particular danger as the militant groups that operate in Pakistan view them as infidels and heretics that have no place in their world order. The Pakistani state's feeble attempts to crack down on extremism in the country following U.S. pressure after 9/11 were met with resistance from the country's religious establishment. Religious groups now had enough power to punish those politicians that attempted to speak against their agenda – Musharraf's life was repeatedly under attack following his attempts to curb extremism (Hussain 2004).

According to various International Crisis Group reports, these groups have all at various junctions of Pakistani history have been the targets of persecution,

discrimination, and often violent attack. They challenge the image of a country that markets itself as an Islamic republic, and as a result face harassment. When any of these groups become perceived threats to the position of the dominant Sunni majority, which has its doctrines sanctified in state law, they become the targets of attacks by militant groups. The main group subject to the latter are Shia Muslims. They are seen as an affront to the status of Pakistan as an Islamic state, which creates an environment of coercion, intimidation, powerlessness, and violence that members of these communities are unable to curb. The US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has reprimanded the Pakistani government for “engaging in or tolerating particularly severe violations of religious freedom” (USCIRF 2003).

It is important to not lump the plight of religious communities with that of Pakistan’s urban and rural poor. While Pakistan’s poor communities suffer poverty, inadequate education, political corruption, insecurity, powerlessness, bondage, state repression, intimidation, and occasionally violence as part of their regular lives, the situation for Pakistan’s religious minorities is arguably worse because in addition to many of them being poor, they are also subject to the difficulties that arise from being of religious minority status.

Worsening Legal Contexts for Religious Minorities

Throughout Pakistan’s history, the legal protections for religious minorities have become increasingly scant. Ambiguous national identity played a large role in defining Pakistan’s initial decades, and the country’s first few leaders placed secularism over religion while ruling the state. The first constitution in 1956 recognized freedom of

religion, the right to refuse religious education, and the right to practice the religion of one's choice. The 1962 constitution contained similar secular ideals while effectively proclaiming Pakistan to be an Islamic state in name. Ayub Khan, Pakistan's second president and first military dictator, did not heavily mix religion with politics, reflecting the approach of the vast majority of Pakistanis at the time (Hussain 2007; Weiss 1986).

Pakistan's 1973 constitution, established under Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, was the first to officially declare Islam Pakistan's state religion; however, it did contain some important protections for religious minorities:

- Article 20: freedom to profess religion and to manage religious institutions
- Article 21: safeguards against the taxation of specific religions
- Article 22: safeguards around education with respect to religious freedom
- Article 25: equality of citizenship, and
- Article 36: general protection of the rights of minorities, including giving them access to political representation (Pakistan Constitution 1973).

This constitution seemed in keeping with the liberal ideals initially espoused by Jinnah. However, it was radically changed in the late 1970s in accordance with Zia ul-Haq's Islamization process (Gregory 2012; Weiss 1986; Rashid 2008). Within the past thirty years, Pakistan's initial secularist, pluralist legal system gave way to a codification of Islamic law that eradicated protections for the rights of religious minorities. Developments of this nature in Pakistan's legal history have included:

- The establishment of *shari'at* benches in Pakistan's high courts from 1979 onwards which have the authority to rule on whether any existing law is 'repugnant to Islam' and, if so, to amend it in accordance with Islamic principles;
- The introduction of the 1979 *Hudood* ordinances which imposed harsh penalties for offenses said to surpass the 'boundaries' set by God, which included drinking alcohol, taking drugs, theft, sexual adultery and fornication;
- The establishment of the *Qanoon-e-Shahadat*, or Law of Evidence, in 1984 which reduced the weight of court testimony given by a Muslim woman and a non-Muslim male citizen to that of half a Muslim male citizen; many judges used the law to justify the dismissal of non-Muslim witnesses entirely;
- The provision of amendments in 1988 and 1991 that allowed for life imprisonment for desecrating the Quran and the death penalty for offensive remarks against the Prophet; and that made *shari'a* law, as established by the Sunni religious parties, the supreme law in the country;
- The 1998 Fifteenth Amendment that further emphasized the supremacy of codified *shari'a* law, and also removed barriers to its enforcement and implementation (Gregory 2012; Abbas 2002; Weiss 1986).

The important thing to note about these changes to an otherwise largely secular constitution is that some of them were made *after* Zia's death. In essence, the culture of Islamization, and adherence to an exclusive identity of Islam, pervaded Pakistani political and social institutions after his regime's end and indeed continues to do so today. These laws are testament to a socio-political environment that blatantly views religious

minorities as unwanted, and as not belonging to the legitimized state version of Sunni Islam. The laws specified above contribute to a religiously intolerant environment that allows for the functioning of religious and sectarian violence in Pakistan. This is further exacerbated by religious minorities being essentially unequal under the law, with few avenues for legal redress for the violation of their rights.

I. The Problem of Religious Violence

General Explanations

There is a broad and comprehensive literature on extremism in Pakistan – both South Asian (Pakistani and Indian) as well as Western scholars have written extensively on the subject, especially in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. These scholars have touched on a variety of issues ranging from violence by political parties to the Pakistani military's links with tribal warlords in league with militant groups. The literature written on the subject of religious minorities has not been particularly extensive. Mostly, literature on extremism in Pakistan focuses on three things: the role of Pakistani national identity in hampering democracy and secularism in the country (Talbot 2009; Ollapolly 2008; Rashid 2008; Abbas 2002; Hussain 2007; M. Ahmed 1997; Cohen 2004); the military's standing as the foremost political institution in the country, as well as the rise of the ISI in forming state domestic and foreign policy (Talbot 2009; Singh 2008; Fair 2008; Rashid 2008; Burki and Baxter 1991; Hussain 2007; Nawaz 2008; Haleem 2003); and the general phenomenon of global jihad as it stemmed from the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (Ollapolly 2008; Zahab and Roy 2009; Fair 2008; Rashid 2008; Abbas 2002; Hussain 2007; Rana 2005; Devji 2005). There have been few pieces of literature linking

all of these factors to explain intolerance against religious minorities, particularly as they relate to specific, targeted violent attacks. This essay attempts to connect the three explanations within the various literature on extremism in order to explicate the reasons for violence against religious minorities.

National Identity

The theme of Pakistan's national identity returns time and again in explanations for Pakistan's weak democratic institutions and its governments' failures. Many scholars have cited the ambiguity of national identity as the fundamental reason for the country's myriad problems, most of which they believe lie in violent Islam. The problem of national identity has been conceptualized within the framework of Pakistani history, in fact, to the movements that called for the creation of a separate state (Talbot 2009; Rashid 2008; Hussain 2007). The early movements promulgated by North Indian Muslims eventually came to rely on using Islam as a unifying narrative – India's Muslim population was spread throughout the country among various ethno-linguistic groups, and the founders of Pakistan ultimately used Islam as a vague starting point for the nation's purpose. Secular conceptualizations did not long last within the country's political movements, as they were often usurped by interests looking to consolidate and centralize power (Hussain 2007; Cohen 2004; Abbas 2002). This meant that various actors, including the state, could easily turn to an Islam that they legitimized and propagated in order to gain power. Scholars have described an Establishment Islam, which arose as the Muslim League moved to "Islamize" the state in response to Islamist forces and also because of its own commitment to an Islamic state, rooted in rhetoric that touted Pakistan

as a haven for the world's Muslims. This early uncertainty has been put forth as the reason for the state's marriage to political Islam.

The Role of the Military

There has also been much written on the role of the Pakistani military in shaping a great deal of the country's institutions, including allowing militant groups to propagate and fueling extremist agendas for its own needs. The military has been constantly denounced for its dictatorial hold on the country's politics; however, it has also been heralded as the most secular institution in a state otherwise bogged by tribal politics and religious fundamentalists (Hussain 2007). The military's formative role in creating a conservative, intolerant environment under the eleven-year regime of General Zia Ul-Haq has been at least touched upon by nearly every scholarly source researched for this subject – the General's Islamization policy during the 1980s and its role in vitally forming the rise of extremism in Pakistan cannot be downplayed (Talbot 2009; Ollapolly 2008; Singh 2008; Zahab and Roy 2009; Rashid 2008; Burki and Baxter 1991; Abbas 2002; Hussain 2007; Rana 2005; Nawaz 2008; M. Ahmed 1996; Gregory 2012; Haleem 2003; Shaikh 2008; Zaman 1998; Cohen 2004; ICG 2005).

Extremism in South Asia after the Soviet War

Finally, there is also a great deal of literature in relation to extremism in Pakistan that cites the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan as the catalyst for religious militancy in the country. The responses by the governments of Saudi Arabia, the United States, and Pakistan resulted in a covert operation that radicalized, trained, and funded guerrilla fighters in Afghanistan to resist the Soviets. These guerrillas would come to be known as

the mujahideen, who would later evolve into the militant groups active in Pakistan and Afghanistan today. Scholars point to these groups' cooptation of their training during the Afghan war to fight for their own versions of jihad, a struggle that includes attacks against religious minorities and sects in Pakistan (Ollapolly 2008; Zahab and Roy 2009; Fair 2008; Rashid 2008; Abbas 2002; Hussain 2007; Rana 2005; Devji 2005; Cohen 2004).

II. The Ambiguity of National Identity

The Creation of the Pakistani State

There is a large body of evidence testament to the fact that Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Pakistan's founding father, conceptualized the country as a secular state. He envisioned Pakistan to be a homeland for South Asia's Muslims, rather than a theocracy or as a state that was intolerant of other religions. When the Pakistan Constituent Assembly elected Jinnah as their first president, he had the following to say about his new state:

"If you change your past and work together in a spirit that every one of you, no matter to what community he belongs, no matter what relations he had with you in the past, no matter what is his color, caste or creed, is first, second and last a citizen of this State with equal rights, privileges and obligations, there will be no end to the progress you will make... You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this State of Pakistan... You may belong to any religion or caste or creed – that has nothing to do with the business of the State (A. Ahmed, 1997)."

This speech clearly establishes Jinnah's stance on religious freedom – he believed it to be a pillar on which the new state was to be formed. Jinnah perceived Pakistan to be a homeland for South Asia's Muslims, but certainly not one to the exclusion of any other

religions. This vision did not come to pass, however; Pakistan's tumultuous history would lead to a state that had little room for religious minorities.

Despite Jinnah's emphasis on a secular state, the Muslim League turned to religion to unify the Indian subcontinent's disparate ethnic and linguistic Muslim groups (Talbot 2009; Cohen 2004; Khan 2012). It was through highlighting the threat of a looming Hindu majority (an opposition to South Asian Muslims' *religious* orientation) that ultimately called for the creation of a separate state.

The motivation for the creation of Pakistan must be understood at some level as communalism: for the Muslim League, national identity could and was premised on religion. As the British sun set over India after World War II, elite Muslims in India's northern cities found the vaulting of Hindu concerns at a national level threatening. In response, India's Muslims began to discuss in university classrooms and coffee shops the possibility of a nation separate from that of *Hindustan*, the "Land of the Hindus."

However, the Muslim League's concern of Muslims becoming a minority in what they perceived to be an anti-Muslim nation did not achieve traction among broad sections of the Indian Muslim populace. After the Muslim League's poor showing in the 1937 elections, Jinnah turned to religious leaders to forward the League's vision to Muslims, and their support has often been cited as one of the primary reasons for the League's success in securing mass support for Pakistan (Talbot 2009; Rashid 2008).

Much of the support for the Muslim League came from Islamic scholars collectively termed the *ulama*, composed of *mullahs* and *pirs*. While both *mullahs* and *pirs* were eventually recruited to further the separatist cause, the distinction between the two is highlighted by the differences in reaction they received from the masses. *Mullahs*

functioned to study and spread orthodox Islamic thought. However, the stereotype of the uneducated and hypocritical *mullah* had long been a trope in South Asian Muslim culture (Talbot 2009, 29). Opposed to this negative portrayal of religion were the *pirs*, Sufi mystics believed to have inherited *baraka* (religious charisma and sanction) from their ancestors, who were locally known saints and martyrs. The *pirs* influence was based in both morality and spirituality, against the *mullahs*' mere regurgitation of Islamic law. The popular appeal of the *pirs* imbued them with ethical and at times political authority. Their recruitment in the Muslim League helped change the party's fortunes and sanctified its cause, as they led rallies and issued *fatwas* (religious declarations) in the forms of newspapers, leaflets, and wall postings. *Pirs* personally made appeals to rural Muslims, urging them to personally identify with the Pakistan cause as a Muslim cause. A leading *pir* told his community followers at rallies in 1947 that "No question of someone's caste or conflicts of [brotherhood] should at this time come before you [in place of the Pakistan cause] (Talbot 2009, 70)." The *pirs* thus placed religious identity over all others, with little room for deviance from this standard.

This emphasis on religious identity overruled the secular conceptions of Pakistan that were initially put forth by the Muslim League. The League's leaders, and Jinnah in particular, continued to emphasize up until the party's collapse in the early 1950s that while Pakistan was a safe haven for Muslims, the country would be secular in nature, with no interference from religion in its governance or institutions. Some religious clerics, when faced with this secular rhetoric, asserted that what Jinnah and the Muslim League were doing was anti-Islamic – Jinnah and his colleagues brought Islam into the realm of politics and nationalism, without basing the latter two ideas on Islamic law or

institutions (Talbot 72, 2009). What Jinnah was proclaiming was a modernist Islamic vision as yet unfathomable in the political soup that was South Asia during colonial transition. He emphasized a secular Muslim nationhood devoid of conflict on the basis of individual modes of expression and belief. To do this, he embarked on the two-pronged strategy of convincing the international world as well as the Muslim masses that Pakistan would be a secular state; at the same time, the *pirs*, in support of him, were rallying people on the cry of an Islamic homeland. Instead of balancing these different identities and visions, later generations of Pakistani leaders conflicted them.

Using Islam as the basis for national identity raised important questions: whose Islam would be the state's? What would be done about other Muslim sects? Could non-Muslims become citizens? How much of and what kind of Islamic law should be incorporated into the country's legal codes? These were not questions that were answered in the early days of the republic – Pakistan's founders remained ambiguous, stating that the country would remain secular on certain levels, but without specificity or distinctive boundaries between mosque and state (Hussain 2007; Cohen 2004; Abbas 2002). This ultimately allowed leaders to design an Establishment Islam that was a conduit for their own needs, and that also appeased Islamist insurgents among the country's myriad religious groups. This focal point in the country's ideological creation has been the reason why the state could not, did not, and often perpetuated narratives of national identity that alienated the country's minority religious groups.

Jinnah's untimely death, as well as a lack of consensus on what a secular homeland for Muslims would mean, created an ambivalent national identity. This identity

would eventually be manipulated by the military-run state for its own agendas and would have disastrous consequences for Pakistan's religious minorities and sects.

III. The State's Usage of Religious Conservatism

Since its inception, the Pakistani state has used religion as a political instrument. The Muslim League's play on Islam as a potential but vague unifying identity served the purpose of bringing support for a state separate from India. This pattern of political instrumentality has continued throughout Pakistan's history, and has ultimately resulted in the legal, political, and social legitimization of Sunni Deobandi³ Islam at the exclusion of other religions. This environment has bolstered religious militancy, with attacks against religious minorities increasing.

Even the secularist Zulfikar Ali Bhutto utilized religion for his own political ends, establishing links with the Deobandi Sunni religious schools (Hussain 2007; Weiss 1986). Many thought Bhutto's ascendancy to leadership would finally herald social democracy and strong secular institutions for Pakistan; he did indeed attempt to achieve social and economic reforms, but sought to do so by funneling a nationalist Islamic identity. He therefore courted religious parties, and upped the religious content in school curricula in order to appease them. Under pressure from the religious parties, Bhutto declared the Ahmedi sect as non-Muslim. What was perceived at the time to be an apparently minor action increased religious zealotry and heightened intolerance against religious minorities (Hussain 2007; Khan 2012; Abbas 2002).

³ A school of thought within Sunni Islam that advocates for societal reform through the imposition of literalist *shari'a* law

Islamization and its Consequences

The patronage of conservative religious parties reached new heights during the reign of General Zia Ul-Haq. General Zia assumed power through a military coup on July 5, 1977, removing democratically elected Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. It was during this time that Pakistan's national identity became overtly premised on building an Islamic state in function as well as name. In fact, Zia believed that the deposition of Bhutto had only been possible because the Pakistani citizenry preferred an Islamic system to Bhutto's personalized and corporatist regime (M. Ahmad 1996; Talbot 2009). For Zia to unify the disparate ethnic and political groups of Pakistan, he first had to definitively outline what an Islamic state was. During this process, Pakistan's history was rewritten, with "Jinnah the secularist becoming Jinnah the upholder of Islam... while the *ulama* whose influence had been marginal in the creation of Pakistan were elevated to a vanguard role" (Talbot 2009, 245). In this manner, Zia attempted to finally solve the problem of identity by outlining 'Muslim' practices and codifying them in state law. Zia thus worked closely with political Sunni groups such as the *Jama'at-i-Islami* (Islamic Party) and *Jami'ayat-i-'Ulama-i-Islam* (Party of the Scholar-Clerics of Islam) to institute religious reforms in law that were hailed by religious conservatives, who viewed the solicitation of Islam in official state policy as an affirmation of the religion's place in public policy (M. Ahmad 1996; Talbot 2009; Rashid 2008).

The idea of Islam codified in state law was fully accepted by most Muslims, in a country where morality was viewed through a religious lens. However, the idea naturally met with competing claims about which version of Islam to institutionalize in law. Thus, Islamic revivalism during the 1980s corresponded to the rise of sectarian divides, as Shias

and Sunnis competed for political legitimacy. Ahmad writes, “With the revival of various Islamic laws, the old juristic, doctrinal and theological differences among Muslim sects and schools of law resurfaced with considerable intensity... The most serious conflict arose over the question of which interpretation of Islamic law ought to be legislated into public policy” (M. Ahmad 1996, 377). Although appearing on the surface to appease both Shias and Sunnis, Zia in fact manipulated both groups to couch his regime in Islamic legitimacy (Rana 2005). Initially, Zia’s regime met Shia demands for the inclusion of their religious leaders in the incorporation of Islamic law into Pakistani law. However, once the Shia minority had been appeased, Zia initiated a plan to divide the Shia leadership, giving some Shia theologians places on state Islamic institutions, such as the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII), the Federal Zakat Council, and the Majlis-i-Shura (M. Ahmad 1996; Rana 2005). When riots continued to occur in Sunni reactions towards this appeasement, and Shia militants responded, the government correctly assumed the support of the Sunni majority, backed as it was by centralist and religious groups. These groups successfully rallied to the government’s defense when any Shia threat appeared to denounce the regime’s legitimacy, ultimately causing Zia’s Islamic government to be a Sunni Muslim government (M. Ahmad 1996).

In his first televised speech to the nation, Zia proclaimed “Pakistan, which was created in the name of Islam, will continue to survive only if it sticks to Islam. That is why I consider the introduction of an Islamic system as an essential prerequisite for the country” (Talbot 2009, 251). In this statement, Zia warned Pakistanis of the widespread danger that would accrue by deviating from the official Islam that his regime would espouse (Abbas 2002). In fact, the danger that Zia was attempting to avoid was a Pakistan

that would continue to topple regimes because it could not agree on how to define itself. However, his promulgation of religious unity would, ironically, exacerbate sectarian divisions between Sunnis, Shias, and Sufis. By placing conservative Sunni Islam as the religious, and therefore moral and ideological core of the country, Zia alienated religious minorities and helped foment ambivalence towards their status as true Muslims, and true participants in the nation-state (Singh 2008; Burki and Baxter 1991).

The laws that were passed under Zia's regime, intended to promote an Islamic understanding of law as espoused by Pakistan's religious clerics, created a dearth of human rights abuses in the country, and increased sectarian violence in major cities. Whereas Sunni-Shia clashes had not been overly frequent before Zia took power, clashes became more visible and more violent after 1977. Riots between the two groups killed 12 people in 1983, and more broke out in the fall of 1984 (Talbot 2009, 251). This sectarian violence would increase rapidly over the coming decades, crippling Pakistan's Shia community. When religious clerics demanded that the Zikri community be declared non-Muslims because of their heterodox practices, despite their own affirmation as Muslims, Zia side-stepped the issue and chose to ignore it, leading to discriminatory practices against the Zikris (Nawaz 2008; Haleem 2003).

In a May 1982 speech, Zia declared that the "preservation of Pakistan ideology and the Islamic character of the country was... as important as the security of the country's geographical boundaries" (Talbot 2009, 255). It is again important to emphasize whose definitions of 'Islamic character' were being propounded and referred to. Zia's regime adhered to the mainstream Sunni religion; he sought to strengthen the populace's commitment to the state by requiring citizens to abide by conservative Islam.

This had the critical effect of conflating citizens' Pakistani and Muslim identities – 'Pakistani' no longer allowed for being 'non-Muslim.' Zia used religion to hold on to power, and to cement the military's legitimacy. While declaring himself to be fulfilling the people's will when overthrowing Bhutto, Zia halted elections in both 1977 and 1979 because, according to him, "the successful completion of the Islamization process was much more important than the holding of elections" (M. Ahmad 1996, 375). Islamization therefore usurped any secular understandings of the state – even democracy, purported to be the defining basis for Pakistan, crumbled in the face of politicized religion. Zia utilized religion to solidify his own power, leading him to be the longest-serving head of state of Pakistan, ruling for over eleven years. Islamization led to a variety of problems that continue to plague Pakistan today, including the government's and military's alliances with extremist groups, as well as religious violence perpetuated against religious minorities (Hussain 2007; Burki and Baxter 1991).

The problem of Islamization as a policy was articulated in the *Pakistan Times* in 1983: "When we say the country's laws will be brought into conformity with the *sunnah* [the example of the Prophet and the first two – or for some the first four – Caliphs] we cannot put out any book acceptable to the community as a safe, secure and current authority... So far the matter remains up to an individual's faith it does not affect others but when a faith is converted into a law, that will affect the *Ummah* (community) as a whole" (Talbot 2009, 270). The author's statement captured the essence of Islamization's final result – there were too many different types of Muslims in Pakistan for all to be inclusively incorporated under one understanding. The end result of Islamization was the touting of Sunni Islam as the correct Islam – deviations were blasphemous, and an affront

to the country's Islamic identity. By not being true Muslims, religious minorities were not true Pakistanis.

Islamization alienated religious minorities through its emphasis on the punitive, harsh, and conservative elements of Hanafi Sunni thought, instead of the egalitarian economic and social mores pushed by progressive Islamic interpretations. A haphazard Islamic judicial system was created in 1984 with the Qazi courts, judicial courts in which cases could be assessed according to the *Shari'a*, or Islamic jurisprudence (Gregory 2012). *Ulama* with degrees from theological schools in Saudi Arabia were eligible for appointment; these courts rarely ruled on the side of justice, overemphasizing arbitrary rules like women's prohibition from playing sports instead of focusing on police corruption or Pakistan's growing drug use problem (Talbot 2009, Rashid 2008). The Hudood Ordinances passed in 1979 were envisioned to be practicing criminal justice ordained through conservative interpretations of the Quran and Islamic law (Khan 2012; Shaikh 2008; Singh 2008). Crimes subject to the harsh punishments of the Islamic Penal Code included murder, adultery, perjury and intoxication (Zahab and Roy 2009). All of these institutionalizations of conservative Sunni Islam served to normalize intolerant ideas about religion, and also alienated religious minorities from public participation. As a result of these policies Zia's critics would eventually accuse him of "opening the floodgates to the widespread ethnic and sectarian violence" (Talbot 2009, 247).

Zia's Islamization came to systemize conservative Islamic elements of law and order that had been prevalent in Pakistan since its inception. Zia and his advisors frequently emphasized the now binding relationship between the ideological beginnings of the state to the ideological bent of the government (M. Ahmad 1996; Haleem 2003;

Shaikh 2008; Gregory 2012). Under Zia, Islam was used to legitimize and strengthen the regime while at the same time downplaying and undermining secular forces. It also brought in waves of support from religious political parties, whose large constituencies were based in the religiously zealous, traditionally lower middle-classes of Punjab, Sindh, and the Northwest Frontier Provinces (M. Ahmad 1996). Zia recognized these bases of support, and catered to them by reemphasizing his commitment to the Islamic state both through his policies and rhetoric – he promised to uphold the sanctity of the *chador* (the veil) and the *chardivari* (the four walls of the house), representing female chastity and purity and private property, values mirrored among the Sunni middle classes (M. Ahmed 1996; Burki and Baxter 1991; Rashid 2009).

Islam became the state's primordial vehicle to assert itself to and respond to challenges to its legitimacy. The state now had a Pakistani identity that would be difficult to oppose: Pakistan had been created in response to a revived Islamic consciousness and brotherhood among South Asian Muslims. In keeping with this tradition, the state had to impose Islamic law in order to ensure the thriving of a pure and true Islamic state. This placed minorities in an uneasy position – their Islam was not the one enforced by the state, and thus their status as Pakistani citizens could be disputed. Non-Muslim minorities had no such ambivalence placed on their status; Hindus, Sikhs, Ahmedis, and Christians were certainly not Muslims, and their ideological wrongness translated to their exclusion from full membership in the Pakistani polity. Islamization thus sowed the seed for intolerance of religious minorities. Zia's codification of Sunni Islam and his claim that it created the foundation for Pakistan created a precarious situation for minorities that did not conform to Sunni Islam.

Because of the state's validation of Sunni Islam, allowing any other forms of religion to propagate came to be viewed as a threat to its legitimacy. Acknowledging that religion can mean different things to different people – in essence, allowing complete freedom of religion – was and continues to be disquieting for the state and for its Sunni majority. Allowing for freedom of religion would take away the state's power to prescribe the religious law of the land, a potent power in Pakistan (Zaman 1998).

The military has asserted its role in the country without much understanding of civil governance. It has constantly intervened in democratic functions once military generals begin to convince themselves that civilian leaders cannot lead the state without it falling into chaos. The military's interventions have always been touted as necessary for the country's well-being; however, they have continuously destroyed any foundation for democracy and secularism. This pattern has continued over decades, with the military retaining its hold on power by supporting, assisting, and utilizing religious parties (and their fringe militant networks) to its own geopolitical advantage (Singh 2008; Burki and Baxter 1991; Nawaz 2008). This exploitation has eroded secular institutions that could provide safeguards for religious minorities.

The Rise of Militant Groups

It was during Zia's reign that the Sipah-i-Sahaba emerged. Founded in 1985 in the mid-sized city of Jhang in the Punjab, the organization agitated to have the Ahmedi sect declared non-Muslim, and thus less protected by the mechanisms of a legally Sunni state (Rana 2005; Zaman 2002; Rashid 2008). After Zulfikar Ali Bhutto ceded to these demands, the Sipah-i-Sahaba began to work against Shia Muslims, asserting that they too

were non-Muslims. It began carrying out attacks against the community; at least some of the funds given to the Sipah-e-Sahaba for these attacks were provided by the ISI and other state agencies. The state suspected that Pakistani Shia organizations were being provided monetary and weapons assistance by Shia Iran (Rana 2005). Thus, the Sipah-e-Sahaba was allowed to prosper under covert state auspices.

The Sipah-e-Sahaba is perhaps the most vocal and well-known Sunni group to harass religious minorities, particularly Shia Muslims. Soon after its inception, the group drafted a resolution that called for, among other things, the declaration of Pakistan as a Sunni state, and that Shia speakers who speak contrary to orthodox tenets of Sunni thought should be punished (Rana 2005; Nawaz 2008; Zaman 2002). The party became enormously popular among large segments of the majority Sunni population. The organization further called for an increase on Zia's Islamization policies by turning seven of Pakistan's major cities into 'model Islamic cities,' which declared that shops close for prayer; Friday be the weekly holiday; the prohibition of cable television; and that all criminal cases be referred to religious scholars (Rana 2005, 198). With the patronage of the *Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam*, the Sipah-e-Sahaba has become a prominent Sunni sectarian group, encouraging the rise of similar groups such as Tahreek-e-Difa Sahaba and Tahafuz Namoos-e-Rasul. The reach of the Sipah-e-Sahaba was so extensive that after the September 11th attacks, as part of Pakistan's initial policy to curb terrorism, Pakistan's Ministry of Interior sent a letter to the organization's official headquarters informing them of accusations being made against them by civil citizens. These included: that the Sipah-e-Shaba was sponsoring fifty thousand men for militant training in Afghanistan; it would bring these men back to Pakistan once their training was completed; the

organization was planning on destroying Shia life and property; and that the group's leaders were making incendiary hate speeches against the Shia (Rana 2005; Zaman 1998; Abbas 2002).

Following the lead of the Sipah-e-Sahaba, other militant Sunni organizations began terrorizing Shia communities in Karachi and the NWFP in the late 1980s. These included: Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, the Jhangvi Tigers, Al Haq Tigers, the Al Badar Federation, Al Farooq, Allah-o-Akbar, Sunni Tahreek, Saiful Mujahideen, Lashkar-e-Ahle Sunnat, Hizb-e-Azeemat, the Sunni Yakjehti Forum, the Ahle Hadees Youth Force, the Shahaban-e-Ahle Hadees, Tehreek Difa Sihaba, Nawjawane-e-Tauheed Ahle Sunnat, Jamiat Muhaibain-e-Sahaba and Idara Tahafuz-e-Namoos-e-Sahaba. All of these organizations are spread throughout the country, and engage in sectarian and religious violence. While there are Shia sectarian groups, they do not come close to the force and power of Sunni militant groups, and have sprung up largely to defend themselves against militant groups, not Sunni civilians (Rana 2005); in fact, the number of actively militant Shia groups in the country total three.

The Sunni groups described above are situated within the dynamics, environment, and agenda perpetuated by externally extremist groups who engage in violence against perceived foreign foes such as India and the United States. In fact, the Sunni militant groups often operate under the umbrella of larger jihadist groups. Groups go through the same military training, attend the same sessions at madrassas, and even plan the same attacks. Muhammad Amir Rana, a journalist researching militant organizations active in Pakistan, was told by a member of the Sipah-e-Sahaba in an interview that: "While jihadi organizations are fighting against infidels on our borders, we are putting an end to them

in Pakistan. Both are jihad.” Most telling in this statement is the member’s identification of religious minorities as the same infidels that must be fought on the border (Rana 2005).

Many of the demands made by Shia organizations are telling of the environment in which this group lives. Tehreek-e-Jafferia, the only Shia organization in all of Pakistan with a nationwide network, provided the Governor of Punjab in August of 2000 with a list of demands that stated: Shia religious clerics should be allowed to appear on television, Shia material should be included in the mandatory Islamics sections of school curricula; Shias should be allowed basic housing; the ban on public Shia religious processions should be lifted; Shia victims of sectarian violence should be provided compensation; and terrorist groups targeting Shias should be banned from having close relations with the state’s political apparatus (Rana 2005, 413). These demands include access to basic human rights that are not given to Shias in the country, and are a result of the environment of fear and violence this group lives in.

IV. The Shaping of Religious Militancy During the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan

Some scholars have claimed that militancy is not inherent to the schools of religious thought within South Asia, and repeatedly emphasize there being few jihad-based attacks prior to Pakistan’s inception (Ollapolly 2008; Hussain 2007). Even when religion was used to further political interests, militancy was not used domestically up until Zia’s administration – rather, it was used to continue a proxy war in Kashmir as a deterrent against India. With the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, however, a foundation for domestic militancy was set in place that has become the cornerstone for attacks

against religious minorities today. The Soviet invasion, occurring in tandem with Zia's Islamization of the country, was instrumental in creating a culture of religious militancy that would dominate Pakistan for decades; this same culture would result in intense increases of violence against religious minorities (Rana 2005).

The dominant Islamic religious schools of thought prevalent in South Asia – Deobandi, Bareilvi, Ahl-i-Hadith – have been conservative, sectarian, and even reformist, but were never politically radical until the mid-1980s. It was during this period that militant splinter groups began to form from these earlier religious movements. These splinter groups are organized “within clandestine frameworks,” and it is thus difficult to maintain how autonomous they are and what links they hold to their parent organizations (Weiss 1986, 21). Their radicalization formed in response to two objectives that eventually coalesced: the first was anti-Shi'ism, which evolved to include all religious minorities, and the jihad in both Kashmir and Afghanistan. These objectives, during the mid-1980s, came to encompass military training, the usage of armed struggle, assassinations and targeted killings, and violent attacks against mosques and religious institutions of other persuasions (Weiss 1986, 22).

When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, Pakistan's ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence, the military spy agency) under Zia Ul-Haq teamed up with the CIA to launch a covert war against the Soviets. When the Soviets began building a military presence in Afghanistan in 1979, Zia's government established a direct link between Saudi forces and the ISI; as a result, vast amounts of Saudi funds began flowing into Pakistan that would in turn be used to strengthen the Afghan resistance against the USSR. Later that same year, US president Jimmy Carter signed a classified memorandum

providing similar support for the Afghan freedom fighters (Nawaz 2008; Talbot 2009). The Reagan administration eventually funneled \$2 billion worth of funds to the rebels after 1980, matched by another \$2 billion from Saudi Arabia, China, and other Gulf states (Rashid 1988). Supported by these funds, the ISI trained guerrilla fighters in the rhetoric of a jihadist ideology against the infidels invading from the north, establishing training camps and madrassas that created a standing army against the Soviets. These fighters came to be known as the mujahideen, literally ‘holy warriors.’ While backed by the ISI and the CIA, the mujahideen eventually managed to turn the Soviets out of Afghanistan; the legitimacy of a jihad against non-Muslims, both real and perceived, was now well on its way. Pakistan’s state apparatus provided the most funding to the most extremist groups, perpetuating a climate of violence and intolerance in the state (Talbot 2009). Once the CIA pulled out of the covert operation in Afghanistan, the mujahideen veterans were largely left to their own devices, and in the coming decades began to assert themselves politically. These groups, while orchestrating continuing militancy campaigns in Afghanistan and Kashmir, also sprawled domestically creating sectarian violence and generally conducting hate campaigns against religious minorities.

Pakistani religious parties during the Afghan civil war provided volunteers to fight for that country’s jihad; training camps were established along the Pakistani-Afghan border to provide religious ideological and military training for would-be combatants. After the Soviet war, Pakistan provided fertile ground for new jihadist enterprises, particularly against India and towards internal threats within Pakistan, including religious minorities as well as pro-Western politicians (Rana 2005; Rashid 2008). The proliferation of militants previously engaged in Afghanistan into Pakistan was the result of the residual

rhetoric of Zia's Islamization process, which gave these organizations a legitimacy centered on operating from a country that touted Islam as its state ideology (Rana 2005, 8).

Madrassas

The evolution of madrassas from informal school to radically ideological centers during the Soviet War cannot be downplayed. Madrassas have been traditional centers of learning across South Asia, drawing students into both formal and informal school settings. As a result of Zia's Islamization process, and the religious radicalism which pervaded South and Central Asia during the Soviet War, madrassas took on a militant bent, encouraging students to sacrifice themselves for their faith. These madrassas overwhelmingly preached the same Sunni ideology promulgated by Zia – their jihad was premised entirely on saving Islam from both Western and domestic infidels. Zia's Islamization process imposed Islamic taxes, zakat and khums, on the general population which it then used to fund madrassas (Fair 2008; Abbas 2002).

Many of these madrassas were also funded by Sunni-dominant states including Saudi Arabia and Iraq, which viewed the rise of a Shia Iran as a threat to their interests. They thus funneled funds to spearhead and arm Pakistani Sunni groups – Saudi Arabia particularly ensured that its money would be used to propagate its own Wahhabist movement, a highly conservative branch of Islam that espoused intolerance of all non-Muslims (Fair 2008). The aftermath of the Afghan war even helped propagate the actual number of religious parties in Pakistan. In 1979, there were 30 religious parties; today, there are close to 376 (Rana 2005). This increase was due in part to the simultaneous

increase in madrassas, which encouraged the political use of Islam. From 1979 to 1990, there was a 100% increase in the number of militant religious organizations. The rapidity with which all these institutions spread had a significant impact in the radicalization of young men across the country. Many of those attending Sunni madrassas would eventually be shipped off to militant organizations conducting attacks in Kashmir, India, and Afghanistan, and also within Pakistan against religious and sectarian minorities (Fair 2008, Rana 2005).

Most scholars agree that these madrassas were not satisfactory educational institutions (Fair 2008; Abbas 2002; Rashid 2008; Zaman 2002; Hussain 2007); they catered to the sectarian bent they were built on, and created impediments to modern knowledge and creativity. Madrassas fueled hate and discontent towards their rival sectarian groups, and posited them as infidels. The advent of jihad culture in the 1980s led to the burgeoning of madrassas. There were only 137 in Pakistan at the time of the independence, and were general institutions of learning; during and after Islamization, they doubled every year, with current estimates figuring at 13,000 with an enrollment of 1.7 million students between five and eighteen years old (Hussain 2007). While madrassas did not train students in arms or provide them with weapons, they heavily encouraged them to join religious holy wars happening in the country, in Kashmir, and in Afghanistan; they also indoctrinated them with an ideological mindset predicated on fulfilling jihad.

Since the cultural and religious avalanches of the 1980s, madrassas have become increasingly sectarian – they teach students with an intent to instill in them the ideological biases of the schools of thought they represent. Thus, a Sunni Wahhabist

madrassa will inculcate in its students an understanding of Shias and Ahmedis as heretics blaspheming the name of Islam, and non-Muslims as either enemies or those in need of conversion. These madrassas portray an image of a ‘good’ Muslim as one who will spread God’s message at whatever cost to himself or others, encouraging students to join militant organizations as their religious and moral obligation (Fair 2008).

Conclusion

The environment of religious intolerance has been due to a number of factors. The lack of consensus on a national identity that made vague allusions to an Islamic identity was not initially coopted by military leaders; however, in later decades, the military used an Islamic rhetoric to justify its foreign and domestic policies, as well as its hold on national power. In the process, the military relied on religious parties and groups to purport the idea of Pakistan as an Islamic state – Islam’s place as the state religion would mean that the military would have total control over how Pakistan would be defined; it could then make the state’s enemies Islam’s enemies. The rhetorical and moral power of religion could now be exploited for the military’s own political interests. This development was most fully visible in the 1980s during the regime of General Zia Ul-Haq, who instituted a program of Islamization that instituted harsh penalties for speaking against conservative Sunni Islam, and that indoctrinated the country’s social and political institutions with a rabid conservative exclusion. It was due to this usage of Sunni Islam as the country’s moral and legal framework that Ahmedis were declared to be a non-Muslim group; it also resulted in intolerance and violence against non-Muslim faiths in Pakistan, including Hindus and Christians. The interference of the ISI, the CIA, and the Saudi

government during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan led to the rise of Islamic militancy in South Asia. Militant groups that are offshoots of this initial movement remain active in Pakistan, conducting attacks on religious minorities throughout the country. Shia Muslims have been subject to the most brutal violence in the nation, with daily killings of known Shias, as well as brutal massacres of entire communities.

At least part of the reason for the continuing intolerance against religious minorities is due to the state's inability and/or refusal to forcefully strike down on militants. After Pakistan aligned itself with the US in the War on Terror, the Musharraf administration promised to eradicate extremism and sectarianism from Pakistan. However, these efforts have been halfhearted and unsuccessful – Pakistan was unable to curb the hate speech spreading from madrassas and militant organizations with large, public platforms, and attacks against religious minorities have continued as a result.

The plight of religious minorities in Pakistan should be a pressing problem for the country; however, the state has done little to nothing to prevent the attacks and discrimination occurring against them. International pressure could be more effective in forcing the state to confront its extremist problem, as well as to place mechanisms in its legal apparatus that would provide adequate protection for religious minorities, rout out fundamentalist groups, and give minorities full-fledged citizenship regardless of religious affiliation. Until the Pakistani state works to sufficiently eradicate militants from Pakistan's terrain and emphasizes freedom of religion as inherent to Pakistan's identity, the situation for Pakistan's religious minorities will remain bleak.

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