TITLE: Education as Self-Government: the Minhaj Education Society's Answer to Managing Violence in Pakistan

AUTHORS: Dr Naheem Jabbar, University of Portsmouth, UK (naheem.jabbar@port.ac.uk)

 Usman Ali, University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan (usman.a@umt.edu.pk)

CORRESPONDENCE EMAIL: naheem.jabbar@port.ac.uk

Education as Self-Government: the Minhaj Education Society's Answer to Managing Violence in Pakistan

Abstract: Development-thinking and planning consistently identify religious markers of self-development as inimical to social cohesion in the Global South. Practitioners in the field see any educational philosophy that emphasises the disciplined formation of character, by non-secular means, as an undesirable reaction to modernisation. Religious or madrassa education is identified as an intrinsically regressive aspect of the indigenous social order that limits the transition to an open access order society. Using qualitative data from interviews with the managers of an NGO and political reform movement in Pakistan, we explore this conclusion and ask whether the secular norms of citizenship, often insisted upon by the international donor community, are strong enough to challenge residual violence. If they are not strong enough, what resources are available within traditional precepts about self-government so that Pakistanis do not need to learn lessons from Europe to protect minorities from communal predation?

Introduction

The goal of the Minhaj Education Society (MES) is to provide educational opportunities to the poorest children in Pakistan. MES is an NGO with a sister organisation, the PAT (Pakistan Awami Tehreek); the PAT is the political wing of the Minhaj-ul Quran International (MQI), a religious reform movement, founded over twenty-five years ago by a cleric with Canadian citizenship who originally graduated in law from the once illustrious University of Punjab, Sheikh Muhammad Tahir-ul Qadri (https://www.minhaj.org/english/index.html). There are a number of reasons why Qadri's social movement is of special interest for political and social scientists, chief of these being diagnostic: analysing MQI's ethos helps us understand how Pakistan affords a critical space for those groups that are engaged in shaping the security-development nexus not by supporting but by *challenging* the encroachment of state elites. For South Asia, this task is vital where economic reforms or mismanagement by political elites, through serving rentier interests, have 'generated greater insecurities' and where ordinary people increasingly see their own state as a security threat in their lives.[1]

The directors of MES and activists for PAT expressed the same grave view of the power establishment, both civilian and military, as many other Pakistanis when we interviewed them. As a movement, MQI has to engage in Pakistan's civil society where both non-state and state specialists in violence increasingly define how expansive the formal arena of politics is going to be. The predominantly lower middle-class professionals involved in defining the morale of the movement through 'third-sector' development activities represent those political interests that are *inevitably* going to be affected by the damage done by frequent and opportunist violence in the general condition of mass insecurity that afflict South Asia's postcolonial

nations. In this specific sense, attending the social imagination of the reformer can test how active the revivalist faith of a mass movement can be as Pakistani society typically veers from a high to a low democratic and undemocratic type and back again often within the *same* regime.[2] Self-fashioned Islamist vanguards in this hybrid regime can attempt to establish a monistic vision of human perfectibility, the *Nizam-e-Mustafa* (the Prophet's system of governance), on the ambiguous constitutional foundation of the Islamic Republic. The preamble to the 1949 Constitution, called 'the Objectives Resolution' delegates authority to Pakistan's rulers as 'a sacred trust' from an original 'sovereignty over the entire universe [that] belongs to Allah Almighty.' The Senate and the Supreme Court can veto the opportunistic use of Islam by politicians. The Senate rejected Nawaz Sharif's attempt to reprise the military dictator Zia ul-Haq's Islamisation of society by imposing Sharia Law as the Supreme Law in Pakistan in his second term as prime minister (1996 – 9).[3] (Yasmeen 2017: 23). The use of *military* force, the mobilisation of state specialists in violence, to establish a general limit in the space for religious actors engaged in contentious politics is not new in Pakistan. The Model Town incident at MQI headquarters – which we will describe below – recalls Operation Sunrise in 2007 when another autocratic general, Pervez Musharraf ordered tanks into the Lal Masjid in the capital Islamabad. Children, pupils, as well as other civilians were killed by the armed forces. These students or *talib* were mustered by clerics at the complex from all of its other madrassas across the country. Their mentor, Maulana Abdul Aziz Ghazi, in contrast to Qadri, had a long vocation in fomenting jihad with relative impunity by indoctrinating children against the *native* enemies of Islam in Pakistan. Captured alive after attempting to escape, the interview in a burkha on national television was the regime's attempt to destroy Abdul Aziz Ghazi's credibility as a *mujahid* (http://www.amongthebelieversfilm.com/). In the 2007 siege, the cleric's mother and son were killed at the hands of the Pakistani military, following the assassination of his father decades ago. The appealing image of *aman* or a society at peace

evoked by the PAT activists and the MES directorate in every interview, as they ponder their practice of instilling *akhlaq*, or a system of ethics from the traditional Islamic curriculum, has the state's reprisals and the Lal Masjid as its imaginary counterpoints. The MES directorate's own plea for peaceful cohabitation is made in this context.

Unlike Abdul Aziz Ghazi's *takfiri* (declaring fellow Muslims as infidel, to wage jihad) resistance to the Pakistani government, MQI's ambition, as the name advertises, is internationalist in scope in its appeal for social welfare. Volunteers for the Minhaj Welfare Foundation deliver aid to victims of war where Muslims are suffering, in Gaza and in Syria, for example, as well as those afflicted by natural disasters (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H2WCTeN1Rjs, http://beta.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-details/?subid=0&regid=1084057). The movement also delivers healthcare to people in the developing world (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lilibnpJKII). MES, the body that manages outreach work through the 'Education for All' campaigns during Ramadan to children whom the Pakistani state has neglected is also extending its operation into East Africa (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i1BZxGLGJ4c). Qadri's NGO also disburses the cost of weddings for families who cannot afford to do so. This global diversity of activities by MQI merits serious attention by returning to their native context.

The PAT workers and activists we interviewed from April 2017 to November 2018 refused to disclose the actual number or occupational profile of party members. They confirmed, however, that Punjab is their most vital stronghold of popular support. Historically, Punjab is the decisive province in shaping the politics of the state. The movement is not new, the Minhaj

Education Trust was founded in 1994, the political party PAT precedes the charitable organisation and was founded on 25th May 1989. The goal of social transformation through individual charity remains the overt ethos; the work is carried out with traditionalist petitioning of Muslims to respond to the welfare of 'orphans and the needy' by sponsoring teachers, the building and costs of running schools as well as providing materials to educate children (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XzxCSVU6QXc). The MES's public rationale, then, is about fostering overt political engagement via an alternative ethos of moral citizenship from childhood on, as well as enjoining the Islamicat in Pakistan and the world to fulfil religiously prescribed duties in the interests of the disadvantaged.

There is an established consensus in development circles and in professional political science alike about the Pakistani state's shortcomings when it comes to propagating an ideal of national belonging that includes all communities. Instead of adding to this consensus, we want to see how MQI's 'men of words with a grievance' posit the sociological value of *akhlaq* or 'character' as a set of ideal practices to challenge Pakistan's discredited 'prevailing order.'[4] Akhlaq in the traditional *Dars-e-Nizam* madrassa curriculum plays a vital unifying role as a master concept *beyond* curriculum design for Pakistani children by the MES, an organisation that claims independence from both state and corporation. We document some of the salient attitudes among Qadri's followers to see how they realise this innovation-in-tradition and in particular, how they make a strategic place for MQI in Pakistan's fragile civil society by using the precepts of rationality, self-control and social responsibility from traditional madrassa instruction to recruit a following. Qadri's disciples recover rationality, self-control and social responsibility, the pre-requisites of secular modernity, from traditionalist norms of discipline. The fact that some followers from childhood are now salaried employees of MQI also bears on how objective their worldview is going to be. It has to be borne in mind that these impassioned

advocates of reform were themselves often-disadvantaged children whom MQI helped attain their position in society.

The Dar-ul-Ulum Haqqaniya, a madrassa first established in 1947 in the Pashtun highlands, continues under Imran Khan, the current Prime Minister, to receive public funds (https://www.rferl.org/a/pakistan-jihad-university-haqqania-government-funding-haq-taliban-omar/29092748.html). Mawlana Sami-ul Haq, the chancellor of the Deobandi madrassa network, is a member of the National Assembly. Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf administration could not govern in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa let alone across all the restive provinces without supporting Dar-ul-Ulum Haqqaniya, the madrassas from which the Pakistani military and intelligence services have historically recruited men for militias to fight in Afghanistan and Indian-occupied Kashmir. Sami-ul Haq also leads the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, one of the two largest Islamist political parties.[5] These are some of the institutional reasons why social struggles beyond the field of politics in Pakistan contribute to what Sadia Saeed, in her account of the democratic exclusion faced by the Ahmadiyya minority, calls unsettled desecularization, namely 'processes that emerge when social actors seek to efface the perceived distance between "religious" and "secular" domains.'[6]

We believe that curricular reform insisted upon by foreign state donors today, with its policy focus on secular norms such as diversity, formal equality, citizenship is ill-conceived because it risks losing the 'characterological' focus in the madrassa curriculum that spans both the sacred and the mundane realms. Character-focussed education, where the moral qualities of the teacher are an example to children, is fast gaining momentum for educational practice in western societies. If madrassas form an essential part of the Ideological State Apparatuses of

Pakistani nationhood, in the way we have suggested, then the effort to promote tolerance via the classical madrassa curriculum – as MQI claim – deserves consideration.

David Gilmartin writes, 'With the colonial state providing no symbolic definition of Muslim community in India, the assertion of 'community' solidarity required that the individual Muslim himself bring his (or her) inner life and sense of identity under self-conscious acceptance of a concept of 'culture' rooted in descent and history, and spread by education, that gave substance and legitimacy to a culturally independent community.'[7] A more nuanced understanding of akhlaq is required as a crucial value for those defining not only what is to be taught in Pakistani schools. Akhlaq is the means through which the majority claims its collective identity. By adopting a critical approach to this data when it comes to interpreting the persistent problem of communal violence in Pakistan, we are examining how the traditional effort of emulating the Prophet is affected by values of self-actualisation *beyond Islam*. By concentrating on conscience, on akhlaq*,* or character, the argument goes, we will be unable to think of education as a vehicle of emancipation because citizenship leaves morality to the private sphere.

The public intellectual Ashis Nandy makes a frustrated observation: the middle-class child in the Global South is expected to provide solutions to encroachments from modernity on traditional life.[8] Nandy's point is that there are realms of human experience where culture as resistance is occurring *every day.* This is important for the way we explore how MES use education in the reproduction of 'progressive' values beyond nationalism in the way Gilmartin emphasises for a number of reasons. In our analysis of akhlaq as an ethos to preserve predation from the state, we note the classification struggles engaged in by social actors who want to enforce their *own* ideal of civic nationalism as a norm.[9] The Objectives Resolution is the

communitarian vehicle to limit a liberal resolution to the problem of communalism. Our point of departure for analysing the movement's survival in Pakistani society analytically rests on the plausible claim for all inquiries of this kind: the 'systematic comparison of empirical reality (data) with values' always presupposes that *values* are stronger than data.[10] For current development practices in Pakistan, attention to values is a prerequisite for examining how any remedial measure combats morbid instances of social involution. This is the case whether the aim is, for example, to enhance women's ability to resist predation from men through microfinance initiatives, Islamic or otherwise, to the promotion of tolerance for minorities through state education, where cultural overhaul or 'impact' – in the language of funding councils – is considered.

Before turning to our findings from the fieldwork in Lahore, we want to consider briefly the secular bias in development work through education. Qualitative evidence is missing from an overtly religious curriculum when it comes to the remedial role education is required to play in reducing 'structural' violence. This is not least because of what the Marxist activist and sociologist Aasim Sajjad Akhtar has dubbed 'elite alienation.'[11] The debate about failure to reform the national curriculum is at least a decade and a half old in Pakistan.[12] Development discourse in Pakistan, without exception, casts itself as a humanizing pedagogy; for activists, scholars and perhaps even for some teachers, the hope has always been that education can perform a restorative role in the wake of General Zia-ul-Haq's (1977 – 1988) efforts to 'Islamise' the country by pandering to religious parties.[13] These are measures that are now regarded by most ordinary Pakistanis as having left them *more* vulnerable to terrorist violence, as Pakistan hosts a Kalashnikov culture after mobilising Haqqaniya talib for the jihad in Afghanistan.[14] For this constituency of elites, Pakistani citizenship is not an abstract juridical concern. The Supreme Court, by practicing judicial activism, can enact piecemeal secularism

even as it falls short of establishing secularism as a political doctrine to heal a divided nation. This policy of liberal interventionism seems an attractive solution to the problem of cultural violence. However, communal violence against minorities, especially attacks targeting settlements of Pakistan's 3 – 5 million Christians and 285, 000 Ahmadiyya, as well as the residual violence that permeates the whole of society, finds its origin for these diagnosticians in the state-engineered system of education.[15] For these observers, the mass indoctrination of children goes on apace in madrassas: a synoptic account concludes with the assertion that Pakistan's religious minorities, to play their part in improving 'the overall conditions of Pakistan's rural and urban poor,' face insuperable odds, 'difficulties and insecurities' because of their minority status and religious differences.[16] The Islamabad-based think-tank, The Sustainable Development Policy Institute in 2002 called for the abolition of all provincial textbook boards because they foster an ethnic nationalism based on Islam (https://www.sdpi.org/publications/files/State%20of%20Curr&TextBooks.pdf). The Liberal Forum Pakistan disseminated these findings for the institute. Abdul Nayyar, one of the writers of the report, belongs to the Eqbal Ahmed Centre for Public Education, named after the Marxist political scientist (https://eacpe.org/about-eacpe/). Nayyar, a physicist who is committed to 'the use of science and reason to understand nature and society' continues to find problems in textbooks used in Pakistan's government schools (http://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2014/05/A-Missed-Opportunity.pdf).

No one can deny problems exist. One of the obstacles to the inclusion of religious minorities can be found in the stark schedule of punishments for blasphemy in Pakistan's Penal Code, especially clause 295-C from 1986 that governs the punishment of those found guilty of using derogatory remarks about the Prophet: a life sentence, initially, changed to execution in 1991.[17] Religious minority women, if they venture beyond their besieged communities, remain

vulnerable to sham marriages, molestation and attack, despite the passing of the Women's Protection Bill by Pervez Musharraf in 2006, to mitigate offences of *zinna* in Zia's Hudood Ordinance where rape is still too easily equated to adultery. If 30 to 50 Christians have been killed between 2001 – 2010, the Centre for Legal Aid Assistance and Settlement also has a record of *singularly* appalling atrocities. These include the rape and murder of children, of clergy, forced displacement and the burning of Christian homes. Towards the political apex of society, Punjab's governor Salmaan Taseer was murdered by Mumtaz Qadri, his bodyguard, and two months later, the Federal Minister for Minorities Affairs, Clement Shahbaz Bhatti, was also murdered by gunmen not least because of their advocacy for those alleged to have committed blasphemy.[18]

These are the challenges facing the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. In the first section after establishing a political context for the violence facing PAT workers, we will briefly examine how the madrassa as the traditional institution of Muslim learning and the historical locus of *akhlaqiat* (ethics) is subject to the same imperatives as society generally. It is worth mentioning at the outset that the emphasis on character-building is not an indigenous, outmoded endeavour of C19th colonial values; the instilling of civic virtues by 'caught and taught' character is increasingly receiving institutional support in the west too.[19] Aid workers should not ignore how Pakistanis construct a self-image out of the indigenous forms available to them if they want to engage those classes that are acutely conscious of predation by entrenched post-colonial elites.

In the second section, we want to establish a sociological interpretation of contemporary need, in the way suggested by Sadia Saeed for the survival of reformist claims of conscience by MES since the C19th. She concludes how 'the politics of citizenship rights is shaped through

conflicts between majoritarian democracy, puritanical Islamic positive laws, abstract liberal rights, and Islamic justifications for religious equality.'[20] Beyond post-colonial critique, the challenge in western social science often means paying more attention to how social actors define their *telos* in a complex situation where 'virtually every political figure has made his proposals in an Islamic atmosphere.'[21] We can only properly examine failings of Pakistan's banal nationalism, including the potential for resistance to those institutional manufacturers of consent in the media, the generals and the clerics, by paying attention to how groups respond to secular modernity when it is cast as a political doctrine of development.[22] In our findings, the MES directorate's rejection of secularism as a plausible solution to the problem of violence against minorities, by instead fostering spiritual self-discipline (*riyadat*) amongst their staff and students, also implicated the Islamist constituency in Pakistani politics. Recent calls by Pir Afzal Qadri for the murder of the justices who freed Asia Bibi, on behalf of Khadim Rizvi's Tehreek-e-Labaik, a coalition of hardliners who are using the blasphemy laws of the country to extract rent from Imran Khan's government, would be appalling to Qadri and MQI. MQI take these threats seriously because the Tehrik-e-Taliban also killed Shahbaz Bhatti in 2011, then Punjab Minister for minorities and a Catholic because of his outspoken defence of Asia Bibi (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8-19rQt2-s0&list=LLVGJS37cY609vsgtELXSeSQ). In the very specific ethos or 'idioculture' of the MQI, what we clearly discerned was that the men we interviewed see their organic association through shared values as a microcosm or 'tiny public' within the current chaos that afflicts civil society.[23] Akhlaq is the bulwark against these forces.

Our study sits alongside a general concern about testing the prescriptive norms of professional activists and Development workers by documenting the MES's associative adventure of socialising children to the communal standards of the *ashraf* (noble) Muslim elites. This is not

to suggest that MES or MQI in their outreach work among Pakistan's subaltern classes have remained untouched by 'Eurocentric' norms of citizenship. At the shallow level of public discourse, the MES management discipline themselves in order to be seen to be enacting progressive social change through customary 'committed involvement' from educators in the development sector.[24] But it is also the case that the sincere reconstructive effort by the MES directorate and PAT activists, at least from the perspective of Anglophone social science, will betray every sign of contradiction, of 'pre-modernity' under the pressures Sadia Saeed noted. We wanted to capture this dynamic in the research for future policy-makers.

Method

MES officials helped us in our data collection; they provided us with the opportunity to interview the PAT leadership. Meetings with the MES gatekeeper started on November 1, 2018 and a formal letter of invitation was sent to the PAT secretariat. The first interview with the PAT official was on November 11, 2018 and a total of six interviews were undertaken over two months. The last interview was recorded on December 21, 2018. All the interviews with PAT leaders were recorded at PAT Head Office located at 65-M, Model Town, Lahore. We interviewed the ten MES directors over two months. Semi-structured responses from our subjects were solicited as part of a larger comparative project which was initially about investigating what remedial measures education can provide in preventing communal violence in Lahore.

We were interested in identifying how the status quo of residual violence, in Freire's sense of a negated consciousness/conscience, may first be shaped in the school. There is no way we can provide a complete understanding of why minority rights are insecure in Pakistani civil society; undoubtedly, our subjects pursue their institutional goals in a cultural environment of increased hostility for ordinary people: state institutions and agencies have failed to protect the constitutional rights of Christian and other religious minorities. Having said this, we are hoping to shed light on the impasse in development thinking which in its secular outlook about textbook material and classroom observations routinely fails to notice the recursive significance of pedagogical narratives centred on self-control. The formulation of practices may be overtly Muslim but the rationale for these may also be projecting something entirely new. The failure to note these is not least because these narratives of Stoical self-control in contemporary society occur in an overtly religious context.

We exclude evidence from observational data of actual practices by teachers in the classroom of MES schools. Teaching in MES's growing network of schools may reveal interesting differences in the disciplinary regimes of state (*haqumat*) and faith community (*tabka*). For now, we concentrate on the ethos of MES, how this group ethos is shaped by the views of the directorate, of the ten *men*, who are charged with designing the curriculum for no less than 670 schools, 570 in Pakistan (the rest in Azad Jammu Kashmir), for the 10, 000 teachers and 150, 000 enrolled pupils. Although the ethos is religious, children from minority Christian and from a variety of Muslim denominations also attend these schools. Most MES schools outside Lahore recruit from the poorest households in the rural hinterland. Even though the MWO does not solicit funds from donor-nations, despite the conservative equation of secularism with individual freedoms that we discovered, its liberal credentials are on public display in its flagship enterprise in Lahore, the Aghosh Grammar school: (http://www.aghosh.net/education-

system/16462/Introduction-of-Aghosh-Grammar-School.html). The emphasis on making children both practicing Muslims and good 'responsible citizens' is consistent with all the development agendas at work in Pakistan. Each of the MES managers we interviewed believe that their model of education provides an ideal template of where the nation ought to go.

In formulating the questions for our sixteen participants from PAT and MQI, we were careful not to reinforce the problematic idea that the victims of religion-inspired violence will irrationally direct their animus to the secular state as the enemy, *regardless* of the nature of the conflict.[25] There is no mileage in this old dogmatism by western observers and their native allies, those working for the SDPI whom we briefly considered above, those elites alluded to by Assim Sajjad Akhtar. Respondents across classes in our research in Lahore – including the relatives of those killed in communal violence – did not blame an under-resourced police force for failing to protect them or their property. In the city where the MES is headquartered, there have been spectacular instances of residual violence taking sharper form against Christian communities in Lahore, including in the Christian enclaves or colonies. In the Gulshan-e-Iqbal, a public park, on Easter Sunday, 27th March 2016 a *dehshat gard* (suicide bomber) killed 72 people, including 29 children. Both Muslims and Christians were victims. The message to Nawaz Sharif, the Prime Minister at the time, by *Jamaat-ul-Ahra* (Assembly of the Free) was as follows: 'We have carried out this attack to target the Christians who were celebrating Easter. Also this is a message to the Pakistani prime minister that we have arrived in Punjab [the ruling party's home province].' (https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/27/dozens-killed-in-blast-outside-lahore-park-pakistan). In Youhanabad, Lahore's Christian colony, on March 15, 2015, *dehshat gard* left 15 dead, including 2 policemen, and 85 wounded in attacks on two congregations; two years earlier, in Joseph colony, on March 9, 2013, a reported 3,000-strong mob burned and looted up to a 100 houses, including two churches

(http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-31894708,

http://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/revisiting-joseph-colony/). The communal riot in Joseph

Colony was the result of an allegation of blasphemy – mentioned by one of the PAT activists

– against a sweeper, Sawan Masih, in an ordinary altercation with a friend. Sawan Masih, the

Christian man, was found guilty and sentenced to death by a Lahore court

(http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/mar/27/pakistan-court-sentences-christian-man-

death-blasphemy). Perceptions about the hostility of a secular world take many forms. In our

study, we cannot say definitively that Pakistanis are uniquely susceptible to a 'gnawing sense

of a loss of identity and control in the modern world.'[26] Nine for the Minhaj Education Society

and twelve open questions for PAT were asked. These ranged from managerial decisions about

recruiting from religious minorities and women to senior roles; how life experience informs

MES leadership concerning the promotion of tolerance and harmony between faiths; what new

challenges face MES and the PAT in implementing the ethos of Tahir-ul Qadri after the

Islamisation programme under Zia ul-Haq; how the objectives of MQI differ from the Jama'at-

i-Islami founded in 1941; the prospects for reform after the fragmentation of authority among

clerics or *ulama.* All names are pseudonymous.

A Context: PAT and Political Violence

Before turning to the educationalists, we want to start with the PAT party workers. One of the

most vivid episodes in the history of the movement when it comes to encountering organised

violence by the state concerns an 'anti-encroachment operation' by Punjab's federal

administration at the party headquarters in Model Town, Lahore. In social media, Qadri has characterised the events as 'the Model Town tragedy (https://twitter.com/hashtag/ModelTownJIT?src=hash).' The Lahore High Court is currently (2019) hearing cases against a hundred or more police officials, including Shahbaz Sharif, the Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's brother, Chief Minister of the Punjab and other politicians in the Muslim League, Nawaz ML(N), the ruling party at the time. On June 17th 2014, armed police carried out a brutal campaign of pacification against unarmed civilians, Minhaj university students, women and the elderly. There were 14 recorded deaths and 90 injured after the use of live rounds on a crowd of protestors who had gathered at Minhaj-ul Quran International and the headquarters of the PAT. Tahir-ul Qadri's supporters had gathered to defend anti-terrorist attack barriers that had been ordered by officials in the provincial government to be dismantled by the police authorities in a reversal of the policy that was designed to protect Qadri's followers from attack by the Pakistani Taliban. Qadri was vulnerable because he had declared suicide bombing and 9/11 contrary to Islam in a fatwa (http://www.pat.com.pk/english/tid/28605/). The siege by the police lasted 15 hours before the deployment occupied the MQI secretariat.

According to a statement by the PAT, the cause of the police operation was a cynical ML(N) sanctioned reprisal for Qadri's withdrawal of support for the ruling party:

The Taliban had given a threat to target MQI buildings at that time. The removal of barriers meant that the government had given an opportunity to terrorists to attack MQI secretariat. The attack proved Dr Tahir-ul-Qadri right when he had declared on media that in case of an attack, he would nominate key government figures in FIR (First Investigation Report) (http://www.pat.com.pk/english/tid/28605/).

Sajid (34), high up in the Minhaj Youth League, who has been with MQI for two decades, speaks about the way elections (*intehab*) in every quarter of social life produces sectarian violence. This goes against normative thinking about the value of popular democracy. Sajid singles out Nawaz Sharif and his provincial government as directly responsible for the Model Town *saniha* or incident by the police. *Islahat*, or reform first, then intehab can begin, claims Nasim (46) because 'mafia' multibillionaires hijack the media and buy votes. According to Ali, a veteran of 25 years, the longest period of service in MQI, this was why PAT did not field candidates in the General Election of 2018. Individuals he also does not want to name, just as Sajid refused to name Islamist parties, are allowed to assail state institutions and the judiciary: feudal politicians and 'mufad prast,' self-seeking politicians, fail to address the ordinary needs and fundamental rights of the people. The institutions must endure whilst office-holders are condemned. For the PAT leadership, this is why Tahir-ul Qadri has refused to use Islam for *syasat* or politics. For these party activists, the Supreme Court in Islamabad will hear the case against the perpetrators of violence, and for four years, for this senior leadership of the PAT, the patient petitioning of the anti-terrorism courts and the refusal of settlements offered by the Punjabi establishment represents faith in judicial activism as a curb on executive power. Had the fourteen dead included Qadri's own sons, Sajid asserts, he might have heeded calls to forgive in the spirit of conciliation. Ali comprehensively points out the failures of each government and failure of institutions and for this seasoned veteran, a new 'social contract' (in English) is needed. For Ali, calls to destroy the State by anonymous forces ought to be resisted in the name of the people.

This scrupulous adherence to due process is interesting. The three younger PAT activists we interviewed, all graduates from the MQI's Islamic College, actually witnessed first-hand the police's repressive operation on Model Town on 17th June, 2014. Shehzad (24) says how students came forward to *defend* themselves against armed police at night on 2.30 am to 10 am. *Intehabi intezam*, Pakistan's democracy, is for the wealthy, he says. All denominations, he says – whether Deobandi, or Shi'a, or Wahhabi – are routinely encouraged by Qadri to attend *aman* or peace conferences. They are invited to set violence aside when disputing theological points. He is emphatic, Qadri has called upon the Pakistani State to prohibit the funding of madrassas, such as Saudi funding for Deobandi madrassas and the Iranians for Shi'a schools. He returns at the end of the interview to how PAT has spent *crores* or millions of rupees on the case against those responsible for the attack on Model Town. He calls for a peaceful, *sabaz* or a green revolution through protest – according to the law – to resist police brutality. This is no small thing for a witness to state repression. Ajmal (24) reports that his two classmates were killed on that night after two days in hospital. They had been shot in the head and chest. In the siege, police snipers started targeting individuals ('straight firing') once occupants did not leave the compound but this student – who has directly encountered organised violence by state actors – continues to affirm an alternative to the status quo in explicitly peaceful terms. No FIR (First Information Report) was issued to presumably legitimate the police action in 2014 by identifying rogue elements in the police; facts in a report by a commission to establish the chain of responsibility for the events in Model Town has been 'gambled with' claims a district leader for the student's youth wing of the PAT. Ismail (23) criticises the reluctance to have even the flawed findings published as to who ordered Rana Sanaullah Khan, the Wazir-e-Qanun or Law Minister of the Provincial Assembly in Punjab to authorise the assault. Karim (24) is emphatic that low-ranking constables are being scapegoated in the Lahore High Court. More importantly, he points to the flaw in the election of the President by a minority vote; 'it's the case that votes

can be bought [among the poor] by a burger,' there are three or votes per person. Qadri insists on a biometric system, he says, and a box should be on the ballot for the voter to signal 'None of the above.' And if, he says, 'the turnout remains 50 or 60%, then the nation is truly asleep. But we do not believe this.' For Ajmal, those in parliament (the 'electives') know nothing of Islam, not an *alif* or A. When Islam is separated from the state, he says, 'changezi' or despotism ensues; the call has always been not to change faces but the system ('Chehre nahin nizam badlo'). Until this fundamental reform is achieved, he says, Dr Sahib, Qadri, will not participate in elections. Ajmal relates the ecumenical focus of MQI's mission: the Christian community is welcomed by MQI every Christmas in their own churches, despite criticism from society and on the birthday of the Prophet, Hindus and Sikhs from all over the world attend. MES schools take children from all denominations.

Madrassa Reform

Since the mid-C19th, accountability structures have always existed to hold management responsible to the local community when it comes to the use of donations in madrassas.[27] The role of the teacher's authority in traditional Islamic instruction and study techniques is changing; madrassa education is not a static form.[28] Today, under pressure from donors like USAID and DFID as well as Pakistan's school inspection regime, madrassa curricula are no longer defined according to the personal authority or charisma (*karamat*) of the teacher as *shaikh* (http://www.schools.punjab.gov.pk/, 'Reforming Madrasa Education in Pakistan; Post9/11 Perspectives' (https://admin.umt.edu.pk/Media/Site/UMT/SubSites/jitc/FileManager/JITC%20Spring%202

013/5.%20Madrasa%20Education.pdf). In the UK, Professor Akram Nadwi has developed an *alimiya* course at the Cambridge Islamic College (http://www.cambridgeislamiccollege.org/) and the contemporary needs of Muslim communities are to the fore in training scholars and imams in Islamic pedagogy. For example, the C19th Deoband syllabus, written about by the great academic historian Barbara Metcalf is being taught in the English language at the Ebrahim College in the UK (https://ebrahimcollege.org.uk/).

In the UK at least, madrassa education has adapted practice away from its primary concern, the development of character and knowledge of its students according to the moral example set by the teacher. Instead, the usually secondary and highly professional concern about institutionalizing the transmission of knowledge is now to the fore in terms of fostering Research Learning Communities.[29] The complex question about the *form* this knowledge takes, especially concerning best juridical practice or *sharia*, is accorded less significance when it comes to adherence by the faithful to a non-Muslim state.[30] However, the approach by the Ebrahim College in the UK and Minhaj in Pakistan is designed to help schools; the leadership, teachers and students are encouraged to use research evidence reflexively in order to develop new and effective teaching or other education related strategies. This effort is not entirely new. Some *indigenist* reformist effort to improve the quality of madrassa education, with an Internationalist orientation, have been made but narratives concerning akhlaq here remained exclusively focussed on traditionally individualised precepts of conduct rather than on the collective responsibility owed to people of other faiths, or indeed, to those of no faith. A look at the 'Curriculum Framework for Madrasah Education' report from 2012 (found at https://www.world-federation.org/sites/default/files/Exhibits.pdf.) shows the vast categories of human behaviour that are the object of ethics, especially under the syllabus for akhlaq.

Looking at the madrassa curriculum, one notes that the meaning of respect for other faiths as a value – in Galtung's sense of a dialogue to foster a negative peace in the project to 'de-westernise' – is not present.[31] In the British context, the core elements of modern citizenship for the madrassa curriculum among 30 madrassas were not in conflict with the national curriculum in the experiment. The ICE (Islamic Citizenship Education) project claims that this curriculum was disseminated across 400 madrassas:

[T]he citizenship themes were drawn from the English national curriculum and then Islamised making the content both Islamic and contemporary. Evaluations were wonderfully positive and the final word remains with one student who felt that 'the teaching of citizenship was better in his madrasah than in his school ('Curriculum Framework for Madrasah Education' 2012: 174).'

A contributor this 2012 multi-country study can complain that, in Canada at least, a refusal to accept a family with 'one father and two mothers' means that

Tolerance and diversity stops when it comes to Muslim values…The community is concerned that this fundamental religious nurturing is maintained because spiritual needs of their children are not met by the formal secular education that occurs within wider multicultural society ('Curriculum Framework for Madrasah Education,' 2012: 149).

The report does not document how the ten-year olds in Karachi interpreted the necessity of *jihad.* Since the 7/7 attacks in 2005, it is not surprising that the nature of terrorism formed part of the English national curriculum ('Curriculum Framework for Madrasah Education,' 2012: 30). Unlike the Canadian cleric's comments, the British director of the ICE project does not report how the prohibition against homosexual acts ('huddud for *liwat*,' literally the limits of homosexuality) was taught ('Curriculum Framework for Madrasah Education,' 2012: 40).

The secular mindset, then, can all too easily associate bodies like the MES with dormant reactionary tendencies. Even more frustratingly for them, whatever the managers of this NGO emphatically assert, the political imagination accustomed to perceiving solutions wholesale for Pakistan will be reluctant or incapable of disregarding all those covert efforts by Pakistan's 'deep state.' These receive an airing in public when operations by occasionally go awry; *madaaris* youth, in this view, form the human capital for the agencies of the ISI (Inter-Service-Intelligence), a body that is routinely alleged to be training cadres of insurgent militias via the Haqqani network at places like Dar al-Ulum to carry out assassinations of enemies, both domestic and foreign. Activists and reformers blame these extra-constitutional measures for inflicting suicide bombing (*dehshatgardi*) on civil society as instances of blowback.[32] The PAT activists and the MES managers live in a society where some sectarian enthusiastic support exists as a political fact. The Pakistani public, trained by the media to take Indian intervention seriously does not challenge ISI-trained or supported Taliban militia in attacking embassies in Afghanistan. Although the contexts were different, the exacting of a grim civilian toll on Bombay's streets in 1993 for the demolition of the Babri mosque in Ayodhya, or again on a greater scale in 2008 in the same city, by members of the Lashkar-e-Taiba militia has not, to date, seen mass public rallies against the Pakistani state. The evacuation of religion from Pakistan's schools and madrassas is held to be key for foreign donors.

The U.S government's refusal to designate Pakistan a Country of Particular Concern, at the behest of its own commission in its Annual Report for 2017, despite a growing charge-sheet, represents the fraught but long association between America and its client. In 2016, the USCIRF reports, 'At least 40 individuals have been sentenced to death or are serving life

sentences for blasphemy, including two Christians who [have] received death sentences (http://www.uscirf.gov/reports-briefs/annual-report-chapters-and-summaries/pakistan-chapter-2017-annual-report).' In 2017, the Pakistani courts convicted and imprisoned an Ahmadi and a Shi'a Muslim for five years as well as hearing charges of blasphemy against four Ahmadis under the anti-Ahmadiyya provisions of the Penal Code. Significantly for us, the authors stress that sectarian [sic] violence from terrorist groups and individuals against Christians, Hindus, Ahmadis and Shia Pakistanis is due to 'a deep-rooted climate of impunity that has emboldened extremist actors', a milieu of hostility which is created by *education*:

Provincial textbooks with discriminatory content against minorities remain a significant concern. Reports also continue of forced conversions and marriages of Hindu and Christian girls and women, although the Pakistani government took some positive steps on this issue and made other encouraging gestures toward religious minorities (http://www.uscirf.gov/reports-briefs/annual-report/2016-annual-report).

The message is clear from these observers from the same Islamabad think tank that called for the abolition of textbook boards in 2002: Pakistani children need to be protected from doctrinal views about how exceptional their creed is, including from religious parties like the Jama'at Islami, to be good citizens. The secular elites consider this story among Islamist reformers about the historical necessity and future destiny of a Muslim homeland in South Asia as the regressive obstacle that prevents a modern polity from emerging. The Objectives Resolution is a symbol of populist intransigence. The American-government funded report simply calls this 'bias.' What does bias exactly mean in evidentiary terms? If we look at the SDPI's report in 2011 in more detail, clear evidence for mass indoctrination of poor children in madrassas as the prime cause of communalism is not forthcoming: 'a wide majority of madrassa students interviewed considered religious minorities to be Pakistani citizens, and some even considered

non-Muslims to have rights equal to Muslims and thought that ensuring their rights was the responsibility of the government.[33]

The SDPI's view of Pakistani culture that treated citizenship in a specific mode represents an anxiety shared by most secularists. Ashis Nandy writes how 'One characteristic of the Enlightenment world-view underpinning modernity, to qualify as worthwhile, must be expressed in a language consistent with modernity, particularly with the demands of historical consciousness, the theory of progress, and scientific rationality.'[34] The MES directors, in contrast, are the intellectual descendants of the nineteenth-century men from Muslim elites who debated the future of Muslims under colonial conditions at the Muhammadan Educational Conference.[35] For some of them at least, exemplary forms of behaviour are also a prerequisite for citizenship but for them progress and rationality (*aqaliyat*) are not the enemies of tradition. This structure of feeling predominates among those like the MES and PAT workers who occupy precarious class positions. These lower middle-class, highly educated men are often excluded from preferment because they lack social capital in Pakistan's key institutions like the army and corporate elites. The emphasis on reason as aqaliyat is the most vital element in the positivist values attributed to human nature in Islam; *kirdar* (good character) under the sign of aqaliyat will see their young wards through the race of life. Abd Allah al-Haddad's (d. 1720) allusion to the Quranic verse, in which Muhammad is told by God that 'Assuredly, thou art of a tremendous character,' (*Nabiyun azimun khalquhu l-khuluqu 'l-ladhi/lahu azzama 'r-Rahmanu fi sayyidi 'l-kutbi*) is the rather mundane epitaph Muslim pilgrims discover about their spiritual mentor if they lift their eyes above the entrance to his tomb in Medina.[36] In Muslim orthopraxy, the task of existence is to make nature and character conform to each other; the etymology for both is identical in the noun phrase *khalq,* meaning created nature, or culture. For Qadri's followers, 'Culture in the third sense [culture as resistance] rejects this stipulation

[that western modernity is inevitable] and the assumption that the future shape of all human consciousness was decided once and for all in the seventeenth-century.'[37]

The conservative effort to make nature and culture cohere in individual conduct and human consciousness, decided in the *seventh* century, becomes a vital principle of all self-actualisation for 'men leaving, or deprived of places in a local structure, [who] are attracted to a community defined by a shared High Culture.'[38] The lifelong educational effort centred on establishing *hay'a* (humility/obedience) as a permanent trait of character, begun in childhood – where 'Creation' [*khalq*] and 'character' [*khuluq*] are two expressions which may be used together' in Sufic thought – has its long antecedents in Plato and the Stoical tradition.[39] In short, only character obtains against the chaotic flux of human existence.[40] The focus in our project remains not on the delivery of curricula based on these intangibles but on the private defensive ethos of those responsible for designing a curriculum for over six hundred schools against the chaos of Pakistani politics.

Education and Violence

It is in keeping with Qadri's overtly political agenda with its reformist outlook to see no inconsistency in what the political philosopher of *Shari'a* or Muslim legal practice, Wael Hallaq, describes as the 'totalizing subjectivity' created by the modern state.[41] The practices of faith, of akhlaq, are essential in fostering a *metaphysical* solidarity between the Muslim individual with the ideal community of faith, the *Umma*.[42] The normative impulses of

citizenship are a late arrival. Qadri, then, is no ordinary cleric denouncing Pakistan's politicians for venality every Friday from the pulpit: in 2014, the year of the Model Town killings by police, he drew crowds of 60,000 in Islamabad, along with Imran Khan. Qadri had called for the resignation of Nawaz Sharif, the erstwhile perennial candidate by his party for Prime Minister, because of alleged rigging of the National Assembly elections in 2013 (http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-28817311). In short, the MWO is an NGO that seeks a populist mandate to challenge the failure of traditional Pakistani political elites.

The small group interviewed here is undoubtedly responsible for 'direct constraint' at the intimate level of social interaction.[43] In *modern* pedagogical terms, what else is the ethical focus on discipline in education essentially about? Our attitude in interpreting the data is apiece with the analysis of the small group as 'a mediating form' that '[moderates] individual interests in the face of group goals and conflicting desires.'[44] For example, a director since 2006, whom we will call Sohail, when responding to our question about the challenges facing MES, says

We have raised our voice against *batal* (error), *haqumat-e-waqt se jo takar hai* (because of our fight against the government of the day) and because the state takes money for approving [schools], we are punished for speaking the truth… Children *are* receiving an education in every school but we bring a message of love and peace against sectarian doctrines of violence…There are many hurdles created for us…But there can only be *aman* (peace) if there is love.

This is resistance against a sectarian, not a secular state. The conciliatory tone is institutionally vital for the NGO. As the Model Town incident showed, the ruling party in Punjab acted ruthlessly in 2014 when Qadri was sermonising to protestors atop shipping containers with

Imran Khan during *dharne* (mass sit-ins) in the capital. But we need to practice some objectivity about Sohail's characterisation of patient non-violence. On 1st September, three deaths resulted at the hands of police when Qadri's supporters, after storming and wrecking the national television station, tried to break an entry into the Secretariat, the head office of the federal administration.[45]

Ecumenical elements are present very strongly in the views of the participants. Even when akhlaq is interpreted in a more humanist way, it does not reach far enough to separate state from religion: the history of partition and the sanguinary quest of a Muslim homeland, the activation of the historical sense to cure present maladies, acts as a screen to limit the ambition of Pakistan's liberal elites. Secularism retains its elite associations for the indigenous class formation to which the MES directorate belongs. For Javed (24), with an M. Phil in Islamic banking, the sloganeering for secularism, 'secularism and liberalism *zindabad* (long live),' engaged in by Pakistan's elites is an affront to the long struggle and sacrifice of 2.5 million people; *faith*, not religion, he says, lends nobility to humankind ('insaan ashraf-ul-makhlukat hai'). Javed cites Martin Luther King's reliance on faith in fighting for equality in America, a fight that still endures; for this young acolyte, the 1400-year old religion promises absolute equality: 'There is no black or white, no white is superior, no black is superior, neither an Arab or non-Arab.' What is interesting in this response are the recurrent markers of social exceptionalism for those capable of fostering good character; terms like ashraf-ul-makhlukat, *afzal* predominate and Javed concludes by asserting that 'he who recognizes his nature, recognizes God.' With *zaat*, the mystical or otherworldly qualities Haddad isolated from Quranic *khulq* for character, in commenting on the parable of human excellence to be found in the life of the Prophet, is now also given a class specific quality in Muslim South Asia. Zaat is also caste, class, social position. Daoud, who is 51, and has been working for the MES for 25

years, puts this orientation into its native-progressive context. Daoud recalls efforts by a party founded by Asghar Khan (b. 1921), Pakistan's first Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force, to separate religion from state. He states the following to explain Asghar Khan's call to make Pakistan a republic by separating politics and religion:

But this is true that Pakistan was made in the name of Islam and its existence is also lies in Islam. Politics should be separated from religion when religion fails to guide you in politics. When religion does not have *roshan khyalat*, *nazariat* (an enlightened worldview). When our religion has roshan khyalat [literally, enlightened ideas] and there is no harm to applying them in politics. There is no harm in making Islam the religion of state. There is no issue in making Islam the religion of state. If religion becomes narrowed and suffers limitations, it should be left aside and people should be left free.

For this seasoned observer of Pakistan's turbulent history, Islam offers individuals the autonomy to act as they please; it is clerics who have diminished the enlightened precepts of the original faith. Mohsin, who is Deputy Director of MES, is also optimistic about faith; for him, extremist violence is the consequence of departing from religion. More importantly, as far as the ethos of the MES is concerned, a modern education must broaden the mind but not so far that the individual starts to depart from a shared reality (*asal*): 'Our reality (asal) is as a Muslim…We have a history, we should keep our relationship with that so that a balanced personality can emerge.'

Sohail characterises secularism as *fasaad* (conflict); he cites, respectfully, India's failure to *prevent* countless deaths as a secular state. For Sohail, secularism is a western imposition that fails to improve on the authentic ideal of democracy (*jamhuryat*) and rights *(huqooq)*, of rational dispute between sects and religions that took place in the precincts of the first mosque in Medina in the masterful presence of Muhammad: '*Din-e-fitrat hai* Islam: (Islam is a faith

built on human nature).' After his disquisition on the founders of Pakistan as ideal and reality, how the nation's poet, Mohammad Allama Iqbal, and the Quaid or Great Leader, M. A. Jinnah's faith, informed that vision, Sohail concludes that exhortations to pray, *namaaz parho* to people of other faiths, to Christians, is wrong. He emphasises that people from different sects and religions came to dispute with the Prophet but their converting to Islam was never made a precondition before entering the mosque. The historical veracity of these claims is not the point; in meeting secularism as world-view, we see the MES directorate interpret their role according to the three tenets Nandy cited as a precondition of modernity: subject your faith to an historical consciousness; let it be a product of evolution (progress); and use reason (*aqal*) to solve social conflicts.

Returning to Sohail, secularism is deeply inimical (*zulm*, a tyranny) to children; teaching *it* will inevitably erode the moral foundation of their character, he says. What is epistemologically interesting is the differentiation he draws between those whose native ethos is strong enough to resist its appeal and those vulnerable masses for whom a secular outlook will fail to conform to nature (*fitrat*). This understanding is similar to Daoud's faith in the religion's ability to impart an enlightened view of the world to its adherents. Sohail's daughter attends Aghosh Grammar, a school of 500 orphans (*yatim*); the *same* education is given to these children as fee-paying pupils 'so that they do not become victims of any conflict.' This is what Sohail says about what secularism means:

Siwae fasad (conflict) aur kuch nahin [jocular tone]. It is the cause of a loss of many lives lost. Many people die in our neighbourhood, with our Indian neighbours in Bharat [India] [in a respectful tone]. If we read Islam's principles, God says that these are *zapta hyat* [essential laws of human nature]…Secularism [in English] only

spreads evil…if humankind [*insan*] goes towards naturalism [in English], if we naturally [in English] observe, we will see that it is *din-e-fitrat*. And when *din-e-fitrat* takes people towards education, then they discover their purpose. If we teach secularism to our children, then we are practicing *zulm* [injustice, tyranny] towards them, *sitam*. We should end this thing.

It *may* very well be the case that out of all Pakistan's institutions, its manifold tiny publics, its schools turn out to be the most important mechanism for passing off private ideals as an unrealised and for some, unrealisable, self-image of the nation as a *culturally* Islamic polity. The army, the seminary, the village council or *panchayat*, the *mohalla* or neighbourhood all function as secondary elaborations. The historical appeal made by M. A. Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, to 'the structurally weak Muslim segment of the Indian bourgeoisie' may be continuing apace today, bypassing 'the entire trajectory of bourgeois nationalism on the one hand [and] the Communist movement on the other.'[46] This might be why Pakistan is often afflicted by gross instances of social breakdown. For Sohail, Hindi films, Bollywood has the power to spoil beliefs in 'two minutes'; 'they spoil our children.' Secularism is the cause of conflict for this director of education. But what we do notice, in the shrewd observation by Aijaz Ahmad is that an elite nationalism is as distant as the Marxist cadres that make up the metropolitan centres in South Asia. How best to use the resources available to MES in helping reduce communal predation? We now turn to this.

Both the 32-year old Director for Curriculum and Training, Farooq, who has been with MES since 2011 and the older Assistant Director of Education for the MES, Mukhtar, a Persianist with a keen interest in the canon of Pakistan's national poet-philosopher 'Allama' Iqbal (1877 – 1938), offered traditional definitions of secularism as freedom to practice religion. For many ordinary Pakistanis, the best institutional manifestation of self-discipline as the origin for

collective solidarity remains the most repressive of apparatuses of state: the army. This is a partial explanation as to *why* survey findings amongst 18 – 29-year-old Pakistanis, when asked whether democratic governance has declined in recent years, prefer solutions in Islamic or *Shari'a* norms (38%) or in military rule (32%) rather than a mere 29% for 'civilian' democracy.[47]

In Mukhtar, a retired ranking officer from Pakistan's Air Force, director since 2013 but working for the movement since 1995 'in different capacities,' the MES has not avoided recruiting from one of Pakistan's two most important power establishments. Mukhtar states that Ahmadis should certainly not be subjected to violence, to do so is unnatural, un-Islamic, barbaric and disadvantageous to national progress; in the four walls (*char diwari*) of their places of worship (*ibadat gau*), Ahmadis, although declared non-Muslim by the state, should enjoy their freedom as a non-Muslim minority, akin to Christians. The white strip in Pakistan's flag symbolises Pakistan's non-Muslim minorities, he says. In fact, Mukhtar asserts, the challenges facing MES include *badgumani*, general stigma because of their steadfast refusal to declare the many Shi'a and Christian children as *kafir* or infidels. The literary ex-military man goes on: MES are working for *moderation* in the young to combat the ill repute that fanatics bring to Islam and Pakistan. The MES, via its syllabus and institutions, are not just for education; a national-party strategy (PAT); the Minhaj-ul-Quran Women's League, the Minhaj Student's Movement are all cited: '*Mu'ashere ko moderate banane ke liye*, (to make the culture moderate).' Mukhtar talks about the manipulation of emotion in a young man that is required to commit suicide bombing in schools, what jihad is this? He refuses to name the Jama'at or any religious party but describes how the factions fostered by the Pakistani state are now returning to plague civil society. As a child, he saw the death of many beautiful youths in communal strife, what is the cause of this violence? He joined the armed forces to find a

solution since every individual seeks to belong to a society greater than itself. If secularism means no religion, Mukhtar emphatically states, or if it means no part for *deen aur mazhab*, faith or religion, in norms of governance or culture, then that is impossible: 'to end injustice and to establish justice is the purpose of Islam.' For Mukhtar, Christianity itself is also Islam, 'we cannot be Muslims without heeding the message of Christianity.' He cites the history of violence against philosophers and scientists by Pope and clergy in Europe's long past: 'and this fostered hatred amongst the educated when *insaani* thought (humanist knowledge), which is human nature, was censored; Islam is a complete code of life.' When asked whether only secularism can guarantee equal citizenship, Mukhtar answers that all beliefs and practices must be respected, ought we to doubt the '*Pakistaniyat* of people'?

For Mukhtar, the different sects (*aqaaed*) of Islam, Shi'a and Sunni, or Wahhabis, Barelvis, are different interpretations but the foundations of belief are identical, with the exception of the Qadiani (Ahmadi) sect that contravenes the law, on the small matter of the principle of Islam, of *khatme nabawut*, termination of prophet-hood. This diversity, instead of being the cause of schism, *fitna*, is akin to a fragrant bouquet of different flowers. For Farooq, the director for curriculum and training, secularism is also about the freedom of religion: 'Bilkul hai (there certainly is). And so there should be. Secularism is that people should be and *are* free in their region, in your country or in their institutions to practice their faith.' When we pressed Farooq, and asked whether the state gives Pakistanis equal citizenship, he moves in an overtly political direction, unlike the ex-officer:

That is another matter. It cannot grant this right. It may be the case in Pakistan that about 1% are prohibited from practicing their faith in their educational institutions but 99% are free to do so, do the 99% enjoy their rights in

the culture? Rights are not founded in religion but in the *political realm* (emphatically *syasi*). *Mazhabi laug to istimal hote hein syasi laugun se* (The faithful are used by politicians). And the *shiddat* (violence) at the heart of these groups is planted by politicians. They have bought the powerful in these groups/strata (*tabka*); they make social conflicts acute according to the principle of divide and rule [in English]. The basis of Human Rights (*Adme-haquq*) in Pakistan is political, not religious. Until the political realm (*syasi nizam*) is not completely reformed, there will be no progress with rights; you may give as much freedom as you like. In fact, freedom [without complete reform] will make matters worse.

When asked whether this parlous state of affairs was because of secularism, Farooq replies: 'Indeed. Until we have this radical reform, competent [in English] and talented people will not emerge. These worthies that cannot even write their names and are elevated by money.' Unlike Sohail and Mukhtar, for Farooq, the public realm is in need of wholesale reform for Human Rights to even have a chance of being protected. Let us take the views on the teaching of English when it comes to one of the most recent moral entrepreneurs to the MES directorate. Saleem designs the curriculum from years 1 to 7, from age six to mid-secondary. What we quickly learn, in common with the other participants we interviewed, was that the species of moral entrepreneurship at MES does not operate with an absolute ethic.[48] If you are going to use the culture's resources to shape the modern nation, an absolute ethic is ontologically unfeasible. Saleem, a graduate in Applied Linguistics, from Sargodha University has been with MES for only two years, he remained emphatic about the way English Literature provided 'universality' to a curriculum because it provided MES pupils with a view of other cultures. The chief *ideological* aim of the curriculum, however, was to promote 'moral values' (in English). This functional view about the didactic power of English literature has a long colonial pedigree.[49] 'The moral values' which MES are inculcating in children does not derive from English Literature. For this idealist, whose vocation remains strong despite the historical failures Freire and others have noted, moral education comes from Islam as ideology.

Secularism is 'alienation from the religion,' he says in English, 'in one sense' but he goes on to qualify this doctrinaire view about the risk for Muslims by half apologetically alluding to vague existential notions about some who *choose* to experience universality 'beyond religious circles' beyond 'boundaries,' or 'circles.' 'They don't like to spend their lives in a religious circle (in English),' Saleem states. The greatest obstacle to the work of MES lies in the misconception that the reformist group is a madrassa, an *adara* (organisation) for *maulvis* (clerics): 'maulviism is a stereotypical belief (in English), '*maulvi ka matlab hai jis se wali bane*', not just someone who calls the faithful to pray and leads a congregation, 'a maulvi is someone who helps society.' *Wali* is a complicated concept to translate; it has connotations of spiritual authority, it means saint, beloved of God, he who exists simultaneously on a miraculous plane of self-knowledge and protects the vision of human perfectibility through faith.

For ordinary life, our research project's emphasis on political secularism as a potential solution to the problem of episodic communal violence had to be carefully allied to the concept of citizenship, *shehri haquq*. To the MES directorate, citizenship by development agencies entails the urgent necessity of revoking the Penal Code's blasphemy laws. When asked whether secularism is the best way of establishing citizen's rights, Saleem gave an interesting analogy. At first, he acknowledged citizens' rights as literally a city-dweller's rights, an odd-sounding locution that is sociologically correct: citizenship, as an historical assemblage in early modern Europe, is also impossible without mass urbanisation in the Global South.[50] These rights *ought* to be implemented to reduce violence, Saleem states but after reflection, he asks us to consider the dilemma facing a manager who wants to treat all staff from different religions in an organisation equally: 'what if you need to go beyond religious practices to give them their rights? Is their religious circle then consistent with your aim?' The issue for Saleem is about

the degree of minimal rights or a negative conception of religious freedom to be allowed. This is the central paradox from our findings between the 'rights' (*haquq*) afforded a man or woman as part of their faith community and the state's duty to protect the modern rights of their citizens, including, in the case of communal violence, *from each other*. *Deeni haquq* or the rights of man according to Providence have a transcendental quality, as Saleem's conception of *wali* as the custodian of *haq* or the Truth suggests.

Conclusion

The associative task by MES management centres on developing a child's character when facing the structural properties of Pakistan's deeply unequal society. An Islamic ethos of self-discipline is evoked so that the aleatory incentives of civic engagement against a background of normalised violence may be more effectively acquired by their students, 'the caught and taught' of character alluded to by specialists at the Jubilee Centre in the UK.

Our qualitative data shows a character-based educational practice for children-as-citizens is given a variety of qualities against a backdrop of great uncertainty of prospects and of normalized violence. The MES is placed in a complex nexus of action and reaction. For Qadri's followers, building character is a civic mission in the environs of an intensely hierarchical civil society where the moral technologies of the self, perfected according to *Shariatic* practice, see agency in terms of instilling a discipline where the self (*nafas*) is to be treated as a *unique* object of self-control. Whilst the MES is not a group that seeks to subvert the authority of the Pakistani state by placing 'character' at the centre of its practice, it certainly is attempting to

compensate for the *failure* of the state to guarantee the minimum conditions of human flourishing. The political workers for the PAT reject violence as a means of legitimating their claim for a space in Pakistan's civil society. Qadri's mass movement, the MQI seeks to deliver the social benefits of fundamental political reform to most Pakistanis but this effort to change the system and not the faces, in the mantra voiced by an activist, can only be done by adhering to the leader's vision. The *wali's* voice is the pattern of Islam for them. The activists and ideologues we interviewed, however, were also acutely conscious that Qadri's endeavour was only possible after making some totalising claims for their young 'subjects.' Why should we object to *their* claim to universality by faith that European governing elites have been doing more successfully now for over a century in the name of scientific progress?

Notes

[1] Parashar, Swati, 'Discursive (in)securities and postcolonial anxiety: Enabling excessive militarism in India,' *Security Dialogue* 49, 2018, (pp 136 – 48), p. 130.

[2] Tilly, Charles, *The Politics of Collective Violence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp 52 -3.

[3] Yasmeen, Samina, *Jihad and Dawah – Evolving Narratives of Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jamat ud Dawah*. London: Hurst, 2017, p. 23.

[4] Hoffer, Eric, *The True Believer.* Harper: New York, 2010, p. 130

[5] Brown, Vahid and Don Rassler, *Fountainhead of Jihad – The Haqqani Nexus, 1973 – 2012*. London: Hurst, 2013, p. 38.

[6] Saeed, Sadia, *Politics of Desecularization – Law and the Minority Question in Pakistan.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018, p. 24.

[7] Gilmartin, David, *Civilisation and Modernity – Narrating the Creation of Pakistan*. New Delhi: Yoda Press, 2014, p. 105.

[8] Nandy, Ashis, *Bonfire of Creeds – The Essential Ashis Nandy.* Delhi: University of Oxford, 2010, p. 431.

[9] Saeed, *Desecularization*, p. 35.

[10] Galtung, John, *Peace by Peaceful Means – Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization.* London: Sage, 1996, p. 10.

[11] Akhtar, Aasim, 'Dreams of a Secular Republic: Elite Alienation in Post-Zia Pakistan,' *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 2016, 46: 4, (pp. 641 – 58).

[12] Nayyar, A. H and Salim, Ahmad, *The Subtle Subversion – The State of Curricula and Textbooks in Pakistan*, Sustainable Development Policy Institute, 2003, Islamabad: Pakistan.

[13] Freire, Paulo, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* London: Penguin, 1996, p. 50 – 1.

[14] Jaffrelot, Christophe, *The Pakistan Paradox – Instability and Resilience.* London: Hurst and Company, 2013, pp. 217, 232.

[15] Pandey, Gyanendra, *Routine Violence: Nations, Fragments, Histories.* California: Stanford University Press, 2006, p. 1. Lall, Marie, 'Educate to Hate: The Use of Education in the Creation of Antagonistic National Identities in India and Pakistan,' *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 31: 8, 2008, (pp. 103 – 119). Durrani, Naureen and Máiréad Dunne, 'Curriculum and National Identity: Exploring the Links between Religion and Nation in Pakistan,' *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 42:2, 2010, (pp. 215-240).

[16] Gregory, Shaun, 'Under the Shadow of Islam: The Plight of the Christian Minority in Pakistan,' *Contemporary South Asia*, 20:2, 2012, (pp. 195-212), p. 197.

[17] Julius, Qaiser, 'The Experience of Minorities under Pakistan's Blasphemy Laws,' *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations*, 27:1, 2016, (pp. 95-115), p. 96.

[18] Gregory, *Shadow*, pp. 206 – 7.

[19] Arthur, James, Kristján Kristjánsson, Tom Harrison, Wouter Sanderse and Daniel Wright. 2017. *Teaching Character and Virtue in Schools.* New York: Routledge, pp. 122 – 32. Morgan, Nicky, *Taught not Caught: Educating for 21st Century Character.* Woodbridge: John Catt Educational, 2017.

[20] Saeed, *Desecularisation*, p. 37.

[21] Metcalf, Barbara, *Islamic Contestations – Essays on Muslims in India and Pakistan.* Delhi. Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 219.

[22] Asad, Talal, *Formations of the Secular – Christianity, Islam, Modernity.* California: Stanford University Press, 2003, p. 5. Billig, Michael, *Banal Nationalism*, 1995, London: Sage.

[23] Fine, Gary, *Tiny Publics – A Theory of Group Action and Culture*, 2012, New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

[24] Freire, *Pedagogy*, p. 51.

[25] Juergensmeyer, Mark in Calhoun, Craig et al., *Rethinking Secularism*, 2011, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 185.

[26] Juergensmeyer, *Rethinking Secularism*, p. 185.

[27] Metcalf, Barbara, *Islamic Revival in British India, Deoband, 1860 – 1900,* 1982, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, p. 20.

[28] Moosa, Ebrahim, *What is a Madrassa?,* 2015, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

[29] Brown, Chris, 'Research learning communities: How the RLC approach enables teachers to use research to improve their practice and the benefits for students that occur as a result,' 2017, *Research for All*, 1 (2), (pp. 387–405).

[30] Berkey, Jonathan, *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo – A Social History of Islamic Education,* 1992, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

[31] Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means*, p. 3.

[32] Hoodbhoy, Pervez, "Can Pakistan Work? A Country in Search of Itself," *Foreign Affairs*, 2004, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/reviews/review-essay/2004-11-01/can-pakistan-work-country-search-itself. Ali, Saleem, *Islam and Education: Conflict and Conformity in Pakistan's Madrassahs*, 2009, Oxford: Oxford University Press. Kiessling, Hein, *Faith, Unity, Discipline – The ISI of Pakistan,* 2016, London: Hurst and Company.

[33] Hussain, Azhar and Arif Naveed, *Connecting the Dots: Education and Religious Discrimination in Pakistan – A Study of Public Schools and Madrassas*, 2011, United States Commission on International Freedom, p. 98. The report is available at http://sdpi.org/.

[34] Nandy, *Bonfire of Creeds*, p. 309.

[35] Seth, Sanjay, *Subject Lessons – The Western Education of Colonial India*, 2007. Durham: Duke University Press, p. 112.

[36] Al-Ghazali, Abu Hamid, *On Disciplining the Soul*, 2015, Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, p. v

[37] Nandy, *Bonfire of Creeds*, p. 309.

[38] Hallaq, Wael, *The Impossible State – Islam, Politics, and Modernity's Moral Predicament*, 2014, New York: Columbia University Press, p. 196. Gellner, Ernest, *Encounters with Nationalism*, 1997, Oxford: Blackwell, p. 179.

[39] Al-Ghazali, *Disciplining the Soul*, p. 16.

[40] MacIntyre, Alasdair, *After Virtue – A Study in Moral Theory*, 2007, London: Duckworth, p. 141.

[41] Hallaq, *Impossible State*, p. 104.

[42] Hallaq, *Impossible State*, p. 104.

[43] Fine, *Tiny Publics*, 21.

[44] Fine, *Tiny Publics*, 21.

[45] Jaffrelot, *Pakistan Paradox*, p. 289.

[46] Ahmad, Aijaz, *Lineages of the Present – Ideology and Politics in Contemporary South Asia*, 2000, London: Verso, p. 102.

[47] Markey, Daniel, *No Exit from Pakistan – America's Tortured Relationship with Islamabad,* 2013, New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 32 – 33.

[48] Becker, Howard, *Outsiders – Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*, 1991, New York: The Free Press, p. 148.

[49] Viswanathan, Gauri, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India*, 1989, New York: Columbia University Press.

[50] Sassen, Saskia, *Territory, Authority, Rights – From Medieval to Global Assemblages*, p. 2006, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, pp. 68 – 9.