Ideological Trafficking of God and the Other

Sultana Haider,
MSc in Media, Communication & Development

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The Author can be contacted at: haider.sultana@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

In 2013, Pakistan experienced an unprecedented rise in the terrorist attacks, with 1,717 attacks that claimed 2,451 people. Growing religious extremism and sectarian polarisation in the country can be traced to its historical, political origins of importation of Islamic ideologies which inevitability gave birth to militant organisations; pointing towards the query of "how" these organisations construct narrative for the audiences. The following research aims to explore the same through two organisations – *Tehrik-e-Taliban* and *Lashkar-e-Jhangvi*, undertaking an exploration of how and to what extent these organisations portray Shiite sect and rationalise *jihad* through official communication.

Guided by the theories of ideology, power and discourse, the research explored how *Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan* (TTP) and *Lashkar-e-Jhangvi* (LeJ) construct and rationalise the discourse. Fairclough's three-dimensional approach to Critical Discourse Analysis was chosen to observe the construction and tendencies towards the "other" in four texts authored by the two groups. Both organisations leverage historical differences to position the "self" as righteous while the "other" as a disease that needs to be eradicated; a notion that is then supported by propagation of *jihad* while admitting attacks positioned on the emotional and political tangent of "Islamic awakening". The research in its limited scope could only critically analyse the construction of the text and not conclusively state about the intentions of the authors; raising two-fold concerns: Firstly a need to understand the origins of construction of messages from the organisation's point of view and secondly, to understand how the extremist sectarian narrative normalises itself in the society, particularly in the audiences with greater access to alternative narratives.

INTRODUCTION

"Death to the man who breaks my law"

- (Lessing, trans. 2005, 1.2.14-15)

Religions have long been communicated through mythology, symbols and storytelling. History bears witness to ruling powers subduing, editing, glorifying and carefully positioning religious scripture for strategic hegemonic reasons. With extremist religious discourse often attributed to influencing the world events, importation and exportation of antagonistic religious narrative seems to present itself as the establishing root of ideological trafficking of God.

Victors may write the history while that not in power may seek to offer an alternative narrative for it. However both narratives, in their bid to present a certain version as absolute truth claiming the neutrality of account, might inevitability fall for the very ideological trap they were claiming to avoid thereby creating a need to "confront theological and ideological systems for what they are: human constructions and paradigms that were made at certain times and places to serve certain interests and ends" (Moosa, 2014, p. 36).

With the evolving media landscape and expansion of expression through digital platforms, ideologies too have evolved in the manner in which they communicate mandate and seek to influence the audience. Given the possibilities of access to alternative narratives to any political, social or religious ideology, how audiences decide to follow an extremist discourse is a recent topic of academic study. However, even before understanding the audience, it seems imperative to investigate the way such narratives are constructed and the manner in which they are presented, for the construction paves way to normalization of such ideologies.

The following study seeks to explore the very query. After highlighting the historical and political context, the research delves into investigating how Islamists adopt a stance and construct the "other". Primarily, the research scope is narrowed to studying the phenomena with the official communication of *Tehrik-e-Taliban* and *Lashkar-e-Jhangvi* – two leading Islamist groups with similar ideology currently operative in Pakistan.

Based on the literary exploration that has focused on establishing the narrative of Othering and antagonistic nature of such organizations; this research aims to explore the "how" of it,

raising questions and paving way to future explorations of normalization of narratives and penetration of extremist messages in the mainstream.

The Indian Subcontinent acquired independence from British colonial rule in 1947, subsequently leading to the creation of two states: Pakistan and India. The ideological basis for separate religious identity was first conceived in 1930, with consequent events leading to the Pakistan Movement. While India declared itself as a secular state, Pakistan with a current population of 180 million, re-positioned itself as an "Islamic Republic" in 1965. Being the second largest Muslim majority country in the world and also hosting the second largest Shiite sect of Muslims, Pakistan is home to 178 million Muslims and approximately two million non-Muslim minorities (Grim & Karim, 2011) including Hindus and Christians. There are an estimated 60 languages spoken in the country while Urdu is the national and English is the official language. Since the country was established primarily on the basis of religious identity (Cohen, 2004), religion has since then played an influential and often decisive role in its diplomatic and national political relations. Saudi Arabia given its religious centrality in Islam, has long served as a key diplomatic partner and an integral donor towards developmental projects (Rashid, 2010). Iran, a neighbouring country, too has served as a key strategic trade partner for Pakistan. Iranian revolution however not just influenced its relations with Pakistan but also caused a proactive political ideological export of *Wahhabi* Islam from Saudi Arabia (Mir, 2010). Pakistan thus has served as the breeding ground for importation and propagation of both countries' ideological hegemonic struggles. Most of these efforts have been routed through religious seminaries in the country.

Vastly, these religious seminaries have remained independent of state's official funding, alternatively attracting foreign and local funding from private donors and religious charities. Consequently, these charities have been often accused by international diasporas and local minorities for propagating and reinforcing the polarization of sectarian sentiments within the country (Hussain M. , 2012). In 2013, there were approximately 1,717 terrorist attacks across Pakistan claiming 2,451 people (Studies, 2014). In the first three months of 2013 alone, three sectarian attacks claimed 180 lives (Shahid, 2013); militant organisations consequently accepted responsibility (Zafar, 2013).

Historical roots of Sectarianism

The last decade has experienced civil disturbances and sectarian strife within Muslim countries including Syrian war, Pakistan's war against Taliban and the establishment of Islamic State in parts of Iraq. While all three cases bear different political contexts; sectarian divide remains the key commonality amongst them.

Moreover, while all Muslim sects adhere to peaceful preaching and condemn extremist discourse, there still remains a fraction that seems to leverage theological preaching and religious text to rationalise and attempt to normalise the antagonistic narrative against the Other (Said, 1978).

Muhammad, the last prophet of Islam united the Arab tribes of the time under his religious message (Esposito, 2002). However, his death in 632 AD resulted in conflicts over the succession of leadership. Muhammad's companion was declared his political successor; thereby establishing the Islamic Caliphate. Another group refused to accept the Caliphate, citing historical events whereby Muhammad had mentioned to seek his cousin and son-in-law, Ali's guidance after his death. The conflict divided the Muslim world in sects namely Shiites and Sunnis, with Sunnis forming 60% percent of Islamic population today. The differences largely exist on historical and political grounds. After the first four Caliphs, the power and leadership turned into monarchies. Caliphate spread drastically with the establishment and expansion of *Ummayad, Abbasids, Fatimids,* and *Ottoman* empires between 661 to 1924 years, eventually being abolished in 1924 in Turkey.

What the consequent decades witnessed still stands testament to the hegemonic struggles over the empire and authority using religion as an ideological tool to gain support of the masses in a bid to re-establish Caliphate as an Islamic system (Sardar & Davies, 2014).
Within Shiites and Sunnis alike, various movements have been initiated. One such movement emerged in the 18th century when Ibn Saud, the first Saudi monarch and a member of the pre-dominant Saud family in what is today Saudi Arabia, established an alliance with Abd al-Wahhab, a leading theologian.

The *Wahhabi* movement has evolved overtime, often influencing the rebirth of various movements including *Salafism[1]* (Meijer, 2009)*;* both are based on theological preaching that adheres to strict interpretation of religious text, contributing often to the current state of sectarianism and growing extremism in the Muslim world (Shehabi, 2008). The movement has been financially supported by the Saudi policies encouraging the spread of *Wahhabism* within the Muslim world. According to Saeed Shehabi (2008), the motivation of Saudi's support for countries can be seen as its desire to expand on religious and political fronts; the country is the custodian of the two holiest mosques for Muslims in the world (Eagleton, 1991).

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[1] Arabic word derived from *Salaf* meaning ancestors; referring to the first four generations of Muslims

Based on the preceding historical discussion, what follows is a theoretical exploration of ideology, religious extremism, extremist media landscape and narrative construction through which the research aims to understand how Islamist movements construct the sectarian discourse by way of positioning the Other while serving to normalize the same in the society.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

The following chapter defines various notions, outlining debates on the interaction of power, religious ideologies, how communication of the extremists involve the discussion of the "Other", its connection with the Islamic sectarian history and the present day narrative. It attempts to outline and understand modern Islamist extremist groups in Pakistan.

Religion as an ideology has long been contested for its usage as a tool to exercise power and normalise certain set of beliefs. Particularly, holy scriptures in religion often serve as the means of constructing narratives that strategically seem to benefit certain entities. Any ideology tends to have strands of varying narratives; subscriber of each stringently believing its version to be the truest. Within religion, "at the heart of sects, there are always systems replete with structures of authority" (Sardar & Davies, 2014, p. 10), whereby authority signifies power.

According to Lukes, power is domination, wherein domination can either be apparent or not visible; pointing towards the unconscious exertion through ideologies and existence of "false consciousness" (Eagleton, 1991) in the society, an entity unaware of its own true interests may be made into believing others' interests as its own. Luke's work on power seems greatly in conjunction with and related to Michael Foucault's notion of circular power. His work reflects an exploration of studying the interaction of power with knowledge. While Foucault seems to highlight the relativity and equal accessibility of power across different entities, Lukes, on the other hand, seems to contextualize power wherein not every entity is said to have equal access to it, hence leading to ideological or otherwise domination of one over the other.

Ideology has been regarded as aiding in "reinforcing relations of dominance" (Thompson, 1990). Althusser defines ideology as a representation of an illusionary link that individuals establish with their real conditions. Such illusion is often then taken charge of by those with power. It has been extensively used by various theorists in the context of power and knowledge production. Essentially in terms of ideological communication, Van Dijk (1998) explicitly delves into discussing the connection between ideologies with manipulation where

masses are often permeated with sets of beliefs leading to fabricated consensus for the powerful. On the other hand, Frantz Fanon's work while remaining largely focused in context of colonialism, race and national culture, highlights the drastic need for acknowledging, challenging the idea which ideologues may hold of them (Nursey-Bray, 1980).

His notion seems to overlap with Foucault's conception of power whereby the dominated may resist the manufacturing of consent. However, there then needs to be an awareness of consent manufacturing in the dominated for the latter to occur; for as Dijk puts it, "especially in what we call manipulation, this happens without the awareness of recipients" (1998, p. 276).

Radical rise in religious social movements which are stemming from but not directly owned by their ideological source has given birth to debates on the limitations of the definition of ideology. For instance, for Foucault, discourse seems more of an encompassing term to describe the social processes, knowledge production and power relations. It seems to constitute the unconscious and the conscious mind (Weedon, 1987). Essentially in terms of knowledge production, a similar strand in the debate over discourse as medium to carry forward ideologies is the concept of knowledge practices (Cortés, Isabel, Osterweil, & Powell, 2008) where knowledge practices are defined as practices which produce meaning guiding individuals' behaviours and code of "how to be" in the world (Becker C. , 2009).

Meanings and knowledge practices evolve as narratives and power dynamics shift in context. One such base often widely debated for its discursive power of mobilizing communities is religion and sects within religion. Definition of religion varies from nominal to real (Banton, 2013). For instance, Geetz and Talal Asad have extensively similar yet opposing ways of defining religion. While both see religion as a set of symbols; Geetz defines symbol as any object or event, whereas Talal identifies symbols as a more discursive, complicated relationship of events, objects bearing emotional and otherwise significance (Nocholls, 1987). Extending from Talal's understanding of religion, one may then view religion on the lexicon of power and knowledge (Carrette, 2002) to better understand the positioning of extremist religious discourse and its narrative less in terms of faith and more in terms of ideological hegemony (Gramsci, 1990), whereby antagonistic sentiments rise – rather than acknowledgement of existence of conflict by way of admitting the difference in identity of "self" and the "other" (Mouffe, 2005).

Despite difference in context, theologies are often held responsible for the giving birth to knowledge practices that inevitably lead to movements in the society (Becker C. , 2009). One such example is that of Islamic theological preaching giving rise to Islamic extremism.

As state systems fail to support its population, alternative religious sentiments and theological systems are seen as filling the void and gaining popular support. Although based on theological preaching, such parallel religious discourse narrative seems to be a product of organizational effectiveness of alternative religious solution than purely faith (Berman, Laurence, & Iannaccone, 2006).

Islamic extremism and narratives

The issue of Islamic extremism is not a new one, various researches have tried exploring the phenomena, while several studies (Matusitz, 2012; Ross, 2007; Khan, 2013) have focused on how extremists and particularly Islamic extremist groups are portrayed in media or even in movies (Boyd-Barrett, Herrera, & Baumann, 2011), others have extensively worked on studying the impact of their communication on their target audience by way of various reception analysis techniques (Howie, 2012; Hussein, 2005; Slone & Shoshani, 2008). Further, work has also been undertaken on what the militants' communication generally tends to express, while speculating the motives and intentions behind the communication (Singh, 2012; Aboul-Enein, 2010). While all three strands of research are significant in advancing the comprehension of drastic spread and normalisation of extremist narrative in recent times; the third strand in particular holds special attention as it tries to ascertain how the communication is structured which in turn may help establish the extent of penetration of the ideology. In this context, Islamic Militancy is understood as an act of defence against any entity that seems to pose a threat to the identity or existence of Islam (Yousuf, 2005) whereas radicalisation is understood as gradual penetration of Islamic values in the mainstream which may bear traces of violence but not importantly call for antagonistic act for any entity defying its ideology (Siddiqa, 2013).

Within the strand that undertakes studying the extremist ideology, there seems to be a major trend to homogenize the radical and the militant discourse (Siddiqa, 2013). There is comparatively less work on trying to understand the communication of Islamic militants and radicals from cultural, identity and political perspectives.

Islamic extremism and Othering

In the context of Pakistan, narratives of religious extremism can be explored on two dimensions: extreme religious ideologies tend to position their identity against the "other" as

who disagrees with their interpretation; where "Othering" is defined as "a course of action whereby society labels an inferior group into existence" (Matusitz, 2012, p. 142).

Bauman in his work outlines three levels of Othering which he titles "Grammars of Othering" (Baumann & Gingrich, 2005, p. 27) wherein the first of it has been derived from Edward Said's exploration of orientalism. According to Bauman (2005), negative mirror imaging can be attributed to the construction of the self and the other, whereby the good in self is what the other lacks and some of the elements in the other is what the self lacks too. In the context of extremist ideologies, lines of practices of right and wrong are extracted from theological text and demanded in social voids of the state. Internalizing the victim role, emotional narratives of "us" against "them" prevail, paving way to antagonistic sentiments (Mouffe, 2000) towards entities existing in disagreement of the proposed religious solution. The elements of antagonism, intolerance and intensity of "Othering" are not a consequential product of extremist religious discourse. For instance, these elements bear strong resemblance to the right-wing politics and European fascism of the 20th century. While ideological structure for fascism originated from nationalist sentiments and in opposition to communism and essentially followed racial streams of thought; religious extremism seems to be follow similar structure of division but on sectarian differences. Sectarianism, derived from sect can be understood as what "constitutes itself as to make possible the carrying out of the mission it believes it has in the world" (Berger P., 1954, p. 479). The same can be contextualized as hate speech. For instance, Jahanzaib Haque (2014) in his report on hate speech in Pakistan highlights the definition that any written, verbal or otherwise form of expression, organization or support of the same that provokes or attempts at provoking sentiments on the communal, social or religious basis, is considered hate speech.

Sectarianism in the Subcontinent

Much of the discussions surrounding Islamic sectarianism in South Asia pertains to the export of ideologies from Iran and Saudi Arabia and contextualizes the same chronologically from combating Soviet's communist expansion into Afghanistan in the 1960's to combating the Iranian revolution in the 1970's.

There are four schools within the Sunni sect that have emerged in the South Asian region – *Deoband, Jama'at-e-Islami, Ahl-e-Hadith* and *Barelwi* which are inspired versions of theological and historical counterparts and each having its own religious seminaries (Singh, 2012). Just as Al-Qaeda has been attributed to the *Wahhabi* school of thought, radicalisation

and the recent rise in Islamic extremism in South Asia are attributed to the *Deobandi* movement.

The *Deobandi* movement was initiated in 1867 in Northern India by Shah Wali Ullah, a strict interpreter of Islamic jurisprudence with considerably vast research and strong views on declaring Shiites as *infidel/kafir* (Wolffe, 2002).

By the 1930's, tremendous literature had penetrated the Indian Muslim society propagating against the Shiite rituals (Sharar, Halim, Harcourt, & Hussain, 1994). The sectarian divide received legitimacy with the official recognition from the British rulers which can then be seen as reflective of "countrywide religio-revivalist trends and tendencies" (2002, p. 80).

The *Deobandi* movement, sharing its ideological underpinnings with the *Wahhabi* movement, despite slight theological differences, works in Pakistan with an intention of revoking what is referred as invocations from Muslim practices and realignment of Islamic practices (Nishapuri, 2013).

Contextualization of Islamic discourse

Islam as a political theology can broadly be categorized into three variations: first, there is Islam as a faith; second, there are Islamists who seek to implement Islamic governance as local guiding entities; third, there are Militant Islamists "who wish to impose a narrow form of Islam through violence upon a diverse Muslim community" (Stavridis, 2010, p. x).

Militant Islamists seek greater effort in action with respect to the imposition of *Sharia*. *Sharia*[2] serves as the guiding factor in Muslims everyday lives. It is based on the interpretation of Islamic texts. There are three opposing views on the methodology of the interpretation. The first one adheres to sustaining an amalgamation of historical, regional and cultural identity with the religious one; the second one titled "revivalist" focuses on the strict interpretation of Islamic customs while condemning regional and cultural influence, meanwhile the third, liberalist view, attempts at balancing a position between the first two (Kurzman, 2003). Thus, in the context of Pakistan, extremist Militant Islamists and radicalization can be situated in the revivalist strand which propagates *jihad*[3].

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[2] *Arabic word meaning legislation*
[3] *Arabic word meaning struggle*

Islamic extremists can be defined as individuals undertaking or encouraging extreme measures including the eradication of anyone with opposing views by way of rationalising *jihad* (Lapidus, 2002). *Jihad* is one of the essential beliefs on which rests the faith of a Muslim: It refers to the religious duty of defending one's faith from internal and external shortcomings including weaknesses of the inner self and powers which threaten the identity or presence of Islam. The concept bears numerous interpretations amongst different sects; one of the stringent and literal interpretations limits the act to armed fighting against and often eradication of any entity which poses threat to the Islamic system (Brachman, 2008).

Militancy and radicalisation

According to Ayesha Siddiqa, Pakistan and particularly the Punjab province are experiencing such radicalization. There, on one hand, militancy can be attributed to the training of the jihadists to wage a holy war against the infidels; while on the other hand, radicalization seems to be penetrating the fabric of the educated, middle class to upper class elite. In this context, middle class can be defined as a group of educated individuals with a comparatively higher degree of freedom to influence the ideological processes of the society (Sridharan, 2004. As a developing country, Pakistan's middle class can understandably be rising with newer ideological sense; however, the recent shift can be debated to reflect radical opinions which perhaps might be stemming from exertion of ideological preaching growing rampant in the country where "the *jihadis* and radical Islamists have replaced the traditional feudal in Punjab" (Siddiqa, 2013, p. 4)**.** Two examples reflective of religious extremist discourse are *Tehrik-e-Taliban* and *Lashkar-e-Jhangvi.*

Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)

Derived from a Pushto word, Talib meaning a student, Taliban refers to a group of people seeking knowledge. The group first emerged in Afghanistan as a student movement facilitated by local and international support to combat Soviet forces. Nationalism did not seem to bear the transnational significance that could unite and gather donors for the battle as much as religious ideology could.

Religious schools became the primary and mostly the only source of religious understanding and a definition of an ideal Islamic society which was later adopted to address the current socio-economic challenges in the country (Rashid, 2010).

Bearing no official affiliation with Afghani Taliban, Tehrik-e-Taliban (TTP) formally announced its establishment in 2007; it was created by Baitullah Mehsud, a tribal combatant from Pakistan along with a cluster of four other smaller organizations sharing strict revivalist religious ideology (Abbas, 2008). Until 2007, several groups with informal operational presence had been combating Pakistani armed forces in the tribal regions, with most of the combatants returning from Afghanistan after the Soviet war. "TTP in particular has aggressively sought to destroy tribal hierarchies in favour of ideological association" (Bergen, Peter, & Tiedemann, 2012, p. 352); the group controls eight tribal agencies spread along the Pakistan Afghanistan border of Federally Administered Tribal Areas, with intensive penetration into the Southern region of the Punjab province.

Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ)

Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (Army of *Jhangvi*) is an offshoot of *Ahle-Sunnat-Wal-Jamat*[4] (ASWJ). ASWJ is a political party which was established in 1985 by Nawaz Jhangvi, a cleric in Jhang[5]. The organization was formed in the wake of the Iranian Revolution of 1979 wherein the Iranian leader, Khomeni, had urged the exportation of the revolution (UPI, 1981). Given Iran's strategic position as neighbouring country along with Pakistan hosting the second largest Shiite population in the world, there was a growing sense of anticipation that Iran might try to exert its hegemonic interests (Mir, 2010). While LeJ operates from Jhang, it is famous for targeting the Shiite population in major urban centres.

Media landscape

Islam has long offered mosques as an integral part of inviting discussions and exchange of views. Essentially, in the fabric of Islamic cultures, "religious specialists (…) worked to spread the norms of scriptural Islam among the illiterate population" (Salvatore & Dale, 2004, p. 11). Communal settings of Muslim practices have been leveraged by extremist factions as it aids the effective penetration of messages to audiences which view religious gatherings and schools as credible centres of religious information.

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[4] Formerly known as Sipah e Sahaba – Companions of God
[5] Small, sensitive district in Southern Punjab

It is speculated that 12,000 religious seminaries with extremist ideological setup are currently operational in Pakistan, funded by private groups from Kuwait, UAE and Saudi Arabia (Mir, 2010). However, with the expansion of digital platforms, extremist factions of religious ideologies are finding more effective methods of reaching out to audiences and hence sustain a stronger online presence. Al-Qaeda and The Islamic State (IS)[6] are two notable extremist religious movements that have an intricate media presence.

Al-Qaeda's official media wing, *As-Sahab*[7] has been producing and distributing Al-Qaeda's content digitally – highlighting its mandate, strategy, current operations, recruitment processes, and political and socio-economic perspectives. *AlHayat* was launched in 2014, prior to which the group communicated through the *AlFurqan* Media centre. *AlHayat* is a recent example of extremist media that has challenged the dynamics of media propaganda and existing counter strategies of the same.

With an intricately woven network, equipped with sophisticated media skills and carefully composed narratives, the group has been effectively reaching out to audiences through digital platforms in multiple languages (Berger J. , 2014).

Pakistan has approximately three million broadband users along with estimated 29 million with internet access. Less than half of the broadband users are registered on Facebook which remains the most visited social networking site in the country (Yusuf, 2013). While the diverse availability of media platforms does influence the country's media consumption, it is generally also the way media in itself leads to the creation of an imagined community (Anderson, 1991). In the wake of the recent increase of violence in Pakistan, there has been a tremendous increase in digital activism in the country. It has led to the creation of discussion platforms serving to debate political and violent issues. There has been growing mass self-communication (Castells, 2013) with individual Facebook pages, popular blogs such as *Shia*killing[8], Memeabad[9], Rants of Pakistani citizen[10], Let us build Pakistan (LUBP)[11].

While on one hand, such pages are reflective of active users engaging and consuming media content digitally, the same has paved way for the extremist ideologies in social media as "the

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[6] Formerly associated with Al-Qaeda and later known as Islamic State of Syria and Levant (ISIL)

[7] Arabic – meaning Cloud

[8] *Shia*-Killing – www.Shiakilling.com

[9] Memeabad – www.blog.memeabad.com

[10] Rants of a Pakistani citizen - www.facebook.com/RantsOfAPakistani

[11] Let us build Pakistan – www.lubpak.com

main strategic communication assets for terrorists [that] have ensured them a favourable communication asymmetry" (Bockstette, 2008, p. 5).

As Amil Khan puts it, in Pakistan, people tend to interact with media more actively on the emotional tangent, which is something that Islamist militant organizations have been leveraging to construct the message. Essentially, Pakistan was created on the basis of separate Muslim identity; this very basis today serves as a leveraging point for constructing and deconstructing nationalist narratives to gain extremist or otherwise support (Khan A. , 2013).

However, the theory may hold true partially but not absolutely as it does not encompass the reason behind rising sectarianism in Pakistan. Extremist sectarian ideologies have long been rooted before partition; thus, it is imperative to also consider how religious identity has been given more preference than nationalist identity in the country. Extremist factions in Pakistan address sectarian discourse on the religious basis more than on the basis of eradicating the "Other" from Pakistan for nationalist reasons.

Evidence of this argument can be found in the campaign launched by former Pakistan Army Chief and President General Pervez Musharaf, who propagated "war on terror" in Pakistan, actively banning militant organizations and combating their bases with army operations in 2000. While doing so, in order to neutralize any potential negative sentiments from the public, government launched a campaign titled *"Sub se pahlay Pakistan"*[12]. With extensive celebrity support, it focused in its entirety to highlight an individual's identity as "Pakistani" first and perhaps religious secondary.

Despite the neutralisation attempts, in the context of extremist religious discourse, all of the prominent extremist groups in Pakistan have an official digital presence from *Tehrik-e-Taliban, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi* to *Hizb-ut-Tahir*. *Umar Media* is TTP's official media wing, while *Jhangvi* Media marks LeJ's formal media presence. These groups continue operating digitally without facing sustainable blocking policies. If they however are banned, for instance TTP's official website was restricted within a day of its launch, the presence resurfaces on alternative social platforms other networks (Haque, 2013).

Thus, religion seems to be used for extending hegemonic interests, whereby specific exportation of extremist revivalist ideology paves way to the creation of Islamic militant

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[12] *"Sub se Pehlay Pakistan – Pakistan First"* - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0zWwIzeLNaQ

organisations that propagate an ideological mandate to the mainstream population by way of their communication.

With the active media presence of TTP and LeJ and rising minority genocide (Watch, 2014), the review then points towards the query of how such organisations effectively define the "self" and the "other" by way of constructing its narrative.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The following draws from various notions of power, ideology, discourse and essentially antagonistic narrative as well as Othering through orientalisation (Baumann & Gingrich, 2005) whereby the other is assumed to be lacking what is right in the self. It is against the literary review of the background and understanding of extremist militant groups (who position themselves as religious authorities responsible for addressing and resolving the ongoing socio-political challenges of Islamic world) and their media landscape where existence and recognition of Shiite sect within the Islamic domain is seen as problematic. Essentially, thus, it aims to explore the discursive ways in which groups contextualize the construction of the Shiite identity, exercising ideological power to normalise a certain narrative. Where power may be explored as being exerted through ideological means and by way of false consciousness (Eagleton, 1991) as masses are attempted to be manipulated by a set of ideological beliefs asserting the right and the wrong for them (Dijk, 1998).

Further, "Othering is a course of action whereby society labels an inferior group into existence" (Matusitz, 2012, p. 142). Consequently, discursive strategies of Othering seem to work in conjunction to drawing boundaries of which individual or group belongs together. Such constructions are created by and embedded within the daily communal interactions (Schwalbe, Godwin, Holden, Schrock, Thompson, & Wolkomir, 2000).

Research Queries

The research aims to investigate the construction of LeJ and TTP's narrative and attempt to understand "how" the two organizations seek to communicate an ideological discourse by way of leveraging the historical, social and political dynamics of Islamic sectarianism. Extending from the above understanding, the research questions orientating this research are:

In what ways do discursive strategies of othering are employed by extremist Islamist discourses in Pakistan?

    (a) How do extremist Islamist voices articulate the other?
    (b) How do extremist Islamist voices justify jihad against the other?

The research will attempt to address the above queries by undertaking a qualitative work through Critical Discourse Analysis, details of which are discussed in the following section.

METHODOLOGY

Language is an expression through which meaning is created. It has been viewed as an interaction that helps transcend boundaries of time and space to create and embed context (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). According to Fairclough, various identities are reflected through language which influences the endorsement of certain ideologies and power relations in the society; shaping discourses and knowledge.

Knowledge has various narratives, which often are contextualized and evolve within a certain time frame and culture and which are influenced by power and the subject in the position to exert it. Further, these narratives of knowledge are constructed by communicative undertakings (Schofield, Irene, Tolson, & Fleming, 2012). Critical Discourse Analysis is a qualitative method that ensures in-depth investigation of such texts.

Communication of extremist ideologies is often reflective of their hegemonic struggles in which the narrative is seen woven in fabrics of religion to rationalise the discourse. Gramci's conception of hegemony and its reproduction through dominant discourse can be studied closely in extremist communications to investigate the discursive ways in which Othering maybe practiced and reproduced. One of the ways in which discursive strategies of othering are realized is through understanding the stance of the narrative. Stancetaking as highlighted by Robert Englebretson (2007) is defined as adopting a position, wherein three queries of who is the initiator of the stance, the subject of stance and the subject to which the stance is being responded to, can help critically evaluate the narrative (Englebretson, 2007).

CDA as an interpretative tool helps studying various practices by way of examining the language used to produce it. CDA seems more focused in the traits of such production than in the language itself (Mayr & Machin, 2012); for "creation of meaning for a particular concept is rooted in a social context" (Matusitz, 2012, p. 138).

There are various ways of undertaking CDA. Fairclough's three-dimensional approach helps analyse the text on textual, discursive and sociocultural level. The dimension of discourse helps establish the connection between the textual and sociocultural level (Fairclough, 2005). At the first dimensional level, the research will attempt to evaluate the narrative construction of the self and the other. At the second dimensional level, it will attempt to extract the interaction of ideological process. At the third dimensional level, the research focuses on understanding how the origins of narrative embedded in various social, cultural and political paradigms are leveraged by authors to position the Other while attempting to normalise the narrative.

Challenges

Neither Critical Discourse Analysis nor this research can help establish the motivation, reasoning and exact intention of the producer of the communications (Mayr & Machin, 2012). While the same can be speculated and the messages studied, it can still not ascertain impact on the audience with absolute assurance; which inevitably serves as the limitation of the scope of current research while paving way for such possible studies in the future. A supplementing research of extremist communications analysing the audience reception through ethnographic means , as suggested by Fairclough (1999), can further the current research scope to determine as to how knowledge production is aiding the normalisation of extremist ideologies in Pakistan.

Qualitative analysis often poses another risk of personal bias of which the researcher undertaking this study is fully aware of. It has been undertaken by an individual who belongs to the Shiite community in Pakistan. It is thus imperative to be self reflexive while analyzing the data. In relation to Othering and self reflexivity, Stuart Hall coined six possible levels of biases (Hall, 2001) which tend to accentuate the current differences of Othering, leading to further polarization of paradigms. Although widely suggested for and referred to in the developmental literature, the same differences can serve and have been used as a reminder to remain self-reflexive through the course of this study. While questioning and countering stereotypes against terrorism and representation of extremism in mainstream media is beyond the scope of this study, efforts still have been made to ensure avoidance of religious or sectarian generalization.

Sample

The last ten years have seen a drastic rise and confident expression of hate speech against Shiites in Pakistan online (Haque, 2014). While most of TTP's official narratives are composed of various "Others" including Americans, Jews, Pakistani armed forces and Shiites, LeJ's narratives exclusively focus on Shiites by way of defining the practices as invocations to Islam. The argument of the research lies in understanding the construction of the narrative rather than on why or how Shiites are the organisation's main target.

There is a vast corpus of related data available online. In the past decade, greater access to global internet has facilitated revivalist religious movements online. With particular reference to the media landscape discussed earlier, the sample for the research was limited to data available online.

As previously mentioned, the sample of extremist organizations for this research was narrowed to *Lashkar-e-Jhangvi* and *Tehrik-e-Taliban*; incorporating more would have been at the cost of the quality of analysis given the limited scope of the research. While there are similar organisations operating with similar ideology in the country, LeJ and TTP have been at the forefronts of undertaking attacks, communicating mandate efficiently and claiming responsibility; thereby, positioning them as suitable cases for study. While LeJ has its own official website and Twitter presence, TTP's latest official website was taken down (Dawn, 2014) in the wake of recent armed action by the state.

In total, four articles were selected; with two articles from each group's communication. TTP's sample articles have been carefully selected from TTP's official magazine called Azan. Azan magazine was launched in 2012 and since then has had five issues published online on various platforms. The magazine is essentially in English and hence no translation was undertaken of these two articles. LeJ's original communications were in Urdu. One article is the threat that has been issued by the organization against Shiites in Pakistan; it was distributed through pamphlets and circulated online on forums and social media. The second piece is a body of text that appears on LeJ's official website.

The data collected was from the last three years only to help ascertain the recent stance and structure of communication with respect to changing socio-political dynamics of the country. CDA entails delving into understanding the text richly generated as a product of, as well as the meaningful ingredient, of discursive events of a particular society. In such a situation,

translating texts in other languages for analysis poses severe hindrance to the understanding the process of meaning generation (Fairclough, 1992). Pakistan is predominantly an Urdu speaking nation. The language has long served as the leading medium for all Islamic movements emerging at the time of British colonial rule in the Indian Subcontinent including the *Deobandi* and *Barelvi* movements (Rahman, 2012). Given the dominance of the language, almost all the literature of extremist organizations in Pakistan today is majorly in Urdu followed by a small proportion of literature in in regional languages. The analysis may have been severed if the sample data was translated for analysis. Henceforth, to retain the essence of context, text has been read and understood in Urdu while its analysis has been presented in English; however, the closest possible translation of the text is also presented in the appendices for reference.

ANALYSIS

The following section provides a comprehensive summary of the analysis undertaken on the two sets of communication messages extracted from the official communications of TTP and LeJ in Pakistan. Having noted earlier in the literary section how revivalist Islamist organizations operate, the following section now undertakes an exploratory discussion highlighting the ways in which discursive strategies of Othering are employed and stance adopted by the two organizations in Pakistan.

LeJ and anti-Shiite discourse online

The main targets of extremist online forums have remained the government, armed forces, judiciary, Americans, Jews, *Barelvi* Sunnis, *Ahmedis*[13] and Shiites. While often the first five are grouped and targeted generally, *Barelvi* Sunnis, *Ahmedis* and Shiites in particular are targeted specifically. As Haque highlights, the narrative is two-fold, with the online content focusing either on the religious or the political front. On the religious tangent, the Shiites are portrayed as an excommunicated community, outside of the Islamic realm and hence infidels. On the political side, Shiites are positioned as a group with hegemonic interests trying to seize power in the country (Haque, 2014).

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[13] Religious movement believing in a current anointed leader

LeJ particularly serves to normalize its content which can be deduced from its digital presence and involvement in national politics facilitated with its strong electoral support in the Punjab province, despite the ban on the organization's operations (Naqvi, 2014).

LeJ has been prominently issuing threats to Shiites in Pakistan. The *Hazara* community[14] has served as a recent example of ethnic and religious genocide given its regional location and nearness to LeJ's operational base. *Hazaras* are predominantly the only Shiite community in the region surrounded by Sunni *Pashtuns* and other tribal agencies. According to Human Rights report, nearly 50% of Shiites targeted in 2013 belonged to the *Hazara* community (Watch, 2014).

Two sample messages of LeJ were selected for the purpose of understanding the structure of the narrative. First is the pamphlet citing reasons to excommunicate and wage jihad against Shiites; second is a set of continuous prose available on LeJ's website.

Both the texts are similar in terms of textual construction and frequent usage of words such as "*Kafir*"[15], "Impure", "*Jihad*" and "*Shias*". Subordinating the other with labels is often evident in literature that serves to penetrate mainstream structures with the new position on the other. Repetitive usage can then be seen as a strategy of addressing a problem in the society rather than as mere eradication of another human being (Hillgruber, 1989). As one progresses from one text to another, the pattern begins emerging. The texts are explicit, categorical in linguistic expression and communication. For example, "Just as our fighters have waged a successful *jihad* against the *Shias Hazaras* in Afghanistan and butchered them" (Jhangvi, n.d.).

It is a two paragraph communication drafted in a letter format. With an opening signature signifying the Balochistan[16] Unit of LeJ as the source of message and closing with the Chief's signature designating the particular individual who may have written the message. However, it does not signify any specific names of LeJ's individuals. The overall message is in active voice, with sound agency grounded in intentions as well as admission of previous attacks on the Shiites in Pakistan.

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[14] Ethnic community belong to Shiite faith

[15] Infidel

[16] Province in Pakistan bordering Iran

Further, the text switches between first and third person language. When it is speaking of destroying *Shias*, it seems to sustain the tone of agency and ownership; for instance "we will make Pakistan their graveyard" (Jhangvi, n.d.). On the other hand, when the message speaks of origination of orders, it seems to nominalise with sudden switch to passive sentence structure; for instance, "awaiting orders to operate across Pakistan" (Jhangvi, n.d.).

Adopting a stance on "them", while the message is directed to a non-*Shias* audience, it has a strong resonance of the "Other". It speaks of the "Other", while establishing *Shias* as outside of Islam. The text, outside of its contextual continuum itself, still sustains the taste of "threat" as it expresses LeJ's strategy to launch future attacks on the same.

Possible audiences of the message can be speculated to be beyond just the existing followers of LeJ. For instance, it refers to having acquired "signatures of revered clerics" (Jhangvi, n.d.) that have declared *Shias*'s as *kafir*. The message thus is addressing audiences who may have doubts about *Shias* as being otherwise. The use of word "revered" to describe clerics seems to reflect an attempt at establishing the authenticity and credibility of *Shias*'s excommunication. The message does not delve into explaining as to why the Shiites have been declared infidel. It does not detail the clerics or the origins of the clerics that have declared them as infidel. The message further rationalizes the discourse against the "Other" by stating how *Shias* have been "butchered" in Afghanistan, seeking it as a benchmark for doing the same in Pakistan.
On the discursive level, it adopts a combination of national and religious identity to position its stance against the "Other", while propagating *Jihad* against it. National identity has been used on the basis of a general Pakistani's understanding of the notion behind the very word "Pakistan" which means the "Land of Pure". The text states, "We will rid Pakistan of impure people, Pakistan means land of pure and *Shias* have no right to live here" (Jhangvi, n.d.). Positioned as the opening line of the message, the strategic placement of the line as well as the circular reasoning used reflects their stance about the "Other".

Textual message often comprises of what it explicitly states along with what it does not state, both bearing equal significance (Fairclough, 2003). For instance, the message expresses *Shias* as infidel, citing *jihad* as a religious duty to be waged against them; however, it does not state the reasons for waging *jihad* against them. Absence of explanation may be attributed to the assumption that the audiences are already well aware of such deductions or that it directly tends to address *Shias* to communicate their intentions.

The statement seemed detailed with clear specificity going at length to express LeJ's targets, for example, "our mission is the abolition of this impure sect (...) from every city, every town,

every village, every nook and corner of Pakistan" (Jhangvi, n.d.). Repetition of the word "every" reflects the emphasis that the author is trying to assert along with the detailing of author's stance. Further, the author's stance on Islam has an antagonistic discursive pattern which becomes more apparent in the latter part of the statement. For example, "we will only rest when we fly the flag of true Islam on this land" (Jhangvi, n.d.).

In the socio-cultural context, the message was issued within a month's period of LeJ's former leader Malik Ishaq's release from prison. After taking responsibility of several attacks, he was imprisoned with the court cases and charges against him.

He was released in July 2011 by the court citing insufficient witnesses to prove the charges (Watch, 2014). Amidst charges against him, he reportedly accepted responsibility for several murders; terror attacks on the *Hazara* community (Watch, 2014) and was under investigation for a terror attack on Sri Lanka's Cricket team along with a hate-inciting speech he had delivered at a school in Pakistan (Tribune, 2014). His release was celebrated by his followers, coverage of which bore striking resemblance to the release of Mumtaz Qadri, who was an official guard of Salman Taseer, former Punjab Governor. In 2011, the Governor was targeted by his own guard, Mumtaz Qadri, for his liberal views against the conservative blasphemy laws in the country. Mumtaz Qadri has been applauded, actively supported by mainstream Islamist organizations along with an otherwise liberal class's support for him reflective by their welcome at the court and the recent construction of a mosque in his name in the federal capital of the country (Zahra-Malik, 2014).

As stated earlier, LeJ has a website and strong digital presence with an active Twitter handle. In order for the visitor to enter the website, it has to accept the declaration stated. The declaration in Urdu outlines the generic Islamic beliefs of Muslims; the user has an option of accepting or rejecting the declaration. Rejection of declaration leads the user to two poems in Urdu titled "Fifth Columnists" and the "The Real face of *Shias*".

The first one assumes the position of "them" while speaking of "themselves", with historically rich setting, the text speaks of *Shias* community disobeying and going against the Islamic rule since after Prophet's death.

On the textual level, the first poem's title is composed of a Hindi proverb which can be translated as Fifth Columnist; whereby the divide and conflict's origins are considered to be from within led by a minority going against the majority. The title points towards the historical sectarian divide of Shiites denying the acceptance of caliphate as the authentic

system of continuance after Prophet's death. The poem uses words of admission projecting the shortcomings of Shiites as perceived by LeJ.

The stance of Shiites as stated by the author in the second poem does not explore, contest or speculate the Shiite ideology; instead, it sustains the presupposition narrative while establishing Shiite's ideology which may otherwise be contested on the basis of their theological practices.

The second one resumes to the position of "self" while defining the "other", the narration rationalizes the excommunication of Shiites with historical references.

On the textual level, the author states the intention of the poetry in the title, while the poetry speaks to the audience who might be at the perils of deception by the "other" – for instance, "Don't be deceived by the desecrators of Quran!" (The Real Face of Shia, n.d.).

On the discursive level, both narratives establish the central argument on "them" as the supporters of "foreign imperialism". In the socio-political context, culturally, there has been a trend of praising community heroes in social gatherings where such poems are performed in regional languages including *Urdu* and *Punjabi*. Often called *qit'as*[17], these have been used by poets to narrate events and satirize others in the courts of Kings and Emperors prior to the British Colonial rule in the Indian subcontinent (Schimmel, 1975). The trend emerged with lack of mass media in the medieval period, where, "the medieval had recourse to his poet (...) to tarnish the images of his rivals and opponents" (Lewis, 1993, p. 171).

Greater access to mass media and evolution of media dynamics may have replaced courts of the Rulers to internet forums, but the construction of narrative still bears striking resemblance to its historical origins. For instance, one of the reasons cited for the assassination of Umayyad princes which inevitably led to the fall of the empire was poetry inciting targeted hate (Lewis, 1993).

Extending from the example, the construction of LeJ's narrative seems to leverage traditional and historical practices of the region as well as of the Islamic political history whereby the other is demeaned for its identity by way of poetic conversation.

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[17] a lesser version of a rhyming poem

TTP – The case of the lesser "Other" and antagonistic narrative

As compared to LeJ, TTP has a broader focus encompassing Pakistan government, Americans, Jews along with Muslim minorities in the discourse of "other".

Thus, it is less surprising to notice how TTP has relatively less literature which exclusively discusses Shiites. However, TTP still positions Shiites as the worst "other" i.e. the enemy within; given the fact that Shiites claim to follow the same religion. The organization's lesser focus on exclusively targeting Shiites in the literature may be attributed to ensuring mainstream tribal support in Northern Pakistan.

Further, TTP had been facilitated by the growing existence of Punjabi Taliban in Southern Punjab province of Pakistan.

The set of sample data for TTP included two articles from the second and the fifth issue of its official magazine titled Azan. Before delving into the discursive analysis of the text, it is imperative to outline the graphical medium in which the messages have been embedded.

Both the articles seem to be graphically rich with the first article containing three pictures facilitating the narrative and accentuating the argument with black-clad individuals depicting the Shiite identity; captured as powerful other with the agency to create havoc while in the second picture people seem relatively helpless. The second article has two sets of pictures, the first facilitating the argument of atrocities being committed in Syria. Briefly, the second set of pictures seems to reaffirm the textual argument of Shiites' association with Jews as the former Iranian president and revolutionary are shown symbolically for Shiite identity. The graphical representation seems to leverage the simmering anti-Semitic sentiments amongst Pakistanis, whereby Pakistanis generalize Jews as Zionists and enemies of Islam, the analogy can be seen here by the author's attempt to say the same about Shiites and Iran.

On the textual level, both articles share a common pattern of stating the social and cultural challenge that is positioned as the source of societal pains, followed by describing and attributing its reason to the "other" while consequently offering *Jihad* as the solution to combat the challenge. As one reads through, the trend of overlexicalisation (Mayr & Machin, 2012) begins appearing with structural opposition and labelling of Shiites as an "impure" creed that needs to be eradicated as seemed the case in LeJ's communications. Similarly, TTP as well reflects a sense of "othering" by way of repeatedly labelling the enemy as "*Kafir*", "Infidel", "pests", "ulcer".

However, in TTP's narratives, there is a comparatively stronger sense of insistence on *Jihad* evident from the repetition of Jihadi discourse, cited with Quranic texts to add credibility. The narratives seem to engage with the reader by trying to present statements as arguments, citing political or social examples to position Muslims as victims, while inevitably presenting the "other" as the enemy and the oppressor.

The first article "Rawalpindi Massacre" does not bear the specific author's name. This particular specimen is from TTP's second magazine issue released in April 2013.

The article covers a clash of religious seminary students with Shiites on the day when Shiites were commemorating grief rituals on *Ashura*[18].

It starts with attribution and declaration to God just the way most TTP narratives are constructed; however, it does not have supporting Quranic verses and presents itself as a rational, political argument. The author seems to pre-empt and counter criticism of how media may have shaped the event's discourse to target audiences; it deconstructs it in the introduction by challenging how "media is adamant in portraying" (Rawalpindi Massacre, 2013), the phrase seeming to emphasise ideological squaring (Dijk, 1998). It then summarizes the account of the event, while the author seems to be using the event as an evidence of Shiites infidelity. For instance, "proof that the *Shias* are not in fact Muslims (...) they are one of the most dangerous of the *Kuffar*" (Rawalpindi Massacre, 2013).

While the sentence draws upon the event as an evidence to rationalise, lexical absence (Mayr & Machin, 2012) of otherwise expected clauses becomes apparent. For instance, TTP's religious discourse establishes excommunication of the "Other" on the basis of their beliefs, if so, how can a clash be used as evidence. Thus, what is positioned as a credible rationalisation; can then perhaps be used as an argument to contest the ideological deduction of the narrative.

It argues that infiltration of the key positions is reflective of waging war against the Muslims. TTP's selection of words to describe how Shiites commemorate rituals can be used to draw observations on the way sectarian discourse is shaped. For instance, "beating their own selves" (Rawalpindi Massacre, 2013) can be used to argue how anti-Shiite sentiments are formed and propagated on the basis of "rituals". Given the digital age, skewed representation

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[18] Marks the historical martyrdom anniversary the grandson of Muslim's Last Prophet

of particular rituals undertaken by regional Shiite communities is generalized while omitting the representation of communal gatherings undertaken.

In the wake of growing extremist other-ing of the community, there have been recent mainstream campaigns such as Who Is Hussain (Hussain R. , 2013) to counter the anti-Shiite discourse which is focused on representing the rituals.

While the ways in which the article promotes Othering stand clear, there are statements that further it by suggesting how mainstream religious seminaries, which deny having associations with extremist organizations, can be speculated to be at the perils of extreme ideologies' normalisation. For instance, the article states, "the Madrassah administration later informed an Azan Magazine inside reporter" (Rawalpindi Massacre, 2013). While the author attempts at adding credibility to the news event's alternative representation, it could simultaneously be critically questioned for the association of religious schools in urban centres of Pakistan with organizations banned by the Government. Further, while the TTP article twice mentions seventy people as killed contrary to media reports of eight (Tribune, 2013), in both instances the author seems to lay active focus with agency attribution to the Other who carried out the act of killing. Both additional agencies, namely, police and the media personnel are positioned as passive recipients of the act as well. What thus could be deduced and contested is how the article interchangeably uses passive and active voice to appropriate the victim in the passive and the "Other" in the active note. Nine paragraphs of the article are used to present the alternative narrative and authenticate what the article describes as "such horrendous killings" (Rawalpindi Massacre, 2013). The last two paragraphs refer to the residents as stating the power of Taliban, "Only Taliban possess the ability to teach these *Shias* a lesson!" while the last paragraph logically establishes it as a reason for the reestablishment of the Caliphate facilitated by waging war against the "Other".

The second article, written by *Maulana*[19] Asim Umar, focuses on the ongoing war in Syria. The author is a prominent Taliban religious leader who has been quoted multiple times by media for statements propagating Pakistan's participation in the Syrian war.

The article seems to have adopted a powerful voice highlighting the emotional elements of the oppression of Sunnis in the country; while doing so, the tone of the article changes from positioning the Syrian Sunnis as victims to adopting agency and active voice in suggesting Shiites as the cause of the oppression. It tends to generalize and adopt a narrative equating

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[19] Title for a religious cleric

Shiites as the "thorn in the heart of the Muslim ummah..an ulcer" (Rawalpindi Massacre, 2013). Again, as evident from previous narratives, this article as well seems to be positioning Shiites as a sickness that needs to be eradicated; hence making *jihad* against them as a duty of eradication rather than as killing humans. Unlike the other narratives of TTP, this article seems to lay stronger focus on the historical dimensions of sectarian differences.

For instance, "daughters of Mother Ayesha" and "daughters of Damascus, Halab and Hims are crying over the ripping of their veils of honor" are statements that position itself as the offspring while the "other" is described as its enemy.

The article, while mentioning the historical figure of Ayesha, wife of Muhammad, does not mention Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad. while both figures are attributed with different levels of significance on sectarian political grounds. Thereby, again, on discursive level, the author seems to leverage and communicate the apparently incontestable notions to his audiences which can only be discussed but not agreed upon amongst the two sects. However, deliberate provoking of the sectarian differences and using an emotional sensitivity to communicate it while discussing the lack of unity amongst Muslims seems paradoxical on the social cultural level.

Propagation of Jihad and construction of "Other"

According to Sunni doctrines, a prophecy by Muhammad states that the religion ultimately will be divided in 72 sects, out of which only one will be the "saved sect". While the narration has various interpretations, it inevitably is quoted and justified by each sect as the "saved" one (Khaki, 2013); more specifically so by Militant Islamists who extend it "by the employment of compulsion, violence and terror as instruments to achieve" (Allen, 2006, p. 22) reflection from the narrative; where an "encounter [of] these narratives with a complex dialogic, where our past speaks to our present" takes place (Moosa, 2014, p. 36).

Based on the literature evidence and analysis of the text, LeJ and TTP can be assessed as the revivalist Islamists driven by extremist ideology. Both demonstrate the tendency to define the self as righteous while positioning the "other" as infidel; whereby the "other" is aligned as the "disease", facilitating the organizations to undertake enemification (Matusitz, 2012) to rationalize the antagonistic discourse against the same. In the context, the "grammars of othering" seems to illustrate how both organizations switch the tone of the narrative (Postert,

2005) between the self and the other, often defining the "other" as "impure" by way of positioning the lack of purity as presence of the same in the "self".

Western imperialism, foreign collaboration and practicing of historical communal rituals are viewed as diseases that have "corrupted" a community which "calls itself Muslims". The emphasis of both narratives lies on Shiites as a conspiracy to weaken Muslim unity in the world. The perception has further been reinforced with the Middle Eastern crisis. For instance, American support for Saddam Hussain's execution was an act applauded by Shiites internationally given Saddam Hussain's unfavourable policies and persecution of Shiites in Iraq (it should also be noted that the Kurds also celebrated the downfall of Saddam Hussain - being the other persecuted group in Iraq). In general, both organizations seem to understand its respective audiences and leverage religious text to rationalize the "othering" discourse. Extremist religious organizations seem to carefully monitor, observe and study their audiences to create a message that best suits the changing receptions. It is evident from the way Taliban's strategy has evolved overtime. TTP's official communication does not emphasise exclusively on the excommunication of Shiites in Pakistan (Banton, 2013). Exclusive focus on Shiites would make American imperialism and Pakistani state's support for it as secondary which consequently slow the process of TTP's demand of imposition of *Sharia* in the country.

Both organizations practice discursive strategies of othering, while TTP focuses more on the propagation of *jihad*, LeJ seeks to normalise by way of rationalising the narrative through religious sermons and history. Chances of penetration, response and impact of LeJ seem comparatively higher given its emphasis and celebration of religious practices. TTP through media specifically has been positioned as a terrorist organization. It may be successful in using its narratives to draw regional support from those with less exposure to international media or extremists who already have been influenced into antagonistic radical thinking; the latter composed of TTP's magazine audiences. However, given the unofficial association with Afghanistan's Taliban, the communication may still be met with scepticism as compared to that of LeJ. LeJ also has a favourable advantage of positioning itself as a local organisation that stems and operates from its town. The town has long been a victim of sectarian strife which facilitates the normalisation of narrative.

Both organisations seem to propagate *jihad*, explicitly admit current and future attacks. While TTP's propagation is on the emotional tangent of "Islamic awakening"; LeJ's seems reserved to reactionary advances pertaining to political and historical Shiites' practices. Both organizations however, reflect a construction of grey propaganda where contextual analysis seems to reveal the fallacy of argument in the narrative (Becker H., 1949).

Further, both organisations bear striking similarity to the ideology of Islamic State (IS), focusing on regional conflict and sectarian struggle as opposed to global jihadist strategy. While sophisticated penetration of digital platforms and applications reflects the professional yet explicit mandate of IS; TTP and LeJ remain comparatively diplomatic with gradual penetration of ideological differences in the country (Rashid, 2014).

Normalization of narrative in the society

In the bid to cover the radicalization of Pakistan, media groups have been providing extensive coverage to individuals belonging to extremist religious organizations. Inevitably, this can be argued to further the polarization of "us" and "them", accentuating sectarian differences while leading to growing normalization of the narrative in the mainstream audiences of Pakistan. Margaret Thatcher once referred to similar phenomena, later studied by academicians as oxygen of publicity (Ross, 2007). While Van Dijk has undertaken extensive work on how "social relationships and processes are accomplished at micro-level"; Fairclough has further delved into understanding how similar texts act in normalising change rather than just reproduction of existing relations which is evident in three ways.

Firstly, for instance, how media groups tend to portray extremist ideologies on media. For instance, Malik Ishaq's release demanded coverage as well as his interview on Express Group channels both serve to communicate the organization's (Ishaq, 2013) mandate by media groups despite the ban on the organization's operation in the country, a comparatively recent phenomenon; in a process shaping the "Other" discourse.

Secondly, TTP's threat to Pakistani media has led to media groups adopting self-censorship, thereby seeking to communicate TTP's mandate less critically (Boone, 2014).

Thirdly, the growing normalisation of extremist discourse (Khan R. , 2013) in the country is evident through the adoption of silence over minority genocide and by way of promoting and actively following religious leaders with evident sectarian stance. Spread of religious messages and growing influence of a sect may not be troublesome in societal terms; however, what may indicate trouble is the way in which the growing narrative addresses the "Other" while normalizing its stance against it.

Movements are transnational when collective identity is understood as a commonality (Shehabi, 2008). The pattern signifying the interaction of power and ideology seems

apparent when movements navigate through the nexus of unequal power relations as defined by religious sectarianism in this context, leading to an importation and embedment of religious "false consciousness" in another country.

Religious authorities are credited for leading the community as the Muslims entrust religious schools and literature for guidance. This setup paves way for leveraging communities into ideological domination while rationalising the discourse by way of religious text.

While generalized conclusions cannot be drawn based on a single study, the research attempted to comprehend how extremist organizations in Pakistan construct messages.

Its current limitations including the sample of the research in a narrow scope and language translation seem to have raised two-fold concerns; firstly, what historical and cultural factors are attributing to the penetration of the extremist discourse in Pakistan; secondly, if and how does the absorption of extremist discourse and its normalisation occur in the audiences with greater access to alternative narratives. The concerns can consequently be addressed with holistic audience research along with expanding the current focus of the study to include the first-hand perspective of similar organisations operating in the country.

Religious differences have existed since centuries. The three rings parable as narrated by Nathan the Wise illustrates that one cannot ascertain a particular faith or sect as the "absolute truth" while rationalising the antagonistic narrative against the "other" (Siebers, 2014). Furthermore, the existence of ideological difference points towards accepting that "every identity is relational" (Mouffe, 2005, p. 2). Perhaps, acknowledging the existence of sectarian difference, surrendering the efforts to excommunicate, can help to critically question the ideological trafficking of God, consequently helping combat the rising religious extremist discourse.

The creation and operations of TTP and LeJ may seem a recent phenomenon; however, if seen in the South Asian historical context of Islamic sectarianism, the rise of the *Deobandi* movement as originally influenced by *Wahhabi* discourse, leveraged overtime for hegemonic reasons; the rising polarisation and gradual normalisation of the "othering" narrative and antagonistic sentiments within the fabric of Pakistani society thus begins appearing less as a product of its timely circumstances and more as a recipient of importation of religious ideologies.

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APPENDIX 1

Translation of Lashkar-e-Jhangvi's Public Threat to the Hazara Community[195]

Lashkar-e-Jhangvi Pakistan
Balochistan Unit.

All Shias are liable to be killed. We will rid Pakistan of [this] impure people. Pakistan means land of the pure, and the Shias have no right to live here. We have the decrees and

Ghar kay Bhaidi (Fifth columnists)	The Real face of Shia!
The world knows that we are twelvers	Shia has no link to Islam!
Cursed since 100 generations, we can only lament!	Don't be deceived by the desecrators of Quran!
We are offensive in practicing deviation	If you want to know their real face,
Yet we are absolved of the blame of being brave!	Seek inspiration from the Quran to see their real face,
Did Shia ever took hold of a sword	Why we should regard them part of the Ummat,
The annals of history are empty of such narrative!	When they disrespect Prophet (PBUH) teaching!
These hands have never touched the sword of Islam!	Love for the companions is part of our belief,
We have only fought along parochial divide or hallucinated!	Yet their enemies' hearts are devoid of that that belief!
We are not worthy of the duels that expect loyalty and courage,	They have no connection; you may test on your own!
We are masters of deceit and treason!	With Siddiq, Farooq, Usman and Ali!
They are fools, who consider us Muslims,	How can these cursed people can love the Prophet (PBUH)
If Shia belief in Islam has been authentic!	They had respected mother Aisha,
To call us Muslims is nothing short of a slander	Whom they disrobe in Karbala!
We regard Quran as Usman compilation!	The one who was protected more than one own,
We have no link to either Allah or the Prophet of Islam (PBUH)	Jihad has been made obligatory for them,
We are infact linked to Ibn Sabah,	Try and find any Shia from the theatre of Jihad!
We burn down the abodes that shelter us!	Their every commandment is a complete deviation in itself!

APPENDIX 2

Rawalpindi Massacre

All Praise is due to Allah Alone.... And may Peace and Blessings be upon Prophet Muhammad ﷺ!

The world media is adamant at portraying the Sunni-Shia conflict as "sectarian"; wherever skirmishes between them take place, there is talk around the world of how gaps need to be bridged between the Sunni and Shia "Muslim" communities. On the 10th of Muharram this year, in Rawalpindi Pakistan, there came yet more proof that the Shia are not in fact Muslims; rather, they are one of the most dangerous of the Kuffar who are waging a continuous, undeclared war against the real Muslims.

From Syria to Iraq to Pakistan to their political stronghold (Iran), the Shias have infiltrated into key positions of the secular democratic systems — be it in the parliaments, the Civil Bureaucracies or the Militaries — and they are utilizing these positions to wage war against the Muslim populations.

In one of their processions of *Ashura* (when they gather together to remorse for the killing of Hussain ؓ and beat their own selves) in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, the Shias gathered outside a large Islamic Institution — the *Madrassah Ta'leem-ul-Quran*. The Madrassah faculty told them to avoid going through the route of the Masjid during the Friday prayers — either to choose another route or to delay their procession. But the Shias, fuelled with their hatred of the Muslims, chose to go through that same route.

They torched the Madrassah and set it on fire. Furthermore, they snatched rifles from the policemen and killed around 70 people — consisting of students of the Madrassah and those who had gone there to pray. The strange thing is that the Police allowed all of this to happen and did not interfere; neither did the Military, who have a Military Unit just 2 km away from the site of the incident, besides having their General Head Quarters (GHQ) in the same city.

The media images show the Shia snatching guns from policemen and opening fire at the innocent Muslims.

A Pakistani Politician reported that the media personnel present at the incident were confronted, and their video tapes were taken out of their cameras and destroyed to hide the terrible crimes the Shia were committing.

The Madrassah administration later informed an Azan Magazine inside reporter that 70 people died in the incident whereas the whereabouts of 100 students were unknown. Local shopkeepers, even days after the incident, said that body parts were still being found as the rubble was being cleared.

The Government imposed a 3-day curfew after the incident so that there would be no backlash and the local citizens would not get to the reality of what actually happened.

Even the media did not report the incident adequately. The Army/Police sent the bodies of the killed to their families during the curfew.

Major religious parties, however, disappointed and let down the entire, resourceful Muslim population of the country by saying that they would make "peaceful protests" and that they do not want "violence" in the country. However, local citizens voiced their anguish at the incident with a resident of a nearby area saying, "Only Taliban possess the ability to teach these Shias a lesson!"

Indeed, it is only with the sword that such horrendous killings can be prevented and the only solution for all Muslims lies in the re-establishment of the just Islamic Khilafah, and the waging of Jihad against all transgressors.

APPENDIX 3

APPENDIX 4

The Pain of Syria

Maulana Asim Umar (HA)

Every nook and corner of Shaam, the land of the Prophets ﷺ stands colored with the blood of the Ahlus-Sunnah Wal Jama'ah[1]. The cries of the daughters of the mother of believers, Ayesha ؓ have spread a scene of autumn upon its beautiful valleys. The youth have been arrested and thrown into prison. The elderly have been bloodied in the streets. The sisters and daughters of the Sunnis have been taken away and subjected to horrible abuses in the jails. These Shia who are probably the worst of creations in the entire universe, the killers of Umar, Usman, Ali, Hassan and Hussain ؓ, have targeted the pious daughters of the Ahlus-Sunnah out of their historical spite. Maybe, with it, they intend to cool the hatred that their mentor ibn Saba had planted in their hearts a long time ago. Or maybe they intend to seek nourishment of their faith by drinking the blood of the Ahlus-Sunnah...

More than a year and a half has passed and the land of the Prophets ﷺ stands crying over the youth of the Ummah. It cries over the deaths of the honor of the scholars and the rulers. The funerals being held in the land of Ash-Shaam represent funerals of the honor, pride and faith of those who tremble at the death of the Kafir. Almost the entire world of Islam is silent at the oppression of the daughters of mother Ayesha ؓ.

The religious people are satisfied with the fact that the call to prayer is going on in their mosques and they seem completely unconcerned with the fact that the pulpits of Shaam have been silenced. The tongues of the preachers of Damascus and Hams have been slaughtered for glorifying the Sahaba ؓ. But some people still seem satisfied at having steady crowds in their own mosques (even if this comes at the price of praising the tyrants and being silent at Kufr).

1. The people who follow the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) according to the practice of his Companions (RA) – the saved group of Muslims

O Sunnis of the world of Islam! Witness the news, images and heart-wrenching videos emerging from the holy land of Shaam... and remember! Remember that these are not just pictures of Shaam... These are the pictures of the whole of Ahlus-Sunnah!

The daughters of Damascus, Halab and Hims are crying over the ripping of their veils of honor... But what veil of honor? How precious has this word "honor" become in these times? The sons of mother Ayesha ؓ have neglected it so much... The hairs on their backs do not stand after reading this... Why don't their bodies shake while hearing it? Why do not their throats get dry? How do they not become insane? Why do not their eyes get red because of emotion?

They should get up and swear that whatever they have of their personal lives, their personal luxuries, their happiness and sadness – all of these belong to the Ummah from now on. They should declare that if they shall live from hence on, they shall live for the Ummah... And if they are to die, then they shall die for the Ummah. They should vow that they will not return to their homes until they have avenged every last drop of tear that any of their sisters or mothers in the entire Ummah ever shed. They should declare that they will not return to their homes unless they establish the Shariah of the beloved Prophet ﷺ of mother Ayesha ؓ!

O people of the pen! O people of the dictionaries! If the word "honor" has become meaningless for this Ummah, then dispense with it for the sake of Allah and replace it with a word that would motivate the sons of my beloved mother Ayesha ؓ to sacrifice their lives for their sisters...

Passivity is one thing... Believe me that I had vowed to write about the events of Syria for quite a long time. But all these words looked meaningless, useless and void to me. No...never... Cowardice, dishonor, ignominy... The silence of the Muslim Ummah with regards to the oppression on the Sunnis of Shaam cannot be uttered in words... The dictionary lacks vocabulary... For a continuous period of one and a half years, a powerful army nurtured by Iran and Russia engaged in full scale war against the Ahlus-Sunnah... There was no voice from any corner of the world against the enemies of the Sahaba ... If someone did shake, then it was that same Jama'ah which seems to be the only one that feels the pain of this Ummah... the Jama'ah that has sold its souls for the glory of this Ummah.

They reach every corner of the world where the Muslims are oppressed... Therefore, when the conditions of Sham and the glory of the Muslim Ummah comes in front of my eyes, then only one word comes to mind... Maybe this word would shock the veins of the young preachers, writers and the religious people ... Or maybe they would at least become angry at me after listening to this word... But then I start pondering and think that... Do words construct emotions or do emotions weave out words to express their meanings... Indeed, do emotions not depend on words?

The Shias are a thorn in the heart of the Muslim Ummah... an ulcer... They are the worst group of people on the entire earth. You can see their real faces in Syria. The insane call this sectarianism. May Allah Guide them... But if this scene is repeated in their homes, then the[y] understand that this is not sectaria[n]. This is historical hatred and anim[osity] that has continued on for centurie[s].

These ruthless people have destroyed cities and towns as if some insects lived th[ere in] many towns, the people were slaughtered [in] their own houses. There was nobody [to] shoulder their funerals. They received coffi[ns and] graves when the Mujahideen reached the[m].

The flowing tears and stoned eyes of our m[others] and daughters betray hope that may be [a] Muhammad bin Qasim or Mua'tasim [will] come and free them from the Shia animals.

But what is the status of the blood of the Un[mmah's] youth that is coloring the Arabian Peni[nsula?] What is its position with us? Why isn't so[meone] standing up at a pulpit or a stage and sp[eaking] the words that need to be spoken? Wh[y? The] only reason is that all this oppression is no[t going] on against any Jew, Christian, Qadiani or [...]. Only these are considered humans... If th[ere is] a Shia who is killed in any corner of the w[orld,] or if an enemy of the final Prophet Muha[mmad] ﷺ - a Qadiani - is hanged anywhere... if an[y] of the Jews or a Hindu is given some pain... [we] see how enflamed speeches emerge fro[m every] corner of the world... Governmental Fat[was...] Demonstrations... Columnists and anchor p[ersons...]

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swallowing foams from their mouths... Everyone starts giving sermons of humanity, starts crying for human rights and starts singing tunes of "mercy for the killed" and brotherhood etc.

Historical oppressions of the Sunnis were carried out by the Shias earlier in Iraq; and Iranian hands were behind these. They did all this upon a silent agreement with America. Iran supervises the Shia Government of Syria as well. America and Europe are not worried over the fact that the blood of Muslims is being spilt there. They are worried about the fact that Al-Qaeda Mujahideen are gaining strength there. These Kuffar did the same in Bosnia when the Muslim generations were being slaughtered; they were silently watching. But when the Mujahideen started to go there for the protection of their sisters, the Kuffar and their allies got united and worked day and night for a peace treaty thus wasting the sacrifices of thousands of Muslims.

Now after Iraq, the political supervision of the Shias in Sham indicates a new rank of the Kuffar against the world of Islam. The Kafir powers see Ahlus-Sunnah and Shia differently. In every age, the oppressions are carried out against the Sunnis whereas the Shias remain safe. In every place, Ahlus-Sunnah are labeled with false accusations whereas the Shia powers are displayed as heroes of Islam. They are always only given "warnings"

so that the Ummah gets deceived and sees them as enemies of America. But wars and attacks are carried out against the Sunnis of Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia and Mali.

We have been hearing from childhood that Iran is the enemy of America. But such a strange enmity this is that it does not ever witness an attack from either side. However, the Sunni states are destroyed within weeks. Iran is, strangely, an enemy of Israel too despite carrying a significant population of Jews who have a strong hold over many sectors of the country. The Iranian leadership allows the Israeli Jews to stroll leisurely in their country whereas they narrow the earth for the Sunnis. The Sunnis are not allowed to even prostrate in some places.

We should remember that Iran is the center of the one-eyed Dajjal. It is the place from which Dajjal will emerge. See the authentic Ahadith. All this Iran-American tooth-cracking is a drama that the Americans and Iranians have continued as a display...

Iran will never be attacked... If ever you see a conflict in Iran, then know that this is not an attack. Rather, it is merely a shift of authority from the secondary minions of Dajjal to the primary ones. An example of this was when the authority passed hands at the time of Khomeini... From the hands of

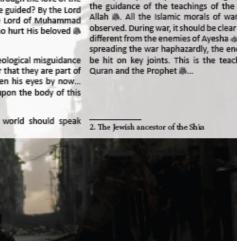the Shah of Iran to Khomeini...This was portrayed as the "Iranian Islamic Revolution".

It would not far off to swear that Khomeini was a Dajjal from among the Dajjals of which the Prophet ﷺ informed us,

"Before Dajjal, there would appear 30 small Dajjals."

There are so many evidences to this fact that only one would be enough to guide the one for whom Guidance has been decreed. But how will hearts that have blackened through the love of the enemies of Ayesha ؓ ever be guided? By the Lord of the Ka'abah, how will the Lord of Muhammad ﷺ give guidance to those who hurt His beloved ﷺ night and day?

Anyone who is under the ideological misguidance that the Shias are Muslims or that they are part of the Islamic world should open his eyes by now... No... This group is an ulcer upon the body of this Ummah.

The Muslims of the entire world should speak

openly about the oppression against [...] in Iraq and Syria. Every Muslim woma[n] should know what the enemies of Islam [...] to us in Syria. Along with this, all the Ahlus-Sunnah should know that the Sha[...] children of Ibn Saba[2] and the Shariah of t[...] ﷺ of mother Ayesha ؓ is separate. We[...] taught the rules of friendship and enm[...] Sahaba ؓ. We have been taught by o[...] Prophet ﷺ the way to establish peace [...] and fight till the end...

Hence, every enemy should be fought [...] the guidance of the teachings of the [...] Allah ﷺ. All the Islamic morals of wa[r...] observed. During war, it should be clear [...] different from the enemies of Ayesha ؓ [...] spreading the war haphazardly, the ene[...] be hit on key joints. This is the teach[...] Quran and the Prophet ﷺ...

2. The Jewish ancestor of the Shia

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