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Gender-based explosions



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# Gender-based explosions: The nexus between Muslim masculinities, jihadist Islamism and terrorism

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Maleeha Aslam

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# Endorsements

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“Maleeha Aslam shines a clear and steady light on the murky, post-9/11 world of violent extremism. She helps us to penetrate the troubled and unsure existence of young Muslim men, who, at a loss for guidance, too often take refuge in the message of radical clerics. Without understanding their context it will be virtually impossible to check the acts of terror that stem from their desperation and indoctrination. Aslam’s book is essential reading for all who seek to comprehend the morass from which terrorists emerge and the very nature of our world.”

**Akbar Ahmed**, Ibn Khaldun Chair of Islamic Studies, School of International Service, American University, Washington D.C.

“This well-researched and morally engaged book is an important contribution to gender studies and to understanding the contemporary Muslim world. Maleeha Aslam has conducted careful and imaginative research, and has a powerful argument on the relevance of masculinity dynamics to Islamist militancy. Some of the findings are troubling; but by moving beyond the clichés of both Western ‘security’ thinking and conventional militancy, to a concern with the making of masculinities and the possibilities of change, this book offers a message of hope.”

**Raewyn Connell**, author of *Masculinities* and *Gender: In World Perspective*

“This is a powerful and disturbing study of global jihadism that maintains that the roots of violence lie not in religious ideologies but in gender-based codes of honour that pre-date Islam. Focusing on Pakistan, it argues that ordinary Pakistanis are predisposed to terrorism by political

and economic oppression that lead to expressions of outraged masculinity. In depicting men as victims of patriarchy, it suggests that only by providing Muslim men with alternative cultures of self-actualisation will we combat Islamist violence.”

**John Hutchinson**, Reader in Nationalism, Department of Government, London School of Economics and Political Science

“This ground-breaking book presents new research which will undoubtedly stimulate much controversy. It opens up issues regarding men, gender and sexuality in Islamic societies and draws connections between how young men are raised and their recruitment into terrorist organizations. Focusing on Pakistan, the book is of relevance to Middle East studies, gender studies and issues of war and peace. A work of courage approached with integrity and solid research.”

**Amira A. Sonbol**, Professor of Islamic History, Law and Society, Georgetown University, Doha, Qatar campus

“From the vantage point of policy, it seems rare in these times that a feminist scholar can take on a subject as daunting and diverse as ‘Muslim Masculinities’ and treat that subject in such a thorough, generous and sympathetic manner. Maleeha Aslam’s *Gender-based Explosions* combines a detailed understanding of the motivations that lead men to join terrorist movements, the Islamic texts that are so often used to justify terrorist violence, and the feminist theory that has yet to find an appropriate foothold in much of the Muslim world. But it is her sensitive and probing interviews with Muslim men in Pakistan that separates this book from others. Aslam investigates the diverse ‘performativities’ of Muslim men, the ‘honor’ codes that drive some to commit grave violence, and the means – more and less legitimate – by which men seek to justify violent response based on external threats to their cultures, families and communities. But it is her trusting engagement with Pakistani men that both complicates stereotypes about who these men are and what actually motivates their action in the world, and portrays humane and nuanced faces to those who see ‘counter-terrorism’ as merely a strategy to pacify and/or nullify ‘the other’. While interrogating her own theoretical categories, Aslam reminds readers that a focus on how masculinities are constructed in the Muslim world can give us important clues on how to reach potential terrorists with new models for the Muslim man; but she also reminds us of the ways in which the policies of the non-Muslim world must dramatically shift to reduce incentives to violence among the men whose families and neighborhoods seem forever under siege.”

**Robert Zuber**, Director, Global Action to Prevent War and Armed Conflict (UN Plaza), New York

For  
Muhammad Aslam  
My father



And as a single leaf turns not yellow but with the silent knowledge  
of the whole tree,  
So the wrong doer cannot do wrong without the hidden will of you all.  
Like a procession you walk together towards your god-self  
You are the way and the wayfarers.  
And when one of you falls down he falls for those behind him,  
a caution against the stumbling stone.  
Ay, and he falls for those ahead of him, who though faster and surer of foot,  
yet removed not the stumbling stone.

...

The righteous is not innocent of the deeds of the wicked

Kahlil Gibran in *The Prophet*

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# Abbreviations

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ANP	Awami National Party (Pakistan)
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (United States)
FATA	federally administered tribal area
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation (United States)
FLN	National Liberation Front (Algeria)
GIA	Armed Islamist Group (Algeria)
GSPC	Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (Algeria)
HT	Hizb-ut-Tahrir
ICPO	International Criminal Police Organization
IDP	internally displaced person
IMU	Islamist Movement of Uzbekistan
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence (Pakistan)
ISP	internet service provider
JRA	Japan Red Army
KP province	Khyber Pukhtunkhwa province (Pakistan)
LSE	low socio-economic group
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PA	Palestinian Authority
RAW	Research and Analysis Wing (India's external intelligence agency)
R2P	responsibility to protect
SDF	Self-Defense Forces (Japan)
SSD	socially stigmatized and distressed
TNSM	Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi (Pakistan)
UN	United Nations
UNSCR	UN Security Council Resolution
USP	university students and professionals

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# Foreword

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*Vesselin Popovski*

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Many books have been written about Islam and terrorism. Many books have been written about Islam and gender. Yet not many books tackle the link between terrorism and gender. Maleeha Aslam focuses on this missing link and assembles the triangle, contributing profoundly to all three fields: gender studies, terrorism studies and Islamic studies.

The author makes a courageous, almost extraordinary attempt to analyse and argue dispassionately about subjects that are naturally full of passions – religion, violence and gender. Not many writers are able to detach beliefs, feelings, stereotypes, sympathies and other emotions so professionally when addressing such profoundly emotional issues.

This book does not aim at political correctness – its purpose is not to reconcile; there are no appeals for religious harmony or gender equality. This is not a volume which is similar to those we have read already – the book is about gender, but focuses on men. It is about militant jihadism, but does not condemn it. It is about Islam, but the analysis is denominated, almost secularized – the Muslim men's behaviour is examined as gender-based, not religion-based.

The significance of this book lies in the way that it transverses across disciplines, and between policy and academic quarters so that a case for peace and human rights for the global community can be built. Maleeha Aslam achieves this distinctively while staying clear of any stock political (including religious), cultural or intellectual agendas. She utilizes her comprehensive studies of gender and Islam and her groundwork with grassroots communities to bring the readers something very special –

how to explain and understand gender performativity generally and Muslim masculinity in particular. Although not attempting to present doctrinal novelties, the few messages are powerful and sharp – gender is cross-cutting and permeates through all aspects of life, and it informs various types of social behaviour. Accordingly, gender can be crucial in understanding motivations, actions and policy-making. It has, therefore, been inexplicable negligence not to have made gender one of the central elements of the analysis of such global issues as terrorism.

Theory guides practice and vice versa. This book informs both theory and practice, and expands our current understanding of terrorism in an original fashion. This text must spur policy-makers into action so that we begin to hear decisions and see actions aimed at preserving human life and dignity wherever it is endangered.

*Tokyo, October 2011*



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Gender issues heat up and become “alive” and visibly ubiquitous whenever I am in a lengthy conversation with Dr Fouzia Saeed. I thank Dr Saeed for uninhibitedly sharing her wisdom with me since 2001. The credit for introducing Connell’s work on “masculinities” to me unreservedly goes to my doctoral supervisor, Dr Shailaja Fennell (Jesus College, University of Cambridge). I thank Dr Fennell for being an excellent guide and teacher to me.

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Family and friends are the foundation blocks of contentment in one's life. My sisters Sumaira, Ayesha and Ambreen have consistently supported my intellectual pursuits over the years, for which I am truly thankful to them. In her short lifespan, Saima, my sister, taught me more about the trials of life and patriarchy than anyone else. She was also my steady source of information on Afghan refugees in UNHCR camps in Pakistan, where she tirelessly provided her services as a medical doctor. A humanitarian at heart, Saima was "peace" personified, and I thank her for her wisdom and the unequivocal love and support with which she nurtured me as her youngest sibling.

The gratitude I owe to my dear father, to whom I singularly dedicate this book, cannot be fathomed or recorded. A tenacious, robust infantryman to outsiders, Abu ji's mild and humble manner in an all-women household enlightened me early on about the nobler practices in Muslim masculinities. I thank Abu ji for his boundless love and devotion to my (late) mother, Parveen Akhtar Malik, myself and my sisters. Most of all, I thank Abu ji for giving me education, and for being the best *mother* in the world.

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# Introduction

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Are Muslim men troublemakers, or troubled? Currently, the truth lies somewhere in between. A few men are perpetrators, but many are victims of economic, political and, ironically enough, patriarchal socio-cultural oppression. In post-colonial societies, Muslim leadership has consistently failed to deliver within locally “modified” Western frameworks of governance. Worse is that the leadership has failed to provide an original/innovative “vision” and “agenda” for growth and prosperity to its people. Consequently the political *agency* of Muslim social capital, largely consisting of troubled but energetic young men, has been absorbed in Islamist and terrorist networks. This siphoning of Muslim social capital by terrorist networks has to be stopped.

Although destructive and aggressive trends within practices of masculinities need to be remedied, lessons from the past suggest that repressive detention, imprisonment and discriminatory profiling of Muslim men only exacerbate socio-political chaos, give rise to human rights abuses and generate more protests and violence in and outside Muslim contexts. Ultimately, we as a “global community” pay the price, as no airport, train station, shopping mall or place of worship today is safer than another. Death looms equally in Times Square in New York and a mosque in the village of Akurwall in Peshawar. Putting every other individual behind bars can be a symptomatic but not a sustainable solution that requires engaging with formal and informal institutional issues at both local and global levels. This book aims to problematize one such institutional system, *gender*, while alerting policy-makers that deradicalization programmes

in Muslim contexts will not be successful unless gender-based issues, and most particularly those revolving around “masculinities”, are fully addressed.

Since 9/11, Islamic scholars have rejected militancy and terrorism by quoting religious texts that forbid murder or promoting jihad against one’s inner self (*nafs*). Although such measures are necessary, they are neither sufficient nor a sustainable treatment of the problem of militant-jihadist Islamism and terrorism. This volume will build a case for shifting discussions on counterterrorism from *religion* to *gender* (at least to whatever extent possible). Popovksi (2009) illustrates the significance of religion as a mobilizing tool, and emphasizes: “religions *do not* produce conflict directly, but they can easily be employed as . . . a propaganda strategy to mobilize more fighters”. If religion “mobilizes” individuals, this book will show that gender “justifies” for individuals their combative and confrontational actions. From this standpoint, there is a need for counterterrorism measures to have a certain level of “gender appeal” for Muslim youth if counterterrorism strategists seek *sustainability* and *peace*.

Ordinarily, Islamic texts that create avenues for militant Islamism gain immediate popularity among Muslim men, while those that elaborate everyday social obligations for men are either interpreted in a typical ultraconservative or orthodox patriarchal manner or left ignored. In the field of militarism and militancy, “wartime” roles are allocated to men. These wartime roles are manifestations by which existing cultural and psychological understandings of gender roles are further authenticated and made relevant to current political contexts. Socially prescribed and idealized norms for the male gender are such that many men are willing to experiment with militant-jihadist Islamism and even terrorism to alleviate financial hardships and social inadequacies, or simply to embark on an adventurous lifestyle as a stereotypical “hero” to confirm their “manliness”. Programmed by societies to conceptualize their own masculinity in a peculiar fashion, men indulge in flamboyant displays of physical force either to assert or to regain their (lost) “honour”. Men indulge in risky behaviours, often involving injury or even death. They are socialized into accepting such situations as long as these make them “honourable”. Many men will second that “martyrdom” is not restricted to dying as a “believer” – but also as a “hero”.

Set in a post-9/11 Muslim world context, this volume aims to break new ground in the field of gender and global politics by reviewing our contemporary understanding of causes of militant-jihadist Islamism and terrorism. The book explores an unprecedented thesis: Muslim men participate in militant-jihadist Islamism as an act of *gender performativity*, a notion that was first introduced by Judith Butler (2006) in the context of

heterosexual normativity and will be used here to highlight how, among other contextual elements, gender constructs and practices play a fundamental role in influencing and propelling young men towards militant-jihadist Islamism and terrorism. Counterterrorism experts need to recognize why *gender matters*, and accordingly consider reviewing (and hopefully amending) their current approaches to counterterrorism.

In addition to Butler's *gender performativity*, militant-jihadist Islamism and terrorism among Muslim men will be explored through Connell's (2005) notion of *multiple masculinities*. This book also includes a pilot, small-scale empirical investigation on Pakistani masculinities, mainly to underline connections between cultural constructions of the "masculine gender" and the pervasive ethos of "militant-jihadist Islamism" among Pakistani men in a post-9/11 world. To the best of my knowledge, it is the first case study of this nature. The pilot study is a distinct portrayal of the routine living of ordinary Muslim men who are susceptible to drawing influences from Islamists, and even terrorist networks that are operating globally. The study focuses on how young Pakistani men relate to issues of their culturally defined and prescribed masculinity. It is also about how Pakistani Muslim men *locate* themselves within wider and broader socio-economic and political contexts surrounding them. The pilot study proposes conceptual models that can be replicated at a larger scale, and their findings used to generate more information on the nexus between gender, militant Islamism and terrorism (particularly suicide terrorism).

Drawing upon classic gender theory, existing scholarship on Muslim masculinities and the pilot study on Pakistani Muslim masculinities, this research underlines socio-cultural and political ramifications of post-9/11 securitization-focused and gender-deficient counterterrorism measures within Muslim contexts that already suffer from detrimental effects of marginalization, both within and outside Muslim countries. Without taking the blame away from those indulging in aggression, violence and crime, this book exposes the vulnerabilities and incertitude of what is apparently the fearsome masculine gender of the Muslim world.

## Features pertinent to this investigation

There are a few aspects of this research that need to be emphasized. First, Muslim men are neither conceptualized nor presented as a homogeneous group. As will be noted, the study in both theory and praxis observes the heterogeneity of Muslim men, and documents variations existing among/within groups of these men on the basis of their socio-economic and political lives. Yet there are similarities across these disparities that interestingly make Muslim men a "collectivity" with a past and present of

“shared experiences”. Second, the study is not about “trained minds”, i.e. those who have been in militant or terrorist camps, but “untrained minds” of “ordinary men”, with their usual thoughts. This is a relatively under-researched area. At present data on militant-jihadist Islamism focus on men associated with madrassahs and/or militant organizations. Although data concerning militants and madrassah students are equally important, they only pave the way to solidify erroneous assumptions such as “Muslim men kill and get killed for the sake of Islam”. The contexts and experiences of respondents predetermine the type of data researchers may acquire from them. In order to prove how studious one is, in a way students are “madrassah-bound” to glorify jihad and Islam and make hate speeches against “the West”. Researchers may never find madrassah students parodying self-styled clerics making calls for jihad. However, they may find such performers among ordinary men – at least, this is what constitutes my experiences in the field. Third, the participants in the empirical investigation in Pakistan were not given any definitions of “jihad”. This allowed participants the freedom to interpret jihad in their own way, and accordingly determine their relationship with the institution of jihad. Regardless of how respondents perceived jihad, the study ultimately aimed only at assessing the extent to which gender mediates understanding of all forms of jihad (or so-called jihad), be it religious (i.e. Quran supported), militant Islamist (as that of Islamist groups with political agendas) or criminal (as that of terrorist networks). There is a nexus between gender and war – be that war divine, political or criminal. By offering themselves for combat jihad, Muslim men may aim to struggle to live up to the ideals of “chivalry” in Islam and as envisaged in the Quran. Such men are driven by the demands of masculine honour and aspire to achieve a “heroic” end. Similarly, those indulging in militant-jihadist Islamism, and those committing blatant acts of terrorism after being incited by terrorist networks, do this either for economic reasons or for self-actualization and heroism. They get access to guns, money and fame.

This study is rooted in theory and provides a review of literature, as well as case study material that will be analysed through qualitative and quantitative means. The work is valuable, and has implications for future policy-making and strategizing in the field of counterterrorism and deradicalization. The nature of its academic engagement is interdisciplinary, and at least three critical areas of policy and educational interest have been combined to maintain scholarly interest: first, gender and human rights; second, terrorism and counterterrorism; and third, Islam and Islamism.

Ultimately, this text aims to advocate for people-centred, peaceful and sustainable approaches to counterterrorism and deradicalization.

## Roadmap

This book is divided into three parts. Part I, “Framing the global chaos: An overview”, describes important details regarding the global jihadist movement and counterterrorism strategies. The context explained is that of global disorder where policies are lopsided and often backfire. Part I provides the necessary background information for building a case that reorients counterterrorism strategies from being securitization focused to becoming more development/human rights and/or ethics centred. The issues have been framed with two objectives in mind: first, underlining the magnitude and extent of the fragility of our globe in the age of terror; and second, advocating that the solutions to our problems do not lie in investing all our resources in tactical defence, particularly militarism, but in also investing in soft, human-centred and sustainable approaches to counterterrorism and deradicalization.

Part II, “Islam, masculinities and performance”, serves three important purposes. It *appraises* gender theory and the seminal contributions of Butler and Connell. Combined, these two give the intellectual basis of exploring the critical nexus between gender, militant-jihadist Islamism and terrorism. It *collates* “Islamic masculinities” as underlined in sacred texts and narratives. The aim is to illuminate what may approximately be termed as “exemplary” Islamic masculinity. Finally, it *locates* Muslim men within their current socio-economic and political contexts so that the nature and extent of problems, aims and ambitions of men in such living conditions can be gauged. The third objective is met through a comprehensive chapter on “Muslim masculinities”.

Like the other two parts, Part III, “Pakistani masculinities and vulnerable social groups in the age of terror”, has certain objectives to serve and its six chapters have been compiled accordingly. It starts by introducing the research setting, study design and overall context of Pakistan: a country that is a mix of ancient local/tribal customary institutions, has a colonial baggage and is barely surviving a troubled present. This context is shaping and producing practices in Pakistani masculinities. Chapters 7 and 8 present qualitative data on critical issues ranging from conceptual to topical matters, while documenting voices of the people. The research sample discussed several issues regarding routine socio-economic pressures in a man’s life, their understanding of “honour” and “being a man”, and life choices made by troubled men. Chapter 9 approaches similar issues in a more crystallized manner through quantitative analysis. Two conceptual models illustrating the nexus between gender and militant-jihadist Islamism and gender and suicide bombings are also presented. Chapter 10 shifts the focus from ordinary Muslim men to substance misusers and Pakistani women from the masses, regarded together as



“vulnerable” sections of Pakistani society. This chapter warns of the susceptibility of these vulnerable groups in the age of terror. Chapter 11 consolidates the important findings from the pilot study.

The language of this book has been carefully selected keeping in view an eclectic readership consisting of policy-makers, human rights and other civil society stakeholders, academics, students and medical doctors, particularly psychiatrists. It is hoped that policy-makers will have an interesting theoretical concept and some useful empirical data to work with. They can formulate and introduce innovative social and political development programmes, both short and long term. Academics, and most particularly gender theorists, who are only starting to debate terrorism and its effects on gender as a system, and masculinity and femininity as a practice within gender, will find this book useful. Despite a limited use of gender theory in the book, a substantive effort has been made to claim a share for gender theory in post-9/11 global politics. Students of terrorism studies, masculinity studies and Islam, as well as civil society engaging with issues of peace and sustainable development, can expand their knowledge by reading this text. It is hoped that *ulema*/Islamic scholars will recognize the need to elaborate further on Islamic masculinities and collaborate with counterterrorism strategists to improve existing knowledge on Islamic masculinities. Finally, ordinary individuals who ponder (and worry) over the current state of our world will find this an interesting and thought-provoking volume.

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Part I

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Framing the global chaos:  
An overview

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## 1

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# The global jihadist movement

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The past 10 years have seen a rapid increase in regressive radicalism and literalism in Muslim societies, when the global challenge is to deradicalize and ensure peace. Muslim history is rife with socio-political movements that have sought to transform the nature of Islamic belief, its function and the routine living of its adherents. Present times are no different. The post-9/11 counterterrorism strategies of US and European governments ignited frenzied reactions across the Muslim world. 11 September 2001 played a role in making US policy quarters and those of its allies (both Western and non-Western) behave in irrational, chaotic and even tyrannical ways. Bush's infamous "crusade" *faux pas* while representing a twenty-first-century, new-millennium, secular America was unwarranted. That year's 11 September had left the United States truly terrorized, and this was a great success for Bin Laden's Al Qaeda.

At present, US President Barack Obama is actively seeking dialogue with the Muslim world, making announcements such as the closure of Guantanamo prison and withdrawal of US combat troops from Afghanistan by 2014, and more recently demanding that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu consider moving back to 1967 borders (i.e. surrendering Judea and Samaria in the West Bank to the Palestinians, or at least making arrangements with them for an alternative land swap). President Obama has also openly championed the socio-political rights of American Muslims and, despite public protests, justified their access to land surrounding Ground Zero to construct an Islamic centre. The Obama administration has publicly condemned at home and abroad any hateful

actions against Islam and Muslim communities, such as those organized by Pastor Terry Jones. Nonetheless, US policies begin to look less favourable for Muslims whenever it decides to take on Pakistan: predominantly a Muslim nation, but not just *any* Muslim nation. In fact Pakistan, according to some demographic estimates, is predicted to replace Indonesia by 2030 as the world's largest Muslim population (Borstein, 2011). The current US administration has given rise to controversy by approving a marked increase in the number of drone attacks in Waziristan, Pakistan, causing a large number of civilian casualties and violating the country's sovereignty in the name of going after a high-value target (Bin Laden), and threatening Pakistan with such attacks in future.

It is important to decide not to allow "securitization" agendas to compromise mutual respect between nation-states. The United States and its European allies through their governmental and civil society sectors must support development interventions in the Muslim world that involve wide-ranging institutional reforms: not only ensuring economic prosperity but also social change centring on the principle of equanimity in thought and action. Religious and cultural literalism and regressive radicalism consume all forms of governance structures while leaving societies dejected and inert. Gender is one such foundational mechanism whereby regressive literalism is produced. It is a system that serves as a major site on which radical agendas are honed and practised. In this text, gender is understood as an institutional arrangement that is both informal and formal, and permeates all aspects of socio-economic and political living in a cross-cutting manner. "Prescribed", "appropriate" and "approved" gender roles result from centuries-old local customs and traditions, policies of a particular state or globalism and globalization. Governments interested in allocating resources for counterterrorism have to initiate programmes aimed specifically at transforming practices in "masculinity" and "femininity" within the larger institutional system known as "gender". There is always a danger that regressive radicalism will culminate in terrorism. Policy-makers aim to "deradicalize", but answers to the question "how?" are unclear and still rudimentary. Policy documents mostly focus on governments promising to safeguard their local and global interests. Security concerns related to law enforcement agencies, civil aviation and immigration authorities are highest on counterterrorism agendas. Simultaneously, the West's other adopted policies on counterterrorism have caused disproportionate levels of civilian deaths and casualties in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan and an overarching vilification of the Muslim community globally, producing a large number of detainees mostly vanishing under mysterious circumstances. Since 9/11 violent protests have swept across the Muslim world denouncing counterterrorism measures adopted by Western governments and their allies elsewhere.

## Language of political Islam

Casual use of words can be damaging and almost always has subtexts. It is important to be aware of implications of political language that particularizes humans on a wrong note. Social history informs us that human rights violations are at least partly caused by irresponsible and unethical use of language that presents the masses with over-simplistic conclusions of otherwise complicated socio-political dynamics. Bourdieu (1998: 22) stated:

it is possible to resist the violence that is exerted daily . . . on television, on the radio and in the newspapers, through verbal reflexes, stereotyped images and conventional words, and the effect of habituation that it produces, imperceptibly raising, throughout the whole population, the threshold of tolerance of racist insults and contempt, reducing critical defences against pre-logical thought and verbal confusion (between Islam and Islamicism, between Muslim and Islamicist, or between Islamicist and terrorist, for example), insidiously reinforcing all the habits of thought and behaviour inherited from more than a century of colonialism and colonial struggles.

Unfortunately, not much has altered since Bourdieu's attempt at fine-tuning use of language. Islamist, Islamic and Muslims are still categorized as one, and a caricature of Islam is presented for mass consumption. Words such as fanatic, fundamentalist, terrorist, extremist and jihadi are still used interchangeably. Individuals with scheming minds and criminal intent and those with a cause or ones without any political agendas are roughly grouped together. Yet overlaps between jihad and terrorism are not always entirely created by the West.<sup>1</sup> Islam has often been misused for criminal purposes by terrorists born in Muslim households. The fusion between religion and crime serves the purpose of providing divine legitimacy to terrorists, who stand absolved and often venerated after committing atrocities against humanity.

A *Muslim* is considered to be one who submits to Allah, where "to submit" implies formally presenting oneself to the Divine for consideration, and thereby surrendering one's soul fully to that One Divine Being. The Quran allocates the title of Muslim to anyone who accepts the divine presence of Allah as *the* only Divine existence and declares faith in Angels, Messengers, Revealed Books and the Hereafter. The Muslim declaration of faith is as basic, and in many ways as uncomplicated, as *there is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah*. Muslims are a diverse group in their intensity and manner of practising Islam. Muslims can be "believers" and nothing beyond, or they can be conscious Muslims (i.e. those who make a conscious effort to adopt at least a few

religious practices and behaviours in their routine living), with a few being quite meticulous in practising Islam in letter and spirit. Individuals may draw influences from esoteric or exoteric versions of their faith, or follow a combination of the two. Some may become vainly ritualistic, or even die-hard regressive literalists and “radicals” as they are ordinarily captioned.

*Islamic* implies whatever may be accepted as the *essence* of the religion of Islam. In its simplest form, Islamic is that aspect and practice of faith that is uncontested across heterogeneous global Muslim societies and about which there are no two opinions. For example, philosophy is Islamic when it relies heavily on spiritualism, even in disciplines such as medicine and arithmetic. Art becomes Islamic in mosques, where calligraphy – the power of words rather than that of a mortal face (animal or human) – is emphasized. Regardless of advancements in music, the call for prayer, *azan*, remains Islamic and is still performed five times a day without musical instruments across the globe and with a typical Arabian rhythm. Such a consistent practice of something over a number of centuries can be considered as “Islamic”. Against this backdrop, most Muslims find a casual grouping of “Islamic” and “terrorist” truly offensive, as it amounts to implying terrorism as an essence of the religion of Islam. The fundamentals of a civilization are best assessed through its art, architecture, music and literature rather than by any temporary political *zeitgeist*. To put it differently, the walls and domes of the Taj Mahal decorated with verses from the Quran, as well as its paradise-like gardens, and the whirling dervishes of Rumi’s mausoleum can certainly be labelled “Islamic”, but not the brutal murders committed by Al Qaeda and the Taliban.

*Islamism* is quite different from *Islam/Islamic*. It is a distinctive political ideology that has emerged due to a peculiar understanding of the religion of Islam, resulting in both “for” and “against” sentiments among diverse Muslim populations. Islamism may have as many forms as there may be political movements across different time periods of histories past and those yet to form. In this context, an *Islamist* is Islamism-inspired. Islamists may be understated, stated or overstated in their religious expression.

An example of Islamism is Wahhabism, an idiosyncrasy exported by Saudi Arabia to other Muslim communities all over the world (including the Muslim diaspora in the West). Not all Muslims abide by or agree with Wahhabism’s peculiar interpretation and practice of the religion of Islam. I consider Saudi Wahhabism as a form of Arab cultural imperialism similar to Western cultural imperialism, with the two producing dichotomous effects on Muslim populations. In recent years Saudi authorities have

ordered Pakistani women pilgrims arriving at Mecca for the annual *hajj* to shroud themselves in *burqas*. The dress code of *shalwar kameez* and *chador* traditionally worn by South Asian Muslim women is no longer acceptable to Saudi *hajj* authorities. In other words, entry to the Holy Mosques has become conditional on accepting the Wahhabi way of life. Muslim populations across the globe are not only getting imbued with Wahhabism but also other Islamist ideologies such as Salafism and Qutbism, whose proponents have monopolized Islam by claiming their understanding of it as “original”. It is not easy to define “original” when one is dealing with a nation that is divided into sects, ideologies and popular cultures such as *sufism*.

Another example of particularized language that is misleading is the present usage of the word “radical”. Post 9/11, the word “radical” is almost always used to project someone violent, destructive and extreme in thought. Radicals are thought to be hyper-expressive individuals who want to “revert back to the original” at any cost. This is as if the “radical feminism” of the 1960s, or for that matter the very “radical” posture adopted by Rosa Parks to usher in an era of equal rights for coloured people, does not represent a shared struggle for equality, justice and peace in the world. Therefore, in my view, radicalism on its own is not negative, rather what is dangerous for societies is regressive and literalist thinking. Nonetheless, please note that since I make direct references to official counterterrorism policy/strategy documents (which use radical in a negative sense), despite having serious reservations, to spare readers any confusion I will follow the mainstream/current usage of the word “radical” and its derivatives.

Islamists can be broadly divided into “preachers” and “militants” or “jihadis” who are driven by religious ideologies, at times genuine political grievances, or just ambitious political agendas (this type is commonly understood as “radical Islamists”, as opposed to another supposed category of “moderate Islamists”). “Militant-jihadist Islamists” indulge in confrontational tactics and/or armed offences, bombings, suicide attacks, shoot-outs, etc. These groups may be involved in national separatist movements, such as in Chechnya; national liberation movements against occupations, as in Palestine; or anti-authoritarian movements, as the one in Algeria. In other words, no matter how offensive their activities may appear, there are some substantive political grounds that instigate their actions. Finally, there are networks that indulge in blatant acts of terrorism and in most cases have terrorists who are Muslims (a frequently used post-9/11 adage being *all Muslims are not terrorists, but most terrorists are Muslims*). These terrorists have styled themselves as jihadis, and are using religious symbolism to justify their plans for a global apocalypse. These individuals



belong to an underworld of organized crime networks and are able to strike against targets through a complex system of terror-nomics. At present, the distinguishing lines between militant-jihadist Islamists with a cause and/or purpose and terrorists with nothing but criminal intent have blurred. Since the late 1980s terrorist groups/networks such as Al Qaeda have lent themselves to other forms of nationalist and separatist movements, i.e. militant Islamist movements, and have “hijacked” them – making these movements their own. On the other hand, militant-jihadist Islamists can best be described as “reactionaries” venting anger against local and global institutions. They have a utopian vision of establishing a Shariah-directed caliphate, but are clueless as to its modalities and have no clearly defined political plan or strategies of socio-economic growth for societies that they claim to salvage. It is mainly due to this loophole in ideological vision and strategy that militant-jihadist Islamists are most susceptible to getting subsumed under, or having their political agency coopted into, crime/terrorism. Al Qaeda, well known to have started as a terrorist network, has now matured into a social movement (Sageman, 2009), mainly by acting as a surrogate for anti-occupation/nationalist/separatist movements across Muslim populations. Although claiming to uphold Islam, the underworld Muslim terrorists are not only attacking non-Muslims but also their fellow Muslims who they declare as *takfiris* (infidels), condemning them to death for their inaction against Muslim governments which have allied with the West since 9/11. Pakistan, a case in point, has suffered heavy loss of human life. The killings of Bin Laden in Abbottabad (May 2011) and Ilyas Kashmiri in Waziristan (June 2011) by US Navy Seals and unmanned drone attacks have made Pakistanis more vulnerable to torrential backlashes by Al Qaeda and the Taliban.

## Jihad – The notion

Jihad as a subject falls within the domain of Islamic jurists; historians also contemplate issues regarding jihad and motivation, mobilization and political authority. By discussing dynamics of ethnic and sectarian clashes inside Muslim societies (ordinarily drawing justification from the notion of jihad), historians were able to expand understanding of jihad on the ground. Jihad could now be understood as something beyond religious scriptures, and the umbrella perception of jihad as a practice that could only be manifested through clashes between opposite religions, civilizations and states was challenged (for example Bonner, 2006: 3–5). Returning to basics, the Arabic word “jihad” means neither “holy war” nor “just war”. It literally means “striving”. The modifying phrase *fi sabil Allah* (in

the path of God) follows later. Principally the essence of the practice of jihad is to strive for the sake of Allah. In contemporary politics, jihad has often been defined and redefined within socio-economic and political contexts of the Muslim world, its meaning never ceasing to change. If there was ever an original core, it has been reviewed many times over (ibid.).

Today, global terrorism has perverted the Islamic practice of *jihad* at the heart of contemporary Islamist ideology, practised by both preachers and militants. Some observers associate jihad with attachment to local values and resistance to homogenizing trends of globalization and forces of Western capitalism. For others, jihad represents a universalistic and globalizing force on its own. Mostly Islam polemicists use jihad to show Islam as a religion of violence and a code of life that contradicts civilized norms. At the other extreme are writers who insist that jihad is a defensive principle, or else utterly pacifist and directed inward (ibid.).

Militancy, though not central to jihad, is certainly there, distinguishing Islam from religious philosophies such as *ahimsa* in Hinduism. Islam allows the use of force, provided it is used against oppression and injustice, and only after all other peaceful means of resolution have been exhausted. One way to come to terms with Islam's blessing for militancy is to understand two aspects. First, Islam forbids "violence" while calling for military engagement with enemy forces on a battlefield whose geographical limits are properly defined. It is illegal to cause carnage or run amok damaging, for example, plants/crops and attacking women, animals or areas designated as "sanctuaries" (hospitals, schools, places of worship, etc.). Second, Islam clearly recognizes the powers of human "agency" and authorizes reprisals as well as defensive manoeuvring against authoritarianism and injustice under a representative leadership. The Organization of the Islamic Conference is the only political body representative of the Muslim world (plus the Arab League in matters peculiarly concerning the Middle East and North Africa – MENA). These representative bodies are authorized to raise grievances officially against any country, exhaust all diplomatic options available and, on failing, announce a call for "jihad" in a particular sector, be it economic or political. By these parameters, Osama Bin Laden, Baitullah and Hakimullah Mehsud, Ilyas Kashmiri, Ayman al-Zawahiri and all their clones were and remain nothing but thuggish terrorists with criminal intent influencing troubled Muslim youth across the world. The hallmark of the Taliban, Al Qaeda and their like is rejection of all historical experience, scientific experiment and other forms of knowledge that Muslims and other societies have developed over the past 1,400 years. Islam has been divested of its values of humanism and spirituality by these terrorist networks (Rashid, 2002).

## Factors that cause Islamism (ideological and militant)

Post 9/11, explaining violence committed in the name of religion has become both an intellectual and a political imperative. This has converted the “study of religion [into] a veritable cottage industry” (Sidel, 2006). Fundamentally we are only researching topics for which funds can be made available conveniently. With few exceptions, existing literature offers poverty, religiosity, religious leadership, madrassah education, authoritarianism in Muslim countries and their colonial heritage as variables causing ideological and militant-jihadist Islamism.

In nineteenth-century colonial India, religious symbols such as jihad were used by Muslim freedom fighters for mass mobilization (see Chapter 6). Even today, a few political movements opposing foreign occupations can pass under a banner of jihadi. In contrast, the Al Qaeda and Taliban claims on jihad are preposterous and the behaviour exhibited by the 9/11 hijackers remains unsupported by millions of practising Muslims (Houdaiby, 2009: 26). The fallacy of madrassah education causing terrorism is exposed by the fact that Bin Laden had degrees in management and engineering, al-Zawahiri is a trained medical doctor and Omar Saeed Sheikh, who grew up in the UK, graduated from the London School of Economics.

According to Gallup polls, 98 per cent of Egyptians consider Islam as a part of their daily lives and make reference to it a number of times a day (ibid.: 29). Although these individuals may appear dogmatic to a secular mind, the baseline is that most traditional societies, Muslim and non-Muslim, are inherently ritualistic. People are given ample opportunities to practise and observe a variety of rituals in a religious sphere. Traditionally, South Asian Muslims have found comfort in visiting holy shrines of *sufi* saints. They also find solace in offering the prescribed Islamic ritual prayer five times a day, fasting, reading Quranic Arabic out of sheer reverence rather than actually developing an understanding of the meaning of this sacred text, giving dues to the poor (*zakath*), performing *hajj* and practising jihad, i.e. routinely struggling against inner temptations to reach higher ideals of prescribed morality. Ordinary Muslims do all this for the simple logic of pleasing their Creator and ensuring their station in paradise upon death. Through presentation of empirical data from Pakistan, it is argued in this book that piety and routine expressions of religiosity among Muslims cannot and must not be treated as an indicator of extreme and/or regressively radical Islamism. To state this differently, it is unnecessary to fear someone offering a ritual prayer in an airport lounge. Notwithstanding, certainly there is a peculiar form of religiosity that can be associated with trajectories such as that of radical and/or militant-jihadist Islamism. There are a number of parallel

existing Islamic thoughts on any issue, be it treatment of women or participation in jihad. The need is to determine why individuals choose a regressive and bigoted line of thought above all others. Thought, after all, is mediated by socio-economic and political contexts. In this book, I insist that although not exclusively, most critically gender (i.e. gender constructions, identities, roles, expectations) is one such foundational institutional mechanism that plays a key role in individual and collective interpretations of socio-economic and political contexts. Since the death of Prophet Muhammad, Islam has been repeatedly moulded by men to serve patriarchal power structures all across the Muslim world. It is true that at times even the process and the predominant content of Shariah appear to serve mankind, rather than humankind inclusive of women and children too. Post-9/11 Muslim patriarchies were further problematized. Terrorist intrusions were aimed at stagnating all progress and development in traditional societies by disrupting the routine living of ordinary men, women and children.

Islamists have long debated over “means of change” among themselves. It is not uncommon to find an Islamist movement bifurcating at some point and allowing the birth of a militant wing. The militant wings indulge in activities such as suicide bombings and major political assassinations. Relevant publications focus on the presence of authoritarian governments in the Muslim world, most particularly in MENA. Undemocratic governance structures ultimately lead to political frustration, i.e. regressive radicalism. The Algerian parliament voted to change the constitution, and allowed President Abdelaziz Bouteflika of the National Liberation Front (FLN) to seek a third term in office. With its revolutionary credentials, the FLN monopolized legislative and executive decision-making – something that had been opposed by Islamists since the late 1980s.<sup>2</sup> In 1991 the regime agreed to hold free multi-party elections. The Islamic Salvation Front won the first round with a clear majority – a result that shocked the government, which had fatally underestimated the growing strength of Islamist parties. The regime panicked and cancelled the final round, fearing a win by the Islamist opposition. Consequently, militancy grew out of the anger and frustration that followed this cancellation of the election.

Contrary to assumptions, Islamists have had few avenues for political expression in many Muslim countries. For example, the state has intercepted the Muslim Brotherhood and its offshoots in countries such as Syria, Tunisia and Libya. In places like Jordan, Algeria, Morocco and Egypt they have had relatively moderate levels of success. By and large authoritarian governments in Muslim lands, like that of former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, marketed themselves as firewalls against militant Islamists, winning largely economic favours from the West. In the

meantime, Muslim populations have continued to criticize foreign policies of Western governments, perceiving them to be anti-Muslim and pro-Zionist. Militant networks capitalize on such popular impressions, while mobilizing and generating reactionary politics within Muslim populations. Hamas is known for masterminding a number of suicide bombings, at times even using Palestinian women and children to achieve its aims. The network's actions, against both its own people and Israelis, remain largely acceptable because they are undertaken in the name of the Palestinian people's movement for liberation and ending Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands. Signing a peace treaty with Israel did cost Egyptian President Anwar Sadat his life in October 1981 at the hands of Jamaat al-Islamiyya (also known as Gama'a al-Islamiyya, and not to be confused with Jemaah Islamiyya of Southeast Asia) and Jamaat-al-Jihad (other names being Al-Jihad, Egyptian Islamic Jihad, Al Jihad Al Islami), which closely collaborated with a few elements from the military. During interrogations, the plotters admitted that Sadat's assassination was purely political, and religious symbolism, i.e. "jihad", was brought in much later to justify the killing.

A factor by which radical Islamists win support is their condemnation of liberalism. The tide of Islamism is at least partly a reaction to Western cultural imperialism, which is considered obscene and is associated with the elites of Muslim societies. Regardless of the Islamic notions (and even propaganda) of Muslim brotherhood and *ummah*, anthropological studies have showed that Muslim societies are class-based and competitive. It has never been possible (and to be precise, affordable) for all social classes in a Muslim country to subscribe to Western ideals and practices or become comfortable in their use. The highly educated professional middle classes, although lacking the money that may be required to imitate a Western way of life (including choice of clothing and appearance, food, schools and resorts, etc.), manage to interact well with the West-influenced elite. However, the masses that have spent childhood in substandard schooling systems lag behind, become frustrated and react against the unaffordable and unfamiliar, making demands to revert back to the familiar, i.e. their own culture. Infuriated Muslim crowds make headlines when at times Western biases against Islam (or perhaps an underestimation of the relevance of political ethics) result in cultural assaults, such as that of Prophet Muhammad's cartoons published in a Danish newspaper, the release of short films like *Submission* (even if with collaborators like Ayaan Hirsi Ali) or an invitation to the Facebook community to draw Prophet Muhammad – all in the name of freedom of expression. Without getting into the debate over the limits of freedom of expression, here I would only like to warn that such socially irresponsible behaviour and presumptuousness are readily drawn upon by militant-

jihadi Islamist and terrorist networks, and Muslim populations are incited to react against the West. These groups harness perturbed Muslims such that they end up serving organized militant and crime networks while considering it to be a service to Islam.

In a first attempt of its kind, I will introduce gender (an artificial construct of society) as a major “cause” of the rise in militant-jihadist Islamism and terrorism. I argue that a critical nexus exists between “gender” (practices of Muslim masculinities) and “militant-jihadist Islamism” that quite often gets subsumed under terrorism, and needs to be fully recognized by terrorism and counterterrorism analysts.

## Ideologies and ambitions of Islamists

Ideologies provide their proponents with a *modus operandi* for meeting their political objectives and also lend themselves to followers so that actions can be justified within certain frameworks. During the 1970s Jamaat al-Islamiyya, headed by Islamist students who drew inspiration from newly released Muslim Brotherhood members, started functioning in Egypt.<sup>3</sup> The Islamist Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and Hizb-ut-Tahrir (HT) based in Central Asia imported their ideological paradigm from the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban. This imported version was imposed over Central Asia’s indigenous *sufi* and *jadidi* Islam. Since 1990, along with geographical cross-border jihadi movements, ideological export of regressive and militant Islamism has increased rapidly. Salafism and Wahhabism have brought within their ambit Muslim populations all over the world – converting Muslims into some sort of regressive literalists. Salafism, whose stated objective is to venerate early practices and practitioners of Islam, has been popularized across MENA and the Gulf. Women in Cairo are gradually opting for *niquaab* rather than *hijaab*, while their South Asian co-religionists in Islamabad are choosing Arab outfits such as *abaya* rather than their national dress of *chador*. The South Asian Muslim communities do not quite realize that in their attempt to resist Western imperialism they have kneeled down to Saudi imperialism. It is interesting to note that South Asian Muslims seem to remember fully the arrival of the British while choosing to forget Arab invasions of the subcontinent.

For purposes of forwarding their agenda of spreading terror indiscriminately, it is not unusual for terrorists to utilize Islamist platforms such as that of the IMU, the Islamic Armed Front of Jordan, Islamist separatists from Chechnya, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) of Algeria and Jemaah Islamiyya Indonesia. Currently, recruits of these Islamist networks are a mix of terrorists with criminal intent and some politically agitated youth who want to replace capitalism and Western state

systems with a Muslim (and I emphasize Muslim, not Islamic) caliphate that implements Shariah as a new world order. Manifestos of prominent Islamist movements, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, include such aims. Algeria's Islamic Salvation Front with its vision of Shariah law does not believe in parliamentary democracy. The objective of Jemaah Islamiyya Indonesia is to establish an "Islamic" (read Islamist) state in Indonesia and other parts of Southeast Asia. The IMU has long promoted this brand of political Islam – distorting a centuries-old history and tradition of Shariah by limiting it to a beard and a veil (Rashid, 2002). These networks have absolutely no clue as to what Shariah entails, and neither do they have the capacity to interpret religious provisions on issues of law and legislature or establish a fully functioning governance system in the light of voluminous treatises of Islamic law. It is important to realize that Shariah is used as a tool to mobilize people against the establishment. In April 2009 the government of Pakistan introduced Shariah law in Swat as part of a deal with Taliban terrorists, who at the time were thought to be insurgents demanding political autonomy. Soon the gibberish of Talibanized Shariah came to the forefront, and the peace deal melted.<sup>4</sup>

In Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood proclaims itself to be moderate, condemning violence. In the past it has favoured restricting the eligibility of women and Copts to run for the presidency. It also advocated advisory councils of Islamic scholars for the parliament. Both the Muslim Brotherhood and Jamaat al-Islamiyya wanted access to mainstream politics, so they indulged in commenting on the human condition while presenting their own perspectives – demanding a social revolution. Over the years the Muslim Brotherhood has shown signs of transforming from within, maybe as a defensive mechanism under state oppression. Since Mubarak's ousting in February 2011 the diversity of opinion existing among members of the Muslim Brotherhood has become visible. The youth are interested in a political dialogue that hinges on secular rather than religious symbolism. During the 2011 Tahrir Square protests in Egypt individuals with affiliations to the Muslim Brotherhood re-emerged in public, commanding spontaneous respect. For example, 2 million protesters offered Friday prayers behind Sheikh Youssef Qaradawy as an imam (*The Economist*, 2011a). This young generation of the Muslim Brotherhood manned barricades in Tahrir Square, and hope to have a greater say in reforming their party's manifesto. For example, they have suggested dropping the idea of a body of clerics vetting future laws. Overall, the dismissal of Mubarak has made the Muslim Brotherhood calmer and more open to accepting constitutional reforms – but only time will tell (*The Economist*, 2011c). Egypt's Jamaat al-Islamiyya and Jamaat al-Jihad are also prominent: the major difference between the two is that Islamiyya continues to play a social role following Quranic instructions, such as



*enjoin good and forbid evil* (of course open to as many interpretations as there may be motives behind it), while al-Jihad is militant in nature. During the 1980s Jamaat al-Islamiyya became very active and burnt movie rental stores. Such measures made them unpopular, and they quickly fixed this by starting charity work. In 2007 the Red Mosque (Jamia Hafsa and Jamia Fareedia) seminary in Islamabad used a similar combination of carrots and sticks (discussed briefly in Chapter 10). Jamaat al-Islamiyya also promotes hostile attitudes towards the West, justifying attacks against non-Muslims. Jamaat al-Jihad resorts to assassinations in order to meet its political ambitions.

The GSPC in Algeria has a political strategy to assassinate soldiers and policemen (Taylor, 2008). In 1994 Algeria's Armed Islamist Group (GIA) hijacked a French plane carrying 200 passengers. For the GIA, France was an enemy, as its government had supported the undemocratic FLN regime in Algeria. What made the hijacking historically significant was that the four militant-jihadists who seized the plane at Algiers airport had originally planned to crash it in Paris (perhaps the Eiffel Tower). This was seven years before 9/11. According to the French anti-terrorist judge Jean Louis Bruguière, the hijacking marked the beginning of a new and ominous phase in Algeria's jihadist combat. "The GIA decided to make a strategic step in 1994, not only to fight inside Algeria which is their home ground battlefield but to export violence outside," he said. "Algeria was only the first base for a much larger strategy to promote jihad(ism) as a tool to have a worldwide Caliphate regime in the future. The same as Al Qaeda," he added (ibid.).

Throughout the Muslim world, public and civil society elements are caught between a rock and a hard place: between authoritarian regimes or corrupt governments and the global terrorist networks. Terrorists acting in the name of Islam are at times perceived as holy men by naïve villagers, or tribal communities as in the case of Pakistan, who provide them with protection and hideouts in the name of clan brotherhood (discussed in Chapter 6). Terrorists sometimes give these families money for their services. Conversely, on occasions terrorists impose their presence on local communities, which submit to them out of fear.

## Mapping Islamism and terrorism

This section has been incorporated by way of introduction, and is neither exhaustive nor draws any hasty conclusions. It is critical to determine the extent of militant-jihadist/Islamist proliferation around the globe: who are these groups, what are they seeking and who is joining them? Historically, Islamist parties never won elections in Pakistan or MENA. After



9/11 the political environment, particularly that concerning foreign policy matters between the Muslim world and the United States/European Union, became really tense. With detention facilities such as Guantanamo and Abu Gharaib operating against Muslims, radical Islamists were able to multiply their voting bank. For example, Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal in Pakistan, Hamas in Gaza and Salafists in Kuwait won elections in 2002, 2006 and 2008 respectively. In fact the last two won more seats than their Islamist counterparts Al-Fatah and Hadas. Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood showed a remarkable performance in all three stages of the parliamentary elections in 2005,<sup>5</sup> succumbing to Hosni Mubarak's authoritarian regime but now back playing after Mubarak's dismissal.

After a few years of operation, moderate Islamist organizations are known to form their own radical wings that either remain active partners or become separate. Radical Islamist organizations may experience a further split, bifurcating into militant and non-militant groups. Egypt's Jamaat al-Jihad gave rise to a splinter group, Talaia al Fateh, led by Ayman al-Zawahiri. This organization has focused on violent actions and secret cells, and remained isolated from society and the mainstream political scene. In the 1980s and 1990s Jamaat al-Jihad suddenly emerged from the national to the global scene, reframing its militant approach as blatant terrorism. At present the group is redefining its activities and does not hesitate to refer to terrorist acts as jihad carried out for the safety of Muslims against Western and Zionist oppression. In Algeria, following an amnesty brokered by the army in 1999, the main militant organization, the GIA, now stands disbanded (BBC News, 2003). But the GSPC continues to fight, and is causing alarm to governments in the West.

In 1996 Sudanese and Saudis offered to kidnap and hand over Osama Bin Laden to US authorities, but the United States declined to accept. Around the same time Ayman al-Zawahiri used Chechnya as a safe haven, as did Ahmed Salama Mabrouk of Azerbaijan. Al-Zawahiri was arrested by Russians in Dagestan, near Derbent, and put on trial, but was released in May 1997 for reasons known to Moscow (Burr and O'Collins, 2006: 175–182). Such lost opportunities only ensured a smooth move towards 9/11 – changing Manhattan's skyline forever. Today militant-jihadist Islamism needs to be understood as a truly global and trans-national phenomenon. Unity of purpose helps these militants work across international borders without difficulties, as they exist in conglomerates and networks. Terrorists like al-Zawahiri capitalize on such opportunities. Very easily al-Zawahiri reached Chechnya and absorbed its ethnic conflict into a larger terrorist agenda. Similarly Juma Namangani of the IMU, an Uzbek operating from Tajikistan, went over to command Taliban forces after the US invasion of Afghanistan in December 2001. He was later killed in a battle near Konduz by an American air strike.

Islam is the fastest-growing religion in the world. Almost 60 million Muslims belonging to over 30 separate nationalities lived in the former Soviet Union; when the USSR disintegrated in 1991, six independent Muslim states surfaced in the eastern zone of the globe. Muslims in Chechnya, Tatarstan, Dagestan and the Caucasus surround the 20 million Muslims living inside Russia. Islamism began to rise in Russia at the beginning of 1990, and emerged as an Islamic rebirth after the long years of totalitarian and atheistic rule. It has remained an important feature of identity for Russian Muslims. Among Muslim/non-Muslim groups, such as the Ossets, the Muslims tend to be closer to Muslims from other areas than to the Christians who may be their kin. The unifying force that Islam offers to its adherents is intense, providing them with a sense of connection and belongingness. In the past Muslim Dagestanis, Chechens and Ingush continued to follow Naqshbandi and Qadiri *sufi tariqat* despite Soviet repression (Gammar, 1995: 164).

A closer look at the Chechen separatist movement reveals how terrorist networks operating under the garb of Islam have redefined nationalistic sentiments dating back centuries in a matter of two decades, starting in 1991. Conflict between Chechnya and Russia goes back 200 years. In 1859 the armies of the Christian tsar defeated Imam Shamil, and Chechnya was incorporated in the imperial Russian empire. Chechens have repeatedly demanded independence, but were defeated by the Red Army at the end of the First World War. The Chechens and Ingush<sup>6</sup> were accused of supporting Germany in the Second World War; as punishment, 425,000 were deported to Kazakhstan and their mosques, cemeteries and Islamic libraries were bulldozed. Thousands died during transit, and the rest failed to settle in Kazakhstan. They could only return home in 1957. At the time of the disintegration of the Soviet empire, Chechens elected Dzhokhar Dudayev as their president and declared independence. This was not accepted by Moscow, instigating a war between the two. Chechnya's large expatriate community consisted of Syrians and Jordanians, who arranged support for their Chechen co-religionists through Muslim charities. Afghans and Arabs started arriving in Chechnya, declaring jihad against Russian forces. The precedent of Afghans defeating the Soviet empire was already present. Saudi Arabia started financing Wahhabism in Chechnya – something that the locals who were more *sufi* oriented did not appreciate. This imported version of Islam was claimed to be a reformist paradigm, but in reality promoted militant Salafism: it made the local population feel tense and “traditionalists”, i.e. the *sufis*, felt threatened. A meeting with Hasan Al Turabi and Ayman al-Zawahiri influenced Dudayev, who also started promoting Salafism in Chechnya. In 1993 Dudayev announced the formation of an alliance against the West. This merger of Chechen separatist and global Islamist movements gave a

cover to the operation of terror networks such as Al Qaeda. However, soon Russia's Boris Yeltsin captured Grozny, leaving a large number of people dead. The Afghan Arab mujahideen, who were now called the Chechen Arabs, brought in more Afghan Arabs led by Amir Khattab (also written as Emir Khattab, and known as Ibn al-Khattab) under the banner of the International Islamic Brigade or International Islamic Peace Brigade. These groups of armed men helped Chechens to launch a jihad against Russia. Bin Laden, who was hiding in Sudan at the time, offered \$1,500 to anyone willing to go to Chechnya for jihad. Al Qaeda trained these militants in the name of jihad. The Chechen Arab presence assured a continuous flow of funds from rich Islamic charities around the world. Soon a military training camp was opened in southeast Chechnya. *Zakath*, the obligatory charity given by Muslims, was used to buy arms for Chechens; Muslims, even those living in the United States and Europe, generally believed that the money was being spent on Chechen refugees.

Russia and Chechnya signed a peace agreement in 1996 and the new Chechen leader, General Aslan Maskhadov, expressed the need to revert back to what was local to Chechnya and ordered Khattab and all foreign fighters of the International Islamic Brigade to leave. Khattab, in a political move, relocated to Dagestan and married a local woman. By 1999 Khattab had established training camps in Dagestan and started demanding autonomy and secession from Moscow. The Russians carried out air strikes, and the terrorists in Dagestan responded by a series of bombings in Moscow. Russia's Vladimir Putin did not waver and invaded Chechnya, resulting in 10,000 deaths among Russian troops and 400,000 Chechen refugees who had to flee to Ingushetia. Maskhadov felt powerless, as the Salafist radicals were so well financed. In May 2000 Putin imposed direct rule in Chechnya and appointed Akhmad Kadyrov, a separatist turned Muslim cleric, as head of the Chechen government. Kadyrov immediately engaged with Riyadh, pleading for money to be sent to his government and not to some self-styled jihadists. He had made little progress when he was murdered by a group of Salafist Islamists in 2004 (Burr and O'Collins, 2006: 175–182).

In the Chechen case, geopolitical opponents of Russia hijacked the spiritual space and justified their misdeeds on the pretext of Islam. Between October 2002 and August 2004 Chechen separatists, who since then have moved towards terrorism, carried out 10 attacks: a theatre siege and nine suicide attacks. The most horrific atrocity occurred on 3 September 2004 in Middle School Number One in Beslan in North Ossetia, with the slaughter of 330 children. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei V. Lavrov declared: "those who slaughtered children in Beslan and hijacked the planes to attack the US, are creatures of the same breed"

(*ibid.*). A group led by Shamil Basayev, an accomplice of Khattab, took responsibility for the incident. By then Basayev was operating his jihadist network like a don of an organized crime network, kidnapping foreign aid workers and demanding political advantages and huge sums of ransom money.

A group of armed men from Chechnya, Muslim Brothers, provided aid to Abkhazian troops via the North Caucasus when the former went to war with Georgia. The leaders of such groups demand Shariah, especially in penal codes, and generally favour a union of politics and religion. Islamist groups from the North Caucasus have ties with the Muslim Brothers in the Middle East, especially with their wing in Jordan. The nature of these links is not very clear: some analysts have insisted that they are just family ties, while the Chechen Muslim Brothers themselves claim to buy arms from their contacts in the Middle East.

A Chechen terrorist, Doku Umarov, nicknamed Osama Bin Laden, has declared himself the emir of the North Caucasus. He is responsible for a number of terrorist attacks against Russia. The Chechen conflict lost its ethnic and geographical quality long ago, and is now one of the centre points in the wider web of terrorist networks (*ibid.*).

Amir Khattab and Shamil Basayev had relocated to Dagestan to ignite the second Chechen war. The introduction of Salafism in a *sufi* population gave rise to antagonism among opposing religious groups. Although both Khattab and Basayev are now dead, their legacy haunts Dagestan and Ingushetia, which have become more volatile than even Chechnya – a region governed by pro-Kremlin Ramazan Kadyrov, the son of Akhmad Kadyrov.

Since 2000 Moscow has consistently made moves to expel Wahhabi and Salafi clerics (predominantly of Arab origins) from the North Caucasus. Recent political moves include removing radicals from Shariah villages in Dagestan and forbidding Wahhabism and Salafism by law. Yet Salafism is increasing steadily. It is usual to come across cases of murder and kidnap of bearded men, who at times are picked up by state authorities as terrorists.<sup>7</sup> For example, in the village of Novosaitli there were 10 per cent Salafis in 2001; now there are 50 per cent (*The Economist*, 2011f).

Ordinary Chechens, Dagestanis and Ingush suffer from feelings of injustice and lack of freedom. For a Dagestani Muslim, Russian identity is limited to a note in one's passport and nothing more. The feeling of alienation is manifest in these words of a local: "I can't get a job in Moscow or even a mortgage because I come from Dagestan" (*ibid.*). Russian policy has remained that of brute force and bad money across the North Caucasus. But recently, unlike Putin, Russian President Medvedev has started declaring the importance of engaging in dialogue with the rebels.

Quite similar to in the North Caucasus, Central Asian Islam remained undercover during the Soviet regime. However, after 1991 Central Asian states started hoping for a revival of a religion that they could not practise in the previous 74 years. Clerics from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey started visiting Central Asia to educate people about Islam. At present there are three major radical Islamist movements in Central Asia, namely the Islamic Renaissance Party, Hizb-ut-Tahrir and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. Although their titles reflect the word *Islamic*, these groups are indulging in militant Islamism and blatant acts of terrorism. Post 9/11 most Central Asian Islamists have aligned themselves with the Taliban and Al Qaeda. The IMU poses a grave threat to Tajikistan and the rest of Central Asia, as it employs its guerrilla tactics from bases in Tajikistan. The IMU started in 1998 and has since been expanding and recruiting from Chechnya, Dagestan and Uighur-China. It has nothing to offer its followers except deposition of the current regime in Uzbekistan, and yet it has become a transnational group. In contrast, Hizb-ut-Tahrir aims to unite the whole Muslim world under one caliphate through non-violent means. Like the IMU, HT does not have any refined or fully developed political or economic manifesto/agenda. Despite this, youth are supporting the IMU and HT mainly because they want to register their grievances against the present regime, which perceives all conscious and practising Muslims as terrorists and appears keen on arresting them. Muslim masculinities from marginalized contexts are increasingly getting drawn towards militant Islamist movements. With terrorist networks provided surrogacy services to these movements, there is always a danger of Muslim youth coopting their political agency in local and global-level terrorism.

The porous border between Pakistan and Afghanistan is another region that allows militant and terrorist movement from Helmand to Chaghai, Kandahar to Quetta, Zabul to South Waziristan, Nangarhar to Swat,<sup>8</sup> Bajaur<sup>9</sup> and Mohmand. Suicide bombers trained in South Waziristan are regularly infiltrated into major cities of Pakistan and Afghanistan to commit blatant acts of terrorism against innocent civilians and government agencies. South Waziristan is a tribal district in Pakistan's federally administered tribal areas, and is the first post-9/11 sanctuary that Islamist militants carved for themselves outside Afghanistan. In early 2002 hundreds of militants – Arabs, Central Asians, Chechens, Uighur-Chinese, Afghans and Pakistanis – descended on the main town, Wana. Some moved to urban centres in Punjab and Sindh provinces. Others slipped back into Afghanistan or headed west to Zhob and Quetta and onwards to Iran – but most stayed back and are fighting the Pakistan army. They have recently become more active in Khyber Pukhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. In North Waziristan there are 10,000 militants led by Hafiz Gul Bahadur

– an Afghan civil war veteran who later joined the Taliban (BBC News, 2009a).

Baitullah Mehsud, thought to have masterminded the assassination of Benazir Bhutto in 2007, headed the eastern half of South Waziristan, where he commanded the largest militant group operating inside Pakistan. He set up Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan and fought the Pakistan army until he was killed by the coalition forces in 2009. He had entered into alliances with Wazir commanders who operated in both Pakistan and Afghanistan, constantly destabilizing their respective governments. Baitullah Mehsud was responsible for the Swat insurgency in early 2009 – a situation that later brought the Taliban within 60 miles of Islamabad. The fate of Pakistan's nuclear arsenals became a source of anxiety for global leaders. Since then Pakistan's military has been at war with the militants. An equally formidable commander, Hakimullah Mehsud, who has sent hundreds of suicide bombers all over Pakistan, succeeded Baitullah Mehsud. Hakimullah was able to strike at the very heart of the Pakistan military's general headquarters in Rawalpindi in October 2009. This horrendous attack on Pakistan's key military installation was not to be the last: in May 2011 another costly attack on the Pakistan navy's Mehran base in Karachi was successfully carried out.<sup>10</sup>

The Southeast Asian Islamist scene has its own particularities. It is fairly influenced by hierarchical class dynamics, and directed by power struggles to win visibility in mainstream politics. The Islamist groups from Indonesia are a “counter-authoritarianism” breed. There has been a power struggle among religious groups (Jemaah Islamiyya) trying to supersede others hierarchically. Riots occurred when in 1995–1997 the All Indonesian Association of Islamic Intellectuals made new claims to represent Islam in Indonesia. In 1999–2001 Protestant organizations and Muslims engaged in violence in the religiously divided provinces of Central Sulawesi and Maluku in order to establish themselves as an “authority”. The terrorist bombing campaigns of 2002–2005 were undertaken precisely as the Islamist networks identified with Al Irsyad, Persatuan Islam and Dewan Dakwah Islamiyya Indonesia began to lose the status in national political classes that they had so painstakingly obtained in the 1990s against all odds posed by an authoritarian regime (Sidel, 2006).

Towards the end of the 1980s, Indonesian Islamists exiled in Malaysia formed Jemaah Islamiyya. Other than Indonesia and Malaysia, the network created cells in the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand (not even part of the Muslim world). Jemaah downplayed use of violence as a political tactic, yet it absorbed a number of hardliners as members. At one point Jemaah ruptured due to clashes of opinion among its leadership. A few of its leaders argued against carrying out bomb attacks that caused

more casualties among Muslims than non-Muslims. The group bifurcated into two factions: bombers and preachers.

Jemaah has links with Al Qaeda and a long track record of carrying out bomb attacks in Southeast Asia. In October 2002 it blasted two separate nightclubs in Bali, leaving 202 people dead, out of whom 88 were Australian. In July 2009 Jemaah Islamiyya was declared the prime suspect for bombing the Ritz in Jakarta. Noordin Mohamed (Top), implicated in both the 2003 Marriot and 2004 Australian embassy attacks, was originally a Malaysian national, a member of Jemaah and an accountant by profession; he was killed in 2009. Communication between Al Qaeda and Jemaah goes back more than 15 years – as documented by the BBC News (2010c). The level of commitment with Al Qaeda is thought to be more ideological and inspirational rather than involving organizational logistics of terrorist operations carried out in Southeast Asia.

Quite ordinarily separatist movements can be seen as getting absorbed within the greater Islamist networks claiming to be jihadists. For example, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, a secessionist movement fighting for a Muslim homeland in the southern Philippines, has connections with Jemaah and other Islamist militant groups. Jemaah has been able to sustain and popularize itself among Southeast Asian Muslims by spreading anti-West and anti-Zionist propaganda suggesting that US policies are quintessentially “anti-Muslims/anti-Islam”.

### *Post-institutional Islamism: Phenomenon of the new preachers and digital jihad*

Militant-jihadist Islamism and terrorism are no longer restricted to geographical locations but also have a virtual and digital presence. In post-colonial times Muslim societies have mostly had two choices: become Western or Islamist. Both options are alien to the present Muslim youth, who want a third option, i.e. some form that could appear and seem Western but also make reference to their Muslim identity. Since 9/11 independent preachers (not Islamic scholars) have been providing this “safe religiosity”, entailing a non-confrontational approach to state and society. These Muslim preachers are speaking a language that is more spiritual than dogmatic. Influenced by Wahhabi and Salafi schools, at times their messages can be quite essential and literal. Sermons delivered by these post-institutional, tech-savvy Islamists are easily accessible on YouTube. This “virtual political space” and the “Facebookyin”, hip and wired Islamists, Emerson warned, “have a huge potential for political eruptions” (Springborg, 2009: 6).

Post-institutional radical Islamism can lead to terrorism. Young Islamists may go on a mission independently. Jamaat al-Islamiyya in Egypt ad-



mitted that “youth activists . . . lacking sufficient understanding of Islam” were behind terrorist attacks during the 1990s. “As long as the causes of radicalism exist, neo-terrorism will continue its ascent and will remain impossible to control and monitor using security measures” (Houdaiby, 2009: 50). The Cairo attack of 2005 was masterminded by a third generation of Islamists in Egypt – having no links to any of the Islamist groups from the 1950s, 1970s and 1980s, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, Jamaat al-Islamiyya or Jamaat al-Jihad. This speaks volumes regarding not just the presence of regressive radicalism among Muslim youth, but also the failure of governance structures and Islamic institutions in their countries. The hyperactive intelligence and security agencies have made it difficult for the terrorist underworld to carry out organized crimes. In such circumstances, solo or semi-independent terrorists like Faisal Shahzad, the Times Square bomb plotter, are surfacing to carry out terrorism while claiming to serve ideological missions.

Is it common for Muslims to visit cyber Islamist environments,<sup>11</sup> and if so to what degree and for what purpose (Bunt, 2003)? Religious information provided on the net is diverse. It is important to know how religious concepts are uploaded, to what purpose and to whom these resources are available. Internet access in the Middle East is low, with the highest in the United Arab Emirates at 36.79 per cent and the lowest in Palestine, standing at zero. Saudi Arabia has 2.50 per cent and Iran 0.63 per cent (Roversi, 2008: 98). Also, a gender digital divide is quite prominent in the Muslim world, with only 4 per cent of users being Arab women. Even if not affordable for the masses through PCs and MacBooks, the internet is a solicited facility in public spaces. Conventional ideas and thoughts are often reproduced and made readily accessible to Muslim youth via the internet.

Information available in the virtual sphere of religion is diverse. For example, on the question of jihad a few websites provide exact Quranic references, while others are merely rhetorical. The flip side of this digitization of information is that a number of self-styled Islamic scholars have emerged online, declaring *fatwas* – upsetting accredited Islamic religious authorities. Digital spaces are being used mainly for two purposes: jihad and *fatwa*. Islamist groups and even individual surfers have promoted the cause of Chechens, Afghans, Kashmiris and Palestinians in the name of jihad. After Russian authorities killed Khattab, a biography lauding him as a “martyr” appeared on myislam.info and islammyway.com. The account resonated with classical Islamic heroic accounts of role models and heroes, and even events from the life of Prophet Muhammad himself (Bunt, 2003: 186). Jihad is discussed in chatrooms, and at times contributors to discussion forums regarding Islam have political names, such as “Hizbulla4life” (ibid.).



After 9/11 Bin Laden's messages and videos kept appearing on secret websites whose origins could not be detected. This shows that terrorists are skilled in handling complex technologies for web traffic. Al Qaeda has used information technology to arrange logistics for its operations by e-mailing encrypted messages. Funds were raised online, and encrypted spaces for money transfers and credit card transactions were provided online. Al Qaeda is known to tailor its online messages in such a way that something is conveyed to both Muslim and non-Muslim viewers simultaneously (Roversi, 2008: 102–103). Psychological terrorism is being spread via the internet. For example, US citizen Nick Berg's execution video was uploaded on the net by terrorists who had kidnapped Berg and decapitated him on 11 May 2004 (*ibid.*).

Islamist hackers target websites promoting Zionist agendas. E-jihad is more effective in a number of ways. "Jihadist activity can be a low level hacking or cracking by affiliates or supporters of an organisation or perspective: it could be major disruptive activities such as attacking internet infrastructures or compromising major servers; it could be through a rapid dissemination of propaganda" (Bunt, 2003: 12), for example uploading video footage of a Palestinian victim and inciting violence across the Muslim world. The erroneous Western perception that Muslims are "technologically backward" has often prevented major corporations and organizations from creating safeguards against possible "hacktivism" – the convergence of hacking and activism, and a form of civil disobedience in cyberspace (*ibid.*: 37). The virus "Brain" (assumed to be the first in this realm) was a Pakistani product developed by Basit and Amjad Alvi from Lahore. Later the brothers started running Pakistan's largest internet service provider (ISP), Brain.net.pk. As an ISP company, knowledge of potential intrusion techniques was invaluable to them. Coincidentally the Taliban used it as the ISP for their website (*ibid.*: 39–40).

## Nexus between gender and militant-jihadist Islamism

Behaviours that are sociologically, politically and economically motivated may often be justified by using truncated versions of biology. For example, men are assumed to be predatory in nature on grounds of testosterone. Biological determinism maintains that men are naturally inclined towards war. However, if men were so naturally inclined to become warriors, history would never have recorded conscription around the globe.<sup>12</sup> Empirical evidence provided in this book shows that war is foisted upon men, and objectives of war are presented to men at the interface of their gender identity and biological sex. Religion is provided as an intangible

intoxicant to men, who may otherwise show their fear or even weep in pain and misery on the battlefield surrounded by death. Jews, Christians and Muslims fight for “martyrdom” – a notion existing as a divine decree in monotheistic religions. Japanese soldiers in the Second World War fought fiercely in part because of their belief in reincarnation. In existing literature, mostly it is religion that has been identified as a motivating force convincing men to go to war. Notwithstanding, here it will be argued that the very expression of “religiosity” among men is an act of gender *performativity* that they indulge in primarily to serve their masculinity. It is pertinent to remember that the religious sphere has always offered men far superior statuses than it has ever contemplated offering to women. Women as leaders of religious congregations and institutions have long remained a raw nerve for male religious scholars. Thus it is not unusual for men to use religious symbolism to serve their gender/manly ego.<sup>13</sup> Religious domains have served and glorified men since ancient times. Men tend to play within the religious sphere as if they were on a home pitch. As Goldstein (2003: 301) notes, “male soldiers can better motivate themselves for combat if they can compartmentalize combat in their belief systems and identities. They can endure, and commit terrible acts, because the context is exceptional and temporary.” Religion can be used as a tool to live up to certain gender expectations associated with bravery, ego, etc. The Nazis honoured the dead by pushing death aside: the dead were glorified as if they had achieved some heroic eternity. Christian tradition and elements of faith had been perverted in Nazification. Hitler called the blood of those who were killed for his movement “baptismal water of the Reich” (Reichel, 1999: 160). It is not only through religion that heroism is granted to warrior men: it is also within the contexts of local and tribal customary codes of conduct and informal socio-political institutional arrangements that men going to war are glorified. Muslim societies that are already quite traditional are no different. Additionally, one must remember that heroes in commercial cinema are mostly action heroes, and such media depiction of an ideal man, a hero, gets imitated by youth.

Killing in war does not come naturally for either gender, and cultural norms often shape men, women and children to the needs of the war system (Goldstein, 2003: 301). War roles authenticate the cultural and psychological understanding of existing gender roles and constructions. Therefore women in a war setting mostly appear as nurses, mothers, prostitutes, camp followers, rape victims and even peace activists (at times they are absorbed as warriors, as is the case of Muslim women suicide bombers or Sri Lankan Tamil rebels). By participating in war, men aim to achieve autonomy – something that in developing countries is otherwise particularly hard to achieve. The chance to break away from one’s

parents, most particularly mothers, and fight independently like an adult also seems appealing to many men.

The test of manliness lies in a man's motivation to fight, and feminine reinforcement of soldierly masculinity is quite visible within private and public spaces. Victory is often portrayed in art as a female who caresses the soul of a soldier as he is carried away by death. A painting done in 1922, and now dominating the stairway of Harvard's main library, shows a man's return to an "appreciative" and "heavenly" female company at the end of the war (ibid.: 302). Likewise, ordinarily it is imagined that militant-jihadist Islamists fantasize about *houris* (heavenly feminine creatures) on the pathway to martyrdom. The "feminine" is brought in as a reinforcement of a soldier's militarized, warrior-like "masculinity". Men are convinced into believing that any man who goes to war and dies a soldier's death is an ideal man, a "hero" among men, and most particularly in the sight of women.

Not males but men (the way societies construct them) are predisposed to militancy and terrorism, and this needs to be stopped. I argue that two types of contexts can be found affecting production of masculinities in the Muslim world. With failing socio-economic and political institutions, many Muslim countries have become premises for protests. Men, and at times women, can be seen protesting on roads for various reasons. There is an element of widespread intractable fury against forces of imperialism, capitalism and globalism, Zionism and domestic authoritarianism. Emerging from this marginalized context, the hegemonic masculinity among Muslims is now mainly *aggressive*, i.e. revengeful and reactionary. Informal customary codes of conduct quite often approve of, and even prescribe, men adopting this behaviour. The second most visible form of masculinity among Muslim populations is *emasculated masculinity* – a product of peripatetic marginalized contexts within which Muslim men continue to struggle globally subsequent to their racial vilification. These are the disadvantaged, dispossessed and abused men, most particularly those who were or continue to be directly affected by post-9/11 strategies and policies of counterterrorism. Examples are "the missing people" who were kidnapped and detained by national governments and intelligence agencies and had/have no recourse to law, or the men of Abu Gharaib who were sexually abused. Emasculated men can join the ranks of aggressive masculinity, acting in either subordinate or complicit roles. The two masculinities generate a protest context in reaction to their marginalized life experiences, and may be understood as *protest masculinities*, i.e. a form of gender practice and performativity that has become a *collective masculinity* of the Muslim population, both in and outside the Muslim world. It is critical to recognize that protest masculinities are vulnerable to influences emerging from the global terrorist networks. At

times the terrorist underworld feeds into genuine political grievances – recruiting Muslim rebels with a cause to conduct acts of blatant terror. On other occasions, terrorists make promises to provide dignity and honour for emasculated Muslim men while igniting ego issues – encouraging men to become impetuously vengeful. The political *agency* of this young social capital is being increasingly coopted by terrorist agendas, and their collective actions are not leading to progress or advancement in their wider societies but only causing violence and destruction. Current trends in practices of Muslim masculinities have to be urgently intercepted through governance structures, and the nexus between gender and militant-jihadist Islamism, as well as terrorism, has to be mainstreamed in processes of counterterrorism. I argue that it is high time global society starts treating this siphoning of social capital by terrorist networks as far greater a tragedy and catastrophe than 9/11 on its own.

## Gender and policy matters

An imprisoned leader of Jamaat al-Islamiyya facing a death sentence said:

I was an A [grade] student, ever since I was a freshman . . . No one [came] to ask me about my cause; where do I come from and why am I going down this road . . . Had the regime adopted dialogue since the beginning, all problems and violence would not have taken place. (Houdaiby, 2009: 39)

When legislative, executive and judicial systems are authoritarian or work inefficiently and inefficaciously, and when national leadership lacks vision, populations often subscribe to deceptive ideas for development and self-actualization. Citizens become easy prey for thugs such as self-styled saints selling deception in the garb of faith. Public areas within local religious spheres, such as shrines, mosques and madrassahs, begin serving as hideouts for terrorists. Violating places of worship invites severe reaction from ordinary people. For example, in 2007 the militant tactics employed by the Red Mosque seminary students in Islamabad deeply annoyed local residents. Parallel to this, an attack on the seminary by the Pakistan military was also condemned and perceived as war against Islam, with the Musharraf administration acting as a proxy for the United States. The civilian population overlooked the fact that the product coming out of the Red Mosque was not Pakistani *per se*, but a result of terrorist dictation. The military attack was perceived as an assault on a religious institution, and the injuries caused to seminary students led to immediate public condemnation. This was not the first time this had

happened. On another occasion, Hosni Mubarak's troops were perceived in a similar vein as the Egyptian government tried to seize Jamaat al-Islamiyya members hiding in a mosque.

Post 9/11, Muslims all over the world – including the diaspora – have been arguing that Islam is under attack. Western governments have channelled huge sums into preventing terrorism by tackling radicalization of individuals in Muslim societies. Policy processes need to wean away from conventional wisdom that counts poverty and madrassah education as primary causes of the rise in radical and militant Islamism. The objective of deradicalization cannot be achieved unless policies engage with the basic “persons”, i.e. individuals who are or may become “radicals”, “jihadists”, “militants” or even terrorists in future. I argue that individual and collective living has to be understood holistically and viewed from a gender perspective. Cultures present certain gender ideals, at times borrowing from tradition, local customs or religion, and individuals make efforts to live up to those ideals. For example, men on religious, nationalistic and tribal missions idealize martyrdom as a glorious honour that one can achieve. Islamic sacred texts and Muslim cultures are no different. However, the requirement is to understand what makes the ideal of achieving martyrdom more “manly” and “heroic” than, for example, reallocating all one's savings for purposes of charity – another equally valid religious ideal or value. It is no exaggeration to state that when individuals make efforts to achieve life ideals, gender performances are more at play than plain religion. This is what makes martyrdom exclusively attractive among other religious and cultural ideals. Therefore addressing gender, most particularly masculinities, becomes a basic requirement for successful counterterrorism strategizing.

Details regarding policies of counterterrorism are provided in the next chapter. However, it is significant to mention here a few important elements. One needs to remember that we are living in a world where there is a global financial crisis and a daunting number of political conflicts that involve Muslim populations. The West needs policies and strategies that take account of the national and regional contexts within which radicalism and militant Islamism gain momentum. The United States is vocal about introducing democratic and human rights principles and rule of law in Muslim countries. In my view, the success of such policies is dependent on engaging with local formal and informal institutional mechanisms and customary codes of conduct. After all, societal arrangements that contribute to shaping individual and collective behaviours at household, community, national and global levels are quite useful for understanding trajectories adopted by people.

With more than 2 million Muslims in Britain, the policy-makers are indeed cautious – to the extent of being obviously apologetic, as if the

country is focused on proving that it has no anti-Islamic/Muslim agenda. Most of the UK's Muslim diaspora belong to societies where gender-typified behaviour is a cultural norm: cultures where violent attitudes among men are silently ignored (and at times encouraged), and domestically abused women are advised to tolerate bad behaviour. Policy-makers must not brush this under the carpet in their attempt to remain politically correct. However, the ability to distinguish between Islamic teachings and traditional/tribal as well as contemporary Muslim practices must be critically taken into consideration. A display of bravery by fearlessly facing death while aspiring to rise again as a martyr is an ideal presented within both "Islamic" and tribal/custom-mediated masculinity. This urge to act chivalrously leads ordinary Muslim men to participate in jihadist combat without realizing their vulnerabilities within the political domains of the terrorist underworld that regularly employs religious pretext and symbolism to unleash indiscriminate violence against innocent civilians. So far, this critical link has not been addressed in global policies of counterterrorism.

A point to consider is that misguided Islamists are not undefeatable. Islamist groups have political as well as ideological flaws, and their leadership does not always have a hypnotic effect. Most jihadist leaders are not even charismatic, and their practices are not foolproof. Also in some cases Islamists have committed mistakes, political blunders that have led to their depopularization within those very communities that were supportive of them in the beginning. For example, jihadists seized Nahr-Al-Barad refugee camp in 2007 and the entire Lebanese population backed the military's sustained effort to conquer them (Springborg, 2009: 5–7). This is very similar to what recently happened in Swat. Pakistanis no longer regard the Taliban as heroes, but as terrorists – a perceptual change attributable to the political blunders the Taliban committed in Swat. The exodus of 3.5 million internally displaced people from Swat clearly shows the lack of a popular support base for the Taliban among locals. Knowing this must certainly ease pressure on policy-makers interested in deradicalization-related interventions. However, policy-makers need to remain connected with the reality: the combination of internal and external forces that mobilizes Muslims. Politics mobilizes while gender roles justify (certain actions). Issues emerging at the interface of politics and gender, most particularly masculinities, must be addressed in counterterrorism interventions if these are to be comprehensive.

For centuries men (although not all) have abused women psychologically, emotionally and physically. It is noted as "harassment", when in reality it was and remains inter-gender "terrorism". As pointed out earlier, many societies around the world accept such gendered living as a social norm. Girls are programmed at a very tender age to accept and live in a

state of terror with an omnipresent possibility of being violated in one way or another. The phrase “Eve-teasing” does not have horrific connotations, as the effect of fear, terror, insecurity and worthlessness that it generates in women is diluted by use of the word “teasing”, when in reality it is “terrorizing”. Since 11 September the whole global community is living in a state of terror, i.e. basically living like women. One should not be surprised if some male aggressors translate their actions into militancy and terrorism. Mothers nurture future generations, offering male children privileges while allowing them to become violent. In Muslim societies, if one is not dominating or aggressive enough, one is not man enough.

## Conclusion

Salafism’s and Wahhabism’s primary achievement in our times is a systematic and systemic cultivation of regressive radicalism and literalism among Muslims. Across the world Muslims appear disoriented at the interface of Saudi ideological imperialism and Western globalism. Political leadership in Muslim countries lacks originality of thought and vision. This chapter explained how certain factors, including oppressive, autocratic and dictatorial governance systems, made Muslim populations susceptible to influences of ideological Islamism. In addition, misleading summary typifications and dramatization of Islamic civilization in Western media and scholarship have often caused resentment among Muslim communities; they then react and become inclined towards Islamism as an alternative to *zeitgeists* emerging from the West.

This chapter illustrated the complexity of the global jihadist movement (militant-jihadist Islamism) and terrorist networks by spelling out differences in purposes of the two trends. Although both draw upon religious symbolism, the first is political (whether one agrees with the agenda and means for bringing about change or not), and the second is criminal in intent. A warning is given regarding how terrorist networks have been acting as surrogates for national liberation and anti-authoritarian movements across MENA, Central Asia and Pakistan. Militant Islamists are highly susceptible to being subsumed into terrorist networks, or else allowing cooption of their political agency by criminal schemes. We now know that financing of terrorism, border crossing and settling is not coincidental but is a strategy spreading over three decades. In addition, electronic spaces that were left ungoverned allowed a number of self-styled Islamist/jihadist leaders to emerge: digital jihad is now a cyberspace reality, as has been recorded here.

Without going into much detail (reserved for Parts II and III), this chapter undertook the important task of introducing “gender” as a foun-



dational or basic institutional framework that provides meaning to what and how individuals perform. Underlying sociological factors have a direct impact on political living and must be recognized as valuable pointers in the fight against terror. Complex societal structures, particularly informal institutional arrangements and sociological processes, impact political outcomes in a formal fashion. Behaviours that are treated as criminal in the global arena may simultaneously prevail as social norms (for both right and wrong reasons) in traditional/transitional societies. The challenge is to work across these dichotomous socio-political systems and strategize new directions of progress by engaging with institutional mechanisms (such as gender) and practices (of masculinity and femininity) prevalent in Muslim societies. In the Muslim world the local practices of masculinity, primarily mediated by both religion and tribal codes of conduct, are such that “honourable” men are assumed to have a “warrior” identity – if not literal, at least metaphorical. Post-9/11 Muslim populations have become protest oriented and vengeful. This book presents a strong case for studying a very critical and so far neglected nexus between gender and militant-jihadist Islamism and terrorism.

## Notes

1. Although the Western perception of jihad is also influenced by the eighth-century Moorish conquest of Spain and the thirteenth- to twentieth-century rule of the Ottoman Empire.
2. In 1988 Ali Belhadj organized a demonstration of 20,000 Islamist supporters, who were stopped by the military that effectively ran the regime. In the ensuing confrontation, the army shot dead 50 demonstrators and Algeria's *intifada* began.
3. Ideologically, Muslim Brotherhood members are a mix of Salafi, Wahhabi, Azhari, Tablighi, Ikhwani and Qutbis.
4. Associating the Taliban with either Islam, Islamic or Islamism is incorrect. The Taliban are terrorists who were created by American and Pakistani intelligence agencies, i.e. the CIA and ISI, respectively.
5. However, in 2008 the Muslim Brotherhood faced authoritarian suppression and failed to win even a single seat.
6. In 1934 Chechnya and Ingushetia were merged to form the Chechen-Ingush Soviet Socialist Republic.
7. Police and security services in Dagestan are answerable to Moscow.
8. Baitullah Mehsud (now dead) and Hakimullah Mehsud led Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, which, along with TNSM (Dir), is behind terrorism in and around Swat Valley. Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan/TNSM are responsible for kidnappings, planning political assassinations, suicide bombings and attacks on Pakistani armed forces and their facilities all over the country.
9. Analysts had long suspected Pakistan's Bajaur tribal region to be the hideout of Osama Bin Laden, who was finally found and killed in Abbottabad. Ayman al-Zawahiri and other top Al Qaeda leaders are also suspected to be in and around Bajaur.



10. Ilyas Kashmiri is thought to have masterminded the attack. The official inquiry is under way, while Kashmiri has reportedly been killed in a US drone strike in South Waziristan, Pakistan, on 4 June 2011.
11. Cyber Islam(ist) environments have the potential to transform aspects of religious understanding and expression within Muslim contexts and the power to enable elements within Muslim populations to enter into dialogue with each other. It is important to note the complex patterns of access, dialogue, networking and application of the internet by Muslims (see Bunt, 2003: 4).
12. For an extensive understanding of this issue, please refer to Goldstein (2003). Militarized masculinity and the feminine reinforcement of the same are explained in detail in his book.
13. Castelli (2001) extensively records existing biases towards the female gender, and the allocated advantaged position of men within the religious sphere.

## 2

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## Terrorism and counterterrorism: An overview of current strategies

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But your god-self dwells not alone in your being.  
Much in you is still man, and much in you is not yet man  
But a shapeless pigmy that walks asleep in the mist searching for  
its own awakening.  
And of the man in you would I now speak  
For it is he and not your god-self nor the pigmy in the mist that knows  
crime and the punishment of crime

Kahlil Gibran in *The Prophet*

Terrorism is dramatic, and it is surprising. It takes place “on a stage” with an audience in mind. Unlike guerrilla warfare, an act of terror has nominal military value and mainly aims at “sending a message” to the target audience. Delivering a message in a “shocking”, “sensational” and “horrific” manner is meant to demand a change for which terrorists otherwise lack political cogency. Sudden and deeply distressing acts of extra-normal violence whenever committed affect emotions, motives, objective reasoning, perceptions and ultimately behaviour in the target population (Gerwehr and Hubbard, 2007). In *The Wretched of the Earth* when Fanon (2004) argued in favour of colonized people using violence to meet personhood and change social order, he crafted an intellectually, morally and emotionally complex picture of violence. Individual violence can be a cleansing force that frees natives from their inferiority complex, despair and inaction – it makes them fearless, and restores their self-respect. This raises questions as to the moral justification of political violence.

Even if the Bush administration is accused of ignoring intelligence reports that warned of 11 September 2001, assuming a deliberate failure of US security forces in obstructing Al Qaeda on 9/11 is insipid. Recognizing difficulties in pre-empting terrorist strikes, given the nature of acts of terror as explained before, might be closer to reality. After all, shock and surprise are quintessential elements in acts of terror, and these are what terrorists achieved on that merciless day of 11 September 2001. However, must this imply counterterrorism measures become as wicked as terrorism itself? Quite ironically, counterterrorist forces can be as virulent in their vigilance as the terrorists themselves (Berger, 1995: 18).

The United States has a history of dealing with terrorism for two centuries prior to 9/11, and France for about a century. Nonetheless, neither the United States nor Europe was prepared for 9/11, soon after which commitment to fight international terrorism was vocalized by UN member states. This chapter mainly illuminates causes of terrorism and presents an overview of the current counterterrorism strategies. The aim is to assess the extent to which present strategies, particularly those emerging from the United States, the UK and Japan, address or rectify militant and violent extremism and acts of terror. Towards this end some basic information regarding the UN approach to terrorism has been provided.

## Shaping of a terrorist

If one looks at the political and even social movements of activism around the world, one realizes that global youth are becoming militant. This is our current reality, where there is an obvious momentum to create an alternative political culture. Young racists and anti-racist activists can be found confronting each other. Young environmentalist and animal rights groups are using violent means to convey “moral courage” against giant companies. Everyone seems to be putting “deeds” before “words”. Such practices are even changing the scene in places like Sweden, which has traditionally had a non-violent political culture.

Currently, those who attacked the World Trade Center, the 7/7 London bombers, Al Qaeda, the Taliban, Palestinian and Kashmiri nationalists, trigger-happy thugs, national-level insurgents against establishments and political networks demanding a caliphate/imposition of Shariah are all being grouped together loosely as “terrorists”. In its recent publications, the UK Home Office repeatedly mentions Islam as not having anything to do with terrorism, blaming terrorists for wrongly attributing their actions to Islam. Other global leaders, including President Barack Hussein Obama, have voiced a similar opinion. This calls into question an inces-

sant prefixing of the word “Islam” and its derivatives with terrorist networks such as Al Qaeda and the Taliban, most particularly by the global media. Is one to define Islam in the way it is defined by criminal and thuggish terrorist networks? If terrorists are wrongly claiming their actions to be in the name of Islam, how ridiculous can it become to continue extracting titles for them from Islam? Al Qaeda, the Taliban and similar groups deserve only one title, plain and representative of their deeds: *terrorists*. This negligent prefixing of Islamic derivatives for Al Qaeda and the Taliban has confused Muslim youth into assuming the deeds of these terrorist networks are Islamic or Islamist. What I state here is fairly uncomplicated. Just imagine reading a sentence: *A black man went into a bakery and bought some doughnuts with his black hands*. To all non-white people (and even sensitive Caucasians), black is the word that will continue blipping for a while. They would hardly notice what the man bought. The racist tone of the sentence will remain in their memory. Now imagine a news story: *Islamic [or Islamist] terrorists kidnapped a diplomat this evening. These Islamic terrorists have connections all over the Islamic world*. How should followers of Islam respond to this?

A terrorist’s *becoming* has always intrigued researchers. Sageman (2009: 3–6) challenges the view that terrorists are essentially bad guys from the start by elaborating on Omar Saeed Sheikh, the London School of Economics student who masterminded *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl’s murder. Sheikh had received a bravery commendation from London Underground after he jumped on the track in front of an oncoming train to save another commuter from an accident.

Sageman shares three versions of Sheikh’s persona. According to family, friends and tutors, Omar was “the kindest, most gentle person you could meet”, “the model of a London public schoolboy, a keen, courteous student heading for university”, “the premier league of students . . . bright boy, popular with his peers and very personable”, “never being particularly religious, or politically motivated”, “the sort of a boy you would want your sister to marry”. The second and third versions, also narrated by friends, acquaintances and Sheikh himself, point towards certain issues that can prove to be useful in understanding the topic at hand – the critical nexus between gender, militant-jihadist Islamism and terrorism. “When [Sheikh] was eight, he punched a teacher called Mr. Burns and knocked him to the floor. He was a full grown man, and this was an eight year old boy.” Sheikh told Peter Gee about growing up in England facing racism in the playground, with his peer group calling him a “Paki bastard”. Here, Sageman immediately cautions against generalizing racism-terrorism arguments, on grounds that there are countless immigrants who tolerate racism – but do not opt for terrorism. Peter Gee said that Sheikh

was not “averse to playing to the gallery. Quite a lot of it with Omar is *macho bravado*” (ibid.). Sheikh was known to have a “twin obsession” with “Islam and body-building”. An “arm wrestler”, he was obsessed about his physique and boasted to his English friends that he was a kick-boxing champion of Pakistan. Others thought Sheikh had a “fantasy” that he at times narrated (ibid.). His body lost out once he started training as a militant. Yet he did not give up, and noted in his diary, “I remained adamant and resumed training after a hiatus of 10 days” (ibid.: 9). Sheikh started out by supporting the Bosnian cause, but ended up becoming a terrorist.

What motivates a terrorist to perpetuate such horrific acts? In this regard Reich’s (1998) work on origins of terrorism and Horgan’s (2008) analysis of the psychology of terrorism are considered important contributions in the field. Across Europe, the Middle East and South Asia, Horgan collected data from militants, extremists, radicals and at least 29 former terrorists. He concludes that terrorism is a complex psychosocial process having an impact on the minds of terrorists as they cross through a number of stages, from *becoming* involved to *being* involved to finally *disengaging* but not *deradicalizing*. Quite often an argument is made favouring greater consideration for the “disengagement phase” and a clearer role for psychological research in the field of counterterrorism.

In the aftermath of 11 September 2001, President Bush remarked, “they hate our values” – where “they” implied terrorists acting in the name of Islam. Psychologists who study emotions insist on distinguishing hate from anger, with both generating quite different responses. Anger leads to reaction, probably aggression. Hate leads to withdrawal, avoidance and indifference towards the object of hatred. In contrast, an angry man can become blind to his self-interest and proceed to take action while his anger makes him conquer fear. With the current escalated rates of suicide bombings, the issue has to be understood as that of anger rather than of hate.

Terrorists being poverty-stricken, having severe problems regarding self-actualization or being psychopathic are proven wrong by the case of Atta Muhammad, who completed his education in Germany and even submitted a well-received thesis on “Architecture of Aleppo”. Many terrorists are neither poor nor underachievers; in fact they are educated, with average or above-average job prospects. Another prevailing thesis is that group frustration and insults often cause destructive behaviour in individuals. Fair (quoted in Temple-Raston, 2010) informs us about individuals perceiving religious movements as “chic” and “cool”, and citing motorcycles, guns and access to women as their top three answers regarding reasons drawing them to jihad. Religious motivation is often rated quite low. In order to engage with the digital generation, militant recruit-

ing bodies are using advanced technologies, projecting agendas not only territorially and temporally but also in the realm of cognition through the internet. The web provides opportunities to change real identities and personalities and interact with a larger number of people without being discovered. Youth recruiting themselves through cyber tech find this useful. Colleen LaRose, with a user ID of “Jihad Jane”, is an important example (ibid.).

Another understanding is that terrorists are pathologically or psychiatrically sick and draw pleasure from other people’s pain. But accuracy, vigilance and coordinated effort towards an objective are difficult to achieve for a diseased mind – things that terrorists around us accomplish successfully every other day. Can these masterminds be treated as psychiatric patients? In his research, Major-General Arjun Ray (1997: 12, 33) from the Indian Armed Forces presents interesting data on 400 Muslim Kashmiri militants who were psychoanalysed and tested for levels of fanaticism. According to the findings, 44.5 per cent of the militants had picked up guns due to “coercion”, while 45.5 per cent attributed their behaviour to economic deprivation, hurt and alienation and 10.0 per cent argued that it was in defence of their religion. To put it differently, in a batch that apparently was acting in the name of Islam, 90 per cent of militants had no engagement with religion. Ray records that all these captured militants finally turned out to be non-fanatic: 75 per cent were open to change, 80 per cent were found “consistent” in their behaviour, 75 per cent were declared “sensitive” and 90 per cent did not hold any peculiar personalized view of the world. Ray concludes that the Kashmiri militants are educated, and rebellion is their teacher. It is “alienation” that educates man – even if literacy is absent. He knows that his status quo needs to be changed, and therefore he takes action with whatever is available. According to Ray, militants are genuine and normal, certainly not psychopathic or criminal, but they have their own psyche and logic, such as “I kill, therefore I am”, “Listen to me, I have a problem” or “Look what I can do!” It is the propaganda of the deed, its romanticism, the chance of making headlines – quite similar to what Che Guevara believed: “create revolutionary situations, rather than waiting for them” (ibid.: 22).

There are at least two reasons that establish the need to involve more psychologists in the analysis of terrorism – which has largely become restricted to politics. First, the aim of terrorism is clearly psychological warfare, and second, it is subjectively interpreted values and beliefs that lead to terrorist activities. There are a number of social and psychological issues that contribute to this situation. It is “egotistical” and “fraternal” deprivation enhanced by feelings of the whole group’s disadvantaged position that cause terrorism, rather than issues such as lack of education

or wealth (Moghaddam, 2007). Through his *staircase floor* approach, Moghaddam explains the pathway to terrorism in a systematic manner. Like others, he argues that at the foundational level terrorist choices are not justified by perceptions of fairness or poverty. Usually poor people are content, happy and in fact really very docile – as mostly observed by development professionals across the developing world. People at the grassroots learn to smile and go on with their routine hardships. Individuals *drifting* towards terrorism (i.e. starting as radicals in thought and joining Islamist movements before getting subsumed into criminal networks such as Al Qaeda) are experiencing “displaced aggression” and are interested in testing out possibilities for personal mobility and avenues for participating in decision-making. Expanding on Moghaddam’s analysis, a sociological dimension of the issue is upheld in this book, and it is argued that terrorism and militant-jihadist Islamism cannot be restricted to an individual’s subjective interpretations of values and beliefs but are also a result of formal/informal societal structures, institutions and systems – particularly and most critically, *gender*.

Bandyopadhyay and Younas (2009) argue that domestic or transnational terrorism is not a direct result of poverty and lack of education. All specifications show that “rule of law” reduces terrorism, be it through functioning of mature democratic institutions or authoritarian regimes. Their study shows that despite its rapid growth in comparison to transnational terrorism, governments neglect domestic terrorism. If terrorism implies fighting non-combatants and killing in cold blood then anyone may have terrorist tendencies. In democratic and non-democratic settings such acts are often committed by law enforcement agencies. Under law, when the orders are “to kill”, law enforcers get transformed into killers, even of civilians. Killing is not difficult, and most people can and will kill in certain situations. In cases of self-defence, one can kill almost reflexively – and be protected by law. It is only the framework, or the context, that turns one into an acceptable or an unacceptable killer. When one kills in the name of law, it is accepted. When one kills in the name of a political agenda, the action is unacceptable to those not part of the agenda but acceptable for those who are a party to it. Similarly, customary codes of conduct, gender expectations and institutional arrangements authorize certain practices of masculinity that generally predispose men to be aggressive and vengeful if faced with honour-related questions – an issue highlighted through this book.

A recurrent theme appearing in discussions on post-9/11 politics is that religion causes terrorism. In my opinion the nexus between religion and terrorism is not as strong as is often projected. One has seen the rise of radical socialist groups with purely secular roots, for example the Red Brigade in Italy, Baader Meinhof in Germany, the Shinning Path in Peru,

the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka and even atheistic communism spreading terrorism (McCauley, 2007: 19). Notwithstanding, religion has a unique ability to serve people's identity needs, and therefore those who feel threatened may become defensive about their religion. Terrorists present tag-lines, such as "back to our roots" or revival of a caliphate similar to the Ottoman and Umayyad (Moghaddam, 2006), etc., as an "authentic" identity to Muslim populations that the latter find quite engaging.

A few studies indicate that group honour also convinces individuals to adopt trajectories towards terrorism. Group affiliations serve as a means for validating one's thinking as an individual feeling that many share one's values. Immortality arises from being part of a group. A participant lives up to the norms and contributes to the group in life and death. For terrorists who are educated, the power of an idea itself may become more convincing than any group identity. In that sense a particular ideology or way of seeing things becomes important. According to the theory of *social comparison*, there is always competition for status in which no one wants to fall behind in supporting the direction favoured by the group (McCauley, 2007: 22). Certain activities are kept optional and, if done, elevate an individual *par excellence*, granting him a very high status among other group members. It is almost like becoming a gold medallist, generating in others a form of status envy. In the realms of militant and jihadist Islamism, those who offer themselves for suicide missions usually achieve this status. Their colleagues glorify them by addressing them as *al-shahid-al-hai'* (the living martyr) – a lofty status in religious, nationalistic and tribal discourses. Listening to such lauding certainly boosts one's ego – transforming one into a hero. As one gets deeper and deeper into the group and rises up, the options to steer out or away from the group diminish. In other words, the status comes at a cost: there are absolutely no exits available. Collective mobilization of the group continues to provide a sense of direction and purpose to individuals.

Group cohesiveness simultaneously convinces vulnerable youth to focus on the in-group as "us" and everyone else, including their own societies, communities and future targets, as the out-group, "them", with a clear belief that it is "us" who are morally engaged and have a "moral advantage" while everyone else is morally disengaged and has a "moral disadvantage", and therefore is liable to be killed. Terrorists undergo a whole perceptual transformation gradually, all the way imagining themselves as heading towards martyrdom. Usually these recruits are nurtured on principles of isolation, secrecy, in-group affiliation and fear. Their closest family members remain mostly unaware of their agenda (Moghaddam, 2007: 72–77). Collective fusion or identity of a militant group can be assumed to centre around three fundamentals: ideology, cultural praxis and finally confrontation (Peterson, 2001). Ritual confrontation leads to a



mentality of embattlement, creating a vision of a divided world. Everyday challenges of militant groups lead to further radicalization and in-group cohesiveness, in the form of being against the out-group. Militancy requires secrecy, and that is maintained through basic solidarity and comradeship – *being together*.

Horgan (2008) argued that only a few belonging to radical groups (or in my view regressive-radical groups) actually opt for terrorism. He builds a case in favour of understanding the underlying processes of radicalization. There is a difference between disengagement and deradicalization: the former is a behavioural change and latter a cognitive rerouting. The one who disengages does not necessarily deradicalize. However, this important distinction is ignored in official policy and strategy papers; for example, the UK's *Prevent: A Communications Guide* (RICU, 2010) offers disengagement as a useful substitute for deradicalization, having a wider, more inclusive and less contentious standing. Youth existing on the fringes of decision-making processes use opportunities provided by Islamist and terrorist networks as side-door entries into politics. Later, individuals may quit when feelings of disillusionment set in or they realize the overall infeasibility of the group's political agenda. At times a clash between group and family responsibilities makes individuals succumb to pressures and become part of terrorist groups employing violent methods that allow individuals to vent out frustrations. These findings are further validated in Part III by empirical evidence from Pakistan, as the issue of militant Islamism and terrorism is critically evaluated from a gender perspective. To reduce individual interest in militancy and/or terrorism, Horgan suggests providing offenders with options such as exit routes in the form of amnesty or reduced sentences for crimes committed, plus education and job training along with economic support (Woodrow Wilson Center, 2009a).

Relations with Muslim communities need to be promoted in an environment that is free of pre-judgements, allegations, biases and stereotypes of the people. One of the primary challenges lies in making Muslim youth perceive terrorists as “morally disengaged”. We also need to overcome our tendencies to play categorization politics. Upon revisiting Bush's awful post-9/11 challenge, *either you are with us or you are with them*, one realizes that the comment not only affected buffer states in Asia and Africa but proved to be catastrophic for Muslim youth globally, who as a reaction allowed themselves to be played into the hands of Al Qaeda and the Taliban – perceiving them as America's “them” but their very own “us”. Policies and strategies must be détente oriented and not restricted to countering terrorism. Such policies must engage with Muslim populations that are not only susceptible to forces of regressive power structures in their own societies, but are also vulnerable to the exploitation

that can be a by-product of rapid capitalization, globalism and globalization of the political economy. I argue that the siphoning of global youth into terrorist networks can be successfully throttled only if the transformative nature of socio-cultural and political processes is utilized. Militant and terrorist precincts are essentially shaky and therefore navigable and penetrable, regardless of their nature – territorial, temporal or cognitive. These spaces can even be subjected to hijacking activities, often led by rival criminal groups. The networks are detectable, as they are inextricably linked to social relations and operate crossing boundaries and even violating national borders.

## The United States and counterterrorism

American policies to date are defined by “securitization” of the United States and its citizens at home and abroad. US counterterrorism strategies mainly aim at defeating terrorist organizations/networks by eliminating their sanctuaries, such as those on the border areas between Afghanistan and Pakistan, and their leadership, assets, forms of communication, etc. The requirement is to identify and stop support sources, and importantly diminish underlying conditions that terrorists seek to exploit. This can be achieved by enlisting the focus of the international community, utilizing resources for addressing legitimate political and social needs, and reducing security vulnerabilities in the countries most at risk.

What the United States initially had thought of as a war against two specific geographical locations led to destruction of such magnitude that now no one city is safer than another. A costly generational war, similar to the Cold War, ensued and might take decades to end. According to FBI records, between 1990 and 1999 domestic and foreign groups carried out 60 terrorist attacks in the United States, killing 182 and injuring more than 1,932. From January to March 1991, out of a total of 939 incidents globally, 104 operations were directed against Americans and US interests. This is in comparison to 39 in 1990 and 32 in 1989. The State Department’s records for 1970–1989 reveal a total of 1,617 anti-American international attacks. A statistics review shows that the United States was the single most targeted country throughout the 1970s and 1980s. The victims were citizens, officials, diplomats and military officers.

After 9/11, Bush’s statement regarding people hating the United States due to the values that it stood for is misleading and oversimplistic. If these values were not appreciated, no mass immigrations to the United States would ever have taken place, including those from around the Muslim world. It would have been better for Bush straightforwardly to

acknowledge flawed US foreign and defence policy towards the Muslim world. By America's own definition of terrorism, in which violence is unleashed on non-combatants, Israel becomes a terrorist state. The asymmetrical US support to Israel is one of the major factors that gave terrorist networks a convenient freeway for recruiting Muslim youth and coopting their political agency towards terrorist designs. If Syria and Libya are guilty of defending terrorists, the United States in its time-tested commitment to Israel's successive oppressive regimes has not acted differently (this is how it is viewed throughout the Muslim world, making it vulnerable to attacks).

After the World Trade Center attack, a war posture was immediately adopted by the United States when its president stated: "we are a nation at war". This led further to the United States adopting policies and strategies appropriated by nations that are "technically" at war. US policy consisted of four key elements: making no concessions to terrorists and striking no deals; bringing terrorists to justice; isolating and applying pressures on state sponsors of terrorism and forcing them to change their stance; and bolstering the counterterrorism capabilities of countries that work with the United States and require assistance in combating terrorism. While in terms of security all these policies and strategies appear to make sense, the harsh and disappointing manner of their implementation gave rise to issues of human rights, ethics and civil liberty – leaving the American ideal of justice blemished, both at home and abroad.

Policy advice has remained security centred, focusing on intelligence while issuing warnings about the so-called rogue states and generating phobia about jihad as a notion. Despite references to diplomacy and cooperation with the Muslim world, adopted policies have created antagonism between the United States and Muslim populations (see, for example, Alexander, 2006).

Post-9/11 US counterterrorism measures mainly emerge from enactment of the Patriot Act, the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the report of the 9/11 Commission and the restructuring of the intelligence community. Patriot Act stands for "providing appropriate tools required to intercept and obstruct terrorism" (PATRIOT). The Act is mainly security centred and does not engage with what are ordinarily understood as the softer issues. It is focused on search, regulation, surveillance tactics and beefing up intelligence. It is interceptive and obstructive in the name of prevention and pre-emption, but most ironically, since it is not really engaging with the human element, it is not entirely non-preventive in nature. Mainly the Patriot Act increases the ability of law enforcement agencies to search telephone, e-mail, medical, financial and other records. It also regulates financial transactions and broadens the discretion of law enforce-

ment and immigration authorities in detaining and deporting immigrants suspected of terrorism-related acts. In the first instance, the Patriot Act allowed state authorities far more freedom to attack terrorists network structures directly (Enders and Su, 2007). However, it has often been criticized for creating room for prosecuting non-terrorists on the basis of suspicion: it can be invoked for non-terrorist crime investigations. The plan to investigate and pre-empt potential terrorist acts broadened the security net, but it also deeply affected human rights and ethics by making ordinary citizens and visitors vulnerable to state interference. Racial vilification and violence, and most particularly discrimination against Arab and Muslim Americans, are believed to be a direct fallout of American policies of counterterrorism. Human rights groups noted how unwarranted profiling of Muslims in the United States and those crossing through US immigration became a major concern. The Act also gave rise to a number of issues in the realm of civil liberties. It curtailed people's sense of freedom, speech and expression, as artists, scientists and political analysts felt stifled in their expression on issues of terrorism. Opponents of the law criticized its authorization of indefinite detentions of immigrants – something that was later revised under the Obama administration. Obama made a valid point when he snapped at Bush's policies, stating that one doesn't defeat a network that is operational in 80 countries by occupying Iraq (Woodrow Wilson Center, 2008a).

Kaplan has suggested a dichotomous strategy for counterterrorism: modernization and constraintment (ibid.). Modernization is reformative in character and is supposed to be holistic, engaging with political, social and economic spheres. It is assumed that the process of modernization and liberalization will eventually eliminate the grounds that breed terrorism. After reviewing the war's legacy, Kaplan made a case for adopting constraintment in the post-Iraq war era on the basis of two underlying assumptions. First, the terrorist networks are on a path of self-defeat, and not sooner but later this defeat will become a reality. Second, terrorists operate on an ideational level and constraintment is quintessential as a preventive strategy.

The United States needs to sort out issues related to planning and execution of its counterterrorism programme. It did not manage matters properly, and terrorism outside its borders quickly escalated. Al Qaeda met huge successes by tapping into local grievances of Muslim populations, condemning American policies in the Middle East and instigating high levels of anti-Americanism that Byman (2008) notes as a "lethal mix of religious inspiration and xenophobic nationalism". Western promotion of "democracy" started backfiring in the Muslim world in the wake of its apparently anti-Muslim policies after 9/11. Consequently, Islamist groups through use of anti-American sloganeering and promises of reviving a

Muslim caliphate (as an alternative to Western forms of governance) starting winning elections in Muslim countries (as in Pakistan, Egypt and the Gulf states), despite their unsuccessful attempts earlier. On getting elected, these literalist and regressive radicals failed to distinguish between militant-jihadist Islamists (for example in Palestine) and terrorists such as Al Qaeda and the Taliban. Carelessly they started vocalizing support for all such activated groups who employed the word “Islam”, thereby inciting people to run amok.

Bypassing the rhetoric of democracy for all, Bush started a close camaraderie with General Musharraf of Pakistan that was criticized even by the US-sympathetic civilian leadership of Pakistan, including the late Benazir Bhutto. Wide-scale protests demanding ousting of Musharraf started in Pakistan. The situation was exacerbated further when in an unconstitutional move Musharraf removed the chief justice of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, mainly to defend American interests. The chief justice had angered the government by demanding information about Pakistanis held as terrorism suspects without charge (*New York Times*, 2009). As a result, the Lawyer’s Movement brought Musharraf’s rule to an end. Unfortunately, with Benazir assassinated the country had no leadership to match her political stature. This made Pakistan an open playing field for terrorists. In an unwise move, the newly elected federal government abdicated in favour of the Taliban in Swat. I maintain that the government’s decision to abdicate was not a result of lack of political will or double play, but somewhat of a warped political astuteness. Details of the Swat crisis are provided in Chapter 6.

Until recently, US counterterrorism policy remained hardcore rather than subtle, long term and engaging. Even now there is more emphasis on investigative and obstructive interventions rather than transformative actions or prevention. For example, in Iraq the United States has no other option but to prioritize dealing with sectarianism and purging armed and security forces, promoting national reconciliation, establishing rule of law and taking care of the displaced and refugee populations before withdrawing completely.

Once the Cold War ended the United States had no overarching strategic concept to sell to the world. The Clinton administration made *democratic enlargement* and *democratic peace* its strategic principles and, despite criticism from neo-cons, started humanitarian interventions in Somalia, Bosnia, Haiti and Kosovo. Neo-cons favoured an unrestrained US foreign policy; a muscular approach that could function beyond dictates of international institutions. After 9/11, in its dealing with the Muslim world the United States has repeatedly violated the state sovereignty that is a cardinal principle of international relations. It subdued governments operating in the Muslim world, and basically they were offered choices

between bad and very bad. American interference in Muslim lands was taken as essential, and Muslim countries were either occupied or their governments were made to kneel down and offer cooperation in direct opposition to public opinion in their countries. A classic example of the latter is Pakistan, where General Musharraf and later Zardari-Gillani continued providing support to the United States, even allowing drone attacks in northern parts of Pakistan, while simultaneously dealing with public opinion that was against all this.

The analysis of US counterterrorism strategies has remained quite deficient. A few Western analysts have been advising the US government to depopularize Al Qaeda among Muslim populations (rather than investing in popularizing American values) by informing them of the number of casualties inflicted upon them by Al Qaeda. Against the backdrop of a speech by Cronin (Woodrow Wilson Center, 2008b), it is surprising to note that widespread promotion of the practice of *takfir* in the Muslim world (whereby a Muslim declares another Muslim as a disbeliever – *kafir* – or an apostate) was not mentioned.<sup>1</sup> Although Cronin makes some valid points, such as outlining the four prominent strategies adopted by terrorist groups – compellence, provocation, polarization and mobilization – her insistence on aiming to “implode” rather than “explode” Al Qaeda is in practice difficult to achieve. Through invocation of *takfir*, Al Qaeda and the Taliban have already declared as non-Muslims anyone who supports Western policies and secular governments in the Muslim world. This implies that Muslims must not lament the killing of Muslims who are friends with the West. It is through *takfir* that terrorists justify crimes committed against Pakistan, predominantly a Muslim nation. Al Qaeda labelled Musharraf, his government and the civilian population that supported his policies as “infidels”. There is plenty of video footage available on the internet that validates this point further. For example, videos released after the Jamia Hafsa/Red Mosque siege in July 2007 call for jihad against Musharraf and the people of Pakistan, who are treated as guilty and complicit in tolerating a pro-American military regime in their country.

Pakistan, being a smaller ally in the war on terror, has often been treated as a scapegoat by the United States. This in my view is a self-defeating approach. US counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan were not only delayed but also lacked an integrated or holistic strategic approach. The US decision to enter Iraq without finishing what it had started in Afghanistan worsened the political crisis in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The United States continued to bail out by blaming matters on Pakistan’s lack of political will to take on the Taliban. Efforts made by Pakistan are viewed in the West as “desultory” and “ineffective” (Fair and Jones, 2009).

Bin Laden's elimination in Abbottabad (Pakistan) appears to be a classic whodunnit where two counterterrorism allies remained busy hoodwinking each other while suffering from a severe mutual trust deficit. With Bin Laden shot dead, Al Qaeda may retreat in some ways, but it is far from beaten. Concerns are rising over what other forms of global jihadist movement will now take hold. A movement where martyrdom is valued will not waste propaganda opportunities by failing to use its symbolic leader's execution by the United States. Bin Laden's value as a recruiting sergeant for disaffected young Muslims may be greater in death than it was in life (*The Economist*, 2011g). In the meantime the United States has failed to avoid damaging important counterterrorism partnerships. Pak-US is a classic example, where unwilling but opportunist parties sign a contract of partnership only to get it awfully wrong in the end. Pakistan's role in this war is ambiguous. On the one hand it has sacrificed 5,000 soldiers fighting terrorists, tolerated US drone attacks that are highly unpopular with its public and let (not quite "allowed", as that implies legal aspects) hundreds of CIA agents roam about – Raymond Davis shot two Pakistani men in broad daylight and, succumbing to US pressures, Pakistani authorities organized a settlement and eventually allowed a safe passage to him. By 2006 Pakistan had at least captured and handed over to the United States 670 Al Qaeda fighters, including Khaled Sheikh Muhammed – the alleged mastermind of the 9/11 attacks. On the other hand, Pakistan has helped the Afghan Taliban strengthen. Mullah Omar, the head of the Afghan Taliban, might eventually be discovered in Pakistan (as surprisingly as Bin Laden; *The Economist*, 2011m). Analysts have often underlined Pakistan's alleged dubious play, for example: "the security agencies, which are not monolithic, have been willing to conduct operations against groups that have threatened Pakistan, but not those that advance what they see as Pakistan's interests in Afghanistan and India. This policy of sustaining the 'good jihadis' has strained Pakistan's social fabric and endangered the state when erstwhile proxies have turned on it" (Fair and Jones, 2009: 162). Mullah Omar has had issues with the Pakistani Taliban (first Baitullah Mehsud and now Hakimullah Mehsud) due to their attacks on Pakistani military and intelligence targets (Fair, 2011a: 103). The Pakistan military's role in supporting the Afghan Taliban has come under attack on several occasions.

Friends can be chosen, but not neighbours. India makes Pakistan feel unsafe, and Pakistan finds its strategic depth in the Afghan Taliban – which it wants to gain power in Afghanistan (*The Economist*, 2011m). Such affinities and perspectives on regional security are so deeply disturbing for the United States that it is encouraging ties between the Karzai and Mohan governments – mainly to curtail Pakistan's nuisance value in the region. The US reputation in addressing really vital questions



of what “rules” it should observe, whenever and wherever suspected terrorists are held, is not good (*The Economist*, 2011n). By extension of the same mindset, the United States does not hesitate even if it has to violate the territorial sovereignty and integrity of its ally nations in pursuit of what it labels a “high-value target” after receiving “actionable intelligence”. After having Bin Laden killed, the US president suggested “someone” in Pakistan was or had been protecting the Al Qaeda leader. Later, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton admitted there was “absolutely no evidence” that anyone at the highest level of the Pakistani government knew the whereabouts of Bin Laden. With a gap of few weeks, licking its wounds, Pakistan responded to US audacity on its territory by stating: “we are interrogating several people whom we suspect of having been working for the American intelligence services . . . we suspect them of having been working for CIA”. Since 9/11 Pakistan has maintained an impressive track record of successfully collaborating with the CIA and countering Al Qaeda by capturing hundreds of terrorists. After the US raids on Abbottabad (or more precisely “attacks”), currently Pakistani authorities appear to be making every effort to unearth CIA informants while showing little interest in arresting Taliban and Al Qaeda sympathizers (BBC News, 2011a). Pakistan is a country where

Some 30,000 people have been killed in the past four years . . . The number of attacks in Pakistan’s heartland is on the rise, and Pakistani terrorists have gone global in their ambitions. This year [2011] there have been unprecedented displays of fundamentalist religious and anti-Western feeling. All this might be expected in Somalia or Yemen, but not in a country of great sophistication which boasts an elite educated at Oxbridge and the Ivy League, which produces brilliant novelists, artists and scientists, and is armed with nuclear weapons. (*The Economist*, 2011e)

When counterterrorism strategies are not people-centred, this is what one is left with in the end. What an unfortunate juncture to reach for any two ally nation-states, and how terribly detrimental it can be in a fight against terrorism. Changes that Bin Laden wrought in America itself have left it closed and suspicious. America is no longer open and trusting, as it was before September 2001. As a country its vigilance is ubiquitous and it has become relentlessly intrusive. Security-inspired hassles, for example on inbound/outbound flights, are becoming unbearable for frequent travellers. America has become less tolerant, and the cumulative result of all its precautionary security measures is a wretched thing: a culture of suspicion (*The Economist*, 2011h). The same is true for its allies, including Pakistan, which rely much on conspiracy theories while dealing with the United States.



In his analysis Daniel Benjamin appreciates the US ability to conduct tactical offensive counterterrorism – apprehending terrorists and disrupting and dismantling their operating units. However, he rightly questions if these counterterrorism strategies result in the creation of more terrorists, or are policies shrinking the pool of terror recruits. Only recently is the United States beginning to concentrate on grounds that breed terrorism, and being advised to focus on ungoverned and under-governed spheres belonging to socio-economic and political domains. The United States cannot afford to reduce spending on security. Yet needs must be prioritized while focusing on “micro-strategies”, and connections between local and global must not be lost while devising policies in Washington (Woodrow Wilson Center, 2010).

## The UK and counterterrorism

The new UK legislative framework is principally made up of the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001, the Terrorism Acts 2000 and 2006, the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, the Police Act 1997 and the Security Services Act 1996. The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 creates a legal framework for use of surveillance and human operatives to monitor and infiltrate activities of groups subject to “investigation”. It is aimed at those involved in “serious crime” and “terrorism”. Under the Terrorism Act 2006, directly or indirectly encouraging any commission, preparation, glorification or instigation of acts of terrorism or disseminating terrorist publications is a criminal offence. Terrorism is understood as actions involving serious violence against a person, causing damage to property, acts that endanger an individual’s life (other than that of the person committing the action) or activities risking health or safety of the public or a section of the public. In addition, all action designed to interfere seriously with or disrupt an electronic system can also be tried under the Terrorism Act 2006.

Several aspects of the UK’s counterterrorism strategy are considered confidential and identified as such in documents open to the public. In both the UK and the United States, civil rights groups argue that aspects of anti-terrorism legislation impinge upon civil liberties. For example, new legal definitions of “terrorism” move beyond paramilitary or violent action and make provisions to implicate those suspected of endangering the state. Such anti-terrorism measures can affect anti-establishment public protests and campaigns, even if justified. Under the Security Services Act and the Police Act, those planning to hold an assembly of 20 or more persons in a public place must inform the local police station seven days in advance. Any movement holding rallies without such prior notification

can be prosecuted, and under the common purpose principle its activities can be investigated as “serious crime”. Social activists warn that freedom of expression (the cornerstone of any democratic society) has been restricted under counterterrorism legislation that has not provided any clear guidelines on permitted public expressions. Criteria regarding who can be labelled a terrorist are absent. It is difficult to provide a definitive sense to either terrorism as a concept or a terrorist as an individual. Nonetheless, this obscurity makes ordinary individuals vulnerable to unjust investigations.

To increase acceptability among the public and civil rights groups, the UK has made serious efforts to make its counterterrorism and anti-radicalization programme more impartial. In the British government’s view terrorism and violent extremism are attributable to four causes (UK Home Office, 2010: 10): an individual’s exposure to an ideology that seems to sanction, legitimize or require violence, often by providing a compelling but fabricated narrative of contemporary politics and recent history; exposure to people or groups who can directly and persuasively articulate that ideology and then relate it to aspects of a person’s own background and life history; a crisis in identity and often uncertainty about belonging which might be triggered by a range of further personal issues, including experiences of racism, discrimination, deprivation or other criminality (as victim or perpetrator), family breakdown or separation; and finally a range of perceived grievances, some real and some imagined, to which there may seem to be no credible and effective non-violent response. By and large the understanding is that people involved in terrorist attacks are driven by certain violent and extremist beliefs, and their recruiters claim to be acting in defence of Islam. The British government understands that forms of Islamist extremism are promoted in the garb of the faith of Islam, encouraging or obliging its adherents to carry out acts of violence against those identified as enemies (HM Government, 2006: 7).

The UK government’s unified counterterrorism strategy is CONTEST, whose aim is to stop people from becoming or supporting terrorists and violent extremists. CONTEST has four strands or work-streams: prevent, pursue, protect and prepare. Most interestingly, the *prevent* strategy is a mix of interventions in civil society, governance, education, human rights, law and knowledge creation. In order to achieve its aims successfully the government is working closely with foreign collaborators. For the US government, *preventing* terrorism entails involving security agencies and obstructing terrorist movement in a timely fashion. However, in the UK such obstructive security measures have been placed under the *pursue* and *protect* strands of the programme, while the *prevent* segment engages with long-term social and political issues. *Prevent* is designed to be

people-centred, according to which the ownership of the UK's counter-terrorism and anti-radicalization programme rests with the people. *Prevent* adopts and maintains records at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office/Home Office by involving civil society groups from Muslim and non-Muslim communities settled inside and outside the UK. Under this strand, the Home Office has extended funding for projects that challenge extreme ideologies and support mainstream voices, disrupt ideologues and strengthen vulnerable institutions. Other measures include supporting targeted individuals, increasing resilience of communities against violent extremists and addressing grievances that are singled out and exploited by ideologues. Most particularly the programme is aimed at supporting and engaging with British Muslim youth.

The UK has largely been very cautious and calculating in its approach towards Muslims in Britain – surprisingly more so than France, Belgium and Switzerland, which have all taken issue with either the Muslim way of life or Islamic infrastructures. Given that the UK stands second to France in its Muslim population statistics and was perceived among Muslims as less friendly than Switzerland, the country's unclassified counterterrorism policies and strategies appear to be closest to principles of democracy, equality and tolerance. This is not to say that the UK's Muslim population has not faced any issues related to group vilification, especially when human rights groups have already highlighted such issues. The fundamental point here is to realize that the UK has proved itself to be quite discerning and tolerant, finding solutions through "dialogue" rather than developing pronounced phobias about Muslim civilization.

There is an impressive wealth of information regarding the *prevent* strand on the UK Home Office website. A number of documents illuminate issues surrounding terrorism in both real and virtual worlds. The documents and toolkits prepared for the successful implementation of the *prevent* strategy address government and non-government bodies, along with local partners and communities. Violent extremists are noted as criminals, and British youth's susceptibility to terrorist narratives is elaborated in these documents, which simultaneously emphasize the need to support such vulnerable youth.

Most interestingly, all documents reiterate that the UK's agenda is not restricted to addressing Muslim communities or reflecting a negative light on British Muslims. The objective, as it has been recorded, is to challenge narratives arising out of right-wing and extreme social groups, be they Muslim or non-Muslim. The government recognizes that there is no single pathway to radicalization and no single profile of individuals prone to radicalization. Being secular, the state avoids interference in the faith of its citizens, yet considers it important to engage with credible religious

authorities for purposes of countering any religious narratives that incite people to violence.

There is an incredible emphasis on avoiding all controversial or pejorative terms in the official documents. Great care has been taken to identify Islam as a religion of peace, noting Al Qaeda as non-representative of Islam and Muslims. The British government realizes the repercussions of a distorted and divisive view of the world that terrorists create with the intention of making the Muslim diaspora feel alienated from their adopted Western context. Despite this, Britain sends out a clear message of being a society that not only supports diversity in identity but also has no problem with people forming their own identity, such as being British and Muslim at the same time. This is very different from France's political position, in which the idea of a French republic has been standardized in a European sense, and Muslim immigrant women have been judged as not being "French enough" in their Muslim clothing.

The *prevent* strategy also provides guidelines on communicating with vulnerable communities, mainly Muslim, in a non-offensive and useful manner (RICU, 2010). Considering the difference between contemporary jihad as an ambitious political ideology and Quranic jihad as a self-effacing act of faith, the document advises caution in use of this notion. The guide advises all stakeholders to avoid using Islamist/Islamism as descriptive of terrorist/terrorism while engaging with local Muslims in Britain. The *prevent* strand fully recognizes that there are vulnerable young people who can get drawn into violent extremism, just as they would in drugs or other gangs, and therefore need to be weaned away from such destructive behaviour through similar interventions to those applied to prevent people from taking drugs or joining mafia gangs. Thus the *prevent* strategy is aimed at supporting vulnerable individuals and protecting them from terrorists who seek to exploit them.

The importance of understanding local realities and accordingly providing training to public officials is highlighted in all documents. After the 7/7 London bombings, Home Office ministers visited nine towns and cities with large Muslim populations, and attempts were made to collaborate with local Muslims who were considered critical in preventing future acts of violent extremism in the UK: 1,000 British Muslims participated in these consultations, and seven community-led working groups were set up under the umbrella of "Preventing Extremism Together". The working groups made 64 recommendations, of which 27 were made to the government and the rest were taken up by communities supported by the government.

It is important to realize that, unlike the US administration, the UK government is not dealing with a Muslim population for the first time as immigrants in the country. The UK has its colonial legacy to guide it.

Therefore it should not be surprising, but only interesting, to note the government's engaging tone with Muslim immigrants and second-generation British Muslims. The UK government has repeatedly emphasized the Muslim community as its very own; people whom the government relies on for preventing violent extremists inspired by Al Qaeda arising from within Muslim populations. Yet the new "Prevent Strategy 2011" announced in June (UK Home Office, 2011) raised a few concerns. Analysts find use of language such as "mainstream British values" problematic, as this is likely to exacerbate "othering" of immigrants (Jarvis and Lister, 2011) and will lead to "alienating" communities that are ironically noted in the *prevent* strand as "vulnerable" (Alam, 2011). The new strategy focuses on "extremism" as opposed to "violent extremism", and it is being predicted that encompassing labels such as "Islamist" will be used to judge individuals and groups as "extremist" (Spalek, 2011). The "Prevent Strategy 2011" has also been called "a patchwork of contradictions" (McGhee, 2011). Experts have taken issue with the fact that 25 priority *prevent* areas were selected on the basis of Muslim demographics. On this basis, critics have pointed out that the Home Office has attempted to get away from acknowledging that Muslim communities remain its primary focus of surveillance (spying), with claims that the *prevent* strategy addresses radicalization across all faiths and ethnic groups.<sup>2</sup>

*Prevent* is being implemented through initiatives such as the Radical Middle Way roadshows, Islam in Citizenship education projects, the Faith Community Development Qualification and the Review of Muslim Faith Leader training. Also, "Channel" (UK Home Office, 2010) provides a mechanism for assessing and supporting people who may be targeted by violent extremists or drawn into violent extremism. In these guides, the reasons behind terrorism and violent extremism have been explained to local partners, who are also trained to detect indicators (for example expressed opinion, material and behavioural changes, and personal history of individuals) of questionable behaviour. Expressed opinion presents a problem in terms of civil liberties, as the Home Office (*ibid.*: 9) reveals: "these [expressions] may include support for violence and terrorism, the leadership of terrorist organizations and uncompromising rejection of the principles of the rule of law and of the authority of any elected Government in this country". The guide warns against viewing communities only through a counterterrorism perspective. Nonetheless, "Channel" has given rise to controversy over being used as an instrument to mark practising Muslim students in universities as radicals requiring support.

Finally, the UK government has kept the military option open "in accordance with international law, for counterterrorism purposes when non-military tools cannot achieve its goals. There will always be considerable challenges in doing so because before [the UK] could consider the

use of force in a particular case [it] would have to pinpoint terrorists precisely, which is usually extremely difficult” (HM Government, 2006: 29).

## Japan and counterterrorism

Japan has been risk-averse and in the past has not encouraged public debate on terrorism, which is viewed in conjunction with other social problems under the heading of “crisis management” in Japan’s distinctive, long-standing definition of comprehensive security. Japan’s counterterrorism policy has been linked closely to the concepts of peace and human rights that are considered central to its Peace Constitution, and focuses on addressing root causes of terrorism rather than responding/retaliating to sudden acts of terrorism.

In Japan, left-wing popular protests on a scale unknown in Europe or the United States in the 1950s and 1960s gave way to smaller attacks staged by extremist groups of both the left and the right. Between 1969 and 1989 Japan recorded more than 200 domestic bombings; and between 1978 and 1990 there were about 700 domestic “guerilla” attacks, using arson and Molotov cocktails. In 1995 a Sarin gas attack in Tokyo’s subway killed 12 and injured 5,000.

In the late 1960s the intense pressure exerted by Japanese police led the forerunners of the Japan Red Army (JRA) to relocate and operate from abroad. Due to their strong international ideology, left-wing radicals moved to North Korea and the Middle East. From these foreign locations, the JRA staged daring operations, such as the attacks on Tel Aviv airport (1972), Singapore’s oil refinery and the French embassy in The Hague (1974) and the US and Swedish embassies in Kuala Lumpur (1975). In the 1980s the JRA had about 30 core cadres operating abroad. The political significance of Japanese terrorists operating abroad was severely underestimated by Japanese officials. The 1975 Kuala Lumpur attacks shocked Japanese government and security officials. The link between the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the JRA had escaped their attention. By the late 1980s and mid-1990s the JRA had receded. If JRA members were to return to Japan, they would face certain arrest. The threat emerging from the JRA has decreased in the wake of the Oslo peace process and the US-led war against terror.<sup>3</sup>

Aum Shinrikyo, a religious sect with an apocalyptic vision, carried out the 1995 Sarin gas attack mentioned above. Hesitation and caution marked official reaction (in fact, response). In 1995 Aum had assets in excess of \$1 billion and, with 50,000 members worldwide, operated through more than 30 branches in six countries. The Japanese government has been blamed in the past for avoiding investigations of Aum,

which had transnational links in Russia; and when the government decided to take it to court, Articles 77 and 78 of the constitution related to “preparing for civil war” were not invoked. Instead, Aum’s actions were treated as individual murders and crimes against aggrieved parties. Such superficial assimilation of actual events misled Japan into overlooking the wider international perspective on terrorism (Katzenstein, 2003).

Japan felt removed from Al Qaeda, but it seized 11 September as a political opportunity for showing resolve and escaping criticism of being a do-nothing power. Rather than prepare for new security threats, the government incrementally adjusted its foreign security policy. Around the world, the 11 September attacks on the World Trade Center were perceived differently. For the United States it was “war”, for the UK it was “crime” and for Japan it was “crisis”. 9/11 offered the Japanese government an opportunity to show Japan’s symbolic support for the US-led war against terror. It provided another welcome opportunity for gradually expanding the regional scope of operation for Japan’s Self-Defense Forces (SDF). It also afforded Japan a chance to improve on its inadequate preparation for situations of national emergency. Japan was able to emphasize its independent role and contributions regarding issues of international development and matters of global security.

Japan justifies its current policies and strategies of counterterrorism under UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) 1373 and 1368 that mainly declare the attacks on the United States as a “threat to international peace and security” and call upon countries to “take all necessary steps” in combating all forms of terrorism. Since then, Japan has played active roles in strengthening its national-level counterterrorism measures and cooperating fully in international efforts against terrorism while simultaneously providing support to countries affected by terrorism.

Currently, Japan’s counterterrorism programme is centred on three elements: first, Japan will actively engage in combating terrorism that it regards as its own security issue; second, the country will continue supporting the United States; and third, for purposes of demonstrating its firm determination to fight against terrorism, Japan will take concrete and effective measures. Although Japan has remained involved in providing fuel to US and UK forces in the Indian Ocean, it has simultaneously engaged fully with Southeast Asia (mainly Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Cambodia) and Pakistan and Afghanistan. Japan has provided critical and direct inputs in development, humanitarian and technological spheres, ranging from rescheduling Pakistan’s debt and preventing the country from defaulting to paying ransom money in order to free innocent civilians kidnapped by terrorists, and even investing in introducing advanced immigration controls and maritime security in a post-9/11 world. The Japanese government also lifted restrictions on economic



assistance and yen loan extensions to India and Pakistan that had been in place since May 1998, around the time when the two nations tested their nuclear weapons. Former Prime Minister Koizumi actively engaged with several governments in the Muslim world, convincing them to participate in the global fight against terrorism. Japanese policy avoids bloodshed and its instruments of counterterrorist policy consist of peace, human rights and complacency. Adopted measures include refugee assistance, special assistance to countries surrounding Afghanistan and international cooperation to combat terrorism, mainly envisaging international legal frameworks for prevention and eradication of terrorism. In October 2001 the government of Japan signed the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism at UN headquarters in New York, and it remains committed to UNSCR 1373 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2001).

Succinctly stated, SDF operations are no longer restricted to defence of Japan's home islands. In addition, the Japanese government has agreed to provide refuge, relief and other humanitarian assistance, supply grant aid to frontline states, share intelligence, participate in international police cooperation, work with other central and commercial banks to restrict funding for terrorist organizations and help establish a government in Afghanistan with a broad political base. These steps, Michael Armacost and Kenneth Pyle (quoted in *ibid.*) argue, "move Japan decisively toward some middle ground between the hypernationalism of World War II and what some have described as the 'toothless pacifism' of its post-war defense policy".

In its dealings with Afghanistan and Pakistan, Japan continues to implement swiftly the pledge made in April 2009 to provide assistance up to US\$1 billion in two years. It is providing concrete assistance for economic growth (most particularly in the energy sector and infrastructure development), and for reforming the macroeconomic sector (a syndicated loan with the World Bank). Another area of intervention for Japan is improvement of people's livelihoods through provision of assistance in poverty reduction (health, basic education, rural development). Japan is prioritizing work in Khyber Pukhtunkhwa province of Pakistan, including Malakand division and the federally administered tribal areas. In the spring of 2009 military operations against insurgents in Malakand division led to the displacement of 3.5 million people; this number gradually dropped to 1.5 million after humanitarian interventions. Recovery and rehabilitation were direly needed for the 2 million who returned; the 1.7 million Afghan refugees in the border region also required assistance. Japan has been consistently providing support to these internally displaced people and Afghan refugees. During monsoon season 2010, the Japanese government immediately made aid available for flood-hit



Pakistan. In the long run, the success of counterterrorism measures is dependent on stable economies, and in countries like Pakistan Japan has been emphasizing the need for economic reforms.

There is a mature understanding in the Japanese government as to “war fatigue” among the Afghan people. The government is allocating resources to “Afghanizing” the processes of integrated and sustainable development. Japan has made a commitment to provide assistance of approximately ¥80 billion for Afghanistan, and is directing its assistance towards containment of insurgencies by building the capacities of the Afghan National Police. Investments in vocational and small-scale rural development programmes are expected to reintegrate Afghan society and create opportunities for reconciliation with insurgents. With an objective of achieving regional and global peace and stability, Japan has channelled resources towards reconstruction of Afghanistan. Through security, intelligence, reconstruction, development and humanitarian measures, Japan is ultimately interested in *preventing* terrorism. A recent trajectory in Japan’s counterterrorism strategy is about adopting “deradicalization” measures. For example, during the First Japan-Singapore Counterterrorism Dialogue in December 2009, Japanese leaders mentioned the need for strengthening international counterterrorism efforts such as capacity-building assistance to developing countries, along with introducing counter-radicalization efforts (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2009).

An official document warns: “terrorist threat to Japan should never be underestimated when the global terrorism situation remains serious. Since the situation constantly changes, Japan’s terrorism-prevention measures must be subject to ceaseless review to meet the change” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2004: 4). After being named as a target by Al Qaeda, the possibility of a direct terrorist attack on Japan cannot be dismissed.<sup>4</sup> Terrorist groups may also target US interests in Japan. In the past, terrorists have secretly entered and operated in Japan. For example, a French individual related to Al Qaeda who was on the ICPO (International Criminal Police Organization) wanted list repeatedly visited Japan using a fake identity and passport (*ibid.*: 6–7). What makes Japan vulnerable to acts of terrorism? With no colonial or oil baggage, Japan has a spotless foreign relations record with the Muslim world, making it difficult for Al Qaeda and the Taliban to influence the psychology of Muslim youth, who view Japan sympathetically as being a victim of US bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, or as a non-exploitative manufacturer of affordable electronics and automobiles. Despite awareness of modern Japan’s distant approach to religion, such perceptions have not altered in Muslim domains, where Japan and its people are held in deep regard. After 9/11 protests in Muslim countries were mainly directed against the United States and its allies, Western and non-Western.

Although Japan has remained among US frontline allies against terrorism, no protests were made against it. Successive governments in Japan have certainly been doing something right towards maintaining an unblemished reputation among Muslim populations. One has to appreciate that despite being a major creditor nation in the fight against terror, Japan has never engaged with smaller and weaker nation-states on unequal terms. Since 9/11 Japan has practised cross-civilization dialogue, pitying heavy loss of life borne by terrorism-affected countries such as Pakistan and Afghanistan. Against this backdrop, Japan's nervousness does not emerge from its own relations with the Muslim world, but from its friendship with the United States.

## The United Nations

For the United Nations, terrorism was largely peripheral until the events of September 2001 (Boulden and Weiss, 2004: 5). After 9/11 the global body featured briefly and the Security Council took note of Washington's right to self-defence, thereby effectively opting out of subsequent decision-making and leaving military response to the United States. UNSCR 1368, passed the day after the attacks on the United States, recognized "the inherent right of individual or collective self defense" as a legitimate response. This was the first time that self-defence was recognized as a legitimate response to terrorism. A few weeks later the Security Council passed a more comprehensive resolution outlining a series of wide-ranging anti-terrorism measures to be adopted by states. By prioritizing self-defence the United Nations refrained from taking measures with respect to use of force (*ibid.*: 11). As if self-explanatory, terrorism and terrorist acts remained undefined in both UNSCR 1368 and 1373.

After 9/11 the international body weathered difficult times, with analysts questioning its very relevance in the age of terror. To carry out timely military actions, member states started devising their self-defence without having concerns about the Security Council. The global institution has obviously struggled since then against clear US "statements of intent" regarding what it wanted and to what extent it could go without authorization from the Security Council. There appeared to be two world organizations: the United Nations, global in membership, and the United States, global in reach and power (*ibid.*: 10–18). Ramesh Thakur resonated these views and enquired if a marriage between the international legitimacy of the United Nations and the global reach and power of the United States was possible (United Nations University, 2006: 13). Gradually the United Nations started urging solutions to global problems in a cooperative framework, while emphasizing the need to understand

root causes of terrorism (ibid.). After 11 September 2001 Kofi Annan established a policy working group on terrorism. The group proposed a strategy focusing on three elements: *dissuade* disaffected groups from embracing terrorism; *deny* groups or individuals the means to carry out acts of terrorism; and *sustain* broad-based international cooperation in the struggle against terrorism.

In recent years the United Nations has shown interest in rationalizing and suppressing terrorism (ibid.). Currently, it largely associates terrorism with lack of democratic institutions and practices, political freedoms and civil liberties; group grievances based on collective injustice; intractable conflicts; poverty; and inter-civilization suspicions. Thakur favoured placing terrorism within the ambit of law enforcement agencies and military forces (ibid.). The conceptual models and empirical data provided in this book create conducive grounds for development-oriented UN agencies to intervene more proactively and productively contribute in processes of counterterrorism. Many of the existing multilateral counterterrorism resources are initiated and led by the United Nations. UNSCR 1267 focuses specifically on the Taliban and Al Qaeda; UNSCR 1373 is a generalized anti-terror resolution providing for travel bans, visa monitoring and authority to track and freeze assets.

The United Nations has contributed in the training of counterterrorism forces, but analysts believe that jurisdictional overlaps can create confusion and inefficiency. A few analysts consider the United Nations less experienced and less useful than regional organizations, such as the European Union and NATO. Lopez (Woodrow Wilson Center, 2008c) even suggested the formation of an autonomous body along the lines of the International Atomic Energy Agency for taking care of the counterterrorism agenda. He insists that UN expertise does not match that of regional organizations, and the cynicism among member states only hampers UN decision-making (ibid.).

Also, Article 51 of the UN Charter authorizes self-defence for member states until the Security Council takes action. This article becomes moot when the Council does not take timely action, or simply blesses the status quo chosen by any member state. Policy analysts like McNamara (ibid.) argue in favour of the United Nations and treat it as an effective institution for counterterrorism that can impose diplomatic isolation and international sanctions without inciting terrorists to strike against particular targets to settle scores. In my opinion, one also has to appreciate the fact that after 11 September 2001 the Bush administration approached the United Nations. After the demise of the League of Nations, the United Nations is the only institution that literally brings global society on to a single platform, predisposing nations to enter “dialogue” at a crossroads. Like a gravitational centre, the world body draws even the most powerful

states within its *system*, and this must not be underestimated. The United Nations casts a moral/immoral, ethical/unethical shadow over actions of independent states, no matter how powerful. Issues regarding human rights remain important for the United Nations and it rejects violations that take place during the conduct of war. It never approved the Guantanamo detention centres.

## The way forward

Counterterrorism narrative that aims to depopularize the Al Qaeda narrative does not recognize the critical nexus between gender and militant Islamism, or gender and terrorism – a consequential oversight. Structural and contextual aspects of terrorism should be addressed, and counterterrorism strategies must not be restricted to securitization. Governments and civil society need to intervene in societal, political and development spheres, and prevent militancy and terrorism from becoming a viable trajectory for youth through which they register political grievances or embark on utopian political ambitions. Operational and structural interventions must complement each other. Gender issues mainly fall within the range of structural and functional aspects of societies, and are important to address.

Academics and policy-makers must avoid irresponsible use of the language of political Islam. It is equally significant for Western governments to recognize gender dynamics within contemporary Muslim cultures, even those in diaspora settings. At the interface of identity politics, Muslim women as immigrants and second-generation Westerners suffer from severe entitlement and agency (freedom of expression) issues. The Pakistani nation elected Benazir Bhutto in the 1980s; in contrast, a highly capable and impressive British-Pakistani woman, Baroness Sayeeda Warsi of the Conservative Party in Britain, in an appalling incident in 2009 was pelted with eggs by a group of rowdy British Muslim men who accused her of violating boundaries of Islam. The British government needs to be aware of such dynamics and ensure that women's voices are represented in "what defines and represents Islam in Britain", including issues beyond the usual *hijab* debate. Women are mostly treated as a separate group that is expected to deal with its own (i.e. women's rights) issues. Owing to the structural and functional dynamics of the Muslim diaspora in Britain and elsewhere, men in religious and political domains are granted supreme status by immigrant communities. The British government has been engaging with mosque imams and chaplains, who are men. Muslim women's views on militant-jihadist Islamism need to be mainstreamed by the British government.

Britain has been focusing on radicalization and Muslim identity politics, implicitly adopting a restrictive approach to “identity” as a badge that is essentially based in religion. As social sciences inform us, human identity is not limited to religion alone. One of the most foundational and critical systems contributing in the formation of identities is “gender” – defining, regulating and mediating human behaviour and particularizing it in accordance to the dictates of local cultural, socio-economic and political contexts. Projected identities and behaviours are only partially religion-based, as religion is merely one component within a larger culture. It is really important to engage with gender, and understand its contributory role in regressive radicalism and literalism in certain societies as opposed to others.

Although through its official documentation the UK acknowledges the importance of understanding local contexts of Muslim communities in Britain, the Home Office has not identified issues emerging from peculiar forms of gender constructions, roles and expectations that are deeply embedded in Muslim societies. For example, how should a Muslim man behave “honourably” at the interface of pressures arising from forces of tradition, religion, capitalism and globalization? There is every likelihood that in a Muslim immigrant family from South Asia (no profiling intended), a man is more of a prized possession for his parents than his sister and therefore much less liable to go through checks and surveillance as a teenager than his sister – and thus eventually more likely to get involved in criminal activity, be it drugs, gangs or terrorist networks. In my opinion, this lack of recognition of gender constructions, most particularly formation of masculinities in Muslim households and their nexus with militant Islamism and terrorism, is a critical void in current strategies of counterterrorism. As mentioned before, identity as a notion is only partially understood, and the bulk of gender theory stacked up in five decades of hard work by anthropologists, sociologists, feminists and development theorists has not been used to serve policy initiatives in the field of counterterrorism. Other than a passing and almost “stick-on” reference to a national Muslim women’s advisory group in the UK’s Home Office, one does not come across any meaningful engagement with a substructure of human selfhood: *gender*.

In policy documents one finds a commitment to addressing issues of vulnerable groups that have difficulty in maintaining their routine life or are undergoing crisis. However, there is no mention of engaging with masculinities, the *practices* within gender, and no interest in understanding how masculinities are shaped by both ancient customary codes of conduct and contemporary trends (for example those portrayed in big-screen cinema, all contributing towards “becoming a man”) influencing individual and collective identities. Through its Young Muslim advisory

groups and while working under the umbrella of the *prevent* strategy, the British government may consider designing projects along similar lines. In my view, among contemporary Muslim societies it is gender and not religion that forms the core of regressive radicalism, literalism, militant-jihadist Islamism and even terrorism. Therefore the need is less to remind men about the message of peace in Islam, and more to make them question their socially prescribed masculinity: *practices* through which men idealize flamboyance, aggression and revenge. *Prevent* warns about such terrorist propaganda that manipulates theology, history and contemporary politics to create a sense of division and antagonism among nations (HM Government, 2008: 9). The new “Prevent Strategy 2011” (UK Home Office, 2011) prioritizes the need to respond to the “ideological challenge” of terrorism. It aims at challenging extremism in all its forms (even if non-violent). The Home Office argues that such a strategy is required because evidence has shown that those radicalized in the UK had past associations with extremist organizations. And if the aim under CONTEST is to stop people from becoming terrorists and supporting terrorism, then extremism has to be challenged at a wider scale. I believe that the Home Office is right in observing a connection between apparently non-violent extreme organizations and violent groups. Regressive radicalism and literalism are on the rise inside the Muslim world, and Chapter 1 described Islamist organizations having non-violent and violent wings, with each performing specific functions. Group members of the first can be absorbed into the second as recruits. Therefore, “Prevent 2011” appears to be more holistic in approach. Nonetheless, the concerns over its vague language and it becoming a tool for spying on and intruding in (specifically) Muslim communities and impinging upon civil liberties are equally justified, and must be addressed by the government. My key reservation on “Prevent 2011” is that it is as “gender deficient” as before, particularly on the issue of masculinities. The Home Office and other governments involved in efforts against terrorism should know that references to notions of Muslim manhood and male honour are constantly made by terrorists to inspire youth. Therefore, I find it critical to make clear references to gender in any future attempts at deradicalization. In its fight against terrorism, the Home Office prioritizes a focus on Al Qaeda. This has been viewed apprehensively by critics, who fear it will lead to profiling of Muslims as terrorists – as if the only terrorists the UK should be concerned about. Diaspora dynamics are always more complex, and one needs to appreciate this. However, one also has to recognize that Al Qaeda is not just the UK’s priority challenge, but also that of many Muslim countries around the world.

Japan’s counterterrorism strategy is a non-issue in the Muslim world. The country’s emphasis on development and humanitarian interventions

is largely appreciated by Muslim populations, who consider Japan a neutral and technologically advanced nation bringing betterment and economic progress to the Muslim world. Despite being shameful, it is true that a majority in the Muslim world did not mourn the targeting of the World Trade Center and the loss of innocent lives there. On the other hand, the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States is still lamented. In my opinion, eventually values of mutual respect and tolerance between nations, and not their religious polarities, determine the dynamics of their shared relationship. Japan is not a Muslim state and in fact is as secular as the West. However, its non-exploitative and respectful stance towards Muslim nations, no matter how small, has kept it popular with Muslims. Respected in both the Muslim world and the West, Japan can use its weight to affect policy decisions and strategies of counterterrorism that benefit the whole global community.

Finally, an issue that needs mentioning is the fact that “gender”, both inside the United Nations and elsewhere, is understood as “women” and not quite “men and women”. UNSCR 1325 is the closest that global policy-makers have got in terms of incorporating gender in issues of security. The resolution makes a commitment towards safeguarding women in war situations and increasing their role as global peacemakers. An upheaval in masculinities (particularly Muslim masculinities) is yet to be recognized. This is ironic, considering that it is mainly men who are at the centre of militant-jihadist Islamism, as well as terrorism. When women become involved, it is “the masculine ideal” that they attempt to achieve (discussed in Chapter 10).

## Conclusion

This chapter explored how ordinary individuals who are not always necessarily underachievers or poor or mad become terrorists. Individual and collective identities act as anvils on which terrorists are shaped and solidified. Local contexts authorize and legitimize certain behaviours. Honour codes expect zealous actions from men. Informal and formal societal structures, institutions and systems such as “gender” play an equally important role. Theoretical scholarship shows a symbiosis between gender and politics. Regardless, policy and strategy documents on counterterrorism overlook this very key aspect of the issue.

The chapter presented an overview of current counterterrorism strategies of the United States, the UK, Japan and the United Nations while simultaneously making the “gender-deficient” aspect of current strategies of counterterrorism conspicuous. US counterterrorism, being too much



securitization focused, has left American justice blemished. Claiming to be preventive, policies have remained non-preventive. Human rights and ethics have been compromised greatly, and racial vilification of Muslims has followed. Above all, American policies have proved to be counter-productive, allowing a rise in anti-Americanism and pro/semi-Islamism among Muslim populations. US counterterrorism strategies have remained investigative, obstructive and intrusive. It has been argued that strategies need to be more preventive and transformative in nature. In this regard UK official strategy has been evaluated as relatively more prudent. Although it has faced similar problems regarding compromised principles of human rights, freedom of expression and respect for privacy, it has managed to adopt a moderate approach towards deradicalization. Overall, both countries largely adopted a rather simplistic and symptomatic counterterrorism strategy, not fully taking into consideration other complex issues that form the core of the structure and function of societies with whom they are engaging. I attribute this approach to difficult timing. With Bin Laden dead, what could not be afforded then probably can be afforded now. The dilemma that Japan faced after 11 September was also elaborated. Japan had to decide on a very difficult political position. With no past experience in terms of being able to comprehend terrorist networks as a “global” phenomenon, and with no direct animosity (current or historical) towards Arabs or Muslims and vice versa, Japan had to offer logistic support to the United States and ended up landing on Al Qaeda’s target list. Regardless, currently the country offers important lessons in counterterrorism, particularly in relation to development, technological and humanitarian interventions.

Despite the consequences of their formidable geographical and digital presence, Part I notes with optimism that transnational militant-jihadist and/or terrorist networks have ideological and functional flaws that can severely disrupt their operational success, provided counterterrorism strategists are able to offer something more promising to the vulnerable and troubled Muslim youth around the world.

## Notes

1. *Takfir* has been recognized as a growing phenomenon. Rid (2010) mentions *takfir*, and it has been recorded in official documents (RICU, 2010: 65; HM Government, 2006: 8).
2. For details and similar views see the website of the Muslim Council of Britain on <http://soundings.mcb.org.uk>, in particular Spalek (2011), Allen (2011), Jarvis and Lister (2011), Jackson (2011), McGhee (2011), Alam (2011), Lambert (2011), Brown (2011), Poynting (2011) and Copsey (2011).



3. For more information regarding Japan's experience with terrorism, see Katzenstein (2003).
4. Japan has been named as a target of terrorist attacks in, for instance, messages attributed to Osama Bin Laden in October 2003 and May 2004 (*Focus*, undated), and a statement attributed to Ayman al-Zawahiri in October 2004 (Msnbc.com, undated). Also Southeast Asia, a region geographically close to Japan, has experienced terrorism. Threat of mass and indiscriminate terror has thus reached the areas surrounding Japan.

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## Part II

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# Islam, masculinities and performance

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## Gender theory

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Issues, contexts and processes discussed in Part I raise at least five important points for further evaluation. First, religion and gender have a symbiotic relation, and religious symbolism services men's egos. Second, Muslim masculinities are getting shaped at the interface of deprivations, oppressions and locally valued collective affinities for informal systemic arrangements and expectations on the one hand, and capitalism and globalism on the other hand. Third, violence, aggression and regressive radicalism from men are tolerated in some cultures as social norms. The need is to revive values of equanimity and peace. Fourth, current counter-terrorism strategies are impinging upon a greater vision of global peace. Despite claims made in favour of deradicalization, the *modus operandi* is vague. Fifth, "gender" can be explored as one of the unrecognized battlegrounds on which states can win a greater war against Al Qaeda, its franchises and transnational partners by using peaceful means while aiming for sustainable results.

This brings us to Chapter 3, which introduces the theoretical basis of this study: Butler's "gender performativity" and Connell's "multiple masculinities". The first provides conceptual underpinnings, and the second influences the methodology as well as the philosophical dimensions of this work. Chapter 3 draws material from these two classic texts in gender theory, and records details that are relevant for exploring a nexus between gender and militant-jihadist Islamism and/or terrorism. The chapter has a critical role in understanding the presence of a systemic and collective marginalization context, collectively experienced by Muslim

communities across the globe. Such a context, on the basis of my theoretical assumptions, affects masculinities and gender performances in peculiar ways.

### Conceptualizing gender performativity and multiple masculinities

This study on gender, militant Islamism and terrorism adopts a very focused conceptual approach. Two major ideas exist within gender theory, with the first being Butler's (2006) *gender performativity* as explained in the classic text *Gender Trouble* and the second being *multiple masculinity* as detailed in Connell's (2005) seminal work *Masculinities*, and these have been utilized to illuminate the issue in hand. My reason for engaging with these two texts in particular is my own fascination with the insights presented therein. I also find Butler's and Connell's deliberations very relevant for critically evaluating post-9/11 political milieux. The inclusion of precisely these two texts is not to exclude other social and political theories that can be equally helpful in understanding the issues under discussion. Also, the intent is not to present *gender performativity* and *multiple masculinities* as ultimate conceptual frameworks within which complex issues such as militant-jihadist Islamism and global terrorism can or should be explained. My purpose here is only to deconstruct the man behind an "Islamist", a "militant", "militant Islamist", "jihadist" or anyone susceptible of becoming a "terrorist" by drawing out insights emerging from the two notions of gender performativity and multiple masculinities.

Originally located within queer theory, *Gender Trouble* interestingly informs us about the appalling realities of our current local and global socio-political tendencies and trajectories. Connell's work is as enlightening and classic in nature as that of Butler. Connell does not create categories or typologies of "masculinity", but presents for us four main contexts that shape masculinity. Her work guided me to recognize the significance of social structures (formal and informal institutional arrangements) and cultural, political and socio-economic contexts within which Muslim masculinities are being defined, shaped and manifested. The nineteenth-century context of British and French colonialism in the Muslim world makes Connell's advice to "historicize" masculinity relevant for any study regarding Muslim masculinities. Post-colonial Muslim men share a collective sentiment of being marginalized in their own countries and in the global society. The concept of marginalization is not limited to economic deprivation, but may include social isolation at the interface of politics, race and religion.

Marginalization challenges core attributes that define the masculine gender. This either infuriates men, sending them on trajectories that are regressive, aggressive and reactionary, or emasculates them severely. Post-colonial communities are producing what I understand as resentful and revengeful *aggressive masculinity* on the one hand, and *emasculated masculinity* on the other. Together the two can be understood as protest masculinities: practices that appear from protest contexts, and generate more of it. I consider militant-jihadist Islamism another form of “gender trouble”.

## Gender trouble

Deciding to take an inverted pyramid approach, I shall start by delineating the ostensible problems with Butler’s work as pointed out by political and social scientists. I mention those who used Butler’s work for theorizing their own studies, before finally establishing a connection between the topic at hand and Butler’s classic notion of *gender performativity*. Like other scholars, Butler has had her share of critics. However, the purpose of this book is not to evaluate her as an intellectual, but rather to document my own reading of aspects of *performativity* as conceptualized by Butler. This work may be approached very differently by academics belonging to other disciplines. By authoring thought-provoking works such as *Precarious Life*, Butler (2004) has already stepped into the domain of political sciences and is influencing our understanding of the age of terror. As she points out in the preface to *Gender Trouble*, the text is in use both within and outside academia – an impact that she had not considered at the time of raising questions on *performative gender*. Key areas influenced by her theoretical contributions include drama, visual art, psychiatry, feminist jurisprudence, political theory and anti-discrimination legal scholarship. Butler considers thematic overlaps, such as those of race and gender, and cultural appropriations of her contributions to gender theory as being critical for academic progress.

### *Critique of Butler’s work*

Carver and Chambers (2008) volume *Judith Butler’s Precarious Politics: Critical Encounters* represents the first collective “critical” encounter between scholars of political theory and the work of Judith Butler, with its concepts such as *vulnerability*, *grieving*, *mourning*, *performativity*, *trouble* and the *liveable* life. The volume presents a symbiosis of Butler’s contributions and the realm of the political. Her most notable impact in the intellectual world continues to be her now-famous reversal of the

sex-gender conceptual relationships and the implications of this deconstructive but decisive analysis for the theory and politics of feminism. Butler's engagement with French theory has invited criticism, particularly on grounds that she has used works of French theorists by amalgamating them when they themselves did not necessarily represent the same theoretical movements (Disch, 2008: 50). Critics such as Coole (2008) have blamed Butler for situating her thoughts, including those presented in *Gender Trouble*, in an uncompromisingly anti-humanist setting. A few analysts have explicated her recent writings on politics as works that risk eclecticism and incoherence in relation to the experiential issues of corporeality, materiality, agency, intersubjectivity, politics and society. Butler has also come under criticism for presenting notions of a "constitutive outside" as an existing reality, and arguing strictly in terms of binaries. It has been argued that an emphasis on "binaries", rather than a concern with multiplicities and pluralities of a system, makes Butler's work relevant to structuralism rather than poststructuralism – the school of thought she is mostly associated with. Analysts have also doubted whether "statistically oppositional" and "schematic" language can offer a promising vehicle for the progressive politics that Butler advocates. Finally, Butler has been critiqued on grounds that although she has presented "ontology itself as a contested field", she herself has to acknowledge certain ontological presuppositions (Seery, 2008: 74; Lloyd, 2008: 92).

*Gender performativity* met critics who claimed that the notion undermined validity of political action even when it may be geared towards progressive and positive change. Zivi (2008) emphasizes restoring Butler's valuable contribution to democratic politics. It is important to recognize that in her discussions on politics, Butler presupposes a *performative subject* that has real agency – a subtlety conveniently overlooked by her die-hard critics. The performative subject uses the "excess" inherent in language to remake subjectivity and displace or denaturalize current configurations of power. Understood in this way, demanding rights becomes a remaking of reality and expansion of the liveable, albeit without guarantees (Carver and Chambers, 2008: 6). To say that Butler's theory of performativity has had an important influence on contemporary understandings of gender identity is to make a fairly uncontroversial statement. To say that her theory contributes towards democratic politics is more contested. Zivi (2008: 157–158) poses important questions. What are we to do with Butler's avowed commitment to and continuous engagement with democratic politics? Is performativity really antithetical to or at odds with progressive politics? My view is that this is not the case, and in fact one gets better informed about politics through an understanding of performativity and realizing that performances by default are agentic (where agents can be of either change or continuity).<sup>1</sup> Agency and action

can be either progressive or regressive. The link between performativity and progressive politics is real and significant. Even when performances are regressive, the counterfactual is indeed progressive. Therefore, when Zivi ponders over whether a theory of performativity can actually contribute to or advance a theory and practice in politics, my answer is in the affirmative. In fact, this book establishes the relationship between performativity and politics, and supports performativity as not just any other concept that contributes to democratic politics, but one of *the* most critical elements to be considered for defeating militant and terrorist tendencies among huge populations of men across the Muslim world.

Disciplinary tactics employed on Iraqi prisoners at Abu Gharaib were mainly guided by our understanding of binary categories of masculine and feminine. Men and women are constantly being gendered as they participate in practices mandated by cultural norms of masculinity and femininity, which are themselves contingently related to their respective anatomies. Emasculation is mainly used as a disciplinary technique “to strip prisoners of their masculine gender identity and turn them into caricatures of terrified femininity” (Kaufman-Osborn, 2008: 210, 216–217). The prisoners were made to wear women’s underwear in bright colours like red and then photographed as if they were women. In the United States armed masculinity is constructed through the process of stripping, humiliating and literally emasculating newly recruited servicemen, leaving them as sorry figures so that at the academy they may start anew. In these highly masculine institutions women are almost always mentioned as either sexual items or some form of piffling objects (not really individuals with selfhood). Every taunt at military men is essentially feminine in character, ranging from dirty swearwords to softer versions like “little girl”. Men’s greatest embarrassment is “to be equated to women” (ibid.), and they constantly struggle to maintain their masculinity as an ideal opposed to femininity.

### *Butler’s gender performativity*

Dance and mime are performing arts, as an object in need of *performing* is involved. Painting is not a performing art, as the “primary product is an object that does not stand in need of performance in order to be experienced directly by a public. Performing arts are all temporal arts, in the sense that performances and experiences of them are necessarily extended in time, but not all temporal arts are performing arts” (Honderich, 2005: 689). Time emerges as a key factor that determines the dynamics and duration of the performative. Performances made by individuals change over time. Manifested practices of Muslim masculinities have been shaped by cultural preferences, post-colonial legacies and current



socio-economic and political contexts of the Muslim world. Masculine performances in the Muslim world can be made progressive with sustainable and strategic policy interventions.

Theory undergoes cultural appropriation, and Butler counts this as a productive trend. She recognizes that demand for cultural translation of any theory is usually intense and acute, but the success of such engagement cannot be predicted. Cultural translations of any theoretical paradigm are considered useful. She uses the example of poststructuralism, which at its beginning was about formalism and therefore restricted its capacity to contribute in political progress. However, once adopted within cultural theory, poststructuralism made great contributions to understandings of race, gender, sexuality and post-colonial contexts. All this was a result of a process of cultural translation. Butler places herself and Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Slavoj Žižek at a crossroads of cultural theory and critical theory, and informs us about a symbiosis of the two that has already started.

The main ideas emerging from *Gender Trouble* (Butler, 2006) have been consolidated and presented here. Its first basis originates from Gayle Rubin's (1975) work "The Traffic in Women". For Butler, the idea that sexual practice has the power to destabilize gender emerged from this work. Normative sexuality contributes towards strengthening of normative gender. One is a woman or a man within this heterosexual normative framework. To call that into question, as of course homosexuality has done, is to lose one's place in gender. For Butler this is the first formulation of gender trouble. The terror and anxiety in becoming gay are not limited to religion or ethics, as is mostly portrayed, but, according to Butler, emerge from the fact that one has questioned one's place in the appropriate gender order – a system. For example, sleeping with the same gender challenges one's core identity and people feel anxious as to what they "become" by doing so. Quite obviously, the couple subconsciously use the same prescribed and socially accepted, i.e. "normative", framework of heterosexuality to translate and operationalize their homosexual relationship. It has been argued that in other words nothing changes: it is just a woman trying to act like a man, or the other way around when a man is trying to act like a woman in a male gay relation. To put it differently, gay couples take the system of gender into their private sphere.

Butler has matured her understanding of gender performativity over the years. Performativity of gender revolves around this metalepsis, the way in which the anticipation of a gendered essence produces that which it posits as outside itself. Secondly, performativity is not a singular act, but a *repetition* and a ritual that achieves its effects through its naturalization in the context of a body, understood in part as a culturally sustained temporal duration.

In the preface to the 1999 edition of *Gender Trouble*, Butler explains that by viewing gender as “performative”, one can recognize that what is taken as an internal essence of gender is manufactured through a sustained set of acts, posited through the gendered *stylization* of the body. What we take as an internal feature of ourselves is what we anticipate for ourselves and produce through certain bodily acts – at an extreme, a hallucinatory effect of naturalized gestures.

*Gender Trouble* as a text has expanded the realm of gender possibilities. It does not address the normative or prescriptive dimensions of feminist thought. “Normative” clearly has at least two meanings for Butler. The word can be used to describe mundane violence performed by certain kinds of gender ideals. She uses normative in a way that is synonymous with pertaining to the norms governing that gender. The term also consists of ethical justification: how is it established and what consequences may emerge from it? How is it that we can become judgemental about how “gender” is to be lived? How does a man “become a man”? *Gender Trouble* offers some theoretical descriptions as to how this happens. Mainly, we have an understanding of the gendered world and we look at this as how it *ought to be* and *ought not be*. This is our own normative understanding of the social reality in which we breathe. Butler talks about the descriptive account of gender and the normative account of gender as what will be the case, as opposed to what is the case and in a way should be the case. Gender cannot be described without its normative context, and therefore it cannot be divested of its normativity.

Butler argues that the categories through which one sees the human body cannot be determined. When such categories come into question, the reality of gender is put in crisis. What we take as real or invoke as the naturalized knowledge of gender is in fact a changeable and revisable reality. Call it subversive or call it something else. This insight does not constitute in itself a political revolution, as no political revolution is possible without a radical shift in one’s notion of the possible and the real. But such matters put into question what is gender, how it is produced and reproduced and what are its possibilities. Butler (*ibid.*: xxiv–xxv) maintains: “the sedimented and reified field of gender ‘reality’ is understood as one that might be made differently, and indeed less violently”.

In *Gender Trouble*, Butler repeatedly emphasizes that she is not focused on presenting drag or transsexuals as some form of ideal genders, apart from people making an effort to extend legitimacy to their bodies that have been mostly regarded as false, unreal and unintelligible. But the main task of the theoretical text is to show that:

Naturalized knowledge of gender operates as a preemptive and violent circumspection of reality. To the extent the gender norms ... (rule of proper and

improper masculinity and femininity, many of which are underwritten by racial codes of purity and taboos against miscegenation) establish what will and will not be intelligibly human, what will and will not be considered to be “real”, they establish the ontological field in which bodies may be given legitimate expression. [The purpose of the example of drag] is to expose the tenuousness of gender reality in order to counter the violence performed by gender norms. (Ibid.: xxiv–xxv)

Iterability of performativity has “power” as its precondition.

There is no reason not to use or be used by identity. There is no political position purified of power, and perhaps that impurity is what produced agency as the potential interruption and reversal of regulatory regimes. (Ibid.: xxviii)

Identity is performatively constituted by the very expressions that are said to be its results. Gender is performatively produced and compelled by regulatory practices of gender coherence (ibid.: 35).

It is clear that coherence is desired, wished for, idealized, and that this idealization is an effect of a corporeal signification. In other words, the acts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance but produce this *on the surface* of the body through the play of signifying absences that suggest, but never reveal, the organizing principle of identity as a cause. Such acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are performative in the sense that the essence of identity that they otherwise purport to express are *fabrications*, manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means. That the gendered body is *performative* suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality. This also suggests that if that reality is fabricated as an interior essence, that very interiority is an effect and function of a decidedly public and social discourse. (Ibid.: 185)

Butler argues that such illusions, as if there is an interior or a gender core, are discursively maintained for the purpose of the regulation of sexuality within the obligatory frame of reproductive heterosexuality.

After drawing inspiration from Beauvoir, Butler concludes gender to be “styles of flesh”. She insists that the styles may have emerged due to historical contexts as well, and therefore cultural histories and processes need to be considered in understanding variance in styles of the flesh. Gender is treated by Butler as a “corporeal style, an act” that may be intentional and performative, where the latter suggests a dramatic and contingent construction of meaning (ibid.: 190). Gender has been suggested earlier as a “corporeal project” that is functionalized and *performed* as a

strategy of cultural survival – whose context is duress. Gender reality is constructed through sustained social performances. This “performance always and variously occurs and is a strategy of survival within compulsory systems. Gender is a performance with clearly punitive consequences” (ibid.). Identities are formed through these performances and are not pre-existing as portrayed in these performances.

The very notions of an essential sex and a true or abiding masculinity or femininity are also constituted as part of the strategy that conceals gender’s performative character and the performative possibilities for proliferating gender configurations outside the restricting frames of masculinist domination and compulsory heterosexuality (ibid.: 192–193). Gender is not factual, but is created by performing various acts. In this manner gender becomes an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts. This makes gender a *social temporality* and not just an identity (ibid.: 191). *Performativity* as a notion has “change” embedded within it: over time certain practices can be *discontinued* and gender continues to be reshaped in response to a set of configured acts designed for certain social/historical frameworks – and not really an unchangeable, non-transformative “ground”. This is quite important to realize, as it creates room to explore possibilities of transformations within gender roles, identities, acts and performances. In a way, Butler’s theory has already proved its merits in a rapidly changing industrial and technological milieu that has influenced traditional gender roles and performances. Antagonism between individuals and societies occurs when gender, religious and racial identities are counted as having “fixed grounds”. Transformation in human societies is possible, and social theorists support this position. There always is space for policy-related interventions and progress, and Butler’s theoretical contributions accentuate this claim.

## Notions of masculinity

Work on masculinity has shown that patriarchy is both more complex, for being *more* implicated in the structure of social relations than has sometimes been admitted, and at the same time not as monolithic as has been suggested. Focusing on masculinity should not be seen as a shift away from feminist projects, but rather as a complementary endeavour, indeed one that is organically linked. (Ghousoub and Sinclair-Webb, 2006: 8)

At the beginning, Western feminism was met with defensive arguments from analysts attributing *men’s* behaviour to the biological make of a *male*. Such a diagrammatically opposed thought to feminist theory led to

the reassertion of several versions of masculinity as if it were a biological “given”. However, simultaneously another terrain of literature emerged arguing “masculinity” to be a socially constructed notion, and as such having no determinants (ibid.). There is a whole range of social categories such as race, sexuality, ethnicity and religion that further problematize masculinity. As a practice masculinity has to be understood in a larger and more complex sociological, economic and political context. Processes of socialization and their variations across societies depending on cultural and religious norms also influence the formation and production of masculinity. Through his work, Gilmore (1990, 2001) shows masculinity to be culturally constructed and emphasizes the need to find answers in cultures where masculinities are shaped. Also one must understand why certain biological potentials get exaggerated in specific ways in one or another culture.

The following paragraphs present a comprehensive account of the constitution, representation and effects of masculinity as recorded in published texts. Mangan draws largely from Peter Gay (1993) when discussing the image of an Aryan heroic warrior – “a muscular man, the inviolable, invulnerable, dominant Superman” (Mangan, 1999a: 1). There is a long tradition behind the martial imagery of a hero shaped through a political process. Mangan has critiqued the nineteenth-century aggression of Europeans among themselves and towards other civilizations. There was an aristocratic ideal of essential male prowess and a cult of manliness that evolved directly from it. Also biology, scientific discoveries and a convenient prejudice against other cultures made competitive man more of a hero and Spencer’s (1850; quoted in Mangan, ibid.: 3) “survival of the fittest” became the most followed and expressed soundbite of all times. Such a culture made patronizing, bullying, ridiculing, contradicting, exploiting and exterminating acceptable as *proper* behaviours for men and encouraged in them self-centredness and aggression. At the same time, militaristic masculinity became the essence of manliness and “the heroes” were imagined to have capabilities to accept and act out stern dictates of honour codes (ibid.: 2–3, 8).

Among Europeans, a colonialist appetite for “patriotic aggression” was present. The interest for most men in joining the military is the fact that it is largely a sex-segregated field where men are preferred and considered best suited for the job. All men are not necessarily happy about the military, and conscription and other coercive measures are used to initiate men into masculine practices and values whereby they begin to recognize their desire to fight. Considering that wars are a consistent reality and men are always involved in one or another kind, war cannot be ignored. The nineteenth-century ideology of manliness had a history of

its own, a history of mounting defensiveness and vulgarization and of regression to more uninhibited verbal brutality and more militant postures, culminating in the widespread belief that war was a form of male moral regeneration, a revitalization essential to society's survival, an opportunity for heroic self-sacrifice and thus a manifestation of manly honour: "aggressive cravings as exalted sentiments" (ibid.: 7). Analysts have shared anxieties over "the murderous hero, the supreme specialist in violence" (Mangan, 1999b: 183; Connell, 2005) as one of the central images of masculinity in the Western cultural tradition. Heroes have always been created, and muscled men as torch-bearers, sword-bearers, visionaries, sacrificing comrades were sculpted by the Germans during the 1930s and 1940s and played out by Sly Stallone in Hollywood as a cultural archetype of the American nation – the heroic warrior whose victories over the enemy (Viet Nam) symbolically affirm the country's goodness and power (Connell, quoted in Mangan 1999b: 183).

### *Connell's deliberation on men*

Gender is a social practice that constantly refers to bodies and what bodies do. However, it is not a social practice reduced to body. Gender exists precisely to the extent that biology does *not* determine, i.e. *the social*. It marks one of those points of transition where historical processes supersede biological evolution as the form of change. The usage of masculine and feminine is fundamental to gender analysis. The difference between men and women when termed as masculine and feminine is important for gender analysis, as it is not only about the difference between them but among individuals of one group. For example, men among men are differentiable on the basis of the level of masculinity (Connell, 2005: 69). Most men believe they can exercise a right over the weak, mostly women; that men are authorized by an ideology of supremacy and are justified when they wolf-whistle at women or harass them. All men do not do this – but those who do think they have a right (ibid.: 83). Yet masculinity cannot be interpreted as a fixed propensity to violence (ibid.: 258). Violence is more complex, and has been linked to socio-economic issues, world history (colonialism and its aftermath), etc.

### *Connell and multiple masculinities: Not character typologies but relational dynamics*

A focus on gender relations among men is necessary to keep analysis dynamic and prevent *multiple masculinities* collapsing into a character typology. Recognizing the existence of more than one kind of masculinity

is important, but more critical is to examine relations between them. Masculinities are formed at a crossroads of class and race, and gender relations operating within need to be scrutinized. Hegemonic masculinity is not a fixed character type. In fact it is masculinity that occupies any hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations, a position always contestable. Connell suggests adopting a relational approach that makes it easier to recognize hard compulsions under which gender configurations are formed, the bitterness as well as the pleasure in gendered experience (ibid.: 76). Through her work on Western society, Connell recognizes at least four practices and relations that construct the main patterns of masculinity in the Western gender order: *hegemony*, *subordination*, *complicity* and *marginalization*. These four frameworks allow critical understanding of specific masculinities. As mentioned, these are *not* fixed character types but configurations of practice generated in particular situations in a changing structure of relationships. Connell (ibid.: 81) maintains that any theory of masculinity worth having must give an account of this process of change.

### Marginalized contexts, poverty and their impact on manhood

A predominance of men as terrorists and suicide bombers is indicative of an upheaval in practices of (Muslim) masculinities.<sup>2</sup> Likewise the military chauvinism of a highly masculinized US army and the destruction caused by its military operations in Afghanistan, Pakistan (Waziristan) and Iraq, along with a very oppressive culture of holding detainees in Abu Gharaib and Guantanamo, place responsibility for the current global chaos on the masculine gender. How real is this upheaval in practice of global masculinity, and can it be reversed? Connell's analysis is optimistic: crisis may strike a peculiar *system*, where masculinity is only a configuration of certain *practices* within this larger system of gender order/relations. To state it differently, if there cannot be a crisis of practices, attempts can be made at *transforming* certain practices that characterize masculinity. For example, if men are authorized or prescribed to be violent or compelled to opt for violence, their masculine practices can be realigned and transformed into becoming non-violent. Such an understanding of masculinity promises success for deradicalization and other counterterrorism programmes that are preventive in nature. Crisis will always implicate masculinities, but not necessarily by disrupting them. Crisis may provoke attempts to maintain a certain type of masculinity, making it dominant – hegemonic, so to speak (ibid.: 84). In a way dominant masculinity is less a construction than a production and thus always in tension, acting as a site of mediation and negotiation.



Patriarchal power has lost its traditional legitimacy with the rise of feminism and its acceptance by men who support women's equality. The rise in women's employment, even in Muslim societies, has had a huge impact on gender relations. For instance, Muslim feminists have been arguing for quite some time that Islamic exegesis lacks women's voices and is a product defined by men who have read sacred texts and narratives through a patriarchal prism. For some men these rapid changes and jolts of awakening among women and the activation of their agentic potential can be quite disturbing. Such social transformations that centre on women create high levels of anxiety and possibly outbursts among men – if not against Muslim women then against the West, which is at times accused of being a source of this change through its media and multinational companies.

The most central and almost universal expectation from the masculine gender is to be and to *perform* like a breadwinner. Men fall down the appropriate gender order if they fail to fit into this assigned gender role. Structural unemployment strikes at the very essence of manhood and increases anxiety levels among young men. Most men perform what is known by Marx as “abstract labour”: the lowest common denominator, the capacity to do what anyone can do. Abstract labour turns a man into a simple, monotonous productive force that does not require intense physical or intellectual faculties. His labour becomes a task that anyone can perform (ibid.: 90–96).

Hitting women is common in lower socio-economic groups in Western contexts. Yet men avoid violence against women for fear of being labelled “wimps” and depreciating their maleness by finding an opponent from the “weaker sex”. Women are not considered to be legitimate participants in the exchange of physical aggression (ibid.: 100) due to a natural disparity of physical strength between the two sexes.

### *Production of protest masculinity*

Connell claimed that *protest masculinities* are an active response to situations and build on working-class ethics of solidarity. In my view, men stripped of economic authority tend to adopt political trajectories that facilitate the restoration of (lost) honour: an asset that is essentially considered to be one's own. Largely the phrase *protest masculinities* refers to extreme forms of sex-typed behaviour on the part of some men and causes high levels of physical aggression and destructiveness. Some high levels of sex-typed behaviour in adult males are due to unconscious defensive manoeuvres on the part of men who are in conflict or insecure about their identities as males (Broude, 1990). Hypermasculinity is usually (but not always) at the heart of protest masculinity, and can be



understood by viewing individual measures such as pursuit of military glory, pugnacity, boasting, sensitivity to narcissistic wounds and frequency of theft, personal crime and property crime (ibid.). According to psychological sciences, status envy and father absence are the two major contributing factors that lead to extreme sex-typed behaviours among men and/or protest masculinity (ibid.). Broude (ibid.) statistically proves a solid association between adult hypermasculinity and father absence, and adult hypermasculinity and pressure towards aggression during childhood, i.e. socialization of aggression among boy children by the larger society. High levels of sex-typed behaviour in adult males are highly related to socialization pressures placed upon them during childhood. Similarly, growing up without a mother is quite detrimental for a boy and may cause in him a severely paranoid personality (Ahmed, 2006). Against this backdrop, a passing reference needs to be made to the many boys who have grown up without fathers and mothers due to years of war in Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan. A sense of injustice largely prevails among the masses due to inequitable distribution of wealth throughout the Muslim world. Thus status envy is a familiar emotion for those who feel marginalized and neglected. It is also important to recognize the discomfort with which subject communities view modernization projects of their former colonial masters.<sup>3</sup>

Central to the making of gender are active processes of grappling with a situation and developing the means to survive within it. Class deprivation whose starting point is poverty may lead to displays of aggression by certain groups towards those who are culturally, economically or socially more secure; for example, the “bikers” with all their tattoos and anger against straight people. This needs to be understood as class resentment as well as a display of collective masculinity. Their deprivations generate in them a reaction to their own rejection by society – converting/transforming them into something that the rest of the society dreads. Those interviewed by Connell (2005: 114–118) encouraged their boy children to try boxing and weightlifting, so that if someone hassles them, they can really beat them up. Together they make a “class statement”: for example, if they give us a hard time, we give them a hard time. In this group one can find men who are misogynists and do not want their wives to earn more than them, as it would lower their self-esteem – even expanding the education base of such men may not change these deeply ingrained attitudes. Men from this group want benefits that emerge from male supremacy. There are also men who, although wanting to remain in command, do not opt for physical confrontation. Such men distance themselves from hegemonic masculinity, and their masculinity becomes complicit in the collective project of patriarchy.

The project of protest masculinity also develops in a marginal class situation, where the claim to power that is central in hegemonic masculinity is constantly negated by economic and cultural weakness. [A man] may be strong and his tattoos scary, but he cannot even read . . . By virtue of class situation and practice, these men have lost most of the patriarchal dividends. (Ibid.: 116)

These men resolve this situation by embracing marginality and stigma and displaying them in spectacular fashion. They are not defending traditional working-class masculinity, as most of them now let their women find employment due to economic constraints. Yet these men have insecurities about the possibility of their woman cheating on them – mainly because socially and economically she is doing better than him. Therefore they immediately adopt ways to style themselves as credibly revengeful or threatening to outsiders. At the group level, the collective practice of masculinity becomes a performance. The problem is that this performance is not leading anywhere. These men do not have a sense of an individual or shared future. The bikers in Connell's research contemplate dying at 40, using the principle of "live fast and die young and die on the bike". Death on a bike is a powerful theme in motorbike culture internationally and is taken as almost a religion by bikers (ibid.: 116–117).

Practices are mediated through conceptions of masculinity (ibid.: 206). The patriarchal system as an order keeps running, and at times masculinity *per se* does not need to be particularly thematized. One looks around and finds that many institutions, state apparatuses and business spaces are already patriarchal and masculinity is routinely in action. What is usually highlighted is "national security, corporate profits, family values, true religion, individual freedoms or international competitiveness or economic efficiency or advance of science. Through everyday working of institutions defended in such terms, the dominance of a particular kind of masculinity is achieved" (ibid.: 212–213). Yet crisis tendencies in the gender order do emerge, and as a result hegemonic masculinity is thematized. The interplay between routine maintenance and explicit masculinity politics can be followed in different arenas of practice, for example "masculine violence, the promotion of exemplary masculinities and the management of organizations" (ibid.: 213). Eighteenth-century Europe and North America defined masculinity in opposition to femininity, and institutionalized it in economy and state (ibid.: 189).

*Hegemonic masculinity* "performs" in three vast arenas. Cases of domestic abuse reveal that a husband is self-assured that he has a right and duty to keep the wife *in her proper place* and maintain good order and discipline in the family. Violence on the largest possible scale is the purpose of the military, and this culture is mainly about hegemonic

masculinity. Second, “hero” is central to the Western cultural imagery of the masculine, the “warrior”, a “knight in shining armour”. Military prowess as a test of honour was in medieval Europe a class theme of knight-hood. Such imagery is used by militaries even today, and young recruits are made to idealize violence in a hero’s garb. Connell (ibid.: 214) describes this masculine heroism as further pinnacled with presentations of exemplary masculinities. Men who did not fall short! Men who acted as violent machines lacking emotion. Films throughout the 1970s and 1980s eliminated women altogether, and muscular men like Stallone and Schwarzenegger appeared as Rambo, Rocky and Terminator. It is interesting to see the release of such films in the era when feminism was strengthening and there was more talk of gender equality. It appeared as if through such films men were trying to hold on to the power quarters of plain violence as their very own. In the 1950s *Playboy* magazine expanded to form clubs and its readership was converted into membership, with women employees reduced to “bunnies”. Other than Rambo-types who were “ice” towards women, an image of a corporate sexual hero consuming an endless supply of desirable young women emerged. As Connell (ibid.: 215) discusses, this type of “exemplary” masculinity became collectivized through the growth of the pornography industry. The management of patriarchal organization is the third arena. We all know that power relations are practised: the important question is “how” they are practised. “Institutions do not maintain themselves – someone has to practise power for power effects to occur” (ibid.: 214–215). Historically one can see who emphasizes command and who gets to exert authority. Also, who gets to claim expertise in a particular field? Hegemonic masculinity is actively and consciously defended. There is no visible “patriarch headquarters”, as pointed out by Connell, but small groups of men in their routine jobs pose challenges to one another and keep this institutional arrangement running. Connell warns that we live in a world order whose central pillar is a “competitive” and “dominance”-oriented masculinity that insists on maintaining itself and gives rise to tides that become difficult to reverse, mainly because of the very nature of hegemony – once introduced, it does not retreat (ibid.). When hegemonic masculinity is defended (the way it is being defended now by employing formidable resources), the impacts can be found in the trajectories that emerge from institutions dominated by such masculinity. This slows down the process of change in gender arrangements, i.e. revising, reviewing or transforming practices in masculinity and femininity. We live in a world where aggressive masculinity is hegemonic masculinity, and where destructive potentials of military technologies and terrorist networks have increased manifold. But we also live in a world where marginalization does not allow men to maintain their most essential “self-respect” and “honour”.

## Conclusion

Societies treat gender norms as legitimate expressions, and through them authorize and legitimize violent masculine practices. We have created action heroes, and now we have trouble handling real-life action, i.e. bombings. Societies can also produce and perform gender that is very different and non-violent. Gender performances are temporal and there is always an opening for introducing or rejecting certain practices of the masculine gender. The whole logic of gender reality is born out of the human need to survive through an allocational principle as to who will do what. If gender ends up creating survival issues (as in the age of terror), gender, i.e. the *system*, needs to be regulated along new lines of thought. Masculinities can be reworked, as these are constructions/productions “in the making” and they can be intercepted. Masculinities can become “new”, and their meaning and practices can continue to evolve (Gilmore, 1990; Mangan, 1999a, 1999b; Hodgson, 1999).

Butler’s politics presupposes a *performative subject* that has real agency – a subtlety conveniently overlooked by her critics. Nonetheless, one has to be aware that agency and action can be both regressive and progressive. Agents can lead to *change* or they may insist on *continuity* of certain practices. The link between *performativity* and progressive politics is real and significant. A relationship between *gender performativity* and politics in the age of terror has been explored in this book: it supports performativity as not just any other concept that contributes towards democratic politics, but as one of *the* most critical elements to be considered for successfully tapering down militant and terrorist tendencies among huge populations of men across the Muslim world. Simultaneously, the dilemma of a collective Muslim masculinity based on class resentment can be understood within contexts of marginalized existences and protest expressions. Oppression and occupation of Muslim populations and lands impinge upon the basic dignity of manhood with as much severity as is felt by women victims of violence.

## Notes

1. See Jeffery (1998), Pathak and Rajan (1989), Moallem (1999) and Hoodfar (1997) for this debate.
2. Women are also involved in militant-jihadist Islamism, but their numbers are relatively low. For further details on the role of women in militant Islamism, please see Chapter 10.
3. Hodgson (1999) in her study of Maasai masculinities warns that issues such as relationships between experiences of modernity and formation of individual and collective subjectivities are important.

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## Islamic masculinities

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Allah doth wish to lighten you – for mankind was created *weak*. (Al-Quran, 4:28)

While “Islamic masculinities” are the focus of this chapter, the rest of this book discusses in detail the dynamics of “Muslim masculinities” in the Middle East and North Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Muslim men tend to attribute most of their actions to Islam, and therefore quite often the two words are used interchangeably as if they are synonyms. I understand “Islamic” and “Muslim” as two separate but interconnected identities. Islamic masculinities are *thought* to be what ideally Muslim masculinities *ought to* but may not necessarily be; despite the fact that the word Muslim means one who (successfully) submits to the commandments of God. One comes to have a “Muslim” identity by being born in a Muslim household. Muslims may draw influences from actual codes of the religion of Islam in varying degrees, their understanding mostly mediated through elements such as culture and individual and communal subjectivities. The moniker “Islamic”, on the other hand, has a clout of “religious authenticity” and is practically difficult to master. I thus consider Islamic masculinities as practices adopted by prophets, saints and ordinary individuals who without any ulterior motives or political agendas struggle to personify the Quran and Sunnah.

Although this study is influenced by Connell’s work, “characterizing” masculinities that appear in the Quran and Sunnah is almost unavoidable. Muslim men justify their hypermasculinized and predominantly

aggressive and oppressive personalities through religious texts and narratives. The objective of this chapter is to present a consolidated version of the notion of “masculinity” within Islamic texts and narratives. The purpose here is not to start a theological or historical recap of Islam; the decision to include the chapter stems from recognition that contemporary practices in Muslim masculinities cannot be fully understood without referring to the basics of “masculinity” in Islam, if any. While drawing upon the Quran and the Prophet’s sayings, *hadith*, this chapter prepares the foundation for answering two questions: what was expected of Muslim men, and what have they become? This chapter answers the first question: *what was expected* or what Muslim men *ought to be*. This is a critical question and calls for introspection from Muslim men the world over, particularly from those sliding into regressive radicalism, cultural literalism, militant Islamism, jihadism and terrorism. My hope is that the information included can be used for purposes of deradicalization of Muslim men. There are aspects of Islamic masculinities that can serve as an “alternative masculinity” to the dominant/hegemonic “aggressive” Muslim masculinity.

Those with an interest in Islam might already be aware of a few components mentioned here. Nonetheless, by and large the information provided is valuable and has been collected through direct interviews of Pakistani Islamic scholars affiliated with academic and research institutions in the country, as well as a few senior imams heading Sunni and Shiite mosques in Islamabad. The scholars were asked to illuminate Islam’s stance on gender and the concept of masculinity in the light of religious texts. They were also asked to respond to questions such as to what extent do the Quran and *hadith* introduce masculinity as a subcategory, or a practice within gender; what is the difference between masculinity and femininity according to the Quran and Sunnah; what is an ideal or exemplary masculinity in the teachings of the Quran; and what characteristics and personal attributes must Muslim men uphold? Profiles of at least 25 prophets mentioned in the Quran were also thematically assessed to understand their primary and recurring characteristics as men. Wherever considered necessary, Quranic verses and *hadith* have been quoted.

### Concept of gender in textual and *sufi* Islam

Primarily the Quran is for humankind, and establishes the significance of morality while prescribing a value structure defining positive and negative behaviours for human beings. In addition, a number of directives are revealed for men and women as individuals considering their biological differences.<sup>1</sup> Islam considers *amal* (deed) as central, and ignores the

biological sex of the doer. A bad or a good deed is determined by itself.<sup>2</sup> The asymmetry observed in male and female morality is a product of Muslim local cultures and traditions and is not supported by the Quran or Sunnah.<sup>3</sup>

For Muslim men and women, for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for true men and women, for men and women who are patient and constant, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who give in Charity, for men and women who fast (and deny themselves), for men and women who guard their chastity, and for men and women who engage much in Allah's praise – for them has Allah prepared forgiveness and great reward. (Al-Quran, 33:35)

Therefore Islam's focus is on entirety, universality, and the focus remains on the relationship between the Creator and creation. Gender, the category of man and woman, is presented in Islam only for purposes of "regulation of humanity". However, this should not create any issues as long as "Islam is not divested of spirituality and its central element of *wholeness* of humanity remains".<sup>4</sup>

Islam presents a code of gender-based expectations considering biological differences between the two sexes. The most prominent gender-based designation, and perhaps the most discussed by Western and Muslim feminists alike, is that of men made *qawwam* (custodian) over women. Almost all Islamic scholars interviewed for this book insisted that the status of *qawwam* did not make men superior to women, and nor did it give men a licence to police or dictate to womenfolk. In fact being made a *qawwam* is largely understood as a very challenging gender-based *expectation* from men – a cumbersome responsibility rather than a privilege. Islamic scholars consider this status to be a result of the Creator's understanding of his own creation, whereby hard and crude labour is imposed on the male body, making it incumbent upon him to *maintain and protect*, and ensure the well-being of women at all costs and under all circumstances. The female body is not considered weak, and is equipped to go through the trials of childbirth. Although women can procreate, they are *not assigned* this role. Infertility as a condition (mainly a trial from God) is mentioned at several places in the Quran. In contrast, the role of being a *qawwam* has been *assigned* to men. Men and women are expected to complement each other, with men having a degree of extra responsibility towards those dependent on them, mainly their wives and children. Thus a man can be made accountable on "religious grounds" for failing to provide for his family, or being negligent towards the welfare of his household. On the other hand, no such responsibility and consequent accountability are placed upon women. Islamic texts highly recommend and advise women to be kind and caring towards their husbands, but a

woman is not made *responsible* for her husband. It is obligatory for a husband to take care of his wife by virtue of being her *qawwam*.<sup>5</sup> Even if he divorces her, he cannot escape the responsibilities imposed upon a *qawwam* and has to continue providing maintenance to his former wife according to court orders. A woman does not have any such responsibility towards him – and this applies even if she earns more than him.

Similarly, jihad in the battlefield, if required, is termed obligatory for men but not for women. The hardship of battle and jihad is made obligatory for men considering their physical attributes, and women are exempted from all confrontational forms.

The Islamic sacred text focuses on “gender relations” rather than gender in isolation.<sup>6</sup> Interestingly enough, within secular contexts this relational approach is emphasized by development and gender theorists, including Connell (2005: 76). Islamic texts grant an unimaginably profound social status to mothers, while fathers only appear nominally. Muslim children are not just advised but obliged to respect and care for their mothers three times more than their fathers. Prophetic traditions metaphorically convey to Muslim children that heaven lies under their mother’s feet. This can be interpreted in two ways: first, the doorstep to heaven is reached by obeying one’s mother, and second, heaven is less sacred than one’s mother. In a typical Muslim household, children grow up with an obsessive mother-centric mindset. In such a societal setting, it should not be surprising to find adult men marrying in accordance to their mothers’ choice. Islamic scholars argue that by making husbands *qawwam* over their wives, the Divine balances household relations. Subsequently, it is “hoped” that women who are respectful to their husbands will transfer the same to their children. Had this not been the case, there is every likelihood that men would have occupied just the fringes of a Muslim household. Brothers and sisters are considered to be equal to one another in terms of rights and duties during childhood. On growing up, brothers are expected to act as a parallel support system to their fathers and are made responsible for the well-being of their unmarried sisters. The Quran introduces daughters as far superior to sons, and a number of prophetic traditions promise heaven for parents who have raised daughters in happiness and thankfulness.

The religion of Islam is not only textual but also *sufic*. Almost all *sufis* have engaged with the Quranic text and presented to the world pearls of wisdom in the form of *sufi* poetry and chants. In *sufism*, human consciousness is psychologically “demasculinized”. *Sufism* glorifies contemplation and a passive-receptive attitude, and it is believed that “macho insights reveal nothing of God” (Ong, 1981: 63). The word “Islam” itself has profound connotations of submission, acceptance and surrender – all sounding stereotypically feminine attributes (Ahmed, 2006: 18–20).



It is important to mention that according to Islamic teachings Allah is genderless, both in character and in the Arabic language of the Quran, which does not allocate a masculine pronoun of “He” to God. Male and female are considered “creations” made by the “Creator”, while the Creator remains only a creator and cannot be summarized as a *he* or *she*. Yet a deeper and more sensitive reading of the Quranic text reveals that Allah’s attributes can be divided into masculine, feminine and neutral. The *sufic* understanding of the Quranic text is very interesting. It assumes that God has asked both men and women to fashion themselves on *hasana* (literally “beauty”) – a female adjective. Therefore *sufi* poets, particularly those in the Indian subcontinent (including Pakistan) can be noted for using the feminine pronoun for themselves. Similarly the Quranic verse *Bismillah Ar-Rahman – Ar Rahim* (In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Beneficent) is perhaps the most recited verse among Muslims, and within it the word *Rahman* is derived from the Arabic word *rahma* (literally “womb”) – a feminine noun/adjective. *Sufis* believe that Allah’s kindness and mercy overtake Allah’s anger. Within *sufi* Islam, feminine is understood as the normal, natural flow of existence and masculine is associated with extraordinary circumstances, the unusual, for example in situations of war. In peacetime, the rhythm of this world is modelled on the “feminine”. The receptacle is literally and metaphorically feminine. People are not asked to be timid, most particularly men, but are guided to uphold feminine traits to achieve greater standards of humanity – for example grace, modesty, munificence, mercy, kindness and patience. All these very feminine aspects are enjoined by the Quran on both men and women equally, and with them is associated tremendous success in both this world and the afterworld. Harmony runs on “feminine” for both men and women.<sup>7</sup> Simultaneously, the Quran takes the reality of this world into account. Injustice and oppression are bound to give rise to a more active, reactionary role among mankind. Within *sufism*, anger is associated with masculine attributes and perceived as a deviation from the norm (*fitrah*). The Quran does not provide space for tolerating *zulm* (cruelty and injustice). “In case of *zulm*, the calling forth of masculine attributes of *jalah* [power] is in order.”<sup>8</sup> *Sufism* does not discriminate between women and men, and whoever is made to tolerate injustice has to rise proactively against oppression. If the sufferer is a woman, she has to bring forth her “masculine” attributes – her anger, reaction and decisiveness – rather than the usual calmness of her feminine persona. *Zulm* emerges when people suppress their feminine side, i.e. their gentle side. If *zulm* is understood as darkness then *adal* (equanimity) is understood in *sufism* as a situation where all things occupy their proper place and an equilibrium is reached. It is the feminine equilibrium that ensures *adal*. The masculine attributes of human beings are responsible

for not only disturbing this equilibrium but also restoring it from time to time.<sup>9</sup>

### Prophets: All God's *men*

According to Islamic belief, 124,000 prophets were sent to earth and out of these the Quran mentions only the 25 considered best among the Chosen Ones. All prophets were men and left some impression during their lifetime. The Divine in the Quran has praised these men. In my opinion, practices of these men can serve as reliable indicators for an ideal "Islamic masculinity".

Regardless of their gender, the Quran introduces Adam and Eve as equally vulnerable to temptations of the Devil. Adam's humility and honesty were the most prominent features of his persona. He proved himself to be a man who "repented" over his errors without serving any sham ego, pride or arrogance. Adam was regretful and remorseful after eating an apple from the forbidden tree. One does not read of him developing excuses and implicating his wife Eve, or even blaming Satan. Adam's sense of responsibility for his own deeds is granted high value in the Quran; it also notes Abraham, the father of monotheism, as an upright man (Al-Quran, 2:135, 4:125, 6:161) who surrendered only in front of Allah and Its commandments (ibid.: 3:67). Abraham was not a Jew, nor yet a Christian, but he had unparalleled courage of conviction and was powerful in presenting arguments to his political opponents. He had the courage to understand Allah better by questioning It; "My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead." [Allah] said, 'Have you not believed?' He said, 'Yes, but [I ask] only that my heart may be satisfied . . .'" (ibid.: 2:260). In other words, Abraham was fearless and brave and could only be subdued by Allah, in whom he believed. "And We imposed a duty upon Abraham and Ishmael [saying]: Purify My house for those who go around and those who meditate therein and those who bow down and prostrate themselves [in worship]" (ibid.: 2:125).

Abraham was given the enormous task of "establishing" a new social order by eliminating the existing one. From a gender perspective, his masculine traits were called into action. He was a son who rebelled against his father's religion, a husband who in search of the Divine did not succumb to worldly sentiments but abandoned his wife Hagar in a desert with their small baby. According to Muslim belief, as a father, Abraham asked his son Ishmael (Isma'il) to sacrifice himself to God. Ishmael was brave when he offered himself for Allah. "And when [his son] was old enough to walk with him, [Abraham] said: O my dear son, I have seen in a dream that I must sacrifice thee. So look, what thinkest thou?"

He said: O my father! Do that which thou art commanded. Allah willing, thou shalt find me of the steadfast” (ibid.: 37:102). A very “manly” exchange of words occurs between the two, and the woman (a wife to one and a mother to the other) is noticeably absent. The transfer of heritage from father to son emerges as an important aspect of Abraham-Ishmael tradition. The act of submission followed by the father is successfully transferred to the son as some form of patriarchal exclusive and Hagar, despite giving birth to Ishmael, is missing. Abraham’s lifestyle appears to be formulary masculine. By this standard, establishment of monotheism is certainly the most impactful masculine achievement in human history. However, his life also reveals that with the power of intellectual reasoning Abraham was able to disagree with his father. Abraham was close only to God. He had two wives and two sons, but in the end we find him leaving all human contacts behind. He was neither with Sarah and her son Isaac, nor with Hagar and her son Ishmael. As mentioned, the climax of Abraham’s story is the offer to sacrifice his son, and this is almost like a valorization of paternity over and above any parental claims that the mother, who neither knows nor is asked, can make (Rahman, 2006: 74).

Among other prophets mentioned in the Quran, Enoch (Idrees) is appreciated for his patience and truthfulness. Noah (Noh) is introduced as a humble, patient and grateful man; one who kept his covenant, survived constant political opposition and was persecuted, and became a migrant/refugee leaving everything behind. His nation was unjust, despotic and licentious, and Noah refused to follow suit. Both Noah and Lot were deceived and betrayed by their wives. One does not come across any references where these wives were forcibly brought to submission or beaten up by the prophets. The Quran informs us that eventually both Noah and Lot decided to walk away from their wives, leaving them with the repercussions of their own decisions. Abraham (Ibrahim), Isaac (Is’haq) and Jacob (Ya’qub) in the Quran (38:45) occupy the mantle of “possessors of power and vision”. John (Yahya) is appreciated for being dutiful to his parents, “and he was not arrogant, [or] rebellious” (ibid.: 19:14). Moses (Musa) with his lion heart dared to ask God to reveal Himself to him. Not quite knowing what to expect as a result, Moses appears to be stereotypically masculine here. Jesus (Esa) was miraculous in unthinkable ways. By Allah’s leave, he defended his mother’s “honour” right from the cradle, providing testimony to her “purity” and declaring his own prophethood. Safeguarding women’s honour is also perceived as quintessentially masculine, and one sees Jesus almost becoming a *qawwam* for Mary – her custodian, her protector, but also an “obedient son”.

Prophets were ordered by the Divine “to set their houses in order”. It is important to recognize the implications of this text for gender relations. Prophets had to tolerate heavy losses during their search for God.

There are a number of references throughout the Quran that mention prophets being ordered to leave their lands, homes, people, even their wives and sons, and undertake difficult journeys, live life destitute or as political prisoners, etc. If comparisons are drawn, the life of father of monotheism Abraham will appear to be tougher and more rebellious than that of the last messenger of monotheism, Prophet Muhammad. Also, in terms of gender relations, women appear to be more expressive and controlling in Prophet Muhammad's household than they were in Abraham's. The influence of at least three women, Khadija, Aisha and Fatima, in the life of Prophet Muhammad is well documented in existing scholarship.

### *Muhammad*<sup>10</sup> – *The man*

And you [Muhammad, stand] on an exalted standard of character. (Al-Quran, 68:4)

Ye [the Believers] have indeed in the Messenger of Allah [i.e. Muhammad] a beautiful pattern of conduct . . . (Ibid.: 33:21)

Anas ibn Malik, who served Muhammad for ten years, recorded: "When I did something, he never questioned my manner of doing it; and when I did not do something, he never questioned my failure to do it. He was the most good-natured of all men." (Sahih Bukhari, 8(73), No. 64)

Khadija, the first cousin to Waraqah, the Christian, had been married and widowed twice. She sent word to Muhammad asking him to visit her. She said to him: "Son of mine uncle, I love thee for thy kinship with me, and for that thou art ever in the center, not being a partisan amongst the people for this or that; I love thee for thy trustworthiness and for the beauty of thy character and the truth of thy speech." Then she offered herself in marriage to him. She herself was still beautiful, but she was fifteen years elder to him. He said: "I am willing." Khadija stayed an intimate friend to Muhammad, the sharer of his inclinations and ideals to a remarkable degree . . . his wise counselor. (Lings, 2006: 34–37, 98)

Not many know that Muhammad (literally "the praiseworthy") was not his name at birth but was bestowed upon him by the Divine. Consequently a question arises as to what made Ahmed into Muhammad, the praiseworthy one? It is important to answer this question, as this can provide major benchmarks for an ideal Islamic masculinity.

Abraham's masculinity is more authoritative than Muhammad's, who is believed to be a man foundationally compassionate and mild in nature. To put it differently, Abraham agreed to sacrifice his son for God, and

Muhammad's tears over the natural deaths of his sons and daughters became narratives within Islamic tradition and history. Documented information on Muhammad places immense emphasis on his *noble* tribal heritage of Bannu Hashim. The tradition prevailing in Hijaz at the time took patrilineal *nasab* (lineage) and men's martial competency as major proof of their authentic manhood (Roded, 2006). Of paramount significance were moral qualities of *rajul* and good manners. During the formative years of Islamic culture locals in Arabia considered chastity, good nature and conduct, dignity, compassion and urbanity as virtues. In addition, early Muslims reckoned virility as a crucial and determining factor in establishing one's manhood (ibid.: 58–59). This social context explains the boundless emphasis placed by Islamic historians on Muhammad's heritage and his polygamous lifestyle – at times to the extent of being unethical and distasteful, as explained later.

Not just Muslim men but also Muslim women find Muhammad highly inspirational. Despite their current low status, Muslim women continue to love and respect Muhammad. Exceptions like Ayaan Hirsi Ali are always there, whose work should be read in the context of their personal life experiences rather than be generalized or taken as representative of the larger Muslim majority. Muhammad's personality exhibits what is “human”, and not necessarily what is masculine or “male” *per se*. The following paragraphs prove that his masculinity was not a primary feature of his persona or aura. Muhammad was not a warrior, nor a representation of an “ultra” Arab male of his time. In his early twenties Muhammad made a debut in the world of business, commerce and trade. Meccans lovingly called him *Saadiq* (the Honest) and *Amin* (the Trustworthy), and he enjoyed a good reputation. The two qualities emanated from his principled life, rather than any domineering or ferocious expression of his masculine gender. It was not that iron-fisted men were not noted in the Arabia of those times – in fact, Muhammad's cousin Ali, his uncle Hamza and his close companion Umar have made their way into Islamic history on the basis of masterful displays of physical force and courage; men whom the enemy forces found disturbingly fearsome. It was just that Muhammad was different, and his character was distinctly mild and sober in comparison to other men around him.

Arab men often wrestled to prove their power. Muhammad stayed away from such displays and once remarked: “Powerful man is not the one who throws another on the ground but the one who defeats his *nafs* [inner temptations].”<sup>11</sup>

While still in his twenties, he immediately accepted the marriage proposal of Khadija, a professional woman almost twice his age. Upon marrying her, Muhammad matured into a family-oriented man and fathered

four daughters. Even now, but most particularly in ancient times, Arab men routinely retired into the desert for all-male exclusive respite. Muhammad, on the other hand, liked spending time in meditation or helping women around the house. He participated in household chores stereotypically associated with women, and did sewing, cooking and washing.

He spent time in having relaxing conversations with his daughters, most particularly with Fatima, something that was neither then nor is today Arabia's culture. Muhammad once proudly told those around him: "Fatima is an integral part of me." This comment needs to be contextualized, as it is not limited to suggesting Fatima as being his biological child. The Arabs felt shame and embarrassment over the birth of girl children and preferred hiding it, and at times even burying the girl child alive. Even today, the graveyard where infant girls were buried alive exists quite near to the Holy Mosque in Mecca. In such circumstances, Prophet's regard for his daughter was not ordinary, but extraordinary.<sup>12</sup>

By declaring Fatima as his very own, Muhammad was clearly redefining gender relations in Arab culture. He has been recorded as always standing (in respect) for his daughters and spreading his personal cloak out for them to sit on. This gesture is revolutionary in the context of a culture that considered women as a source of defilement and contamination due to their most basic biological functions of menstruation and childbirth. Thus this attribute of high levels of reliance, trust and emotional dependency on the womenfolk of his household set Muhammad apart from his contemporary Muslim followers. Khadija, Aisha and Fatima featured prominently during his lifetime. He called Aisha *Sadiqa* (the Honest and Truthful One) and transferred much of his religious knowledge to her; this she further transmitted in the form of more than 2,000 quotes, out of which more than 300 are included in compilations of authentic *hadith*.

In all probability, it is Muhammad's polygamous lifestyle that significantly *hypermasculinizes* him in a stereotypical way. Classical Muslim scholars have studied Muhammad as a man called to a mission by God, but also as someone who could be characterized by sexuality, much like David and Solomon. It is not difficult to imagine the extreme commentary on Muhammad's polygamous life by the two frameworks of Christianity and Islam, with the former considering women as a source of distraction from God and the latter perceiving women and children as a conduit to gain higher moral grounds and eventually spiritual success. While Muslim scholars have found Muhammad's interest in women and his virility a sign of his humanity and "normalcy", Christian clergy who promoted celibacy attacked by declaring him as a false prophet. Muhammad's marriages have been criticized as acts of lust, with a few even

declaring him a child abuser for consummating his marriage with 11-year-old Aisha. In contrast, Muslim apologists have directed efforts towards justifying each of Muhammad's marriages on the basis of some political reason or Divine intervention. Succinctly stated, both Muslim and Western sources have remained interested in dehumanizing Muhammad, with Muslim sources at times desexualizing and on other occasions oversexualizing him and Western sources unnecessarily and accusatively oversexualizing him. Roded (ibid.: 32) informs us that it was not until the nineteenth century that the Western bias against Muhammad was discovered, mainly by those colonized Indian Muslims who travelled to the UK for studies or work. Consequently, Muslims of India started working on manuscripts that documented Muslim understandings of Muhammad's personality. Muslim scholars have oscillated between two positions on Muhammad's multiple marriages. The first thesis is that most of these marriages were either political settlements or favours bestowed upon widows or divorcées. The second widely agreed understanding is that he had multiple wives mainly because he was blessed with a miracle of inexhaustible virility – with some sources even recording that he had sexual prowess equivalent to that of 40 ordinary men and could literally satisfy all his wives in one night (ibid.: 55).<sup>13</sup> I understand the first as a desexualizing discourse, and the second as an oversexualizing critique – an embarrassing product of an all-male-centric Islamic exegesis. In Muslim contexts, masculinity is often portrayed in a pea-brained, rugged manner – even if the subject under discussion is Muhammad. The Islamic scholars, all men, can be seen transposing their virility- and potency-related anxieties, the phobia of *performance* failure, on to Muhammad's private life. These scholars could not have been expected to do a better job. One has to recognize that a large part of Muhammad's life was spent as a refugee persecuted for his religious beliefs. Is the plight of refugees too difficult to imagine? There are countless religious references that mention Muhammad prioritizing prayer and being visited by Gabriel. This should not be surprising: it is the expected life of most prophets, not just Muhammad. Against this backdrop, trying to prove Muhammad's masculinity through his virility, having sexual interaction with different wives each day and night, seems not only exaggerated but also shamefully ridiculous. Such irresponsible statements on the part of Muslims scholars have provided ample opportunities for Islam polemicists to present Muhammad as a man with insatiable lust for women. Had Muslim women been widely included during the deliberations on the life of Muhammad, the masculine sketch of Muhammad would not have been so unseemly phallic – a thought product of embedded *performance* anxieties of Muslim men.

I shall state here a few features of Muhammad's polygamous life in a clear manner so that some conclusions can be drawn regarding his mas-



culinity. First, throughout his youth Muhammad was monogamous; he became polygamous only after Khadija's death. Second, it is true that Muhammad married some of the most beautiful women of his time, particularly Aisha Bint Abu Bakr, Zaynab Bint Jahsh, Juwayriyya bint Al-Harith, Rayhana bint Zayd, Asma bint al Nu'man, Mariya al Qabtiyya and Saffiya bint Huyyayy, and that out of all things in this world, Muhammad openly admitted his natural affection for women and fragrances. Third, it is an equally important fact that he married ordinary-looking and even old women, like Sawdah, his second wife. Fourth, Muhammad never abducted any of these women: they all freely agreed to marry him, with some even offering their hands in marriage to him on their own (he is believed to have been an exceptionally handsome and charismatic man). Fifth, even the worst of Muhammad's critics, including those who planned for his political assassination, did not condemn or invalidate his marriages – not even that with Aisha, who was betrothed to Jubair bin Mut'im prior to her marriage to Muhammad. To put it differently, in that age and time, none of Muhammad's marriages was illegal, unethical or invalid and his actions were authorized under law. The Arab tribal customs were such that even women could have two or three successive husbands. Sixth, other than Aisha, Muhammad had no maiden as a wife – quite unlike the preferences of Arab men, who not only selected maidens but then had (and in some tribes still have) a set of risqué customs to celebrate their prized possession. Seventh, according to authentic Islamic traditions, Muhammad's wives routinely argued, criticized and questioned, and yet no event of him being violent towards them has ever been reported or recorded. On a number of occasions Muhammad warned men against behaving badly towards their women lest they became sources for sending men to hell on account of this maltreatment. Once, expressing his revulsion and shock on violence against women, Muhammad protested: "How can anyone of you beat his wife . . . and then try sleeping with her?" (Sahih Bukhari, Vol. 8(73), No. 68).

Aisha, noted as an abused child in many Western sources, lived for another 46 years after Muhammad's demise. She grew up to record one of the largest segments of Prophetic traditions and commanded at the Battle of Camel against Ali. She is considered as the main source of information on sexual rights of women in Islam, and recorded details of her personal sphere for the awareness of Muslim women. She noted how Muhammad recited the Quran with his head in her lap while she was menstruating (*ibid.*: 1(6), No. 296). Sharing such practices was expected to change dynamics of gender relations within Muslim households and elevate the status of women, granting them more rights and increasing their acceptability. Many of Muhammad's sayings clearly rejected traditional ways adopted by Arab men for showing their masculine supremacy in



relation to women, for example “the best man among you is the best to his wife” (SunniPath, 2005), “not one of you should fall upon his wife like an animal” (Sunni Forum.Net, 2010), “things [that] are counted inadequacies in a man [include] satisfying his needs before she has satisfied hers” (Muslim Marriage Guide, undated) and “he is not one of us who does not satisfy his wife’s need of him before he satisfies his need of her” (Maqsood, 2005).

Two quite important realizations emerge from Muhammad’s masculinity. First, the religion of Islam does not find it unusual for men, even prophets, to feel inclined towards a number of women in their lifetime; and second, the only sanctioned approach to women one feels attracted to is to offer legal and financial safeguards to them via the institution of marriage. By outlawing pre-marital sex, Islam literally imposes on men the condition to adopt a family structure, a household as a whole, rather than an individual woman whom they find sexually attractive. The emphasis is on a “tamed” masculinity: a “family man” rather than an unbridled one with access to a female body. Within marriage, a man cannot practise birth control without the consent of his wife. Although according to Islamic traditions much less prestigious an institution than motherhood, fatherhood is a highly recommended and trusted institutional framework for men to gain spiritual elevation. As mentioned before, Muhammad’s daughters were really important to him. His polygamous marriages confirm the male tendency to have multiple sexual partners, and also the female tendency and right to look for a number of successive male sexual partners (considering Muhammad’s wives who were widowed or divorced). Unlike Muhammad, many Muslim men today avoid making their interest in a woman official by proposing marriage – a commitment that was always and almost immediately offered by Muhammad. Also, domestic abuse experienced by Muslim women today was unheard of in Muhammad’s household. Similarly, a very clear division of labour, with women across the Muslim world obliged to perform household chores, was not the work code practised by Muhammad, who proactively participated in all tasks now considered feminine by Muslims, with men typically demanding their wives to be cooks, launderers and cleaners in the house while simultaneously having a yearly potential for producing healthy *sons*.

### “The exemplary man”: Masculine attributes within Islamic text and tradition

“The way Muslim men walk nowadays is entirely un-Islamic: the ‘feudal-lord’-like gait; arms and legs wide apart, as if a giant is approaching. In

the Quran (25:63), Allah clearly informs us that he likes ‘those who walk on earth softly.’<sup>14</sup> Also, according to the Quran (3:159), a Muslim man is guided to follow one basic principle for the expression of his manhood: *husn ikhlaq* – a beautiful character. Within a beautiful character are two principles: wisdom (*hikmat*) and excellence (*eh’sun*).<sup>15</sup>

Islamic scholars claim that the notion of masculinity as presented in the Quran is different from the one existing in Arab culture before the dawn of Islam.

The pre-Islamic Arab masculinity centred on severity, a commanding attitude and forcing others to submit. A woman was desired only as an object, not as a wife who could file a claim over her husband’s property. Islam presented its idea of an “exemplary man” as a law-abiding, honest, truthful and forgiving individual. An exemplary man is the one who inspires rather than terrorizes others.<sup>16</sup>

As a true follower of Islam, a man is expected to keep his family well fed and comfortable: a man who has the character and the strength to earn *qasb halal* (legitimate livelihood) for the support of his family.<sup>17</sup> The following quote by a religious scholar reflects upon gender relations, particularly focusing on the characteristics of an Islam-abiding Muslim man. The words reject current household-level gender-based divisions of labour in the Muslim world:

When a man marries, a woman’s well-being [food, clothing, lodging, etc.] becomes *wajib* [necessary] on *him* and not on the woman. Islam outlines this in a candid and clear language. A husband should not be providing his wife unstitched, but stitched clothes, and similarly not uncooked but cooked food. This is a clear responsibility of a man *as per the teachings of Islam*. No husband can force a wife to cook for him in case she refuses to cook. If a woman cooperates with her husband, this should be understood as her piety or kindness: clearly a *favour* extended to her husband. We must remember that he is *qawwam* over her, not that she [is *qawwam*] over him. She is *not supposed to maintain him in any sense*, but only through acts of her own free will. On the other hand, he is under a definite obligation, and *duty* to *maintain* and feed her . . . to the extent that if, for example, due to some odd reason she refuses to eat . . . it is the duty of her husband to spoon-feed her . . . as if she were a child. He has to ensure her well-being, her health – or be raised for accountability on the Day of Judgment. When she gives birth to their child – *she has a religious right to refuse feeding the child or alternately demand monetary compensation for doing so*. This again proves that she is not even responsible for feeding her own biological child, what to state about him [her husband]. Ordinarily, across the Muslim world, mainly due to developing contexts, it is women who run households. Therefore, it needs to be fully recognized that whatever she does in his household is *ihsan* [a favour] towards her husband. This is exactly how Allah views

her contributions in the house ... and she will benefit in the hereafter ... for each and every meal that she has prepared for her family ... as this was never her duty to start with ... Allah imposes only one duty upon her, *that of remaining "faithful" and "sincere" to her husband*. Muslim men *must* fully realize this. If a man does household work, it is not feminine and neither is it something that is anti-masculine. In fact all these works have been assigned to men from the beginning ... and are expected from good Muslim men who are interested in following their religion *correctly*. What we see ... for example in Pakistan ... it is not the word of God, or deeds of Prophet Muhammad – but our local culture.<sup>18</sup>

The Arabs were meticulous in taking revenge. Islam makes a provision of *qisas* (the option of an eye for an eye), mainly on the principle of "justice". However, simultaneously Islamic "ideals" are clearly linked to values of patience, forgiveness and mercy. For example: "If ye punish, then punish with the like of that wherewith ye were afflicted. But if ye endure patiently, verily it is better for the patient" (Al-Quran, 16:126). Islam expects its followers to balance hard logic, the animal instinct of settling scores, with spiritualism – the intellect and sensitivity to look beyond the immediate. Islam grants basic rights of revenge to any victim of violence, but simultaneously warns and guides that "what eventually brings us closer to God is forgiveness and patience, and not revenge".<sup>19</sup> Here it is also important to mention that *qisas* can be invoked by both men and women, and Islam does not introduce any pre-emptive measures upon women who might feel the need to take revenge.<sup>20</sup>

Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of Muhammad, was strong, invincible and always used a bifurcated sword. He was known by the titles of Saif'ullah (the sword of Allah) and Zulfiqar (sword) – both masculine adjectives. During the Battle of Trench in 627, Ali overpowered a tough rival and was about to kill him when the latter spat in his face. Ali stood up and walked away from his enemy. He returned after a while, his anger subsided, and told the opponent "when you spat at me, my ego upsurged and I wanted to kill you instantly. Had I killed you then, the action would have been not in service of God but my personal ego."<sup>21</sup> Ali's actions make a benchmark case giving insights as to what is to be considered Islamic masculinity. Among his contemporaries, Ali was perceived as unstoppable – and yet he stopped. Ali appears to be red-blooded and vigorous in terms of his *performativity* and his capacity to compete against his rivals in a fearless fashion, yet in this incident he shows restraint and reflexive introspection, and defers action in an attempt to overcome his ego-related issues as both a man and a warrior. Although Ali does not prove himself to be incredibly gentle (as he does kill his opponent in the end), he does not behave wildly or impulsively on the battlefield. Ali's behaviour towards Fatima, daughter of Muhammad, is noted in classical

texts as most humble and warm; yet on the seventh day after her death he solemnized another marriage.

Put succinctly, self-respect is justified but blatant and overbearing male ego is highly unacceptable in Islamic traditions. According to sacred narratives and tradition, “those who remain patient have the same status as that of martyrs and enter paradise without accountability. This is because martyrs die once, but those who are patient die a number of times every day on facing insults and oppression – and yet remain forbearing.”<sup>22</sup> Therefore, in Islam, for both men and women there is absolutely no concept of serving one’s ego.

The Quran (3:134) condemns *ghaiz* (bad temper) and hot-temperedness, guiding its followers to be patient and mannerly, “and bear patiently with what they [opponents] say, and part with them in a beautiful manner” (ibid.: 73:10). The Book is full of passages requiring both men and women followers to be “patient” and “gentle”. For example: “And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient” (ibid.: 2:155); “if harm strikes you, they rejoice at it. And if you are patient and fear Allah, their plot will not harm you at all” (ibid.: 3:120); “Fall not into disputes, lest . . . your power departs . . . For Allah is with those who patiently persevere” (ibid.: 8:46); “And [mention] Ishmael and Idrees and Dhul-Kifl; all were of the patient” (ibid.: 21:85); “Commemorate Our Servant Job [Ayub]. Behold he cried to his Lord: ‘The Evil one [skin disease] has afflicted me with distress and suffering . . .’ Truly We found him full of patience and constancy” (ibid.: 38:41, 38:44). The list of verses is extensive.

Muhammad’s uncle, known in the Quran as Abu Lahab, persecuted him when he revived Abraham’s monotheism in Arabia under the title of Islam. Abu Lahab asked his sons to divorce their wives, who were two of Muhammad’s daughters. Abu Lahab’s wife, apart from shouting profanities at Muhammad, used to tie bundles of firewood and thorns and throw them in Muhammad’s path. Neighbours pestered him during his prayer. In all cases, there is no record that Muhammad ever reacted.

## The “perfect man” according to *sufi* Islamic thought

*Sufism* has contributed greatly towards providing specifications for ideal Islamic masculinities. The concept of a perfect man has historically existed in pre-Islamic and Islamic thought. Ibn Arabi was the first thinker to present the theory of *Al-Insan-i-Kamil* and used the term at least seven times in *Fusus Al Hikam* (Takeshita, 1987: 49). Later it was translated to “the Perfect Man”, although literally stated the substitute for *insan* is “human” rather than “man”. Nonetheless, based on its relevance,

the exposition merits elaboration here. Takeshita's (ibid.) and Murata's (1992) research contributions became the leading scholarship on this subject. Ibn Arabi discussed the Perfect Man by predominantly focusing on Adam's creation in the image of God, the correspondence between microcosm and macrocosm, and how not an "animal man" but a "sufi saint" is an ultimate ideal to be followed by Muslim men. Sufi saints were noted for vision, moderation (*iqtisad*), good manners (*samt hasan*), right guidance (*huda salih*) and being law abiding (Takeshita, 1987: 137, 143).

All three Judeo-Christian and Islamic traditions are anthropocentric. According to the Quran, man has dominion over all things existing in heaven and on earth. Allah created Adam as *the vicegerent of God on earth* and "taught" Adam so he could "function". Muslim philosophers such as Ghazzali and Shibli emphasized that although man was not created in God's essence, he was created in God's attributes, some of which are reflected in the 99 names (*Isma' al' hasana*) revealed to man by the Divine (ibid.: 17). Man in his creation has the ability to attain heights of some Godly virtues and become angelic, and has equal ability to rebel against God's existence and become an ordinary animal, or perhaps even less. Man is under the moral obligation to work towards the former.

Ibn Arabi theorized that a man, being the vicegerent of God, has a *sura zahira* (outer form) and *sura batina* (inner form), where the former is fashioned in accordance to universal realities and the latter is fashioned by God in Divine image, i.e. the soul, the spirit. As a vicegerent it was expected of Adam to remain duty bound to provide those who were dependent on him with everything that they needed. Man is required to indulge in all such worldly activities that allow him to nurture and school his soul. For example, a doctor who goes about his daily professional duties has ample opportunities to work towards the elevation of his soul by treating his patients with kindness and understanding, and also closely observing the cycles of life, disease and death.

Islamic traditions consider the concept of "absolute" and/or "universal" man, i.e. Adam, as the "universal human soul". All other men are believed to be "individuations" of this absolute man in Islamic *sufi* philosophy. Man comprises three forces: *growth*, *animality* and *rationality*. Ibn Arabi believed that the first is a trait of plants, the second of animals and the third of angels (ibid.: 78). Man's action can be a result of any of the three, but the divine act is one in which the "soul" is engaged. It is the rationality of the human soul that sets it apart from plants and animals.

The notion of *e'tidaal* (perfect equilibrium) is also considered central in Islamic philosophy, both textual and spiritual. There is a belief that man was created in *e'tidaal* and this was made his *fitrah* (basic nature). Of

course this is in direct contrast to Hobbes's philosophy. It is believed that this equilibrium gets disturbed when men start adopting a "second nature" centring around vanity, materialism, ego, etc., and forget the "first nature" that is mainly *fa'zil* (virtuous, peaceful and wise). Perfection in manhood can only be achieved if *fa'zil* is maintained. A man must remain on a "mission of discovery", following the invitation of God who sent him to earth to explore and ponder over all that is in the heavens and on the earth. "He has subjected to you, as a charge from Him, all that is in the heaven and earth" (Al-Quran, 45:13). According to this thought, man is clearly on a mission to acquire knowledge, do research, explore and educate. He attains perfection when he becomes an active "agent" making a constructive contribution to this world. The Quranic message is clear: man can subjugate all that is here and beyond *by Allah's leave*.

A "perfect man" does not restrict his qualities to *rationality*, but furthers them into the realms of *intellect* that brings to him *perfection* and nobility. This is something that Ghazzali explained by comparing a donkey and a horse. Regardless of the fact that both are similar forms and usually used for hard labour or martial life, there is something nobler about a horse simply because of the perfection of form bestowed on it by the Divine. Animals have rationality that is either innate or experimental. A human learns, questions and develops his intellect. When man praises God, it is not an act like that of the sun or moon, which move in their galaxies unquestioningly and, according to Islamic belief, on the Day of Judgment on Allah's Command will fall to earth as unquestioningly. A man uses his intellect to choose or not choose a certain path. In other words, he has equal choice to move away from or towards the Divine. According to Ibn Arabi, "perfection" is a combination, an immaculate blend of "divine" and "creaturely" existence, as envisaged by the Divine Itself at the time of the creation of Adam.

*Sufism* does not approve audacious, arrogant and reckless behaviour. A man who performs in this universe with his soul centred on the Creator is known as virtuous, blessed and wise in Islamic thought. A perfect man consciously *regulates* his behaviour, each time balancing between his creaturely life and divine life. For example, if he performs brilliantly in his work life, he is aware that it was God's blessing and not that he himself is extraordinary or smart. Such a mindset is expected to generate humility in man, and the journey continues. A man striving for perfection may fail a number of times, but never ceases to make efforts.

## Performing masculinities: The gender play in jihad

One cannot have a "murder agenda" and claim to be a *mujahid*.<sup>23</sup>

There is no room for aggression in jihad, which is ordinarily misunderstood and at times misrepresented on purpose. The Quran has a number of references that forbid killing and aggression against opponents – unless one is literally cornered and has no other alternative available. For example, “fight them until there is no [more] *fitnah* and worship is [acknowledged to be] for Allah. But if they cease, then there is to be no aggression except against the oppressors” (Al-Quran, 2:193); “Nor kill (or destroy) yourselves: for verily Allah hath been to you Most Merciful!” (ibid.: 4:29); “whoever does that out of aggression and injustice, We shall cast him into the Fire. This is an easy thing for Allah” (ibid.: 4:30); “And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression. And fear Allah, indeed, Allah is severe in penalty” (ibid.: 5:2). A *mujahid* (one who engages in jihad) has a difficult task at hand.

Through love and wisdom, a *mujahid* is expected to convince people to declare faith in God. He should have the capacity to do so with perfection and an impressive personality. He cannot invite dead bodies to the way of God. His aim should not be to fight and kill. However, if he is attacked, he has no alternative but to fully defend himself.<sup>24</sup>

A jihad may be against inner temptations or it may be on a battlefield against enemy forces. Islamic scholars differ over which of these might be understood as the “greater jihad” (*Jihad-i-Akbar*) or a “lesser jihad” (*Jihad-i-Asghar*). Those who comprehend suppression of temptations as a greater jihad quote a prophetic tradition in support of their understanding. According to this *hadith*, Muslim forces were returning from a battlefield after defeating enemy forces and the Prophet reminded them three times that although they had finished *Jihad-i-Asghar*, *Jihad-i-Akbar* against their own *nafs* (self/ego) was incumbent upon them.<sup>25</sup> In contrast, a group of scholars insist that the *hadith* is technically *weak* and must not be overemphasized.<sup>26</sup> There is also a view that since martyrdom cannot be achieved or aimed for outside the battlefield, jihad that involves confrontation with an enemy must be counted as *Jihad-i-Akbar*. However, the most interesting approach to the two corollaries of jihad is explained in the following quote:

These two types of jihad overlap one another. One can be in the battlefield fighting an enemy as well as battling against inner temptations. According to a tradition . . . after defeating the enemy, a soldier from the Muslim forces was about to attack a woman from the enemy side because he had seen her dancing and mocking at Muslim forces before the battle had begun. However, suddenly he recalled the words of the Prophet . . . that jihad was only in the way of Allah . . . and this immediately forced him to place himself and his actions in [religious or Islamic] perspective. He let go of the woman after realizing that



attacking a vulnerable woman on the basis of male ego, or hate, or perhaps for other equally wrong reasons, could be for his own self . . . but never be for a just cause, in the name of Allah.<sup>27</sup>

Drawing from this quote, an ideal “Islamic” masculine performance on a battlefield may be the one that achieves a delicate balance between invincibility and self-restraint. Islam prevents individuals, particularly young men with household responsibilities, from acting whimsically by offering their services for combat jihad. Serving one’s parents is considered more important a religious act than aiming for martyrdom in battle. Certain *hadithic* references clarify this further, for example: “Abdullah Ibn ‘Amr says that once a person asked the Prophet to participate in jihad. At this, the Prophet inquired whether his parents were alive. On hearing an affirmative reply, he remarked: ‘do jihad for their benefit’”,<sup>28</sup> i.e. continue to struggle for the well-being of one’s parents. Abu Sa’id Khudri says that a person from Yemen migrated and came to the Prophet in order to participate in jihad. The Prophet asked: “Do you have any relative in Yemen?” He replied that he had his parents there. The Prophet remarked: “Did you seek their permission?” He said: “No.” The Prophet then said: “Go back to them and ask their permission. If they agree to it, go on *jihad*. Otherwise stay and serve them.”<sup>29</sup> Mu’awiyah narrated from his father Jahimah that he came to the Prophet and said: “O Messenger of God! I would like to participate in *jihad* and have come to consult you.” The Prophet asked: “Is your mother alive?” He said: “Yes.” At this, the Prophet advised, “Then stay near her . . . for at her feet is *jannah* [paradise]!”<sup>30</sup> These quotes establish the role of caregiver rather than warrior as an ideal for young Muslim men.

### *Diplomacy not rigidity*

Muhammad arrived in Medina in 622 CE and immediately set out to establish friendly relations among all tribes. These measures also involved a pact signed with three Jewish clans. The pact primarily upheld the notion of Medina as a “nation” – where religious and tribal affiliations melted away in a political sense of the word, but not in a cultural or religious sense. Each group was allowed to practise its faith freely but defend only as a Medina’ite in case of external assault. While the treaty of Hudaibiyah was being signed, the Mecca’ites provoked Muslims in a number of ways. Muhammad insisted that his followers remain diplomatic rather than become reactionary. For example, the agreement mentioned Muhammad as “the Messenger of Allah”. This was not only a religious belief of the followers of Muhammad, but was their political stance – due to which they were facing persecution and exile. Mecca’ites started



demanding that the phrase be substituted with “son of Abd’allah”. Muhammad accepted the condition. Times changed, and in 630 CE Muhammad defeated his opponents in Mecca and entered it as a conqueror. Yet his demeanour was not of pride or arrogance.<sup>31</sup>

### The Muslim boy and the everlasting imprint of Islam on him

As this chapter on Islamic masculinities draws to an end and the next on Muslim masculinities is yet to begin, it is an apt place to write a few paragraphs on male circumcision, which falls within the domains of both Islamic and Muslim. It is Islamic due to it being part of sacred narrative and tradition, and is Muslim as all across the Muslim world people practise it more than they offer prayers. Circumcision after birth of a boy child is as much a norm in the Muslim world as is burial after death (Bouhdiba and Khal, 2006). In Judaism and Islam it is the male, not the female (except in few African cultures), who is *initiated* into the religion through the ritualistic procedure of circumcision – believed to act as a semi-anaesthetic, decreasing hypersensitivity to sexually exciting stimuli. Thus among Muslim men *tahara* (state of purity) becomes conditional on being circumcised (*ibid.*). In some parts of the Arab world the rite is still performed on pubescent boys, who are taken in a procession and circumcised. The boys are expected to act brave and pretend they do not feel any pain during incision. Mothers place additional pressure on boys by insisting they uphold their parentage by keeping a brave face during the ritual. If the day of circumcision is survived well by the boy, he is given the right to be considered a man: someone who has been through a trial that involved acute pain to his body, and who maintained the “honour” of his mother by keeping a brave face.<sup>32</sup> Instructions from mothers to boys being taken away for circumcision are poetically summarized in Arabic tradition as follows:

Be careful not to flinch  
Don’t let people gloat over us  
Don’t let them say you’re a sissie.  
Don’t blink and so shame us and yourself.<sup>33</sup>

The initiation of Muslim boys in Islam is priced heavily – something that labels boys with their Muslim identity and holds a symbolic value for them for the rest of their lives. Following the ritual, people come to congratulate the child on “his happy accession to Islam” (*ibid.*: 23). Male circumcision starts a gendered socialization in both Jewish and Muslim cultures, distinguishing boys from girls in childhood. Boys are pro-

grammed very early that physical suffering, if tolerated with a brave face, will increase social acceptance (Sinclair-Webb, 2006a: 11).

In the contemporary Muslim world, including Pakistan, and most particularly in urban centres, the ritual is performed on a two- to three-week-old infant in hospital as a medical procedure. To put it differently, at the time the infant boy is *initiated* into Islam, he is not actually conscious or aware of it. The extent of the role of circumcision in the formation of Muslim male identity has itself undergone a change and is not as intense as it used to be. Nonetheless, gradually even if not instantly, boys start recognizing and appreciating their distinct Islamic heritage/Muslim identity through this incision.

## Conclusion

This chapter has drawn upon Islamic texts, narratives and traditions with the objective of presenting “alternative knowledge” on masculinities – substantive information that can be used to counter the local and customary norms that have allowed the growth of violence among Muslim men. Usually violence erupts at the interface of “honour” and “shame” that is felt either individually, collectively or both. The chapter showed that overbearing male ego has no place in Islam, and “restraint” is considered quintessential. Prophets were individuals whose behaviours were based on patience, wisdom, courage and fearlessness. However, Islamic masculine attributes take final shape in the form of equanimity, compassion and intellect as one reaches the end of a chain of prophets that in Muslim belief culminates with Muhammad. Attitudinal vanity among men is rejected entirely, be it directed towards women or the larger society. Mainly, Muslim men are warned that being “macho” would reveal nothing of the Divine to them, and they are better aiming towards achieving excellence and beauty in serving humanity and producing knowledge.

## Notes

1. Allama Muhammad Ali Tauhidi and Allama Kausar Abbass Haidri in interviews with the author, 21 January 2010.
2. Haidri, *ibid*.
3. Dr Shahzaad Iqbal, International Islamic University, Islamabad, in an interview with the author, 25 January 2010.
4. Professor Javed Amiri, Karachi University, in an interview with the author, 27 January 2010.
5. Haidri, note 1 above.
6. Javed Ahmed Ghamidi has expressed this opinion a number of times in his media appearances. Dr Shahzaad Iqbal, note 3 above, expressed similar views.

7. Amiri, note 4 above.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Muslim readers please note that the prefix *Prophet* with Muhammad's name has been omitted in this section to make it more consistent with its objective of discussing Muhammad for his masculine attributes and as a man from Mecca, rather than as Messenger.
11. Tauhidi, note 1 above.
12. Ibid.
13. See also Sahih Bukhari, 1(5), No. 268, where Qatada narrates that Anas bin Malik said, "The Prophet used to visit all his wives in a round, during the day and night and they were eleven in number." I asked Anas, "Had the Prophet the strength for it?" Anas replied, "We used to say that the Prophet was given the strength of thirty [men]." Please note "we used to say" – Muhammad himself did not ever make any such claims.
14. Haidri, note 1 above.
15. Ibid.
16. Tauhidi, note 1 above.
17. Amiri, note 4 above.
18. Tauhidi, note 1 above; emphasis in the original.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Haidri, note 1 above.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Amiri, note 4 above.
26. Professor Anis Ahmed in an interview with the author, 15 February 2010.
27. Professor Mushtaq Ahmed, International Islamic University, Islamabad, in an interview with the author, 3 February 2010.
28. See [www.masjidassunnah-fl.com/en/en\\_assunnah/docs/bokhari8.pdf](http://www.masjidassunnah-fl.com/en/en_assunnah/docs/bokhari8.pdf).
29. See [http://web.youngmuslims.ca/online\\_library/books/the\\_lawful\\_and\\_prohibition\\_in\\_islam/ch3s6p12.htm](http://web.youngmuslims.ca/online_library/books/the_lawful_and_prohibition_in_islam/ch3s6p12.htm).
30. See [www.sunnahonline.com/ilm/purification/0056.htm](http://www.sunnahonline.com/ilm/purification/0056.htm).
31. Tauhidi, note 1 above.
32. Basil Hatim and Gavin Watterson commenting on Khal's novel *Cities that Devour Grass*. See Bouhdiba and Khal (2006: 29).
33. Yahya, a Saudi boy in Khal's novel *Cities that Devour Grass*, is taken for circumcision and gets instructions from his mother, starting the journey into Muslim manhood (Bouhdiba and Khal, 2006: 30).

## 5

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## Muslim masculinities

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On the day my mother gave me birth,  
On that day five-and-twenty years ago,  
Silence placed me in the vast hands of life, abounding with struggle  
and conflict.  
Lo, five-and-twenty times have I journeyed round the sun.  
How many times the moon has journeyed round me I do not know.  
But this I know, that I have not yet learned the secrets of light,  
Nor have I understood the mysteries of darkness.

Kahlil Gibran in *My Birthday*

In the past, cultural anthropology has taken masculinity for granted and mostly dealt with it implicitly rather than explicitly. Gilmore's (1990) interesting cross-cultural study presents an anthropological account of the notion of masculinity in both Western and non-Western societies. His explanation of masculinity is a synthesized product of comparative cultural case studies, for example those of prominent anthropologists like Nadel and Barth, and Freudian and post-Freudian psychology theories. According to Gilmore (*ibid.*: 2), through cultural sanctions, rituals or trials of skill and endurance societies generate an exclusionary image of manhood – for example, the deficient arguments stereotyping men to be better suited, both biologically and culturally, to serve in rough and tough professions. The manner adopted to promote such ideas leads to subsequent acclimatization; for example, “military service becomes naturalized as befitting of men” (Sinclair-Webb, 2006b: 86). It must be recognized that social consent allows certain practices to prevail, and a study of military

historiography reveals that our dominant cultural understandings are mainly a result of socially approved *zeitgeists*. Militarism and militaries are masculine sites that exclude women. There are other questions involved here, such as the power relations within military institutions. Hegemonic tendencies are not the same among men serving in the army, and variations are always there. However, it is not easy for men to refuse military service, as they are expected to do this job (*ibid.*: 86–87).

Undoubtedly, for men anxieties and social pressures regarding performativity are ubiquitous and high. Women are believed to reinforce pressures of *performance* on men. Even in conservative cultures, women can be found teasing or mocking shy men and, ironically, even embarrassing such men by comparing them to women. The challenges of modern life are such that progress is conditional on aggression and competition, and men are at the centre of it (Gilmore, 1990: 230–231). It is the rough and tough, competitive and successful men who are chosen by women as prospective mates. In many cultures the expectations of *gender performativity* from men get transposed from public to private spheres. Failure to withstand pressure for *performance* can eventually make men vulnerable to several psychosomatic and psychiatric illnesses. For example, *koro* among Chinese communities is a medical condition where a sufferer thinks that he is becoming impotent. These thoughts cause palpitations and anxiety in him, thereby debilitating his *performance* – his ultimate fear.

Gilmore (*ibid.*) provides an interesting account of masculine constructions in the geographically isolated Mehinakus in central Brazil, where men are expected to be vigorous, energetic, hard working, lively, boisterous, audacious and decisive. Right from childhood, boys are warned against bringing social disgrace and isolation by not being all this. Fear of economic inadequacy is high among Mehinaku men, and yet generosity is not only expected but also considered a valued masculine attribute. To gain female approval, Mehinaku and Truk men engage in daily combats, most particularly in places where women can witness their power from the sidelines. Ritualized brawling among young and unmarried men for the sake of proving their physical strength is a fairly universal phenomenon. It becomes more pronounced in the presence of women, as men can be seen puffing up chests, rolling up sleeves and even starting mock fights with male friends in order to gain female attention. Fighting is not integral to being male, but it is an essential element of how we as a global society construct and approve of masculinity. “Once a man establishes his reputation as a tough guy by entering and winning a few fights, the other guys respect him” (*ibid.*: 75–76). The brawling, rather being a waste of energy, is a testing ground that gains a man both prestige and opportunities. Basically it is a statement that he can “take it” or “face it” and fend for himself, implying that he is fit to keep his family safe from injury and

harm (ibid.). Andalucía, from where the notion of “machismo” emerges, has a very anxious male population and manhood is a prized possession, a valuable and indispensable attribute in society. However, this peculiar production of manhood is not only an individual psychology but an integral part of a public culture, a collective representation (ibid.: 4–5). Thus “true manhood is [understood as] a precious and elusive status beyond mere maleness, a hortatory image that men and boys aspire to and that their culture demands of them as a measure of belonging” (ibid.: 17).

Each society has its own standards of masculinity and manhood, a proud display of being born with this privileged status. There are some cultural ideals and certain inner psychic ways that persuade men to reach a compromise and remain culturally acceptable and functional. Manhood is a kind of male procreation that borrows its heroic quality through self-direction and discipline, absolute self-reliance and agential autonomy (ibid.: 223). Social organization of production and the intensity of male image are closely connected, and codes of masculinity are derivative rather than arbitrary. Harsher environments and scarcity of resources make manhood more pronounced as an inspiration and goal (ibid.: 230–231). Simultaneously, men always remain aware that they are expendable (ibid.: 223). Masculinities are routinely negotiated at the intersection of gender, ethnicity, class, religion, age and place, and enacted within contexts that are subjected to racialized and gendered processes (Dwyer, Shah and Sanghera, 2008).

### *Production of Muslim masculinities*

We need to take into consideration local realities, religious and political agendas, the consequences of western colonialism and imperialism, and the marked effects of globalisation . . . all masculinity studies must be grounded in historical, cultural and geographical contexts. (Ouzgane, 2006: 6)

Writing about masculinities does not undermine the feminist agenda in any sense. Studying Muslim women without Muslim men is futile. For example, veiling cannot really be discussed if attitudes of Muslim men towards the female body cannot be successfully deconstructed. Therefore, most studies on Muslim women’s rights have always had a mention of men. Despite this, men rarely have been objects of direct study in these accounts. Men are usually introduced as offenders, “the anti-women”. There are just a handful of academic texts that focus on Muslims and Islamic masculinities as a subject. Writings on gender in the Middle East have understandably focused more on women’s rights issues. Lately, research works in the fields of anthropology, sociology and history have engaged with critical approaches in gender theory. Masculinity in Islamic

cultures has so far remained an under-examined category. Masculinity studies are gaining rapid significance in the West, but similar studies in Islamic and Muslim contexts are surprisingly rare. Available information on Muslim men focuses on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), and South and Central Asian masculinities are under-researched (Gerami, 2005: 448). Archer (2005a, 2005b) has discussed lives of British Muslim boys of South Asian origin. In addition, Ghoussoub and Sinclair-Webb's (2006) collection of essays is considered to be the first serious work on Muslim men that treats them as gendered subjects, locates them in history and establishes them as part of gender relations within Muslim cultures. This work was followed by Ouzgane's (2006) edited volume explaining how the Muslim *ummah* constructs and negotiates the masculine gender. A few recent journal publications focus on British Muslim youth (Dwyer, Shah and Sanghera, 2008). This chapter discusses contemporary Muslim masculinities through whatever little has so far been documented on them.

Ghoussoub (2006) has concluded several approaches to male identity. Socialization into masculinity is a dynamic process in Muslim contexts that occurs at the interface of institutions, social practices, cultural productions and power relations. Ancient codes of conduct (such as honour and shame) pre-dating Islam influence contemporary living in Muslim societies and must be recognized. Even now "honour" is valued and passionately defended across Muslim communities.

The appeal of feminine emotionalism within Islam and Muslim cultures cannot be overestimated. As Ahmed (2006: 18) indicates, Muslim souls did not feel absorbed by the theocratic superstructures that were raised after Prophet Muhammad's death. Muslims found such measures stern and dry, and very soon moved to the development of *sufism*, a way of life that could influence their emotion. However, during the 1970s and 1980s Islamic states (like Pakistan and Iran) restricted the message of *sufi* Islam and introduced misinterpreted and misrepresented versions of textual Islam in society. Attempts at Islamization focused on women's bodies, mobility and life options without ever giving them opportunities to legislate. Consequently, a peculiar form of Muslim male psychology regarding women, gender and sexuality emerged (de Reincourt, 1989: 197–203). An unhealthy and almost retarded fixation with the female body exists: how it can be or not be, or what of it is sexually exciting for men and what is not. Other cultures may have similar issues. Nonetheless, in the Muslim world there exists a degenerative "paranoid obsession around women's bodies and what a woman can or cannot do, as sanctioned on the grounds that it is our culture/religion" (Ahmed, 2006: 24).

Gender-based superiorities and inferiorities are artificially created to serve patriarchal interests. For example, *purdah* provides the most pro-

nounced inter-gender relational meaning to machismo – making men feel instantly and heroically more competent and “performative” in comparison to women. As a first measure, *performativity* of women is largely curtailed in order to create an illusion of boundless avenues where only men can perform. Many Muslims portray themselves as Islamic through excessive use of explicit religious symbolism, and *pardah* (or beards for men) is just one such tool through which gender-based superiorities, inferiorities and complexes are manifested and collective or group identities are asserted.<sup>1</sup> In Muslim cultures adult women expect even young boy children to answer the doorbell. Consequently, a boy child begins to feel extraordinary early in life. The illusion of him being more capable in comparison to his sister is artificially created.

Such informal institutional arrangements and divisions of labour not only restrict women’s freedom but also put masculinities at stake. Boys become adults anxious to perform not only in public domains but also in private spheres, where Muslim women are programmed to take passive (culturally dubbed modest) roles. Risk taking and performing as “in charge” become a norm for men. A few societies instil manly endurance and stoic resolve by ceremoniously separating young boys from their mothers and initiating them into manhood through bloodletting – beating them so that blood flows – and boys at a very tender age learn to ignore both their blood and pain (Gilmore, 1990: 156–157). Male circumcision is a cultural norm in Muslim societies: a major intervention that sends a clear message to a Muslim boy that if he is to remain in the ranks of men he must tolerate pain with a brave, and preferably smiling, face (*ibid.*). Considering anatomy as destiny is Freudian and “gender reductionist”, yet male circumcision is a cultural norm. Circumcision is a marker of a distinct male trajectory from the beginning of life, “a representation of the very basic cultural dichotomy between men and women” (Bilu, 2006: 38; Hoffman, 1996: 44).

The following sections capture the current predicament of Muslim men in MENA, West Asia and Afghanistan. The objective is to present an overview of challenges with which Muslim masculinities routinely grapple in attempting to stay “honourable”. Marginalized contexts instigate gender performativity. Routine/everyday masculine trajectories may transport Muslim men into domains of militant-jihadist Islamism and terrorism.

## West Asian and Arab Muslim masculinities

Turkish men are quite heterogeneous, and are truly a diverse group when it comes to their outward personality. A moustache is symbolic of masculinity, and the majority of Turkish men grow one. Islamic spiritual



elders with full beards and wearing traditional outfits are also very prominent. Since 9/11, not only in Turkey but across the Muslim world, men are growing beards as if to make a political statement. Their dress code ranges between European and traditional. Men in military uniforms and those in revolutionary guerilla outfits are considered charming. The Turkish military is constructed as an object of faith, and love for the nation and state. A Turkish commando returning from a military operation against the Kurdistan Workers' Party describes his group in the following words:

It was completely like they were drunk. As if they had succeeded in carrying out a very big job, their adrenaline was up, they were decked out in the feeling of greatness. They would recount to each other the things they had done in difficult conditions in an exaggerated way. I think that the clearest definition of this state is that it was a type of drunkenness. (Sinclair-Webb, 2006b: 95)

The ideal man of the Turkish republic is a cultural icon who is supposed to honour "a schizophrenic split between his brain and his body" (Helvacioğlu, 2006: 52): absorbing all technological advancements of the West, and yet holding on to the traditional/orthodox codes of conduct and perceptions. Men are expected to ignore women, perceived as "temptations", and remain fully focused on socio-economic advancement. Another contradictory expectation of Turkish men is that of an apparently "oversexed", "macho" man who must keep himself away from indulgent behaviour and, following in the footsteps of other ideal men in Muslim societies, remain devoted to his mother (ibid.). Helvacioğlu (ibid.: 42) notes that if a Muslim woman enters an all-male social space, she may literally embarrass and terrify men by her presence. Contrary to conventional suppositions, Muslim men may not become hostile to such a woman but rather feel awkward, shy and have trouble in communicating with her. Turkish masculinity in its most segregated prohibitive mode is the same as feminine subordination, submission and oppression. A woman may almost achieve a *masculine triumph* when the men facing her suffer from *shy curiosity* (as if feminine).

Modernization and globalization have introduced drastic changes in moral norms and women's status in Muslim contexts. In urban areas women's representation in the market and employment sector has increased rapidly. Their print and electronic images are available in various forms and are limitless – even in rural areas of Muslim countries. Muslim men are expected to adjust accordingly, but "navigating change presents its own dilemmas" (Ghoussoub, 2006: 230). When it comes to gender relations, men's perceptions still follow ancient imprints of inherited memories regarding masculinity and femininity. Men's tortured conception of

their own masculinity, its meaning, demands and projections, affects gender relations (*ibid.*).

True men and effete men are distinguishable, with the former having physical prowess (for example in eastern Morocco). Indulging in heroic acts of both feuding and sexual potency, their manly deeds are memorialized in verses sung in front of admiring crowds, making it a communal celebration. Bedouin men are considered “real” if they are assertive, courageous (i.e. bold enough to take any challenge) and sexually potent. In almost all cultures, men *become* men if they “face” death with a smile. Gilmore (1990: 16) notes how “honour” features prominently in all Muslim cultures, including Mediterranean, Middle Eastern and South Asian societies, intensifying in the northern tribal belt that is now Pakistan (see Chapter 6).

Arab masculinity, *rajulah*, is marked by brave deeds, risk taking, fearlessness and assertiveness. Attributes of *rajulah* include vigilance, willingness to defend the honour of kin and community, and protecting the cultural definition of gender-specific propriety (Peteet, 2006; Abu-Lughod, 1986; Gilmore, 1990: 40). Masculinity is about having strong willpower, even if one’s capacity is less than that of one’s opponent. Denying one’s own needs while providing for others is a signifier of being a man (Peteet, 2006: 107). Men who raise their hands at women, ordinarily perceived as “weak”, are considered dishonourable and cowards. Nonetheless, violence against women is on the rise, and is indicative of frustration among Muslim men.

Unlike Mediterranean masculinity, Arab manhood does not involve public displays of lust and sexual bravado: self-mastery of lust and romantic emotions is crucial to the construction and maintenance of Arab manhood (Peteet, 2006; Abu-Lughod, 1986; Gilmore, 1990: 40). However, within marriage Arab men are under pressure to prove their virility and sexual performance by having a large number of children. In Western contexts men usually boast about the number of women they have slept with; in Muslim contexts this is manifested through the number of children one has.

A study by Inhorn (2003: 226–227) informs us that Egyptians who *assign* procreation to their men find it disquieting to subscribe to duo-genetic procreation theories that explain ovum and sperm as equally important in fertilization. Egyptian culture is “monogenetic”, i.e. sperm-centred. The womb is perceived *merely* as a receiver, taking the pressure of *performance* away from women. Upon marriage, an immediate pregnancy wins the husband accolades. Patriarchal play begins if pregnancy gets delayed. Even if the husband suffers from sexual dysfunction and/or infertility, it is taboo for a woman to bring it up for fear of overstepping the *honour* of her husband. In Middle Eastern contexts, divorce can be

an instant outcome for exposing the issue of male impotence within marriage. In a childless marriage, the blame or social stigma for failing to reproduce falls on the wife. Other traditional Muslim cultures have similarities in this regard. It is important to understand how patriarchal frameworks create criminals, liars, abusers and misogynists out of ordinary men who only need medical help. This is just one example of how a socially approved gender ideal of “the masculine” predisposes otherwise innocent men towards unprincipled and even wicked behaviour. Even if men agree to seek medical help, it is not always possible for them to do so. For example, war-ravaged countries such as Lebanon, which may otherwise have high levels of education and literacy, offer underdeveloped socio-economic contexts to their populations. Lebanese male engineers, dentists and lawyers have meagre earnings or remain jobless due to post-war economic crisis in the country, where the cost of living is very high. Ordinarily Lebanese men make around \$1,000–\$2,000 per month, with annual household incomes of significantly less than \$20,000. In her study of Lebanese reproductive patterns, Inhorn (2006) shows that not polygamy but IVF treatment is the choice of men in childless marriages. However, for many the treatment remains unaffordable. Ultimately, a combination of personal ego and external pressures influences choices made by men.

Surviving under occupation for almost 40 years, the Palestinians are prevented by Israel from developing skills required for economic advancement. They are mostly hired as unskilled labour in Israel, and struggle hard to manage well. The *intifadas* condemned over half of Palestinian population to great poverty (*The Economist*, 2001). Palestinian dependency on Israel is certainly among the most extreme cases of international dependency in the world. This makes relations between the two nations bitter and volatile, and perpetuates severe underdevelopment of the Palestinian people. Eighty-five per cent of people in Gaza depend on humanitarian aid for survival and per capita income is less than half of what it was in the late 1990s. The Palestinian economic structure is highly dependent on Israel: 80 per cent (some figures are as high as 90 per cent) of all imports to the West Bank and Gaza are from Israel, and more than 90 per cent (some figures are as high as 97 per cent) of all exports from the two Palestinian territories go to Israel. In fact, economic power is largely derived not from local industry but from selling imported goods from Israel. There are no avenues for livelihoods “to be achieved in a manner that instils self-reliance, restructures the economy, decreases its vulnerabilities to external influences and enhances regional stability” (Ben-Meir, 2009). If such economic conditions are juxtaposed with the notion of *rajulah*, one can estimate the upheaval this causes in Palestinian masculinities.

This is not all. The battered body of a Palestinian male is a representation fashioned by Israelis but presented to the world by the Palestinians. The body, with its broken limbs and bruises, is a symbolic embodiment of twentieth-century subordination and Palestinian powerlessness: it represents Palestinian determination to resist and struggle for national independence (Peteet, 2006: 109). Generations of Palestinian boys have attained maturity in a framework defined by beatings and detentions in the occupied West Bank. This is ordinarily believed to provide a rite of passage into adulthood and considered by locals as crucial to the male self. Finally, it has had critical consequences for political consciousness and agency among Palestinian men (*ibid.*).

Israel continues to justify torture, physical abuse and extrajudicial violence against Palestinians, denigrating their human value and perceiving them only as gangs of socially primitive lawless men and terrorists. Palestinian male life cycles have been blurred by an Israeli military that does not afford any childhood to Palestinian boys. A child was shot by Israeli military, and reported in their papers as “a young man of ten” (*ibid.*: 106). Khalili (2010) compares counterinsurgency tactics adopted by the colonial powers of the twentieth century and those used by Israel in Palestine and the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan. Politically mobilized people have always been forcibly silenced by the powerful. The tactics involve house demolitions, detention of men of a certain age and the targeting of civilian spaces and populations. I quote below a narrative shared by Khalili; it brings to light the life led by ordinary Palestinian men under the occupation. The context is that of “subordination” and “marginalization” for the Palestinians:

On the fourth day, they managed to enter [the Jenin camp] because ... this giant tank could simply run over booby traps, especially since they were very primitive booby traps. Once the army took over our street, they started shooting missiles from the air. On the fifth day they started shelling homes. A large number of people were killed or wounded. My neighbour's home was blown up by missiles ... Close to us was a group of [detained] young men. They were handcuffed, naked, and lying on their stomachs ... They would take each one of us and force us onto the ground, stomping on our backs and heads. One soldier would put his machine gun right on your head, and the other would tie you up.

And the ordeal continues.

Since June 2006 the Palestinian Authority (PA) has been locking up suspected Hamas members and sympathizers all over the West Bank. Yusri Maswadeh says that his experience with the PA was “worse than [what he experienced] with the Israelis” (*The Economist*, 2007). Both internal and external elements push Palestinian youth towards death and

torture: Hamas kills those opposing it. According to a report in the *Middle East Journal* (2009), during the December 2008–January 2009 conflict with Israel, Hamas killed 32 Palestinian men after accusing them of collaborating with the Jewish state. The PA abducts and interrogates men it suspects of having links with Hamas. Arrests, beatings, detentions and intimidation are routine for Palestinian men.<sup>2</sup>

Palestinian agency is neither expressed through military resistance to occupation, nor organized resistance to the political power of the PA, nor in social norms of nationalism. The agency entails practices whereby people manage, get by and adapt by simply “getting used to” their context. Allen (2008) explains how violence has become routinized and Palestinians “orient” themselves in “space and time”. To commemorate every war, battle and blood lost, memorialization, a cultural practice using story telling, acts as a norm. The street names all indicate a violent past and present: from Ramallah to Jenin and Gaza, monikers such as Martyrs’ Passing, Martyrs’ Street and Martyrs’ Square, always covered in commemorative “martyr posters”, mark locations that witnessed clashes, blood spilling and/or death. The concept of “getting by” captures the many spatial and commemorative forms through which Palestinians manage everyday survival.

Poverty is familiar ground to Palestinians settled in Israel (Pappé, 2011; Peleg and Waxman, 2011; *The Economist*, 2011r). From a socio-economic perspective, Peleg and Waxman (2011) compare Palestinians in Israel with Jewish Israelis. They argue that the Palestinians

suffer from numerous inequities, tacit discrimination, government neglect and social prejudice. They are largely excluded from the country’s public life, they have not been integrated socially or economically, and they are generally treated with suspicion by the state and by Israeli Jewish society. As such, collectively, Arabs are very much second-class citizens in Israel.

As mentioned, it is routine for Muslim youth to be tortured, and it connotes the worthlessness of the human body, both male and female (Helvacioğlu, 2006). If Palestinians cannot use force, their co-religionists elsewhere are more likely to use force. Studies also show that frustrated men facing torture return home and inflict violence on their womenfolk. Peteet (2006: 120) tells us how authoritarianism faced by Palestinian men leads them to monitor and police the mobility of their women. Tortured and humiliated men from marginalized contexts may turn aggressive as a reaction to their emasculation. *Emasculated masculinity* is a threat to itself, its womenfolk and the global society. An extensive study of 1,766 respondents was carried out to research psychological symptomatology among Palestinian male and female adolescents living under political

violence (Al-Krenawi, Lev-Wiesel and Sehwill, 2007). The study revealed that although conflict does empower women (as men have to allow women's access to multiple socio-political and economic domains), norms of patriarchal frameworks come under direct pressure. Consequently, men become more dominating, violent and abusive towards their women. Humanitarian crisis is pervasive in Palestine. Scattered in refugee camps in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, Palestinians are the largest population in exile. Violence is also common in Palestinian refugee camps. Wife-beating is not ordinarily considered a serious offence and spousal abuse is common (Khawaja, Linos and El-Roueiheb, 2008). Palestinians not only face psychological health issues, but also their physical health is deteriorating. Men do not get medical attention, and weak mothers and substandard postnatal care mean that future generations of Palestinians are seriously endangered (*Nation's Health*, 2002). This is a very brief sketch of an issue that dates back to 1948 and has dominated the global political scene since 1967.

There are issues of reconstruction and rebuilding in Iraq through a participatory process of reconciliation and development. Currently, the country is rife with factional, ethnic and sectarian divisions and men are extremely frustrated. Western feminists consider the US-led war on terror to be a masculine war waged by white hegemonic masculinity against marginalized native masculinity of Muslim countries (Denike, 2008; Eide, 2008; Ayotte and Husain, 2005). There is an understanding that in the case of Iraq Arab masculinity was depicted as barbaric so that white masculinity could be presented in a saviour role and the military occupation could be termed inevitable and thereby naturalized. The Iraqi nation was humiliated in a number of ways during the war, the worst instance being the Iraqi men prisoners abused by American women soldiers. Iraq is an interesting case for studying the dynamics of femininity and masculinity at the interface of race and class. When US Private Jessica Lynch was raped by Iraqi men, everything seemed congruent to a colonial history where native masculinities are perverse and barbaric, endangering the innocent, vulnerable white women who had to be protected by their own civilized white men. However, Lynndie England, the antithesis of Jessica Lynch, provided images of demasculated Arab masculinity, terribly vulnerable, abused by a white woman. The photographs from Abu Gharaib resonate of US racism and lynching of blacks between 1880 and the 1930s. As Brittain (2007: 89) notes:

The images of Arab men being broken, subdued, shamed and disciplined by a white woman allow for the realization of the American dream of the total demasculiation and humiliation of Arab men, while white masculinity remains outside the category of depravity and the white male establishment both

military and government avoids blame. The pleasure that a deeply racist society experiences when viewing images of a white woman grinning at the sexual humiliation of Arab men diverts attention away from the larger question of who is ultimately responsible for the abuses . . .

Frustrations were high, and the journalist who threw a shoe at Bush was glorified for portraying Arab *rajulah* (masculinity). The shoe-thrower became instantly popular due to his fearlessness and capacity to make an *honour* statement. He even received marriage proposals. Women sang in his appreciation. He became an icon of Arab heroism.

### 2011 uprisings and Arab masculinities: A preliminary analysis

Was it fair to label the Arab uprisings as the Arab Spring, if the word “spring” implies new and healthy beginnings? In my view, the answer is negative. Is it sensible still to call these uprisings “Arab revolutions”? In terms of “rebellion against masters” the answer is yes, but in terms of “reorganization and restructuring of institutions” my answer is again negative. The media hype in “the West” perhaps resulted from their association of the word “revolution” with France, America and Russia. To be intellectually fair, one has to consider the political and economic landscape of contemporary MENA, which unfortunately warns of a deeply entrenched culture of oppression and exploitation in formal/informal governance systems; despite changes in individual faces, this is likely to stay the case for some time.

At the time of writing this book (July 2011), the Arab uprisings had already left 846 dead in Egypt, up to 1,000 in Libya, 219 in Tunisia, 1,300 in Syria and 200 in Yemen (*The Economist*, 2011t; *New York Times*, 2011a). Many have been displaced, rounded up by the security forces, tortured or forced to flee and become refugees in neighbouring countries such as Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and even Italy.

Early in 2011 Arab uprisings started in Tunisia, sweeping across Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Morocco and Syria and encompassing countries located further east, like Bahrain and Yemen. The popular social protest movements demanded more human rights and political freedoms, hinged on Western principles of democracy. Protesters wanted an end to autocratic rule and monarchies. The Ben Ali and Mubarak regimes toppled in Tunisia and Egypt respectively. Protests continued to create huge turmoil in the rest of the region, even demanding that kings introduce constitutional rule. Protesters in Tunisia were met with concessions, while those gathering in Tahrir Square in Cairo had to suffer state brutality before Mubarak ultimately stepped down.



King Muhammad VI of Morocco introduced constitutional reforms, reaching a sort of uneasy consensus with the protesters. King Saud of Saudi Arabia offered \$37 billion in public spending to stave off unrest, after reviewing recent developments in the region. Other subsidies offered by states to their people to achieve peace included \$156 billion by Algeria, \$100 million by Bahrain, \$4,000 per individual plus free food for 14 months by Kuwait and \$450 per family plus a 150 per cent wage increase for public servants and elimination of taxes and customs duties on food by Libya. Morocco, Tunisia, Oman and Yemen also introduced compensation systems (*The Economist*, 2011i). Bahrain released political prisoners such as Ali Abduleman, a blogger prominent in the youth movement.

The situation in Yemen, Syria and Libya quickly deteriorated. Gaddafi brought in helicopter gunships, snipers and heavy-calibre machine gunships to fight protesters (rebels from Benghazi). On the invitation of the Arab League and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, NATO went in to fight Gaddafi's forces, with the Obama and Sarkozy administrations as the front-runners.

The Arab uprisings can be evaluated mainly along three strings of thought: first, the primary causes behind them; second, the main political concerns that these uprisings raise; and third, fundamental human rights and humanitarian concerns with a special focus on masculinities. The first theme covers issues such as poverty and oppression. Four major issues have been elaborated as political concerns: a leadership vacuum; Arab politics at the interface of secular and Islamists forces and Al Qaeda; tribalism and sectarianism; and whether these uprisings are the beginnings of a new era in MENA. Human rights and humanitarian concerns are divided into four subsections, with the first focusing on a broader debate around civilian casualties caused by state and foreign intrusions, and the second addressing issues of "male honour" and violence. The third subsection illustrates masculinization of street violence, and the fourth highlights the issue of livelihood and displacement in conflict zones (civil war in this case).

### *Causes: Poverty and oppression*

A study of Bourdieu's habitus informs us how we carry history within ourselves. We refer to this history to interpret our circumstances as we make choices to act in certain ways (Maton, 2008: 52). Our experience in the past shapes our vision. We have a set of choices, but we choose one particular path guided by our past experiences. We create possibilities in the future by taking a certain trajectory, forgoing other alternatives (ibid.). Our inner and outer worlds are relational and evolving. The



social landscape, our contextual field, is also evolving and the “social logic” is transforming with it. This time, according to Shibley Telhami of the Brookings Institution, “Arab protesters are seeking dignity, not just bread” (*The Economist*, 2011j). Protests in MENA continue despite offers of negotiations and economic compensation from Arab rulers. A combination of poverty and political oppression caused the Arab uprisings.

Unemployment is rampant throughout MENA. People have no access to basic amenities and live under difficult conditions. The moderate levels of protests in Morocco started in the slums, where people demanded reforms involving economic safeguards. Sectarian minorities were suppressed and threatened, particularly in Yemen where Shiite Houthis were targeted – their dominant areas, such as Al Jawf, remain impoverished, allegedly due to government neglect.

In Saudi Arabia populations do not govern and neither do they have a say in how they will be governed. In Egypt, Syria and Libya Islamists were profiled and targeted, and their political parties were banned from functioning. Regimes in MENA have been presenting themselves as indispensable to the West – and particularly after 9/11, as they started suggesting that Al Qaeda had a hand in all anti-government protests (this might be true, as I discuss later). Gaddafi was brutal in his attempts against Islamist radicals in Cyrenaica (Benghazi).

In Libya protests started on 17 February 2011, with youth committees in the eastern zone behind them. Almost 120,000 volunteers in Tobruk collected and managed supplies for those in protest camps. The youth rebelled, making statements such as “he [Gaddafi] kept us ignorant and blindfolded” (*The Economist*, 2011b). They believed that now was the time to liberate Libya as a whole, rather than finish off an old separatist movement by splitting away the eastern zone.

Oppression has featured prominently in the past in countries around MENA now undergoing turmoil. Libya was the worst example in the region: oil-rich eastern areas such as Benghazi remained the poorest, despite having oil refineries. In a country with the largest oil reserves in Africa, the people in the east were surprisingly poor. The government supplied shoddy housing and free schooling and healthcare, but state salaries seldom exceeded \$500 a month and the community suffered from economic deprivations. Some 1.5 million foreign labourers were present in the area, while the locals struggled to find useful employment. Libya’s security services harassed ordinary people. Meanwhile, in Egypt and Tunisia Gaddafi’s relatives and cronies monopolized big businesses (*The Economist*, 2011a).

With a colonial past that ended with the Second World War, Libyans were warned that dissidence would not be tolerated. Gaddafi steered the nation on principles of Bedouin socialism while destroying and con-

fiscating state bureaucracy and private wealth. Libyans were denied any meaningful role in politics. Approximately 4,000 soldiers died in Libya's attempt to take over Chad. The country built up its arms and ammunition over the years and Gaddafi sponsored revolutionary movements around the world. He hired agents to murder or force into exile voices of dissent. The international sanctions of the 1980s after Libyan sponsoring of bombings of French and American planes added to the suffering of the civilian population, and also created more avenues for Gaddafi to exploit them.

### *Political concerns*

#### *Leadership vacuum*

Sen (2009: 287) maintains that "well-being" and "agency" are two different notions: the former concerns one's own individual self, and the latter is in pursuit of larger and wider goals, perhaps those concerning a group. Agency encompasses all goals that a person chooses to adopt, including those that do not involve advancement of one's own well-being. According to this understanding, Arab youth appear to be "agentic" and impressive in their demand for democracy and the end of autocratic rule. However, equally real is the youth's vulnerability to dirty politics, where oppositional parties use the energy of their movement to oust the political ruling elite and create their own chances, without particularly committing themselves to "youth" and their "causes" (*The Economist*, 2011j).

Youth movements arising in MENA do not have leaders *per se*, and therefore there is no one to sit at the negotiating table (*ibid.*). Mostly these were and are leaderless protests which do not really have a vision. The groups know what they do not want, but do not necessarily know what they want. The autocrats have been rejected, but no one quite knows who replaces them or, if they are to stay after extending concessions (particularly expected from kings rather than autocratic presidents), how to deal with them. There is no model democracy for the Arab revolutionists. The institutions are hard to clean out (*The Economist*, 2011k). The Libyan youth lack a clear command structure. They are spirited but untrained. Gaddafi's legacy is inadequate institutions, tangled laws and burning animosities (*The Economist*, 2011a). Although Tunisia was the first to throw out its leader, who had been president for 23 years, the country has a grim future. The system is plagued with lack of transparency, and in fact not much has changed since Ben Ali left. Courts are not functioning properly and the Arab leaders are either not quitting or have left behind a shapeless landscape.

When the public lack trust in state institutions, it makes the job of interim governments much harder. According to one thesis, more freedom leads to more development but, importantly, more opposition may start demanding policy changes that can halt the functioning of democracy altogether (Sen, 2009: 345–350). At the moment, with a leadership vacuum in MENA and no political vision among those in control, affected populations may become more frustrated and demanding, and turn violent.

Institutions cannot be reformed in a day. Most significantly, justice is ultimately connected with the way people's lives go, and not merely with the nature of the institutions surrounding them (ibid.: x). In my view civilian lives have been turned upside down, particularly in countries such as Libya, Yemen and Syria. The prevailing lack of national/regional vision in MENA allows competitors in the political field to play the game on their own terms.

*At the interface of secular and Islamist forces and Al Qaeda*

Continuing from the previous section, it needs to be recognized that the game played in social spaces is at its most competitive when different agents want “positional advantage”. These agents work around capital interests that may be economic, cultural, social or symbolic in nature. Players who can bring with them some form of *capital* are (pre-)advantaged. The (political) *field*, through practice, produces more of the same *capital* and then the *agents* are able to improve their *position* in the field (Thomson, 2008: 69). Considering the political environment of MENA, as elaborated in Chapter 1, in my view in the long run Islamism will rise and Islamists who have the “cultural capital” on their side, and a “sympathy vote” for bearing with autocratic oppressions in the past, will become popular. What started in Egypt as a secular and democratic uprising culminated in the appointment of Tariq Al Bishri, an Islamist thinker and jurist, to act as the committee head required by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces to amend the constitution. The Muslim Brotherhood, promising parliamentary democracy, continues to maintain a religious slant. Many Islamist political prisoners have been released in Egypt and Tunisia. Islamists are now portraying themselves to be more accommodating, be it the Muslim Brotherhood or militant groups such as Hamas (which to Israel's annoyance has been taken under the umbrella of the Palestinian Liberation Organization). Islamists have a diversity of opinion among themselves, and this is likely to complicate any future political dialogue. Leaders within Hamas have different opinions over accepting Mahmoud Abbas as the Palestinian president. Similarly, Salafists in Egypt defended Mubarak before the 2011 uprising – but later went against him to get their Salafist contemporaries out of prison.

Jihadist groups are present as well, but apparently keeping a low profile. Gaddafi, holding on to his 41-year rule, vowed to fight against the rebels from eastern Libya, warning the international community about the presence of Al Qaeda within anti-Gaddafi ranks (*The Economist*, 2011b). Rebels in Benghazi included “bearded irregulars” who made Western companies nervous after repeated warnings by Gaddafi that “jihadists might grab the oil fields” (*The Economist*, 2011k). Jihadists as contenders cannot be ruled out considering Libya’s history of jihad against the Italians in 1837, led by a *sufi* order, Sanusi, founded by Algerian mendicants (*The Economist*, 2011b). Evidence is surfacing that rebels opposed to Gaddafi hail from Islamist groups as well as Al Qaeda – although they say that they are willing to accommodate secular views (*The Economist*, 2011c). Cyrenaica raised a “martyrs’ brigade” of 50,000 armed youths to defend itself from Gaddafi (*The Economist*, 2011o). Mustafa Abdel Jalil, Gaddafi’s former justice minister, is popular with both Islamists and tribal people (*The Economist*, 2011k). And there are reports that veterans of Afghan jihad are operating among rebel groups against Gaddafi. These individuals claim that their approach to the West has changed over the years and therefore they perceive NATO forces as friendly. How far is this claim true (*The Economist*, 2011l)? Apparently the Libyan uprising is against a tyrannical ruler, and not against the West. In the mid-1990s the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, now the Libyan Islamic Movement, was active in guerilla warfare in the hills above Darna, northeast of Benghazi. Gaddafi’s counterattacks made them flee to Afghanistan. Clearly, Darna’s Islamist jihadist fighters had a key role in the recent protests.

The clashes in Yemen started with Saleh’s supporters attacking his tribal rivals, the Ahmar family, whose members play leading roles in the political opposition. Other tribes joined in, Islamist militants seized a coastal town and security forces killed as many as 50 protesters in the city of Taiz as chaos spread. Yemen is already home to an active branch of Al Qaeda that has tried to carry out terrorist attacks on the United States and seeks to overthrow the Saudi monarchy. In response to the growing chaos, the Obama administration intensified American covert war, exploiting the power vacuum to strike at militant suspects with armed drones and fighter jets (*New York Times*, 2011b).

There are many competitors in the field. The West has to make hard choices between rebel groups and autocratic leaders in MENA. Protesters under the protection of the outside world may include Islamists and killers who turn out to be as brutal as Colonel Gaddafi (*The Economist*, 2011q). Yemen’s apparently impoverished Shiite Houthis have been alleged by Saleh to have connections with militant Islamists and terrorists. Its tribal militias appeared fearsome as they left the president injured.

*Tribalism and sectarianism*

Both protesters and rulers in MENA employ tribalism and sectarianism to play politics. Libya, after spending years battling the influence of tribes, is making a concerted effort to revive their role. Likewise, the Yemeni president, now opposed by an alliance of tribal militias, has a history of promoting a culture of socio-economic and political discrimination on the basis of tribal origin. He privileged the Sanhan tribe in terms of army top brass, and consequently caused discontent in the lower ranks. A brutal civil war broke out in Yemen in 1994. Now in 2011, when Saleh refused to step down, thousands of tribesmen marched on the presidential palace and injured the president and his top aides. Yemen is again going through a civil war. For an observer, what is worrisome is the changing face of protesters, from pro-democracy students of Sana'a University to the tribal militia. An undercover presence of Al Qaeda cannot be completely ruled out at this stage, considering the presence of Al Qaeda in Arab Peninsula in Yemen. So far, Islam *per se* has not featured in the Arab uprisings. Nonetheless, religion has surfaced in a sectarian sense, i.e. Shiite-Sunni dualism, where for example the Alawite Syrian President Assad is negligent towards a two-thirds Sunni population in his country, while the Sunni King Al Khalifa of Bahrain and President Saleh of Yemen are both guilty of suppressing Shiite populations, with Al Khalifa going to the extent of seeking help from Saudi Arabia to fire bullets at Bahraini Shiites gathered in Pearl Square, Manama.

*Beginnings of a new era in MENA?*

These uprisings are not the first in MENA. During the 1950s and 1960s the Middle East resisted colonialism. Later it witnessed civil wars that led to the migration of Arabs towards Europe. Currently, London hosts a population of 300,000 Egyptians, Moroccans, Iraqis, Palestinians, Yemenis, Lebanese and Emiratis. The rest of Britain has another 200,000 Arabs. History informs us that rather than staying home and putting their house in order, these communities and South Asian populations relocate, as Said (2004: 370) notes:

As a general condition, India and Pakistan on the one hand, and Arabs on the other, share a common background of colonial tribulation followed by independence and sovereignty. And at least in our case, speaking of the Arabs, what has happened is that although there are now twenty plus independent Arab states, the Arab world itself, with its rulers and regimes and kings and presidents, is a catastrophe. You have regimes, all of whom, with the exception of a few, are deeply unpopular. You have the resurgence of Muslim religious political feeling. You have a significant brain drain; a lot of people are leaving. And

above all, from my point of view, you have a cultural class, let's say, who are either silent or in hiding or abroad.

So, very frequently in a situation like this – when the situation is hopeless – it is important to turn to a symbolic figure . . . who is not co-opted, who is not corrupted, who is not silenced, and to say what he or she is doing is enough for us. Of course, in reality it's not enough. What we are talking about are situations where political change has often been set back. There has been no political change.

Even if there is no worthwhile political change, there are huge social costs involved, as shown in the next section.

### *Human rights and humanitarian concerns (masculinities in MENA)*

#### *Civilian casualties: State and foreign intrusion*

Conflict zones (as in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan) show that military and humanitarian stakeholders prioritize objectives differently. Civilian populations suffer terribly when lines between humanitarian, military and political objectives are blurred (Humanitarian Policy Group, 2011a).

NATO intervention in Libya was tactical, and a political solution was not particularly prioritized. Beyond an evident desire to eliminate Gaddafi, the mission lacked a clear direction, making the affected population more vulnerable (ibid.). In Libya civilians continued to bear the brunt of the conflict, with early estimates of civilian casualties exceeding 1,000, and thousands more injured. There were also reports of extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, detentions and torture by pro-Gaddafi forces. Up to 600,000 people in Libya are believed to be in need of humanitarian assistance and more than 376,000 have fled the country. This highly politicized and dynamic environment presents major challenges for the humanitarian community, including access inside the country (Humanitarian Policy Group, 2011b).

In a post-9/11 world hard policy options have become more rampant than exploration of soft policy interventions. The roles of militaries have increased markedly. Foreign interventions are made after invoking R2P (responsibility to protect) – whose rationale is based on protecting civilians. Governments are operating on hybrid grounds, including state security, counterterrorism and civilian protection. Although R2P contributed greatly to civilian welfare, security and protection in Darfur, Somalia, East Timor, the Solomon Islands and Nepal, in the cases of Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya, analysts at a seminar in the Overseas Development Institute, London, concluded that R2P has taken a step

backwards by focusing on military interventions rather than protection of civilians.<sup>3</sup>

Invoking R2P is indeed a tough call. Torture and death rampaged through Brega and Zawiya as Gaddafi hit back at the civilians during the last week of March 2011. NATO had not yet gone in, and Libya's skies were free for Gaddafi's air force to cause civilian casualties among his opponents. Finally NATO went in, and at the time of writing (July 2011) had flown more than 11,000 sorties, including almost 4,400 strike attacks against Libyan government targets across its territory (BBC News, 2011b). Libya accused NATO of killing five civilians in an air strike in the Souk al-Juma residential district in Tripoli (ibid.). Casualties of war, mostly recorded as collateral damage, are often left out of human security reporting, with international forces getting away with simple apologies.<sup>4</sup> NATO's Wing Commander Mike Bracken told the BBC "NATO deeply regrets any losses of civilian life during [the Libya] operation, and it would be very sorry indeed if a review of this incident concludes it was a NATO operation. Our pilots and air crew go to great lengths to minimalise civilian risk, but ultimately you can never make that risk zero in a military campaign" (ibid.). NATO has previously admitted hitting mistaken targets (ibid.).

#### *Protecting men from men: Issues of "male honour" and violence*

Tribal codes of honour play an important role in mass militarization of ordinary men. For example, conscription is not to be resisted if one is a honourable man. Such codes were expected to play a role in the fight between Gaddafi and the rebels, particularly on occasions when women and children are used as human shields. Commentators warned about "pouncing relatives" (*The Economist*, 2011d) taking revenge as women and children get abused in this political situation.

Heterosexual rape when used as a weapon of war causes equal damage to men and women. Rape when used in war acts as a three-edged weapon against society. It destroys the victim, "dishonours" her male familial relations (husband, father, brothers, sons) and converts ordinary soldiers into sex offenders. Soldiers who commit rape crimes under duress often turn neurotic or psychotic, as sentiments of "anxiety" and "guilt" follow.

#### **Military conscriptions**

In conflict situations men go through an emotional shutdown (Goldstein, 2003: 269), as they are expected to stand up to the occasion and perform. During the Second World War millions of men in Britain and America were transformed into soldiers through a rapid and brutal conditioning process (ibid.: 277). Currently a new militarism and rebellion are on the



rise and “severity” is in order. In conflict situations it is the stereotype of “manliness” that gets strengthened, endangering both men and women (ibid.). In Tripoli, unemployment hit tens of thousands of educated men and women overnight. Military conscription took a very serious turn after months of rumours. All public sector companies in Tripoli were given official notice of the military draft plans through a letter carrying a message that was to be passed on to all male employees, particularly those aged between 20 and 40. The BBC News (2011c) reported that men were faking medical reasons to get out of military training, and even fleeing/migrating to neighbouring countries to evade conscription. However, it is not as simple as it appears. In the same report, the BBC noted that men who were untrained were getting recruited by lying that they were trained. Young men face the dilemma of either being a “warrior” and serving “honour” while developing stress, anxiety and other bodily ailments, or paying the price of “humiliation” and “shame” and becoming known to all as a “failed” and “dishonoured” man (Goldstein, 2003: 269). Shame is the glue that holds the “man-making” process together. It was not just Gaddafi’s military conscriptions but also rebel camp recruitments that created issues in masculinities by exposing them to militarism.

### **Heterosexual rape and honour killings**

At a certain level, political developments in MENA made both men and women equally vulnerable. For example, young women from Tahrir Square were arrested and taken for “virginity tests” by the Egyptian army and humiliated. In times of political chaos and during conflict situations, rape is often used as an “ethnomarker” to sharpen inter-group boundaries, as in former Yugoslavia (ibid.: 371). Gaddafi also used rape for similar reasons. However, Libya has denied accusations that its forces used systematic rape as a weapon of war. The International Criminal Court’s chief prosecutor noted there was evidence that women had been raped on Gaddafi’s orders (Harding, 2011). The case of Libya’s Eman Al Obeidy accusing Gaddafi’s security forces of gang raping her is well known. Further, the International Criminal Court announced that it had reasons to believe that the drug Viagra was distributed to fighters (Harter, 2011). However, a former major in the Libyan army said that this allegation might hold true for mercenaries, but not for the regular army: the officer informed the BBC that “the shipments of Viagra were widely known about, but neither he nor his colleagues saw them” (ibid.).

Conflict lifts social taboos and disrupts relationships. It sends men away from home, and that makes them behave raunchily (Goldstein, 2003: 335). Gender as a code for a domination-submission relationship is used in conflict situations to harm the enemy at a much deeper level.



Exploitation of women intensifies during fighting. Domination is expressed, as the victorious use rape to conquer the subdued (ibid: 333).

Rape leaves not just an individual but the entire clan or tribe “dishonoured”. A quote from a UNHCR employee engaging in humanitarian assistance in Libya confirms this: “in Libya when rape occurs, it seems to be a whole village or town which is seen to be ‘dishonoured’”. Humanitarian agencies reported Gaddafi ordering his forces to rape women in particularly conservative areas, and “in front of their fathers and brothers” (Harter, 2011).

Rape arises from different specific motivations in various wars . . . Historically, the main point of rape in war seems to be to humiliate enemy males by despoiling their valued property – “the ultimate humiliation . . . the stamp of total conquest”. A raped woman is “devalued property, and she signals defeat for the man who fails in his role as protector”. Rape is thus “a means of establishing jurisdiction and conquest”. “Rape at once pollutes and occupies the territory of the nation, transgresses its boundaries, defeats its protectors.” For its victims, rape as a “violent invasion into the interior of one’s body represents the most severe attacks imaginable upon the intimate self and the dignity of a human being” (woman or man), constituting “severe torture” . . . Rape is a crime of domination and war has everything to do with domination. (Goldstein, 2003: 362)

The horrific impact of rape on the physical and psychological health of women is well known. In traditional societies, the issue becomes even more complex. Cultural codes of honour quite often lead to extrajudicial murder (honour killing) of the rape victim. As noted in a BBC news report: “To be seen naked and violated is worse than death for them [Libyan women]. This is a region where women will not go out of the house without covering their face with a veil” (Harter, 2011).

Libyan women and girls who become pregnant through rape risk being murdered by their own families in so-called “honour killings”. To prevent this from happening, human rights activists are arranging to pay for abortions for Libyan rape victims. “For the moment pregnancies can be disguised, but not for much longer. Many fathers will kill their own daughters if they find out they have been raped. It is ‘killing done with love’. They believe they are saving the girl” (ibid.) – but their actions are to serve their male ego and honour by wiping away the stain of dishonour. Goldstein (2003: 365–366) has elaborated on similar issues of honour killings in conflict zones.

During conflict, heterosexual gang rapes are a “standard torture mechanism” (ibid.: 362). Humiliating the victim and her tribe/clan is the obvious objective of gang rape. A more depraved motive is to increase “group bonding” among men as they share the same victim of abuse. By partici-

pating in gang rape, men can be part of the group (a cardinal value in military discipline), and appear tough among comrades (ibid.: 365). It seems that Gaddafi ordered gang rape as a means to deepen the existing “hierarchy” among troops, with officers taking their turns before other ranks (Harding, 2011).

### **Homosexual rape and feminization of subordinated masculinity**

Enemies and subordinates are gendered feminine (Goldstein, 2003: 333). Bosnia and Kosovo during conflict showed high levels of sexual abuse of men. Human rights activists have noted the occurrence of homosexual rape in Libya, for example as claimed in this quote: “The mother, the father and the son were all raped by Col Gaddafi’s forces” (Harter, 2011). Homosexual rape is another method of “feminizing the enemy”. In contexts where “feminine” equals “inferior”, homosexual rape provides an opportunity for taking perverse pleasure by relegating men to the status of women. These shameful tactics have remained in use in the Middle East and some other cultures, for example in Greek and Amerindian societies. Homosexual references constitute the biggest military insult. Among messages inscribed on US bombs in the Gulf War was “Bend over, Saddam” (Goldstein, 2003: 333).

### **Literal emasculation of enemy men**

Feminization of civilians commonly takes place and rape is enacted to symbolize and literally practise domination. Enemies are feminized so that attackers assume masculine and dominant roles (ibid.: 356). Studies show that captured men are sexually humiliated, even castrated and subjected to genital mutilation. Defeated groups are emasculated *en masse*.<sup>5</sup> So far no such findings have emerged from MENA, but this should be investigated by human rights and humanitarian agencies.

### *Masculinization of street violence*

Being able to reason and choose is a significant aspect of human life. The freedoms and capabilities that we enjoy can be valuable to us, and it is ultimately “our decision how to use the freedoms we have” (Sen, 2009: 18–19). In the Arab uprisings, and particularly in Yemen and Libya, the tribal militia and rebel youth groups have used freedoms while forgetting what Sen (ibid.) noted as the “deontological demands” associated with “accountability” that one with “power” or “capability” has to face. Criminality is on the rise (*The Economist*, 2011c). Everything is unpredictable in this sense. Benghazi youth quickly developed street-fighting skills. They had access to looted weapons (*The Economist*, 2011s). Youths who had experienced torture and imprisonment in the past went around thuggishly during the 2011 uprising, attacking foreign/migrant workers,

including Egyptians. An Egyptian accountant described how sword-wielding youths drove off in his company cars. A British project manager working on an extension to Darna's university reported youths arriving in dozens of trucks to cart away the site's 80 computers and other hardware, and burning down offices (*The Economist*, 2011o). They also looted army bases and roamed around carrying weapons in the street, banned during Gaddafi's tenure. Once army bases were ransacked, people had access to means of resistance. Rebels groups also targeted black refugees from Chad, Eritrea and Darfur, mistaking them for mercenaries in the pay of the colonel. Black Africans, even if Muslim and wounded, were not welcomed by the eastern rebel groups (*The Economist*, 2011p).

Violent trajectories are more accessible to men than women. If they cannot save themselves, they can always become one of the bad guys on the street.

*No more "head of the household": Issues of livelihood and displacement in conflict zones*

Experts warn that, among other features, in conflict/violent zones the nexus between physical security and livelihoods must be prioritized in humanitarian interventions. According to aid workers, impending death, internal displacement, forced migration or exile and loss of livelihood (in the Muslim world it is mainly men who head households and have dependants) combine together to produce conflict zones.<sup>6</sup> Experts believe that in conflict zones where guerilla warfare is ongoing, the livelihood sector is among the first to be targeted by warring factions. Political opponents harass each other's supporters, forcing closure of shops and businesses, and even looting assets or hoarding items such as food to sell at higher prices much later. Civilians feel vulnerable and exploitable in such a socio-economic environment. Men and women are equally powerless in conflict situations. While women may avoid provoking the enemy, men with their honour baggage and status of head of household opt for risk taking, even at the cost of their lives.

Arab uprisings and particularly civil wars caused upheavals in Arab masculinities. The need is to amplify human rights and humanitarian interventions.

## The Afghan predicament

Like other conflict-ridden countries, there are high levels of poverty in Afghanistan, and according to the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Taliban generate 70 per cent of their revenue through opium. There are strong links between drug traffickers and the Taliban. During the Bush

administration poppy fields were destroyed, but such actions pushed Afghan farmers into the grip of terrorists. These measures also allowed traffickers and terrorists to increase opium prices and make the life of ordinary farmers more miserable (*The Economist*, 2009b).

During conflict there is usually a continuum of different forms of violence, from organized warfare and systematic economic violence by the state or other organized military actors through to more individualized forms linked to crime, opportunism and violent and destructive survival strategies (Collinson, 2003: 16). Economic impediments, social expectations and cultural dictates combine together to create trouble for Afghans, as the whole structural and functional base of the society is rife with inequalities (Eggerman and Panter-Brick, 2010). Afghanistan has serious issues to deal with in terms of a weak judicial system and pervasive gender inequalities (Phadnis, 2009).

A burden of poor mental health arises in contexts of pervasive poverty, social inequality and persistent violence. Findings of a health survey reveal that at present most adults identify a “broken economy” as the root of all miseries and a major stress factor (Eggerman and Panter-Brick, 2010). For youth, frustrations focus on learning environments as well as poverty. Afghan society draws strength from the idea of education as the gateway to upward social and economic mobility. Matters such as faith, family unity, morals and honour are of critical importance (*ibid.*).

Life in Afghanistan is rugged and the society is closed and conservative. The houses are built in the same style and with the same materials as have been used for centuries. Ancient methods of agriculture are still in use. In Afghan society, the father and his brother are considered the ultimate authority in a family and are treated with utmost respect. They take decisions regarding finances, social relations and daily routine. Marriage is considered very important, and any man delaying marriage risks being assumed impotent or “unmanly” in some way. The usual practice is for a mother to find a bride for her son, as the daughter-in-law will move into the home and become a member of the extended household (Firling, 1988).

Living in a state of war and hostility since 1979, men mistrust people across the board and make them obedient through persecution. Since 1995–1996 Talibanization has caused *persecutory paranoia* among ordinary Afghan men. As young men, Afghans are being socialized with a “feminine void” (Ahmed, 2006: 27). They are ingrained with sentiments of violence and misogyny during childhood. Children are told in schools how a 10-year-old Afghan boy killed 100 Russians. A letter from a boy to his mother and sister reads: “If I am killed in battle, celebrate . . . make sure you conceal your body . . .” (*ibid.*) Ahmed (*ibid.*: 28) warns that this

is not just a political crisis: its roots are in an enormous psychological upheaval in masculinity, sexuality, religion and love. Afghan males, and most males in war-ravaged Muslim countries, are growing up in “the absence of a female matrix”, and this is making them self-destructive to an extent that is not even visible in the larger animal kingdom. Misogyny and paranoia are manifestations of an extreme individual pathology. Syndromes that are psychosexual in nature are a common finding among men growing up and living in a rugged and destructive environment. These men are clueless as to who women are – and become persecutory and abusive upon encountering them. To prove their masculinity they accept offers of jihad, divesting it from all its meanings and externalizing it in the service of a persecutory paranoia by becoming insular and destroying the perceived threat.

Islamic scholars interviewed for this book unreservedly condemned the Taliban as a “black spot on Islam”. Trained in issues of gender and religion, unlike some Pakistani defence analysts and military personnel I do not distinguish between “Afghan Taliban” and “Pakistani Taliban”, or any such politically clever binaries as “good Taliban/bad Taliban”. The Taliban are involved in acts of terror in the region and beyond (through their Al Qaeda connections). When in power (1996–2001 in Afghanistan, and in 2009 for a short while in Swat, Pakistan), the Taliban have governed in manners that violated basic human dignity.<sup>7</sup> It is due to their patent human rights abuses that I count the Taliban as “criminal” in intent and not political in agenda. From a human rights perspective, the Taliban *were* and *are* responsible for crimes against women and children and for *en masse* militarization of innocent Afghan men and boys. Their tactics forced innocent civilians to flee from their homes. Afghan refugees are one of the largest displaced communities in the world. According to estimates, during the 1980s there were 3 million refugees in Pakistan, and by 2001 they had increased to 5 million. In 2002 efforts were made to repatriate 3 million refugees, and of course life in war-torn Afghanistan has not offered them anything. Approximately 1.8 million refugees remain in Pakistan (Nilsson, 2009: 35; Nisbett and Cohen, 1996). Many refugees used Pakistan as a temporary relief station before resettling in the United States or Europe.

In his research on Afghan refugees in the United States, Firling (1988) collected some thought-provoking case data focusing on the psychological issues among refugees. He concluded that Afghan refugees were fearful and confused: on a playing field trying to advance in a new sport using the goals and techniques of an entirely different game. Stress and anxiety levels were found to be as high as in those suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. Afghan refugees suffer from insomnia, anger at the slight-

est noises, withdrawal and lack of regard for other family members. This behaviour was found to be exclusive to Afghan men, who, Firling reasons, succumb to social pressures that place men in charge of the socio-economic welfare of their families. Men attach a stigma to income earned by women – which indirectly implies men’s failure to provide for their women. Ultimately, cultural dictates prevent other individuals in an Afghan household from contributing (and thereby intruding). The whole family is entirely dependent on the man, who often develops anxiety and stress-related medical conditions. Many Afghans have left their homes to face an uncertain outside world. Refugees have their share of harrowing experiences, and usually suffer from a number of neurotic issues that can go unnoticed as the world becomes busy in criticizing them for their attitudes.<sup>8</sup> For example, high trends of spousal violence (wife-beating) have featured in research reports on Afghan refugees in Peshawar. Traditional gender roles within marriage and unwarranted interference of other family members in determining dynamics of spousal relations have been counted as major causes of problems in a marriage (Hyder, Noor and Tsui, 2007).

Afghanistan needs to establish a democratic political system for successful reconstruction of the country. Among other things it needs to develop a strong civil society and introduce basic human rights, while establishing rule of law, adopting a new constitution and building effective state institutions (Khalilzad, 2010). Issues related to Afghan refugees and their concerns for repatriation have to be addressed. A large Afghan population is still in Pakistan and Iran. They are the deterritorialized youth (Chatty, 2010). Jalaluddin and Majid (2009: 56) reveal that after having settled in Pakistan, many Afghan refugees resist repatriation. Livelihood options in Pakistan are relatively better than in Afghanistan, and this remains the main concern of men. Afghan refugees do not trust their government, are afraid of the atrocities of the Taliban and do not have access to any socio-economic opportunities or even basic health facilities inside Afghanistan.

In my view one of the major ramifications of 9/11 is the mass-scale Xeroxing of *criminal psychology*. Our world may be global, but it is disgracefully tribalistic. One of the worst outcomes of 9/11 and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq was to provide ordinary human beings with a moral ground to celebrate the death of “the other”. From a psychological perspective, it is worrisome to see Afghan boys growing up in all-male seminaries, prevented from having even the most basic and essential exposure to women. Forcibly snatched from their mothers to be cast into militant training camps, can one really believe these boys will be able to lead normal lives as adults?

## The Muslim diaspora and honour

Although beyond the scope of this research,<sup>9</sup> it is important to mention briefly how “masculine honour” gets pronounced among post-colonial immigrant Muslim communities. Archer (2005a: 67–68) writes about British Muslim boys who almost naturally and traditionally engage in the reproduction of *racialized masculinities*. They insist that they police or keep their women under surveillance – creating an impression that patriarchal norms of Muslim societies are part of their life in Britain. Boys make statements about British Muslim women that will never be confirmed by the latter as a just representation of gender relations in Muslim communities in Britain, for example that Muslim women “are not allowed to continue education”, “have no choices in terms of future marriage”, are “forced to stay at home performing domestic chores for their families”, etc. The fact that a number of Muslim women *are* able to continue education, choose their partners, enter the public domain, be with friends, etc., remains unrecognized in men’s groups, unless forced. Archer understands this as “an account of idealized patriarchal division of labour” that boys narrate to “pronounce [Muslim] masculinity”. Muslim boys actively engage in perpetuating a number of myths about Muslim women in order to produce masculine advantages. They may feel the need to do so as Muslim men have a positional disadvantage and tolerate structural inequalities such as racism that in turn make them emotional towards traditional depictions of masculinity through which they attempt to convey their “power” and “status”.

## Why are Muslim men so violent?

The heading has a subtext that may mistakenly imply Muslim men are particularly violent. The intention, however, is not to stereotype men from any religious community. In this age of terrorism, Muslim men face persecution from their own governments and their allies. Existing scholarship on the plight of Muslims around the world and also this research (see Part III) illustrate multiplicities of forms of violence and denial that Muslim men bear. Yet ironically it is Muslim men who are currently notorious for being very intolerant and violent. Due to this disparity between the current predicament of ordinary Muslim men and their global “image”, I ask: why are Muslim men so violent? The answer can be found by engaging with the Muslim world and practices of masculinities within it. Even the lousiest propaganda has to be based on some truth. Muslim men cannot have this reputation of being “violent” without any basis. Unfortunately, Muslim societies condone and tolerate violence when it is



men who commit it and women who tolerate it. Customary norms, along with discriminatory and/or incipient governance structures, also allow men to practise violence. One of the major themes within women's studies, Muslim feminism, has contributed to our understanding of Muslim women's lives within patriarchal contexts (be these agrarian, tribal or nomadic). Scholarship consolidated by Afshar, (Leila) Ahmed, Kandiyoti, Khayyat, Moghadam, Paider and Sadawi is commendable.

During my discussions with Islamic scholars I asked them why Muslim men are so violent. One string of answers relied on theories centring on biological determinism: the male sex (as opposed to female) is genetically violent unless *made* civilized.<sup>10</sup> Another group of scholars resisted the question on grounds that other men were equally violent, and that violence was a recent phenomenon and politically motivated. The following quote illustrates this view:

It is very unfortunate that through a "conspiracy" Islamic culture is being summarized and presented to the whole world as a religion that abuses women, murders political opponents and authorizes suicide bombings. Prior to General Zia-ul-Haq, Pakistani society was the same – but these were not our attitudes. Today men are violent . . . not just towards women, but against men, for example the bomb blasts and targeted killings in mosques are against men. Zia and the Western powers have played a major game to make Islam and Muslims appear as a notorious community.<sup>11</sup>

I do not entirely agree with this assessment, as internal factors such as social structures and informal institutional arrangements that define social norms and mores for both men and women have not been taken into consideration here. Institutional and development failure throughout the Muslim world has made judicial systems defunct and the apparently disgruntled youth are trying to take justice into their own hands. Also, men regularly indulge in honour-related violence against women. The murderers get away with it, as there are no institutions controlling, penalizing and punishing them. When a system of accountability is absent, any-one may become violent.

Yes, [Pakistani] men commit honour crimes. They do this in service of male ego. Their behaviour is seated in a "subjected" and "self-crafted understanding" of "masculinity" and is purely agrarian and/or tribal. It has absolutely no place in the Quran and Sunnah.<sup>12</sup>

The young men in mass Islamism are a "collective shadow of the over-inflated heroic ego of modernity" (Ahmed, 2006: 24–25). Men going through the processes of development and cognition at the interface of rapid globalization and vanishing local cultures often become dazed and



confused (ibid.). This resonates closely with Connell's exposition of class resentment and collective masculinity, as elaborated in Chapter 3.

Scholars also blame the media for presenting misleading ideals to men. Illiterate men are particularly susceptible to such negative influences. Political groups inciting hatred for other nations among Muslim men were also criticized. Religious texts are often used to spread *fitna* (chaos), and people with limited knowledge about Islam get carried away. This quote is an example:

How can one claim to engage with something that one has no knowledge about? This is how we, the Muslims . . . are living Islam. We have no idea what Islam is – but we claim to be Muslims. To make it worse . . . we are not amenable to “ideas”. Muslims have always prevented debate within religion. The dark ages of the West were not that dark after all. Aquinas, St Augustine, interacted with the Muslims . . . and they became progressive. On the contrary, Behlol and Hallaj were sent to the gallows. Those who say something different or deeper . . . are existing on the fringes of Muslim societies, while these “violent types” are having their day representing Islam.<sup>13</sup>

## Conclusion

By using examples of typical daily-life issues of Muslim men around the world, particularly from MENA and Afghanistan, this chapter illustrated concepts and theory discussed in Chapter 3. It illuminated those socio-political and economic contexts and processes that affect gender dynamics. Butler (2006: 191) emphasized gender as a “constituted social temporality”. Currently, in environments of political oppression and economic deprivation, customary and traditional “ideals” for masculinities quite often come under stress, thereby causing upheaval in masculine practices and crises in the overall gender system. Men's behaviour instantly affects not just other men but also women, as they are left with no options for healthy expression, competition or success. Gender-based disappointments and this burden of living an “unmanly” life contribute to making men violent as they try to rescue their image of being born “powerful”.

## Notes

1. This topic is being discussed from a sociological angle. My intention here is not to present a theological debate on *purdah* or engage with relevant Quranic injunctions.
2. For details see O'Callaghan, Jaspars and Pavanello (2009). This paper provides useful statistics on cases of violence, particularly detentions.

3. See the Overseas Development Institute's Humanitarian Policy Group website at [www.odi.org.uk](http://www.odi.org.uk) (Overseas Development Institute, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c).
4. See the Overseas Development Institute's Humanitarian Policy Group website (Overseas Development Institute, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c).
5. President Lyndon Johnson said of the damage inflicted on Vietnamese communists during the 1968 Tet offensive: "I didn't just screw Ho Chi Minh. I cut his pecker off!" An underlying discourse of castration also existed in the Gulf War in 1991: US General Colin Powell's strategy towards the Iraqi army was to first "cut it off" and then "kill it". Richard Nixon called Saddam Hussein "militarily castrated" by the war. See Goldstein (2003: 358).
6. See the Overseas Development Institute's Humanitarian Policy Group website, note 4 above (Overseas Development Institute, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c).
7. "The Pakistani government is fiddling as the North West Frontier Province burns and residents are left at the mercy of the Taliban," said Sam Zarifi, Amnesty International's Asia-Pacific director, in Islamabad. See Amnesty International (2009).
8. This reminds one of the Islamic notion of *qawwam*, as elucidated in Chapter 4.
9. I understand diaspora studies as a specialized field, and therefore consider it beyond the scope of this particular study, whose main focus is Muslim masculinities inside the Muslim world.
10. For example as expressed by Dr Shahzaad Iqbal, International Islamic University, Islamabad, in an interview with the author, 25 January 2010.
11. Allama Muhammad Ali Tauhidi in an interview with the author, 21 January 2010.
12. Allama Kausar Abbass Haidri in an interview with the author, 21 January 2010.
13. Professor Javed Amiri, Karachi University, in an interview with the author, 27 January 2010.



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## Part III

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Pakistani masculinities and  
vulnerable social groups in the age  
of terror: A pilot study of Muslim  
men in Islamabad, aged 18–40

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## 6

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## Research setting: Contextualizing the pilot study on Pakistani masculinities

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To open Part III, this chapter provides important background information regarding the research design and the historical, political and social context of Pakistan, particularly focusing on trajectories of masculine honour in the post-9/11 era. The subsequent chapters give a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the collected data.

### Research design

“Paradigm wars” in social sciences between positivists (empiricists, quantitative researchers) and constructionists (phenomenologists, qualitative researchers) have continued for over four decades (Robson, 2002: 43). *Relativist* approaches consider “reality” as what can be constructed only by means of a conceptual system: there can be no objective reality because different cultures and societies have different conceptual systems. Relativists argue that researchers can only represent “reality” through the “meanings” research participants attach to things. Also known as *constructivist* and *interpretive*, relativist approaches are a critique of positivistic traditions and emphasize multiplicity in social constructions of meaning and knowledge (ibid.: 22–24, 27). Almost a decade ago Robson (ibid.: 42) argued that *critical realism* was the way forward. With its focus on studying the “outcome” of an “action” as what follows from a “mechanism” and within a particular “context”, *realism* became a priority epistemological approach for researchers associated with value-based

professions such as social work (ibid.: 30–31). Bhaskar’s critical realism provides a rationale for a “critical social science”; one that criticizes the social practices that it studies (ibid.: 41). Social researchers at times favour using whatever philosophical or methodological approach works best for the problem or issue at hand. Robson (ibid.: 43) labels their approach *pragmatic*. Pragmatism is a philosophical position whose practitioners assert “truth is what works”.

The role of social researchers underwent dramatic developments as the foundations of postmodernism shifted. The difference between research and research participant dissolved as researchers started prioritizing “action” and “activism” research: an art-based social enquiry whose audience is not limited to academics, but participants (or co-researchers) who made the investigation possible by providing data (Finley, 2008: 96–97). Rather than being restricted to “objectivity” issues, social researchers started a more interpersonal, political, emotional, moral and ethical engagement with the research subject (ibid.). “We want a social science that is committed upfront to issues of social justice, equity, non-violence, peace, and universal human rights. We do not want a social science that says it can address these issues if it wants to. For us, that is no longer an option” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008: 18). However, simultaneously came the re-emergence of “scientism”, stressing a “positivist, evidence-based epistemology” and urging social researchers to be “rigorous, systematic and objective” in methodology. Such an approach used the causal models and well-defined independent and dependent variables that Denzin and Lincoln note as problematic for qualitative researchers, who are often unable to generate “hard evidence”. At best they can work with case study material and interviews, conduct ethnographies and produce descriptive material (ibid.: 12). Critics argue that the *scientifically based research* movement has rendered the epistemologies of race, queer, post-colonial feminist and postmodern theories useless, and have demoted qualitative research by labelling it as “scholarship” but not “science” (ibid.).

For over a decade I have carried out intensive sociological investigations at the grassroots level in Pakistan. I have found working with a combination of interpretive and realist approaches very useful: what meaning participants attach to certain things, the words they use, along with a more critical and objective understanding of the institutional “mechanisms” through which ideas or social codes get consolidated – the involved tangible and intangible social processes and specific socio-economic political contexts that influence the outcomes we ultimately come across. A social activist at heart, I prioritize action research that explores, describes or explains, but eventually critically evaluates the status quo. Although trained as a qualitative researcher, I realize the pros

and cons of both qualitative and quantitative enquiry. I use both methods in this study: we can study the same thing in two different ways. However, across the positivist/postpositivist divide, not every social researcher is willing to do this. The mixed-method approach used in this study allows us to divide enquiry into two dichotomous categories, explorations and confirmations, and then associate qualitative with the first and quantitative with the second. We must recognize that it is through qualitative research that we see the world as it is and embed our findings within it. Using qualitative means we are able to “engage” with the world that we investigate as social researchers. Quantitative tools do not allow us to study this world directly, or engage with it in a fuller manner. Yet quantitative measures send us on a trajectory of “probability”, giving us something more concrete to work with. The nature and complexity of this subject obliged me to allocate direct attention to the research sample, and get to the root of specifics. In order to fight what Silverman (1997, quoted in Denzin and Lincoln, 2008) described as “the impulse of raising the experiential to the authentic” (ibid.: 13–17), I decided to balance this enquiry on two legs rather than one. Quantitative methods helped me study causal links between variables and operationalize gender theory, even if at a small scale in a pilot. This work has both scholarly and scientific value.

### *Sampling and process*

Gilmore (1990: 175–186) documents his anthropological findings on South Asian Indian masculinities, with a page on Pakistani/Pukhtun. Beyond this, I did not find any notable literature on Pakistani masculinities. Also, the upheaval caused in these masculinities by the war on terror has never before been recorded from a gender perspective. Thus I decided to produce an empirical dataset on Pakistani Muslim masculinities.

This empirical investigation had a flexible research design and was conducted in Islamabad. The theoretical framework guided the population sample. The starting point was Connell’s (2005) notion of “multiple masculinities” (multiple contexts within which gender relations and practices get influenced). Connell postulates “marginalization”, “hegemony”, “complicity” and “subordination”. In the following chapters I deliberate upon 118 men belonging to similar contexts classified as three stratified samples: low socio-economic group (LSE), socially stigmatized and distressed (SSD) and university students and professionals (USP). LSE consisted of educated jobless who use secondary sources of income for basic survival, daily-wage labourers and non-commissioned government staff. SSD had substance misusers and internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Waziristan and Swat or those directly afflicted by floods, the war on



terror and drone attacks. USP comprised bankers, commissioned government officials, development professionals and MA/PhD students from Quaid-i-Azam University and Urdu University, Islamabad. These three social strata served the research objective, with the first two representing Connell's marginalization/subordination and complicity scenario, and the third (the domain of higher/tertiary education) appearing to be similar to Connell's hegemony zone. Participants were aged 18–40 and volunteered to contribute in this research.

Scientific methods demand defining/limiting the scope of research in certain ways. Quite often this is achieved by prioritizing one unit of analysis over another. A review of literature guided me to prioritize socio-economic contexts (based on the three strata), and also variables such as income, marital status etc. (see Chapter 9). While moderating survey questionnaires and focus groups, I started recognizing the number of Pukhtun<sup>1</sup> participants as high in comparison to other ethnic groups, particularly in LSE and SSD. This was despite the fact that the data were being collected in Islamabad and not in Peshawar, the provincial capital of KP Province. The majority representation of Pukhtuns can be attributed to demographic changes that are taking place in a country endangered by political violence and natural disasters. According to the last census held in the country (1998), Pukhtuns were the second-largest migrant group in Islamabad. The total migrant population of Islamabad was estimated at 3,97,731, of whom at least 76,614 came from KP Province, along with 2,534 (ethnically Pukhtun) from the federally administered tribal areas (FATAs), in comparison to only 26,143 from Sindh and 2,969 from Baluchistan.<sup>2</sup> Also, currently Pukhtuns are the main displaced community – in fact twice displaced, leaving Pukhtunkhwa owing to drone attacks and Pakistan military operations against the Taliban, and monsoon floods that destroyed Pukhtun areas in 2010. UN agencies have provided temporary refuge to these affected communities. Historically, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan resulted in an influx of Afghan refugees into Pakistan, who for the sake of survival started securing odd/low-paying jobs all over the country. Mostly settling in KP province or moving further southwards into Islamabad, today Pukhtuns constitute the largest population among daily-wage labourers.

As a researcher, I wanted to avoid provincialism and ethnic, subethnic and even sectarian profiling of different races, particularly *vis-à-vis* the sensitive issue of terrorism. Thus from the beginning ethnicity was not prioritized as an independent variable for this research. However, after finding a dominant Pukhtun presence and identifying the causes behind this trend, I adjusted this “oversampling” of Pukhtuns on grounds that undoubtedly the population most affected by the ill-named war on terror *is* Pukhtun. All stakeholders in counterterrorism consider their tribal

affiliations with Afghans across the border as “critical”. It may sometimes be helpful to allow a sample to develop in this way, particularly in a flexible design and when one knows the advantages of doing so (Robson, 2002: 262). A detailed statistical profile of the population sample is given in the Appendix.

At the start of empirical investigation the three groups of LSE, SSD and USP were largely “supposed” categories – their rationale emerging from Connell’s proposition that masculinities are a product of their social contexts and histories. Nonetheless, one has to acknowledge the porosity and crossovers between these social contexts – for example, being a professional and yet being socially stigmatized or being highly educated and yet either jobless or drug dependent is common in Pakistan. Local and global socio-economic and political contexts play a role in defining masculinities. It is not unusual to find educated and uneducated, jobless and employed, making similar statements. Interpreting from the sample studied, Pakistani men feel as if their contexts are essentially marginalized and peripatetic in nature. It is more out of their marginalized contexts, and less due to rhetorical symbols such as Islamic brotherhood, that Muslim men make a collective statement of their plight. Against this backdrop, qualitative and quantitative data provided in the following chapters focus on both individual and collective trends across the identified strata.

### *Methodological tools*

The conclusions of this small-scale pilot study are based on multiple sources of evidence (survey questionnaires, focus group discussions, interviews with religious scholars and academics, along with already established and published gender theory). The survey questionnaire consisted of subsections that focused on masculinities (local perceptions of manhood, pressures and expectations from men), the role of women in men’s lives, and jihad, terrorism and global politics with special emphasis on Osama Bin Laden. Surveys were always completed prior to starting focus group discussion sessions. For each group, the practice was to read through the preliminary statistics quickly and identify the nature of responses before starting more detailed discussion.

The focus groups aimed at achieving three objectives: documenting subjective interpretation of the masculine gender within a Pakistani context, particularly *vis-à-vis* women; documenting potential reactionary behaviours of socially and economically incompetent or otherwise troubled men; and probing the nexus between cultural ideals of masculinity and one’s tendency to opt for militant-jihadist Islamism or terrorism. The sessions centred on five main questions and one auxiliary question.

- What privileges or advantages do men have, particularly in comparison to women?
- How does Pakistani society pressurize its men *or* what are the various forms of expectations that Pakistani society has from its men?
- What happens to those men who fail to meet these (identified) expectations? What life choices do these men usually make upon succumbing to such pressures?
- What type of “personal satisfaction” do men obtain by indulging in jihad?
- How must a man respond if he is approached by any affiliate of some “random” religious organization/network?
- (Auxiliary question.) What can be the various ways of responding to an invitation such as “join the cause of Islam” or “join jihad”?

In interviews Islamic scholars were asked to illuminate Islam’s position on gender and concepts of masculinity.

- To what extent do the Quran and *hadith* introduce masculinity as a subcategory or a practice within gender?
- What is the difference between masculinity and femininity in accordance to the Quran and Sunnah?
- What is an ideal or exemplary masculinity according to the teachings of the Quran?
- What characteristics and personal attributes must Muslim men uphold?

Profiles of at least 25 prophets mentioned in the Quran were also thematically assessed to understand their primary and recurring characteristics as men (see Chapter 4).

### *Analysis*

This research is mainly qualitative in nature, and quantitative data and analysis have been included as a complementary measure so that important trends in the sample can be conveniently identified. Qualitative analysis relying mainly on field study data (focus groups, interviews with Islamic scholars and academics) and relevant theoretical and empirical literature led to certain inferences and assumptions. Data were recorded efficiently and effectively. Transcripts of focus group discussions were prepared in vernacular language and later translated into English. In interpreting and analysing focus group data, I have not only treated the three social groups individually but also collectively, to identify patterns of similarities and differences across them. Subsequently, a few crystallized hypotheses were drawn out and tested through multivariate logistical regression models using SPSS. The quantitative data helped determine the impact significance of certain independent variables on dependent

variables (see Chapter 9). Also, other significant data frequencies and distributions were recorded.

*Does this pilot study have any scientific value?*

There is absolutely no way that what individuals “state” on a questionnaire is how they “behave” in real life (ibid.: 266–267). Regardless of sample size, “statement-behaviour disparity” means one can never be completely sure of the “probability” factor in what one is researching. As long as research is rooted in theory and review of literature, the chances are that, even if conducted at a small scale, it will systematically lead to production of intellectually sound arguments and findings. Guided by classic theory, I proceeded with particular sample groups in mind that could represent certain contexts, such as hegemony, marginalization, subordination and complicity. The findings presented here apply to the sample in question. This pilot study on Pakistani masculinities with its small population size and much wider vision is quite valuable.

The first two parts of this book provided details on the political crises in the Muslim world, the global jihadist movement and the changes occurring in practices of masculinities. Part III and the findings presented therein form part of the bigger global picture. This pilot study has the potential to be replicated on a larger scale. I state this on the grounds that the data presented have both construct and internal validity; the findings of this pilot study can be theoretically and methodologically triangulated. At times researchers ignore a third factor – the involvement of “z” while explaining a causal relationship between “x” and “y”; use of multivariate regression analysis precluded this from happening. Methodologists always appreciate a fully developed theoretical framework, as has been presented in this book. For example, Yin (2009) attributes successful data collection in the field to sensible use of theory. Such appropriately used or developed theory also allows the generalization of case study results. The pilot study presented in this book used analytic generalization, whereby previously developed gender theories (those developed by Connell and Butler) were used as a template within which data collection and analysis were successfully carried out in the field.

Like most sociological research, this small-scale investigation faced restrictions: availability of limited resources (financial and human); a rapidly deteriorating law and order situation in Islamabad; the work culture of Pakistan, where punctuality is a utopian notion; frequent power outages; and time management problems, particularly caused by low literacy levels among LSE and SSD groups, for whom survey questionnaires had to be filled out in face-to-face interviews.<sup>3</sup> Despite all this, data collection was surprisingly smooth given that I am an urban, educated Pakistani

Muslim woman, and the samples are all Pakistani Muslim men belonging to very diverse social groups. In Muslim contexts, this is indeed an odd setting. As a researcher, I expected “resentment” or even some “mean comments” regarding what might culturally be perceived as “impudence” on my part: taking a seat among men and talking to them about “masculinities”. Simultaneously, I thought that since individuals need to express themselves, this might work out well. My second assumption turned out to be correct.

### Why focus on Pakistan?

Pakistan has been widely studied. Anyone interested in the country may consider reading the works of A. S. Ahmed (1976, 1983, 1986, 1992), Jalal (1995, 2000, 2010), Talbot (2010), Jaffreot (2004), Shaikh (2009) and Weiss and Gilani (2001). Here I focus on three main reasons that make Pakistan an interesting case for studying militant-jihadist Islamism and terrorism.

First, the nation has a colonial heritage towards which it has an ambivalent attitude. The majority of Pakistanis idealize emigrating to the West while consistently indicting Europe for its colonialism and the United States for its cultural imperialism. Pakistanis have programmed themselves into showing anger over the West without appreciating, for example, the contributions made by the British to Pakistan’s legislative and legal maturity, including the fact that the very founders of Pakistan were trained in/by Europe and the word “Pakistan” was coined in the streets of Cambridge in the UK. At times one feels astonished at the level of attitudinal negativity that surrounds Pakistanis *vis-à-vis* the West. Although Muslims of South Asian origin have staged eclectic entertainment such as “Bombay Dreams” in London,<sup>4</sup> they are also responsible for the 7/7 bombings in the city. Such a vacillating approach towards former colonists is not new among those colonized in the past. During the British Raj, while some Muslims developed a fascination with British attire, table manners and other cultural codes of conduct, many protested and rebelled against the British as freedom fighters. During colonial and current times the culture of protest has remained very popular among South Asian Muslims. Pakistanis have protested on a range of issues, from military dictatorships to power outages, a suspended judiciary and even gang rapes (among other women’s rights violations). Put more precisely, Pakistanis were and are politically proactive. Even high-school children in urban areas have an opinion about politicians, as routine family conversations revolve around politics. One should not be surprised to come across a 14-year-old schoolgirl suggesting a quick fix for Pakistan’s ills

by public execution of all corrupt politicians in the country. The youth are becoming keen participants in political rallies, and are equally accessible (or susceptible) to Islamist and secular political parties working in the country. Pakistanis are a politically engaged people, and this can either be disastrous or an ideal condition for wide-scale massive social change.

Second, Pakistan's status as a developing country and a victim of both natural and man-made disasters is already fully recognized. The *World Development Report 2010* (World Bank, 2010: 6) notes:

South Asia suffers from an already stressed and largely degraded natural resource base resulting from geography coupled with high levels of poverty and population density. Water resources are likely to be affected by climate change, through its effect on the monsoon, which provides 70 per cent of annual precipitation in a four-month period, and on the melting of Himalayan glaciers. Rising sea levels are a dire concern in the region, which has long and densely populated coastlines . . .

The flooding of Pakistan during the 2010 monsoon only validates concerns raised in the report, which warned of massive increase in the costs (at the time estimated to be as high as 9 per cent of GDP) associated with malnutrition and water-borne diseases (ibid.: 11). With widespread floodwater across affected regions in Pakistan, food insecurity and health issues increased enormously, but international aid efforts in response were quite gradual.

Many of the flood-affected regions were also conflict zones and cornerstones of the fight against Taliban insurgency. In many ways the affected populations, the IDPs, were twice uprooted, first by the terrorist-military encounter and second by the floods. An alarm was raised to provide food, shelter, health and sanitation to the displaced population, along with starting investment in rehabilitation and reconstruction operations lest "a population exhausted by conflict [may] become a soft target for militants [and terrorists], making stability in the northwest even more elusive" (International Crisis Group, 2010). The statistics revealed that one-fifth of Pakistan went under water during the floods, affecting a total of 20.5 million people and leaving 8 million homeless and 1,752 dead. Over 1.8 million houses were damaged. The worst-affected sectors included agriculture and communications. At least 71 per cent of KP province's standing rice crop, 59 per cent of vegetable crops and 45 per cent of the maize crop were lost and agricultural lands and orchards were reduced to nothing. An estimated 5,406 irrigation structures were terribly damaged and thousands of small and large livestock animals drowned, leaving their owners without a source of income (ibid.). If Pakistan has always been a

poor country, the wrath of terrorism and monsoon floods only make it poorer and its people more miserable. Although bearing heavy losses, Pakistan has also gained massively from the post-9/11 situation: “The country reaps tremendous financial, political, and diplomatic benefits from being a frontline state in advancing U.S. and international security objectives” (Fair, 2011b: 118). And it has convinced the international community that “it is too important and too dangerous to fail” (Fair, 2011a: 109). Pakistan’s leadership has performed badly and since 9/11 has mainly relied on “extract[ing] lucrative rents while deferring important fiscal decisions about the relative primacy of defense spending and investment in its own citizens” (ibid.).

Finally, being largely a traditional society, Pakistan has a number of informal institutional arrangements that play important roles in the routine social, economic and political life of its people. Cultural notions such as *gherat*, or honour, customary codes of conduct and arbitrary consultative assemblies of tribal influentials such as *jirga* are all interesting areas of study. Pakistan is a land where *formal* institutions function cautiously and side by side with these ancient traditions. Financially weak governments do not have much choice when their main interest, minimizing government expenditure in public service, is served by engaging with these very informal institutional mechanisms. While ruling India, the British succumbed to these ancient frameworks, most particularly to the codes of tribesmen in the north, whom they encountered in vain. Such a socio-political and economic context makes Pakistani men quite troubled and troublesome, and hence an interesting case for studying gender performativity and multiple masculinities, along with exploring the critical nexus between gender and militant-jihadist Islamism and terrorism.

## Heritage of Pakistan: Colonialism, Islamism and tribalism

### *Colonialism and Islamism*

Colonialism was a gendered process. If one is to historicize, the British played a major role in developing specific masculinities in India for the purpose of military recruitment and social control (Connell, 2005). Comparisons between the “effeminate” Bengalis and the fierce Pukhtuns and Sikhs were introduced (Connell, 2002: 254). Stereotyping of Muslim boys continued in a post-colonial world. Before the wave of Islamophobia, Muslim boys in Britain were subsumed within stereotypes (mainly in passive roles) of Asian boys. For example, teachers and other pupils viewed Asian boys as effeminate, quiet, well-behaved and high-achieving pupils. After the Salman Rushdie affair a further distinction became prominent



between Hindu/Sikh “achievers” and Pakistani/Bangladeshi “believers”. Prevailing stereotypes count Muslim boys as dangerous and educationally problematic. They are often represented as a demographic time-bomb in social and policy discourse. The life of Muslim men is troubled simply because of the way the world currently operates. Faced with oppression and destitution in their own countries, they explore avenues abroad, where, even if they are asylum-seekers, they are instantly perceived as invaders. Muslim men are characterized at the street level as gangsters with a flair for violence, petty crime and sexism (Archer, 2005a: 62–63).

Before moving to a discussion of empirical data on Muslim masculinities from Pakistan, it is important to recognize the processes involved in the construction and legitimization of aggressive masculinity among Muslims of united India. It is equally significant to review tribal and customary codes of conduct/institutional arrangements along with contemporary socio-political realities of this region within which troubled masculinities are emerging. Jihadism among Muslims can be attributed to colonialism. In 1914 Muslims acted against their Christian and Western rulers, mainly with a mission to save the Ottoman Empire. This was the time when Indian Muslims developed a symbiotic relationship between religion and politics. The jihadist movement changed from puritanical to revivalist, and Islam transformed into a propaganda machine for mobilizing Muslim masses (Peters, 1979). Colonial subjects learnt to justify bloodshed through use of religious symbolism and nationalism. Pakistani “manliness” developed within the framework of the country’s struggle for independence from British rule. This process spanned decades of both violent and peaceful activism, giving birth to a generation of Muslim men who were lawbreakers as well as freedom fighters and therefore heroes of both Islam and Pakistan. Leaders in the anti-colonial struggle used religious symbolism such as jihad and *ummah*. Young men were mobilized and convinced into taking up arms and fighting like *mujahids* against the infidels – the colonial masters.

Anjuman-i-Khuddam-i-Ka’ba was formed in 1913 for the defence of the Holy Ka’ba, and was transformed in 1919 into Jam’iat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind, which was Devbandi inspired and very antipathetic towards other sects existing in Islam – an attitude it transferred to Jam’iat-ul-Ulema-i-Islam Pakistan (Pirzada, 2000). An incident in Kanpur in 1913 opened doors for religion to enter politics, when the British demolished a part of a mosque during roadworks. The independence movement hero Maulana Muhammad Ali Johar issued a statement: “We owe a duty to the government, but . . . to God as well.” This led to the revival of the defunct Anjuman-i-Khuddam-i-Ka’ba, and a new All India Khilafat [Caliphate] Committee emerged with branches all over India (Jalalzai, 1998).



It is no secret that, contrary to Jinnah's vision, governments in the past have abused religious symbolism to promote the idea of Pakistan as an Islamic republic. After the birth of Pakistan in August 1947, jihadist politics of anti-colonial struggle transformed into communalistic and sectarian warfare. Failing dictatorial regimes and also elected governments in Pakistan repeatedly invoked the religious symbol of jihad to serve their own interests, such as during the anti-Qadiani movement in 1974 (Kukreja, 2003: 154–190; Zaman, 1998), in fighting against the USSR in Afghanistan in 1979 (ibid.; Abbas, 2005: 201–202; Talbot, 2007) and in retrieving Kashmir from Indian control. In 1979 Pakistan used jihad to prevent the spillover of Iranian Shia-based revolution into Sunni-populated Pakistan (Abbas, 2005: 201–202). During the 1980s these sectarian trends started determining regional politics, with the Shiite Iranians versus Sunni Iraqis and the Sunni Taliban versus the Shiite Northern Alliance in Afghanistan, where the Sunni-majority Pakistan supported the Taliban and the Northern Alliance was supported by Shiite Iran.

A modern state apparatus and the processes of modernization led to the suppression of feminine expression of Islam. Misogyny was institutionalized in law during General Zia's regime (1979–1988). The state started promoting *ulema* for political gains and to give Islam an "official" face. Maceration of the feminine side of Islam was indirectly allowed by a state that was driven by "militaristic machismo" and interested in promoting an "*ulemasculinised* theology" that was primarily "aggressive and violent" (Ahmed, 2006: 21). Such theology led to taking God as a distant entity; promoting the idea of the *literalized feminine houri* (as a heavenly virgin) that good Muslim men gain upon death. When the "feminine" divine attributes of *beauty*, *mercy* and *compassion* are crushed in psycho-cultural-theological consciousness, the product one ends up with is "the Taliban".<sup>5</sup> One of the greatest cultural dilemmas faced by modern Pakistan is aggressive Muslim masculinity that is practised in inter- and intra-gender relations and affects quality of life at national and global levels. For purposes of fulfilling political agendas, male bodies are employed in a complex and violent manner. Muslim men are predisposed to violent trajectories in the name of cultural/clan honour.

After 11 September 2001 jihadism became more transnational and global than ever before. The import and export of militant-jihadist Islamists and terrorists in and out of Pakistan are not only a national but also a global menace. Currently, Pakistan is fighting for its very survival as terrorist elements try to create a state within the state. The Musharraf administration tried promoting the notion of *moderate enlightenment* as opposed to extreme interpretations of Islam. Yet the tide of Wahhabism continued to surge and the number of men with traditional beard and skullcap and women in black *burqa* continued to grow. Before leaving

presidential office, Musharraf survived two assassination attempts by terrorist networks. This was taken as a classic example of “a monster rising to consume its creator”, implying the Pakistan army, through its intelligence services (ISI), created these monsters (Rana, 2004). As the study in hand gives priority to sociological perspectives, it would be a digression to start an elaborate discussion on such complex political issues as the often troubled ISI-CIA alliance. Nonetheless, deconstructing masculinities of those indulging in jihadism and suicide terrorism is pertinent, and will be illuminated in this book through empirical data.

Pakistan’s civilian and military leadership must decide the kind of state and society they are prepared to promote and defend (Weinbaum, 2009). Economic instability, cultural discourses, the socialization of boys and experiences of fear and weakness are formative in domestic and societal violence (Cleaver, 2002: 17). Simplified solutions to grave human problems and regressive cultural or religious radicalism often rise on heaps of unfulfilled human needs and massive politico-economic disempowerment among the people of a group, not only within their own borders but elsewhere (Malik, 2005: 272–276). Any state can play an important role in generating violence and conflict, and creating conditions that produce distorted masculinities (Cleaver, 2002: 16). Unfortunately, the state of Pakistan has remained a hypermasculinized one. While abdicating to the Taliban in Swat (explained later), the federal and provincial governments, being complicit, allowed aggressive masculinity to take the throne, leaving civilians at the mercy of the Taliban.

Even today, the state of Pakistan has no vision to offer to its citizens and is incapable of handling a Wahhabi-affected population while nipping out militant and terrorist elements from the country. Pakistan is embroiled in at least two major battles. One features helicopters, unmanned drones and artillery in the mountains of Swat and the tribal belt (Waziristan), while the other involves tens of millions of Pakistanis who are located in “marginalized” contexts and consider it a major “determinant” in the decision that embarks them on a particular trajectory. These people are trying to reconcile what seems to be the attractive heroism of militant Islamism with the not-so-appealing reality of actual men with guns (Schmidle, 2009) and the fact that militant Islamism has now been subsumed under terrorism in the age of Al Qaeda and the Taliban.

### *Troublesome tribalism: Tragedy of Waziristan and Swat*

Since 2004 civilian populations in Waziristan and KP province, particularly Swat, are among those who have suffered the most at the hands of the Taliban. With the intensification of the ill-named war on terror, millions of people fled this area and now survive in temporary camps for the

internally displaced. This book includes primary data from these displaced communities.

Waziristan and Swat are predominantly populated with Pukhtuns. Waziristan, home to 800,000 tribal Pukhtuns, is a complex tribal belt. It is the hinge that joins Pakistan and Afghanistan, geographically and strategically. At present the Taliban and foreign terrorists are in control of the area (*The Economist*, 2009d). These Taliban are opposed to the local tribal chiefs, the *maliks*, many of whom are partners to the government of Pakistan and wish for peace to return. The area has transformed into a headquarters for terrorists, and from a security perspective among the most vulnerable are the civilian population – the terrorized locals (*The Economist*, 2009c). The political situation has deteriorated since 2009, when Pakistan's army launched its fourth consecutive mission against the terrorists. Using unmanned drones, the United States started its military intervention in Waziristan. Thousands of civilians fleeing the scene in October 2009 told of intense aerial bombardment and casualties.

The IDP crisis worsened, and in August 2010 Pakistan experienced the devastation of floods affecting almost 20.5 million of its deeply impoverished population. The extent of the disaster was stupendous: larger than the Kashmir earthquake of 2005, the Haiti earthquake of 2010 and the Thailand tsunami put together.<sup>6</sup> Repeated appeals for aid failed to raise the required amount of funds, and the BBC began to publish news features such as “Who Cares for Pakistan?” (Jude, 2010) and “World ‘Slow to Give’ to Pakistan”.<sup>7</sup> In hindsight, it is not difficult to assess why Pakistan was left to suffer. Since 9/11 Pakistan's image has been obsessively portrayed as negative in global media, stereotyping its people as savages from the Stone Age prodding their way up to destroy the world order through tactics of terrorism. This image came back to haunt international aid networks as they desperately struggled to raise funds for Pakistanis, who the Western media for the first time in nine years claimed now “exported tomatoes, not terrorism” (Hanif, 2010). Ali (2010) criticizes how certain text published in the West (she focuses on fiction) “constructs a misleading narrative of terror in which the realities of Northern Pakistan and Muslim way of life are distorted through simplistic tropes of ignorance, backwardness and extremism, *while histories of US geopolitics and violence are (conveniently) erased*”. These one-sided, biased accounts that judge colonies of the past in such a manner are not only misleading but homicidal towards populations that during Pakistan's floods were left unaided to die of disease and hunger.

That half-naked child that you see in pictures with his face covered in flies is not dead. Not yet. He has dozed off out of hunger and heat and exhaustion. When he wakes up in a little while, he will ask for what every hungry child in

the world asks for. We were told that everyone, everywhere understands that language. (Hanif, 2010)

It is important to realize what life is like in areas that are at the centre of the ill-named war on terror. Economic opportunities are limited in Waziristan, which is mainly a FATA in Pakistan. People raise livestock, grow subsistence crops in the few fertile valleys or run small-scale businesses. The community is also associated with transport, timber, mining and light industry. A few people seek jobs as short-term unskilled labourers or aim to join local security and paramilitary forces. In order to provide better earnings for their families, upward social mobility is common and people can be found relocating to urban areas, or even migrating to the Middle East. The FATAs have higher levels of poverty when compared to other areas in Pakistan. In the absence of licit options to earn a living, money from illegal activities like drug smuggling or serving as mercenaries for extremist elements is difficult to resist. The economy operates on an informal basis and few laws exist to regulate economic activities in the tribal areas. No legal framework for private sector investment exists in the FATAs, and therefore creating more work opportunities has remained challenging. Attempting to undermine and minimize state influence, terrorists have repeatedly destroyed government infrastructure, such as schools and health centres. Due to rampant inter-tribe, criminal and extremist violence, it is difficult to sustain any development projects in the FATAs (Nilsson, 2009). In the early 1980s foreigners started arriving in the FATAs. These fighters of Chechen, Uzbek, Yemeni, Moroccan and other origins married into local clans and brought money to the areas.

The Taliban onslaught on Swat was considered more critical than Waziristan, as Swat is an integral part of the state of Pakistan and the country's best available natural resource for generating tourism capital. A fertile valley, Swat measures some 125 km by 50 km and is located in KP province. The climate is fairly dry, but water for irrigation is plentiful. The population thrives on cereal agriculture, mainly rice, and fruit orchards. Settlements are compact villages, each occupied by an elementary family. At the lower end of the valley, the district capital Mingora (the Taliban used it as their headquarters) is the most important urban agglomerate.

In relation to Pakistan and the rest of the Indian subcontinent, Swat has a distinct history. Its first Muslim masters were non-Pukhtun Dilazak tribes from southeast Afghanistan. Swati Pukhtuns, succeeded by Yusufzai Pukhtuns in the sixteenth century, ousted the Dilazak tribes. Both groups had deep connections with the Kabul valley in Afghanistan. While the British colonized the rest of the area, Swat succeeded in retaining its

autonomy, and when Pakistan became independent in 1947 it did not fully accede until 1969 (Pellegrini, 2007). Swat moved from a state of “ordered anarchy” without rulers to a petty dictatorship, and finally merged within the nation-state of Pakistan. Its governance structure evolved from a fragmented system appropriate for the rise of a unifying leader to institutionalized dissidence without central rule but having a mediator/judge who finds a niche in an expansive centralized state where the warrior holds sway, and then to bureaucracy that needed literacy and clerical skills and the rule of a professional administrator. Swati rulers perceived Pakistan as an opportunity. The society quickly evolved from being troublesome to being tractable and most advanced. Islam was never professed in Swat with fervour (Lindholm, 1979, 1986).

Although Barth’s (1981) anthropological account remains the most detailed study on Swat, socio-economic and political dynamics in the valley have changed. Migration of skilled and unskilled Swatis to the Arab lands, the United States, Canada and Europe during the 1970s and 1980s and increased inflow of foreign remittances contributing to the transformation of socio-economic dynamics of Swati society have influenced local culture. For example, in a clear break from the past, the Shapankyan or Shpoon (shepherds) have become the wealthiest community in Swat. Simultaneously, having lived in Arabia, they are influenced by conservative Wahhabi teachings (K. Khan, 2009). Also, the conflict in Afghanistan had wider ramifications for KP province due to its geographical and linguistic proximity to the war-ravaged country. Swat succumbed to the political environment of the province. Religious seminaries mushroomed and jihadist organizations set up offices in the valley. In the 1980s Sufi Muhammad, father-in-law of Swat-based Maulana Fazlullah, emerged as a Wahhabi leader in the valley and attempted to establish a seminary in Sanghota that was destroyed by the local religious forces of Swat. Those subscribing to Arabia’s Wahhabi school of thought continued their efforts to establish seminaries while facing tough opposition from traditional clerics.

In 1989 Sufi Muhammad founded a people’s movement, Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNSM), in Dir and immediately expanded operations to Swat. Joining hands with Sufi Muhammad, the *jirga* started demanding implementation of Shariah in Swat. Disappointed in the judicial system, police and revenue department, people started supporting the demand for enforcement of Shariah (ibid.). In 1993 TNSM successfully agitated for the introduction of Islamic courts in Swat and other districts of the Malakand region. As a pressure tactic against the government, Sufi Muhammad’s armed activists, drawn largely from the ranks of landless peasants, occupied the airport in Saidu Sharif.

While the federal security forces succeeded in quelling the mini-insurgency, the government accepted popular demands for an Islamist

judiciary and changed the nomenclature accordingly, providing a title of *qazi* to civil judges and appointing scholars to assist them in delivering rulings within two weeks. The system reverted to the previous arrangement after the 1997 election. Sufi Muhammad lost popular support after recruiting thousands of ill-armed, untrained tribesmen to launch jihad against US forces who had invaded Afghanistan in 2001. Many were killed in air strikes, and Sufi Muhammad surrendered to Pakistani authorities in Peshawar to avoid facing wrathful relatives in Swat (Hussain, 2009). Under the Frontier Crimes Regulations, the political agent of Kurram Agency later imprisoned Sufi Muhammad (K. Khan, 2009). During the TNSM movement in Swat the Wahhabi school of thought spread roots and established its religious seminaries. In the absence of Sufi Muhammad, his son-in-law Fazlullah filled the gap and rose to popularity (*ibid.*). Fazlullah, who had previously made his living operating a cross-river cable-car service for residents of Mandherei village near Sanghota, spent five years repairing the lost credibility of TNSM, leading a largely peaceful campaign for the introduction of an “Islamic” judiciary. He changed position in 2007 after hundreds of students from Swat were killed in a military operation against the Jamia Hafsa/Red Mosque seminary in Islamabad. Shortly after, the movement linked up with militants in the FATAs (bordering Afghanistan), and adopted the Taliban brand (Hussain, 2009). Maulana Shah Dawran and Maulana Muhammad Alam joined Fazlullah as his key accomplices to mastermind and implement the most violent forms of Wahhabism, both geographically and ideologically (K. Khan, 2009).

In January 2009 the chairperson of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, Asma Jahangir, met with senior provincial political leaders to discuss the deteriorating law and order situation in the Swat region. The Taliban had burnt down more than 200 girls’ schools and forced closure of another 400. Other than teachers, health workers were also being targeted. The governor of KP province, Owais Ahmed Ghani, noted:

It’s not a law and order problem, rather, it’s a well-planned ideological insurgency [and the militants] are persistently being espoused by external spy agencies. There are about 15,000 militants in the tribal belt, who have no dearth of ration, ammunition, equipment, even anti-tank mines. (Dastageer, 2009)

Fazlullah soon established his own administration on the pattern of Saudi monarchs. He organized a fully trained military, equipping them with updated weaponry. Simultaneously a judiciary was quickly set up and immediately started functioning, ensuring that its verdicts were *enforced*. The local population was made to subscribe to the Taliban courts – institutions that had no legal standing for the state or government of

Pakistan. Fazlullah established a *bait-ul-maal* (treasury) and introduced a mechanism for revenue generation and collection. Traditionally, *ushr* (one-tenth of agricultural produce) was collected by the rulers of Swat. During the winter harvest of 2008 Fazlullah's commanders started collecting *ushr* in some areas of the valley, and it began to serve as a primary source of revenue for the Taliban. Over the Eid-ul-Azha festival the Taliban collected animal fur worth billions of rupees and expanded their information and broadcasting wing in Swat (K. Khan, 2009). At the end of January 2009 the Taliban ordered men to grow beards and wear skullcaps, or face retribution. Barbers in Matta area, a militant stronghold, were ordered to stop offering shaves and post signs in their shops asking customers not to request them (Waraich and Buncombe, 2009). For anyone familiar with Muslim societies, it is not difficult to understand that beards and caps, and for that matter even a woman's *burqa*, are mainly part of Muslim social customs and public etiquette, and not "law" *per se*.

On 3 February 2009 Fazlullah ordered all state employees, judges and lawyers to quit. Being by then terrified, all officials immediately left, causing an instant and indefinite suspension of the judiciary, in effect the last functioning arm of the state (Hussain, 2009). The Taliban captured territory and established a network of makeshift Shariah courts for dispensing "speedy justice", namely the lashing and stoning of those found guilty (Waraich and Buncombe, 2009). Fazlullah administered his machinery from his FM radio pulpit, broadcasting routinely between 8.30 and 11.00 pm. His rulings initially fell broadly into two categories: indictments against persons deemed to be in violation of his extremist interpretation of Shariah, particularly law enforcement personnel, and edicts governing aspects of routine living. Enforcement of Shariah was ruthless, with those challenging Taliban misdemeanours being kidnapped and executed. Beheaded bodies were displayed at road junctions in towns across the valley (Hussain, 2009).

Swat has remained a stronghold of two secular parties: the Pakistan People's Party and the Awami National Party (ANP). On the pretext of Shariah, the militants ruthlessly weeded out supporters of these political parties (I. Khan, 2009). Some orthodox clerics who in the past had supported the introduction of an Islamist judiciary in Swat but criticized the Taliban's murderous methods as un-Islamic were also killed – ironically in the name of Shariah. The "accused" were usually given a single opportunity to repent in front of two top Taliban commanders, Muslim Khan and Shah Dawar Khan (Hussain, 2009). The Taliban labelled *sufi* as anti-Islam and started targeting the locals practising such strands. For example, an individual who used to offer amulets for healing was killed in Khwazakhela. Wahhabi doctrine that was alien to the local culture was



forcibly imposed on the people (K. Khan, 2009). In the past year Pakistan has seen Taliban-planned bombings of some of its most historic *sufi* shrines, attended by devotees whose numbers run into several thousands a day, such as Da'ta Darbar (Lahore), Ahmed Shah Ghazi (Karachi) and Pak Pattan Sharif (Punjab).

The creation of a Wahhabi state within the state of Pakistan was under way in Swat. The Taliban had successfully challenged the writ of the state of Pakistan while imposing silence and punishment on the local people. Under intense criticism both at home and abroad, when the Taliban reached 130 km northwest of the federal capital territory, Islamabad, the federal government began efforts to strike a political settlement through the provincial assembly. These efforts culminated into Sufi Muhammad brokering the controversial 16 February Swat peace deal, imposing Shariah laws in seven districts of the province that are collectively known as the Malakand division in return for the militants laying down their arms (Sindh Today Net, 2009). From a legal perspective the agreement resulted in the planned promulgation of the Nizam-i-adl Regulation in Malakand division, in which the district of Swat is located. Without admitting it, the state had abdicated power in favour of the Taliban.

The government later defended this political settlement as the demand of the people of Malakand division (L. Khan, 2009). Pakistanis usually support implementation of Shariah due to "its perceived connection with good governance, not by sympathy with the goals of militant groups claiming to implement it" (Fair, Malhotra and Shapiro, 2010). However, this time they had not demanded it. ANP chief minister Amir Haider Hoti was criticized by Swatis, who maintained that the choices they had made through the 2008 election had clearly favoured secular, nationalist and democratic parties over Islamist parties and forms of governance. The people of Buner, Shangla, Malakand, Lower and Upper Dir and Chitral never voted for the implementation of Shariah. In Buner people actually pursued and killed some terrorists; in revenge terrorists killed over 40 people in a local village (L. Khan, 2009). Pakistanis in general, and Swatis in particular, criticized the peace deal as "an abject surrender to the forces of obscurantism and darkness, a surrender that presents a bleak future for the people of the area" (ibid.).

The Taliban repeatedly violated the settlement reached with the state of Pakistan. Fazlullah continued killing police constables and army and paramilitary personnel in a most brutal manner. His group bombed schools and bridges, showing ruthlessness against opponents. The Taliban deliberately targeted moderate religious figures and journalists in the district and either killed them or forced them into exile (ibid.). This was done to monopolize Islam in Swat, a Taliban reserve, and enforce it in a Taliban style.



The dissonance that existed between the state's formal interpretation of Shariah and the Talibanized version of convoluted Shariah finally erupted in the breakdown of the peace deal in May 2009. Murders of learned clerics, town beheadings and floggings in the name of Shariah exposed the misdemeanours of the Taliban to the public eye.<sup>8</sup>

In the second week of May 2009 the federal cabinet decided to endorse military action in Swat, observing that there was no option left after failure of the peace accord. The cabinet finally vocalized that the Taliban were carrying out un-Islamic activities in the name of Islam and were "anti-state elements". Operation Black Thunderstorm was approved and the military intervened successfully to regain control of Swat. The political turmoil in KP province has given rise to one of the worst humanitarian crises since 9/11, causing mass-scale displacements and loss of life of innocent civilians. Unfortunately, displaced communities can only return to destroyed houses and schools, and poor governance systems.

Masculine practices are directly influenced by local contexts. Drawing upon empirical literature, the following section elucidates the nature of Muslim men in Pakistan, simultaneously focusing on the informal customary institutional arrangements of honour codes that define Muslim men.<sup>9</sup> For those interested in sustainable and non-aggressive aspects of counterterrorism, an understanding of such informal institutional mechanisms can lead to a more meaningful engagement with communities that are at the centre of post-9/11 politics.

### Nature of Muslim masculinities in the region

An ideal South Asian Muslim man does not interfere in the domestic domain, but leaves it for the womenfolk to handle. He is non-intrusive, hardworking and focuses entirely on his work, ensuring economic well-being for the whole family. He has to be a decision-maker and disciplinarian, and must have high procreative potential. In fact, men are *expected* and prescribed to initiate intimacy routinely and dutifully with their wives, on the assumption that culturally it is immodest and unethical for a woman to initiate (Gilmore, 1990). Although Gilmore mentions a large number of wives as a medium for expressing one's masculinity among Muslims, I argue that economic pressures mean men are avoiding expanded families for their own welfare. Also, despite the existence of a core Islamic precedent of solemnizing marriages with widows and divorcees, the high number of widows in war-ravaged Muslim countries (in 2009 an estimated 740,000 in Iraq alone – Williams, 2009) shows that due to conflict-related economic constraints it is no longer convenient for Muslim men to be polygamous. Other important factors responsible for

this change are the success of feminist and civil society agendas and improvement in educational levels among Muslim women in urban areas. Also, Muslim civilization is very “mother-centric”, and it is difficult for most men to retain a good reputation if they decide to become polygamous. In such situations, old male comradeships can be seen dwindling away as men opt for supporting the “mother” involved, at times publicly condemning a man friend for leaving “the mother of his child/ren” for “the other woman”. The purpose in explaining this is to show how avenues to prove one’s masculinity in traditional ways are becoming limited. Such social changes are yet to become prominent in the literature.

Pakistan has a large population of Rajputs, who are known for their rugged, courageous manliness in action and “great warrior culture” (Gilmore, 1990: 176). Possessing weapons is very common among Pakistani men. It is considered honourable for men to be able to use weapons, and almost all men know how to fire a weapon as if it were second nature.

In Muslim cultures, and most particularly among Pukhtuns, facial and body hair are considered essential for one’s acceptance as a man. Clean-shaven men are often compared with women and politely ridiculed for being soft skinned (particularly in rural settings). Therefore men grow an impressive, even daunting, moustache and beard. Even the most modern and secular ways of living have not convinced ordinary Muslim men to remove body hair through cosmetic interventions. This all is deeply performative – men consciously work to build a male body image as opposed to female. No beautification is expected from men, even on their wedding day. Men are instructed and advised to *act* like men, while women are instructed to *look* beautiful.

Today, trends are such that Pakistani machismo is functioning like a parasite on female seclusion and subjugation. Women receive routine “dictation” from men, even in minor matters such as their daily attire and friends and acquaintances they can or cannot keep. It is not unusual for Pakistani men to order their wives to limit ties with their parental home while ensuring that the upbringing of children is done according to patrilineal and not matrilineal aspirations.

### *Notion of honour*

In a few societies, informal rules and institutions based on tradition and custom take precedence over formal ones. Tradition implies a set of practices normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and rituals of symbolic nature that inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, ensuring continuity with the past (Hobsbawm and Range, 1983: 1–9). Most such societies are patriarchal, wherein men are given greater power, privilege and control over women and children. This

masculine role brings a set of tough responsibilities as well, particularly with regard to preserving honour. There are certain expectations of each gender, and “any one breaching these social boundaries is ostracized”. Through the “binding force of the collective”, defection in communities is minimized (Douglas, 1994: 137–140).

Since Pitt-Rivers’s pioneering work on honour, started in 1958, other anthropologists have used the ideals of manliness and womanliness and their connections with human prestige, sexuality, morality, honour, shame and stigma. Pitt-Rivers (1965) notes honour (like prestige) as a value of a man in his own eyes and that of his society. In a few societies honour may be limited to just preserving female chastity by monitoring their sexual conduct. For others it may involve the overall respect of the family. Some insults centring on women of the family, if used, can make men die or kill each other. Men are overly possessive and patronizing about the women of their families in purely male domains, and take great pride in safeguarding their families. Any trouble caused to the family, by either a family member or an outsider, dishonours and stigmatizes the men of the family (Herzfeld, 1980), posing a huge public challenge to their masculinity.

Goffman’s (1990) work on stigma is of fundamental importance in understanding the disadvantaged position of the “stigmatized” in a social structure. The plight of those “who must suffer the special indignity of knowing that they wear their situation on their sleeve” must be taken seriously; according to him, people feel “shame” because they are obsessed by their image in other people’s eyes (ibid.: 151–152). In most Mediterranean and Middle Eastern societies there is a social obsession with other people’s “acts” (Wikan, 1984: 635–636). Such social contexts, including in South Asia, make it incumbent upon men to take action and consolidate or regain their honour in certain situations.

Honour is a prevalent value in traditional cultures and a core of one’s essence, representing one’s gender (Rothschild, 1969). To clarify a connection between “honour” and “shame” and determine whether or not any “action” will be taken to restore damaged honour, Rothschild explores the concept of *philótimo* (love of honour). *Philótimo* is expected to guide a man to take “culturally appropriate action” in the wake of a “dishonourable act” committed by any family member, proving that he felt ashamed by their actions (ibid.). This shows the primordial significance of preserving honour, and even insiders are not exempt from punishment/vengeance if they violate it, never mind external offenders.

The purpose of this book is to give due recognition to such customary codes that shape gender in a particular manner and affect current global politics. As a relevant example, Pukhtunwali can be elaborated, particularly because it was a recurrent theme among sample groups. To an ex-

tent, Pukhtunwali already has and can further instigate affected tribesmen to settle scores with their political opponents in the war on terror. There are other tribal and community social codes, norms and mores (some formal and many informal) or social customs that revolve around themes of “honour”, particularly masculine honour; they can be found in other ethnic groups in Pakistan and the Muslim world, and in a few non-Muslim contexts. It is pertinent to add that honour and revenge are a major societal theme in Pakistan, and not in any sense restricted to Pukhtuns.<sup>10</sup>

### *Masculinity and Pukhtunwali*

The final outcome of affairs in the socio-political and economic domain depends on both “formal” state apparatuses and “informal” institutional arrangements such as local customs, arbitrary laws and tribal codes of conduct. Pukhtunwali is a series of tenets on how a Pukhtun must live, and it formulates the identity of the Pukhtun nation, who are spread across the porous border between Pakistan and Afghanistan and also significantly visible in Central Asia. By some estimates the tenets of Pukhtunwali date back to the seventeenth century, but they are equally applicable to contemporary Pukhtun living.

Although Pukhtunwali guides both men and women, it is mainly men who are expected to safeguard the code in practice. Girls and boys are educated in the same principles and values of Pukhtunwali from childhood, and thus women are found at times to be more sensitive to and strictly observant of its codes (Glatzer, 1998). The product of the same tribal system, women have a similar level of sensitivity towards different behaviours as Pukhtun men. However, they are not under any obligation to respond to dishonouring situations physically. Under such circumstances women “demand” that their men take appropriate revenge, and the latter have no alternative but to follow instructions or else face *paighor* (taunts of cowardice).

Pukhtun culture is largely egocentric. Sturdy men with overgrown beards and turbanned heads, loose tribal clothing and a rifle on the shoulder appear frightening. Yet Pakistani Pukhtun men do not have a particularly bad reputation regarding their behaviour towards women in the household. Women are ordinarily viewed as naturally vain, and men are expected to ignore their impetuous behaviour. Being patriarchal, Pukhtuns impose strict codes of *purdah* but are not especially known for violence against women: this is more due to male ego than any show of kindness towards women. Pukhtuns believe in a fair or tough fight – and women do not meet the basic criteria. In Pukhtun households women are perceived as “talkative” and “vivacious”, and in contrast men make a conscious effort to appear “masculine” by speaking much less. Avoiding colours, Pukhtun men usually dress in white and grey. They can go to any

extent, even at the cost of their lives, to maintain their ego or “stand by their word”. An honourable man is expected to do everything “by taking risks”. Pukhtun men have to be religiously sound, preferably going regularly to the mosque for prayer. Manhood ideologies force men to become defensive of their identity and not allow any damage to it – a threat apparently worse than death (Gilmore, 1990: 221). Here Pukhtunwali and the manner in which it fashions manhood have been elaborated.

A few analysts have insisted that Pukhtunwali is mainly about the fierce independence of Pukhtun men, consisting of freedom, honour, revenge and chivalry. Such informal codes of conduct that shape gender may predispose men towards militarism and becoming a warrior, going out and fighting bravely “like a man”. These codes can be invoked with the help of different narratives. To state this differently, the Taliban can take advantage of Pukhtunwali and increase their recruitment, or the opponents of the Taliban (those helping the government of Pakistan) can do so to organize their own civilian army. For instance, upon recapturing Swat from the Taliban, the Pakistan army allowed Jamal Nasir, the mayor of Swat, to return to Matta. His first actions were focused on organizing anti-Taliban forces: “You have to involve men in their own defence . . . the army won’t stay here forever.” He gathered his own *lashkar* (traditional tribal militia) of almost 2,500 men to defend his village and other nearby areas. He sent another *lashkar* of 10,000 to surround the airport (*The Economist*, 2009a). In all cases, men are involved in warfare.

Ahmed (1976) identifies two types of socio-economic organizational settings among Pukhtun: the *qalang* (tax) group and the urban land-owning, and *nang*, the chivalrous group or pastoral/nomadic. Honour in Pukhtunwali is governed by principles of *ghairat o nang* – bravery, courage, chivalry, dignity and shame (Kakar, undated; Glatzer, 1998). The principles of *purdah o namus* (gender boundaries) play an important role (Kakar, *ibid.*). *Purdah o namus* is also like a subset of *nang* and focuses on upholding the honour of women and protecting them from verbal and physical harm (Nilsson, 2009: 8). *Badal* (revenge) is another central feature of the doctrine, imposing responsibility to take revenge to wipe out an insult. Revenge is usually not vindictive and is against oppression. Usually it is a “counter-revenge”: Pukhtuns have a good sense of revenge historiography. September 2001 may be a starting point for the United States, but it is not so for the Pukhtuns, who take back the argument to the times of Ayyubids. At times revenge is noted as *intiqam*, which has a more neutral meaning (Widmark, 2010). But revenge has to be proportionate to the insult received or loss borne. If it is loss of life, the revenge will also involve blood. Pukhtunwali is not a Gandhian culture that promotes non-violence. The Quran allows proportionate revenge as a right to a victim; simultaneously it reminds victims that it is forgiveness that

brings them closer to Allah and not revenge. The act of taking revenge is traditionally authorized by the local judicial council (*shura*). According to literature, women reinforce warrior masculinity by urging men to fight, take revenge and prove their worth, if honourable. *Tura* (sword) and *aql* (reason) are counted as cornerstones of masculinity among Pukhtuns. These two qualities define martial and heroic behaviour among men. At times women literally command men to take revenge if they feel some injustice has been done to them. These are the moments when masculinity is invoked with great hopes: a test of the extent of a man's individual sense of honour, virtue and chivalry. No Pukhtun is expected to practise *aql* at that moment; he is only expected to take out the *tura*, as that would immediately confirm his courageous nature. The council of elders is expected to be rational and pacify the fearless and spontaneous man (ibid.: 9; Glatzer, 1998).

Other notions within Pukhtunwali that have played a central role in determining men's behaviour before and after 9/11 include *melmastia* (hospitality) and *nanawatai*, allowing one to enter into the security of another's house – even at times asylum is to be given to enemies if they make a request when empty-handed. *Khegara* is a collective requirement to help those in trouble; *azizwale* is respect for the clan or clanship; *wafa* is fidelity and loyalty; and *hewad* is love for one's nation (Pukhtun) and obligation to defend the country against foreign incursion (Nilsson, 2009: 8).

Social structure principles underlying Waziristan and Swat are the same as those that influence dynamics in the whole territory of Pukhtun tribes. Pukhtunwali, with its values of revenge, refuge, the offering of hospitality and observation of *purdah*, is very central to life in Swat, as in other areas of KP province. The core Pukhtun values of hospitality, council and seclusion form the organizational mechanisms of Swati society. The code establishes normative behaviours, and deviations are dealt with severely. Performances are judged and sanctioned according to these core values (Pellegrini, 2007).

One major exploitable opening in Pukhtun family structure is that a complex network of rivalries prevails among its communities. The balance of power is delicately maintained. On finding one group becoming preponderant in the region, other tribes invite foreign intruders to regain equilibrium. Swati society is no different, and it is not difficult to assess how the Taliban were able to make inroads into local households. Swat understands its social surrounding through a "segmentary lineage model", a system observed and implemented by the men of each family. Sons of a father's brothers are considered as one's enemy (*tabur*), primarily because they have an equal claim on the land left by the grandfather. This patterned rivalry extends throughout Swat: individuals oppose neighbours in a ward, wards oppose other wards in a village and villages

oppose one another within a district. The pervasive hostility between the sons of brothers led to the development of a network of alliances within every village that divides it across lineages into two approximately equal parties called *dulla*. Every man belongs to a *dulla* opposite that of his *tabur*. All inhabitants of Swat visualize themselves as part of a *dulla*. A power balance is maintained between the opposing *dullas*; however, if a *dulla* begins to weaken, in the past a third party, such as the nawab of nearby Dir, has been secretly invited to “rule” so as to “subjugate” both opposing *dullas* and make them equal again. Once the balance is achieved the foreign master is always pressurized to leave. Most crucial aspects of Pukhtun life, such as land rights, obligation to take blood revenge and political alliances, are built up through this segmentary structure (Lindholm, 1979, 1986). The Pukhtun family system remains strongly patriarchal. Virtually all property, moveable and immovable, is held by men and inherited patrilineally, without regard to Islamic laws of inheritance. Swati women surrender all property rights in their natal home upon marriage; thus in the longer run children do not inherit anything from their matrilineal side – eventually weakening ties with the mother’s family (Barth, 1981).

#### *Taliban, coalition forces and Pukhtunwali*

It is on the borders of Afghanistan and Pakistan that adolescent Pukhtun boys are expected to demonstrate their bravery and maturity and association with Pukhtunwali by participating in battles (Hawkins, 2009: 17). Those displaced, and tormented at the moment, are likely to keep *badal* in mind. As mentioned, fighting in war is honourable for men in South Asia, but most particularly for Pukhtuns, as Pukhtunwali defines manhood within a battlefield framework. Pukhtun tribes use war to display and safeguard personal, family and tribal honour. Pukhtunwali has been noted by foreign armed forces personnel engaging in Afghanistan and Pakistan as a tribal system dictating that Pukhtun men behave in a “soldierly” fashion and fight with dignity, never abusing civilians, most particularly never violating women and children, and distributing war spoils evenly. The governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan have been able to form diplomatic connections with the local tribal leaders, *maliks*, who follow the tradition of Pukhtunwali in true spirit without any *mala fide* intentions.

Pukhtun tribal codes have certainly been used by the Taliban to gain benefits and create trouble. The Taliban have seriously violated certain codes of Pukhtunwali (particularly those revolving on principles of hospitality and clan respect), while taking unfair advantage of this system. The parasitic attitude of the Taliban has created rifts between them and tribal elders who follow Pukhtunwali with sincerity. For example, the code



demands respect for *jirga*, something that the Taliban have repeatedly violated while implementing their own draconian laws. The government in Pakistan has engaged with the respected tribal elders, the *khans* and *maliks*, who at times intervened to reach a deal between the state and the Taliban – but were arrogantly ignored by the latter. According to Cathell (2009: 15), the Pakistani Taliban have literally killed hundreds of Pukhtun elders in a bid to undermine the traditional tribal structure. The local populace has been coerced into submission to the Taliban and people are too terrorized to resist. The local customs demand that a grown-up Pukhtun man should be respected as a free individual, and even *jirgas* respect this code. The Taliban, on the other hand, took punitive measures and treated adult Pukhtuns as if they were unimportant and could be dictated to through arrests and chastisement.

A Pukhtun sees himself as completely independent and takes orders from no one. In principle, no adult male Pukhtun may give orders to any other adult male Pukhtun; he must obtain consensus. In case of wrongdoing, the worst punishment from the *jirga* is a fine, but never a death penalty. While overstepping Pukhtun male autonomy, the Taliban have been implementing such extreme measures (ibid.: 14). By their very nature the Taliban alienate the host populace. Their use of corporal and capital punishment constitutes deadly insults to any Pukhtun and his family, who suffer and consider revenge as an option. The sufferers will be avenged, as honour is at stake and must be satisfied. As a Pukhtun proverb says, “I took revenge after a hundred years and I only regret that I acted in haste” (ibid.: 17–18). Nilsson (2009: 33) opines that an effective Pakistani counterinsurgency strategy attenuated by social, state and global realities, and using existing Pukhtun tribal structure, can be a promising antidote to the malaise of Taliban and Al Qaeda sanctuary in the FATAs. However, I argue that the same tribal code has generated several honour-related issues among those Pukhtuns who are suffering at present (consult empirical data provided in Chapters 7–9). Therefore, one has to utilize tribal customs in a very careful manner.

The Western forces are aware of the “revenge” aspect of Pukhtunwali, and warn their soldiers to be prepared for counteroffensives from “honourable” Pukhtun men when making efforts to win the benefits that emerge from the hospitality trajectory of Pukhtunwali. The latter requires more contact with the local elders and clarifying with them the political issues involved in the presence of Western forces in the Pukhtun area. At the moment the Taliban are reaping the benefit of the hospitality component of Pukhtunwali, as the Pukhtuns are culturally honour-bound to provide sanctuary to them: according to the tribal system they cannot dodge or hand over those who they had once accepted as guests in their communities and perhaps even allowed to balance scores between *dullas*.



Of course, at that time the locals did not know what was about to unfold. The Pakistani Pukhtun world was about local cousin disputes, and they did not know about Taliban connections with the global jihadist movement.

Not only Islam but also these cultural codes have been hijacked and distorted by the Taliban. People in the FATAs feel dually robbed: by the Taliban whom they invited in as guests, and by the state of Pakistan that has allowed its own military and foreign forces to attack people in the FATAs. The situation is tense, and an “honourable” Pukhtun may be questioning:

Consider what might compel a man  
To kill himself, or another  
Does oppression not demand  
Some reaction against the oppressor?<sup>11</sup>

It may also take Western troops operating in the region some time to recognize a Pukhtunwali situation (Hawkins, 2009: 22). This is quite true, as the data collected from the field area and provided in this book show that drone attacks in North Waziristan are leading to what was termed by Hawkins as a “Pukhtunwali situation”. Between January 2009 and July 2010 almost 2,500 civilians were killed. Compared to only 25 drone strikes between January 2008 and January 2009, 87 strikes were made between January 2009 and June 2010 (BBC News, 2010a).

Pukhtunwali harnesses tribal as well as gender roles of individuals and instigates men to respond to political developments in their own peculiar fashion. According to Churchill, who fought against Pukhtuns, “every man was a warrior, politician and theologian and clans maintained their hostility and conflicts over generations” (Hawkins, 2009). An understanding of the local and tribal customary codes of conduct reveals to us more about the mindset and making of militant-jihadist Islamists and terrorists than perhaps any other thing.

## Conclusion

Colonialism played a role in giving rise to jihadist rhetoric in South Asian Muslims. This chapter has underlined the importance of informal social institutions. Local institutional mechanisms, such as honour codes, permeate through all aspects of individual and community living – to the extent that they even overshadow government authority and rule of law. Keeping in mind a centre-periphery equation, it is hard to imagine the extent to which ancient local/tribal codes of conduct can affect and decide mod-

ern global outcomes. The Taliban abused Pukhtunwali to meet their ulterior motives. Since 9/11 civilians from Waziristan and Swat have suffered at the hands of the Taliban, who have imported and exported terrorists across borders by using to their advantage codes and gender constructions that emanate from tribal institutional arrangements and mechanisms. By employing the tribal language of Pukhtunwali, the Taliban were able to use community households as their terrorist hideouts. Currently, Pukhtuns who have been “Talibanized” are not prepared to lose this war. Continuing a protracted hostility against the enemy in a no-win situation is closely seated in Pukhtunwali, which gives less significance to winning and more to “not losing”.

Another source of concern is that Pukhtun areas are under attack by local and foreign militaries, causing death and displacement among ordinary civilians – quotes from the affected populations are documented in subsequent chapters. History tells us that when foreign forces invade, Pukhtun autonomy gives way to collective military action (Cathell, 2009: 10). It is for their land and nation that Pukhtuns fight. They are a tribal society whose existence pre-dates modern state systems. Their individual loyalties are to their clan. The Pukhtun nation is obligated to defend its honour, and it will fight foreign military invasion much more seriously than anticipated at the moment. This is a culture where blood-spilling is tied to honour codes. Counterterrorism experts face a difficult situation. Modern war language of “collateral damage” and apologies are not enough. Interventions have to be more people-centred.

## Notes

1. Also known as Pushtuns, Pashtuns and Pathans.
2. At the time of writing (July 2011), Census 2011 (delayed from 2008) was under way; the statistics available were from the last census held in 1998. Consult Government of Pakistan (1998).
3. I am grateful to Nazima Shaheen and Asghar Shah of SDPI, Islamabad, for assisting me in this regard.
4. The sound track of “Bombay Dreams” is the work of Indian Muslim musician A. R. Rahman.
5. Here I have drawn from Ahmed (2006).
6. Also see Oxfam humanitarian director Jane Cocking’s comments – for example: “What we have is a single, long event which has the scale of the tsunami, the destruction of Haiti and the complexity of the Middle East” (BBC News, 2010b).
7. Later the BBC provided a substitute title: “Senior UN Figure Criticizes Response” (BBC News, 2010b). However, the first title, “World ‘Slow to Give’ to Pakistan”, had already been replicated by other news agencies (see Modern Ghana.com, 2010).
8. For example, the terrible public flogging of a young woman accused of having pre-marital relations with a man. The story came out when a video was released on the web, showing Taliban members holding the woman down and whipping her as she screamed

in pain. It sparked intense fury across the judicial body of Pakistan. The chief justice of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, Iftikhar Chaudhry, ordered police and government officials to produce the woman in court immediately so that details of the case could be known. See BBC News (2009b).

9. Illustrated through elaborate discussion of Pukhtunwali – the honour code of Pukhtun men.
10. See, for example, Peters (1979), Pirzada (2000), Jalalzai (1998) and D. S. Ahmed (2006) for Pakistan; L. Ahmed (1992), Khayat-Al (1990), Kandiyoti (1996), Sev'er and Yurdakul (2001), Moallem (1999) and Peteet (1994) for the Middle East and the wider Muslim world; and Pitt-Rivers (1965), Strathern (1972), Herzfeld (1980) and Rothschild (1969) for honour-related codes in non-Muslim settings.
11. Widmark (2010: 4) provides an extract of Dost's poem "They Cannot Help" in *Poems from Guantanamo: The Detainees Speak*.

## 7

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## Self-image, social expectations and pressures

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You have been told also that life is darkness,  
and in your weariness you echo what was said of the weary.  
And I say life is indeed darkness save when there is urge,  
And all urge is blind save when there is knowledge . . .

Kahlil Gibran in *The Prophet*

As indicated by the title, this chapter shares field data illuminating social expectations and pressures that routinely apply to masculinities in the local context of Pakistan. The issue is discussed across three social strata: low socio-economic group, socially stigmatized and distressed, and university students and professionals. The following sections present a detailed account of qualitative data collected from the samples.<sup>1</sup>

### Low socio-economic group

One of the major issues that kept recurring in the group was unemployment and its related social pressures, particularly in the context of competition offered by women at job interviews. At times men accept this growing market trend, and at other times they resent it. This is illustrated through the following quotes:

Women have many advantages in present-day Pakistan. I see them everywhere . . . excelling in jobs, education, media etc. At times I think that had I been a woman, at least I could have gained employment with ease [laughs].

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*Gender-based explosions: The nexus between Muslim masculinities, jihadist Islamism and terrorism, Aslam, United Nations University Press, 2012, ISBN 978-92-808-1208-4*

Men are offered temporary or short-term contracts . . . instigating job insecurity in them. Also, women are doing really well . . . [chuckles] Most of us know that women are more serious minded, while men waste their time having fun. At the time of competition, it is obvious that women will perform better and get the job. Also employers, for example courier services etc., offer desk jobs to women.

On a serious note, a respondent shared his personal experience and attitude towards women's capacity to earn and the intense resentment it causes in men – endangering their social identity of being “honourable”:

My wife was a newscaster and she earned about Rs 60,000 and my salary was less than hers. It always made me feel insecure in front of her. I used to feel embarrassed. I know that this should not have been the case as after all she is my wife . . . my life partner. Once we were visiting someone and on our way back my wife said to me that they had so many things . . . *x, y, z* . . . and I also want to have those things. I had issues with her spending money in my house – so I became annoyed. Somehow, I have always felt that in *my* house everything has to be *my* contribution money-wise. I ended up fighting with her. She wanted things that she could purchase and I could not buy them so . . . [pause] I was stopping her from buying. She accused me of being unnecessarily egotistic. And the fact is that “yes” – she was right. But, as a *man*, I was pressurized, mentally and economically and also in front of other people [i.e. intangible social pressure].

All our problems are self-created. At present women are making efforts to bypass men in all walks of life despite the fact that they do not have the right to behave like this. This is unacceptable. They should stay at home.

Another participant in the group immediately interrupted this man, protesting:

Women *do have a right* and they *must* excel. They must be educated. If we keep women uneducated eventually this will harm all men . . . and the whole society. In all provinces of Pakistan, women are maltreated . . . and the root cause is lack of education – among both men and women. This has to change [if we want to minimize social pressures on men]. Our Prophet married Bibi Khadija, who was a professional . . . a very successful businesswoman. She only helped him further. It is a pity that currently we are idealizing the age of ignorance.

It is important to note that the young man used religion to emphasize his plea for cultural transformation and re-evaluation of roles of women in men's lives, and invited no further opposition. Prophet Muhammad is idealized here for his wisdom in accepting a wife who was more experi-

enced and established than him, rather than being jealous of her success or social status.

Respondents insisted that it was misleading and deceptive to believe that men are not subservient to anyone. The patriarchal system was discussed as a double-edged sword that not only pressurizes women but also makes life cumbersome for men. According to this group, decision-making was not gender-based but a generational advantage in Pakistan, where elders influenced all major decisions in one's life.

Men shared their frustration at not being allowed to express their opinions – and if they ever did, they could rarely follow this with action.

Men face two pressures: social and cultural, and economic. Mainly it is the spiral of silence that is most damaging. Men need to have some voice. At present, they are not allowed to express. The overall impression is that women are silent. However, let me assure you that men are equally silenced in an environment of inequity and injustice.

Men are not independent. We may share opinion more freely; however, this does not imply *action*. There are so many social and cultural pressures, as well as expectations from us. All these factors influence our final decisions that are usually against our wishes.

He went on to elaborate further:

I am jobless. Once I was offered a job in another station [geographical location]. My parents denied me permission to leave. They said: "You cannot leave us alone here. Who will take care of the house? Find a job here." As their son, I had to pay heed to what they wanted from me . . . finally I did not go – although I wanted to leave.

Another participant added his personal experience:

I wanted to get married to a certain woman. Her parents did not allow her [to develop interest in him]. Fine, it is hard for women to have their say in such matters. But, even *my* parents did not approve of my love interest in this particular woman. Now, I am a man . . . even then [alluding to social pressure]! My friends suggested that I should elope with her. She trusted me and agreed to the suggestion. However, I thought about the consequences of my running away with someone's daughter. I also have a younger sister. I realized that my actions would have a direct effect on her and will immediately decrease her chances of finding a suitable match for marriage. The community will say that her brother had a bad reputation and therefore she cannot be trusted either. I thought about my mother cursing me for ruining my sister's life. So – I gave in. Her [the respondent's love interest] parents married her away and I could not do anything. More so, during our last conversations before her marriage, she

told me clearly that I was not worthy enough to be her husband as I had behaved like a coward.

The quote shows how entangled a young Pakistani man can be within a social system full of expectations and considerations. It is important to note his consideration for the women in his family, and the collateral expectations from others around him, including his beloved. His sister and mother featured prominently in his thought process and had an ultimate impact on the decisions he made in life. The language “*someone’s* daughter” is also interesting, and indicative of a cultural subtext of “male honour” – a father/daughter symbiosis. The boy had a patriarchal understanding of the issue where the personhood of his beloved, a woman, is made secondary by a subjective recognition of the social dynamics within which his action would have sullied the honour of his beloved’s father, another *man*. In a local sphere, any honourable man must never cause offence by overstepping another man’s honour – and thus the young man could share his decision in the group with pride (among other men), though undoubtedly with an aching heart for having lost the love of his life while attempting to remain “honourable”. Also, the quote shows how men not only have arranged marriages themselves, but are expected to play a role in finding spouses for their sisters.

Pakistani society is changing at a quick pace and masculine anxieties with regard to the visibility of women in public spaces is increasing. The group identified presence of women in the media as one of the primary pressures that they understood and labelled as “temptations” that “surrounded and tested [their] moral standards constantly”. The following quote captures this anxiety:

Women can mislead men. Media are increasingly using women to “normalize” obscenity in Pakistani society. Women who do things on TV . . . and in films etc. . . are obviously not targeting female audiences – but men. Later, men are blamed [for Eve-teasing, etc.] . . . whereas the fact is that women and media tempt men . . . or pressurize men . . . to deviate. It is becoming very difficult for men to maintain their moral standards.

It is important to note here that within traditional Muslim settings the expression “obscene” is not particularly used to imply offensive sexuality, but can be used to label even creative artistic expressions such as singing, dancing or acting, and is often perceived by the masses as “un-Islamic”.

Other group members reflected further:

Women are part of the society – not outside it. It is the men who hold businesses, and big advertising agencies, and then they hire women for purposes of

spreading obscenity. As far as women in the media are concerned – they only do what they get paid for . . . and have no choices! It is men who exploit them.

The group argued for a while before agreeing that obscenity in media is one of the social ramifications of poverty. When people have no money, they can cross all limits to earn it, they concluded.

Women were blamed for becoming fixated on the idea of men being their financial providers and consequently creating emotional emptiness in their relationship. Several men in the group spoke of the disappointments in their marital relationships, where, they believed, their spouses had reduced them to money-minting machines. Men were phobic of financial instability, and insisted that women reinforced such fears by being entirely dependent on them:

Tensions and pressures are men personified. Men are born to take tensions and women are born to enjoy life. A man is upset about everything: employment, expenses, poverty and domestic environment. He suffers in times of poverty, when life is unaffordable. At the end of the day his wife insults him for failing to do this or that. I am a daily wager and expected to bring home money *daily*. Women are only resting . . . and the moment I enter the house, they ask me how much money have I made today.

As a daily wager, at times I have to travel to other cities to find an assignment. I have a difficult life. I take lot of physical stress and yet when I return home my wife only asks me to hand over the money to her. She doesn't care if I managed to get some work on the day or if I ended up borrowing from someone. She is not interested to know where did I find work or how difficult it was to travel to that place etc. Her primary interest is her children . . . and the money . . . that is all that she needs from me. I think this is how women are – once they become mothers . . . husband becomes irrelevant to them and their only interest is in the currency that he carries. I am not saying that women are bad – I understand that my wife's behaviour towards me is not because she dislikes me, but because she is a mother, first and last.

The sample maintained that a good and respectable life is conditional on social standing and educational status.

I work hard and work as a labourer because I know that even if I make less money, I will have some respect in society. At least people would know that I wake up daily and work hard to make a living. If I don't do this, everyone will view me in a negative light and they will also make fun of me. In our society it is very important for a man to look and appear tough and active – someone who can take care of family and can afford to keep a wife and certain number of children.



At times I feel that economic issues can only be sorted out through women's education. When a woman is literate, she helps her children perform better and of course in the longer run they will find good jobs and make good money. The starting point is women's education. Also an educated woman can give good advice to her husband and give him suggestions on how to improve income etc.

A constable from the police anti-terror squad mentioned the “fear factor” that such men routinely struggle to overcome. Before leaving the house for duty, these men remind themselves of the “honour” associated with the masculine gender:

Due to insurgency in Pakistan, an ordinary man lives in a state of fear. Even the policemen live in fear and I state this not in a negative sense – but simply to emphasize that this is natural. We perform on the front lines on the security checkpoints that get blown apart by these suicide bombers every other day. When we leave home in the morning we only pray for our safety and well-being – just like other ordinary men. I feel worried for my family ... my wife and my dependent children. I think about what might happen to them ... if I never return home. Every other night I give instructions to my wife ... regarding the measures that she would need to adopt immediately on finding out about my death. I make sure to say goodbye to each family member before leaving my house. However, both as men and as Muslims, we [other constables present] leave our houses in the line of duty and are always prepared to die *on duty*. What makes a man into a man is the sincerity and devotion with which he fulfils his *duty*, even at the cost of his life. A man must look forward – there is no option of looking sideways or backwards. Even when he faces death, he should face it with dignity and glory – not like a coward. We face death every day.

## Socially stigmatized and distressed men

The sample consisted of internally displaced people from Waziristan and Swat who have been living in camps established for them in Islamabad and Bara Khau. The sample also contained substance misusers; the data collected from them are provided in Chapter 10. The reasons for doing so are outlined at the start of that chapter. SSD also included a few jobless participants, who identified unemployment as a social stigma rather than an economic pressure. The sample consisted of 32 men who felt deeply distressed due to lack of social status and what they generically interpreted as “worthlessness”.

The group held households and society responsible for instilling pride and arrogance in a male child. Boy children have the same air of superiority as adults. The sample noted that in Pakistani society male children are introduced to outsiders in a manner that generates feelings of superi-

ority and audacity in them, particularly in comparison to their sisters. Local cultures and preferences were implicated by the sample, while Islam was repeatedly mentioned as a religion that eliminated gender inequalities. For example, a participant emphasized:

Such men who become depressed over birth of girls are condemned in the Quran – and yet . . . look at Pakistani men . . . they continue to become embarrassed over birth of a girl child.

The Quranic verse that he makes reference to is as follows:

And when anyone of them is given the news of a daughter his face turns black [and] he is filled with anger. And he hides himself from the people because of the evil of the news given to him [wondering] should he keep her with disgrace, or bury her [alive] in the dust. Behold! [How] evil is what they judge. (Al-Quran, 16:58–59)

Men knew that it was their privilege to be able to take decisions and impose these upon others. This was obviously something that women were not privileged to enjoy or were refused the right to manifest. A few men from the sample found women's lack of entitlement to decision-making regrettable, while others insisted that it was merely a supposition that women were powerless. A subgroup within this sample elaborated the use of "crying" and "seduction" as a dichotomous strategy adopted by women to win favours from men and subsequently influence decision-making at household level.

It was pointed out that men who were influenced by women were considered "wimps" by other men and often ridiculed. An attachment to women was considered a sign of weakness, and men said that as boys they were conditioned for a tough and rugged life in adulthood by parents who purposely kept them away from playing with softer toys – and they were following the same rule in their households.

The sample reckoned that the essence of manhood rests in the power to take and implement an action-oriented decision. The group insisted that a man must be brisk, confident and intense in his actions. They confided that at times, in attempting to keep the power balance in their favour, they do the exact opposite to what they are asked by their wives.

The men speculated that their families (parents, siblings, spouses and children) would not have shown them love and respect had it not been for their status of being financial providers.

Men have to put on a façade and keep that illusion of financial stability alive . . . even if they are not stable. If a relative needs money, we have to either pay

from our pocket or run around and quickly arrange for money ... Men *have to* make commitments that they cannot afford to keep. If they fail to make a commitment – they fail as men. Manhood is all about being able to claim ... I “can and will” do a number of things – no matter in what way ... through what means. Everyone wants to hear from this man that he will take care ... he will ensure that all remains well with the family. Women do not have these pressures. They can be just the way they are ... and do not need to pretend. Mainly the society does not have any expectations from women ... they are perceived as weak ... and they can behave and act weak.

The participants attributed difficulties in meeting gender-based social expectations (such as being a readily available source of income for extended and joint family systems) to Pakistan’s failed economy. Parallel to this, they considered that for women it was relatively easier to meet social expectations, as they only needed good health to bear two or three children. A few respondents were quick to highlight the deplorable health status of Pakistani women, and concluded that recurring medical conditions, particularly those associated with gynaecology and obstetrics, ultimately only increased financial pressures on men.

Arranged marriages were noted as a major issue that exacerbated feelings of inadequacy due to lack of understanding with the partner. The sample condemned such forced betrothals and their negative effects on both men and women. Nonetheless, they agreed that as men they had more freedom than women and could afford either to escape such arrangements or take out their frustrations by mistreating the unwanted wife. Men feel burdened by the expectations society places on them. Similar thoughts are reflected in the following quote:

Everyone has expectations from sons. Mostly mothers have high expectations ... that he would keep us happy. According to Islam, a married man should be allowed to focus on his own household – but this is not how it works in the Pakistani system. A married man is expected to continue supporting parents, dependent siblings and relatives, in addition to supporting his wife and children. There is one to earn, and a hundred to feed. Women should be raised in a manner that prepares them to take their own responsibility. All our troubles are due to the fact that we do not follow the Quran. Islam provides very basic solutions, for example it asks us to focus on good deeds and remain industrious, i.e. *kasb-i-halal* and *not to expect much from others* – but to fulfil our own duties. However, Pakistani society is such that all that we can do is expect ... [pause] and bury the other person under heaps of expectations ... without doing our bit. You have not done this? ... Why have you done this? ... I did not expect this, but that. Their own relatives target unemployed men. We know that the *whole* [governance] *system* has failed in this country ... but it is one individual man who is made answerable and accountable for failing to earn. A man feels totally victimized under such circumstances, and he is helpless.

Being patriarchal, Pakistani society allocates women a vulnerable and conveniently exploitable status. Ironically, social arrangements and divisions of labour of their own choosing make life for Pakistani men difficult when women become more demanding, instigating feelings of financial incompetence and social insecurity in men. The following quotes reflect pressures that arise directly from the womenfolk of the household. It is important to add here that although the anvil of the societal system continues to be patriarchal, many Pakistani men feel as irritated and troubled by patriarchal norms and mores as women.

Women are competitive in terms of clothing and jewellery, and perhaps rightly so because that is their nature. In our community, women meet among themselves and return home with a list of demands ... I want this ... and I want that. Last time I wore those clothes in that gathering ... this time I am not wearing the same one otherwise women will think that my husband doesn't love me and does not spend on me. As a man I get so upset to hear such things. I would like to buy the whole world for her but I do not have money. As a refugee [IDP], I am literally living on the roadside.

Women know that finances are to be attended by the man of the house. My sister never asks our mother for new clothing. Her strategy is to ask our father. Even if he doesn't have money, he always tells her that he will buy her *new* things. This is how a man always answers a woman – even if his pocket is empty. He feels worthless if he cannot buy things for her.

Educated men from the group figured that men would have been better off had Pakistani society allowed women to acquire education and be financially independent. Men cannot escape the disadvantages produced by a social environment that takes shape under patriarchal dictates. The following quotes share similar anxieties:

I do not want to restrict my wife. I am confident that she is a nice and God-fearing woman. However, even if she goes nearby, I always accompany her. This is not because I want to follow her. I do so because the society is full of criminals. I am always worried for her welfare. I accompany her because I know that if I don't, I will remain restless throughout the time she is away. My thought process is such that I consider myself to be her protector. Even if I am sick, I always accompany her so that she does not have to do things – but I will do them for her. I want to keep her comfortable. This is how a good Muslim man is supposed to be like.

Men are expected to not only love and take care of their sisters but also keep a close track of them and their welfare even after they get married. Parents inculcate that sense of responsibility in a boy child – that everlasting accountability for his sisters' welfare.

A sense of pride can be noted when Muslim men make claims to treat women better than men from other cultures. This is in direct contrast to what has been observed by gender experts and occasionally portrayed in the media about gender relations in Muslim societies.

In our society a woman is never without a male well-wisher – her father, brother, husband and son, either one of them or all of them [are there to support her]. I am a married man with children and my sister is also married. She is not only cared for by her husband but I also take care of her ... ensuring as her brother that she remains happy in her house. Many times I help her husband in different things so that he treats my sister with love and care. I want him to know that my sister is not unattended. On the other hand, my sister doesn't have any such obligations towards me. In fact even when she tries to do something for us [the respondent's wife and children], we always tell her to focus on her husband and children and not to worry about us. As a woman, she is privileged. Everyone is always taking care of her. As a man, I am under constant pressure to provide that care.

It is Western propaganda against Muslim men that we violate women's rights. If a true survey is done and if Muslim women are asked they might say that even in poverty they are leading satisfactory lives because their men do everything for them and their children. Our women do not have to worry about making a living ... we do it for them ... for our children ... and for our homes. In the West, women are made to work and their men do not take their responsibility ... they do not marry them – because they are afraid of taking their responsibility ... afraid of having children because it involves commitment and costs. We are also afraid ... I think most men are afraid to take responsibilities. Our elders *push* us into the *situation*. Subsequently, we learn how to swim and take responsibility for our wife and children. There are a lot of expectations from us and we experience immense social pressure. Prophet Muhammad said that when a man marries ... he completes half his faith and he follows my path. That is the reason why we marry – otherwise marriage is a tough thing, it is terrifying. Once married and settled any man can realize why marriage is important. The presence of women and children in a man's life gives him a *purpose* of life. He knows that he has to provide for his family, and this is what makes him serious and focused in his work.

The participants maintained that both men and women had equal rights and duties. However, a few men claimed that “action” and “actual work”, even within the domestic domain, “was always done and accomplished by men while women completed simpler tasks like cooking and washing”. The following quote elaborates the point:

Women mainly cook and wash, but men do all other things in the domestic sphere. However, their contributions remain unacknowledged and women con-

tinue to portray as if they carry out all duties within the domestic domain ... and this is false and misleading. For example, a ceiling fan stops functioning. Who will remove it ... and replace it with a new one ... and in order to save the cost perhaps even do the whole mechanic thing? Of course, it's always the man. The woman only informs him – but she doesn't take action. If there are problems among relatives, men are asked to sort those out.

At times women are accused of creating competition among themselves, forcing men to make difficult choices and decisions. Men perceive such situations as additional pressures.

In Pakistan it is the man who gets minced between his mother and wife. He wants to respect his mother and also love his wife but in most cases the two women place unnecessary pressure on him to decide between the two. This is unfair. At times he is forced to become a hypocrite. He scolds his wife in front of his mother so as to force her to respect his mother. But then he simultaneously realizes that he has insulted the mother of his children. After all, his wife also is a mother and deserves equal respect. A man is never happy to misbehave with his wife – but the society forces him to act in traditional ways and ultimately his own children begin to feel disturbed.

The nature of Pakistani manhood is transformable through our mothers. Pakistani men are deeply influenced by their mothers. If mothers train boy children to be respectful towards all women, these anti-women attitudes in Pakistani men will wash away in two generations. This is not undoable ... and this is not unthinkable. We need educated and confident mothers who trust their own kind and instil the same values in their sons. The problem lies when women themselves get into negative competition with other women. A mother starts competing against a younger and beautiful daughter-in-law because she cannot imagine her son's focus shifting from her to this young woman. When a bride is brought to a house, the understanding is that she is here to serve all family members. This is wrong. She is there to be this man's wife. But our society is such that the son, her husband, is told not to interfere ... and the other women in his household begin to rule the routine of this new woman. The man exists on the sidelines. He even has trouble having private time with his wife as his mother and other elders in the family are so demanding and interfering. Our society is so power hungry that they don't feel embarrassed while knocking at a couple's door and ordering the daughter-in-law to prepare a meal for the whole family. Right from the start, a husband is informed that he does not have any say in what his wife will do or not do in this joint family. He does not have an upper hand; rather he is told that the woman was brought not for him but for the benefit of this whole family. Now she has to work in the kitchen and contribute in all other domestic chores. Man in many ways is helpless. He cannot do much without creating a major fight and cutting off his links from the extended family.

Gender competition is a product of lack of peace and prosperity in Pakistan. No content man can be nasty with his wife. In fact he would spend a lot of wealth on her and take her around the world to keep her happy. The issue is that he is made *responsible* for women. Both religion [Islam] and Pakistani culture have made him accountable. In the real world, he does not have the sources of production . . . of income, and he does not have that security through which he can confidently act responsible for the welfare of his women. Then he gets frustrated and begins to act in manners that are totally unacceptable.

Contrary to general perceptions that men team up with their parental families to subdue women, one sees above a different angle to this wide-spread issue of low status of daughters-in-law within extended family households.

Bravery was viewed by the sample as a central masculine attribute. The group noted that it was men who were getting killed in mosques and public places in a terror-scarred Pakistan. Despite this, men continued to attend Friday prayers at mosques because it was cowardly to sit at home feeling threatened by any looming suicide bombing. A few men ridiculed General Musharraf for hiding behind bulletproof shields, and praised Benazir's aura around the time of her assassination as more authentic and representative of *manhood* than that of Musharraf. Benazir became "courage" personified, and more so than any of the male leaders of the time, when she fearlessly held public congregations during her election campaign.

## University students and professionals

The participants in this sample group were interesting and multilayered.<sup>2</sup> Upward social mobility, i.e. rural-urban migration, is very common in Pakistan. It is ordinary for families settled in rural areas to send their sons to urban centres for education and jobs. Thus some of the respondents were not only educated and settled in urban centres but were also very aware of peripheral cultures. Their thought processes reflected the changing and transforming Pakistani society, where youth is balancing centuries-old traditions with forces of globalization. The social thoughts of participants in this group were progressive, focusing on opportunities in higher education. Yet gender was largely understood in a traditional manner. Like the LSE and SSD groups, a number of USP participants explained differences between men and women through biological determinism. The following quote is representative of the group's opinion:

The vision of Islamic society is that a mother looks after the house and the father earns money. This is natural and even the bodies of both sexes help us

conclude this. Women are delicate and physically made to stay at home. Men have tougher bodies and are made to toil and sweat on roads. Professionally too, men are for the army . . . and women are for . . . [pause] maybe, fine arts.

The group realized that a woman's life was very difficult (especially in terms of her biological role of reproduction), and none among them wished to live a woman's life. Giggling and laughing, as if living a woman's life would be a death sentence for them, they concluded on a serious note that despite not being inferior to men in any other sense, women had an obvious physical disadvantage that created avenues for men to exploit them. However, they also insisted that those men who beat women were "unmanly".

I am aware that in my society men are preferred over women. I also realize that the situation is the same within the domestic sphere as well. Parents, including mothers, treat their sons far better than their daughters. My understanding is that there is only loss in being born a woman – and no gain. I thank God that He did not make me a woman. This is not because I consider women as less, or not good . . . it is just that I feel it is extremely challenging to be a woman. She has to endure a lot.

Group members discussed men's emotional dependence on women and the dilemmas it gave rise to among educated and professional men in a society that was otherwise traditional. Men's dependence on women, if voiced publicly, can stigmatize their masculinity permanently, the group postulated:

Men in our class [middle/upper-middle, educated and urban] live with two faces. We give a lot of importance to the women in our life, including our wives. But when we leave home, we know that society appreciates men who are more casual and dismissive about women. Otherwise they joke about such men who are influenced by women, or are taking their women too seriously. In order to fit in well, we start displaying the same attitudes towards women . . . but in our heart we are aware that women matter to us, and that they are important. However, we will never agree to having such thoughts in a larger group . . . in Pakistani society . . . somehow this makes a man appear weak in our culture. There is no sense in this . . . but this is how it is.

The notion of manhood was idealized and understood differently by men belonging to rural and tribal areas and those who grew up in urban centres. The former insisted that manhood was about preservation of personal, family and clan/tribal honour. These participants said that while acting in accordance to culturally prescribed ways of preserving male honour/worth, men could even commit murder, known as honour killing.



On the other hand, those men who had no active rural and tribal affiliations and had attended schools in Pakistan's urban centres joked about this understanding – their opinion is best reflected in the following quote:

Manhood is just hero worship ... icon worship. This is something silly and is limited to things such as smoking, dating a girl, in fact fooling her, or behaving macho so that she goes crazy over him, eating 40 *chappatis* in one sitting, drinking a cup of hot tea with red chilli and indulging in Eve-teasing in the most trendy areas of Islamabad. Basically, men try to act hero-style and that's what their masculinity is all about. It's all about personality, rather than values. All these conversations about honour etc. might be true for far-flung areas in Pakistan ... I don't know ... but I am providing you with what we at the university think manhood is about!

Professional men were largely divided over the benefits attached to being born a man or a woman. Some held the opinion that although women managed to grab short-term and trivial benefits, they did not enjoy any major advantages. The group thought it was easier for women to get past security checks or break traffic rules, as shown in the following quotes:

Our women have a way to convince men to do things for them only by passing a smile. They can break a queue and then just smile to undo the damage and men are happy with it. They cross a red traffic light and upon being stopped they politely say sorry to the traffic police and he allows them to leave without a fine. The culture is such that more than half of men assume that women are stupid and therefore are "forgiving" in their dealings with them. The other segment of society [males] thinks that women must be respected and therefore even when women show disrespect, like breaking traffic signals, the man has a tough time in acting harshly or sternly towards them.

Worries are a routine thing. A woman has the advantage of expressing it without shame. In fact creating panic, shouting and crying are totally acceptable from her. Men cannot do all this. I remain awake all night considering how to improve my family's socio-economic status. In the morning, I present myself as a man who is very much in control of all situations, his family's destiny etc. ... mainly because I want my wife to feel secure with me. I want her to know that she married the right man. I want her [parental] family to know that they made a right choice by marrying their daughter to me.

Men traditionally expected and programmed to be financial providers and breadwinners for their families are also facing intense competition from capable women in the field. Men in this class are not against women having jobs, but feel that the counterfactual would have served men's interests better. However, currently this cannot be the case when women are prioritized across the board in efforts to improve their socio-economic

standing. In the job market, women have become a stress factor for men, as is visible in the following quote:

Women get all the jobs . . . and they get it for fun. The salaries are deposited as “extra” income while their father and husband spend money on their routine expenses. Men need jobs – but women do it for their self-growth, experience, exposure etc. They don’t have any dependants on them. Employers must consider this difference in economic offers and social expectations from men and women. I, as a man, have a certain number of dependants on me. If I am competing for a job and there is a woman who has equally strong credentials [pause] – in the end she will be given the job. For her, it’s about keeping herself busy and perhaps being constructive. I am not against this. This is good – but for me as a man, a job is not about being constructive . . . it’s a matter of feeding my whole household.

Although men feel challenged by the fact that women are competing against them for the same jobs and assignments, they want wives who are educated and professional. Many participants emphasized how important it was to have a sensible and independent wife who could help her husband survive through economic difficulties and contribute towards maintaining the couple’s socio-economic status in a wider society that had become increasingly competitive. It was noted that arranged marriages among urban professionals mostly turn out to be unsuccessful. The gender gap widens due to a communication gulf between two indifferent individuals living as a couple. Men conveyed that in an ever-demanding socio-economic, political and media-oriented urban Pakistan, homespun women as wives caused stagnation and difficulties in their life. Nonetheless, traditional practices dictating marital choice and social pressures remain as forceful as before, and even professional and educated men end up marrying women chosen for them by their families, and usually among relatives.

Women are not aware of the employment sector and at times we are genuinely pressured at the workplace . . . our bosses make us work extra hours. However, when we return home, women make us accountable as if we are cheating on them.

Women must have [public domain] exposure. A woman who has experienced the trials of the job sector will never bother her husband when he returns home. Usually, this is how it happens: the moment he sits down to have food . . . he is tired and hungry . . . his wife starts petty conversation . . . fights in the family etc. . . . driving him mad. An educated, confident and composed woman will never do this. First, she will hardly act that petty and second, even if she decides to, she will wait for the right time so as not to irritate but to influence him.

When I return home, my wife and also other women in my family . . . start narrating the day's events to me. Their expectation is always for me to sort out domestic issues. They want me to take responsibility for the house, as well as that outside – my employment etc. This obviously is a huge pressure.

Girls are raised on a principle according to which they treat their parental home as temporary and their husband's house as a permanent abode. Ultimately this mindset brings men under pressure. After marriage a woman becomes relentless in her demands, expecting her husband to fulfil all her wishes. A woman avoids pressurizing her father, perceiving him to be old. However, she perceives her husband differently . . . young . . . energetic . . . and that if he is man enough he will meet all my requirements: necessary and unnecessary. Marriage brings along tremendous pressures on men.

A man is under a lot of pressure to comply with his wife's wishes. At times, women and children behave similarly. I took my family to the US. Isn't this enough [hinting at air-travel costs between Pakistan and the United States]? After reaching there, the women of my family drove me to the wall. They wanted to buy everything without realizing how much my pocket could afford. Women can really pressurize men and I ended up buying all that they wanted and till today I am clearing my debts as they go around showing off their purses and sandals among friends and relatives. I feel that if women are educated, they won't behave in this irresponsible manner. Education brings maturity in a woman . . . and responsibility . . . and concern for her husband. She can relate more to him . . . the economics aspects etc.

Men insist that the economic pressures are such that not only do they want a wife who can earn, but also they want her to be aware about the job sector, undergo work pressures and counsel him for economic growth, stability and progress.

Most men do not have any understanding with their wives and this is something that proves to be detrimental for any relationship. However, we continue to marry according to our family's wishes. A woman who is educated and has some personal association with her spouse will never pressurize him, or be unfair to him . . . as she would not want to torture him. One major drawback of arranged marriage is that personal association is usually lacking and that makes both partners behave in a mechanical manner, with she in the kitchen and he on the road. Nowadays work pressures have increased so much that at times I go into depression. When I return home in this state . . . I require a partner who can help me relax and calm down my nerves. Mechanical arrangements lack such emotional benefits.

The men said that they feel pressured by the fact that, since childhood, women in their families are made their responsibility. However, men also

viewed this pressure as a major site of action for proving their worth as men:

Mothers pressurize sons by telling them . . . take responsibility for sisters and the house, and also get married among relatives and after marriage never forget about your responsibilities towards parents and siblings. A woman is married and there is a shift in responsibilities from her parents to her husband and children. When a man marries he only adds responsibilities on himself . . . parents, siblings, relatives and additionally wife and children.

We feel pressured with all these responsibilities, but then if we cannot take care of women, or are incapable of doing so or if we have to resent it all the time, then we'd better stop calling ourselves men. No matter what, a man has to fulfil his responsibilities and his duties towards dependent women.

The sample talked about the deplorable plight of women, most particularly in Baluchistan and rural Sindh. They concluded that ancient agrarian traditions and not Islam exploited women.

In some rural areas of Pakistan, if a woman wears shoes, sandals, men are rebuked for allowing women to have an upper hand. This is not Islam – but local culture where men succumb to such pressures even when all they want to do is be good to their women.

I belong to interior Pukhtunkhwa province and I have been studying here [Islamabad] for quite some time. My sisters are not allowed to leave their house. In fact even my mother hardly ever leaves home. I really like Islamabad, as it is a beautiful city . . . also I notice how women over here move about freely. They drive cars and shop around. During my visits home, I show photographs of Islamabad to my sisters . . . and they are always so delighted . . . they ask me all sorts of questions. Being their elder brother it is my heartfelt wish to bring them to Islamabad and to show them around but I cannot – as I told you that in our family and social system, women do not step outside their house. Even as a man I feel helpless as I cannot fight against the system. I do not like it – but I cannot do anything. There is no logic in these things . . . it is only respect for tradition . . . as this is how it has always, always, been.

In a few places, most particularly in Baluchistan, parents are happier over birth of boys. People in these areas do not like women because of two major problems. First, her marriage is a huge responsibility on parents and secondly, the division of property becomes a source of worry, or should I say greed. If they give her a share [according to Islam], it goes to the other household that is that of her husband. This is something that the parents want to avoid because their assets are already nominal. This is why they want to have sons.

By and large, the group insisted that if Islam was in any way rigorous and enclosing upon either of the two genders, it was “masculine”. Quotes reflect this opinion. Men struggled to convey their desperation where a religion *imposes* on them economic and family duties that they cannot easily fulfil in contemporary Muslim societies:

In a way Islam provides exclusive rights to both men and women – and the rights are different for each gender. A mother is far superior to a father, and we know that this is Islamic teaching. A recurrent theme in Islam is to order a son to obey his mother much more than his father. In contrast, a woman’s testimony is given half the weight of that of a man. Basically, both men and women gain and lose in certain situations and neither is stronger than the other according to Islam.

Islam does not restrict women – but it restricts a man by forcing him to earn and spend on women. If she earns, it is hers, if he earns – it is everyone’s. I think Islam provides more advantages to women than it does to men.

If upon marriage a woman does not want to do a job, her husband cannot force her. If she completes domestic chores, it is her favour to him and her good deeds, but she is under no obligation. Men are obligated to keep their wives happy . . . to earn . . . and to spend.

It is ordinary to find men running away from making a commitment. They even refuse to get settled, get married and have children. Women want to get married . . . but men don’t want such long-term commitments. Their argument is that they should be allowed to gain better control of their finances. The fact is that this is unlikely to happen. According to Islam, it is through a woman that a man gains his earning.<sup>3</sup> When a woman enters his house, God sends additional blessings along because that woman and their would-be children have their own pre-allocated bounties [according to a heavenly plan]. Therefore, men have to . . . and must get married, no matter how threatened they may be feeling due to uncertain circumstances. At least this is what our culture makes us do.

Islam makes a clear distinction between responsibilities of men and women. A woman completes her obligation by giving birth. It is not her duty to feed the child. It is a man’s job to feed his family. The Quran instructs her to take money from her husband if she feeds the child and if this is what she wants. In other words, Islam clearly conveys to Muslim men that she has special rights and privileges over him – whether he likes it or not. In fact, this mother-child example is a very *extreme* example but this tells a man his right place . . . level. Basically he is told not to expect anything from anyone . . . not even from his wife feeding his children for free.

Islamic teachings are all about keeping women safe. At times polygamy is condemned. This was practised when men used to go to wars . . . widows were in-

creasing. Polygamy was authorized so that those women who were left behind could be taken care of – even here the consideration is women, not men. Currently economic pressures are so high that men cannot afford to keep one wife . . . three to four children. People have become more practical.

The respondents also argued that Islamic compulsions gain further strength under societal and cultural preferences. The following quotes elaborate further:

Men are judged on acquired merit, position . . . while women are assessed on beauty. Today people have so much money that every woman has become beautiful because all day long they sit in beauty salons. It's the man who is in trouble. Expectations are higher from men. Marriages are directly dependent on the financial status of men. This adds a lot of pressure on men. If a man is unemployed, even if temporarily – chances are that no one will give his daughter to him and he will become frustrated.

Media are projecting men to have lot of money. They portray men as capable of providing luxury to women . . . jewellery, bungalows, chauffeur-driven cars, lavish parties etc. Men are usually married to 18–20-year-old girls who watch such dramas and expect their husbands to provide them the same lifestyle. It is quite complex, as that young girl is the selection of the mother of the groom who mainly approves her on the basis of fair complexion and beauty. Later, the cost of her stupidity is borne by her husband. Women themselves refuse to accept educated women – and this is really strange. Women do not want women to hold an opinion – but only to submit. It is not gender inequality but relational inequality between women and women and men and men [that creates issues].

Fathers allow their daughters to take high-paying jobs. Men are expected to allow their wives to work after marriage. Literally . . . in a marriage contract . . . the father of the bride adds things like my daughter will have the permission to work etc. On the other hand, if something goes wrong and the husband loses his job, the father-in-law creates major issues around his daughter going to work. Women themselves start taking it as some sort of exploitation . . . for example “my husband is exploiting me by not working”. Basically, a man is under constant pressure to remain a successful breadwinner and no one gives him space for not being so . . . religion, culture, society, all pressurize him.

The group also clarified that it is very difficult to practise polygamy and stories of it being ubiquitous are exaggerated. A man narrated how his friend tried to remarry because he did not find his wife attractive. When he approached the *qazi*, he was advised to remain faithful to his wife and told that his logic (less attraction to one's wife) was unacceptable. The group insisted that although a very rosy picture is painted of privileges of men in Muslim societies, this is not always the case. They

concluded that Pakistani society functioned on certain local social norms and mores whereby divorces were to be prevented for both men and women. They insisted that once paired wrongly, both men and women continued to suffer, as this was how Pakistani society dictated its values to the couple. A participant shared his understanding of the social processes:

It is not easy for either of them [man or woman] to walk out on each other . . . simply because this is not a prescribed behaviour among middle classes of Pakistan. Among educated circles, one can find other *men criminalizing men* who opt out of a marriage or go for a second wife. This is mainly because, unlike Saudi men, Pakistani men interact with wives of their friends, considering them as *bhabi*, providing them status as that of real sisters or even mother, depending on age difference. Therefore, most men part ways with their man friend when he misbehaves with their *bhabi*. Also educated or more women's-agenda-oriented women [feminists] from the couple's inner circle of friends force their husbands to isolate their friend for being so inconsiderate and shameless in his dealings with his wife or children. Quite soon, the one with a second wife becomes an outcast among educated and urbanized families he was friends with in the past. That is when he truly repents. In other words, social pressures are equally strong for men.

A few participants elaborated further that Pakistan was a complex society and changing at a rapid pace. The quote above shows that traditionally acceptable actions are becoming unacceptable, while men's individual behaviours are kept under surveillance. Men are expected to ponder over unpleasant decisions, such as a divorce or second marriage, before taking them. A man has to succumb to family pressures, as is apparent in this statement from one of the professionals in the group:

Joint family serves women well. If a woman is tactful and uses the system to her advantage, she can lobby quite a bit with the husband's sisters and cousins to pressurize him to do things for her and their children. For example, she wants to buy something and asks him to do so. Assuming that he does not have money – he tells her so and the matter is closed. Later the woman will tell the whole story to his sister or someone else in the extended family and a third party will start pressurizing him into buying the thing. In the end, living in an extended family isolates men and provides women with strong foundations. However, everything is dependent on a woman's skills to manoeuvre this joint family system to her advantage.

A number of university students revealed anxieties regarding sexual performance as one of the major pressures faced by Pakistani Muslim men. This finding is important not only because the central feature is the element of masculine *performativity*, very much in line with the theoretic-

cal rationale of this book, but also because it did not emerge in LSE and SSD. One reason why this finding appears in university students can be that educated men deal with educated and aware women and therefore perceive them as challenging – they have no margin for acting ignorant or foolish. Cultural norms are such that the notion of modesty and feminine honour prevents even educated and aware women from behaving knowledgeably in the realm of sexual interaction – thereby shifting the whole pressure directly upon men. It is relevant to mention here that pre- and extra-marital sexual associations are considered offensive under both Shariah and civil laws in Pakistan. This provides an interesting socio-legal context to the sexual performance anxiety of single men, as expressed below. The sample avoided using any language that could be considered taboo in the local cultural setting:

Men are expected to take action in all spheres. In the private sphere, we feel pressured to keep our wife happy, even if we don't know how to . . . or are concerned that we might not be able to. But it is our religious duty, as if we fail, we force our wife into *fitna* [rebellion]. We feel pressured at the time of marriage and the social norms are such that we cannot seek advice – not even from our own fathers. For a woman it is all so easy. In the name of modesty, she is not expected to do anything. The whole pressure [to perform] is on the man. Nowadays, women are not stupid. They may act as if they don't know anything . . . like I said because of modesty . . . but they know.

I am a PhD student and I am 32. I am a decent man and I have never been with a woman. My parents told me that they are marrying me to a cousin of mine . . . in few months' time. The moment they told me, I froze. I don't know if I will be successful as a husband. Quite honestly, if you are talking about expectations from men, we have to talk about this . . . about their private sphere . . . about the immense pressure that they experience . . . if you are a decent and respectable Pakistani man you are not expected to know about women. And yet, you are expected to take initiative after marriage . . . *because you are a man*. This society is full of contradictions.

According to a *hadith*, one major sign of weakness in a man is that he satisfies himself before his wife has completed. *Such religious things* add so much psychological pressure on men, right before marriage. For one, we don't know about women . . . you know our culture. We are not allowed to interact with women . . . then, we are suddenly supposed to know everything about women.

## Analysis

The high level of awareness among men regarding their socio-economic responsibilities as emanating from religious texts and the perception of



Islam being relatively biased against men are extraordinary. Men believe that Islam primarily provides safeguards to women, while making men accountable for their economic failures in this world and the hereafter. Mothers, sisters, wives and daughters all have a sanctified status in Islam and God makes it incumbent upon men to be primary caregivers to women. In this context, there is a common understanding among Pakistani men that the Divine introduces expectations and pressures on men, and these get translated into local cultures that reduce men to the status of breadwinners.

A number of common themes appear when one analyses the data. First and foremost, men from all groups highlighted achieving and maintaining a certain financial status as a major stress factor in their lives. This pressure emerges from religious obligations of the masculine gender, and is reinforced by parents, siblings, spouses and children. Men identified unemployment/job insecurity as primary sources of worry, along with social expectations of *appearing* honourable in society.

Arranged marriages were identified as another social pressure, and were expressed as “mismatches” that could only lead to communication problems between men and women. Men shared disappointment over their wives being of little or no help in alleviating their economic hardships. Men were not only expected to submit to their own arranged marriage but also to arrange marriages for their sisters.

Women’s expectations of men, and especially those arising from mothers and wives, were counted as tender areas. It was alleged that women unfairly demanded material benefits from their partners as proof of their love. Averting possibilities of family dishonour, men take women as a serious responsibility, a burden. Almost all men were aware of and displeased with the plight of women in Pakistan and identified a number of situations where women were discriminated against. However, they also enumerated advantages of womanhood, such as the freedom to be one’s real self without fear of shame (i.e. to be able to show fear if one is afraid, or cry when one is depressed or express lack of knowledge when one is not aware). Men felt that the anxiety of falling from the appropriate gender order of the “masculine” prevented them from being expressive in routine and real-life situations.

Men regularly succumb to socio-economic pressures arising from their parental, nuclear and extended families. In terms of marriage, job and all other major decisions, men had to “consider” family expectations and responsibilities. Simultaneously, the courage to acknowledge/accept and carry out responsibilities and stand tall under pressures was considered central to manhood. Ironically, men feel weary of certain aspects of patriarchal social arrangements, such as unnecessary restrictions imposed on women in terms of mobility and access to information; stressful financial

expectations from the male gender; and dynamics of gender relations where men cannot see women as inspirational without being perceived as a “wimp” and cannot take financial help from their own wives for fear of being labelled “dishonourable” and having their social reputation stigmatized.

Respondents in the three groups reviewed the general perception of men not being useful in the domestic domain. They insisted that their ambit of responsibilities spread from the domestic sphere to the local community and the larger public domain. They counted their contributions in the domestic area as vital for household economics. For example, if women cooked and cleaned, men attended to difficult and technical jobs in the house, and by virtue of being born men were expected to have working knowledge of slightly complex issues so that external expense could be avoided. Men insisted that they either did more or equal work to women – but never less.

Biological determinism emerged as a cross-cutting theme in all three samples. Ordinarily men held the opinion that since they were physically strong they were better formed to deal with the challenges of life. A generic understanding was that men were to be responsible for women and Islam put additional pressures on men, while women, if healthy, were only expected to reproduce. Parallel to this there was agreement that both men and women suffered equal levels of losses and gains by virtue of their gender. The USP insisted that women did not really have any tangible advantages and their biology as well as society only acted as pressures on them. The LSE felt women had more advantages and men tolerated physical as well as mental stress. The SSD participants counted their benefits to be decision-making power and the option to explore their choices, though with difficulty; biological advantages such as not having to go through a prolonged cycle of child-bearing and losing one’s health; and having physical freedom in terms of clothing and mobility. Men from the SSD group counted rights to express frustration and anger as a principal benefit of being born men, as opposed to the USP and LSE, who noted maintaining a “culture of silence” as a pressure.

Social norms were identified as major pressures that determine men’s behaviour towards women and its parameters. Although the LSE seemed to act on their own terms with women, men from among the SSD and USP insisted that they did not want to pretend regarding their opinion about women, whom they considered as sensible and suitable for playing advisory roles in men’s lives. Men were wary of the belief that a dismissive attitude towards women was a proof of manhood. Patriarchal norms were condemned for making men into hypocrites and imposing upon them a state of denial by not acknowledging the mental and emotional hold that women had over them.

Sexual concerns were raised by both LSE and USP. The former exposed their frustration in an indirect manner by constantly bringing up women as a source of obscenity, leading men astray from the standard “moral” stance. It is common to come across such co-relational inferences in patriarchal societies, what analysts – for example Brandes (1981) writing about Andalusian society – usually understand as emerging from the Biblical concept of “original sin” that presents Eve as the temptress who causes the fall of Adam. Most interestingly, although the Quran does not present the notion of original sin and nor does it place the blame on Eve, Muslims all over the world (particularly in rural spheres) are fascinated by the presentation of man as saint and woman as temptress, Satan or a conniving witch. Parallel to this, sexual anxiety was expressed by unmarried university students over their lack of knowledge about women.

Professionals and university students also showed frustration over how women always doubted male fidelity, and attributed much of this behaviour to lack of education in women rather than their biological constitution. Men in LSE felt that economically successful women caused feelings of socio-economic inadequacy and insecurity to arise among men in their family. Quite often this led to unfair behaviour from men in an attempt at face-saving in society and re-establishing their masculine gender role of being “the master of the house”.

Most importantly, in all three strata of society there is a refreshing need (expressed in clear language) to interact with women more freely and marry educated women. More and more men are communicating with women in the public domain and consider them as intelligent, wise and composed. However, men also succumb to pressures of arranged marriages, ending up with wives whom they consider “petty”, spendthrift, incapable of providing emotional support in the wake of the economic challenges of present-day Pakistan and parasitic in their relationship with their husband. Several reasons were pointed out to justify the need to have more educated women in families, mainly emanating from a realization that economic pressures on men could be markedly reduced by either a woman’s earning capacity or her intelligence in saving money, or simply through morale boosting that only an educated woman could sensibly offer to her husband in times of psychological stress. In contrast, an uneducated woman was assumed only to create panic and more disorder and discord in the house. Pakistani men depend on an “educated mothers – educated children” formula to usher in an era of financial stability in their lives. USP participants postulated that educated women could be better “partners” to their husbands. This is again very refreshing, as traditionally Pakistani men are perceived as rather dismissive and distant towards their wives, utilizing them purposefully as baby-producing machines. The fact that more and more Pakistani men are proactively seek-

ing women with whom they can “share” their lives in a fuller manner is interesting. Even the LSE sample who felt insecure due to the economic independence or supremacy of women expected their wives to treat husbands more as life partners than as financial providers. All sample groups suggested “education of women” as one foundational solution that could serve as a conduit for improving the “social status” of any family in larger society, along with removing all socio-economic ills of Pakistan.

## Notes

1. All italics appearing within quotes are to be read as “original emphasis” as expressed by the respondents. The same rule applies throughout this book.
2. At times participants spoke full sentences in English and excerpts provided in this section did not require elaborate translation.
3. This is more of a cultural subtext, rather than an Islamic narrative or tradition.

## 8

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## Muslim masculinities in the age of terror

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To continue what has been explained in the previous chapters, socio-economic and political processes and formal and informal institutional arrangements, such as gender roles, relations and expectations, produce troubled masculinities. Data documented in this chapter provide useful insights into the making of militants, terrorists and/or suicide bombers within the context of the current state of affairs in Pakistan. The narratives presented illuminate at least three critical themes that should be central to any further understanding of militant-jihadist Islamism in Pakistan: issues that form the core of “masculine” frustration among Pakistani Muslim men; psychological trajectories of men who are or may become militant-jihadist Islamists, terrorists and suicide bombers; and the determining factors that absolve militants and terrorists of their crimes in the sight of their co-religionists in Pakistan. Socially trivialized men experience phases of frustration and discontent that move them towards undertaking actions that are assumed and portrayed as potentially significant tools for regaining self-worth and masculine efficacy. To achieve this objective, Muslim men use militant Islamism, terrorism and suicide bombings.

Certain assumptions regarding the extent to which militant tendencies currently exist among Pakistani men are shared below. These suppositions are based on the data collected from the sample of 118 men in the three groups studied for this research. It must be mentioned here that almost all participants emphasized the sanctity of the Islamic notion of jihad, and preferred referring to contemporary versions of jihadi organ-

izations and networks as *nam nihad*, or “purported” jihadi organizations. As mentioned in the Introduction, the participants were not given any definitions of jihad.

### Men and cues of frustration: Journey from smoking to terrorism

A man has to have “aggression” . . . and only then he will join the so-called jihadi organizations and networks. I am very clear on one thing . . . either you can kill . . . or you cannot kill. Those who kill are frustrated and unhappy within them . . . and are angry with everyone around them. (Respondent aged 36, representing IDP group in Bara Khau, Islamabad)

Violence is one of the leading cues that a man is frustrated; the sample described such men as those with “defeated selves”. Militancy, terrorism and bombings are all examples or synonyms of violence. The following quotes, from SSD, LSE and USP participants, substantiate the ultimately detrimental effects that unchecked and socially accepted (even prescribed) violent/aggressive behaviours among men have on peaceful living in global society.

Men become violent due to mental stress. When I am undergoing stress . . . I beat my wife, [pause] my children. Whoever comes in front of me – I just become violent. I call them names. Later, I realize that I should be offering prayers to seek help from Allah rather than behave like this. But – I do this. I feel I can do this and get away with it because men can afford to be like this. My wife cannot express her anger in this way. At times she hits a child. But, obviously, she cannot hit me.

When the respondent was asked what type of emotions he experienced following his actions, he answered that at times he felt ashamed but, considering the extent of socio-economic pressures he has been experiencing, quite often he feels *justified* in his behaviour. A young, educated participant in his mid-twenties passionately argued:

Violence is not only a result of stress – it is an indicator of manhood. Quite like what my friend said . . . he does this *because his wife cannot do this* [stops the first respondent from speaking and continues]. Let me tell you, in Pakistan, beating one’s wife, or at least slapping her etc. that we [Pakistanis generically, including women] do not even perceive as violence . . . is about being “the man of the house”. Our psychology is to send her a clear signal, “See and remember it for times to come . . . *Who is the man of the house, here? Not you . . . me.*” After this, she will remain subordinated to him for the rest of her life. Trying to intimidate one’s wife through use of words is also violence. I think that all this

is because Islam never arrived in the subcontinent – it just crossed from here. We are wretched and misguided Muslims. We are ignorant – and we think we are extra smart . . . and very pious.

Violence can be adopted due to personal attitudinal problems, the disturbed internal logic of individuals and their view of society, and at times substantive socio-economic factors existing in an individual's overall context. Aggression can be internal and external, i.e. of a dichotomous nature entailing suicidal or homicidal actions. Opinions on the issue provided by the sample illustrate the point further:

Men may commit an act of violence, for example a bomb attack. It is a manifestation or a clear message to the society that "I am fed up of you."

We [Pakistanis] are violent . . . and we are frustrated. Men enter mosques with guns and kill other men offering prayers. Men are violent, not only against women but also against other men. We cannot tolerate thoughts and actions opposed to ours. We have a superiority complex. We think that we are the best and everyone else is just a speck of dirt . . . no right to speak or express themselves.

We should learn how to compromise and be content. All social problems, gender related, crimes, terrorism etc. surface when we compete against each other. All that is happening at the moment is a direct result of competition between opposing groups – where everyone imagines that he is better than the other.

Deeply frustrated individuals can inflict harm on both themselves and others, and the same holds true for Pakistani men who within a constraining and compulsive socio-economic context try to salvage what is left of their masculinity. Other cues of frustration among Pakistani men were identified as smoking and delinquent/harmful motivations and actions. The following quotes elaborate this.

Pakistani men have an imprint in their psychology. "If I am a real man . . . I can make anything possible." You start talking to a man and he will say: "No problem – this can be done. No problem, I will do this now; no problem, consider this one done." This is an ideal man according to Pakistani psychology. The fact is that he *cannot* do *anything* because of the circumstances surrounding him. When he fails, he starts indulging in whatever else is possible for him . . . be it smoking, dacoity, crime, murder etc. Once they start indulging in something, they go right to the end as then it becomes a test of their manhood. They never quit halfway as that makes them *na-mard* [eunuch].

Men want to take care of their families. If they feel incapable of doing so, in most cases they leave the house and never return. After leaving the house

they start acting criminally. Men are vulnerable to external influences. Women remain protected in their house. Men become part of street culture. They opt for drugs. They start abusing people around them. They indulge in physical violence – and they shout, use foul language. They do all this to eliminate the list of demands that their family wants to place on them.

Men usually start taking drugs or start indulging in crimes not only to get money but also to feel confident and powerful, [pause] forcing others to respect them . . . out of fear. I know a man in my locality, and he was poor. He became a dacoit . . . you know . . . like a local gangster, a thug. At times men become smugglers or start selling things in the black market. When they do not meet expectations they may also become addicts. I would say 95 per cent of them go on a wrong track and a few also commit suicide.

Smoking is an addiction. Men become smokers due to all sorts of socio-economic pressures and frustration. Also, in Pakistan, women don't smoke [openly]. It is culturally incorrect for a woman to smoke . . . and therefore men consider this as their prerogative, and use cigarettes to look superior and act like a hero. Cigarettes help hide inadequacy. Don't do or say much and yet remain the focus by puffing up smoke!

In recent years people in Pakistan have started adopting Saudi Wahabi appearance, with men growing beards and wearing traditional clothing with skullcaps and women putting on *abaya* and *niqaab*. Considering Pakistan's socio-economic and political context, the participants postulated a nexus between a crisis in social status and identity and the use of pronounced religious appearance and symbolism. However, they added that this might not always be the case.

Pressure [troubles/difficulties] changes people. On becoming hopeless people try to find spiritual contentment through a source. Such a source is only the Divine. And then one notices sudden changes in people . . . growing a beard and wearing a skullcap, and becoming more and more inclined towards religion. However, this is not mainly about religion itself. It is just that the person has lost hope and is desperate to find some comfort. In a way he is trying to find *himself* because the society has told him that "you are worthless and we don't value you". Basically, he is trying to assign some value to himself by becoming very religious . . . so that people respect him.

People are changing their appearance to look more Islamic. This is because either they have actually discovered something and want to be different or because they are recovering from accidental happenings or personal losses. For example, if a man has a car accident and fears that he will die – but he does not die – chances are that he will become very religious and God-fearing on recovering. Every day there is a bomb attack in Pakistan . . . people are afraid as



death is standing around the corner ... people are becoming religious because they fear that today might be the last day of their life. They might get killed in a suicide attack or they may be gunned down in a mosque or even a marketplace. They just want to act *proper* according to their religion.

Professionals and students insisted that individual understanding of “self” among Pakistani youth was being influenced by two opposing cultures: the West and the Saudi Wahhabi brand of Islam. Both imports have led to a severe identity crisis among urban populations. A student from the rural belt of Pakistan and studying in Islamabad for a master’s degree in international politics commented on the issue, suggesting Islamist revivalism and anti-West postures in the Muslim world are urban phenomena caused directly by forces of globalism and capitalism.

Succumbing to poverty, or suddenly reacting in a way to change one’s personality ... to look more “Islamic” ... is an urban phenomenon and a result of information/awareness, [pause] right or wrong ... and also some inferiority complex due to low social status. Urban populations ... the poor who have settled here ... they have this habit of *reacting* to everything around them. They are confused, frustrated and ready to act foolish. They pick a piece of info from here, and then another from there ... *doing a quick dirty mix match* [of religious information] ... and suddenly becoming someone very different ... *redefining* themselves in a way that would attract attention. All this is to gain importance. People around start saying “he is very noble ... now he has become very pious ... very close to God”. If at all ... this is self-worship. If you visit rural communities, you will know that they are at peace with poverty, and in fact poverty is a way of life for them ... and they are fine with it. Whatever little they make, they live peacefully ... working hard on farmlands. They are not reacting to anything. Their women work in the fields. They want to change it [poverty], but in a routine manner. There is no revolution or rebellion in the rural areas. They are still giving [traditional] names such as Pahar [Mountain] Khan to the children born in the twenty-first century, when these names have become totally outdated. This is because ... this is all that they know ... *and they are very content with it*. No shame, no embarrassment, no competition.

Other critical issues that emerged included suicide as a way to escape socio-economic failures:

I know someone who committed suicide. He felt like a total failure and remained very anxious. He did not have a job. Everything has become unaffordable in Pakistan and men don’t know how to survive and also keep their families. They cannot escape their duties, as bringing bread is ultimately a man’s job. However, at times they do [fail] ... like this man who I knew. He poisoned himself.

Views condemning suicide on religious grounds were expressed in strong words:

Those who are aware of Allah and his Messenger . . . never bow down in front of troubles. Worship is important . . . and prayer. Anyone who is a true practising Muslim can never commit suicide. They should know that suicide is *haram* [forbidden], no matter under whichever circumstances. You can die of hunger – that is better. But Islam does not allow one to take one’s own life. You cannot dictate to God [regarding time of death]. He sent you to this world, and only He can call you back by sending the Angel of Death.

Conventional wisdom that focuses on external factors such as militant outfits and religious leadership influencing individual thinking and gravitating young men towards violent options also emerged during discussions with the sample. However, the participants had trouble substantiating the explanation, as they could not ascertain the “why” and “how” of educated and affluent youth becoming violent and seemingly keen on promoting the militant tactics adopted by Al Qaeda and the Taliban.

When people succumb to pressures . . . suicide is ordinarily the way out. There are these so-called jihadi organizations that sell suicide as an attractive idea to a young man – as if he is about to do something very “consequential” and “impactful”. People do not have awareness and they buy what the leadership sells to them. At times, people have awareness and they study in places like London, [pause] obviously, they are not stupid. Yet these organizations fool them. I don’t know why or how.

Violence and terrorism are similar things and men do this because they are offered huge sums of money and given access to a wide range of resources. Men always go after money. This is how they become terrorists. We can blame the outside elements or forces for misguiding our youth into terrorism but the fact of the matter is that [pause] what environment has Pakistan provided them? Poverty, illiteracy, hunger, joblessness – what else? [Probe: but why are the educated and rich men doing so?] This is very simple; they want to do this for fun . . . for adventure . . . for money . . . for popularity . . . for being a “Terminator”. Why do you think Qasab<sup>1</sup> did this? He did that for guns and money as well . . . for fame.

Another group participant added:

Poverty breeds terrorism, and actions such as suicide bombings – but at times I think this is not the case. Poverty has always been part of world history but terrorism is a new phenomenon. We cannot blame poor people and start perceiving them as terrorists.

Indeed, all poor are not terrorists but terrorists can be poor.

The USP, who had more sources of information and knowledge, shared some interesting views on how rich and/or educated men become terrorists.

There are two types of so-called jihadis. Those who are a product of madrassahs – usually from the poor classes whose parents leave them there for food, boarding and lodging. The other type is the modern, urban, employed, rich young man. In my opinion the second ones are agents of intelligence agencies who want to target Muslims the world over. They hire these young men to commit terrible acts mainly to send out a message that “Muslims are not reliable; they are the most dangerous people in the world. They are all terrorists; with or without beard, in trousers or in *shalwar kameez*, in London or in a Pakistani village – all Muslims are the same: terrorists.” The West will spread so much hatred against us that wherever we will go it will become difficult for us to survive. Our own governments are power hungry. They don’t care about the conspiracy. They only care about buying ranches in the USA. We, the ordinary men . . . who want to make a good life – we don’t even get visas to the USA now. If you read world history, you will know that we [Muslims] are the most hospitable civilization in the world. How come we have become so terrifying? We are the only ones who “originally” do not give importance to materialism . . . but only to ethics. Our religion is about being polite and being a wonderful host to our guests. When did we start killing Americans? Why? This is not our culture to kill people. Now we are portrayed as if we are more savage than the animals around. This all is planned, and the CIA or some other agency bought people like Shahzad.<sup>2</sup> The bomb didn’t even explode, which is quite interesting – but we [Pakistanis] are picking up the pieces . . . blamed . . . called terrorists. He was an employee of some intelligence agency, specifically hired to target Pakistani interests.

One perspective can be that there are no options for our youth. The other is that the youth have become so casual about things that they think that they have multiple options. If this doesn’t work out, I’ll go for this, regardless of right or wrong. For example, if she doesn’t agree to marry me, I will abduct her. *How dare* she say “no” to me? Similarly, if I cannot make money this way, I will snatch it from someone. If I cannot make people bend knees, I will become a terrorist . . . and suck out their very life. I think this is all a result of misguided and bad behaviour in our society that goes unchecked . . . nothing else.

In our country people are either extremely poor or they are very rich. These are the two classes who are generally bad in their behaviour at home . . . and they also become bombers. The middle-class . . . salaried people . . . they are the ones who go to work to get killed in the roadside accident, or in bomb blasts. The majority is that of victims and not bombers.

It is equally interesting to elucidate roles women play when men adopt violent socio-political trajectories. Opinion in the sample was largely di-

vided, with a few insisting that the presence of women reduced violence and others arguing that women were in fact a source of violence. A review of the literature endorses the view that women, by their mere presence, play a role in reinforcing militaristic and other forms of power display among men (Goldstein, 2003). Women validate violence among men and in a way idealize men who go to war. The following quotes from the USP sample illustrate women's role in violence:

Presence of women will decrease violent tendencies in men. The fact is that men behave differently when women are around. At times men use very dirty language among themselves but in the presence of women they use polite language. This is because women are sanctimonious and men are under the obligation to maintain modest decorum when women join in.

All violence is due to women, money and land. Yes, women make men more violent.

Men are possessive about women. No matter how they treat their own wives, if another man even looks at her – they become violent towards their own kind. Why did you look at my wife? How dare you? In tribal areas, men murder one another over women-related issues.

Women may ask men to fight ... but only in defence of nation and honour. Women never ask their men to become murderers or terrorists. Also, when men leave home for fighting ... it is mainly the women who become insecure and they want their men back.

## Making of a terrorist

The samples highlighted the nexus between customary and socio-culturally prescribed practices of masculinities and terrorism. This particular aspect is explored further in Chapter 9 through multivariate logistical regression modelling. The quantitative data show positive correlation between masculine constructions and the tendency to opt for militant-jihadist Islamism, currently often subsumed under terrorism. These quotes show how cultural and masculine ideals are evoked to increase the appeal of violence among men:

Men often want to pose themselves as “heroes” and they want to do all such activities that would make them look like a hero.

Young men are being used for suicide blasts and they are brainwashed into believing that they will have *houris* in the hereafter. These are mostly young

boys, unmarried . . . and they start dreaming about paradise and the beautiful women over there. Can they be blamed?

We know that “martyr” is the highest rank in Islam. Any man would act in this way with the hope of achieving “glory” and “pride”. Our men are exploited in the name of jihad etc. Promises of heaven are made to them. We cannot see what happens to them in the hereafter, but one can assume that they probably never go to paradise. Who can . . . after killing innocent people? They go for the charm of martyrdom.

It is natural for any young man to go for something that provides a quick and easy fix. He will go for anything that serves his interest whether it is right or wrong. His interest is money, respect, honour and power.

When unemployed men with multiple inadequacies get together, they get re-organized as a “gang” and go around snatching mobiles and indulging in other street crimes. At times, they are picked up by other crime networks, even terrorist networks, and are paid money to commit certain actions. The men start feeling as if they have found employment and success. Their actions serve their male ego.

The following quotes from the USP group reflect upon the importance men allocate to the elements of respect and honour in their lives and how central these are in the articulation of masculinity and authentic manhood. There is ample evidence that anything involving action, war, militancy, rebellion and even bombing has a certain masculine charm, as most perceive it as somewhat heroic, even if fallacious. There is a fine line between a suicide bomber being a criminal and rising again – if not as a martyr, at least as a heroic *man* among Pakistani youth. The USP are no different in this regard than their less fortunate countrymen from the LSE and SSD groups.

Human psychology and most particularly that of men is such that they want to be respected. They want to be followed. They think that they are always right and whatever they say, others must follow. When no one listens to them, they join such networks to display their power.

Young men start smoking to feel like a hero. They opt for terrorism because it is adventurous and makes them feel like a hero from some action movie. They are living a life of a Bollywood or Hollywood hero. They have access to weapons and they are on a run like an action hero.

I am 19 and I know that my friends get hyper-excited whenever there is a fight sequence in a film. The main issue is that if you are a hero then you should be hitting the other and not get hit. *This is the main thing.* I enjoy it. In Bollywood

it is sort of unrealistic where the hero even starts flying ... [giggles] but I like Hollywood fights. They are *more real* ... and the *blood is red*, not pink [everyone in the group laughs].

Boy children are taught how to use a pistol at a very young age. This is very common all over Pakistan, especially in Peshawar. Handling weapons is not something very special for men in that sense. They consider it as a part of their body and women stay away from it. Nowadays there is so much insecurity that in my opinion even women should know how to fire a pistol. But men keep it as their prerogative.

The test of manhood is not in training as a suicide bomber, but in *actually completing the deed*. Once they get involved in such operations they cannot escape [even if they realize it is futile]. No matter how confused or afraid they become while walking towards their own death, they *complete the task to die as a man*. Steadfastness is an essence of manhood – and I think all over the world, not just in the Muslim world. A man is not made to be flexible, but a go-getter. Once he decides, he will then not change his stance or opinion – come what may. This is what makes him a man, different to a woman. Women are more flexible and are not [generally] egocentric.

Masculinity-related concerns and urges play a role in converting ordinary men into militants and terrorists. In this regard, the component of revenge as central to the notion of male honour, particularly in Muslim societies, cannot be ignored. Without any cosmetic treatment, it must be stated in clear terms that *revenge* has a primordial value in Pakistani culture, most particularly within tribal areas of the country. Cultural codes such as Pukhtunwali serve as cornerstones of all thoughts and actions and determine dynamics of relationships in conclusive ways. Details of this customary tribal code were given in Chapter 6. The sample predominantly consisted of Pukhtun men belonging to the troubled regions of Swat and Waziristan, and their views are shared below.

In order to understand the culture of revenge, we need to understand the concept of Pukhtunwali. Both men and women count revenge [in defence of honour] as important. However, my sister cannot go to the extent to which I can go ... in terms of implementing revenge. The way expectations are of me to take revenge ... these expectations are not of my sister. She is after all just a woman. But I am required as a man to *practically* maintain our honour.

Revenge is part of masculine honour. Pakistani courts delay settlement and, of course, once matters go to court, the option of revenge is eliminated. Many times men prefer taking revenge to close a matter in a more acceptable [to family and/or community] manner.

A respondent from the professional classes spoke on similar lines:

Revenge, honour and self-respect are interconnected. It is not just sadness that leads to revenge but also a pressure to regain one's worth after being assaulted. Both men and women feel these emotions. However, women are more vulnerable and therefore they do not take risks. Men, on the other hand, have no choice. The society expects them to settle the score – challenges them to prove their worth by striking back at the enemy. Even the women say things like “if you cannot deal with our enemy then colour your palms with henna or go and wear bangles or wear a nose pin”. All such mocking leads to blind action on the part of men.

These customary informal institutions exist parallel to the Quran, in which the idea of forgiveness as better than revenge is promoted. Heavily relying on modern and high-tech military and intelligence sources, NATO forces and their allies, including successive governments in Pakistan, launched their counterterrorism strategies after the 11 September attacks. Yet the potential impact of traditional and informal social institutional arrangements/processes on counterterrorism efforts (of the United States and its allies) could not be effectively contained – even if a realization along these lines was present. Consequently, with each drone strike that targeted terrorist hideouts in the tribal belt of Waziristan, dozens of revengeful protest masculinities emerged and were quickly embraced by jihadist and/or terrorist outfits. The quotes substantiate these points.

Many innocent people lose their lives during bomb blasts and drone attacks. The people do not know and neither do they understand the reasons for which they get killed. The Pakistani government and media ignore such casualties. A few survivors start raging and burning in the fire of revenge. The so-called jihadi organizations use such emotions to their benefit and include them in their activities.

Every action has equal and opposite reaction. These are the laws of nature. I am not saying anything extraordinary. Whatever America is doing in Afghanistan and other Muslim countries, it should not expect flowers and sweets from us. Why are they attacking us with drones? Why has our government sold us . . . our lives . . . for a few dollars? Now they are sitting as ducks, letting drones fly into our space and kill us.

People are becoming terrorists for the sake of revenge. When a close relative is killed by drone attacks, if he will not take revenge then what other options does he have?

Madrasahs and houses are bombed . . . and people are killed. When men are left behind to collect pieces of blown bodies of their relatives, they go wild in the fire of revenge. This is how they become terrorists.

Inequality and economic disparity among all geographical regions of Pakistan also lead to the success of so-called jihadi organizations. People who are already feeling aggression inside . . . can be used as cheap gunpowder by these networks.

Men are brainwashed by these so-called jihadi organizations. Engaging with personal grievances of individuals makes brainwashing attempts successful. Men want to take revenge for the crimes committed against them and become part of a system that gives them a leap . . . a jump. Now he acquires training, money, guns – he also watches videos to keep the hate alive – and then finally he goes on the mission.

Chapter 6 covers the plight of people from Swat and Waziristan. Undoubtedly, war-affected populations are filled with indignation towards the government of Pakistan and the coalition forces. Their feelings towards the Taliban are no different. In the end, people only want or aspire to a decent and stable life. The following views reflect the concerns, tragedies and anger of the IDPs:

This is not jihad but *fisad* [anarchy]. I am paying Rs 12,000 as rent in Bara Khau when my own house in Waziristan is worth Rs 1,200,000. Had I not been faithful to Pakistan, what am I doing in Bara Khau after the war broke out in Waziristan? We are killed from both sides. If we tell the Taliban that this is not jihad, they kill us. If we tell the government that this is jihad, the army kills us. Americans are already killing us and we are sitting on the roadsides with our lives turned upside down. How should we respond?

We are in trouble due to the Pakistan army and Taliban. Taliban killed six people in our village. When the *jirga* session was arranged, the Taliban refused to reconcile. When we requested the army, they started thinking that there are Taliban residing in our village and they started shooting at us. Now you tell me – if you are a survivor, and if you have some self-respect and feelings . . . emotions . . . and if you have lost a family member . . . will you not take revenge?

A young man became tearful as he shared the distressing incident of a killing in his own family:

Our inefficient army gunned down my uncle . . . an innocent man. He was old [pauses, fights back tears] and could not see due to cataracts . . . or perhaps interpret the signal to stop . . . this was when he was returning to the village that evening. They [Pakistan army] shot him down at the checkpoint. He was like my father.

Pakistan is full of checkpoints and yet not a day goes by without terrorism. This shows that the government and police are a party to terrorists and they are doing it to make Pakistan a living hell for ordinary citizens.



Even the USP, the majority of whom were not directly affected by all that is happening in Waziristan, expressed similar views to those of the LSE and SSD:

Americans and Jews want to take control of natural resources in this region and that's why they are declaring us worthless. They treat us like dogs – throw a bone . . . and make them do whatever needs to be done. Unfortunately, our leadership is such that we are selling our lives cheaply – for a few dollars.

Revenge is certainly a major factor in militancy and terrorism. Our policies have been suicidal. The way we [Pakistan government] handled Swat and the way we [Pakistan military] attacked Red Mosque in Islamabad. Each time there has been an attempt to curb terrorism, we have ended up producing hundreds more terrorists. This is due to foolish planning in which we provide the population with a reason to “react”.

The sample suggested that individuals could become terrorists due to economic hardship, but also due to lack of awareness of larger political issues. These two factors have already appeared widely in mainstream scholarship and policy documents. A few comments add to our existing understanding of the issue:

I am from Waziristan. People say that terrorists live there. The fact is that people in our area join these organizations due to lack of awareness. We don't have education and we are a tribal society. We are told by our tribal elders to do certain things – and we just follow orders to maintain clan honour. Now anti-Pakistan groups are politicizing innocent people of Waziristan and using them for their ulterior motives.

Poverty is an additional factor that curtains people's sense of judgement. Unemployment is a huge pressure and that makes individuals join so-called jihadi organizations. Most men accept offers of jihad as the organizations take responsibility for their families and welfare. They are given money. Men say . . . why not take this money for food?

A few professional participants did not agree with the two conclusions attributing an increase in militant Islamism and terrorism inside Pakistan to either external influences, such as Al Qaeda, or the country's economic quagmire. The following quote is an example:

Today people think about Osama Bin Laden as a cause of terrorism. I say that I have never seen a more unimpressive man than him. He has no philosophy . . . no charisma . . . nothing. How come we are so stupid to believe that he has made everyone violent? People resort to violence due to their own inadequacies. The starting point is always the world within, and not the world outside. Terrorist training camps and all that come much later into the picture. We have

to see how our men think . . . how they suffer. That is what makes him violent towards his parents, wife, children, society, global system and everything. He is unhappy and feels like a failure. There are a few hundred cases of “unemployment and terrorism” and there are more than a million cases inside Pakistan with people living in abject poverty and not resorting to any form of crime.

## Testing militant-jihadist tendencies among Pakistani men

Questions posed during focus group sessions asked “how should men respond to offers of jihad in Pakistan’s current political scenario”, and whether the sample “imagined offering themselves for militant/jihadist operations”. Here the focus remains on qualitative data collected from the three research samples – LSE, SSD and USP – while quantitative analysis is provided in Chapter 9. A slight variation between qualitative and quantitative results was observed, and might have been caused by more cautious/calculated responses during focus group discussions as opposed to forthright replies in questionnaires that were completed under conditions of anonymity.

### *Low socio-economic group and terrorism*

The group mainly presented their arguments within the context of conspiracy theory. The participants mistrusted Islamists, the West and their own government as well. Therefore the idea of joining any organization that made calls for Islam and jihad was dismissed.

Even if someone gives me 10 million rupees, I will not go for this type of jihad. I have never seen a *moulvi* sending his son or relatives for jihad. They target innocent young men who can be fooled.

As labourers we are strictly against terrorism. Firstly, this is a job of gangsters. We are hard-working people who literally sweat all day long to make a living. We are not thugs. If we get involved we would only endanger ourselves, because terrorist networks are *the other wing* of intelligence agencies, like the CIA, ISI . . . Mossad. Once you are in them, you cannot leave without getting shot.

A number of anti-Pakistan elements have got together and they are murdering Pakistanis. They want to finish our country. They are labelling their hired murderers as jihadis. These suicide bombers are not jihadis, or so-called jihadis. They are hired assassins and bombers and their task is to kill Pakistanis daily.

There is no such thing as a jihadi organization. These networks are all created by Pakistani and American [intelligence] agencies to destroy Pakistan. Young

men should know what mess they are getting into before joining these organizations.

Suicide bombing or bombing – the type we are witnessing today is all terrorism . . . and not jihad. It is very simple to differentiate between the two. Jihad is not a job: you bomb that place and I give you this much money. But men are taking it like a job. They do this for money. A jihadi is supposed to be very humble. He does not boast that I am better than you. He fights against oppression and injustice. Our men are telling everyone that they are better than others. This is pride and arrogance. This is not jihad. This is terrorism. Or maybe it is some *big scheme* to destroy Islamic culture by tainting the basic teachings of Islam, so that Muslims start killing one another, [pause] like what is currently happening in Pakistan.

A participant suggested Palestine as an exception and offered his services for the Palestinian cause.

In my opinion, Palestinians are the only ones doing *real* jihad in today's world. If I am given an opportunity, I will certainly join the cause and fight the oppressor [Israel]. However, we cannot even meet our own necessities and I wonder how can we contribute towards jihad.

### *Socially stigmatized and distressed and terrorism*

This group, like the LSE, expressed anti-US sentiments and declared the present political actions as a conspiracy against Muslims that has been unleashed by elements such as intelligence agencies with global outreach, Western governments and nations opposed to Pakistan, mainly India and Israel. Against this backdrop, the sample felt that it was better for them to stay away from politics and offers of joining jihad. The following three examples illustrate this conclusive sentiment:

America is organizing these bomb blasts. This is their greater agenda for destroying Islam. They are doing all this to show to the world that Pakistanis and Muslims don't deserve to be part of this world and that we should eliminate them. Suicide bombers in Pakistan are American agents and have nothing to do with any Islamic organizations. Americans are acting like the boy in the "cry wolf" story . . . as if it is today . . . this very day . . . that Pakistan will be taken over by terrorists who will capture the country's nukes and use them against the West. The West became phobic of Pakistan . . . the day we became the first nuclear power in the Muslim world. The reality is that Americans are buying agents who look like us [ethnic appearance is Pakistani], but they are hired specifically to target and bomb us. Our government is no angel . . . they are collaborating with the Americans.

Men should not join jihadi organizations. They should realize that at times these are banned, then they start functioning again. At times they become Taliban, at times they become Al Qaeda and what not. Our politics look suspicious and it is not as simple a matter as jihad . . . or something pure or respectable. Jihadi organizations are a fraud. Even RAW [Research and Analysis Wing (India's external intelligence agency)] agents . . . Hindus were moving around in Swat . . . acting like mullahs. We have to make our youth aware of the politics, of the role of agencies. This is not jihad.

At present, the brain is that of someone . . . words are that of another and action is implemented by the third. This all is politics and madness. No one should be telling people how they can become good Muslims, [pause] participating in jihad and all. We should be given education and then we should be able to decide on our own whether we want a particular path or not.

Nonetheless, in comparison to LSE, those belonging to SSD seemed more motivated to offer their services for jihad. Regardless of their keenness to engage in jihad, the respondents emphasized the importance of practising prudence and caution in accepting a call for jihad in current political times.

If a jihadi organization or network starts working towards a good objective along with the government, I will certainly join them.

One of the major components of Islam is jihad and as Muslims we must acquire complete information about this. If I am approached by a jihadi organization, I will certainly take time to investigate the truth and falsity of their agenda – and then . . . if all is well . . . I will definitely join them. However, according to my understanding, whatever is happening today under the garb of jihad in reality is terrorism.

Jihad is only permissible under two conditions. First, when religion is endangered; and second when atheists take over our lands. My information is that both these conditions exist today and therefore we are under an obligation to participate in jihad.

A man must always see his pocket. If he is poor, he should see his poverty and make efforts to change it. If a jihadi organization approaches him, he should see his pocket . . . and make the decision accordingly.

### *University students and professionals and terrorism*

The group was interesting, and responses ranged from total approval to ambivalence to disapproval of offering one's services for jihad in the current political scenario. Those who supported the notion of jihad believed it was a divine injunction and could not be ignored, but they also insisted

that jihad implying “struggle” was more about defending human rights, and for that they were willing to offer their services.

It is a Divine order: *when you are called for jihad – go for it*. If I am approached by any such organization I will do my research as to what they are doing, how, where and are they for real . . . or fraud. Do they practise the spirit of jihad that is against oppression and injustice or not? Only then, I will make my decision whether to support or not. If the objective is rightly guided, I will certainly join them.

Any organization that contributes in human welfare – I will join them in the name of jihad. A few things are very clear; for example, let’s assume that at the time of the earthquake [2005], if someone had started bothering the affected and we were called to help by fighting those elements, I would have certainly idealized martyrdom and offered my services. For me this is a fight in the way of Allah.

I will listen to the call for jihad – but I will decide on action only after much thought and consideration regarding the authenticity of the organization’s objective.

Other professionals and students were quick to dismiss jihad considering how politicized the notion had become in present times:

Fifty to 60 per cent of jihadi organizations working currently are all fraudulent and criminal. I will never join them.

I will never go for jihad. Also, I have never been contacted by any so-called jihadi organization. In any case, I know one thing for sure – I cannot kill anyone.

Aspiring recruits are questioned about their sect by *jihadi organizations*. This is un-Islamic to begin with. We are all Muslims and this is it. The one who divides [into Shiite/Sunni] is nothing but a fraud. Allah did not tell us to run all these networks representing different sects, targeting one another on the basis of different imams.

It is important to note that quite a few participants in all three sample groups vehemently rejected the maligned version of jihad and martyrdom and insisted upon the need to inspire people through Islam, rather than terrorize them. A number of viewpoints have been mentioned already and a few additional comments received during focus group sessions are provided below. The selected quotes deliver the message of and willingness for peace and restraint:

All this is not jihad. When true believers do something for Allah, they become prosperous and see progress due to mercy and bounty sent from heavens

above. Obviously we are not enjoying anything like this. In fact, we are becoming worse with each passing day. This shows that God is not happy, but he is so angry that he has stopped giving us mercy. Now we are murdering one another. Had this been pure jihad, the results would have been good. The young men should realize that it *was not* jihad and *is not* jihad . . . and because we have *misused* such a sacred institution of Islam, jihad, God will never forgive us . . . and we will remain like this till the Day of Judgment, murdering one another for money and media attention.

A martyr is not the one who commits a suicide bombing but the ones who die on the road. They are the ones who leave their houses to make a *halal* living . . . despite all the fear and terror that surrounds them. They are working hard and then they die in a bomb blast. They are *shahid* [martyrs], and not the suicide bomber who murdered them.

Muslims need to remind themselves of how Islam started expanding. Islam has never influenced societies in a sloganeering fashion. The Prophet did not do this and the saints coming over and settling in India did not do this. Yet we see that people started converting to Islam. Why? Whatever is happening today is not about Islam. The strategy is entirely incorrect. If Muslims have to see a revival of their legacy, they must see the Mughal architecture . . . the Taj Mahal, not a cartoon<sup>3</sup> like Osama Bin Laden. *We [Muslims] build for love . . . we don't destroy.*

## Conclusion

Competition and lack of contentment generate inferiority and superiority complexes in individuals. Men and women are becoming what I understand as “Islamish”, i.e. somewhat and apparently having qualities and characteristic of Islam – mainly to make an identity statement. On the basis of what I explained in Chapter 2, *Islamish* can neither be Islamists, as they are often without political agendas, nor “Islamic”, which implies reaching perfection in faith.

The samples attributed terrorism to poverty (to which I return later), and to the “street culture” within which boys grow up unshielded. They postulated that men became militants and terrorists mainly because they become adults in an “unrestrained” fashion. Members of households and wider society do not believe in keeping surveillance over them. In other words, the participants indicated a gender-based disadvantage that increases men’s vulnerability to wicked influences in the street.

Conventional wisdom dictated poverty to be a source of militancy and terrorism. Analysts, for example Sageman (2009), who made an extensive study on causes of terrorism and had CIA influence that gave him access to documentation and respondents of primary importance, argue that the

assumed poverty-terrorism connection is not real. Even if there is no direct link between poverty and terrorism, my sample leads me to figure that one of the most prominent themes of causes of terrorism remains poverty, and that quite often it appears as a subtext in other factors that cause terrorism. Therefore my comprehension of the issue is that among the LSE and SSD sentiments of inadequacy and a sense of resentment among “have nots” towards “haves” are generated by poverty. There has to be coherence between expectations from the masculine gender and the socio-economic context within which masculinities are produced. However, in the case of Pakistan, socio-economic expectations of men are high and the socio-economic context of the country is deplorable. Issues of self-actualization and feelings of inadequacy often caused by unemployment affect masculine practices in a negative manner. Among Muslim communities, where men are supposed to be *qawwam* of their household, poverty jeopardizes masculine honour at a subjective and somewhat communal level. The affected man makes attempts to regain his position in the appropriate gender order through acts of violence that are culturally perceived as masculine “norms”. Despite this, the poor cannot be “profiled” as would-be terrorists – even the current data and documented voices of people do not build a case for such a supposition as a discernible symbiotic relationship between poverty and terrorism.

Violence that is dualistic and can be internal or external becomes a socially accepted masculine practice, in the name of the primordial cultural umbrella of “honour”. According to the sample, despite women being stakeholders, it is precisely through masculine undertakings that communal and familial honour is brought to life. In conflict situations, masculine honour is called upon and men wait for opportunities that will allow them to become either a living hero or a martyr. Despite much criticism of the Pakistani government, in the end one of the most reliable forms of jihad for the research sample turned out to be either nationalistic or one aimed at countering human rights violations of the wider Muslim populations. Currently, US drone strikes in Waziristan and the collateral damage they continue to cause are being contextualized by local masculinities within an “honour-revenge” equation. Feelings of chaos and resentment among affected men are rising, and future trajectories of masculine practices among them may include regressive radicalism, militancy and suicide bombings. Political violence may be practised in the name of preserving or regaining subjective and collective (clan) “honour”.

Although the sample repeatedly mentioned the issue of lack of political awareness among the masses, in my assessment all three subgroups – LSE, SSD and USP – had a fair level of awareness regarding the political crisis in Pakistan and the complex nature of jihadi networks and operations conducted by intelligence agencies.

## Notes

1. Qasab is a terrorist of Pakistani origin and was involved in the 2008 Mumbai attacks. He has a poor family background and comes from an underdeveloped region, Faridkot. Making a reference to him in this quote is not an ideal example. The reference to acquiring guns and becoming famous for “hero style” (though not “heroic”) is nonetheless relevant to the discussion.
2. Faisal Shahzad is a Times Square car-bomb suspect who pleaded guilty to charges of mass destruction. Calling himself a Muslim soldier, the defiant Pakistan-born US citizen left a sinister warning that unless the United States leaves Muslim lands alone, “we will be attacking US”. See Hays (2010).
3. Often used as a satirical expression in Pakistan – not to be read as real humour.



## 9

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## Muslim masculinities, militant-jihadist Islamism and suicide terrorism

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Gender as a concept must be incorporated fully in strategies of deradicalization and counterterrorism. The study seeks to establish a critical link between gender and militant-jihadist Islamism and/or terrorism, and for this purpose uses scientific methods of research such as the multivariate model of logistical regression to determine the impact significance of certain independent variables on dependent variables. The quantitative data were generated after drawing upon qualitative data analysis and producing a concise list of sublevel hypothetical assumptions and variables. As a result two models are postulated: determinants of militant-jihadist Islamism; and determinants of suicide bombings (as an example of terrorism). Both models were formed by combined analysis of the three sample categories – LSE, SSD and USP – whose qualitative assessment is provided in Chapters 7, 8 and 10.

Following standards of scientific research, the theoretical framework (focusing on gender performativity and practices of multiple masculinities) guided empirical data collection. Out of 118 Pakistani Muslim men who participated in focus group discussions, 95 also agreed to fill out survey questionnaires. To facilitate meaningful focus group sessions, survey questionnaires were introduced in the group beforehand. This strategy allowed the research team to go through some preliminary statistics and observe data trends for subsequently introducing useful probes during discussions. Simultaneously, it helped participants to relax and organize their thoughts at a subjective level prior to contributing in a group.

Data were systematically entered in SPSS and trends were noted, mainly entailing frequencies and distributions for each sample group. Also, distribution lists were produced for a combined group that consisted of the three sample categories.<sup>1</sup> Qualitative and quantitative data indicate significant and substantive connections between gender (constructions, expectations, roles and so on) and militant-jihadist Islamism and/or terrorism.

The rationale, objective and conceptual framework of this research made it critical to understand connections between certain behavioural patterns: for example, the impact of idealizing stereotypically masculine characteristics (such as bravery) on a man's tendency to offer himself for jihad; identifying "economic pressures" as a stress factor and taking to battle to prove one's worth; having an active interest in weapons as usual masculine curiosity while coopting oneself in militant-jihadist Islamism and suicide terrorism; or considering jihad as a thrilling opportunity that can be used to gain (or retrieve) honour, and accordingly deciding to volunteer for it.

Not only this, the data provided here run through certain aspects of conventional wisdom held over decades and used to explain the growth of militant-jihadist Islamism: for example, practising and conscientious Muslims are extremists; those attending mosques are predisposed to religious extremism as they are in contact with mullahs or are misguided by their religious leadership and affiliations; poverty and unemployment are a direct cause of terrorism and/or militant-jihadist Islamism; Pakistanis consider Bin Laden a jihadi (in the true spirit of Islam), and those idealizing him have a greater tendency to involve themselves in militant-jihadist Islamism; and Muslim men commit suicide attacks to get virgins (*houris*) in paradise. Against the backdrop of these assumptions, findings of regression analyses will be presented before moving on to some interesting distribution patterns that emerge from separate sample categories: LSE, SSD and USP.

## Logistical regression models illustrating critical linkages between Muslim masculinities, militant-jihadist Islamism and suicide bombings

Model A frames several sub-hypotheses centring on a primary indicative trend.

H1: Masculine constructions predispose men to jihad. (This nexus between masculinity and jihad is guided by gender theory and qualitative data analysis, and is disaggregated through further assumptions.)

H1a: Men idealizing stereotypically “masculine” traits (e.g. bravery) will offer themselves for jihad.

H1b: Routine keenness on weapons will incline men towards jihad.

H1c/i: Participation in jihad is due to an interest in meeting virgins in paradise.

H1c/ii: Men articulating manhood as a thrill-seeking, adventure-based identity will offer themselves for jihad.

In continuation, two other hypotheses are explored in Model A.

H2: Those having religious affiliations or a certain connection with religious set-ups will offer themselves for jihad.

H3: Men who consider Bin Laden a jihadi will offer themselves for jihad, and those who consider him a terrorist will not offer themselves for jihad.

One of the underlying assumptions was that men who have more responsibilities at home – wife/wives or children – would avoid offering themselves for battle. The findings show that the presence of women in the household has no impact on men’s decision in this regard. A literature review led to an assumption that women felt ashamed of men who did not participate in war and thereby reinforced men’s participation in jihad. However, the qualitative data showed quite opposite trends, with most men arguing that women expected men not to indulge in any form of fighting, and wanted their men to stay home. The regression analysis, however, shows that women do not have a direct, or at least a “significant”, impact on men’s decision to participate in jihad.

The results in Table 9.1 show an unmistakable linkage between masculine constructions and tendency to offer oneself for jihad, and prove the hypothesis as true. Age and marital status have positive impacts on jihadi tendencies but are statistically insignificant. It was seen that more single than married men and those aged 18–30 were likely to offer themselves for jihad. A qualitative finding of men opting for jihad due to low income level or unemployment could not be confirmed in regression analysis. Some respondents had insisted that poverty led to militant-jihadist Islamism. Parallel to this, a large number had insisted that poor people or those with low incomes were leading difficult but not criminal lives, and also those with high incomes and education were becoming militants and even terrorists. I conclude that, if not directly, low income levels and unemployment indirectly lead men to jihadism (also see the conclusion of Chapter 8).

Table 9.1 Model A: Determinants of militant-jihadist Islamism

Explanatory variables	B coefficient	S.E.
Hypothesis H1: Masculine constructions predispose men to jihad		
H1a: Men idealizing stereotypically “masculine” traits (bravery) will offer themselves for jihad		
(Constant)	1.21	1.61
Age	0.25	0.28
Marital status	0.42	0.36
Education	0.10	0.20
Income level	-0.04	0.12
No. of females in household	-0.22	0.33
Characteristics of manhood (brave and responsible)	0.16	0.16
Socio-economic pressures	0.00	0.15
Hypothesis H1: Masculine constructions predispose men to jihad		
H1b: Routine keenness on weapons will incline men towards jihad		
(Constant)	1.97	1.67
Age	0.32	0.29
Marital status	0.38	0.36
Education	-0.05	0.20
Income level	-0.08	0.12
No. of females in household	-0.16	0.33
Extent of knowledge about weapons	0.27	0.18
Hypothesis H1: Masculine constructions predispose men to jihad		
H1c/i: Participation in jihad is due to an interest in meeting virgins ( <i>houris</i> ) in paradise		
H1c/ii: Men articulating manhood as a thrill-seeking, adventure-based identity will offer themselves for jihad		
(Constant)	1.30	1.53
Age	0.23	0.28
Marital status	0.41	0.36
Education	-0.10	0.20
Income level	-0.07	0.13
No. of females in household	-0.18	0.33
Jihad is central to “manhood”	0.19	0.18
Unfamiliarity about <i>houris</i> , i.e. virgins in paradise	0.46	0.51
Hypothesis H2: Those having religious affiliations or a certain connection with religious set-ups will offer themselves for jihad		
(Constant)	5.29	2.94
Age	0.13	0.37
Marital status	0.65	0.50
Education	-0.04	0.23
Income level	-0.09	0.17
No. of females in household	-0.61	0.47
Frequency of visits to local mosque	0.76**	0.34

Table 9.1 (cont.)

Explanatory variables	B coefficient	S.E.
Affiliation with formal/informal religious body	-1.84***	0.96
Consider that joining a discussion on jihad and Islam is too political	2.59*	0.95
Considering joining a discussion on jihad and Islam	-1.09	1.16
Decided upon joining a discussion on jihad and Islam	-0.17	1.14
Hypothesis H3: Men who consider Bin Laden a jihadi will offer themselves for jihad, and those who consider him a terrorist will not offer themselves for jihad		
(Constant)	1.45	2.06
Age	0.13	0.30
Marital status	0.46	0.37
Education	-0.15	0.22
Income level	0.11	0.13
No. of females in household	0.09	0.34
Bin Laden and Al Qaeda are terrorists	1.02	0.97
Bin Laden and Al Qaeda are jihadis following the true spirit of Islam	-0.04	0.18

*Notes:*

Dependent variable: Do you believe that you can offer yourself for jihad (Y)?

\*Significance at 1 per cent level

\*\*Significance at 5 per cent level

\*\*\*Significance at 10 per cent level

*Source:* Field survey data.

The proposition that “routine keenness on weapons will incline men towards jihad” is validated by the findings. In Pakistani culture, customary norms and institutional arrangements such as Pukhtunwali, as explained in Chapter 6, serve as a Petri dish for developing close associations between weapons and men, thus these results should not be surprising. Also, the United States did not clear weapons left over from the Afghan-Soviet war that ended with the withdrawal of Soviet troops in 1989. Later these weapons became readily available to wider male populations in Pakistan and Afghanistan, at cheap/smuggled rates.

Another important finding is that knowledge of and/or interest in *houris* does not have any direct impact on a man’s decision to get involved in jihad. The men who showed unfamiliarity with the notion of *houris* and those who knew about them were equally interested in jihad. This finding not only reveals the fallaciousness of casually promoting the idea that men opt for jihad so they can gain *houris*, but also is opposed to the qualitative data and certain comments highlighting the significance of making men idealize *houris* so they could be brainwashed and gravitated towards militant-jihadist Islamism successfully.

Most importantly, the findings show that men's official and unofficial affiliations with religious organizations and networks have no direct impact on individual choice of jihad. This is against conventional supposition that religious leaders or organizations misguide ordinary men. The finding is in consonance with the qualitative data that show men being suspicious of jihad offers. Also men are quite critical of the role of religious leaders and do not find them charismatic enough to be followed. The regression analyses show that men's decision to attend jihadi circles, or at least consider attending, has no impact on the final decision of actually participating in jihad. Only those who consider discussion sessions on jihad as political allow this perception to influence their decision on participating in jihad.

Opinion about Bin Laden as a terrorist has little impact on the decision to offer oneself for jihad; similarly, perceiving Bin Laden as a jihadi has absolutely no impact on a man's determination to participate in jihad. This is an interesting finding. Opinion polls in the past have often brought to the fore the Muslim population's fascination with Bin Laden. However, this finding shows that Pakistanis idealize Bin Laden less due to him and more due to anger towards the United States. Generally, Pakistanis do not perceive Bin Laden as a charismatic leader to be followed, even if they count him as somewhat a jihadi. Most respondents dismissed Bin Laden during focus group discussions, and therefore the quantitative analysis substantiates the qualitative data here. Substance misusers viewed Bin Laden as a jihadi and were also willing to offer themselves for jihad. Even though a connection between idealizing Bin Laden and offering oneself for jihad seems to appear here, this is not quite the case (see Chapter 10 for further clarification). Substance misusers have a tendency to offer themselves for jihad to meet their own needs for self-actualization and atonement.

Data were also generated for studying determinants of suicide bombings – a very topical form of militant-jihadist Islamism, often subsumed under terrorism. Model B frames two hypotheses.

H1: Ritualistic religiosity in a man does not give him a penchant for suicide bombing.

H2: Men who consider Bin Laden a terrorist will not approve of suicide bombings, and those who consider him a jihadi will approve of suicide bombings.

The findings show that age and education have no impact on one's approval of suicide bombings. Importantly, the first hypothesis is proven correct. Ritualistic religiosity such as praying five times a day appears to have no influence on one's approval of suicide bombings. In religious/

Table 9.2 Model B: Determinants of suicide bombings

Explanatory variables	B coefficient	S.E.
Hypothesis H1: Ritualistic religiosity in a man does not give him a penchant for suicide bombing		
(Constant)	2.68	1.56
Age	-0.51***	0.29
Marital status	0.42	0.35
Education	-0.15	0.20
No. of females in household	0.20	0.33
Income level	0.07	0.12
Prayer attendance (5 times a day)	-0.51***	0.27
Hypothesis H2: Men who consider Bin Laden a terrorist will not approve of suicide bombings, and those who consider him a jihadi will approve of suicide bombings		
(Constant)	1.29	1.61
Age	0.35	0.27
Marital status	-0.47	0.34
Education	0.15	0.19
No. of females in household	-0.20	0.32
Income level	0.01	0.12
Bin Laden and Al Qaeda are terrorists	-0.33	0.71
Bin Laden and Al Qaeda are jihadis following the true spirit of Islam	0.63	1.03

*Notes:*

Dependent variable: Suicide bombing is acceptable under certain conditions (Y).

\*\*\*Significance at 10 per cent level

*Source:* Field survey data.

Islamic texts and narratives suicide is considered forbidden, thus the possibility is that practising Muslims do not approve of suicide bombings. Perceiving Bin Laden and Al Qaeda as terrorists has no impact on one's approach towards suicide bombings. Nonetheless, a perception of Bin Laden and Al Qaeda as jihadi is likely to influence people's approach towards suicide bombing, although in the findings this is statistically insignificant (see Table 9.2).

## Group-wise and combined distribution lists

### *Religious sentiments, lack of awareness and militant-jihadist Islamism*

The findings do not confirm the assumption that awareness about religion may be acquired through religious organizations with which one is affli-

ated. For example, of the 32 respondents in the SSD sample, 9.4 per cent had a formal or informal affiliation with a religious body and 90.6 per cent did not. From the 30 who represented LSE, 10 per cent had an affiliation and 90 per cent did not hail from any religious organization or network. Out of the 33 USP group members, only six had an affiliation and 27 did not have any contact with religious bodies. Finally, the combined data for the three sample groups show that only 12.6 per cent have any affiliation with a religious group while 87.6 per cent have acquired an understanding of their faith in an unmediated fashion (at least statistically). If the tendency for jihad among these men is assessed, we find that 66.3 per cent were willing to offer themselves for jihad while 31.6 per cent chose not to, and 2.1 per cent maintained silence. Among the 87.4 per cent of those not affiliated with any religious group, approximately 56 per cent agreed to offer themselves for jihad unconditionally, and 10.5 per cent out of the 12.6 per cent affiliated with religious bodies also agreed. This is a thought-provoking data trend, as it questions a commonly held perception that men opt for jihadist pursuits because they are influenced by madrassahs or other organized religious bodies.

Some analysts maintain that even if this direct link is missing, madrassahs still “merit continual observation as they may contribute both to the demand for terrorism and to the limited supply of militants”. In Pakistan, madrassahs and to an extent public schools promote religious intolerance, jihadism and a gender-discriminatory culture among pupils (Fair, 2007). In my view, flair for jihadism can mature within any schooling system – even Western (inside or outside “the West”). After all, Omar Saeed Sheikh developed “an unhealthy interest in jihad” while he was in Aitchison College, Lahore – one of the most prestigious English-medium educational institutions in Pakistan (Sageman, 2009: 6).

Combined data trends indicate that 31.6 per cent consider jihad an honour and 45.2 per cent perceive it as a challenge or difficult trial, and an opportunity to prove oneself; 22.1 per cent identified a number of other elements, such as to wash away sins, become a martyr, relive history, etc. When these men were questioned as to whether they would like to join a group discussion on jihad and Islam, only 17 per cent noted “of course” (Table 9.3).

Currently, another widely assumed positive correlation is between jihadist tendencies and frequency of religious observance (for example, those Muslims who offer compulsory prayers five times a day will opt for jihadism more than those who skip compulsory prayer). A nationally representative survey of 6,000 Pakistanis conducted in April 2009 revealed that there is no relationship between measures of personal religiosity and the likelihood that respondents express highly sectarian sentiments (Fair, Malhotra and Shapiro, 2010).



Table 9.3 Affiliation with religious bodies and trends in militant Islamism (sample: combined)

Particulars	Formal/informal affiliation with a religious body		
	Yes	No	Total
Would you accept an invitation to join a group of men who want to discuss "jihad and Islam"?			
No, it's too political	3.2	15.8	18.9
Let the mullahs do the mullah thing	3.2	18.9	22.1
I would probably give it a try and see how I feel about the discussions	2.1	24.2	26.3
Of course	2.1	15.8	17.9
Other	1.1	10.5	11.6
Did not answer	1.1	2.1	3.2
Total	12.6	87.4	100.0
Can you offer yourself for jihad?			
Yes	10.5	55.8	66.3
No	1.1	30.5	31.6
Did not answer	1.1	1.1	2.1
Total	12.6	87.4	100.0
Is suicide bombing acceptable in some forms?			
Disagree	4.2	40.0	44.2
Agree	1.1	7.4	8.4
Unsure	3.2	22.1	25.3
Other	2.1	9.5	11.6
Did not answer	2.1	8.4	10.5
Total	12.6	87.4	100.0
Jihad in battlefield is obligatory for men: how do you perceive this?			
An honour	5.3	26.3	31.6
A difficult trial	2.1	30.5	32.6
An opportunity to prove oneself	2.1	10.5	12.6
Other	2.1	20.0	22.1
Did not answer	1.1	0.0	1.1
Total	12.6	87.4	100.0

Findings of this research show that those not offering prayer in the SSD sample were still keen on jihad. Many of them were also unsure as to Islam's stance on suicide bombing, but were intrigued by the practice. Jihad and participation in it are counted as a source of honour and prestige. Also, the sample associated "thrill" and "challenge" with jihad, making it an opportunity that they would consider exploring. Interestingly,

Table 9.4 Attendance at daily prayer (sample: SSD)

Particulars	Attendance at daily prayer			
	Yes	No	Sort of	Total
Would you accept an invitation to join a group of men who want to discuss "jihad and Islam"?				
No, it's too political	9.4	0.0	15.6	25.0
Let the mullahs do the mullah thing	6.3	6.3	6.3	18.8
I would probably give it a try and see how I feel about the discussions	9.4	3.1	9.4	21.9
Of course	15.6	0.0	9.4	25.0
Other	3.1	0.0	6.3	9.4
Total	43.8	9.4	46.9	100.0
Can you offer yourself for jihad?				
Yes	31.3	6.3	31.3	68.8
No	12.5	3.1	15.6	31.3
Total	43.8	9.4	46.9	100.0
Is suicide bombing acceptable in some forms?				
Disagree	18.8	0.0	28.1	46.9
Agree	0.0	0.0	6.3	6.3
Unsure	12.5	6.3	9.4	28.1
Other	6.3	3.1	0.0	9.4
Did not answer	6.3	0.0	3.1	9.4
Total	43.8	9.4	46.9	100.0
Jihad in battlefield is obligatory for men: how do you perceive this?				
An honour	15.6	6.3	15.6	37.5
A difficult trial	18.8	3.1	15.6	37.5
An opportunity to prove oneself	0.0	0.0	9.4	9.4
Other	9.4	0.0	6.3	15.6
Total	43.8	9.4	46.9	100.0

43.8 per cent who prayed regularly flagged caution in attending discussion sessions on jihad and Islam, with only 15.6 per cent approving such group activities. Still, 31.3 per cent looked forward to offering themselves for jihad (Table 9.4).

A dichotomous finding is that jihad was rated relatively low in priority by the (combined) sample in comparison to other religious obligations, such as prayer, fasting, *hajj* and *zakath*. Similar hierarchical referencing of religious obligations in Islamic texts and narratives could have affected the output. For example, prayer, fast and charity are almost always noted in a sequence, even in the Quran. This might

Table 9.5 Most appealing religious duty, obligation or ritual (sample: combined)

Particulars	Most appealing religious duty/obligation/ritual						Total
	Prayer	Fasting	Hajj	Zakath	Jihad	Did not answer	
Would you accept an invitation to join a group of men who want to discuss "jihad and Islam"?							
No, it's too political	9.5	5.3	1.1	2.1	1.1	0.0	18.9
Let the mullahs do the mullah thing	12.6	3.2	2.1	0.0	0.0	4.2	22.1
I would probably give it a try and see how I feel about the discussions	14.7	6.3	2.1	1.1	2.1	0.0	26.3
Of course	11.6	1.1	1.1	3.2	0.0	1.1	17.9
Other	7.4	0.0	0.0	2.1	0.0	2.1	11.6
Did not answer	2.1	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.2
Total	57.9	16.8	6.3	8.4	3.2	7.4	100.0
Can you offer yourself for jihad?							
Yes	37.9	11.6	4.2	6.3	2.1	4.2	66.3
No	17.9	5.3	2.1	2.1	1.1	3.2	31.6
Did not answer	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.1
Total	57.9	16.8	6.3	8.4	3.2	7.4	100.0
Is suicide bombing acceptable in some forms?							
Disagree	30.5	7.4	2.1	2.1	0.0	2.1	44.2
Agree	4.2	1.1	2.1	0.0	1.1	0.0	8.4
Unsure	13.7	6.3	1.1	1.1	1.1	2.1	25.3
Other	3.2	2.1	0.0	3.2	1.1	2.1	11.6
Did not answer	6.3	0.0	1.1	2.1	0.0	1.1	10.5
Total	57.9	16.8	6.3	8.4	3.2	7.4	100.0
Jihad in battlefield is obligatory for men: how do you perceive this?							
An honour	14.7	8.4	2.1	3.2	1.1	2.1	31.6
A difficult trial	21.1	5.3	2.1	1.1	1.1	2.1	32.6
An opportunity to prove oneself	7.4	1.1	2.1	0.0	0.0	2.1	12.6
Other	13.7	2.1	0.0	4.2	1.1	1.1	22.1
Did not answer	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1
Total	57.9	16.8	6.3	8.4	3.2	7.4	100.0

have affected the thought processes of the sample (particularly as, generically, rote learning is common in Pakistan). The details are provided in Table 9.5.

*How far does poverty create militant-jihadist Islamism and/or terrorism?*

The link with poverty can be tested: for example, in the LSE group, by analysing how many among them identified low income and family-related issues as pressures. Guided by qualitative data, we can study distribution trends for the suppositional link between endured pressures and the probability of participating in jihad for economic reasons. Quantitative data show that these pressures were identified by 60 per cent, and 40 per cent provided an affirmative answer as to offering themselves for jihad. Almost 47 per cent of the sample believed that jihad was an opportunity in a number of ways: a source for gaining honour (37 per cent), a challenge to try oneself out (24 per cent) and an avenue by which one's worth can be proven (20 per cent). Only 13.3 per cent of the total sample noted "other", mentioning jihad as a source to make God happy or to gain heaven. None of the respondents from the LSE group identified money or financial gain as a benefit of jihad. It is important to mention that among SSD 69 per cent would join jihad and 84.4 per cent perceive jihad as a source for gaining honour or an opportunity to participate in something challenging. Still, 25 per cent of this sample considered it as too political to join a discussion on jihad and Islam, and 19 per cent thought it was something that the mullahs do and therefore the subject should be left to them. However, in another question asking the sample to identify socio-economic benefits of jihad, surprisingly 9.4 per cent from the same group noted war booty and 12.5 per cent counted additional political advantages as "benefits" they could hope to acquire by participating in jihad (Table 9.6).

So the question arises again: does poverty have any clear links with terrorism? Through his research Sageman shows that terrorists are less

Table 9.6 Expectations from jihad (sample: SSD)

What socio-economic or political "benefits" can you hope to achieve by offering yourself for jihad?							
Partic- ulars	For the sake of Islam (%)	Heaven (%)	<i>Maal-e- Ghanimat</i> (war booty) (%)	Political (%)	Other (%)	Did not answer (%)	Total (%)
Can you offer yourself for jihad?							
Yes	9.4	3.1	9.4	0.0	15.6	31.3	68.8
No	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	0.0	18.8	31.3
Total	9.4	3.1	9.4	12.5	15.6	50.0	100.0

likely to be poor and undereducated than other individuals in the societies from which they are drawn (discussed in Fair, 2007: 117). As discussed in Chapter 8, I emphasize that poverty, even if lacking a direct connection with terrorism, appears as a subtext to other causes of terrorism. The data provided here show that although all poor people are not terrorists, some terrorists can be poor. Men also consider financial gains in conflict situations valuable.

### *Manhood and militant-jihadist Islamism and/or terrorism*

The issue of extending support to family and taking responsibility for them also featured in quantitative data, with 40 per cent from the USP noting it as a major pressure on the masculine gender. Among the LSE, 43.3 per cent identified low income and 16.6 per cent noted supporting family and undertaking multiple socio-economic responsibilities as worrying. Similarly, 31.3 per cent from among the SSD considered family responsibilities cumbersome and 28.1 per cent identified joblessness as their primary pressure.

It is interesting to see that although men identified economic pressures as the major ones, when asked to choose their masculine attributes, being “brave” rather than “responsible” was counted as important, with the LSE and USP groups noting it at 30.0 per cent and 30.3 per cent respectively. The SSD, on the other hand, saw “hard-working” as the most important attribute, with 34.4 per cent of the sample noting it. Being “responsible” was ranked third by the LSE, with 13.3 per cent selecting it. It ranked second in the SSD, with 21.9 per cent choosing it. The trait was not prioritized in the USP at all.

The probability of participation in jihad increases with masculine attributes. Men do see a connection between masculinity and jihad: it provides them with an ample field of expression for authenticating the masculine gender. Although not the singular cause behind jihadism, gender as a contributing factor in militant-jihadist Islamism and/or terrorism has to be recognized. For example, our combined data revealed that 31.6 per cent idealized “bravery” as the primary characteristic of manhood. It must be noted that from this total 22.1 per cent were willing to offer themselves for jihad, and out of these men 21.1 per cent would base their decision on perceiving jihad as an honour, a difficult trial and an opportunity to prove their worth in wider society. The remainder do it for the sake of Allah (Table 9.7).

The combined data show that from the sample, at least 60 per cent identified low income, pressure of family support and additional responsibilities as their sore areas. Of these, 41.0 per cent are willing to join jihad and 47.4 per cent perceived jihad as an honour, difficult trial and an

Table 9.7 Three primary characteristics of being a “man” (sample: combined)

Particulars	Three primary characteristics of being a man					Total
	Brave	Honest	Respon- sible	Other	Did not answer	
Would you accept an invitation to join a group of men who want to discuss “jihad and Islam”?						
No, it’s too political	5.3	4.2	2.1	6.3	1.1	18.9
Let the mullahs do the mullah thing	7.4	5.3	3.2	3.2	3.2	22.1
I would probably give it a try and see how I feel about the discussions	6.3	3.2	6.3	7.4	3.2	26.3
Of course	6.3	2.1	3.2	4.2	2.1	17.9
Other	5.3	2.1	1.1	3.2	0.0	11.6
Did not answer	1.1	0.0	1.1	1.1	0.0	3.2
Total	31.6	16.8	16.8	25.3	9.5	100.0
Can you offer yourself for jihad?						
Yes	22.1	10.5	12.6	16.8	4.2	66.3
No	9.5	6.3	3.2	7.4	5.3	31.6
Did not answer	0.0	0.0	1.1	1.1	0.0	2.1
Total	31.6	16.8	16.8	25.3	9.5	100.0
Is suicide bombing acceptable in some forms?						
Disagree	13.7	8.4	6.3	13.7	2.1	44.2
Agree	1.1	0.0	4.2	3.2	0.0	8.4
Unsure	9.5	4.2	4.2	4.2	3.2	25.3
Other	3.2	3.2	1.1	2.1	2.1	11.6
Did not answer	4.2	1.1	1.1	2.1	2.1	10.5
Total	31.6	16.8	16.8	25.3	9.5	100.0
Jihad in battlefield is obligatory for men: how do you perceive this?						
An honour	7.4	7.4	7.4	7.4	2.1	31.6
A difficult trial	11.6	5.3	4.2	9.5	2.1	32.6
An opportunity to prove oneself	2.1	2.1	3.2	1.1	4.2	12.6
Other	10.5	2.1	2.1	6.3	1.1	22.1
Did not answer	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	1.1
Total	31.6	16.8	16.8	25.3	9.5	100.0

opportunity to prove oneself – leaving only 12.7 per cent who would join jihad for other reasons, which may include using it as an opportunity to accumulate finances or escape family responsibilities (Table 9.8).

Men know about street culture and guns. The combined data show that 72.6 per cent are aware of market names of weapons and mentioned

Table 9.8 Gender expectations and trends in militant Islamism (sample: combined)

Particulars	What pressures accompany being born a man?					Total
	Low income	Support family	Multiple responsibilities	Other	Did not answer	
Would you accept an invitation to join a group of men who want to discuss "jihad and Islam"?						
No, it's too political	8.4	5.3	0.0	3.2	2.1	18.9
Let the mullahs do the mullah thing	7.4	2.1	0.0	7.4	5.3	22.1
I would probably give it a try and see how I feel about the discussions	2.1	6.3	7.4	5.3	5.3	26.3
Of course	5.3	5.3	2.1	1.1	4.2	17.9
Other	4.2	3.2	0.0	2.1	2.1	11.6
Did not answer	0.0	0.0	1.1	2.1	0.0	3.2
Total	27.4	22.1	10.5	21.1	18.9	100.0
Can you offer yourself for jihad?						
Yes	16.8	15.8	8.4	13.7	11.6	66.3
No	10.5	6.3	2.1	5.3	7.4	31.6
Did not answer	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.1	0.0	2.1
Total	27.4	22.1	10.5	21.1	18.9	100.0
Is suicide bombing acceptable in some forms?						
Disagree	12.6	13.7	6.3	6.3	5.3	44.2
Agree	1.1	1.1	3.2	2.1	1.1	8.4
Unsure	8.4	4.2	1.1	6.3	5.3	25.3
Other	2.1	3.2	0.0	2.1	4.2	11.6
Did not answer	3.2	0.0	0.0	4.2	3.2	10.5
Total	27.4	22.1	10.5	21.1	18.9	100.0
Jihad in battlefield is obligatory for men: how do you perceive this?						
An honour	6.3	6.3	4.2	6.3	8.4	31.6
A difficult trial	10.5	7.4	2.1	6.3	6.3	32.6
An opportunity to prove oneself	5.3	3.2	2.1	2.1	0.0	12.6
Other	5.3	5.3	2.1	5.3	4.2	22.1
Did not answer	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	1.1
Total	27.4	22.1	10.5	21.1	18.9	100.0

these in the questionnaires. Both SSD and LSE groups showed awareness reaching approximately 77 per cent each, while the USP scored 66.7 per cent. The disparity might be due to the acquired tendency of the educated class to disassociate from something that might be criminal in suggestion.

Almost 50 per cent of men from the sample had hit another individual. However, they avoided going into specifics: for example, 66.3 per cent did not reveal their age at the time when they hit someone for the first time. Almost 30 per cent indulged in violence when aged 15–25. Approximately 4.2 per cent had raised their hands on another for the first time after passing 25. In Pakistan this is ordinarily the age around which people get married and also begin to stand more economic pressures. Surprisingly, 78 per cent preferred not to answer the question “Do you have a record of hitting men or women, or both?” During focus group sessions men from these samples said that violence was widespread, and at least 6.3 per cent agreed to having hit others *severely* more than once (Table 9.9).

Qualitatively, the respondents had emphasized that men went for jihad to expel inner aggression and frustration. The quantitative data revealed that 77 per cent of men would consider jihad for reasons that were not religious in nature. Of the 22.1 per cent of the sample who chose the category “other” in the questionnaire, a few may still opt for jihad for religious reasons. It is worth mentioning that of this 77 per cent only 5.3 per cent are recorded to be violent, for example by hitting someone. A total of 6.3 per cent are recorded as violent in hitting someone more than twice. From these violent men, not a single individual agreed to or approved of the idea of suicide bombings. The questionnaire assessed men’s “urge” for violence, for example by thinking and finally hitting someone in the household and/or in public. From 95 men, 64.2 per cent declared themselves as entirely non-aggressive in answering this question and only 25.3 per cent agreed to having aggressive thoughts and urges. A total of 41.1 per cent of those who claimed to be non-aggressive would still consider offering themselves for jihad. Additionally, 20 per cent of those having urges of aggression will also consider joining in a jihadist mission (Table 9.10).

Although the issue of *houris* briefly emerged during focus group sessions, it did not feature very prominently. Since *houris* are generally considered to be a source of fulfilment of a man’s sexual desires, this may be why only a few men mentioned them. Thus it is important to look at a few quantitative trends. A combined data analysis reveals that 13.7 per cent avoided sharing their understanding of *houris* and 30.0 per cent showed their lack of knowledge on the subject, while 39.0 per cent noted *houris* as heavenly females and 18.0 per cent as a heavenly species –



Table 9.9 Masculine constructions, violence and trends in militant Islamism (sample: combined)

Particulars	Do you have a record of hitting men or women, or both?				Total
	Once	Twice	More than twice	Did not answer	
Would you accept an invitation to join a group of men who want to discuss "jihad and Islam"?					
No, it's too political	1.1	1.1	0.0	16.8	18.9
Let the mullahs do the mullah thing	1.1	0.0	1.1	20.0	22.1
I would probably give it a try and see how I feel about the discussions	3.2	0.0	2.1	21.1	26.3
Of course	2.1	3.2	1.1	11.6	17.9
Other	2.1	1.1	2.1	6.3	11.6
Did not answer	1.1	0.0	0.0	2.1	3.2
Total	10.5	5.3	6.3	77.9	100.0
Can you offer yourself for jihad?					
Yes	8.4	4.2	4.2	49.5	66.3
No	1.1	0.0	2.1	28.4	31.6
Did not answer	1.1	1.1	0.0	0.0	2.1
Total	10.5	5.3	6.3	77.9	100.0
Is suicide bombing acceptable in some forms?					
Disagree	4.2	2.1	3.2	34.7	44.2
Agree	2.1	0.0	0.0	6.3	8.4
Unsure	2.1	1.1	0.0	22.1	25.3
Other	1.1	1.1	3.2	6.3	11.6
Did not answer	1.1	1.1	0.0	8.4	10.5
Total	10.5	5.3	6.3	77.9	100.0
Jihad in battlefield is obligatory for men: how do you perceive this?					
An honour	2.1	2.1	3.2	24.2	31.6
A difficult trial	3.2	0.0	2.1	27.4	32.6
An opportunity to prove oneself	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.6	12.6
Other	4.2	3.2	1.1	13.7	22.1
Did not answer	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1
Total	10.5	5.3	6.3	77.9	100.0

different from humans. Of the 39.0 per cent who identified *houris* as females, 32.0 per cent were willing to offer themselves for jihad, but only 4.2 per cent were of the opinion that suicide bombing may become permissible under certain circumstances (Table 9.11).

Table 9.10 Domestic and public violence and trends in militant Islamism (sample: combined)

Particulars	Frequency of urge to hit people in household and public						Other	Total
	Never	Few times a week	Few times a month	I've hit someone already, and I am glad	I've hit someone and I am embarrassed to acknowledge it here	I've hit someone and I am embarrassed to acknowledge it here		
<b>Can you offer yourself for jihad?</b>								
Yes	41.1	5.3	1.1	3.2	10.5	5.3	66.3	
No	22.1	0.0	3.2	0.0	2.1	4.2	31.6	
Did not answer	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	2.1	
Total	64.2	5.3	4.2	3.2	12.6	10.5	100.0	
<b>Would you accept an invitation to join a group of men who want to discuss "jihad and Islam"?</b>								
No, it's too political	14.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	3.2	18.9	
Let the mullahs do the mullah thing	14.7	0.0	3.2	0.0	2.1	2.1	22.1	
I would probably give it a try and see how I feel about the discussions	12.6	2.1	1.1	2.1	5.3	3.2	26.3	
Of course	9.5	3.2	0.0	1.1	3.2	1.1	17.9	
Other	11.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.6	
Did not answer	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	1.1	3.2	
Total	64.2	5.3	4.2	3.2	12.6	10.5	100.0	
<b>Is suicide bombing acceptable in some forms?</b>								
Disagree	29.5	1.1	2.1	1.1	6.3	4.2	44.2	
Agree	4.2	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	0.0	8.4	
Unsure	17.9	2.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	2.1	25.3	
Other	5.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.2	2.1	11.6	
Did not answer	7.4	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.1	10.5	
Total	64.2	5.3	4.2	3.2	12.6	10.5	100.0	

Table 9.10 (cont.)

Particulars	Frequency of urge to hit people in household and public					Other	Total
	Never	Few times a week	Few times a month	I've hit someone already, and I am glad	I've hit someone and I am embarrassed to acknowledge it here		
Jihad in battlefield is obligatory for men: how do you perceive this?							
An honour	22.1	4.2	0.0	0.0	3.2	2.1	31.6
A difficult trial	18.9	0.0	2.1	1.1	6.3	4.2	32.6
An opportunity to prove oneself	7.4	1.1	2.1	0.0	0.0	2.1	12.6
Other	15.8	0.0	0.0	2.1	3.2	1.1	22.1
Did not answer	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	1.1
Total	64.2	5.3	4.2	3.2	12.6	10.5	100.0

Table 9.11 Interest in *houris* and trends in militant Islamism (sample: combined)

Particulars	Knowledge about <i>houris</i> : a <i>houris</i> is ... ?				Total
	Heavenly female	Heavenly species but not like a human female	I have never thought about this question before; I don't know	Did not answer	
Would you accept an invitation to join a group of men who want to discuss "jihad and Islam"?					
No, it's too political	7.4	2.1	6.3	3.2	18.9
Let the mullahs do the mullah thing	6.3	8.4	6.3	1.1	22.1
I would probably give it a try and see how I feel about the discussions	11.6	3.2	6.3	5.3	26.3
Of course	6.3	2.1	8.4	1.1	17.9
Other	7.4	1.1	2.1	1.1	11.6
Did not answer	0.0	1.1	0.0	2.1	3.2
Total	38.9	17.9	29.5	13.7	100.0
Can you offer yourself for jihad?					
Yes	31.6	6.3	17.9	10.5	66.3
No	7.4	10.5	11.6	2.1	31.6
Did not answer	0.0	1.1	0.0	1.1	2.1
Total	38.9	17.9	29.5	13.7	100.0
Is suicide bombing acceptable in some forms?					
Disagree	14.7	4.2	20.0	5.3	44.2
Agree	4.2	2.1	2.1	0.0	8.4
Unsure	13.7	7.4	2.1	2.1	25.3
Other	3.2	3.2	4.2	1.1	11.6
Did not answer	3.2	1.1	1.1	5.3	10.5
Total	38.9	17.9	29.5	13.7	100.0
Jihad in battlefield is obligatory for men: how do you perceive this?					
An honour	11.6	4.2	10.5	5.3	31.6
A difficult trial	13.7	6.3	9.5	3.2	32.6
An opportunity to prove oneself	5.3	3.2	2.1	2.1	12.6
Other	8.4	4.2	7.4	2.1	22.1
Did not answer	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	1.1
Total	38.9	17.9	29.5	13.7	100.0

It is often believed and has been recorded in mainstream literature that men adopt warrior roles due to women's reinforcement of the idea. Women mock at men, particularly those who refuse to participate in jihad despite being called. The combined quantitative data reveal that only 10.5 per cent will reconsider their decision not to join jihad if mocked by a woman. Almost 33 per cent were of the opinion that women never mock at men, as they are happier to have them at home rather than at war; 23.2 per cent noted that they would ask women to stay quiet and take decisions on their own.

*Bin Laden, militant-jihadist Islamism and suicide terrorism*

Most interestingly, those regular in their obligatory prayers were better aware of Islam's approach to suicide bombing and only 1.1 per cent agreed to the idea in some forms, in comparison to 7.4 per cent of those who either were irregular or did not offer prayer (Table 9.12).

Qualitative data suggest that unemployment leads to suicide bombing. However, distribution lists show shocking trends of approval of suicide bombings among professional and educated men, almost double compared to tendencies observed in the LSE and SSD (Table 9.13). If one looks at the data, a very striking 12.1 per cent of USP (working and studying in the federal territory and not in some far-flung area) consider that suicide bombing can be acceptable in certain forms. In qualitative data the issue of revenge and drone attacks surfaced repeatedly, particularly in datasets of the educated sample who queried any (constructive) alternative trajectories that could become available for the affected men. The group were not hopeful regarding suicide terrorism leaving us any time soon.

The USP sample labelled Bin Laden as unimpressive, and uncharismatic enough to deserve outright dismissal. Combined analysis shows that only 8.4 per cent thought Osama was a jihadi working in the true spirit of Islam: 46.3 per cent called him a CIA creation, and 6.3 per cent considered that he was imaginary and unreal. Out of 95 respondents, 18 per cent called him a terrorist in clear terms and 10.5 per cent avoided the question altogether. More detailed patterns across the three groups are shown in Tables 9.14–9.17.

Table 9.12 Attendance at daily prayer and trends in militant Islamism (sample: combined)

Particulars	Attendance at daily prayer			
	Yes	No	Sort of	Total
Would you accept an invitation to join a group of men who want to discuss "jihad and Islam"?				
No, it's too political	5.3	1.1	12.6	18.9
Let the mullahs do the mullah thing	9.5	6.3	6.3	22.1
I would probably give it a try and see how I feel about the discussions	11.6	7.4	7.4	26.3
Of course	9.5	1.1	7.4	17.9
Other	3.2	1.1	7.4	11.6
Did not answer	1.1	2.1	0.0	3.2
Total	40.0	18.9	41.1	100.0
Can you offer yourself for jihad?				
Yes	26.3	12.6	27.4	66.3
No	11.6	6.3	13.7	31.6
Did not answer	2.1	0.0	0.0	2.1
Total	40.0	18.9	41.1	100.0
Is suicide bombing acceptable in some forms?				
Disagree	16.8	4.2	23.2	44.2
Agree	1.1	4.2	3.2	8.4
Unsure	12.6	4.2	8.4	25.3
Other	3.2	4.2	4.2	11.6
Did not answer	6.3	2.1	2.1	10.5
Total	40.0	18.9	41.1	100.0
Jihad in battlefield is obligatory for men: how do you perceive this?				
An honour	11.6	7.4	12.6	31.6
A difficult trial	12.6	5.3	14.7	32.6
An opportunity to prove oneself	4.2	3.2	5.3	12.6
Other	10.5	3.2	8.4	22.1
Did not answer	1.1	0.0	0.0	1.1
Total	40.0	18.9	41.1	100.0

Table 9.13 Approval of suicide terrorism

Particulars	Suicide bombings can be acceptable in some forms (%)				
	Disagree	Agree	Unsure	Other	Did not answer
LSE	46.7	6.7	26.7	6.7	13.3
SS	46.9	6.3	28.1	9.4	9.4
USP	39.4	12.1	21.2	18.2	9.1

Table 9.14 Opinion about Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda (sample: LSE)

Particulars	Opinion about Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda						Total
	Terrorists	Jihadis following true spirit of Islam	Fabricated, non-existent	CIA creation	Other	Did not answer	
Would you accept an invitation to join a group of men who want to discuss "jihad and Islam"?							
No, it's too political	10.0	0.0	0.0	6.7	0.0	0.0	16.7
Let the mullahs do the mullah thing	3.3	0.0	0.0	16.7	0.0	16.7	36.7
I would probably give it a try and see how I feel about the discussions	0.0	3.3	3.3	10.0	0.0	3.3	20.0
Of course	6.7	0.0	0.0	3.3	0.0	0.0	10.0
Other	3.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	13.3
Did not answer	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	0.0	3.3
Total	23.3	3.3	3.3	36.7	13.3	20.0	100.0
Can you offer yourself for jihad?							
Yes	16.7	3.3	3.3	10.0	10.0	16.7	60.0
No	6.7	0.0	0.0	26.7	0.0	3.3	36.7
Did not answer	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	0.0	3.3
Total	23.3	3.3	3.3	36.7	13.3	20.0	100.0
Is suicide bombing acceptable in some forms?							
Disagree	6.7	0.0	3.3	20.0	3.3	13.3	46.7
Agree	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	3.3	6.7
Unsure	10.0	3.3	0.0	10.0	0.0	3.3	26.7
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.7	0.0	6.7
Did not answer	6.7	0.0	0.0	6.7	0.0	0.0	13.3
Total	23.3	3.3	3.3	36.7	13.3	20.0	100.0

Jihad in battlefield is obligatory for men: how do you perceive this?

An honour	6.7	0.0	0.0	10.0	6.7	13.3	36.7
A difficult trial	6.7	0.0	3.3	10.0	0.0	3.3	23.3
An opportunity to prove oneself	6.7	3.3	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	20.0
Other	3.3	0.0	0.0	6.7	6.7	3.3	20.0
Total	23.3	3.3	3.3	36.7	13.3	20.0	100.0



Table 9.15 Opinion about Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda (sample: SSD)

Particulars	Opinion about Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda						Total
	Terrorists	Jihadis following true spirit of Islam	Fabricated, non-existent	CIA creation	Other	Did not answer	
Would you accept an invitation to join a group of men who want to discuss "jihad and Islam"?							
No, it's too political	3.1	3.1	0.0	12.5	6.3	0.0	25.0
Let the mullahs do the mullah thing	3.1	0.0	3.1	12.5	0.0	0.0	18.8
I would probably give it a try and see how I feel about the discussions	3.1	3.1	0.0	12.5	0.0	3.1	21.9
Of course	0.0	6.3	6.3	6.3	0.0	6.3	25.0
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.4	0.0	0.0	9.4
Total	9.4	12.5	9.4	53.1	6.3	9.4	100.0
Can you offer yourself for jihad?							
Yes	6.3	12.5	6.3	34.4	0.0	9.4	68.8
No	3.1	0.0	3.1	18.8	6.3	0.0	31.3
Total	9.4	12.5	9.4	53.1	6.3	9.4	100.0
Is suicide bombing acceptable in some forms?							
Disagree	6.3	9.4	6.3	18.8	3.1	3.1	46.9
Agree	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.3	0.0	0.0	6.3
Unsure	0.0	0.0	3.1	18.8	3.1	3.1	28.1
Other	3.1	0.0	0.0	6.3	0.0	0.0	9.4
Did not answer	0.0	3.1	0.0	3.1	0.0	3.1	9.4
Total	9.4	12.5	9.4	53.1	6.3	9.4	100.0

Jihad in battlefield is obligatory for men: how do you perceive this?

An honour	3.1	3.1	0.0	21.9	0.0	9.4	37.5
A difficult trial	6.3	6.3	3.1	15.6	6.3	0.0	37.5
An opportunity to prove oneself	0.0	3.1	3.1	3.1	0.0	0.0	9.4
Other	0.0	0.0	3.1	12.5	0.0	0.0	15.6
Total	9.4	12.5	9.4	53.1	6.3	9.4	100.0

Table 9.16 Opinion about Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda (sample: USP)

Particulars	Opinion about Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda						Total
	Terrorists	Jihadis following true spirit of Islam	Fabricated, non-existent	CIA creation	Other	Did not answer	
Would you accept an invitation to join a group of men who want to discuss "jihad and Islam"?							
No, it's too political	6.1	0.0	0.0	6.1	3.0	0.0	15.2
Let the mullahs do the mullah thing	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.1	0.0	0.0	12.1
I would probably give it a try and see how I feel about the discussions	6.1	6.1	3.0	18.2	3.0	0.0	36.4
Of course	6.1	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	0.0	18.2
Other	3.0	0.0	0.0	6.1	3.0	0.0	12.1
Did not answer	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	0.0	3.0	6.1
Total	21.2	9.1	6.1	48.5	12.1	3.0	100.0
Can you offer yourself for jihad?							
Yes	12.1	9.1	0.0	39.4	9.1	0.0	69.7
No	9.1	0.0	6.1	9.1	3.0	0.0	27.3
Did not answer	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	3.0
Total	21.2	9.1	6.1	48.5	12.1	3.0	100.0
Is suicide bombing acceptable in some forms?							
Disagree	15.2	0.0	3.0	21.2	0.0	0.0	39.4
Agree	3.0	6.1	0.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	12.1
Unsure	3.0	0.0	0.0	9.1	9.1	0.0	21.2
Other	0.0	3.0	3.0	9.1	3.0	0.0	18.2
Did not answer	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.1	0.0	3.0	9.1
Total	21.2	9.1	6.1	48.5	12.1	3.0	100.0

Jihad in battlefield is obligatory for men: how do you perceive this?

An honour	3.0	0.0	0.0	15.2	3.0	0.0	21.2
A difficult trial	12.1	6.1	0.0	12.1	6.1	0.0	36.4
An opportunity to prove oneself	0.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	9.1
Other	6.1	0.0	3.0	18.2	3.0	0.0	30.3
Did not answer	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	3.0
Total	21.2	9.1	6.1	48.5	12.1	3.0	100.0

Table 9.17 Opinion about Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda (sample: combined)

Particulars	Opinion about Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda						Total
	Terrorists	Jihadis following true spirit of Islam	Fabricated, non-existent	CIA creation	Other	Did not answer	
Would you accept an invitation to join a group of men who want to discuss "jihad and Islam"?							
No, it's too political	6.3	1.1	0.0	8.4	3.2	0.0	18.9
Let the mullahs do the mullah thing	2.1	0.0	1.1	13.7	0.0	5.3	22.1
I would probably give it a try and see how I feel about the discussions	3.2	4.2	2.1	13.7	1.1	2.1	26.3
Of course	4.2	3.2	3.2	4.2	1.1	2.1	17.9
Other	2.1	0.0	0.0	5.3	4.2	0.0	11.6
Did not answer	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	1.1	1.1	3.2
Total	17.9	8.4	6.3	46.3	10.5	10.5	100.0
Can you offer yourself for jihad?							
Yes	11.6	8.4	3.2	28.4	6.3	8.4	66.3
No	6.3	0.0	3.2	17.9	3.2	1.1	31.6
Did not answer	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	1.1	2.1
Total	17.9	8.4	6.3	46.3	10.5	10.5	100.0
Is suicide bombing acceptable in some forms?							
Disagree	9.5	3.2	4.2	20.0	2.1	5.3	44.2
Agree	1.1	2.1	0.0	3.2	1.1	1.1	8.4
Unsure	4.2	1.1	1.1	12.6	4.2	2.1	25.3
Other	1.1	1.1	1.1	5.3	3.2	0.0	11.6
Did not answer	2.1	1.1	0.0	5.3	0.0	2.1	10.5
Total	17.9	8.4	6.3	46.3	10.5	10.5	100.0

Jihad in battlefield is obligatory for men: how do you perceive this?

An honour	4.2	1.1	0.0	15.8	3.2	7.4	31.6
A difficult trial	8.4	4.2	2.1	12.6	4.2	1.1	32.6
An opportunity to prove oneself	2.1	3.2	2.1	5.3	0.0	0.0	12.6
Other	3.2	0.0	2.1	12.6	3.2	1.1	22.1
Did not answer	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	1.1
Total	17.9	8.4	6.3	46.3	10.5	10.5	100.0

## Conclusion

The chapter enumerated a number of findings in very clear terms that require no repetition. Although the qualitative data showed a critical nexus between gender, militant-jihadist Islamism and terrorism, a statistical study into the impact of several explanatory variables upon the key assumptions of this research illuminates this nexus even further. In addition, the chapter has provided insightful disaggregated quantitative data regarding the extent to which Bin Laden and Al Qaeda have an impact on Pakistani men's approach towards jihad and suicide bombings.<sup>2</sup> Most importantly, the findings of this chapter (along with the qualitative data presented in previous chapters) facilitate us in diversifying the use of Butler's notion of *gender performativity* in politics, and particularly in illuminating socio-cultural and political dynamics of Muslim masculinities in the age of terror. Butler's theory is transposable from Western to Eastern contexts, and certainly from gender into the realms of global politics.

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## Notes

1. I am aware that researchers have conducted relatively broader though limited quantitative analysis of issues regarding public opinion in Pakistan on an array of policy concerns revolving around Al Qaeda and militant Islamism/Islamist militancy. For example, Neilson conducted interviews with 907 people across 19 cities over two weeks in 2007 (Shapiro and Fair, 2009/2010). Also the Pew Research Center and the International Republican Institute have conducted a number of quantitative surveys and documented Pakistan's public opinion about militancy. However, none has engaged with Muslim *masculinities* and political processes guided by them.
2. The data were collected when Bin Laden was still alive. Considering that upon Bin Laden's killing, Pakistanis were more upset about the violation of their territorial sovereignty by US Navy Seals than by the killing itself, the data provided here remain dependable.

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## 10

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# Islamism, terrorism and “the vulnerable” in society

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This chapter focuses on two vulnerable groups of Pakistani society: substance misusers and Muslim women. It highlights the extent to which politics of the age of terror is influencing the thought processes and trajectories of these two marginalized sections of society. The purpose here is to draw the attention of counterterrorism strategists towards those groups of individuals whose susceptibility to militant-jihadist Islamism and terrorism has remained either unrecognized or undervalued. The chapter makes a strong case for expanding the reach of counterterrorism strategies to special groups in Muslim societies. By raising this issue, I hope to solicit peaceful and sustainable interventions, and not typecasting of substance misusers and Muslim women in the name of counterterrorism.

### Substance misusers

The data are based on six male substance misusers undergoing therapy in a facility in Islamabad. The information was collected through survey questionnaires and by conducting a single focus group session. The sample labelled SSD included six substance misusers. Upon data collection it was realized that the subject deserved a separate section and needed special treatment: first, the connection between drugs and militant Islamism and terrorism among substance misusers has never before featured in mainstream scholarship; second, the issue is a matter of policy urgency and requires immediate interventions from concerned social and political



policy-makers in Pakistan; and finally substance misusers were the group of men who were most underprivileged and stigmatized, and perceived in wider Pakistani society as “criminals”. To give exclusive treatment to the subject, the data were not included in other chapters that elucidate SSD issues. A sample size of six men is considered too small for conducting any worthwhile quantitative analysis. Nonetheless, indicative trends among substance misusers were noted in a thorough and exclusive reading of the six questionnaires before incorporating their data in SPSS for aggregate quantitative analysis.

The primary objective here is to highlight the vulnerability of substance misusers after 9/11. The collection and dissemination of this type of data in connection with the growth of militant Islamism and Taliban/Al Qaeda brand terrorism are critical in attempting to make policy-makers realize the counterfactual of not reaching out to the victims of substance misuse in Muslim societies. Such microcosmic presentations of sociological processes need to be fully recognized and assimilated in global policy deliberations, and those dealing with counterterrorism and counterinsurgency politics must not make the mistake of perceiving these as *softer issues*.

Substance misusers are readily available fodder for militant Islamists and terrorists, as they are mostly perceived as a burden and their families and communities consider them conveniently dispensable. Already existing on the fringes of society, if these groups continue to be condemned and rejected by larger society they may take the road to hell in search of paradise. There is an urgent need to introduce interventions that not only target the affected social groups but also raise awareness in the wider community so that after their release from medical centres, the process of rehabilitation continues for them in both households and communities.

The following is a detailed primary account addressing issues of substance misuse and masculinity among Pakistani men. The group were asked questions regarding what led them to become substance dependent – what type of social expectations pressured them into taking this path. They were also asked to share their opinion about the current political turmoil in Pakistan, with special relevance to suicide bombings and so-called jihadi organizations.

Considering that the target group were vulnerable and undergoing rehabilitation, “probing” was kept to a minimum to prevent any irresponsible thoughts from arising in the group. The data largely consist of spontaneous replies of the sample. All participants expressed their opinion and the session was more mechanical than the other focus groups moderated for this study. I did not need to urge anyone to contribute, as all participants took turns to speak in a most disciplined manner. There was no cross-talk, a problem researchers commonly experience while moder-

ating focus group sessions. Vulnerable groups such as this are an asset and need special attention from policy-makers.

### *Self-image*

Smoking is a prerogative of men in Pakistan, and women who smoke are disproportionately judged as having “loose morals”. Interestingly, smoking among women is not rejected on the basis of its unhealthy impact on gynaecological well-being, but because of gender-based expectations of women. Social norms are such that men reserve cigarettes for themselves and there is no way that women can make a claim on tobacco without appearing odd. On the other hand, smoking among men is not only widely accepted as a social norm but is also symbolic of masculinity. Coincidentally, these gender-based expectations end up producing a safer and healthier environment for women while making men susceptible to all forms of negative influences that come with smoking, including substance misuse. The sample shared similar views regarding how peer pressure and a desire to appear “macho” or “lulling oneself into oblivion” to escape routine worries instigate smoking and addictive habits among men.

I was impressed by the personality of one of the men in my neighbourhood. He was very “manly” and very impressive – sort of dominating. My friends told me that he takes drugs and that is why he is so high, so “macho”. I thought that intoxication improves our personality, makes us more fearless . . . brave. Of course I was not aware of how the body becomes dependent [on drugs] – and then eventually collapses.

I am almost 30. I was a smoker but had never taken drugs. One of my friends was a drug dependent. He used it as a stress reliever. I was just intrigued, inquisitive . . . wanted to taste and discover what was it like to be intoxicated. I enjoyed being on a high. I felt “macho” [flexes his muscles] and started using it more often. Now I am greatly upset due to my condition and so are my parents. This thing has finished me as a man [alluding to impotence].

I come from a respectable family, but I had bad friends who used drugs. My parents always stopped me . . . and I never listened to them. Now I am ashamed of what I have done and I am trying to restore honour and respect of my family and that’s why I am in the rehab. I will *inshallah* recover and leave.

I often used to smoke with my friends. One of my friends used to smoke hash. That day I remember being very tense and I felt like as if a number of dynamites were exploding in my head and I thought that I would die. I started pressing my friend to give me some hash. He tried to stop, but I started fighting with him and finally he gave in. I felt good . . . it sort of satisfied me.

I used to work with a mechanic. He used to smoke cannabis and would always say that it is a great tension reliever. Whenever I felt tired or tense over any small matter – I started taking drugs and that’s what made me an addict.

I am married. Upon marriage I failed to take responsibilities of my wife. I totally collapsed and found refuge in drugs. No thinking, no responsibilities. I felt at ease.

This association between drug dependence and low self-esteem indicates that individuals with a deficient self-image may be at risk of becoming drug addicts. Self-image therapy for certain kinds of drug-dependent patients is often recommended (Gossop, 1976).

### *Expectations*

The sample men, aged 19, 21, 25, 31, 32 and 38 years, were quite expressive in mentioning details about their subjective understanding of masculinity and the qualities that must preferably be possessed by any ideal Muslim man. They considered men “masculine” who were strong-willed, confident, adamant and determined, trustworthy, vigorous and tenacious, unrelentingly courageous, authoritative and disciplinary in their routine living. The group also outlined another set of attributes that made men appear successful in life: being breadwinners (successful *qawwam* for his women), highly educated, religious, talented/skilled and impressive in communication. Drug dependents have a hard time in meeting social expectations directed towards the masculine gender. This is illustrated in the following quotes.

Man must be able to display his talents. He should be able to earn a living and show that he is capable of handling everything.

Man must be able to earn a living. Most importantly, he should be able to marry, keep his wife happy and have a large family with many children. He should keep his family in a lavish style – take all responsibilities for wife and children.

In comparison to women, men are expected to produce “more”, and . . . “rapid” results. While we are students, our parents start pressurizing us for jobs and money. A woman’s life is also tough – but expectations are always from men. When a woman fails to do something, it is the men in her life who are blamed; for example, “her brothers must have stopped her”, or “her husband is not to be trusted”. In my case, as I am drug dependent, I created so many problems for my wife. She had to do *everything* [alluding to economic aspects] . . . also I had not remained *qabil* [worthy] enough for her [drops head].

In order to escape these gender-based expectations, men may start substance misuse. Later, intoxicants generate intense feelings of inferiority and low self-esteem that exacerbate the situation further. Serum testosterone concentration is decreased in heroin addicts without consistent abnormalities in other hormones. It is suggested that reduced sexual function in male addicts may be partially due to this decrease and may cause anxiety among patients (Azizi et al., 1973). During discussions with the authorities at the rehabilitation centre, it was discovered that substance misusers constantly worried about their condition of psychological and physical impotence. Also, after rehabilitation a few substance misuse victims develop high anxiety levels about their ability to perform sexually, or lack of it. These types of self-image issues directly cause an upheaval in practice and performance of masculinity. Premature ejaculation is a surprisingly common complaint when subjects are drug free. Heroin and methadone both increase frequency of impotence and retardation, though the effects of heroin are substantially more dramatic (Mintz et al., 1974). Drug addiction gives rise to severe *performativity* issues in male substance misusers as they become unable to execute their basic biological functions, putting into jeopardy their higher status in the gender order. I argue that such men may look for alternative avenues for *gender performativity* in order to maintain their status. One must be forewarned that these alternatives may consist of militant-jihadist Islamism and terrorism.

### *Manifestations of masculine frustrations*

The group repeatedly identified the social as well as the religious pressure to be maintainers and providers to their families. In completing the survey questionnaire, four out of six respondents mentioned “failure to earn a living” as their major embarrassment. All six self-identified the stigma of being labelled a “druggie” as a major source of “personal anxiety”, “shame”, “worthlessness”, “defilement” and “frustration”. Two identified their inability to make major decisions in life as a source of personal embarrassment as men, and four of the six respondents felt embarrassed over acknowledging the influence of women in their life. In elaborating, they said that they found women interesting and intelligent and were inclined to listen to their advice. However, this also made these four men “feel *unmanly*” and they guarded their fascination with women as a skeleton in the cupboard – not to be shared in larger groups. All six men believed that women were more “moral” and “clean/pure” in comparison to men. They even had their own assessment as to why this was the case:

Women do not succumb to pressures in negative ways. This is because women are really protected. They mostly stay inside the house where they can go about

their day-to-day routine. Everyone knows . . . who are they meeting . . . as most of the time their friends come over to the house . . . unlike men who meet their friends in the street and gather negative influences from them. Many times men start visiting prostitutes or become thieves and mobile snatchers or dacoits – only to relieve their frustrations. People are so poor and they want quick money. For example, the one who gambles inspires poor men to gamble and become rich. At times they gamble and lose money, following which they become violent. Then . . . there are men who do all this just for fun. It makes them feel adventurous. I think women are fortunate in this sense as they stay away from the negative influences of society and lead very clean lives.

### *Making of a terrorist/suicide bomber*

The respondents emphasized the link between poverty and terrorism. This is very much in line with conventional wisdom (also see Chapters 8 and 9). One important factor that needs to be highlighted here is the clear understanding even among substance misusers regarding inequitable distribution of wealth and how it makes poor people vulnerable and exploitable. At times political perspectives are applied to evaluate or understand poverty. Likewise, rather than taking it as their fate, the sample undergoing rehabilitation blamed the unjust social structures and functions of Pakistani society. The following quotes reveal such a mindset.

Our country is poor and there are a number of crocodiles that are eating money of poor people. There is a lot of black money. Poor people are becoming poorer and that is why suicide bombings are taking place.

Economic needs are so pressurizing . . . and the system so very corrupt that people can even sell their own children. Later those children can be used for anything, even suicide bombings.

A group member shared his own vulnerabilities in these words:

Unmarried and jobless men usually take money from parents. Later they use the same money to buy drugs. Initially . . . when parents do not realize the purpose of taking money . . . they continue giving money. However, once they discover the deeds of their son, then they stop giving money. At this time the situation is difficult to handle for a drug dependent; his body is helpless . . . he has to take drugs . . . but he does not have the money to buy drugs. Such men can be used by anyone involved in illegal activities, be these terrorist activities or kidnapping, theft etc.

In addition, the respondents accused the Musharraf administration and the current elected government of playing “dirty politics” with the

people of Pakistan. The governments were accused of being unfair, unjust and authoritarian. The men insisted that all current socio-political and economic ills in Pakistan could be attributed to foreign elements (CIA) and Pakistani official authorities that were conniving with each other to destabilize Pakistan, they suspected. Two group members expressed this in rather gritty words:

“Influentials” are behind these bomb blasts. At times there is so much security . . . and yet the blast occurs. This is only possible if influentials and decision-makers are themselves involved in dirty politics for larger political gains. How do you think they [terrorists] entered the GHQ [military general headquarters in Rawalpindi]? Suicide bombers can be “bought” with a cheap payment. Influentials know how to exploit people’s weak points. A “druggie” can detonate a bomb for little price. The root cause of all bad decisions and wrong actions is money.

I think suicide bombing is all about bad politics. It was Musharraf and the way he mishandled the Red Mosque issue, and I think when people come to believe that some cruelty or some injustice has been done to them, then they take revenge. I think this is what is happening in Pakistan now. Everyone feels that some “wrong” has been done to us . . . and we have to take revenge.

Five of the six men were familiar with three different types of weapons used in war. Responding in the questionnaire to “Would you accept an invitation to join a group of men who want to discuss ‘jihad and Islam?’”, five checked answers in the affirmative while one decided upon ticking “No, it is too political.” All six noted jihad as “a difficult trial/an opportunity to prove oneself” for which they were willing to volunteer. Two respondents noted further that jihad was only that which was for the defence of Pakistan and included activities of Pakistan’s army as jihad. Five respondents indicated being familiar with the idea of “heavenly virgins”, while one claimed he was hearing the word *houris* for the very first time. Irrespective of their knowledge about *houris*, all men were willing to offer themselves for jihad. Five men trusted Osama Bin Laden as “a jihadi following the true spirit of Islam”, while one labelled him as “fabricated and non-existent” – an individual whose name is being used to create havoc in the world. All six condemned US policies and labelled them as particularly “hegemonic” and “anti-Muslim”. The sample insisted that Americans, being non-Muslim, could never favour Muslims. On being asked whether they had the same perception about Japan, another non-Muslim state, the group reckoned Japan was “different”, “friendly” and a “technologically advanced” country that could be trusted.

In answering questionnaires, none of the respondents approved of suicide bombings. However, during focus group discussion they openly

shared their opinions as to why suicide bombings were becoming so rampant, and how under certain circumstances these bombings were considered acceptable.

There are many who sacrifice their lives *for a cause* . . . in Afghanistan or elsewhere. They are on a *proper* mission [implying a greater cause]. Then, there are terrorists. In my opinion . . . terrorists . . . by employing the same tactics [suicide bombings] have given a bad name to all suicide bombers.

A few group members reasoned that suicide bombings could be acceptable as a remedy to poverty and for fulfilling one's primary responsibilities as a man. One such quote is given below. Another quote, harsher in language, was removed from the dataset at the request of the respondent.

Suicide bombing is not a major issue. We all know that we have to die one day . . . so what is this big fuss about? No one is here forever. Many men think that they can die through suicide bombing and their family can receive huge sums of money. The main duty of a man is to give money to his family. So, I don't see any problem [in suicide bombing]. People are so selfish that no one will give him [a needy individual] money. He has to make his own arrangement. He can give money [to his family] by dying . . . and think that [if not me] at least my family would live happily.

The group members believed that suicide bombings provided ordinary men with an avenue to do something extraordinary and had a huge appeal for the masculine gender. The logistical regression analysis based on the responses of the total sample of 95 men, presented in Chapter 9, corroborates with the quotes presented below.

Youth or young age is about keeping your life on your palm – not being afraid. When men start getting a price for this, they sell themselves. There are “buyers” and there are “sellers”.

Suicide bombing or taking one's own life is not an easy thing. Pakistani men like to indulge in such difficult projects both because they do not have a choice . . . and also in order to seek pleasure. [Probe: what type of pleasure?] Pleasure is about the feeling of “being all in all”; it is about “being important . . . instantly”, about “gaining fame”, “popularity” . . . it is about “*becoming* someone”.

Another respondent added:

[Pleasure is] about “boosting one's ego” – but not only one's personal ego like my brother is saying . . . it is about doing something for the security of your

own nation. This has to be an issue of ego. This is genuine: if the honour of your country or nation is at stake, then it is the men who have to do this.

Men want to be at the centre of everything, all activity. If the activity or the main show is run by the Taliban ... all men want to join in simply because they would be at the centre of everything. This would give them a social standing. They would know about all the activities in their region. People will ask them ... okay ... tell us where are they making the ammunition ... which road should I take ... which road must I avoid ... you know better than me etc. And the men giving information will become very “important” among people in the larger community. Of course, everyone wants [to gain] attention.

Men do opt for militant Islamism as a thrill-seeking opportunity and an attempt to gain honour. Policy-makers must take these quotes as a serious warning. The sample consisted of men undergoing rehabilitation in the developed city of Islamabad. The vulnerability of unattended substance misusers in peripheral areas of Pakistan is yet to be researched.

Interestingly, although the group respected Bin Laden as an Islamic (not Islamist) jihadi, the six men were willing to offer themselves for jihad without giving much consideration to Bin Laden’s calls for jihad. Put differently, their decision to play a role through jihad(ism) is independent of Bin Laden, despite his revered status among substance misusers. In fact, it is altogether another set of reasons that may lead substance misusers towards the path of militant-jihadist Islamism and terrorism. These reasons, in order of the sample’s indicated priority, are given below.

- Expiation of past sins (i.e. drugs/alcohol consumption) and ensuring paradise.
- Regaining lost social and religious prestige by becoming a warrior, martyr or survivor.
- Regaining control of one’s life; taking major decisions to prove self-worth and personal character.

The reasons seem to concur with those shared by other men – but it is the personal experiences and social context of substance misusers that make them far more susceptible to influences emerging from the terrorist underworld, currently so active in Pakistan. Substance misusers suffer from low self-esteem and live with feelings of guilt *vis-à-vis* both their families and God. Islam forbids all forms of intoxication, and rehabilitation staff as a cathartic process often remind these Muslim substance misusers of their religious responsibilities to renounce drugs in future. Substance misusers consider jihad as a possible route for regaining all that they have lost in terms of individual and social standing while experimenting with drugs. These comments must be taken seriously in order to devise strategies to pre-empt the possibility of substance misusers becoming fodder for terrorist campaigns. In the case of the Taliban, the



significance of the fact that the terrorist movement is funded by drug money cannot be overemphasized.

### Impact of post-9/11 politics on ordinary young Pakistani women

Militant-jihadist Islamism has become a critical element in contemporary socio-political contexts. Muslim women's political agency is being increasingly coopted towards militant-jihadist Islamism and terrorism. Having a compromised social status, Pakistani women do not own or define Islamist ambitions that are mostly determined by men. Terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda, the Taliban and their like are actively manipulating ordinary Pakistani men, who in turn influence women.

Muslim women's political agency is being increasingly misappropriated and directed along a trajectory of confrontational and regressive Islamism. A case in point is the July 2007 siege of Jamia Hafsa and the Red Mosque complex in Islamabad, where in the name of "jihad" hundreds of *burqa*-clad women indulged in "vigilantism", imposing righteousness over ordinary citizens while indulging in kidnaps and street violence. The seminary had connections with the Taliban, and women followed their leader Umm Hasan, who took orders from her husband and brother-in-law, known as "the Ghazi Brothers". After ignoring months of agitational politics, the Musharraf administration authorized military action that left hundreds of students injured or dead (Aslam, 2010).

Jamia Hafsa gave women education and activism opportunities – something not offered in conservative societies. Education was not limited to religion (ironically, while Jamia women considered themselves as modern, they were perceived as conservatives by outsiders). Regardless, the ending of the Jamia women undermines the value of what was provided to them at the seminary.

#### *Political agency of Muslim women in the age of terror*

The issue of "misappropriation" of Muslim women's political agency by patriarchal and criminal/terrorist elements is under-researched in existing scholarship. A group of Muslim feminists, and even Western feminists in the post-9/11 world, have continued to argue in favour of a recognized place for women Islamists (militant or non-militant) as *agents* who through their activism are able to have access to public domains.<sup>1</sup> Western feminists have observed restraint in critiquing women Islamists and their agendas. Some Western feminists consider the US-led war on terror to be a masculine war waged by hegemonic masculinity against marginal-

ized native masculinity of Afghanistan, Iraq and KP province (Pakistan). They argue that Muslim women stereotypes as victims of violence are aimed at providing some artificial moral grounds for waging wars on Muslim countries. Staying focused on their governments, Western feminists have overlooked the complex dynamics of Muslim women’s militant Islamism (ibid.).

Eide (2008) goes to the extent of arguing: “the guerilla [insurgent] war I like to imagine sometimes ironically and sometime seriously as particularly feminine”. As I have previously reasoned elsewhere (Aslam, 2010), I find this understanding of women’s agency problematic as it instantly legitimizes Muslim women’s involvement in confrontational Islamism, no matter under whose directives (be it militant-jihadist Islamists or terrorists), by portraying it as a victory for women’s rights activists. I maintain that women can employ their agentic potential peacefully in order to gain a similar end. Under Taliban directives women students of Jamia Hafsa employed vigilantism to harass “other” local women into submission, and claimed their deeds to be for preserving “the Muslim way of life”. I insist that ideally within development discourse, regardless of gender a cogent *agency* must achieve its aims without tactics of political violence and bloodshed. After 9/11, while operating within patriarchal dictates, Pakistani women are drifting towards the latter.

### *Islamic scholars and Pakistani women’s militant Islamism*

The information included here is based on interviews with Islamic scholars and academics from Pakistan. These scholars argued that the Jamia Hafsa movement and Islam could not be juxtaposed, as the former was a result of unscrupulous politics played through use of religious symbolism. The following quotes illustrate their opinions.

Jamia Hafsa is part of our national politics; something that we are playing along with the global big powers. People are made to garb themselves in Islam and through this, a number of wrong deeds are committed in the name of Islam and jihad.<sup>2</sup>

Regarding Jamia Hafsa there is no independent inquiry report and assessing it . . . is very difficult. As per Islamic law, when some Muslims see an immoral or illegal act, they must stop it. However, there are stages that need to be exhausted. First stage is to condemn something in heart, second is to vocalize, and third or final stage is to stop by hand. However, there are two preconditions that need to be exhausted for such an action. Ordinary people are not eligible to do so . . . only a ruler is allowed . . . and those who are *capable* to do so. Shariah guides us as to who is or is not capable. In case of Jamia Hafsa, the state apparatus used the third option but really very, very brutally – and this is not

acceptable. Even those who thought that Jamia Hafsa was wrong because obviously they had not fulfilled any preconditions either . . . thought that the state apparatus's actions were equally wrong.<sup>3</sup>

During interviews with Islamic scholars, three views, summarized below, repeatedly surfaced on the issue of Muslim women's participation in jihad.<sup>4</sup>

- Combat jihad is obligatory only on men. Within Islam, warfare is strictly a male domain and women are “exempted” from the “burden” of fighting as well as from participating in any other such activity that may entail direct harm to their body. Shariah recognizes that women's primary biological role is “reproduction”, whose foundational role in sustenance of any community cannot be overestimated. Therefore, Shariah emphasizes not treating women as “expendable” under any circumstances. In conflict situations, women and children must be shifted to a sanctuary rather than a combat zone.
- Women are not “required” to participate in combat jihad. However, in a case of mass uprising against aggression or anarchy or for the sake of self-defence, it is “permissible” for women to *offer* their services. Unlike men, women are under no divine obligation to participate and therefore cannot be held accountable for refusing to contribute.
- According to scholars, a group of women approached Prophet Muhammad and sought permission to participate in combat operations. The Prophet “did not” grant this permission. Therefore, it is treated as clear evidence that Islam does not allow women to participate in combat operations. Nonetheless, historical evidence of women in supporting roles, such as nurses or using weapons in self-defence, is available.

Classical literature on jihad makes a nominal reference to women, who are quintessentially considered to be unfit for combat. During the Palestinian *intifida* women started emerging on the fringes. Initially, Hamas insisted women militants must be accompanied by male chaperones, or at least have their permission to participate in combat operations. However, soon it became acceptable to allow women to offer their services in their own individual capacities, i.e. as “Palestinians”. Gender identities were pushed beneath the rhetoric of nationalist agendas. As the Israeli occupation intensified, this new meaning to women's involvement was popularized further. Clerics legitimized women's militant Islamism. During the 1990s women gained prominence in spheres of militant and jihadist Islamism. In 2001 the High Islamic Council of Saudi Arabia openly urged women to opt for jihad against Israel and become martyrs (Ness, 2008). Traditionally jihad had been treated as *fard-i-kifayah* and was considered obligatory only for a certain age bracket of adult men. Clerics soon declared jihad as *fard-i-ayn* – contemplating the Muslim predicament as in-

volving “total war” (Cunningham, 2008: 85). Historical precedents and Quranic references were used out of context, and over the past few years politically inspired clerics remained busy establishing a rationale that justified women’s participation in combat jihad. Through the principle of *fard-i-ayn*, not only women in Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq and KP province/Pakistan but also Muslim women around the globe have been allowed to play a role in militant-jihadist Islamism. In fact, such a standpoint has authorized total social mobilization in support of Islamism – even that of children. Jamia Hafsa was an undeclared but clearly recognizable part of the global jihadist movement, discussed in Chapter 1. Ness (2008) provides a three-stage formula through which militancy among women is legitimized in both secular and religious contexts. This *modus operandi* is aimed at pre-empting social disapproval over women’s role as militants. The stages are *rationalize*, *historicize* and *glorify* (the woman). The need for militant action is contextualized within historical and/or religious frameworks and women militants are publicized as moral heroines with the help of relevant symbolism.

*Muslim women’s “new vulnerabilities”, patriarchy and the global jihadist movement*

Muslim women’s “new vulnerabilities” are about how their political *agency* has been coopted to play a role in confrontational Islamism involving militant means. It is also about how women are expected to move beyond certain gender-based behaviours, and serve the *unusualness* of circumstances by doing more than their gender roles may allow. A peculiar type of war psychology in Afghanistan promotes women going into a “sacrificial mode” and facing the hardships of war in an extraordinary, masculinized, “heroic” manner (Aslam, 2010).

Reification of women’s presence in militant Islamism takes place at the interface of the religion of Islam, patriarchal culture and, more importantly, the transnational global jihadist movement. Women do not participate in jihad on their own terms and conditions, and I maintain that the axiom “women/female jihadists” is misleading. The idea of militant Islamism is presented to women under the guise of gender equality. Other than Khomeini, who called women “warriors of Islam”, Hamas leader Al-Rantisi is known to have remarked that he saw no reason why suicide attacks must be “monopolized” by men. Likewise, Abdul Rashid Ghazi insisted that his actions only aimed at ensuring women’s participation in the larger political domain of Pakistan (*ibid.*).

Butler’s notion of gender *performativity* is one of the central theoretical ideas used in this book. If Muslim men are likely to participate in jihad as an act of *gender performativity*, how does one explain gender

performativity as a reason behind women's militant behaviour when within Muslim contexts it is *purdah*/domestication that is socially prescribed for them? If gender performativity may partially explain militant Islamism among Muslim men, can it explain the same among Muslim women? Obviously, militancy is not a repetitive or stylized performance of one's gender role for women. So what explains it? How can it become acceptable to a society whose gender norms this behaviour breaches (*ibid.*)? First and foremost it must be recognized that in the public domain, women aim to calibrate their actions *vis-à-vis* standard masculine practices. An everyday example is women surrendering pinks and reds and wearing blacks and greys to look "as professional as men". Gender dynamics allocate superiority to masculine practices and inferiority to feminine preferences. Consequently, women always try to be "as good as men", and never "as good as themselves". Also, the criteria against which women's performances are scaled undoubtedly remain masculine. Therefore, regardless of the gender of the militant jihadist, the notion of gender performativity remains valid. It is the masculine ideal that women seek to achieve by indulging in militant Islamism or becoming suicide bombers.

A woman militant operates within culturally accepted gender norms, and by doing so remains good enough for her family, society and Islamist networks (or terrorist movements, depending on the men she is associated with in real life). She maintains the impression of being modest, chaste and a purveyor of family honour in her personal life. The most prominent religious symbol of the Jamia Hafsa movement, the black *burqa*, gave an instant moral edge to Jamia women over other local women in Islamabad as they went around intimidating them.

The global jihadist movement offers an ideological framework to local movements across the Muslim world before hijacking them (see Chapter 1). In the case of Jamia Hafsa, the movement was tailored against the Musharraf administration – a dictatorship that most Pakistanis despised, but more importantly the movement's leaders loathed due to the regime's association with the United States. Thinking that they were restoring democracy, Jamia women became puppets in the hands of a movement that was and remains particularly interested in the "Talibanization" of Pakistan.

Islamist and terrorist networks know the benefits of having women on board. Violent and criminal agendas can be given moral grounds by involving women. Militant-jihadist Islamists and terrorists have a twisted logic and substantive interest in involving women: first, presenting women Islamists as heroines and shaming Muslim masculinities, thereby increasing the number of male recruits; and second, even if justified, any raids on women's groups can be conveniently termed as "assaults" that can

further be honed through cultural notions such as honour and shame to stir up public reaction and more violence:

Women become sites on which men play out a politics of honour . . . Propaganda videos [by Jamia Hafsa sympathizers] show how terrorists *market* bodies of *burqa*-clad women for inciting revenge among Muslim men both inside and outside Pakistan. Events that occurred at the Jamia are presented in the most exaggerated fashion in these videos. Seminary students are referred to as the “*dignified women*” who were “*tainted*” by the military of Pakistan, despite the fact that Jamia women listed no such complaints and raised no grievances in this regard. Nonetheless, the propagandists were honing their political agendas on cultural notions such as “honour” – a highly emotive discourse in Muslim contexts. (Ibid.)

## Conclusion

Indoctrination of militant-jihadist Islamism can occur in societies where issues such as inequitable distribution of wealth, class-based hierarchies and prejudices against the “stigmatized” and “marginalized” hold sway. Inefficient and incompetent governance structures exacerbate the status quo.

Pakistan has an extensive list of “vulnerable” sections in its society. This chapter studied only two such groups while attempting to establish them as susceptible to influences of regressive radicalism, literalism, militant-jihadist Islamism and terrorism. Both groups – substance misusers and ordinary Muslim women – are aiming to achieve something higher, an action or activity that would make them feel “honourable” and “dignified”: an agenda for self-aggrandizement and actualization, or a commitment that would make them feel worthy as individuals. What does the government of Pakistan have to offer to them? What does the global community have to offer to them?

## Notes

1. For example, Mahmood (2001), Gerami and Lehnerer (2001), Abusharaf (2004), Abisaab (2004), Ness (2008) and West (2009: 148). Also see International Crisis Group (2009).
2. Allama Kausar Abbas Haidri in an interview with the author, 21 January 2010.
3. Professor Mushtaq Ahmed in a telephone interview with the author, 3 February 2010. This quote has not been edited as the interview was in English.
4. Interviews conducted with Professor Anis Ahmed (15 February 2010), Saqib Akbar (26 January 2010), Professor Mushtaq Ahmed (3 February 2010), Professor Shahzad Iqbal (25 January 2010), Allama Muhammad Ali Tawhidi (21 January 2010) and Dr Syed Nasir Raza Zaidi (3 February 2010).

## 11

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## Analysis of the pilot study

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Part III, covering an internally valid empirical investigation, has raised a few points for further consideration. First, the upheaval in Muslim masculinities is not hypothetical but real, and it is expanding at the interface of global politics (including counterterrorism tactics), economic deprivation and gender-based expectations. The pilot study shows that men divested of economic authority tend to adopt political trajectories that facilitate the restoration of (lost) honour: an asset that is essentially considered to be one's own. Second, the qualitative and quantitative findings point towards a nexus between gender (masculine constructs and practices), militant-jihadist Islamism and terrorism. Third, dynamics of "honour" and "shame" in post-colonial societies are more complex and consequential for global society than might previously have been assumed. Fourth, victims of patriarchy are not just women, but also men who tolerate cultural scrutiny and feel "honour-bound" to undertake certain combat/aggressive actions in the name of their tribe or religion, but more so in the name of "manliness". Fifth, we live in an age when a "trust deficit" between institutions, nations, governments, networks and individuals has become widespread. At times this trend may not be detrimental but beneficial for global society, for example when the trust deficit is between an ordinary young man and a militant or terrorist organization claiming to be God-sent. Sixth, vulnerable sections in terrorism-affected societies, particularly those facing political and economic oppression, the socially stigmatized or distressed and women, remain susceptible to terrorist influences.

Research participants underlined their vulnerabilities to “harmful” options available on “the street”, as opposed to women, who stayed home under close observation and protection of extended familial relations. Ordinary Pakistani men are predisposed to militant-jihadist Islamism, as their socio-cultural ideals and privileges of masculinity absolve them of having dangerous interests. Information on IDPs, Pakistani women and substance misusers is also topical in post-9/11 contexts and can inform policy-makers and interested academics in several significant ways. Islam forbids consumption of or dependence on intoxicants and alcohol. The data on substance misusers reveal how individual moral dilemmas of Muslim substance misusers make them susceptible to Islamist and terrorist networks. The sense of judgement is also altered during drug therapy and most men have difficulty in distinguishing who is or is not a political representative of Muslims and Islam. Securitization measures that are in place may jail suspects – but what is the use of this if hundreds more churn out from among the socially stigmatized?

The findings of the pilot study show that almost 70 per cent of Pakistani men can opt for jihad (regardless of its meaning or implication – see the Introduction). Militant-jihadist Islamism becomes an avenue, a legitimate expression for putting masculinity into action or practice. Men opting for jihad are not always affiliated with religious set-ups, and their women, contrary to the literature, do not always feature prominently in goading them into such ventures. What they do is primarily intended to serve their very basic “male ego”, living up to the gender ideal provided by ancient cultural/tribal customary institutions, and to an extent by the commercial heroism portrayed in Western and Indian cinema. In addition, Butler’s proposition of taking a relational approach to recognize hard compulsions under which gender configurations are formed proved useful for studying the sample. The pilot study has clearly described the pressures men face in relation to women and also within the patriarchal system as men among other men. Men may want to admit their dependency on women, but cannot do so publicly as this is not the so-called *exemplary masculinity*, nor the hegemonic one. Men may want to allow their women to move around freely, but ironically enough feel restricted by patriarchal norms. In Pakistan there is a broad-based social approval of aggressive masculinity as hegemonic masculinity – and even if aggression does not come naturally to men, they get socialized into faking it.

Drawing on Connell’s theoretical contributions in masculinities, I conducted this pilot study along three distinct social strata: low socio-economic group, socially stigmatized and distressed, and university students and professionals. A detailed empirical analysis of my sample has led me to recognize primarily a singular context that is currently shaping Pakistani Muslim masculinities. I maintain that marginalization and



protests are symbiotically cyclical. The studied sample shows that masculinities are being shaped by *marginalized contexts* that produce *protest masculinities* as an output (short term) and outcome (long term). Protest contexts and practices nurture two masculinities: *aggressive masculinity* that is also the *hegemonic masculinity*, and *emasculated masculinity* which is subordinated or complicit. Both masculine practices can be revengeful, but *hegemonic masculinity* takes the lead as it trusts that its authority can be dictated to others and its rationalization of the current world order is perfect. On the other hand, *emasculated masculinity* joins or submits to the missions of *hegemonic masculinity*. In the current age of terror these two masculinities together represent the *collective (Pakistani Muslim) masculinity*, dissolving boundaries between rich and poor, educated and uneducated, Muslims inside and outside Muslim contexts, etc. The datasets given in this book show that *emasculated masculinity* is becoming increasingly resentful and revengeful (for reasons explained throughout the book, but mainly in Part III). These *protest masculinities* are globally perceived as jihadist, militant Islamist or terrorist depending on who is defining, to what purpose and with what type of background information. Post-9/11 events (e.g. crisis in the Muslim world with American invasions, and Al Qaeda's deception tactics against Muslim youth) have implicated Muslim masculinities and inhibited them from functioning normally.

My theoretical and empirical deliberations lead me to conclude that a gender perspective for elucidating jihadism, Islamism, militant Islamism and terrorism (i.e. forms that are parasitic on Islamist ideologies) can contribute in processes of deradicalization and other counterterrorism measures that are preventive in nature. Drawing upon theoretical and empirical means of scientific research, I propose a conceptual model for understanding Muslim masculinities in a post-9/11 age of terror (see Figure 11.1). In addition to relying on qualitative and quantitative analysis of the empirical data collected during this small-scale pilot study on Pakistani masculinities, I used Butler's and Connell's contributions in gender theory as an intellectual basis. A review of theoretical and empirical literature, particularly that pertaining to the life of Muslim men in MENA, South/Southeast and Central Asia and the North Caucasus, helped evolve this model to illuminate relational dynamics existing between different practices of Muslim masculinities.

The model guides us to reach the following conclusions.

- Marginalized contexts are produced through factors such as local and global political and economic conditions, media and local cultural codes of conduct (tribal customs, particularly those defining gender).
- Marginalized and protest contexts/practices are cyclical and reproducible (particularly in the autocratic, monarchical and undemocratic settings that currently exist in a post-colonial Muslim world).

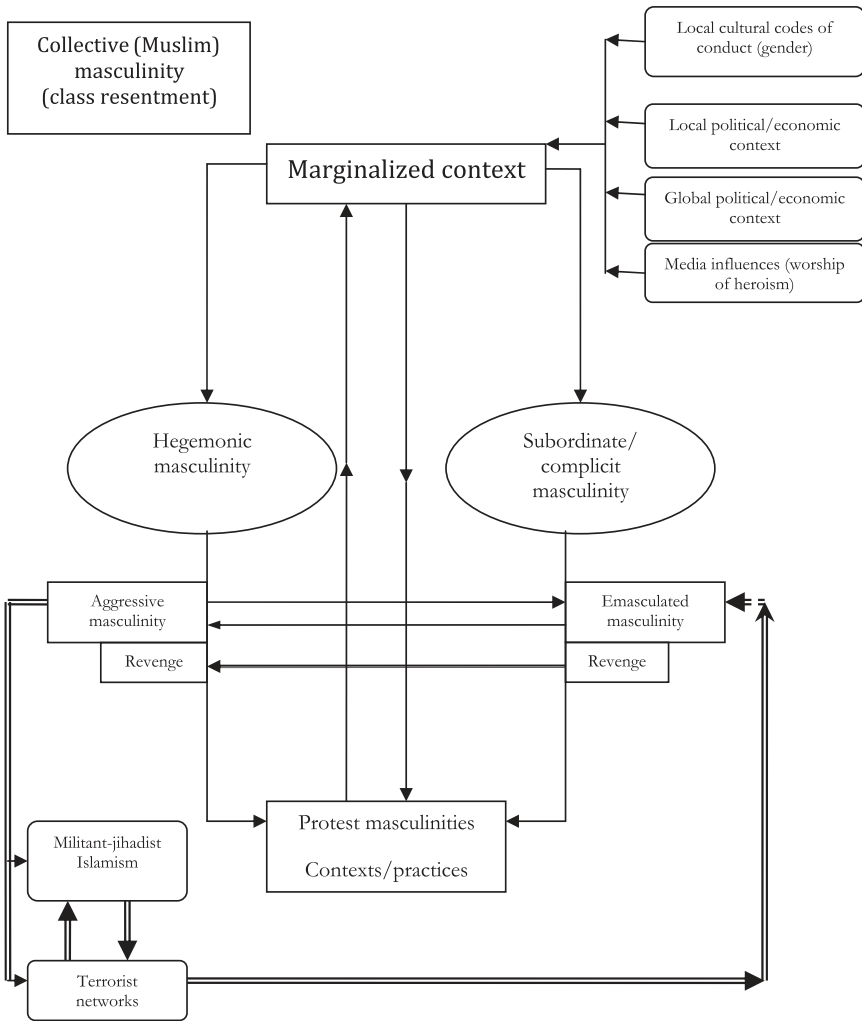


Figure 11.1 Conceptual model: Depicting dynamics of Muslim masculinities

- Aggressive and emasculated masculinities have a corresponding operation with vengeance against the current political environment at its core. Emasculated masculinity lacks confidence to indulge in aggressive gender performativity. Therefore, practices of emasculated masculinity gradually start merging within those of aggressive masculinity as the former becomes complicit or subordinated to hegemonic masculinity.
- Aggressive masculinity may take the trajectory of militant Islamism, or it may directly coopt its political agency to favour criminal/terrorist

networks working as surrogates for militant Islamist movements (the short arrow bottom left in the model shows an association between Islamists and terrorists, with the former being always susceptible to losing their political vision and blindly indulging in blatant acts of terror as criminals).

- Both aggressive and emasculated masculinities are vulnerable to terrorist networks, who by their use of religious/cultural symbolism make attempts to give meaning to masculine practices in local and global spheres. Aggrieved or stigmatized men do not approach terrorist networks. However, this does not stop terrorists from accessing emasculated masculinity and inciting men to be “honourable” and take “revenge”.
- Resulting from communal class resentment against local/global milieu, a sense of *collective masculinity* strengthens among multiple Muslim masculinities.

The phrase “collective masculinity” alludes to some form of homogeneity among Muslim men. It is for terrorism/counterterrorism experts to recognize fully the interesting mix and multiplicity of masculine practices seated under this umbrella of collective Muslim masculinity. Here, the notion of “collective masculinity” has not been used to present Muslim men as a monolith. My objective is to bring forth the current all-pervasive environment of political violence and economic deprivation in the Muslim world within which Muslim masculinities are shaping homogeneously, thereby requiring global-level policy interventions. Drones targeting tribesmen in Pakistan and Israeli occupation forces subduing Palestinian men are producing an upheaval in masculinity to which Muslim populations can relate across the globe. In this sense, Muslim masculinity is converting into a singular entity, making it all the more convenient for terrorists to find recruits by overcoming binary social divisions between rich and poor, educated and uneducated, Pakistani (global South) and British Pakistani (global North), etc.

Pakistani masculinities are almost sharing a working-class ethic of solidarity and expressing themselves as a *collectivity*. This is what explains the fact that militant-jihadist Islamists and terrorists come from a wide spectrum of socio-economic and political backgrounds and yet speak in the same tone: anger. It hardly matters if one is rich and educated or a dropout from school having a hard time finding bread each day. Due to ungrounded incrimination after 9/11, Pakistani men recognize that their marginalized contexts are peripatetic and stick with them wherever they live. Local and global policies only corroborate their phobias.

Breaking the cycle of peripatetic marginalized contexts within which practices of Muslim masculinities mature requires impartial governance structures at both local and global levels. Unjust systems are only likely

to produce more trajectories of *protest masculinities* – some *aggressive* and some *emasculated*, but more importantly both *revengeful*. Since 9/11 such protest contexts and practices of masculinity have engulfed countries like Pakistan – and this has to stop. Institutionally Pakistan is a fragile state and is characterized by patriarchal and class-based socio-economic and political apparatuses. In Pakistan, as is the case in many traditional societies, formal civilian institutions run parallel to ancient arbitrary and customary codes of conduct and informal institutional arrangements upheld by its ethnically diverse population. Pakistan owes much of its fragility as a state to military dictatorships, corrupt and incompetent civilian governments and foreign interference. Human rights violations take place arbitrarily as well as systematically. According to Amnesty International (2010), the government has hardly ever invested time and resources in the welfare of KP province, mostly treating Pukhtuns as rebellious tribesmen. The Taliban's Pukhtun identity has been treated as a licence to persecute, attack, kill, illegally detain, neglect and act disdainfully towards the local civilian population of KP province and the FATAs, including more than 1 million who are now living displaced lives in roadside camps and a small sample of whom were interviewed for this research. If democracy mainly implies rule of law and accountability, it can at least help in diminishing the creation of emasculated masculinity by ensuring justice. However, unfortunately Pakistani officials have been indulging in political repression in the form of illegal detentions of many men.

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## Conclusion

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For counterterrorism, among other measures, Sageman (2009) proposes to take the glory out of terrorism, diminish the sense of moral outrage (among Muslims), counter the enemy appeal and eliminate discrimination against Muslims (by ceasing to “single them out”). To deal with the Al Qaeda threat, Sageman counts the removal of American forces from Iraq and a solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as absolutely necessary. The oppressed and disadvantaged plight of Muslims around the world, particularly those under foreign occupation, makes Al Qaeda’s anti-West vision so appealing to Muslim youth. In addition, I recommend underlining the role of cultural notions/ideals (particularly gender constructs and practices) in predisposing individuals towards trajectories of militant-jihadist Islamism and terrorism. Such a critical nexus between gender, militant-jihadist Islamism and terrorism is so far unrecognized in theoretical literature and policy documents on terrorism/counterterrorism.

Ironically, Muslim populations follow dictates of ancient local customary laws and codes of conduct pre-dating Islam. Global politics can be understood better if such sociological complexities are noticed and *systems* such as gender are recognized. Gender constructions are more critical as determinants of militant-jihadist Islamism and terrorism than perhaps any of the other factors – for example religion and poverty – held responsible for such behaviour. Counterterrorism strategists must also engage with cultural notions, such as “honour”, in post-colonial Muslim populations, as these have an impact on global political outcomes. In traditional societies, political objectives are accentuated through an

“illusionary interior” – a “gender core” (Butler, 2006). Communities start defending this core as if it is an unalterable “reality”, regardless of the costs involved. As recorded in existing scholarship and observed in the pilot study, within Muslim contexts the masculine core is honour-dictated aggression. Such socio-cultural productions predispose men towards violence. Nonetheless, as Butler maintains, “the sedimented and reified field of gender ‘reality’ is understood as one that might be made differently, and indeed less violently”. If gender is not factual and if it is performed in accordance to time and space, i.e. “instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts” (ibid.: 191), then in my view the current political crisis in the age of terror will only cause more chaos in practices of masculinities (and femininities) within Muslim contexts – endangering all of us. On the other hand, if the political situation is controlled through people-centred interventions, and if Muslim men in particular are given an alternative culture for self-actualization and growth, the results can be different. National and global governments are required to collaborate in joint ventures that meet this objective. Otherwise, to deal with the status quo men will find avenues of self-actualization and heroism on the platforms of terrorist networks. This book allocates a primal notch to “male ego” and “honour” as motivating forces that send men on trajectories of confrontational Islamism and blatant acts of terror, particularly in cases where lost honour has to be retrieved. Gender *performativity* is not just *performative*, but is intentional as well. We cannot afford to allow men intentionally opting for militant-jihadist and terrorist pursuits only to survive within particular socio-economic and political contexts.

Retaliation has become a matter of “honour” for Muslim masculinities. Like the bikers Connell (2005) discusses, Muslim men want to send the message: “if they give us a hard time, we give them a hard time”. The “hard times” they face have been explained in detail and are quite real, no matter which side of the political camp one is in. In their current circumstances, Muslim masculinities are aiming for “live fast and die young, and die as a warrior, a hero”. Having no worthy worldly *entitlements* to reflect what Sen (2009) understands as their *capabilities*, Muslim men feel *entitled* to win a station in the afterworld. Their contexts show that these men have lost most of the “patriarchal dividends” (Connell, 2005: 116). Living under occupations and feeling intimidated, humiliated, etc. while not having avenues to practise masculinity in a culturally ideal manner, only troubled masculinities are born: *aggressive* and *emasculated*, i.e. *protest masculinities*. The entry of terrorism and Islamism into digital domains has further problematized the issue. Militant-jihadist Islamism will grow rapidly, as *protest masculinities* across the Muslim world and beyond will continue their struggles against occupations, socio-economic

inequalities, injustices – at times having their political agency coopted towards terrorism. Counterterrorism measures need to be adopted to reverse such destructive trends.

Practices are temporal – and therefore masculinities are transformable. Local and global contexts must be made conducive for socio-economic growth, and political oppression in Muslim contexts has to end so that men and women lead dignified lives. Securitization agendas need to run parallel to wide-ranging institutional reforms that usher in social change to introduce equanimity in thought and action. Simultaneously, larger political issues such as those in MENA need to be resolved through political consensus. Frustrations and inner complexes grow due to a myriad of internal and external sources of political oppression under which Muslim masculinities live in current times. As argued in this book, violence only generates more violence. It is important to realize that the agentic potential of populations must be harnessed by properly functioning governance structures that allow rule of law, installation of judicial institutions, representative political processes, increased development and employment opportunities, and health and education facilities for the people. Currently, due to the failure of governing institutions, men's and women's political agency is being consumed by terrorist networks.

The slogan of jihad is not always raised out of religiosity, but often due to an attraction to war – something that transforms ordinary men into superheroes. *Militarized* jihad is widely seen as legitimate in Pakistan (Fair, Malhotra and Shapiro, 2010). It is the *combat* part of jihad that attracts men – although jihad has additional features that men seldom prioritize. More sustainable results in counterterrorism are possible if the central point of discussion shifts from religion to masculinities. Rather than a generic referencing to the religion of Islam – now more of Islamism, whose opposing sects and ideological movements never seem to agree on a single point – it is advisable to focus on gender. It is difficult to determine who is extreme, very extreme or moderate in the field of religion. It is harder still to decide with whom one should negotiate.

Finally, this book implicitly raises serious concern over the Muslim world's lack of intellectual interest in exploring masculinities beyond the existing discourses on jihad and a myriad of (contested) claims of men's superiority over women. Muslim women have engaged thoroughly and constructively with what Islam has to offer them. There is an intellectual terrain of *Muslim feminism* with a fully recognized, widely subscribed and mature independent academic identity. However, a parallel for Muslim men of Muslim feminism, as well as *masculinity studies* in the West that have gradually expanded over the past decade, simply does not exist. In fact, quite sadly, the orthodox patriarchs have remained too occupied

with and fixated on the female body – what Muslim women should or should not do, wear or not wear – while restricting understanding of their own gender to becoming masters to the women in their household, and most particularly to their wives. Such intellectual deficiency and dishonesty have led to inertia and suffering among Muslim populations and must be remedied.



## Appendix: Statistical profile of the research sample (Islamabad, Pakistan)

Particulars	Categories (%)			
	LSE	USP	SSD	Total
Selected sample size	30	33	32	95
Age of respondents				
18–25	26.7	30.3	43.8	33.7
25–30	33.3	45.5	25.0	34.7
30–40	40.0	24.2	31.3	31.6
Marital status				
Single	33.3	66.7	40.6	47.4
Married	56.7	27.3	43.8	42.1
Engaged	10.0	6.1	15.6	10.5
Ethnic group				
Punjabi	3.3	36.4	15.6	18.9
Sindhi	3.3	3.0	0.0	2.1
Pukhtun	86.7	42.4	81.3	69.5*
Kashmiri	0.0	6.1	0.0	2.1
Undisclosed	6.7	12.1	3.1	7.4
Educational qualifications				
Primary	10.0	0.0	6.3	5.3
Secondary	13.3	0.0	3.1	5.3
Higher secondary	16.7	0.0	28.1	14.7
Graduate	26.7	97.0	53.1	60.0
Other (technical, etc.)	10.0	3.0	0.0	4.2
Uneducated	23.3	0.0	9.4	10.5

Particulars	Categories (%)			
	LSE	USP	SSD	Total
Income status				
Very low (Rs 3,000–5,000 per month)	56.7	3.0	25.0	27.4
Low (Rs 5,001–10,000 per month)	3.3	3.0	12.5	6.3
Medium (Rs 10,001–35,000 per month)	6.7	30.3	46.9	28.4
High (Rs 35,001–80,000 per month)	0.0	6.1	0.0	2.1
Very high (above Rs 80,000 per month)	0.0	9.1	3.1	4.2
Did not answer	33.4	48.5	12.5	31.6

*Note:* The socio-economic profile presented here concerns those who completed the survey questionnaire. In addition to these 95 men, 23 other participants contributed in focus group discussions.

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# References and further reading

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