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CIMIC and Peacekeeping 'Effectiveness': The Role of 'Communication' as a Critical Interface in Evolving UNPKO Dynamics

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Abstract

'Communication,' as an ongoing process underlying civil-military interaction, may be taken as a key component in conceptualizing Civil-Military Coordination (CIMIC) in the context of peacekeeping. Consequently, it allows for a process-centric understanding of peacekeeping 'effectiveness,' particularly in the light of the growing disconnect between the functional dynamics of on-ground missions and broader overarching doctrine/principles. Transitional and Protection of Civilians (POC) mandates compel United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKOs) to operate on the margins of existing doctrine, requiring personnel engaged in conflict management to cultivate and exercise a broader skillset than one initially associated with traditional peacekeeping. Given this background, this research utilizes 'scenario-based interviews' so as to engage with the self-reflexive praxis of veteran Pakistani peacekeepers having served in integrated/hybrid missions. In doing so, it attempts to conceptualize communication as a process premised on the 'shared intentionality' of both military and civil personnel, utilizing de Coning's peacekeeping dimension. Inputs received from the interview process are analyzed using a model conceptualizing communication as a process essential to the realization of successful PKO outcomes. Two key subthemes emerging from the interview process, i.e., crisis management/risk perception and resource management are discussed in relation to decisional processes and 'bounded rationality' constraints attending inter- and intra-group communication under CIMIC in peacekeeping spaces.

Keywords

UN Peacekeeping, Pakistan military, civil-military coordination, communication, crisis and resource management

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Introduction

This paper examines the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping in the post-Capstone era with a focus on intra-group communication underlying civil-military coordination in multidimensional peacekeeping missions. In doing so, it problematizes the idea of civil-military communication as a process with direct implications for the success of the peacekeeping doctrine, particularly in light of the changing nature of missions involving greater stabilization components, as well as protection of civilians mandates. The 'effectiveness' of peacekeeping has been the subject of multiple debates in the contemporary literature, with scholars divided on the possible criteria for evaluation, as well as the unintended effects of employing select criteria to the exclusion of others. This paper addresses an understudied component in designing a framework for peacekeeping evaluation, focusing on the *processes* underlying peacekeeping as opposed to an overt focus on the 'final' *outcomes* of the same Further, it situates the site of a pre-identified process, i.e., communication, in the context of civil-military interaction, thereby presenting a schematic framework for how group communication in integrated missions in post-conflict, or transitionary, spaces may be conceptualized. The paper builds on de Coning's understanding of critical dimensions underlying the effectiveness of 'CIMIC' in an age of expanded UN peacekeeping. In doing so, it aims to draw attention to the importance of communication in informing the operational dynamics to improve the coherence and coordination of UN peacekeeping, with implications for the selection and training of relevant personnel.

Communication is premised on perception, a product of social cognition and psychology that informs how actors engage with the objects and people in specific contexts. Given the volatility of post-conflict and transitionary spaces, effective communication training facilitates the creation of synergy and complementarity needed to generate and sustain common strategic objectives amongst both civil and military components of a mission. This has prompted authors such as de Coning (2005) and Lindenberg and Bryant (2001) to highlight 'CIMIC' as a critical interface in UN PKOs, with poor coordination risking delays in response-time that may translate into a significant loss of life. These delays may be prompted by role clarification and deliberation about respective responsibilities, particularly as integrated missions are faced with an increasing gap between actual operational practice and existing consensus on the nature and scope of UN peacekeeping as enshrined in existing principles and doctrine (de Coning et al, 2017). An added concern is the duplication of effort i.e., military components should not be called upon to perform humanitarian tasks, further complicated by the complexities of functioning in volatile post-conflict/transitionary spaces. Thus, by emphasizing 'communication' as a processual skill, this paper aims to outline avenues for further research related to the design of 'psychological peacekeeper profiles' used in identifying and selecting personnel, as well as emergent areas of concern in pre-deployment training. Further, it conceptualizes communication as an essential prerequisite underlying peacekeeping 'effectiveness,' given its role in enabling participative management environments where both civil and military actors may utilize their training and skillset in frameworks ranging from cooperation to coexistence (Abiew, 2003; de Coning, 2005).

'Effectiveness' of UN Peacekeeping

Diehl's 1993 publication, titled 'International Peacekeeping,' bifurcates the criteria for evaluating peacekeeping operations using two essential outcomes i.e., (i) that missions limit armed conflict, and (ii) promote conflict resolution. Ensuing debates in the relevant literature present markedly varied approaches towards the appropriate frameworks for analysis, standards for evaluating 'effectiveness,' and the relevance of purportedly 'objective' criteria in mission-specific contexts. Thus, Johansen (1994) argues that Diehl's criteria fundamentally misrepresent the real purpose of peacekeeping while eclipsing many of the key benefits of UNPKOs. What emerges is a debate between scholars such as Diehl, Durch, and Ratner, versus Fetherston and Johansen (Druckman & Stern, 1997). The former group emphasizes designing criteria relevant to 'quantifiable' mission mandates and contribution to containing conflict, while the latter highlights the need for 'qualitative' criteria linking peacekeeping to the promotion of such overarching values as human rights, justice, and the reduction of human suffering. An intermediary approach is presented by the work of Todd Sandler (2017) who analyzes 'mission' effectiveness in the light of the changing nature of PKOs, alongside the idea of 'burden sharing' using the private provision of public goods and joint products. In terms of whether the application of a single, 'objective' criterion for effectiveness is warranted, scholars such as Diehl and Druckman (2010) cite the increasingly hybrid nature of 'peacekeeping/peacebuilding/peace enforcement' missions to argue for the need for multiple dimensions in the process of evaluation. An additional element in gauging effectiveness, corresponding to the broader quantitative/qualitative debate, concerns the question of temporality i.e., when does one deem the mission to have been 'successful' and thus 'effective'? In an early study examining UN interventions in 147 interstate crises during 1946-88, Diehl, Reifschneider, and Hensel (1996) proposed a time period of ten years i.e., no militarized conflict occurring within that time frame, following the UN's intervention, would be taken as a standard of 'effectiveness.' In contrast, Hartzell, Hoddie, and Rothchild (2001) opted for assessing whether negotiated peace held for a period of five years in their study of intrastate wars during 1945-98.

The markedly varied criteria — and attendant concerns surrounding such themes as temporality, under positivist (quantitative), versus constructivist (qualitative) — approaches towards peacekeeping evaluation may be contextualized using the fast-changing nature of peacekeeping itself. Dorussen (2014), building on the work of scholars such as Ratner (1995, p. 528), highlights how peacekeepers,

> [T]end to intervene as much in civil as in interstate wars. They often intervene early even before the situation has become resolved militarily or politically making it necessary to enforce rather than to keep the peace. Peacekeepers operate with a broader mandate; so- called 'new' or "integrated" peacekeeping monitors and observes, but also aims to protect civilians, to build capacity and to address the underlying factors that contributed to conflict.

A similar theme is identified by de Coning et al. (2017) in highlighting how there is a shift away from the UN's role in keeping the peace, towards using UN to protect civilians amidst active conflicts or governments from insurgencies. Further, the emphasis on 'peacebuilding' involves management of dimensions including but not limited to assisting with judicial reforms and civil administration, supervising

elections, providing humanitarian relief, and training public officials in various government functions (Aniola, 2007). In such a context, authors such as Abiew (2003) highlight the importance of civil-military coordination in ensuring common goals, with communication emerging as an essential process impacting the effectiveness of CIMIC vis-à-vis peacekeeping. Studies on communication in the context of CIMIC have focused mostly on disaster-management contexts, with sites of active conflict, post-conflict areas, or transitional spaces herded under the heading of 'complex emergencies,' and accorded less exclusive focus in terms of critical research inquiry. Nevertheless, key frameworks, particularly concerning the role of dual-use Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) in enabling information exchange, may be adapted for further analysis and research on CIMIC in peacekeeping contexts.

Communication and Civil-Military Coordination

Kanciak et al. (2021) analyze the importance of information sharing in CIMIC operational theaters given the deployment of 'Internet of Things' (IoT) devices, outlining the design for a 'federated smart environment' for enabling the same. While this study focuses on the technical architecture required for secure civil-military information sharing in emergency response and disaster recovery operations, the underlying premise corresponds to the overarching theme of 'effectiveness' related to information exchange, i.e., communication, under CIMIC interaction. Bollettino's (2015) work on the humanitarian perception of civil-military coordination during the response to Typhoon Haiyan illustrates a more direct focus on the given theme in the context of disaster management. The study engages with the impact of communication in analyzing how CIMIC may be undertaken to identify the needs of the affected population and deliver relief goods. It then explores the perception of the 'effectiveness' of civil-military coordination following such interactions, examining the same using the training imparted to humanitarian actors to better coordinate with the military. Thus, Bollettino's 2015 piece focuses primarily on humanitarian actors in *disaster relief* contexts involving CIMIC, using survey instruments to gauge the perceptions of country directors and agency leads. A similar focus is exhibited in Cook and Yogendran's (2019) conceptualization of civil-military partnerships using the '4Cs' of disaster partnering, as theorized by Martin et al. (2016). The first is 'Communication,' followed by Cooperation, Coordination, and Collaboration. The study assesses the effectiveness of civil-military disaster partnering in the Asia-Pacific region using this model, elements of which may be seen as holding relevance for post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction operations (SROs).

In contrast, a monograph by Wentz (2006) for the US Defense Technical Information Center situates the impact of ICTs on CIMIC in disaster relief, as well as post-conflict SROs. Wentz (2006) outlines the need to better understand the capabilities and requirements of ICTs in order to create a collaborative information sharing environment to support data collection, communications, and coordination needs in environments not limited to disaster relief. Rietjens et al. (2009) also focus on CIMIC during '*complex emergencies*,' using an understanding of inter-organizational communication to analyze civil-military cooperation in the context of Afghanistan. The authors employ a logical framework analysis to identify six major

improvement tactics for information sharing, each of which may have implications for UN peacekeeping in a post-conflict/transitionary setting. These include the creation of overlap in personnel rotation, the specification of tasks and aims regarding information management, the improvement of skills and competencies of personnel, and the introduction of regular joint CIMIC evaluations.

Thus, 'communication' as a process features prominently in analyses of the effectiveness of civil-military coordination and cooperation in the context of disaster relief. In terms of post-conflict or transitionary spaces, there is less of a focus on UN PKOs as informed by specific principles and doctrine. Further, the gap between these principles, and the evolving functional dynamics of integrated UN PKOs in the field, highlights the importance of CIMIC as a key interface for engaging with the ensuing disconnect. 'Communication,' as a conceptual framework, may encompass the dimensions of ICT systems, personnel training, and management protocols outlined above, in addition to the parameters of social cognition involved in civil-military interaction. This paper seeks to identify 'communication' as a process embedded in such parameters, with implications for UN PKO personnel selection and pre-deployment training.

Methodology

In order to engage with the self-reflexive praxis of veteran Pakistani peacekeepers with experience serving in integrated missions in both post-conflict and transitionary settings, this study employed 'scenario-building' alongside semi-structured interviews. Ramirez et al. (2015) analyze how scenarios have the potential to produce 'interesting research,' in challenging existing assumptions and identifying novel lines of inquiry. A similar logic informs Beighton's (2021) use of scenario-based interviews in a study on UK further education management settings, with the added utility of facilitating interviewer interaction with interviewees. Scenarios draw on the working practices and real-life scenarios commonly experienced by the interviewees, feeding into the interview process through what Ratcliffe (2002) identified as 'strategic conversation.' In the case of this study, four distinct scenarios were developed using four select 'dimensions' for effective peacekeeping, as identified in de Coning's work on peacekeeping evaluation (2005; 2017). These dimensions, embedded across distinct scenarios, were used to assess interviewee perception of the role of 'communication' in ensuring mission success, under the broader heading of CIMIC 'effectiveness.' Both civilian and military personnel formed part of the sample, with 22 of the total 30 interviewees having served as military personnel. The given scenarios prompted both groups to reflect on their own lived experiences interacting in the field, while assessing the impact of their pre-deployment training in informing the nature of their interaction. 'Communication' emerged as an essential process in translating the dimensions identified in the scenarios into actionable strategies drawing on the training imparted to both groups.

Inputs received from the interview process were analyzed using a model conceptualizing communication as a process essential to the effectiveness of civil-military interaction i.e., a critical interface informing UN PKOs.

Scenario: 1

Local forces and insurgents are two forces at war, with insurgents now occupying the Eastern part which was previously under the control of the local forces. A small village (in a part of local forces that is now occupied by insurgents) has been effectively cut off. Messages from the area indicate that food is running low as markets and supply routes are not functioning. The people living there are now exposed to high danger, and there exists a need to establish a safe and secure environment. The UN has started to negotiate a humanitarian corridor and localized ceasefire so that a civilian aid convoy can get in, but it is anticipated that this will take some days to achieve. In the meantime, a food distribution point has been established within an armed perimeter (established by peacekeeping forces) and Meals Ready to Eat (MRE) are being distributed by soldiers in uniform. A small medical clinic has also been established and is treating minor injuries and illnesses. However, there still remains a threat from the insurgents that they might try to infiltrate the secure perimeter.

Scenario: 2

A counter-insurgency operation is being undertaken in a highly contested area of A, a very fragile state. UN's civil organizations have been operating there for years and are undertaking the direct provision of essential services through a network of supplies and training to those existing facilities that are still functional. Recently there has been an upsurge in attacks, especially Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) focused on one village. The commander of an X infantry unit (part of a UN Peacekeeping force) has arranged a meeting with the village elders to discuss the situation and seek support in improving local security, accompanied by a UN civilian advisor. At the meeting, the civilian advisor recognizes that the village does not currently have a working health facility as the doctor fled after it was damaged in an arson attack. He offers to restore power to the clinic by replacing the generator and also to stock it with some basic supplies in the hope that the doctor can be persuaded to return. While the team are working on the generator and carrying in medical supplies, the commander of the X infantry unit also takes the opportunity to discuss the worrying security situation (and where perpetrators might be found) with villagers.

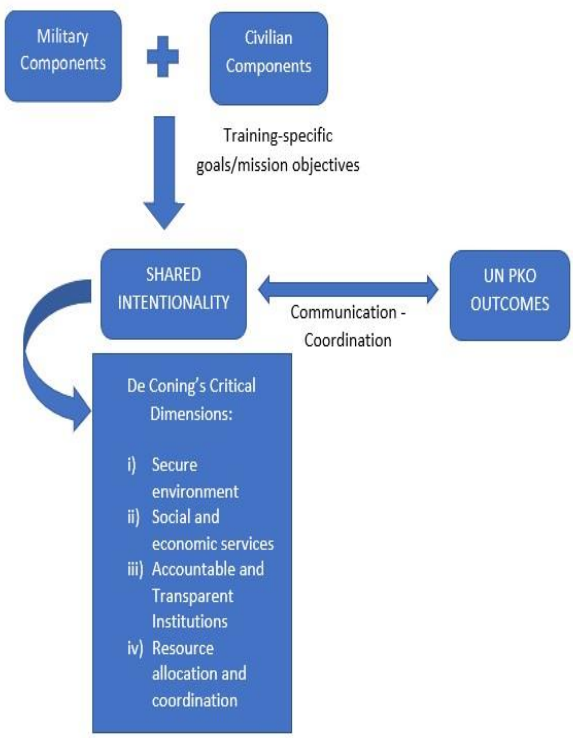
Scenario: 3

While on peacekeeping operations (in a fragile state emerging from civil war) personnel from a Peacekeeping medical military unit are invited to a major Incident planning meeting, as a period of unrest is expected. However, the civilian advisors are also called in to discuss and formulate a plan. The UN and its military counterparts have found it difficult to develop a coordinated plan agreed by both sides. At the request of the UN and the WHO (chairing the health cluster), the civilian advisors lead a series of workshops and seminars and support the development of an integrated plan. They also arrange train-the-trainers sessions on managing the scene of the incident. The various military agencies themselves later deliver tactical level training.

Scenario: 4

Several independent and state-sponsored development organizations are active in Country A, a low/middle-income country with poor economic and development indicators, especially in rural areas. The Country's (A) local army runs a clinic in a remote mountain pass in one of its most rural areas, between April and September every year. It usually has around ten staff and provides a wide range of primary care services to hard-to-access populations, some of whom travel for several days to get to the facility. This year UN has sent a small team of military doctors, nurses and medics to accompany the usual A team. It hopes to gain experience for all personnel in altitude-related conditions while also teaching a WHO-endorsed trauma course. It aims to improve the trauma skills in the facility itself but is also planning to run half-day first-aid packages for community volunteers from the various villages in the area. The programme has been designed and implemented in collaboration between UN peacekeepers, civilian support groups, and the local A military.

Figure 1. Conceptual Modeling: 'Communication' and CIMIC Effectiveness



Discussion and Analysis

The conceptual model outlined above deploys de Coning's dimensions for evaluating peacekeeping under the heading of 'shared intentionality' underlying civil-military interaction in UN PKOs. As evidenced in multiple interview responses, both military and civilian groups exhibit certain 'organizational' cultures informed by distinct modes of 'learning' i.e., training. Thus, salient group memberships shape the nature

and scope of the 'communication' that occurs during the fast-changing contexts of post-conflict/transitionary setups, with personnel reliant on organizational and social cognition imbibed during the course of formal training. While the 'intention' behind CIMIC may be common to both civilian and military personnel, there is a need to avoid duplication of effort, while ensuring that both groups function within their distinct domains. Doing so in integrated mission contexts adds complexity, particularly in light of the disconnect between peacekeeping principles/doctrine and functional mission dynamics identified earlier.

Further, authors such as Llyod et al. (2009) identify how psychological selection profiles for peacekeepers are not catered to identify skills and traits essential to civil-military coordination. Communication forms an essential process under this coordination, as determined by interviewees in analyzing the four scenarios outlined above. In the context of assessing how the four dimensions under 'shared intentionality' may be effectively actualized in the form of successful mission outcomes, two following subthemes emerged in relation to the broader idea of communication vis-à-vis CIMIC.

Crisis Management and Risk Perception

Interviewees cited the importance of translating 'shared intentionality' into actionable strategic plans in a participative management environment. This was particularly evident in scenario 1, where both civilian and military personnel emphasized the need for functional communication in fast-moving crisis contexts. In establishing a perimeter so as to ensure resource distribution in a secure environment to embattled civilians, rational decision-making under conditions of risk and uncertainty emerged as a primary consideration i.e., gauging how long the perimeter would hold, while assessing the threat of insurgent attack. Interviewees commented on the risk of the 'passing of wrong information' prompting 'a substantial military effort' with little gain, citing the importance of efficient support training for both military and civilian components. Consequently, a key aspect under 'CIMIC effectiveness' was highlighted as identifying the conditions of 'bounded rationality' that impede decision-making processes in volatile contexts i.e., the contextual and psychological constraints that prevent the realization of optimal choices. In light of this, 'strategic communication' was discussed as a pervasive component in the process of civil-military interaction during the course of 'hybrid' missions, with a key impact on decisional processes. It was felt that effective division of labor during crisis situations necessitated recognizing the comparative advantages of both civilian and military domains, allowing for building a more effective understanding of changing circumstances.

The efficacy of models used to inform action in crisis contexts relies on the effective transmission of information that is as accurate as possible. It is essential that pre-deployment training and the selection of personnel incorporate skills specific to intra- and inter-group communication, particularly given the impact of cultural sensibilities. This is particularly crucial for missions with a protection of civilian mandate (POC) in the absence of a peace agreement, as well as transitional administration mandates where the UN is possessed of both executive authority and responsibility. In light of the gap between doctrine and functional dynamics identified

earlier, the UN is faced with maintaining consent, minimum use of force, and impartiality in increasingly volatile contexts that go beyond traditional peacekeeping boundaries. The resulting complexity is amplified when proxy militias associated with the host state pose a risk to civilians, as highlighted by de Coning et al. (2017). Personnel interviewed felt that conflict management missions, characterized by a significant risk of relapse and lack of a clear political exit strategy, are a key site for gauging the evolution of UN peacekeeping. Consequently, the psychological profiles of UN peacekeepers, and the skills needed by both military and civil components to optimize mission outcomes, must keep pace with this evolution, a key aspect of which is intra- and inter-group communication.

Discussion on crisis management prompted consideration of the role of risk perception and communication, in fast-changing spaces, with personnel's lived experience of complexity a key asset for designing relevant training models. Interviewees referred to situations that require CIMIC officers to assess how local communities gauge the risk of potential conflict escalation using community-based inter-group dialogues. The given scenario 4 prompted comments on the need to characterize decisions faced by local communities in sufficiently precise terms to identify critical areas necessitating immediate action. Doing so was seen as requiring intra-group coordination in integrated missions, with both civilian and military personnel able to designate domains of action and attendant roles in risk-related choices. The interdependence of effective risk communication vis-à-vis the local community, and collaboration/coordination in risk management between civil and military operatives of UN PKOs, was stressed by multiple interviewees, with communication failure being tied to fractured risk analysis.

A related concern, which may form an avenue for further research, concerned the 'visual' communication of risk perception through modes other than verbal signaling i.e., a multimodal form of risk communication involving photographs and educational images to external audiences. This led to interviewees highlighting an attendant, somewhat unexpected, aspect of communication efficacy under crises, i.e., media relations. Media coverage of conflict/post-conflict/transitionary spaces tends to contain elements of sensationalism i.e., human suffering and battle scenes etc. Nevertheless, coverage can increase the attention a crisis receives from international and regional actors i.e., donors, global powers, NGOs etc. Further, the media can act as a site for disseminating information to establish linkages with host communities, with most peace operations having a public information component that can be effectively utilized alongside alternative media structures. Communicating *with* the media, as well as *through* the media, especially in the context of emergent crises, were highlighted as two distinct avenues warranting due attention and training for both military and civilian components in peacekeeping missions. While designated CIMIC officers may be put in charge of media relations, it was considered important that all personnel have some idea as to the most appropriate modes of interaction to adopt when faced with journalists, both local and international. Communication distortion being a key risk vis-à-vis media engagement, it was felt to be prudent that personnel be trained to engage with the role of the media more effectively in peacekeeping spaces.

Resource Management

The second sub-theme to emerge concerning resource allocation, focusing on the effective identification and communication of attendant opportunity costs. Interviewees commenting on the given scenarios identified the importance of identifying, allocating, and ensuring the effective utilization of scarce resources in volatile contexts. *Time* was treated as one such resource, particularly in connection with crisis management, as 'windows of opportunity' for effective action were seen as essential to securing successful outcomes. Given concerns surrounding funding, opportunity cost emerges as an essential parameter for framing not only temporal but also material questions of resource allocation i.e., prioritizing mission objectives in the light of emergent situations. The ability to rationalize, and convey the relative benefits of utilizing scarce resources for select purposes, to the exclusion of others, is essential to the realization of mission objectives.

Additionally, interviewees commented on 'human resource' training and management as an essential feature of evolving peacekeeping praxis, as long-term stability was tied to developing best practice guidelines for locals. Given the learning demands and continuous adaptation, required in volatile spaces, commentators cited the role of UN PKOs in conducting training workshops for host communities. Further, as outlined in scenario 6, partnerships between local specialists i.e., health practitioners and UN personnel carry the potential to develop guidelines for use by non-specialists in similar contexts. Human resource 'management,' in such a context, may be seen as a two-way process holding mutual learning for both host communities and deployed personnel. Interacting and engaging with host communities in training contexts may at times enable peacekeepers to strengthen inter-group communication between the civilian and military components of a given mission. A key consideration concerns the role of language in communication with the host communities, as well as the 'positionality' of the interpreter in enabling the same. Personnel highlighted the need for designing specific training regimens for interpreters, which may act as a key liaison between the PKO personnel and the hosts. Accurate and concise interpretation of local languages was seen as key to assessment and analysis of emergent crises, as well as planning and decision-making in risk perception and management. It was argued that strong language skills are a component in the nomination and selection of personnel, particularly in integrated missions.

Regular Personnel Self-Evaluation and Rotation

With reference to both crisis management/risk perception and resource management, commentators argued for the need for regular and more comprehensive personnel self-evaluation, particularly concerning the role of communication in enabling more effective civil-military interaction under these themes. It was felt that self-evaluation by personnel, especially those having served in integrated or hybrid mission contexts, would enable greater improvement in the performance and impact of evolving UN peacekeeping. As PKO missions continue to face a dynamic set of administrative, operational, and political challenges, complex and wide-ranging mandates require that personnel exert a range of skills to navigate volatile and often dangerous environments. Given the high cost of operational failures, there emerges a need for restructuring efforts aimed at better crisis management and resource planning.

Considering this, self-evaluation reports help contextualize the experiences of deployed personnel in the light of ongoing high-level reforms while allowing for the identification of skillsets and psychological traits that may aid in improving personnel selection and pre-deployment training.

Finally, regular and robust personnel rotation was seen as essential to cultivating the type of experience-based learning in various contexts that would enable more effective strategic communication. Different contingents from different countries across the world are illustrative of 'practice communities' i.e., contexts which allow peacekeepers to cultivate 'contact skills.' The IPI Global Observatory defines these skills as helping to "de-escalate potentially violent or manifestly violent situations and facilitate movement toward conflict resolution," especially in the context of POC missions. Strategic communication may be identified as one such skill, particularly in how it pertains to civil-military interaction in the course of UN PKOs. Thus, combined with the praxis of self-evaluation, personnel rotation was taken as key to sustaining and improving, the operational capabilities of UN peacekeeping. Scenario-based interview interactions also helped in the identification of potential research themes for further study i.e., the impact of effective intra-group communication on personnel morale in mission contexts, as well as the use of social media applications by both civil and military personnel for personal, professional, and communication needs. Additionally, how various contingents perceive 'strategic' communication in relation to effectiveness may be tied to the predominant nature of this perception in 'sending states' — an area which may be explored further given the increasing role of such states as China in peacekeeping. This, in turn, stands to impact how contingents operationalize communication praxis in integrated mission contexts — an area beyond the scope of this present piece but nonetheless warranting further study.

Conclusion

'Communication,' as an ongoing process underlying civil-military interaction, may be taken as a key component in conceptualizing CIMIC in the context of peacekeeping. Consequently, it allows for a process-centric understanding of peacekeeping 'effectiveness,' particularly in the light of the growing disconnect between the functional dynamics of on-ground missions and broader overarching doctrine/principles. Transitional and POC mandates compel UNPKOs to operate on the margins of existing doctrine, requiring personnel engaged in conflict management to cultivate and exercise a broader skillset than one initially associated with traditional peacekeeping. Given this background, this research utilized 'scenario-based interviews' to engage with the self-reflexive praxis of veteran Pakistani peacekeepers having served in integrated/hybrid missions. In doing so, it attempted to conceptualize communication as a process premised on the 'shared intentionality' of both military and civil personnel, utilizing de Coning's peacekeeping dimensions as a base for the ensuing interaction. 'Scenario-based interviews' aided in identifying two broad subthemes under the umbrella of communication i.e., crisis management/risk perception and resource management. It emerged that multidimensional approach(es) towards peacekeeping entail ensuring synergy between the mechanisms that sustain and generate common strategic objectives under civil-military coordination. Given the

distinct social and organizational 'learning,' i.e., training that underlies these two groups, salient group membership was seen as shaping the cognitive processes underlying communication in peacekeeping spaces.

It followed that the evolution in the functional dynamics of peacekeeping be reflected in the psychological selection profiles for peacekeepers, as well as in pre-deployment training. In such a context, poor communication signified the lack of essential 'contact skills' needed to ensure effective coordination, thus enabling the realization of core mission objectives. Delays in response caused by role clarification, and protracted deliberation about the allocation of responsibilities, were seen as risking a significant loss of life in volatile spaces. This may be analyzed alongside concerns for avoiding duplication of effort i.e., ensuring that both civil and military components operate within their distinct domains. Thus, this research explored the challenges of functioning in a 'cooperative versus coexistence' framework under the umbrella of CIMIC in peacekeeping spaces. Communication was seen as a critical interface between humanitarian and military components in such a context, potentially informing further research addressing the perception of 'strategic communication' cultures in troop-contributing states.

Further, the multimodal nature of communication, including visual communication utilized through engagements with local and international outlets, was seen as increasingly relevant to the role of media coverage in conflict situations. Thus, the study sought to highlight the somewhat underrated importance of communication, focusing on its 'strategic' elements, vis-à-vis the operationalization of civil-military coordination in volatile conflict situations. In doing so, it outlines an area of inter-and multidisciplinary inquiry for further research i.e., how organizational communication theories and attendant risk management modeling may be adapted for the study of peacekeeping contexts.

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The Influence of Globalization on Insurgency: Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab in the Age of Information Technology

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Abstract

Without a doubt, Africa is presently faced with violence, war, and acts of terrorism arising from the activities of insurgents. This paper examines the ways globalization aids insurgent activities and increasing manipulation of globalization by insurgents. It also looks at the negative impacts of violence and the need to find solutions to the insurgents' activities that have generated concerns for the contemporary global system. The issues raised are significant considering the need to find solutions to the violence in the continent. This paper argues that just as globalization has encouraged increased technology, lowered transportation cost, increased trade and capital flow and the overall economic growth of nation-states; it has also allowed insurgency and terrorism to spread easily; serving as a sanctuary to insurgent groups and aiding the activities of insurgents. Although globalization has been fingered as a factor in some cases of insurgency, it is not itself the main cause of insurgency; however, globalization has dramatically helped transform the strategies, tactics, and the overall activities of insurgents in the past two decades. This is because insurgents have directly and indirectly manipulated the faceless character of globalization to carry out their activities, especially Al-Shabaab in Kenya and Boko Haram in Nigeria. The paper states that just as insurgents have exploited globalization to perpetrate terror, globalization can also be used as a vital tool in counter-insurgency (COIN) and the War on Terror (WoT).

Keywords

Globalization, ICTs, terrorism, counter-insurgency, strategy and tactics

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Introduction

Two fundamental statements are germane in the discussion entailed in this paper. The first is that the contemporary international system faces multiple security challenges, with many states being threatened by conflicts, violence, and terrorism. Many of these are often occasioned by individuals and groups who disagree with other individuals, groups, or the state. The second assertion is that with the passage of time, the world is increasingly shrinking into a global village, posing a formidable challenge to many states, particularly the developing countries in Africa. This has, thereby, led to an ongoing debate as to whether or not globalization is likely and/or capable of creating a better world. The proponents of globalization argue that it helps generate openness in government and business, the strong rule of law, and greater opportunities for people to experience personal freedom (Rudra, 2005; James & Tulloch, 2010). The opposing view suggests that globalization tends to cause more turbulence in the world (Barber, 2000). While this article is not concerned with this discussion, it asserts that Africa (hosting two of the deadliest insurgent groups in the world, Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram) is currently troubled by violence and that the insurgent groups in Africa have continued to manipulate the process of globalization to enhance their strategies and tactics. The present article has been extracted from a broader Ph.D. thesis study, submitted to the North-West University. It is premised on the idea that globalization has consistently created enabling environments for insurgents to better operate i.e., by offering them sanctuary; and making their communication, disguise, and ability to move freely and carry out their operation anonymously easier. The research concludes that globalization is being manipulated by the insurgents and has improved their combat and non-combat operational strategies.

The reports of the Global Peace Index have also, since 2010, repeatedly listed sub-Saharan Africa as the most affected region by violent conflicts (Dowd, 2015). This ceaseless manifestation of violence perpetrated by these insurgents has turned a significant part of the African landscape into a theatre of war and conflict. In addition, there are substantial social implications of globalization and social change that have produced marginalization, social exclusion, and increasing impoverishment of a large population in Africa (Ikotun, 2009, p. 187). And one of the consequences is the series of tension, political unrest, and violence perpetrated by the insurgents in the region.

As stated earlier, in addition to the states benefitting from the globalization regime, the insurgent groups also manipulate their economic, political, technological, and cultural variants to improve their tactics, strategies, and overall operational capabilities. This position is succinctly captured by Bandyopadhyay and colleagues (2015) when they observed that the new technology — occasioned by globalization that has lowered transportation cost and increased trade and capital flow across borders and countries — has also been manipulated by the insurgents in their operations. This submission is further confirmed by the field research conducted by the first author in 2017 (see, for details, Adeyeye, 2017).

Navigating the Labyrinth of Concepts and Theory: Terrorism, Insurgency, Strategy and Tactics

Globalization has often been perceived as an imprecise term that has been defined and interpreted in multiple forms. The result of the crowded and multifarious opinions on globalization is the lack of consensus on the definition of the term (Appadurai, 2001; Hanlon, 2009). Four major variants have been identified for globalization — economic, technological, cultural, and political. It has been argued that globalization

can be credited to have brought large-scale interdependence and driven cut-off populations and regions into modernity (Appadurai, 2001, 1996; Clapham, 2012; Cronin, 2003; Griffin, 2004).

With a brief overview of globalization, the following subsections discuss and lay down the functional and operational definitions of the terminology used in this article. For this article, these two terms are used interchangeably to describe individuals and groups overtly and/or covertly engaging themselves in insurgent or terrorist activities. They mostly adopt terrorism strategies and tactics not only to accomplish their socio-cultural, economic, political, and religious ends but also to force states to surrender to their demands (Hoffman, 1988, 1998, pp. 94-95; Rogers, 2008). Their modes of operation often include (i) *disorientation:* alienating governments from the citizens, tarnishing the repute of governments in the eyes of the people; (ii) *target response:* to influence and stimulate their targets to act favourably to their cause; (iii) *gaining legitimacy:* exploiting the emotional impacts of violence to introduce alternative demands and messages (Abdulahi, 2015; Ibaba, 2011).

Insurgency

Gompert and Gordon (2008, p. 60) have defined insurgency as the pre-determined and work-out adoption of violence or its threat against state forces and unarmed civilians to achieve political, religious, ideological, and ethno-national goals. For this study, an 'insurgency' describes actual acts of rebellion against the state and the people. This conception recognizes that not all cases of rebellion are insurgencies. The use of the concept in this study is premised on individuals or groups adopting the position of armed rebellion (Abdulahi, 2015; Gompert & Gordon, 2008, p. 60; Fearon & Laitin, 2003; Okoli & Philip, 2014).

The insurgency has also been defined as political-military activity directed towards complete or partial control of the state resources by using irregular military forces and illegal political organizations. Insurgent activities include guerrilla warfare, terrorism, and political mobilization that may help in recruitment, propaganda, and covert party organization and international activity (Rineheart, 2010). This international activity is often designed to weaken the control of the government and adversely influence its legitimacy. The general denominator is the objective to control some particular geographical location (Analysis of Insurgency, 2012).

Terrorism

Without much doubt, terrorism, similar to several other political disciplinary concepts, is difficult to define in ways that holistically capture the phenomenon. As a social construct, terrorism has been defined within the context of shifting social and political realities (Bayo, 2013; Cooper, 2001; Lizardo, 2008; Primoratz, 2004). If one throws into this mix of economic, cultural and religious perceptions, then the conceptualization task becomes more complex. In attempting to develop a comprehensive definition of terrorism, Schmid and Jongman (1983, 1992) gathered 109 official and academic definitions of terrorism and subjected them to analysis; to identify their main components. The result of this rigorous academic pursuit reveals that elements of violence ranked highest with 83.5 per cent; the aspect of political goal accounted for 65 per cent; and the element of inflicting fear and terror was recorded at 51 per cent. Additionally, the components of targeting indiscriminately and arbitrarily — also related to the victimization of non-combatant civilians and outsiders — scored 17.5 per cent (Schmid & Jongman, 1983, 1992). Hence, it

becomes clear that causing violence, intending to hurt others physically, physiologically, economically, politically, racially, ethnically, and culturally, is the most common reason for informing or motivating the terror attacks by insurgent groups (Dyson, 2008). Perhaps, this is in agreement with the violence component of terrorism, which, as Blair (2007, pp. 79-90) has argued, is criminal and unfair and/or constitutes an illegitimate use of force.

Chomsky (2002) argues that the endeavour to understand terrorism can be undertaken in two ways. It is possible to either adopt a literal approach to the study of terrorism or employ the propagandist method — analyzing the term as a weapon that can be taken advantage of. As for this paper, terrorism is defined in relation to the strategies and tactics employed by the insurgents (Omitola et al., 2021).

Strategy and Tactics

Essentially, strategy means taking and using available material means to accomplish a desired end (Pratt, 2010). Outwit, outbid, outmanoeuvre, and deceiving are all forms of strategies that could be adopted in political and military battles. Strategies can acquire many concrete forms, depending on when and where they are put to use. Lee (2008, pp. 13-17) has defined strategy as an organized plan of action that is put in place to accomplish a specified goal and objective. It is defined as the planning, synchronization, and overall focus of the military and non-military operations. Different strategies also have political, economic, and socio-cultural dimensions (Ogundiya & Azmat, 2008). In addition, a terrorism strategy may be referred to as the one premised on yielding psychological effects; causing violence that leads to deaths and destruction of properties and inculcating fear of the insurgents. This also has the potential to adversely impact the morale of the opposing force-party in the conflict, such as the government forces (Amusan & Adeyeye, 2014, pp. 1866-1874; Guglielmo, 2011; Crenshaw, 2004, pp. 74-79).

On the contrary, tactics are located in instrumental actions. Tactics could be in the form of hit-and-run or flanking and aiming targets for accuracy. It could also refer to the military and non-military art concerned with achieving the goals and objectives laid down in the strategy (Lee, 2008; Pratt, 2010; Bell & Bell, 1976).

Terrorism as Insurgency

It is recognized in this article that the insurgents can and do employ both — strategies pertaining to terrorism as well as insurgency. While insurgency is most effective when there is wide mobilization, terrorism can be effective with limited mobilization (Wardlaw, 1989). Usually, the strategies and tactics used by insurgents are often premised and conditioned by the environments in which they operate. Terrorism is one of the easiest and readily available strategies for insurgents (Wardlaw, 1989). Insurgents adopt combat and non-combat, asymmetric modes of warfare. Some of the elements of terrorism strategies and tactics often adopted by insurgent groups include ambush in forms of annihilation, harassment, and containment. When adopting ambush tactics, the insurgents carry out mass-direct fires and often increase the lethality/causalities with indirect fires, manufactured obstacles, mines, and improvised explosive devices (IEDs); many of the tactics are taught and learned through modern technology using the internet (Lee, 2008). The elements of assault, intimidation, hit-an-run, attrition (physical and moral), and criminal and chaos are parts of insurgents' terrorism strategies and tactics. An important feature of insurgents' strategies is operational dynamism and fluidity, the ability to move around and change their operational strategies and tactics (Olawoyin, Omodunbi, &

Akinrinde, 2021). Insurgent strategies and tactics involve attacking, controlling, and/or constraining opposing forces, as the ability to move quickly and strike is significant for insurgents. Characteristically, insurgents' terrorist operations look like military warfare. As striking power is important for insurgent forces; they also require a sanctuary, that is, a secured base, such as Boko Haram had in the Sambisa Forest. Insurgents seek for a secured and impregnable base(s) against any attack from the military forces of the state (Horowitz, 2001; Owen, 2009). Sanctuary is not only defined in geographic terms but also in abstract terms i.e., the minds of the people who are friendly or sympathetic to the goals of insurgents. In such a case, the penetration strategy gains even more importance in any related discussion since the insurgents' mix with the people and hide to avoid rival forces.

The insurgents also use knowledge transfer and learning as a strategy. This is made possible through their clandestine networks that are self-organized and geographically dispersed, comprising of formal, informal, family, and cultural organizations connected by different and almost invisible means. The insurgents also adopt the genetic speculation strategy by kidnapping and abducting women and young girls to get pregnant and give birth to future insurgents (as successors of their activities). The manipulation of socio-cultural and religious beliefs is equally part of insurgents' methods (Udama, 2013).

Examining the Different Variants of Globalization in Practice

In line with the objective of this study, which is to examine the roles of globalization in insurgents' terrorism strategy, the fundamental question asked here is: how has the elements of globalization, such as the advanced information communication technology (ICT), aided the overall strategy and tactics of insurgents in Africa? Attempting to answer this question, this contribution looks at how these particular components of globalization have contributed to the transformation of insurgents (such as Al-Shabaab in Kenya and Boko Haram in Nigeria) from domestic or indigenous rebellion to regional actors to the extent that they now assume a fundamental security challenge to their respective governments and the citizens, and have become a source of sub-regional, regional, and continental security threat. Scholars such as Bandyopadhyay and colleagues (2015) have argued that this has been made possible owing to the new technology that accompanied the globalization regime; resulting in the lowering of transportation cost and increasing trade and capital flows across nations which have aided the activities of the insurgent groups such as Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram. Undoubtedly, technological globalization has not only increased the number of available tools of communication but has also contributed to the effectiveness and efficiency of communication. Also, globalization has increased and provided faster and cheaper means of transport — by air, road, and rail. It is also argued that just as globalization has fostered the economic growth of states, it has also threatened and, in many cases, resulted in reducing the sovereignty and power of many African states (Ikotun, 2009, p. 183). The outcome of manipulating the supposed benefits of globalization is that it has allowed an easy spread of the acts and effects of insurgency and terrorism. This is because globalization has aided them in their operational dynamics to the extent that insurgent operations, such as those of Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram, are no longer a local issue, as their networks have the capacity to execute a destructive strike even from thousands of miles away. Hence, Powell (2014) has asserted that globalization has changed the form and nature of terrorism and how the world responds to it in its attempts to tackle the crisis.

Globalization is certainly not being presented here as the cause of terrorism; instead, this paper argues that the overall strategies and tactics of insurgents have been greatly transformed especially in the past two decades owing to the globalization process. This is very prominently evidenced in the operations of Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram. It is not wrong to say that globalization has added potency to the operations of the insurgents and has transformed such insurgent and terrorist organizations into fearful actors. Globalization has not only heightened the organizational effectiveness of Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram, but it has also increased their lethality and capability to carry out operations on a wider scale. For instance, with the ease of instant connection and almost untraceable communication made possible by the globalized ICT, they now find sanctuary in less controlled and relatively weak areas (Nasiri, 2006). As parts of their propaganda strategies, both Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram would record scenes of their in-house trainings and trials as well as punishments and use ICT (such as the social media platforms including YouTube) to ensure a wider reach of the content with a view of terrifying the civilian population and cowing them into submission (Alli, 2015, p. 63). Furthermore, the globalization-induced integrated global economy provides the markets and means to move goods, also arms and weapons, thereby increasing the financial and military power of Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram and other similar organizations. Equally, the reconnaissance tactics usually deployed by terrorists are aided by obtaining information using digital means with easy access to information made possible by globalization (Bandyopadhyay et al., 2015; Clapham, 2012; Griffin, 2004).

Economic globalization involves enormous and swift modifications with respect to the flow of trade, investment, finance, capital, and labor. While the economies of developed countries have grown and their global market shares increased, those of African states have dwindled. This inequality, differences, and incongruity have further undermined the sovereignty, security, and legitimacy of many African states (Backhaus, 2003; Griffin, 2004; Hanlon, 2009; Hoffman, 2002). Therefore, insurgent groups get the opportunity to manipulate the inequality created through this globalization, especially in the African societies, such as Nigeria, where the benefits of globalization have not been fully utilized for development.

Secondly, technological globalization largely depends on fundamental advancements in ICT, such as the Internet, which offers open and free access to knowledge and information, and instant communication. Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram have continued to take advantage of these technologies to transmit their ideologies and underlying themes to the nooks and crannies of the world, to recruit, mobilize, conduct, and control their operations (Onuoha, 2014). No doubt, being equipped with such modern technologies has transformed the nature of contemporary terrorist and insurgent groups into dreadful and fearful foes to the extent that their operations are harsh, hostile, severe, and difficult to fight, as currently being witnessed in the operations of Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram in Kenya and Nigeria respectively.

In addition, for the structural and cultural variant of globalization that is predominantly perceived to be synonymous with the notion of 'Americanization', it has been described as the source of a new unbridled neo-imperialism which poses a potential threat to the traditional societies and already existing distinct cultures and civilizations (Bakier, 2006; White, 2014). This cultural transmission is made possible through individually accessible interconnected communications using different traditional and new (mass) media platforms. The content transmitted often extols 'branded products' and 'branded lifestyles' primarily associated with the US-led

western culture. While an extreme view of this version considers globalization as a cultural invasion with the aspiration to achieve global homogenization, a more detailed view acknowledges that globalization has the potential to result in conflict and resentment (an opinion that describes the anti-American movement among the armed groups in the Islamist Arab States) (Zopf, 2018). One of the factors contributing to this is that people get an increased awareness of the stark contrast between their living conditions and those of the developed state which gain more benefits from this process. Consequently, societies that feel excluded from the benefits of globalization increasingly challenge their governments. Of course, these dislocated and powerless people are readily available tools to be exploited at the hands of the insurgent and terrorist groups (White, 2014).

Lastly, briefly touching upon political globalization, it is observed that this particular variant generally explains the impacts of economic, cultural, and technological variants on the state and its policies (Akinrinde & Tegbe, 2020). This implies that as the weak states become weaker, they are increasingly exposed to the impact of opposing asymmetric forces such as Al-Shabaab in Kenya and Boko Haram in Nigeria (Hanlon, 2009, pp. 124-132; Wolf, 2001, p. 182). Having discussed how the globalization has contributed to the activities of Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram, the next section is premised on how these broad globalization changes have facilitated and implored their operations.

The Use of Exploitation Strategies

This section discusses the different strategies Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram employed in their operations. These strategies owe their existence and effectiveness to the process of globalization and are exploited by these groups for their benefit and better functioning. Insurgent groups adopting terrorism strategies, such as Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram, have often manipulated the faceless character of globalization in several ways.

Both Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram have manipulated the large volume of the global economy to hide and disguise their illegal operations such as piracy, kidnapping for ransom, robbery, and a host of others. The members of both the groups/networks have been able to move around with their goods and, in many cases, getaway and escape from being detected in their areas of operations. In many instances, some African states have had difficulty tracking transit and proliferation of illegal goods (especially arms and weapons) and illicit funds to terrorist and insurgent groups. This is because the exercise requires quite complicated and complex security capability and highly dependable anticipatory intelligence which are often beyond the abilities of many African states, where insurgents such as Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram operate (Oyetunbi & Akinrinde, 2021). For example, Nigeria has been battling with the problem of the culpability of Boko Haram in the illegal proliferation and circulation of small and light weapons in the country (Akubor, 2014; Bandyopadhyay et al., 2015). Also, not only have Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram been able to exploit the failings of Kenya and Nigeria, respectively, but they have also been able to escape from being accosted. To that extent, it has been relatively easy for them to acquire illicit arms and weapons, including large weapons, and purchase unlawful goods by disguising and covering their shipments among the vast trade of legal goods (Shelley, 2020).

The integrated global economy also encourages the capacities of the Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, and other insurgents to benefit from the trade in illegal goods and resources and to outwit and outsmart states from penetrating their financial

networks. Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram often seize and control the production of important resources within their Operating Environments (OEs). For instance, Boko Haram now controls the fishing industry around the Lake Chad region and the Baga town in Born State, Nigeria. The insurgent groups are ultimately expected to plough resources into the international market in order to finance wider operations; further weakening the capabilities of their host states. For example, the control of Al-Shabaab of the main port of Somalia and piracy in the Arden region before its dislodgement by the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) is a case in point (Abdulahi, 2015; Carrol, 2012; Owens, 2009).

Furthermore, the enormous number of people who travel for legitimate purposes also enables insurgents to mix with the people and infiltrate states, particularly in the ones where laws regarding the movement of people are not adequate. (Ikome, 2012). Even in developed countries, where there are sufficient resources to trace people and anticipate population movements, the movements of insurgents (such as the ones related to Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram) are left somewhat unhindered. Evidence has shown that Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram members have adapted and found ways to infiltrate their host societies, often through disguised and high-level technological operations (Akinrinde & Tegbe, 2020). The claim of Al-Shabaab, in 2015, smuggling thousands of its members into Europe indicates the same (Brown, 2015). Also, the ability to hide and be faceless — that accompanies the technological globalization regime — has made connections among different insurgent groups highly possible and realistic (Akinrinde & Tegbe, 2020). For example, Al-Shabaab proclaimed it was connected and fully integrated into the al Qaeda network in 2008, and the Al Shabaab Media Foundation claimed that the instructors of Al-Qaeda were the ones who trained the members of Al-Shabaab in guerrilla tactics (Agbiboa, 2014; Lorenzo, Pantucci, & Kohlmann, 2010; Roggio, 2010). Also, the cross-border assault strategy of Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram, to ensure a safe passage to allied countries and create a buffer zone at their borders, has been made possible because of the globalization process. For this purpose, they intensify the linkages with other terror groups outside of their own OEs. For example, Al Shabaab in Kenya is reported to be connected to the Salafi ideological groups in Iran and has often adopted and manipulated the infrastructural communication facilities with which they promote anti-western ideology (Menner, 2014; Zenn, 2014).

In the same vein, there have been reports that Al-Qaeda is connected to other groups beyond national boundaries, such as Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM), Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP), and MUJAO (Onapajo, Uzodike, & Whetho, 2012). Carter Ham, Commander of the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM), reported, in 2011, that the members of Boko Haram received training from the Al-Shabaab group (Agbiboa, 2013; International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2011; International Crisis Group, 2014). Globalization has a great role in developing these bonds and connections among insurgent and terrorist groups, such as between Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram (Cronin, 2006; Emilio, 2010; Mackinlay, 2002; White, 2014).

The increasing ability to connect with one another has helped terrorist organizations convey and send information and recruit domestically and across international borders. (Arquilla, Ronfeldt, & Zanini, 2006; Hoffman, 2002; Owens, 2009). As mentioned earlier, the modern means of (mass) communication serve as potent and capable instruments for the mobilization of people. Also, the image-based nature of information has a particularly overwhelming impact and influence, especially for the population with low literacy levels. This further facilitates the

recruitment and mobilization of members easy for terrorist and insurgent groups (Cronin, 2006; Hanlon, 2009; Lutz & Lutz, 2014; Owens, 2009; White, 2014).

Confirming the manipulation of the information communication technology (ICT) that has been made possible by globalization, a UN report claims that 'the Internet is a prime example of how terrorists can behave in a truly transnational way; in response, States need to think and function in an equally transnational manner' (World Drug Report, 2012, p. 85). Therefore, it can be conveniently argued that technological globalization has helped Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram to transform their organization, combat operational capabilities and tactical attacks. Cybercrimes also provide funds for their functioning, especially through identity theft which, according to United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), criminals use it to generate one billion dollars every year. The UNODC has also confirmed that insurgents exploit the internet to access bank accounts and private information and to extract information from credit cards (World Drug Report, 2012). Through the use of the World Wide Web and technologies, e-mails and electronic bulletin boards, cell phones, fax machines, and computer conferencing, insurgents have shared operational information and coordinated attacks over a vast landscape. The cell phone is extensively used to detonate bombs and facilitate coordination among the connected groups.

It is quite evident that the changes brought about by globalization have increased the resilience of both Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram. This lets these organizations survive even after the death of a prominent leader. For example, after the leader of Boko Haram, Mohammed Yusuf, was killed, Shekau emerged as his successor (Bamgbose, 2011; International Crisis Group, 2014; Owens, 2009; Powell, 2014; Sani, 2011). Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, and some other insurgent groups covertly take advantage of globalization in order to advance their influence on state actors in the international system, particularly in the African states. The capabilities of African states to act proactively in finding solutions to the challenges posed by the insurgent groups, such as Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram, are severely limited and plagued by enormous constraints. One of the reasons for this is that the majority of states in the continent are on the margins of the globalization regime, with little or no power, importance, and influence both within their territories and at the international level (Mills, 2012). In Africa, virtually all the states experiencing the insurgency-related crises exhibit very little or a complete lack of ability to provide essential services to their citizens, with large departments of some states are almost left un-administered (Rothberg, 2004). This fundamental weakness creates both political and geographical vacuums for the insurgents to exploit and thrive on (Abdulahi, 2015; Henley, 2015; Mills, 2012).

In states like Nigeria (affected by terrorism), it is likely for the insurgents to manipulate the ethnic, cultural and religious divides and the trust and legitimacy deficits in any society as is currently being practised by the Boko Haram insurgents in the North-eastern parts of Nigeria. They step into the vacuum, created by the legitimacy deficit, to offer alternative governments; that will provide security, employment, and even the basic services, as expressed by Boko Haram (in Nigeria) in the wake of the failures of the Nigerian government to provide security to the populace (Bamgbose, 2011; Sani, 2011). In instances such as these, insurgents like Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram function as states within a state. They impose taxes and, in some instances, also participate in international diplomacy. In addition, they also provide welfare goods and services within their Operating Environments (OEs) and

mobilize operational forces that are capable and efficient enough to challenge the security forces of the state, offering an alternative government and governance.

As aforementioned, similar to Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram, many insurgent groups economically benefit from globalization to the extent that some insurgent groups have budgets greater than the budget of the states they are fighting. For example, the 2014 *Forbes* report states that the financial base of ISIS was two billion dollars, HAMAS had an annual turnover of one billion dollars, FARC ($600 million), Hezbollah ($500 million), Afghan Taliban ($400 million), Al-Qaeda ($150 million), Boko Haram ($52 million), and Al-Shabaab ($70 million). This reveals that these insurgent groups possess the financial capability to carry out their terrorist activities and challenge states' hither to sovereignty (Zehorai, 2014).

And therefore, with lean and inadequate resources at their disposal, the ability of poor states to provide for their citizens is further stretched and constrained. Hence, the states find themselves in a situation whereby the attempts of proactive defense and the search for insurgent operations further create a chain of problems, aggravated by ubiquitous and ever-present demands on the meagre resources available to them against a strong enemy capable of exploiting the benefits of globalization in ways that these states cannot (Ganor, 2015; Hanlon, 2009; Kesselman, Krieger, & Joseph, 2010).

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that just as globalization has improved national and global development, it has also aided the political, social and economic forces that work to undermine the sovereignty of states and has been manipulated by the insurgent/terrorist groups such as Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram. They have manipulated the supposed benefits of technological globalization to move around; transport arms and weapons, mobilize, pass their messages, and recruit members using modern and advanced communication tools, mostly available through the internet. Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram have been able to carry out propaganda through the use of the information communication technology that accompanies globalization, and this has facilitated them in improving their funding by getting connected with their members and sympathizers.

To tackle the activities of the insurgents, African states would need to adopt both hard and soft measures to security. This is possible by adequately utilizing the benefits of globalization to improve national economy and provide good governance to the extent that it improves the level of education, solves the problem of unemployment, and reduces poverty — the factors that have repeatedly been pointed at as the contributing elements for many cases of insurgency in the African continent. Also, improving the political, economic, military, and technological bilateral and multilateral relations of the states at the sub-regional, regional, and continental levels, through the processes of globalization, will help them fight insurgency. It is equally expedient for the African states to invest in technology (beyond the insurgent groups) to the extent that technological globalization provides effective counter-insurgency tools. States, where insurgent and terrorist activities pervade, may invest in space technologies that would help in early warning, intelligence gathering, and improved military operational capabilities against these sub-state entities.

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The Phenomenon of Far-Right Extremism in Pakistan: A Myth or Reality?

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Abstract
The world has witnessed an increase in far-right extremism, particularly in Poland, Germany, Austria, Hungary, India, and the U.S, where far-right political parties have assumed power. However, the term 'far-right extremism' is not frequently used in Pakistan and is generally considered synonymous with religious extremism or radicalization. This study explores the applicability of the term in the context of Pakistan to determine which political entities in Pakistan can be labeled as far-right political parties. The study observes increasing electoral support for far-right political parties in Pakistan, especially in the last general election held in 2018. Though the support increased, it failed to materialize in a tangible form as the far-right political parties could not win any National Assembly seat in the election. The paper concludes by arguing that the increase in the vote bank of far-right political parties in the last general elections was a temporary and politically-motivated phenomenon that capitalized on people's disillusionment towards the mainstream political parties. Nonetheless, the phenomenon has seriously disrupted the socio-political order in Pakistan, as witnessed in the recent violent standoff between the Government of Pakistan and the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) protesters.

Keywords
Nationalism, electoral politics, religious militancy, Islamophobia, Hindutva

Introduction
In recent years, the world has witnessed a global wave of far-right extremism in many European and Asian countries, i.e., Poland, Austria, Hungary, India, the Philippines, and the U.S. In the recent attack in the Eastern German town of Halle (Saale, 2019), a 27 years old Stephan Balliet attacked the Jewish synagogue and executed a mass shooting. The shooting was live-streamed on social media. This incident was considered an expression of far-right extremism striking Europe (Ehmsen & Scharenberg, 2018; Smith, 2019). Furthermore, the incident was considered to be

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stimulated by similarly organized violent extremism, such as the homicides in Christchurch, New Zealand (March 2019), Poway, California (April 2019), and El Paso, Texas (August 2019). Growing diversity, rising unemployment, the economic recession, and mounting distrust against the mainstream political parties are cited as the underlying reasons for a rise in far-right extremism in Europe (e.g., Koeler, 2019; Caiani, 2017; Jackman & Volpert, 1996), leading to increasing nationalism, anti-immigrant sentiments, Islamophobia, xenophobia, and racism (Othon, 2000; Hainsworth & Robin, 2012).

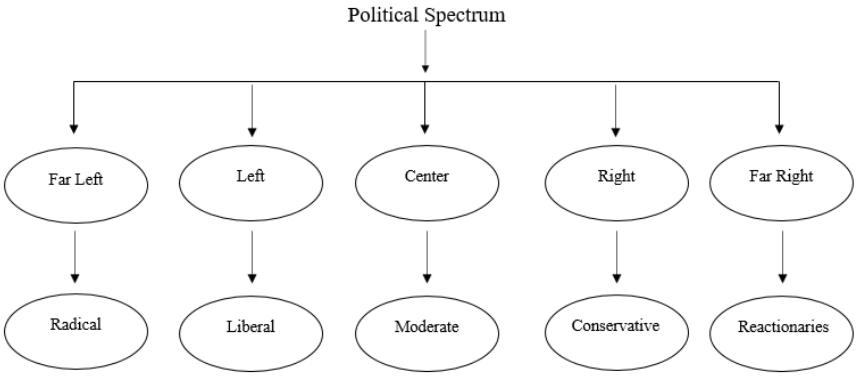
In Pakistan, extremism or radicalism is not a new phenomenon. However, the term far-right has not been used in general public or policy discourse. Since its inception, religious parties in Pakistan (such as Jammat-e-Islami and Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind) have remained dominant on the political horizon and contributed significantly to the Islamization of the state and society. The Islamic provisions included in the 1956, 1962, and 1973 constitutions manifested the active involvement of religious parties in politics (Roy, 1994). Such mobilization, however, has never been categorized as far-right extremist (political) parties. Later, the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan (during the late 1970s) and the subsequent developments ushered in a new era in the politics of Pakistan. The period was marked by extremism and radicalization, with new religious parties (such as Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Sipah-e-Sahaba, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan etc.). These organizations were alleged to be involved in violent activities inside and outside Pakistan (Nolan, Ahmed, & Baue, 2016).

In 2014, the terrorist attack on Army Public School (Peshawar) that killed 150 children and their teachers forced the government and its Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) to take stringent actions against violent extremism and terrorism (under National Action Plan) (e.g., Makki & Yamin, 2021; Johnston, 2016). Nevertheless, the aforementioned religiously-oriented political entities were not understood through the lens of far-right extremism. Therefore, this paper applies the phenomenon of far-right extremism on three political parties (and affiliated groups) to explicate the level of support in the electoral process. With regards, the paper presents three main arguments. Firstly, how can the term 'far-right' be explained in Pakistan? Secondly, which parties in Pakistan can be labeled far-right political parties, and can they threaten Pakistan's internal and external security? The paper also attempts to ascertain the extent of their electoral presence, i.e. are they increasing or decreasing? Thirdly, what measures are required to control the hate-mongering rhetoric of the far-right parties? In doing so, the following section conceptualizes the term 'far-right extremism'. It also provides an overview of far-right extremism in Europe, the United States, and India. The subsequent section provides details concerning the methodological underpinnings, followed by the history of far-right political parties in Pakistan and their electoral presence. Overall, the discussion will help understand the extent to which the far-right political parties have become a national security threat. The last section of the article concludes the discussion by emphasizing a pro-active role for the LEAs and civil society towards countering violent extremism.

Defining and Contextualizing Far-Right Extremism

To define the 'far-right' or 'extreme right', we must understand the political spectrum (i.e., left, right and center positions). The spectrum locates a person's political views, beliefs, and positions from both extremes i.e., extreme left and extreme right (Heywood, 2007).

Figure 1. Political spectrum based on left, right and center positions



Source: (Jefferson, 2010)

Figure 1 provides an overview of the political spectrum based on five broad categories: i.e., Liberal, Radical, Moderate, Conservative, and Reactionary. 'Moderates' are placed at the center. They adopt moderate behavior towards any social issue and repel extreme views regarding changes in the existing socio-political order. In addition, moderates manage erroneous tendencies of society through peaceful means. 'Conservatives' are plotted on the right-hand side of the spectrum and prefer traditional values and practices. They accept the existing order and tend to work peacefully in the prevailing order of society. 'Liberals', however, are located on the left-hand side and are those people who accept the values of equality, intelligence, and competency of the people. They are generally less discontented with the prevailing order of society and demand change that supports individual welfare. 'Radicals' are positioned at the far or extreme left; they mostly feel exceedingly dissatisfied with the existing conditions of society and seek a rapid change in the current order. Moreover, on the far-right position of the spectrum are the reactionaries (Jefferson, 2010).

Speaking in a similar vein, Jones (2018) referred to far-right extremism as the possible use or threat of use of violence by a specific group of the community to achieve racial, religious, or ethical supremacy, or aims to end certain practices of the community by challenging the authority of the government. Eller (2017), however, argued that there is no proper definition of the term 'far-right'. According to Eller, the term serves to broadly indicate groups or identities that seem to be more intolerant, aggressive, and rigid in their stance through their actions and speeches; hence, it is considered a collective term for the radical or extreme right, covering a diverse range of ideologies such as nationalism, racism, xenophobia.

During the 1990s, several international developments — such as the flare-up of Neo-Nazi violence in Germany, the growing strength of the National Front in France, the electoral success of Zhirinovsky in Russia, the inclusion of Allianza Nazionale in Italy, the participation of the Slovak National Party in the government of Slovakia, the electoral victories of the Freedom Party in Austria, the People's Party in Switzerland and the Vlaams Bloc in Belgium — renewed academic interest in the politics of the extreme right (e.g., Hainsworth, 2008). Furthermore, the nationalist

conflicts, ethnic cleansing, and concentration camps in the former Yugoslavia were viewed as an aggressive manifestation of extremism and ultra-nationalism in 1990s Europe (Lazaridis, Campani, & Benvineste, 2016).

At the beginning of this century, the extreme right seemed to be acquiring increasing momentum, with the participation of the Freedom Party in the government of Austria. This was an unusual experience, as it was the first time in the post-war period that an extreme right party participated as an equal 'partner' in a government of a European country. It came as a realization for European citizens that the extreme right is not to be regarded as an entirely marginal phenomenon but as a *force* that can penetrate mainstream democratic politics (Othon, 2000). Although still a vague idea based on muddled political and ideological views, far-right extremism has become a challenge for the European political system and is being used by some groups as an instrument to achieve socio-political goals (Seredenko & Sergei, 2015). Similarly, In the post 9/11 period, Muslims became the chief target of far-right extremism in Europe, especially the dress code (Hijab and veiling), and the far-right political parties targeted places of worship (e.g., Ahmed, 2018; Lambert & Githens-Mazer, 2010).

Historically, the right-wing extremism in the U.S was motivated by different ideologies like racism, nationalism, and Christianity. But one form of extremism that has dominated others is 'white supremacy'. It is perceived as an inclusive condition whereby the interests and discernments of white people are continually placed at center stage and assumed as 'normal' (Gillborn, 2006). It is manifested in the emergence of racial politics (the slavery era), with the formation of the 'Klu Klux Klan' (white supremacy hate group), and the rise of anti-communist sentiments in America (Gambel, 2015; Piazza, 2017). In the report published by the Centre of Strategic and International Relations, Jone (2018) has discussed that far-right extremism in the United States has been increasing. He highlighted that between 2007 and 2011, there were almost 5-7 attacks per year, but from 2012 to 2016, this rose to 14; and 31 in 2017. In the U.S, an increase in far-right extremism was inspired by three trends, i.e. racism, anti-federalism, and fundamentalism, which correspondingly reflects white supremacy, anti-state sentiments, and a strong sense of identity, particularly Christianity.

In India, far-right extremism can be traced back to the British colonial period, when in the 1920s, the Hindu Nationalist movement, 'Sangh Parivar', emerged against the colonial power. It was formed to secure Hindu dominance in Indian society and drive out religious minorities from the state, claiming that the growing Muslim and Christian population in the country was a threat to their religious identity. Other nationalist organizations later joined this movement. These organizations also had educational wings and propaganda groups which operated across the country to disseminate the message of Hindu Nationalism, using hate campaigns and violent tactics against minorities (Marshall, 2004). More recently, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), and Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) have emerged as far-right political parties with overlapping ideologies. RSS, however, operates on cultural, VHP on religion, and BJP on political grounds (Venkatesh, 2019). Under the premiership of current Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, an active member of RSS, Hindutva, or Hindu Nationalism, arose as a leading political ideology of India (Kronstadt, 2018).

It is believed that the military wing of RSS provides military training to young girls and boys who are involved in a series of brutal incidents, particularly

towards Muslims in India. Golwalkar, who was the second supreme leader of RSS, restated that their objective was to make India a Hindu state and the best way to achieve that goal was to adopt resources that included violent militants (Venkatesh, 2019). The revocation of the constitution on Jammu and Kashmir and the cancellation of citizenship of Muslims from other states living in India can be considered a clear manifestation of the current government's far-right approach towards minorities in India. Several incidents have occurred where extreme nationalist supporters used violence against minorities (including Muslims and Christians). Since the 2014 general elections in India, there has been a steady increase in violence against the Christian community (Werleman, 2021; Gittinger, 2020).

In the context of Pakistan, extremism is an outcome of both internal and external factors (Ali et al., 2021). The feelings of deprivation, religious intolerance, lack of trust between the public and the government, and its failure in resolving their social and economic problems, eventually compel people to take extreme actions (Javaid, 2011; Saigol, 2015; Yousaf, 2015; Makki & Yamin, 2021). In most cases, it has also been observed that extremist groups are outgrowths of religio-political parties (Ispahani, 2017).

Methodology

While acknowledging the utility of qualitative data in understanding the social construction of reality, this research employs the qualitative technique of data collection — i.e., documentary analysis and elite interviewing. The documentary analysis helped analyze key individuals and political parties **(**Fitzgerald, 2012). The analysis also assisted in the contextualization of the phenomenon under study. Furthermore, the research further relied on elite interviewing to understand different contextual perspectives, as it is appropriate for the study of recent historical change, political process-tracing, the role of memory, and perception in political or social activity (Natow, 2020). For this purpose, policymakers, representatives from political parties, and religious leaders were interviewed to understand the dynamics behind the emergence of the far-right political parties in Pakistan. The 'snowball' or 'referral' sampling technique (Burnham et al., 2008) was used to approach 15 interviewees. The year 2018-2019 was when the primary data was collected and analyzed. The interviews were guided by semi-structured questions, which allowed the interviewer and interviewees enough space to consider new themes without imposing any rigid framework (Burnham et al., 2008). The research used the narrative approach for the qualitative data with a preference for interpretation, which is a post-positivist and post-modernist approach (Rodríguez-Dorans & Jacobs, 2020).

Far-Right Political Parties in Pakistan and their Electoral Presence

Since its inception, religio-political parties in Pakistan have had a dominant role in mainstream politics. It was primarily due to the political activism of the religious parties like Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan that the first constitution of Pakistan in 1956 declared Pakistan an 'Islamic Republic', and Islamic provisions were added in the 1962 and 1973 constitutions (Ahmad & Sajjad, 2017); however, the electoral success of these parties was negligible (Shah, 2014). Nonetheless, religion was used not only by religious parties but also by mainstream political parties to accomplish and legitimize the political objectives (Khalid, 2020).

As discussed earlier, the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan brought a wave of extremism and religious militancy to Pakistan, leading to the formation of several

sectarian-based organizations such as Sipah-e-Sahaba, Lashkar-e-Jhnagvi, Sipah-e-Muhammad (Nasr, 2000). According to Weinbaum (2017), the underlying reasons behind the upsurge of these sectarian organizations were the marginalization of moderate-democratic political parties by the military governments, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the Iranian revolution in 1979. As discussed earlier, the terrorist attack on Peshawar's Army Public School (APS) in 2014, killing 150 children and their teachers, forced the government and its LEAs to take stringent actions against these extremist groups under the National Action Plan, leading to a significant decrease in the extremism in the country (Makki & Akash, 2020; Johnston, 2016, p. 10).

In 2017, two political parties, the Milli Muslim League (MML) and Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP), emerged and participated in the electoral process (Ghani, 2018), and to the surprise of most, they secured a considerable number of votes from the masses; consequently, reducing the vote bank of the moderate political parties such as Pakistan Muslim League N (PMLN), Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), Awami National Party (ANP).

Milli Muslim League (MML)

The MML, formed in 2017, is believed to be the political wing of Jammat-ud-Dawa (JuD), earlier known as Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT). Let, a radical Islamic group was organized by Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi in 1984 at Muridike (Punjab) to wage 'Jihad' against the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan. In 1985, Hafiz Saeed and Zafar Iqbal established a missionary group titled JuD. In 1986, Lakhvi merged his group, Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, with Hafiz Saeed's JuD to form Markaz-al-Dawa-wal-Irshad, which Hafiz Saeed led himself. The purpose of this organization was social welfare and armed struggle. As introduced earlier, LeT is the militant wing of this organization (Pakistan Militant Groups, 2013).

JuD is known for its alleged involvement in various terrorist attacks on NATO and the American forces in Afghanistan (Sajjad & Jawad, 2011). Consequently, it was declared a terrorist organization by the U.S. In 2017, JuD established its political wing, named the MML, which Safiullah Khalid headed. Since the wing had an affiliation with JuD, the Election Commission of Pakistan banned the organization from registration (as a political party). Subsequently, the MML's candidate participated in the by-election as an independent candidate in a seat vacated by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. Muhammad Yaqoob Sheikh, the MML candidate, scored 5822 votes, four times higher than the mainstream left-wing Pakistan People's Party (PPP) (e.g., Fair, 2018; "JuD Fields Candidate", 2017).

Table 1. Evolution of Milli Muslim League

1984	**1985**	**1986**	**2017**
Lashkar-e-Tayyiba	Jammat-ud-Dawa	Markaz al Dawa-wal-Irshad	Milli Muslim League
Radical	*Missionary*	*Welfare and Jihad*	*Political*

In March 2018, the Islamabad High Court discharged the objections placed by the Election Commission of Pakistan on the MML, as the party leadership had proven that they were not affiliated with JuD (Ghani, 2018). After the verdict of the Supreme Court, the party leadership announced its manifesto, which promised the supremacy of the Quran and Sunnah, i.e. the protection of Pakistan's ideological,

cultural, and moral values. It also guaranteed to safeguard the fundamental rights of minorities and women in Pakistan. The party further endorsed the struggle for Kashmir's freedom and vowed to fight against extremist ideologies and sectarianism ("Jammatud Dawa Enters Political", 2017). Despite the Islamabad High Court verdict, the Election Commission of Pakistan did not register the MML as a political party because of the opposition from the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Foreign affairs. It was reasoned that the JuD and the Faleh-e-Insaniyat Foundations were banned organizations under the United Nations (Security Council) Act, 1948 (Hashim, 2017).

Nevertheless, the organization participated in the 2018 general elections under the banner of Allah-o-Akbar Tehreek, which was registered as a political party in 2016, chaired by Dr. Mian Ihsan Bari. The MML filed 260 candidates for the national and provisional assemblies under its banner in the 2018 elections. The list of candidates also included the son and son-in-law of Hafiz Saeed, nominated for NA-91 and PP-167 seats in Pakistan's national and provincial assemblies (Rasheed, 2018). The Allah-o-Akbar Tehreek also designated ten female candidates, out of which three were nominated for reserved seats. Table 2 below highlights the vote bank for the MML. It stood at the thirteenth position in the National Assembly (172120 votes), at the eighth position in the Punjab assembly (237766 votes), a twelfth position in the KPK assembly (12060 votes), and at a twentieth position in the Baluchistan assembly (1659 votes).

Table 2. Vote bank of Allah-o-Akbar Tehreek (MML) in 2018 Elections

Assembly	*Total Votes*	*Position*	*Seats*
National Assembly	172120	13th	0
Punjab	237766	8th	0
Sindh	16238	16th	0
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	12060	12th	0
Baluchistan	1659	20th	0

Source: (Statistical Reports, Election Commission of Pakistan)

Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP)

Haq Nawaz Jhangvi formed SSP in 1985. Known as a sectarian organization, SSP was involved in militant activities against the Shia sect within Pakistan (Shah, 2014). In addition, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi is considered a military wing of Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan and is alleged to be involved in the targeting of people from the Shia sect; one of the examples was the attack on the Shia Leader Malik Mukhtar Hussain in Chiniot leading to an outbreak of fierce sectarian violence in 2006 (Grare, 2007; Ahmar, 2005). This organization is considered the most influential extremist organization in Pakistan, with almost 500 offices, 100,000 workers, 3000-6000 trained cadres, and 17 branches in foreign states. Apart from targeting people on a sectarian basis, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi is responsible for the attack on Christian communities in Gojra, Punjab, in which eight Christians were killed, and around 100 houses were burned. Lashkar-e-Jhangvi is also alleged to have foreign linkages and had received funding from Saudi Coffers and the United Arab Emirates (Pakistan Militant Groups, 2013; Behera & Sharma, 2014).

SSP Pakistan also participated in the politics of Pakistan. For instance, it aligned itself with other mainstream political parties and remained in the coalition government in Punjab during 1993. In 2002, Pervez Musharaf banned SSP, but it re-

emerged with a new name i.e., Millat-e-Islamia, which was later prohibited. The organization later renamed itself Ahle Sunnat Wal Jammat (ASWJ), with a slightly moderated approach to avoid a ban by the government (Basit, 2013).

In addition, SSP also contested under the banner of Pakistan's Rah-e-Haq Party, founded by Hakeem Muhammad Ibrahim Qasmi in February 2012 (Peshawar). Reports also emerged that Pakistan's Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) supported the independent candidates of ASWJ, and the party released a list of almost 70 candidates, which supported PTI in nearly 45 constituencies. PTI denied any such collaboration, claiming that their support was not party-based (Altaf, 2018; "PTI slams PML-N", 2013).

Table 3. Vote Bank of Pakistan Rah-e-Haq Party (ASWJ) in 2018 Elections

Assembly	*Number of Votes*	*Position*	*Seats*
National Assembly	55859	21st	0
Sindh	18771	15th	0
Punjab	4191	21st	0
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	53472	9th	0
Balochistan	1167	21st	0

Source: (Statistical Reports, Election Commission of Pakistan)

This table shows the vote bank of the Pakistan Rah-e-Haq Party in the general elections of 2018. After gaining 55859 votes, the party stood at the twenty-first position in the National Assembly. It got 18771 votes in the Sindh Assembly, attaining the fifteenth position. With 4191 votes, it came at the twenty-first position in the Punjab Assembly. In the KPK Assembly, the party stood at ninth position, with 53472 votes; in the Baluchistan Assembly, the party stood at the twenty-first position with 1167 votes. Pakistan Rah-e-Haq, however, could not win any seat, but the number of votes shows their popularity among the people.

Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP)

TLP is relatively a new participant in the contemporary politics of Pakistan. Khadim Hussain Rizvi founded the party in August 2015. The formation of the party was the result of protests carried out for the release of Mumtaz Qadri (Sabat, Shoaib, & Qadar, 2020). Mumtaz Qadri was sentenced to death after he was convicted of killing the former Governor Punjab, Mr. Salman Taseer, in January 2011, as he had supported Asia Bibi, a Christian woman charged with blasphemy in 2009. She was sentenced to death after a lengthy trial, but the Supreme Court of Pakistan reversed her conviction and declared her not guilty. TLP opposed this decision and protested against it through violent demonstrations (Akbar, 2019).

In the manifesto of TLP Pakistan for the 2018 general elections, the strict imposition of Shariah Law with Berelvi Interpretations and laws related to 'Namoos e Rasalat' (the Honour of the Prophet) were the key objectives. TLP was also involved in violent demonstrations in Lahore, Islamabad, and many other cities ("Tehreek Labbaik Pakistan unveils manifesto", 2018; Sabat, Shoaib, & Qadar, 2020), against change in blasphemy law and the Election Act, 2017. In 2018, TLP contested in the general elections by filing 178 candidates (Alam, 2018). However, TLP failed to secure seats in the National Assembly but won two seats in the Sindh Assembly ("TLP secures two seats", 2018). The details of the votes they gained in each province is given in Table 4 below:

Table 4. Vote Bank of TLP in 2018 Elections

Assembly	*Number of votes*	*Positions*	*Winning Seats*
National Assembly	2234316	6th	0
Punjab	18,67,625	4th	0
Sindh	4,14,635	7th	2
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	78,125	8th	0
Balochistan	10,999	16th	0

Source: (Statistical Reports- Election Commission of Pakistan)

This research focuses on determining whether the phenomena of far-right extremism have risen in Pakistan or not. For this purpose, the electoral presence of the three parties discussed above has been studied. According to Jamal (2021), far-right politics in Pakistan is gaining strength. The most recent elections of 2018 gained a significant number of votes (see table 5), which shows the increasing support of the public for these parties. Although they did not win National Assembly seats, the number of votes they gained might threaten the vote banks of the moderate democratic parties of Pakistan like PPP, PMLN, and PTI in future politics. Besides the National Assembly, they hold strong positions in provincial assemblies. The table below shows the number of votes each party gained for the National Assembly and clearly demonstrates the progress the far-right parties have made recently at a national and provincial level.

Table 5. Vote Bank of New Far-Right Parties in the Last Four Elections in the National Assembly of Pakistan

Parties	*2002*	*2003*	*2013*	*2018*
Tehreek-e-Labbaik	___	___	___	2234316
Allah-o-Akbar Tehreek	___	___	___	172120
Pakistan Rah-e-Haq Party	___	___	___	55859

Source: (Statistical Reports- Election Commission of Pakistan)

Discussion

Given the increasing popularity of far-right political parties in Pakistan, it is important to assess them through the lens of 'far-right extremist' mobilization. Furthermore, it is necessary to understand the nature of the threat being posed to the moderate and liberal political parties or social-political order in general. Such an elucidation will enable us to identify necessary measures required to counter the violent and hate-instigating elements embedded in the ideology of far-right extremism.

Since this term 'far-right' is alien in Pakistan, the participants envisioned it as a western construct that might not be applicable in Pakistan. It was emphasized that the scale and degree of far-right extremism in the form of white supremacy in the U.S and Europe and Hindutva in India is not the case with Pakistan. Hafeez ur Rehman, a member of TLP, acknowledges an increase in the vote bank of religious parties of Pakistan in the recent elections and pronounced that if TLP comes to power, far-right extremism will probably increase:

> We cannot apply western parameters to define the far-right specifically in Pakistan because religion is the most prominent trend in Pakistan, and people feel attached to religion and respect our party. As a member

> of a religious party, I totally reject, deny, and condemn the use of any type of violence that Western academia uses as an eminent and renowned characteristic of the far-right (Hafeez ur Rehman, personal communication, October 2019).

Most of the participants believed that religious parties with extremist ideas like SSP Pakistan, Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Fiqahe-Jaferia, Sipah-e-Muhammad, and Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, used to be very active in the past, particularly in the 1990s. But in the current political environment, only a few parties can be seen playing an active role so far, such as JuD, TLP, and others. However, they are not involved in any violent activities, owing to the shift in the state's policy concerning strict countering violent extremism and terrorism. Hence, according to a few respondents, such political (extremist) organizations do not threaten the other major political parties. Similarly, some politicians like Murad Rass and Khuwaja Hassan (members of mainstream political parties of Pakistan) also opined that this phenomenon (of violent extremism) does not exist at an alarming scale in Pakistan, as it has been curbed by the combined efforts of the army and the government. They believed that the manifestations and rising vote bank of these parties in the previous elections were temporary. While drawing a comparison with other countries, the participants argue that the trend of far-right extremism has not been found at the state level in Pakistan (such as in India and U.S). Further, it was argued that all such parties with a strong sectarian inclination and/or a supremacist approach that allows hate speech and violence are deficient and do not pose considerable danger to the socio-political fabric of the society. In response to the question about the rising vote bank of newly emerged religious parties like TLP and MML (see tables 1, 2 & 3), Khuwaja Hassan said:

> […] Their presence in the last election was more like an administrative process than political. Even the member of TLP, who contested the previous elections of MNA seat said that their vote bank increased due to the decline in the vote bank of PMLN' (personal communication, October 2019).

Discussing the same concern, Liaqat Baloch, a senior member of Jammat-e-Islami, was of the view that:

> The vote bank of these parties increased as people were disappointed with the performance of liberal and moderate political parties who had been in the government and failed to fulfill their promises, so people diverted from these parties. The example can be seen in the elections of 2018, where religious parties gained a vast number of votes like TLP, Jammat-e-Islami, and many others. But we could not get the desired results because the votes were dispersed in different religious parties. From my point of view, all religious parties should unite under one banner to get the desired results (personal communication, November 2019).

Some participants had a different opinion. They believed that if religio-political organizations kept growing at the same pace, they would threaten other parties. Respondents believed that, if left unchecked, these elements (far-right political parties) can threaten our existing constitutional order and associated socio-political agreements. As witnessed in the 2018 General Elections, such elements have developed a significant vote bank which is alarming. The 2018 General Elections show that the votes received by far-right parties have reduced the winning chances of

major moderate political parties. The assassination attempt on veteran politician Ehsan Iqbal also shows the hate-mongering stance of far-right political parties. Tabish Qayyum, a former member of MML, stated:

> The 2018 elections somehow paved the way for far-right parties in the mainstream politics of Pakistan. MML and TLP, as far-right parties, gained a considerable number of votes which showed that people feel more attached to religion. For instance, TLP's stance on blasphemy captured the people's sentiments. Other than these, some parties have their own objectives, such as MML is committed to Kashmir freedom struggle and the issue has once again become mainstream. Apart from that, people have realized that the so-called moderate parties have failed to deliver the society (personal communication, September 2019).

In response to the question about the strategies to counter the violence and hate-instigating elements of the far-right, most participants argued that the only way forward is to work for better economic conditions of the people. If people are satisfied and engaged in healthy economic activities to fulfill their family needs, they will not go towards extremism. However, Tabish Qayyum, a former member of the MML, linked it to the vacuum in the law-and-order situation of the state, consequently leading to anarchy, violence, and militancy. He argues that effective policies and efficient implementation by the LEAs are needed to overcome these challenges:

> […] if the democratic mainstream system would be strong, then the law and order of the state would be robust, which lessens the chances of any violence, which is important for regional security. The role of Law Enforcement Agencies is very much indispensable. The tragic incident of the Peshawar school massacre in 2014, which killed 149 people, including 132 schoolchildren, led to the change in the government's policy manifested in National Action Plan to curb extremism and militancy in Pakistan. (personal communication, September 2019).

The participants further argued that the engagement of these far-right political parties in the mainstream is needed because extremist and radical entities will change their behavior if they are allowed to become part of the mainstream political system and engage in productive activities. Living in the era of information, people are becoming more aware and are demanding an active and effective role of the government. An expert on religious affairs opined that moderate mainstream religious actors should be weaned away from the far-right extremists to isolate and contract these latter elements. In doing so, state initiatives such as 'Paigham-e-Pakistan' should be widely owned and effectively practiced. Moreover, existing laws and their enforcement mechanisms also need to be made responsive so that hate speech and violent extremism can be curbed effectively. Above all, educational avenues and media outlets should be fully utilized for promoting tolerance and inclusiveness. Nevertheless, all the participants agreed that these strategies need robust implementation and enforcement. Most of the experts interviewed opined that the presence of these far-right parties is 'administratively' planned or are products politically motivated process to gain certain political objectives.

As far as the threat is concerned that is expected to be arising from the politics of far-right political parties in Pakistan, all the interviewees agreed that it does not exist on such a level as it used to be in the past, particularly during the 1990s. Against the backdrop of the APS incident, the extremist elements were dealt with

'hard' measures by the joint efforts of the government and the security forces of Pakistan. In 2015, Pakistan observed the rise of TLP over the publication of Prophet Muhammad's caricature in France. The developments over the incident, which led to the beheading of a school teacher by a young Muslim, enraged many Muslims, who believed the publication was blasphemous (Erlanger, 2020), leading to country-wide protests by TLP, spearheaded by Khadim Hussain Rizvi. The TLP leadership demanded that the government expel the French ambassador and cut ties with the European Union (Baloch & Ellis-Petersen, 2021). Rizvi's sudden death amid the protests on Nov 20, 2020, and the fact that tens of thousands of his supporters attended it was seen as an indication of increasing mass support for the party (Shah, 2020). Khadim Hussain Rizvi was succeeded by his son Saad Hussain Rizvi who reiterated his party's stance against France and French President Emmanuel Macron. TLP launched a major protest in April 2021, which resulted in the arrest of Saad Hussain Rizvi on terrorism charges along with hundreds of his followers (Ahmed, 2021). The standoff between the government of Pakistan and the outlawed party, responsible for the violent clashes with the police and the death of six police officers, ended in a 'secret' deal which resulted in the release of Saad Hussain Rizvi. The government revoked the earlier declaration that declared TLP a banned organization, hence, removed Rizvi's name from the anti-terrorism watch list (Gabol, 2021). The deal, however, is seen by many as a worrying indication of the government surrendering to the far-right political parties, and this resurgence of far-right political parties can challenge the state writ for their vested interests.

Conclusion

This article discusses the re-emergence of far-right political parties in Pakistan, i.e., MML, ASWJ, and TLP. The political parties have been well observed as 'violent' (religiously-oriented) entities. In addition, an increase in their vote bank and support among the people have been noticeable. However, this research argues that the emergence of these political parties can be considered as a 'temporary' and politically motivated phenomenon. Hence, they do not pose a 'threat' to the mainstream political parties. Yet, such mobilization(s) can easily disrupt the socio-political order, as observed in the recent episode of TLP protests. It is equally important to ensure that the LEAs and related institutions effectively counter hate speech (provoking violence) and violent extremism. We also need to consider addressing the structural determinants of violent extremism (socio-economic development, improving education and social services) (Makki & Yamin, 2021).

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Education for Sustainable Development and Social Tolerance: Evidence from Teacher Education Institutions in Pakistan

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Abstract
Education for sustainable development is an evolving notion in teacher education that highlights the need for tolerance, acceptance, and diversity. Therefore, there is a greater need to elucidate the contributions of teacher educators in promoting social tolerance through Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). In addition, it is crucial to understand the challenges faced by teacher educators while dealing with the intolerant, extremist views and/or behaviors in a particular social setting. In doing so, this research interviewed teacher educators (N=12) through a purposive sampling strategy to determine the respondents' views about promoting social tolerance strategies integrated with ESD. The data was analyzed through qualitative data analysis software (NVivo), and themes were extracted based on the analysis plots. The research argues that promoting social tolerance within teacher education through ESD is a multi-layered process and requires attention at the policy level. It suggests that the existing structure of the Teacher Education program and the curricula are barely in line with the indicated ESD contents and strategies (integration with teaching and learning) needed to promote social tolerance and societal peace in Pakistan.

Keywords
Social tolerance, sustainable development, teacher education, violent extremism

Introduction
Pakistan is a diverse and heterogeneous country based on a linguistic, ethnic, religious, and cultural plurality (Ahmed, 2018). This diversity of the country's language, culture, ethnicities, and religion is not an excuse for conflict but a prospect that enriches us all to create a peaceful and coherent society (Khalid & Mahmood, 2013). However, during the last few decades, it has been observed that Pakistan is facing various ethno-religious or identity-based conflicts (Abdullah & Saeed, 2016). Similar issues have also been observed in higher education institutions of Pakistan,

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where violent behavior or intolerance has increased significantly (Atif et al., 2019). Incidents related to student violence and target killings motivated by ethno-religious, sectarian, political, cultural, or linguistic, i.e., identity-based differences have become a recurring phenomenon in Pakistan (Khalid & Mahmood, 2013; Abdullah & Saeed, 2016; Atif et al., 2019).

In June 2014, the Supreme Court of Pakistan made a particular decision regarding the education sector in Pakistan. The decision established the necessary requirement of suitable educational and instructive plans at institutions to promote a culture of religious and social tolerance (Sajjad, 2018). The court orders were given in the backdrop of increasing incidents of intolerance in educational institutes across Pakistan. The Supreme Court's decision was reflective of the United Nations' (UN) 'Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief' (General Assembly resolution 36/55). The declaration is committed to promoting resilience, tolerance, the right to freedom of thought, and solidarity among individuals (see also Mukhtar, 2017). In the 'Declaration on the Principles of Tolerance', the term *tolerance* is defined as (UNESCO, 1995): "Respect, acceptance, and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world's cultures, our forms of expression, and ways of being human. Tolerance is harmony in difference" (p. 2).

Similarly, Zerfu and colleagues (2009) discuss that the social ties or networking(s) between the individuals (or 'self') are principally driven by the existing similarities and commonalities (e.g., socio-cultural, religious, and/or ideological). Consequently, the social identities that are formed as a result of these social ties and networking are often homogenous; hence, they develop a strong 'in-group vs. out-group phenomenon and a sense of 'otherness' or 'us vs. them' (Wise & Driskell, 2017; Miller et al., 2010).

The idea of peace and inclusive education has long established the potential role of teachers in creating a social unit within the instructional setting to strengthen diverse social networks (Causey et al., 2000). Furthermore, it has been elucidated that before educators can recognize how issues such as religious, ethnic, racial, social, economic, and political inequalities influence the socio-cultural realities and learning experiences of the students, an educator must be self-aware of their own cultural, religious, civic, linguistic and socio-political orientations (Howard, 2003). Therefore, to build a coherent and inclusive society, it is mandatory to understand the root causes of intolerance — i.e., both at the individual/self and societal level. Concerned literature also conceives 'education' as a tool through which prejudice can be reduced either by using the teaching content or through the influence of educators (Kumashiro et al., 2004). It is equally important to understand that the intolerance and extremist attitudes or views are not only the product of the externally-induced environment (parents, family, or broader societal values) but also of the educators' environment (Rapp & Freitag, 2015). Nevertheless, the necessary knowledge for effectively promoting dynamic social tolerance through teaching and education programs is an evolving concept (Mirza, 2015).

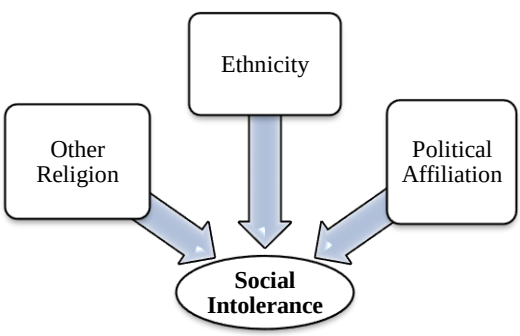
Moreover, it also needs to be recognized that teacher education and ESD have a close association as educators are considered key 'agents' for fostering values of peace, harmony, and cohesion, among students and communities at large (Hopkins & Kohl, 2019). Several scholars have reported that the incorporation of ESD in teacher education positively impacts the capacity building and professional development. Furthermore, ESD delivers the youth the essential capability and means of action(s) to achieve sustainable development and positive transformation in society (Olsson et al., 2016). Since 2015, the international community has recognized the

importance of ESD to avert violence and extremism and promote tolerance within educational institutions. As the United Nations organization for education, UNESCO is assigned to arrange and lead the 'Agenda 2030 for Education', which serves as a worldwide development to guarantee quality and access to education (Owens, 2017).

Dempsey and colleagues (2011) associate 'social cohesion' with the idea of 'sustainable communities' (p. 5) and outline five interrelated and quantifiable dimensions: networks in the community and participation in the shared groups; social interaction; community durability; sense/pride of place; social wellbeing; and, security (Eizenberg & Jabareen, 2017). With regards to this research, the idea of 'sustainable communities' helped to examine how 'social tolerance' in ESD is perceived and, more importantly, how it can serve as a *social pillar*[2] of sustainable development (Bramley et al., 2006). For this reason, ESD is frequently comprehended as education that inspires change in knowledge, values, attitudes, and necessary skills to permit a more sustainable and inclusive society (Rauch & Steiner, 2013). Hence, teacher-education institutions and teacher educators are important for developing the knowledge, skills, and values to inform and shape practices that encourage a sustainable and inclusive society (Huckle & Wals, 2015).

To effectively impart knowledge, skills, and values needed to encourage tolerance in educational settings, teacher educators must be well acquainted with the best teaching techniques. For instance, teacher educators must recognize that teaching-learning techniques and curriculum are the subsets of their pedagogy (Bertschy et al., 2013). This drives inseparably with the information and capacities teachers need to influence the decisions of units of adoptions in a desirable direction, at least from their perspective. That is why pre-service teachers are often recognized as dynamic 'agents of change' (Van der Heijden et al., 2015).

Figure 1. Sub-factors of social intolerance

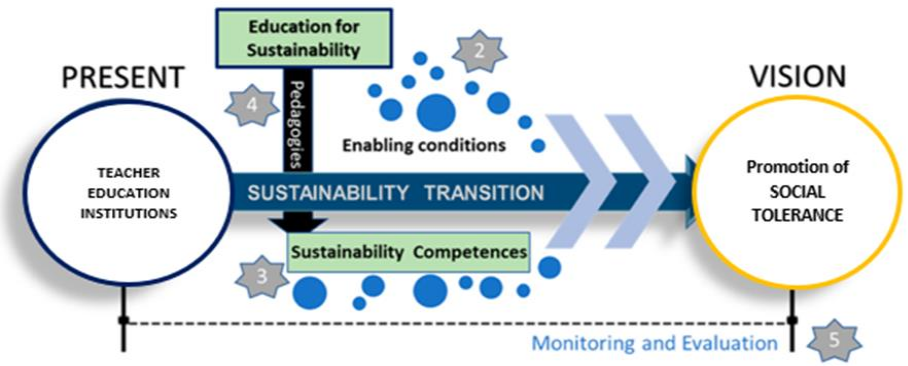


Nonetheless, to understand the prominent factors promoting and influencing social intolerance, this research identified nine main factors: i.e. nationality, culture, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, socioeconomic status, political association, and sexual orientation (Keane & Heinz, 2016).

[2] The social pillar refers to, in broad terms, public policies that support social issues. These social issues relate to our wellbeing and include aspects like healthcare, education, housing, employment, etc. For more information, see (Murphy, 2012).

However, as far as the presented analysis is concerned, this research considered three main factors: (i) ethnicity (i.e., the state of belonging to a specific ethnic-social identity), (ii) religion (a system of worship, faith, and beliefs), and (iii) political affiliation (the state of being closely associated with a political party). These mentioned factors have been considered determinants of intergroup and/or inter-identity intolerance and extremist conduct in educational institutions (see Figure 1). This research aims to explore the views and experiences of teacher educators concerning social tolerance (i.e., in terms of awareness and practice) and the need for ESD. Furthermore, it examines the challenges that teacher educators must face while preparing prospective teachers to deal with the intolerant and extremist views/behaviors in social settings.

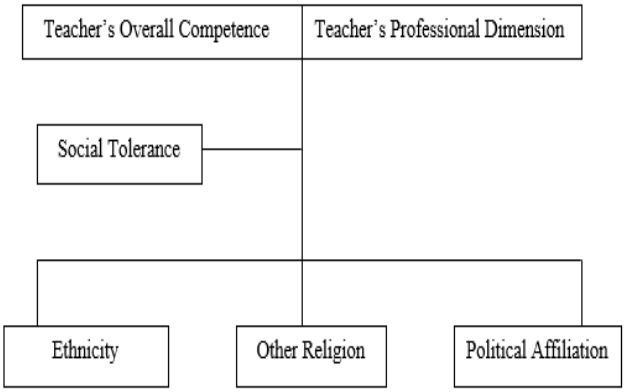
Figure 2. The framework of the study



Methodology

The study follows the interpretivist paradigm to elucidate the expansion of different social realities (e.g., Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). The research design for this study envisioned a qualitative approach, containing descriptive data collection and knowledge assortment through the interviews of teacher educators. The discussions were guided by open-ended and probing questions to understand the perspective of teacher educators in detail. The data was collected between February and June of 2021. Keeping in view the societal context of Pakistan and research objectives, a semi-structured interview protocol was developed. The protocol aimed to explore the teacher educators' overall competence and professionalism toward ESD and tolerance factors. The factors included in-service teachers' observations, experiences, the present level of social tolerance, awareness, willingness, and competence toward ESD and promotion of social tolerance. In addition, research also explored the views of teacher educators about three main sub-factors, i.e. religion, ethnicity, and political affiliation (see figure:1; Bangwayo-Skeete & Zikhali, 2013), affecting the construct of student tolerance within an educational setting. During the interviews, special attention was paid to research ethics and sensitivity concerning race/ethnicity, religion, and political affiliation.

Figure 3. Interview protocol and the related themes



Finally, the conformity and dependency measures were confirmed and validated by the external auditors, who also supervised the data collection, validation, and analysis and also ensured that the participants of this study consisted of 12 teacher educators who are serving as regular faculty in teacher training institutions located in Lahore (for details, see Table 1).

Table 1. Details about the education institutes

	Name of the University	*Department*
Public	University of Lahore	Division of Education (BRC, TC, LMC)
	University of Punjab	Institute of Education and Research
	Lahore College for Women University	Institute. Of Education
Private	University of Lahore	Arts & Social Sciences
	University of Management and Technology	Arts &Social Science
	Beaconhouse National University	Education

The interview participants also included directors and senior faculty members. However, this study focuses on exploring in-service teacher educators' perspectives on ESD implementation within teacher education (for respondents' categorization and details, see Table 2). Therefore, it became necessary and appropriate to use a purposive sampling technique to identify the educators with relevant backgrounds and experiences because purposive selection involves identifying an assortment of individuals or groups who are well informed and proficient with the phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 2014). Quantitative aspects based on stakeholder feedback can be measured in future studies. Furthermore, as a next step, the relationship between the various dimensions of sustainable development can be investigated using longitudinal approaches based on data content analysis.

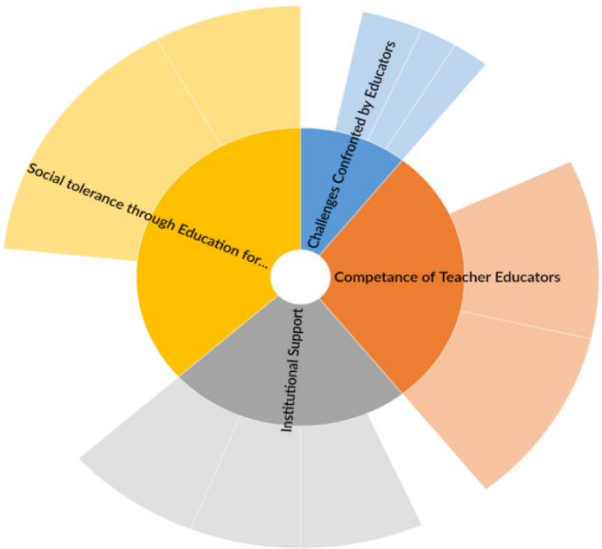
Table 2. Details about the respondents

	University Respondent	*Gender*		*Academic Rank*			
		Female	Male	lecturer	Assistant professor	Associate professor	Professor
Public	Uni-1 (n=3)	2	1	1	1	0	1
	Uni-2 (n=1)	1	0	0	1	0	0
	Uni-3(n=2)	1	1	1	1	0	0
Private	Uni-4(n=1)	0	1	0	0	1	0
	Uni-5(n=3)	3	0	2	1	0	0
	Uni-6(n=2)	1	1	1	0	0	1

To ensure the credibility and reliability of data, this research welcomed the respondents to check the provided responses and the detailed interview transcripts. Since the purpose of this research was to understand the teacher educators' perspectives and practices of social tolerance, the researcher did not ask for any soliciting personal information or any information that could make teacher educators feel vulnerable in any manner. In addition, necessary consents were secured from all the respondents after providing them with the research objectives, interview protocol, and potential outcomes (via introductory e-mail). To deal with data confidentiality and ethics, respondents have been assigned pseudonyms.

Data analysis and interpretation were performed by categorical accumulation, explicit interpretation, formation of patterns, and description of cases (Creswell et al., 2007). The interview transcriptions (including research notes) were coded through an open coding process throughout the data analysis. The process enabled this research to cluster the data around the relevant identified factors and four (sub) themes (see Figure 4). Furthermore, the data was explicated and classified with the help of qualitative data analysis software NVivo 12 Plus (see Figure 4 & 6). Patterns and data linkage were sought, and analysis of interviews has been presented through a Word Tag Cloud and Word Tree Maps (see Figure 5 & 8). Such supplementary analysis exhibitions revealed intriguing patterns and apparent contradictions (see Figures 5 & 8).

Figure 4. Nvivo Theme Map



Theme1: Educator's Insights about Social Tolerance through ESD

ESD was recognized as an important medium for promoting social tolerance for teacher educators. Three of the respondents mentioned that knowledge, skills, and attitudes need to be incorporated by educators into their instructional repertoire to reflect a more transformative stance. For instance, according to one of the respondents 'Ayesha' an assistant professor, ESD requires educators to be more familiar with their responsibilities to address the various social problems. In particular, the respondent believed that educators could play a vital role in preventing (violent) extremism and promoting social cohesion and tolerance (Ayesha, personal communication, March 04, 2021).

Similarly, 'Faiz' and 'Fatimah', associate professor and lecturer respectively, believed that ESD requires learners to adopt the values of open-mindedness, acceptance, and respect for divergent viewpoints and perspectives from other social groups (personal communication, April 2021). Most teacher educators were certain that to integrate ESD into their teaching, one must be aware of the subject that establishes ESD and helps develop a positive attitude towards it. Furthermore, it was mentioned during the interviews that educators need to be well aware of the appropriate pedagogies while addressing a social issue in the classroom, especially when it is about promoting social harmony, peace, and tolerance.

> I perceived ESD as an attempt to reorient the contemporary foundations of education to achieve the present goals and manage the future. It can be served as a tool to promote tolerance, respect for diversity, and peace among the youth (Akram, personal communication, April 07, 2021).

Several respondents recommended that understanding the wide-ranging sustainability issues and the necessary pedagogical skills, attitudes, and values can enhance educators' readiness and confidence to teach the importance of social

tolerance; hence, establishing the foundation of ESD. Although there is a controversial debate on the type of education necessary and sufficient to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 'Fatimah' a lecturer, argued that we have traditional/ethical values and the education system can help transmit this knowledge and tradition to our future generations. The respondent further highlighted the concept of social tolerance within Islam, which can be mobilized through the education system (Fatimah, personal communication, April 19, 2021).

Within the idea of ESD, the social pillar has recently piqued the interest of researchers in teacher education (Glavič, 2020). Differences in ideological perspectives have also been assumed to account for variation in teacher educators' perceptions about the phenomenon (i.e. social pillar). Nevertheless, most of the respondents (teacher educators) acknowledged that ESD could prepare the learner to appreciate and practice values of peace and harmony. Also, such an approach can ensure a conducive environment of suitable peace and stability, both at state and societal levels. And in doing so, teacher education and teacher educators need to provide students with 'abilities' to comprehend the complex and multifaceted contemporary and potential challenges and issues related to global/societal peace and development.

Figure 5. Word cloud of themes extracted from interviews.

On-campus Tolerance vs. Intolerance

In general, most teacher educators (as respondents) revealed that intolerance is associated with the belief that creates a sense of supremacy and distinctiveness of one's social group or identity over another group or identity. According to the respondents, such identity dynamics have a unique ability to mobilize 'in-group' vs 'out-group' and perceived 'others'. With regards, most of the responses from teacher educators centered on issues related to religious and ethnic diversity. For instance, one of the research participants mentioned that 'lack of tolerance' emerges out of the ethno-religious differences, hence, becomes the leading cause of conflict. Similarly, Ahmed, a director in an educational institute, expressed his views as:

> There is a desperate need to root out the extremist and intolerant conduct in educational institutions that pose a significant threat to the

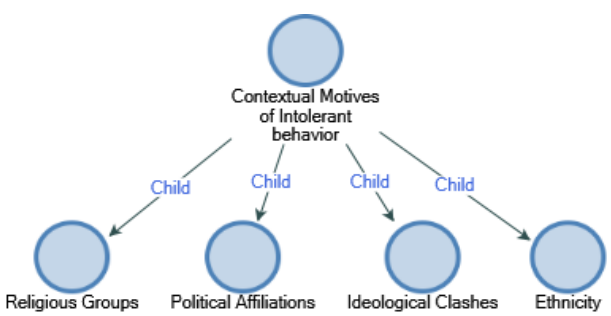
> stability and sustainability of Pakistan`s progress (Ahmad, personal communication, March 25, 2021)

Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that not all the respondents witnessed or reported (violent) extremism within an educational setting. Consequently, few engaged teacher educators negated the idea of the prevalence of extremism within educational institutes. For instance, 'Ali', a lecturer, mentioned that he never witnessed or experienced any violent or aggressive incident in his career. Since the respondent primarily served in Lahore-based co-education institutes, he believes gender exposure and inclusivity produce a sense of tolerance in a particular setting. The respondent further elucidated that incidents of violence and/or aggressive behavior can be mainly observed in male-dominated student institutions (personal communication, February 21, 2021). The mentioned observation was further supported by another respondent who had vast administrative and teaching experience in a female campus

As far as the main factors behind extremist tendencies or violent behavior are concerned, several teacher educators pointed towards religious, cultural, ethnic, and political differences within and between the students. The study participants believed that the aforementioned factors enable an environment where 'us' vs 'them' or identity-based bifurcations are manifested. Such polarization leads to 'in-group' vs 'out-group' aggressive, extreme, and/or hostile behavior(s) — marked by ethno-religious or cultural differences — thus impacting both in-campus environments and disturbing the overall societal fabric.

> We are producing individuals, not a harmonious or cohesive society. Every individual believes he is 'right' and that others are 'wrong'. This bifurcation is particularly causing extremist and intolerant behavior among the youth (Ayesha, personal communication, March 04, 2021).

Figure 6. NVivo Mind Map: Contextual motives of Intolerant behavior



Theme 2: Competence of Teacher Educators

Teacher educators often assume promoting social tolerance as a 'personal agenda', requiring personal commitment from an individual. Such an individual's 'self-driven' agenda necessitates the consideration of ethical norms, guarding the value of morality, inter-faith dialogue, and inclusivity. One of the most important attributes of a learning environment is the influence that teachers impart on their students. Most teacher educators favored the view that teachers` professionalism, commitment, involvement, and way of interacting with students are the critical factors in

facilitating or hindering the student's psychological and learning outcomes. For instance, 'Ahmed', a lecturer, expressed his views as,

> Students learn what they see, not what they have been told. They observe the practices of their teachers, not their words. Intolerant and impatient behavior leads to strong adverse effects on students' personalities, and they depict the same in their real-life situations (Ahmad, personal communication, April 05, 2021).

Theme 3: Institutional Support

ESD Content and Social Tolerance within Teacher Education

The data indicates that the content(s) of the curriculum concerning sustainable development and its social pillar needs greater adoption. Furthermore, there is a dire need for reorienting and reorganization of the embedded content, which can help in promoting positive behavioral change. Thus, empowering students to attain sustainable development. Specific issues which are included in ESD content are peace, cultural diversity, human rights, gender equality, good citizenship, and respect. Nevertheless, they reported that the social pillar of sustainable development receives significant attention in teacher education. Respondents further highlighted a greater need to create political awareness among pre-service teachers.

Therefore, it is pivotal to improve the 'sustainability' aspect of pedagogy which involves teaching and learning social dimensions of sustainable development (and related-SDGs) (see, e.g., SDG 4 'quality education'). Similarly, the data indicates that the social aspects of 'sustainability' must not be mobilized as isolated curricular elements; rather, they should be implemented throughout the educational program.

Policies and Plan of Actions

During an interview with a senior educationist, it was revealed that the Government of Pakistan is planning to develop a comprehensive education plan — i.e., the '2030 Agenda' (Hussain, 2018; Nadia, personal communication, February 2021). While keeping socio-geographical and cultural diversity as integral components, the Agenda 2030 ensures inclusive and accessible education throughout society. Another respondent, 'Fiaz', an associate professor, mentioned that several developments concerning education reforms have occurred at the policy level; however, there is still a significant gap hindering the effective and necessary engagement of ESD into teacher education (personal communication, 2021). Respondents also illuminated that Pakistan's Educational Policy implemented by the Ministry of Education has yet to understand the significance of the education sector in promoting social tolerance, cohesion, harmony, responsible citizenship, and a collaborative approach. Nevertheless, it was encouraging to observe that the teacher educators welcomed the idea of ESD and the promotion of social tolerance.

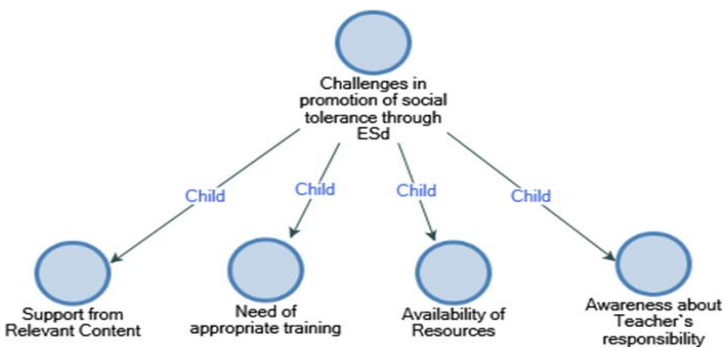
Theme 4: Challenges Confronted by Teacher Educators.

As discussed earlier, considering the diverse Pakistani society (in terms of ethnicity, language, gender, religion, and political affiliation), the role of the teacher must not be confined to mere academic subject contents. Instead, it is important to expand the role of teacher — (both in-service and pre-service) — in a manner that effectively shapes future citizenship; hence, performing as an active agent towards achieving

sustainable society and/or development. A crucial step to enable this process would be developing skilled human resources, which can further facilitate the important social change through education and providing training *within* teacher education.

With respect to the ESD, respondents emphasized that the framework has a great potential to create many new opportunities. However, it is crucial to consider that ESD may expose the education sector to unexpected multifaceted problems and challenges. According to 'Ayesha', some of the key challenges confronted by the teacher educators include "less availability of resources, lack of institutional expertise, lack of departmental interest, and poor institutional linkage of education with sustainable development and promotion of social tolerance" (personal communication, March 04, 2021) (See figure 7). Consequently, a teacher must be well equipped with pedagogical and psychological techniques to deal with the challenges emanating from ethno-religiosity, political disagreements, or other forms of identity-based discrimination and/or marginalization.

Figure 7. Nvivo Mind: Challenges in promotion of social tolerance through ESD



Discussion and Conclusion

The paper aimed to investigate the contribution of teacher educators in promoting social tolerance through ESD. In recent years, the concept of education via sustainable development has taken significant importance in preventing extremism and violence within educational institutions. The research inquiry identified the teacher educators' perceptions and experiences regarding the existing tolerance level in pre-service teachers. In addition, the presented analysis identified several factors which create a conducive environment within which the phenomenon of (violent) extremism gets rooted. Diverse religious views, ethnic differences, gender discrimination, socio-political associations and differences have all been major contributors to such extremism in educational institutes. It is also identified that the proportion of aggressive and intolerant behavior is greater in institutions where male students are higher than female students. This lends credence to Gidengil and Everitt (2003) assertion that women are often thought to be more nurturing and social than men and thus more tolerant. Reorienting the education sector to attain sustainable-peaceful societies is crucial to deal with such tendencies.

According to Ferreira et al. (2007), teacher education programs should incorporate ESD philosophy, content, and activities to the point where ESD becomes embedded in all policies and practices. The findings of the current study also consider

ESD a valid and critically important field. It provides many opportunities for building a more peaceful and tolerant society and comes with new and often unexpected challenges and problems for teacher educators. In this regard, teacher educators identified the real challenges for ESD, such as lack of policy directions, necessary support, and resources,

The paper also highlighted a virtual absence of ESD in national education systems. Topics such as peace, tolerance, human rights, and citizenship are just a few examples that need to be an integral part of the education system and/or curriculum: as a national priority. As far as the current policy orientation is concerned, several guidelines and legislative frameworks related to SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) have been approved and promulgated at the national level. Similarly, Pakistan's Education Policy (2009) also directly emphasizes social tolerance, cohesion, harmony, responsible citizenship, and a collaborative approach (Khizar et al., 2019). However, as Kalsoom and Khanam (2017) advocated, teacher education programs must assist pre-service teachers in becoming ESD educators. The analysis suggests that current teacher education standards and curricula are only marginally aligned with suggested ESD content, processes, and learning outcomes. Hence, it is argued that the limited focus on ESD is one of the main reasons for not providing a sustainable development-based framework that can promote social tolerance through teacher education programs to attain sustainable and peaceful societies.

The paper also suggests that teachers education should maintain a critical and contextualized approach to (violent) extremism and related practices in educational institutes. Taking this into consideration, it is important to establish organizations that can deliver teacher training programs with particular emphasis on ESD. Furthermore, the acceptance and tolerance for different religions, ethnicities and political perspectives (as the root causes of extremism) must be developed through effective pedagogy and content of teacher education institutions. In terms of institutional cooperation, the National Education Policy, National Curriculum Framework, and UNESCO should encourage cross-sectoral collaborations and partnerships to devise an educational setup that can foster social tolerance and inclusivity within and among the societies.

Although this research was primarily concerned with the teacher educators, it is essential to analyze the perspective of students within the Pakistan-based education institutes located in Pakistan. Similarly, there is a greater need to elucidate other mediating factors through longitudinal approaches to improve ESD in teacher education.

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Youth, Counter Violent Extremism and (Social) Media: A Case of Pakistan

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Abstract
The paper explores the role of social media on positive youth development and engagement towards peacebuilding in Pakistan. In particular, it recognizes the role of youth *within* the liberal peace process, hence, sustainably aiding peacebuilding efforts. The paper argues that within developing democracies, media and youth can create an environment to promote dialogue and collaborative problem-solving techniques. Furthermore, it explicates how extreme ideologists exploit social media; hence, negatively influencing the youth. With regards, the paper discusses several aspects of social media that can significantly contribute towards countering violent extremism and related narratives. Such an understanding enables us to classify the potential role of social media in involving youth in contextualized peacebuilding efforts.

Keywords
Youth, Pakistan, social media, counter violent extremism, democracy

Introduction
The active mobilization of youth in political participation is framed by a range of theoretical perspectives on democracy and corresponding views on the rights and responsibilities of citizens (Evans & Prilleltensky, 2007; Sloam, 2007; Yohalem & Martin, 2007; Print, 2007; Bessant, 2016; Kymlicka & Norman, 1994). With regards, the role of media (TV, social media, print media, and radio) is pivotal in shaping inclusive and accountable institutions and governance (Terrill, 2018). However, countries having struggling or developing democratic institutions, marked by ethno-religious extremism and/or identity-based violence, need to utilize the significant constructive role the media can play towards ensuring a just and peaceful society (e.g., Kadayifci-Orellana, 2009). Therefore, it is important to address the structural

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determinants that provide a conducive environment within which the youth (as a vulnerable segment of the society) becomes highly influenced by the narratives of violent extremist and terrorist organization (including political violence) (Onuoha, 2014; Vergani et al., 2020; Weber, 2019).

Similarly, there is a greater need to understand that the youth, as a major portion of Pakistan's total population (i.e., six per cent), is in the continuous process of re-positioning itself within the weak or developing democratic culture (Saud, 2020; Saud, Ida, & Mashud, 2020; Masiha et al., 2018; Mahmood et al., 2014). More importantly, media directly defines (both positively and negatively) youth participation and mobilization in the broader public realm. The argument emanates from the fact that media as a source of information (including social media) shape and situate the youth with regards to the state's political affairs (Sloam, 2018; Salman & Saad, 2015; Price, 2013). Several studies have analyzed such interaction of youth with media, more importantly, how such interface contributes towards the manifestation of violence.

In view of the above, this article aims to examine the role of underutilized potential of media in developing democracies for positive engagement of youth towards sustainable peacebuilding. In particular, the role of youth must be recognized within the liberal peace process, aiding peacebuilding efforts in a sustainable manner (Bickham, 2017; Richmond, 2009). It argues that within weak democracies, media and youth can create an environment promoting dialogue and collaborative problem-solving techniques (Coleman, 2011; Lasker & Weiss, 2003). In doing so, the article explicates how extreme ideologists exploit media; hence, negatively influencing the youth. Such an understanding will help us identify the potential role of media in involving youth in contextualized peacebuilding efforts.

Developing Democracy, Youth, and Social Media: A Case of Pakistan

In the contemporary world, social media is the primary source of engaging and attracting youth in political discussion (Kamau, 2017). Media is a platform that facilitates the outlook of diverse political opinions, including the marginalized sector. Social media users tend to process the information parallel with other media sources like news bulletins, headlines, newspaper editorials or documentaries. Thus, youth learn to interpret and assess political information by focusing on a particular matter. Furthermore, social media provides them with an opportunity to reflect their opinion on the assessed information. Overall, the virtual associations and mobilization are more efficient, as they are accessible to a larger audience and deliver their messages promptly. Such mobilization also acts as a pressure group, ensuring the government, related institutions and security actors to remain accountable. As a result, social media serves the youth people to develop political knowledge, political interests and political efficacy. These aspects are important features of liberal strong democracies (Rhoden, 2015; Brest, 1985). In view, social media is also acting to deliver an organized message to the government and public. This is why it is considered a bridge between government and citizens, influencing their relationship.

Similarly, in Pakistan, the recent mobilization of youth and its interests in the political sphere has been widely observed through social media activism (Ida, Saud, & Mehsud, 2020). Besides, concerning youth take part in trending hashtag stories on Twitter and making viral the important issues or societal concerns. This flow of information and civic engagement enhances the voice of youth and creates a sense of empowerment. As a result, it brings youth organizations at the forefront — as a resisting force — against the exploited democratic culture (corruption, violence and

crime); thus, influencing the decision-making authorities (Wilkinson et al., 2009). In this way, youth activism through social media helps to promote the structural stability of society, helping youth themselves to be resilient first toward the expected threats in developing democracies.

Consequently, such mobilization and activism have played a pivotal role in identifying identified social and political structural failures in developing democracies; hence, benefitting the states in improving its legislative structure through new reforms. For instance, the growing rape incidences in Pakistan became a significant concern for several youth organizations, civil society, and other human rights organizations (e.g., Majid, 2016). With regards, they demanded essential (legislative) reforms to address the issue (Maria, 2020). Likewise, social media is capable of further identifying the loopholes in democratic system/institutions) while suggesting possible recommendations. It is important to recognize that such public interventions are indeed critical in nature, nevertheless peaceful, constructive, and dialogic in nature. Therefore, there are certain ethical orientations which are also expected from (social) media. For instance, the critiques argue that the media has the responsibility to promote content that stimulates peaceful narrative in society; thus, strengthening the conditions necessary for sustainable peace and coexistence.

Understanding the Relationship between Social Media and Violent Extremism

The devastating effect of the exploitation of media by extremist groups is evident in modern war-torn areas (Archetti, 2015; Bertram, 2016; Qin et al., 2006). The economical access to internet data, including in developing countries, has increased the number of social media users on mobile. According to worldwide mobile data pricing, the rate of 1 GB of mobile data costs an average of 1.85$ in Pakistan, which is the 33rd lowest data price in the world (Khalid et al., 2021). Indeed, such access to the internet has resulted in a wide array of positive societal implications (including those mentioned above) (Cheshire & Cook, 2016; Matusitz, 2007). However, the development has also exposed us to the changing nature and dynamics of extremist organizations, in terms of their operational and functional capabilities. Scholars have widely observed that the availability of the internet (and/or social media) has equally offered extremist organizations an opportunity to reach the wider public and vulnerable segments of society (such as youth). Therefore, the self-edited and controlled horizontal media has served the organizations very well regarding disseminating extremist narratives, hate speech, and disinformation (Lieberman, 2017; Tate, 2019). The apparent challenge is that hate speech, and extremist content identification is not easy to trace or decode, as it is written or recorded in local languages (such as Urdu, Arabic, Hindi, Pashto, Bangla or Tamil). Besides, there is less information about the planning and maneuvering tactics of extremists in carrying out violent activities because they have the essential expertise in using the safest and secret channels of social media platforms.

In Pakistan, violent extremist or terrorist organizations can be broadly categorized as sectarianism-based groups, national and transnational terrorist organizations, and ethno-nationalist terrorist organizations. Considering the complex composition of terrorist organizations and their *source* of extremist narratives (ideological and identity-based), the extremist 'content' is highly diverse. Several extremist groups such as Daesh, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) took responsibility for violent attacks through the safest media platforms such as telegram, Umer Media Wing and Al Naba Newsletter. For

instance, the Korangi attack in 2015) was claimed by Daesh through Twitter ("Terrorist Attacks in Pakistan", 2016). Later in 2016, Daesh claimed another attack on a hospital in Quetta through its Amaq News Agency via telegram ("Quetta Attack", 2016).

Similarly, the 2019 attack on Pearl Continental Hotel in Quetta was allegedly claimed by the BLA through telegram (Pakistan attack, 2019). In the context of South Asia, the terrorist attacks in Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka were confirmed by the elements through telegram via 'threema'. Furthermore, the extremist and terrorist associations in the past were able to diffuse fear and terror through violent videos of disfiguring the bodies of the security agents and the civilians resisting their ideology.

Telegram and chat rooms are the most efficient media tools of terrorist organizations and other militant groups in secretly planning and recruiting militants (Iqbal, 2021). On the other hand, the state anti-terrorism agencies can ban Facebook and Twitter accounts belonging to the terrorist organizations after tracing the concerning activity/contents. Similarly, in 2017, the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT) under Facebook organized an image and linguistic footprinting project with the help of Artificial Intelligence to remove and disrupt terrorists and extremists abilities to exploit digital platforms in disseminating terror and propaganda (Saltman, 2020). Thus, currently, similar violent videos are not available on Media particularly YouTube.

Nevertheless, we must recognize how social media *itself* has changed the dynamics of violent extremism and terrorism – often termed as 'new terrorism (Weimann, 2014). In particular, several studies have advanced our understanding of how social media serves extremist organizations to recruit (vulnerable) youth (Spurk, 2020; Bickham, 2017; Weimann, 2014; Wilkinson et al., 2009). Glorification of several terrorists (as virtual characters and fighters on social media have already inspired many young individuals to join their extremist kinetic agendas.

Countering Violent Extremism and Social Media

In Pakistan, under the National Action Plan (NAP, 2014 — a comprehensive plan to counter the menace of terrorism) banned glorifying individuals and their actions in association with any terrorist organizations. Furthermore, serious attention was paid to dismantling the communication networks of terrorist organizations, including the spread of hate speech. Indeed, such realization at the policy level is highly commendable. Nevertheless, the counter-measures did not translate into effective results. For instance, recently, the ongoing 'anti-Shia' campaign under the banner of 'Azmat e Sahaba' rallies in Karachi and Islamabad strokes once again the embers of hate (Batool, 2021; Minority Rights Group International, 2020). Besides such on-ground activities, it is concerning to observe that the extremist groups are equally charged on social media. On the other hand, cyber-related anti-terrorism agencies have not effectively dealt with the issue. Retrospectively, 2019 Easter day Sri Lankan bombings were carried out because communal tensions rose due to growing hate speech throughout the country (Aditya, 2019; "Sri Lanka Indicts ISIS Mastermind", 2021).

To counter the aforementioned challenges related to extremists' social media penetration in countries like Pakistan, the government must introduce several reforms within the ambit of technology corresponding with the operational dynamics of social media. Firstly, necessary technology and expertise are required to decode the local contents (i.e., in local languages) and easily identify them as 'hate speech'. In the

recent past, the National Counter Terrorism Authority Pakistan (NACTA)[4] launched an App, under its Tat'heer Surf safe program (a counter-terrorism drive), titled 'Chaukas'. The objective of 'Chaukas' is to make it easy for the public to report any hate content anonymously so that the content (and content producer) shall be reported to the relevant Law enforcement agencies. Many people criticized that the 'Chaukas' did not ensure the privacy of the reporters. Moreover, it is more likely that the complaint might be sensitive to the 'national security', and the reporter/complainer might be caught for unnecessary interrogation since the NACTA does not clearly define the 'hate content' (Masood, 2018).

Relatedly, a project led by 'Pakistan Peace Initiative' aims to promote sustainable peace in reducing the probability of post-conflict violence in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and post-conflict erstwhile FATA, tribal areas that are most affected areas of Pakistan under the project titled 'Promotion of dialogue for peacebuilding through media and youth mobilization in Pakistan' which aims to divert the societal behavior and outlook of society toward proactive action-oriented peacebuilding efforts through non-violent means (Zaidi, 2014). Moreover, it aimed to support Pakistani media to promote peace and tolerance through coexistence and social integration. A consortium approach was adopted for this project, and the institute worked with five local partners, each designated with specific tasks. The broad intention and purpose of the project were to seek to increase the promotion of dialogue, peacebuilding through media and youth mobilization in Pakistan, and conflict transformation capacity of the youth and local leaders and provide platforms for intergenerational collaboration as well as community engagement and mobilization. The trained participants and consortium have the potential to be utilized for long-term advocacy and awareness for a sustainable peace process in Pakistan.

Therefore, the governments and the related authority (i.e., NACTA) must initiate proper legislation defining the 'hate content' while ensuring the privacy and safety of complaints. Lastly, the government needs to consult civil society and technology firms while regulating cyber-terrorism. In this way, the ambiguities in the policies and regulations could be identified and addressed. Thus, the growing capacity of extremists' groups in propagating extremism could be attended by enhancing cyber security facilities and related infrastructure. Even though the policy related to Pakistan's counter-terrorism and counter violent extremism apparatus (NISP, 2014; NISP, 2018 ; NCEPG, 2018; for detailed review, see Makki & Yamin, 2021; Makki & Akash, 2021) were responsive measures to address the structural determinants of violent extremism and terrorism, the effective and practical implementation framework of the policy and its efficacy is yet to be determined (Holmer, 2013; Mandaville & Nozell, 2017).

Similarly, the cooperation between religious clerics, civic society and government authorities is essential to overcome future violent escalation. Along with that, the promotion of moderate voices countering extremist narratives through media is equally significant. Many countering violent extremism related-efforts look to engage, and partner with what is termed moderate voices within specific vulnerable communities, and religious leaders are frequently cited as a critical constituency of such work. Too often, moderate voices end up being code for religious figures who articulate views aligned with official government policy or refrain from directly criticizing the political elite.

[4] National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA): https://nacta.gov.pk/

Role Traditional Media

In addition to the above-mentioned dynamics of social media, the role of traditional media must not be discounted. In particular, television programs need to develop and air content(s) that promote peace and-related capacity building for youth mobilization towards the construct of sustainable peace (e.g., Ozerdem, 2016; Weimann, 2015; Zaidi, 2014). We also need to recognize the potential role of media, particularly in conflict-ridden societies, towards developing and disseminating the counter-narrative to violent extremism and terrorism. Furthermore, the robust traditional media *itself* symbolizes the democratic value, freedom of expression and fundamental rights (Carlsson, 2016; Voorhoof & Cannie, 2010). It offers analysis and constructive criticism, which then translate into well-informed 'perceptions or opinions'; ultimately enabling the conflict-ridden, transitionary, or post-conflict societies to identify the structural determinants of violence and conflict (Makki & Yamin, 2021) and develop a sustainable environment for peace (Kuusik, 2010). Nevertheless, the mentioned arguments must not be limited to conventional media such as newspapers, TV or radio. Arguably, the traditional media takes primacy in this; however, new technologies, the internet, and digital content should also be considered in this context.

Yet, there are cases of media sponsoring sensation by over-reporting or erroneously reporting events that escalated conflict or violence. With regards, Iqbal and Hussain (2017) argue that the problem or issue does not lie in what media reports, but how it gets reported. Therefore, media could propagate erroneous content for political or ideological purposes or objectives. Hence, it is important to establish an effective 'watchdog' (i.e., regulatory authority) over media, as PEMRA[5] in the case of Pakistan. Sensationalism or dramatization of events on media showcases unpredictability. Often, we have observed highly antagonistic and argumentative dialogue between the conflict stakeholders (s). Consequently, sensationalism does not just infuse unpredictability of the conflict situation, but it also contributes towards the manifestation of violence and threat (Iqbal & Hussain, 2017; Jusić, 2009; Smith, Bond, & Jeffries, 2019).

In particular, the media contents highly influence the youth's opinion regarding the socio-political dimensions of any conflict situation; hence, they are structurally positioned. In other words, the innovative content expected from youth in conflict situations to build peace and resilience remains limited to what they are informed through media. In the case of Pakistan, there have been major tilts in media content from the beginning of the Afghan invasion policy to the War on Terror. The 'sensationalized' media is more concerned about its growing ratings and its biased political goals (Vraga & Tully, 2015; Flanagin & Metzger, 2017).

The major national media channels and newspapers in Pakistan like GEO, Dunya News, Bol News, Express News, ARY News, Dawn, The Express Tribune and Jang have a major influence over public opinion. Although, a few of them, like GEO were banned several times for reporting anti-government content, which led to a discourse of restrictive media ("PEMRA slaps 5-day ban", 2017). Nevertheless, there are criticisms that many media platforms in Pakistan adopt biased political perspectives (International Media Support, 2009). More often, news channels in Pakistan resort to selective censorship , causing the opposite views to disappear. The majority of the news channels push an extremist right-wing agenda compared to a small section that promotes liberal agenda. For instance, in the Salman Taseer

[5] Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA): https://pemra.gov.pk/

(governor Punjab) assassination case, this right-wing agenda of media was apparent (Husain, 2011). It was observed that several news channels interviewed the killer, establishing him as a hero. Media also covered and projected the mobilization and protests carried out by the organization legitimizing the assassination of the late-governor — the protests were spearheaded by TLP. Such a role of media is against the idea and principles of peace journalism. In fact, it has been argued that the projection of such events contributes to the polarization of society. Therefore, media (including print media) should promote content that stimulates peace and positivity amongst the youth and the broader society.

Discussion & Conclusion

The role of social media-led exposure can be well observed in Pakistan, which indeed provided the youth with a platform for political activism and/or mobilization. The paper argued that such mobilization (though online) could be considered as youth re-claiming the political space or participation within the broader political realm. The article further argued that awareness could be spread by using (social) media as an effective tool, highlighting the important issues that the state is facing to bring positive social change in society. Policy-making must acknowledge and respond to the highly heterogeneous socio-economic contexts of the country to promote social inclusivity and tolerance among the youth.

With regards to the issue of violent extremism, the paper discussed several aspects of social media which can significantly contribute towards countering violent extremism and related narratives. In doing so, a possible way forward is to follow the model of UNESCO where youth is imparted adequate awareness and coordination skills and assigned responsibilities to spread the same to the rest of the youth through various youth organizations. A well thought out plan needs to be initially implemented in a limited area and evaluated for further improvement and expansion. Schools, colleges and universities are the most suitable places to impart such training. Fresh graduates can be provided with the opportunity to engage in positive narrative building through social media, engaging in discussion on constructive criticism and suggestions for improvement of society without directly engaging in discussion on terrorism/religious violence as this leads to extreme views on both sides with no result.

Furthermore, mainstream electronic media, drama, talk shows and documentaries shall considerably focus on various social issues through the lens of youth or youth as a target audience. Such a reorientation must be developed around the ‘peace’ narrative while focusing on the constructive engagement of youth in the political discourse; thus, strengthening democratic system of governance and investing youth’s potential in sustaining the conditions for peace and just society. Similarly, engaging young scholars of Islam and comparative religions to write Op-ed in print media will help students in colleges and universities to comprehend different perspectives rather than depending on traditional or ‘controlled’ views about structural issues influencing violent extremism in the society. The most important step to be taken is to be forthcoming with policies that help avoid the issue of socio-economic class-based discourse. While low-income youth remain entangled in deeply conservative/ultraorthodox teachings, upper middle and upper-class youth find multiple avenues to access knowledge and expression. Hence society continues to remain engulfed in the class divide instead of channelizing the potential of the youth across the board.

The media and youth are vital assets for peace and democracy. In weak democracies, youth are often excluded from the major discourse on peacebuilding and decision making. While the liberal peacemaking approach demonstrates that inclusive societies show more positive input in conflict resolution efforts. Meanwhile, media has its own significant output in accelerating peace processes through youth mobilization, developing constructive dialogue and informing people. By contrast, media sensation, youth radicalization, corrupt local leadership and civil society decelerate the peace projects. This paper has thoroughly discussed the prospect of media and youth in peacebuilding in weak democracies with specific examples from experiences and events in Pakistan that promote or demote the conflict resolution process. The finding in this paper suggests that the inclusion of youth and utilization of media in a constructive manner can ensure sustainable peace and also facilitate social and political discourses on important societal challenges — as a prerequisite for a strong democratic process and institutions. The negative influence of media on youth in weak democracies could be resolved through neutral regulation of media content and the collective response of the general public until a systemic societal transformation evolves for sustainable democracy and peace.

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The Kashmir Crisis and the Futility of U.N. Peacekeeping

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Introduction

U.N. focus and mandate have become more complex and multifaceted regarding establishing international peace and security in the conflict-ridden areas (Malone & Thakur, 2001; Sloan, 2014). The peacekeeping mandate has evolved from being an arbiter to being actively involved in political processes, Protection of Civilians (PoC), upholding human rights enshrined in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR), and implementing the general rule of law. Disarmament also remains a crucial mandate of the U.N. peacekeeping agenda in the conflict-ridden context around the world (Howard & Dayal, 2017). Currently, U.N. has 12 active peacekeeping missions worldwide, led by the Department of Peace Operations (DPO)[2]. The majority of their involvement remains in the highly volatile Sub Saharan and Central African countries. These include interventions like the Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in CAR (MINUSCA) and Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) (United Nations Peacekeeping, n.d.).

Nevertheless, there are several contexts where U.N. peacekeeping operations or deployments have failed to bring stability or normalization. The case of Kashmir is one such protracted conflict that has remained an unresolved agenda on the U.N. mandate since 1948 when India sought resolution of the issue at the U.N. Security Council (UNSC). It has remained a source of contention between India and Pakistan; both the nuclear-armed countries laying claim over Kashmir. Kashmir has immense geostrategic value as it borders India, Pakistan, and China. In addition, the territory hosts the Indus river basin and the Silk route (Ilyas, 2021; Mahesar et al., 2015). China also controls part of the valley near the border with Tibet. This complexity has created an amalgam that has wreaked havoc for the past half a century. Despite the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP[3]) engagements, the border (between India and Pakistan) is still highly volatile and contested, and military presence has only increased in recent years. Regular clashes

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[3] UNMOGIP: https://unmogip.unmissions.org/background

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and violations of the U.N. brokered ceasefire continue. Therefore, the role of the U.N. and its peacekeeping effort in the region (UNMOGIP) must be assessed.

UNMOGIP in Kashmir

The hitherto princely state of Jammu and Kashmir is a territory of nearly 222,236 km^2 with a majority Muslim population — the only state in India with such demography. After the war in 1947, the Northern part of the state, including Gilgit-Baltistan and the now labelled Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), ascended to Pakistan. The southern and south-eastern Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) became de facto parts of India. In addition, the Chinese gained control of the Aksai Chin, the eastern border with Tibet, after the 1962 war against India (Ilyas, 2021).

The Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan represents the oldest unresolved mission on the U.N. peacekeeping agenda. There are numerous UNSC resolutions regarding the disputed territory. Considering the geostrategic significance of Kashmir, it has become highly challenging for India and Pakistan to find common ground. Jawaharlal Nehru first approached the U.N. in 1948 to mediate on the Kashmir issue. This subsequently led to the first U.N. resolution and the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) on January 20, 1948. Both countries were refrained from using further violence to establish their territorial control(s). With regards, the U.N. arranged the first ceasefire between the two neighbors in 1948 after war broke out in 1947 over the demarcation of the Kashmir valley. Since 1949, the UNMOGIP has been ever-present in the region to oversee compliance with the ceasefire.

It was further decided that a general plebiscite be held in the disputed valley of Kashmir to determine the future course of action (e.g., Qadri, 2019). However, the U.N. has failed to implement mechanisms for the said referendum. UNCIP and its successor UNMOGIP advised, according to the Security Council resolution, that all foreign troops be removed from the region before a plebiscite is to be held. That condition has never materialized. India has been continuously contesting the plebiscite while claiming that Kashmir is an 'internal' matter and U.N. has no mandate to interfere in the internal issues (Sundararaman, 2000). Therefore, despite the UNMOGIP role (i.e., U.N. peacekeeping mission is mandated to protect), the hostilities between the two rival nations continue to ravage the people of Kashmir.

It is also important to recognize that the effectiveness of U.N. intervention in Kashmir has been *conditional*. The conditionality for interventions has been the involvement of interests of major powers (i.e., P5[4]). During the cold war era, countries that were aligned with either the U.S. or USSR were off the U.N. mandate in an unofficial and practical capacity. Not necessarily due to a lack of will, but often due to the veto power held in the UNSC. Examples of the Hungarian Rising (1956) and the Civil War in Congo (1960-64) are indications of how helpless the U.N. peacekeeping forces are when faced with stern resistance from a formidable opposition, which in these two cases was Russia (Lowe, 2013). The issue of Palestine is another glaring example where U.N. remained docile despite the extreme humanitarian crisis (Kamal, 2021); impacting the integrity of the U.N., especially among the weaker nations (Lowe, 2013). Similarly, regarding Kashmir, there are different international dynamics at play. For instance, India is an important ally of the U.S. enjoying full support in the U.N. Correspondingly, China has had historically

[4] P5 countries refer to the permanent members of UNSC, including USA, UK, France, Russia and China. P5+1 refers to the inclusion of Germany to the council as permanent representatives.

strong ties with Pakistan, and the rise of China as a global power means that Pakistan's position towards the cause of Kashmir will be well supported.

The underperformance of U.N. can be underpinned by three major factors; inadequate policy framework; weak management; and impractical operational tactics (Malone & Thakur, 2001). One can add a fourth dimension by considering the acute problem of *conditionality* imposed on fund and personnel provision. The U.N. relies on funding from member states to run its operations. The US. and China are their most dominant financiers (Shendruk & Rosenthal, 2021). This creates dependence on the part of the U.N. that is contrary to the multilateral spirit of the organization. This crucial chink in the U.N. armour is exploited repeatedly and virtually influences decision making when it comes to peacekeeping in critical areas. The U.N. is inadvertently acting as a rubber stamp for the countries with the highest input in terms of providing funds and personnel to the body. The acute lack of funding to the peacekeeping mission in different parts of the world has exposed U.N., and resultantly there are several lessons to be learned. The case of UNMOGIP is no exception. The U.N. barely has enough people in the area to monitor the events that unfold in this highly volatile region, let alone enforce peace and development. According to U.N. data, there are 109 UN operatives in the UNMOGIP, including 68 civilians and 41 experts of the mission. The budget allocated is around $10 million out of the total peacekeeping budget of $6.38 billion allocated for the year 2021 (United Nations, 2021). The idea behind the presence of U.N. in the area is to monitor the ceasefire after the Kargil war of 1997 and make sure that human rights are not violated in any form.

Concluding Remarks

According to several sources, more than a hundred thousand people have lost their lives in the conflict of Kashmir since 1989 (including civilians and armed forces personnel, both India and Pakistan). One estimate puts the death toll due to terrorism-related incidents to 70,000 from 1989 to 2017 (Rai, 2018). Politics, rhetoric, and the occasional condemnation followed by more promises are all the Kashmir people have had from the U.N. and its representatives. The validity and success of peacekeeping efforts are assessed on both actions and omissions of the use of *authority* (Lundren, Oksamytna, & Bove, 2021). In the case of Kashmir, there is a serious omission of the use of force where required and silence where there should be coherent and substantive chatter. A proposed way forward for the betterment of overall performance and fulfilling the original mandate of U.N. would start with the adherence of all members of UNSC, the extended committees and Military Staff Committee (MSC) to work on a linear and focused plan of action for the greater good of global population rather than political motives.

The Independent High-Level Panel for Peace Operations (HIPPO) is an effort in this direction. The excessive control in the UNSC by the three nations, the U.S., U.K, and France, needs to be checked before any progress (van der Lijn et al., 2017). Peacekeeping is a complex phenomenon and needs to be addressed on multi-levels with engagement on the participatory level of conflicted communities and a responsible, humane approach for all relevant stakeholders.

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