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The Influence of Islam on Pakistani Nationalism Towards Kashmir

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Understanding the close relationship between Islam and nationalism, which have historically been treated as two contesting concepts, is central to fully comprehend the complexity of major crises with strong regional consequences, such as the Kashmiri conflict. Kashmir characterises the very epitome of the dispute between the neighbouring nuclear powers Pakistan and India in a region which houses more than one-fifth of humanity, and where the possibility of a full-scale military confrontation is strongly present.

The emphasis and reliance by Pakistani leaders on Islam to fuel irredentist-type nationalism among the Pakistani public towards Kashmir, has been central to the continuing importance of the conflict. Irredentist-type nationalism means the preference of nationalists in one state for greater autonomy, for whom they consider co-nationals in another state, and the wish for “unification of all co-nationals in one state”. From an instrumentalist view (the idea that factors like religion are used as instruments for attaining specific goals), the Pakistani leadership has instrumentalized Islam to fuel irredentist-type nationalism in Pakistan to fulfil their own goals. Primordialism (the idea that group identity is inherently given, and religion is an independent identity factor creating conflict) contends that such border transcending emotions have their basis in Islam, where the Islamic character of both societies naturally leads to irredentist-type nationalism. Although the discussion about primordialism and instrumentalism has been a topic for scholarly debate for many years, little attention has been given to the study of Islam in a nationalistic context. It is the traditional view of mutual opposition imposed on the relationship between nationalism and Islam this paper seeks to challenge, and to give a better understanding of the role of Islam in the Pakistan-Kashmir relations. To do this, the following question will be answered: How has Islam influenced irredentist-type nationalism in Pakistan vis-à-vis Kashmir?

First, a short explanation to the concept of irredentist-type nationalism and the relationship between Islam and the general concept of nationalism will be given. Afterwards, the theoretical framework of the paper will be presented, which includes the theories of instrumentalism and primordialism, followed by a methodology chapter that explains the main ways in which the research question will be answered and studied. The research will mainly focus on an instrumentalist approach, with primordialism as an alternative explanation to how Islam has influenced irredentist-type nationalism in Pakistan towards Kashmir. In the analysis section, both theories will be used to examine some selected aspects of the case, such as (1) the idea of one Muslim “ummah”, and (2) the role of Pakistani leaders in the Islamization of Pakistani nationalism, mainly through the promotion of jihadism. Lastly, a conclusion will be drawn.

Irredentist-Type Nationalism

Irredentist-type nationalism (from now on referred to as irredentist nationalism), “represents the preferences of nationalists within a homeland state for higher level of self-determination of co-nationals” within another state, under the control of a foreign government. The goal of irredentist nationalism is to end the control of the foreign government over whom the homeland state considers to be their co-nationals, as well as to integrate the co-nationals and the geographical area on which they live into the homeland state. From a Pakistani viewpoint, Muslims in Kashmir represent the co-nationals of Pakistan (the homeland state) under the forced control of the foreign government of India, where Pakistan wishes for a closer integration of the Kashmiri people and its area into their own state.

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Islam and Nationalism

The concept of nationalism includes “a sentiment or [collective] consciousness of belonging to the nation”. The reason for this is that although nationalism can be used by different actors and for a variety of reasons (e.g. for irredentist purposes), in all cases it is based on the idea of a shared national identity. For a while, scholarly work on the role of Islam in national contexts tended to view “the relationship between Islam and nationalism in oppositional terms, both as ideologies trying to eliminate the other” . On the one hand, Islam represented a trans-regional extending tradition, while nationalism on the other hand was portrayed as a secular modernity. However, prominent scholars of nationalism, such as Ernest Gellner, have argued against such a dualistic view of Islam and nationalism, observing: “Thus in Islam, and only in Islam, purification/modernisation on the one hand, and the re-affirmation of a putative old local identity on the other, can be done in one and the same language and set of symbols.”

The analysis of this paper is thus built on the assumption that Islam and nationalism are indeed two concepts that are connected to each other, where the use of one of them does not exclude the use of the other concept in the same sphere. Accordingly, the relationship between Islam and nationalism can be seen in the way in which Islam plays a central role in forming a collective consciousness, whether such awareness is seen as something given (primordialism) or constructed as a mean for a specific goal (instrumentalism).

Instrumentalism and Primordialism

Instrumentalism looks at how ideational factors such as religion and ethnicity are concentrated and used in strictly instrumental ways, often by individuals such as state leaders and elites to fulfil material interests as “a [mean] to their own ends”. Applied to the case, Islam has been used by the Pakistani leadership (especially military leaders), as well as by other interest groups and jihadists, as a tool to fuel irredentist nationalism in order to achieve their own socio-economic and foreign policy goals, which include the goal of establishing strong domestic popularity among the Pakistani public.

Primordialism, on the other hand, is an approach that emphasizes group identity as given and assumes that in all societies there exist particular primordial relations and attachments among people, based on factors such as blood, race and religion. Jack Eller and Reed Coughlan summarize the concept of primordialism with three main ideas, which together place the primordial theory outside the sphere of what is considered socially constructed sentiments and unity:

1. “the ‘given’, a priori, underived nature of primordial attachments, which precedes all social interaction;
2. their ineffable, overpowering, coercive qualities;
3. the emotional, affective nature of primordial sentiments and attachments.”

Thereby, primordialism does not see Islam and the irredentist nationalist sentiment it brings with it as a means to achieve any other goal, but rather as a goal in itself and as something that exists independently of any policy-related objective. Thus, the Islamic faith in itself has in the past and is currently fuelling irredentist nationalism, based on essential values of the religion, such as the belief of all Muslims belonging to a single ummah. This further fosters a need in the Muslims of Pakistan to help Muslims in Kashmir through for instance jihadism in their struggle against the foreign government of India.

Methodology

The analytical approach of this paper is to first examine the instrumentalist arguments, followed by an alternative explanation in light of primordialism, to determine how the two theories explain the way in which Islam has influenced irredentist nationalism in Pakistan vis-à-vis Kashmir.

Instrumentalism on the one hand looks at how Islam is actively used in order to fuel irredentist nationalism for specific policy and socio-economic goals. Such objectives (which are also the factors that will be examined empirically in order to study the case) include: (1) create a common Islamic identity to unite and rule a fragmented public; (2)

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integration of Kashmir into Pakistan, in order to correct a historical “injustice” from partition; (3) retaining power by establishing domestic popularity and legitimacy; and (4) obtain financial contributions from external actors for economic gains.

Primordialism, on the other hand, looks at how Islam itself naturally leads to irredentist nationalism, and where Islam is not instrumentalized for any specific goal. In order to study the primordialist relation between Islam and irredentist nationalism in Pakistan, the paper will examine: (1) how the deep transcendental connections following primordial attachments through Islam, such as the “ummah” idea, inherently lead to the development of irredentist nationalism in Pakistan towards Kashmir; and (2) how this further fosters a need in Pakistani Muslims to help Kashmiri Muslims through jihadism, in what the jihadists perceive to be their moral and religious struggle against India.

In this paper more emphasis is placed on instrumentalist argumentation, while primordialism is included more as an alternative explanatory paradigm to examine a different way in which Islam has influenced irredentist nationalism. There are two main reasons for the emphasis given to instrumentalism:

1. This paper is built on a most-likely case study. Most-likely cases are those where “a theory is likely to provide a good explanation if it applies to any cases”, and such studies often raise doubt on the theory if it does not fit to the case. Based on the empirical material gathered for this paper, the here analysed case seems to fit the theory of instrumentalism very well. This theory should therefore (most likely) be able to largely explain the case theoretically.
2. The content of the theory itself gives instrumentalism a higher relevance of applicability in this case. Primordialism is a more narrowly focused theory, mostly limited to sentiments and inner motivations, whereas instrumentalism has a broader focus which allows for the gathering of a larger variation of empirical data. Consequently, instrumentalism addresses a broader spectre of elements that are included in complex conflicts, hence the emphasis on instrumentalist argumentation. Nevertheless, the utility of primordialism is that it fills in information where instrumentalism might not be as relevant. There are also studies that argue for the relevance of primordialism in explaining different phenomena connected to identity. This underlines the continuing relevance of the theory, and thus for the use of it as an alternative theory in this paper.

Much of the paper’s empirical data was, as a result of its theoretical character, mainly acquired through document analysis, in which central scholarly contributions in books, academic papers, think tank and international organization reports, news articles and speeches have been examined and analysed. It is acknowledged that the application of mostly secondary literature presents its challenges when it comes to the validity of the research. Nevertheless, obtaining data and empirical material through document analysis is the most practical method for this study. Furthermore, because of verifiability reasons, it might also contribute to shedding new light on earlier contributions to the topic.

The Case of Kashmir

Prior to the partition of 1947, the Indian sub-continent was a colony under the British Raj. A frequently used strategy by the British colonisers were the divide-and-rule policies, which included putting Hindus and Muslims up against each other in terms of sectarian issues. In the end, the partition was based on religious divisions – so that Muslim majority areas made up Pakistan, while Hindu majority areas made up India. Of all the princely states of India only Jammu and Kashmir (JK) had a Hindu prince ruling over a Muslim majority population. During the partition, India argued the Hindu prince had decided to join India, while Pakistan made the irredentist claim that the area should be included in their country based on the Muslim-majority living there. The prince of JK initially wanted independence from both countries. As violence increased, Pakistan pressured Kashmir to join it through the use of force. The Kashmiri prince consequently agreed to India’s demand of joining the country in return for assistance against Pakistan.

The following analysis will further examine the role of Islam as an instrument in fuelling irredentist nationalism among Pakistanis, or whether (from a primordialist viewpoint) defining the quest for Kashmir as something of only

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instrumental value is misleading.

The Idea of the Muslim “Ummah”

The concept of the Muslim “ummah” refers to the political ideal of the Muslim community and encompasses the importance of Muslim unity. It stems from the idea that all Muslims despite their geographical location, ethnic background or race, share the connection to the same Islamic faith. The following part will examine how Islam has influenced irredentist nationalism in Pakistan towards Kashmir, with focus on the idea of “ummah”.

Through the Lens of Instrumentalism

An instrumentalist argument looks at how Islam has been used as a tool by Muslim elites to fuel irredentist nationalism for the creation of Pakistan. Here the use of and emphasis on Islamic symbols, such as Muslim unity based on the “ummah” idea, has been central in the attempt to mobilize Muslims of northwest India against Indian rule. The reason for the desire to mobilize the Muslims of the areas to which parts of today’s Kashmir and Pakistan belong, was that British policy at the time seemed to be anti-Muslim and thus, from the perspective of the Pakistani elite, favoured Hindus and others. This made Islam a valuable and convenient instrument to promote irredentist nationalism in order to unite Pakistani and Kashmiri Muslims against India. Furthermore, Muhammad Ali Jinnah (Pakistan’s first Governor-General) wanted to achieve a stronger Muslim unity in order to protect the rights of the Muslim minority against what was perceived as a “permanent Hindu threat”. The Muslim elites were convinced that the separation of the western United Provinces (today’s Pakistan and Kashmir) and Bengal to create a single Muslim state was necessary to secure the rights of Muslims. However, were the goals of the elite at the time, who pushed for the creation of an independent Pakistan, so simple in that they merely wanted to protect the rights of Muslims against Hindus? It could be argued that the reason why Muslim elites wanted to use Islam to fuel irredentist nationalism was to maintain their positions of power in a separate Pakistan, as these elites legitimized their elite positioning through Islam. Consequently, Islam can be seen as instrumentalized by the Muslim elites to foment irredentist nationalism, both for Pakistan’s independence and for their personal goal of maintaining their positions of power in a separate Pakistan.

From an instrumentalist view, another central argument focuses on the national identity of Pakistan, seeing as Kashmir plays a vital role in how Pakistan defines itself as a Muslim country. To be content with the fact that Kashmir is to remain a part of India after partition could imply that a Muslim-majority area does not have to be part of a Muslim political entity, but can also exist within a Hindu-majority Indian state. This would not only weaken the principles of Muslim identity that Pakistan is built on, but also challenge the arguments of unity that Jinnah and other elites furthered prior to independence. It is also important to point out that neither the Muslim population in Pakistan nor in Kashmir are similar in their practice of Islam, even if the mere tie to the Islamic faith connects them to the same “ummah”. This observation matters, not only because Muslims in Pakistan feel a natural affinity with Muslims in Kashmir through their Islamic attachment, but because the irredentist nationalism that drives the quest for Kashmir can be instrumentalized by Pakistani leaders. For example, the emphasis on the “ummah” connection between the Pakistani and Kashmiri people to strengthen irredentist nationalism could be seen by politicians as a means to prove their Islamic credibility. That is because retaining power and political legitimacy in Pakistan is closely tied to Islam, which accordingly accentuates the importance of the use of Islam as a tool for political leaders. Islam has thus been used by politicians as a tool to fuel irredentist nationalism, to increase their own domestic legitimacy within society and to remain in power, as well as to preserve Pakistan’s Islamic identity with its base in Muslim unity.

The use of Islam to strengthen irredentist nationalism can also be seen as a means of persuading the government to take a stronger stance on the Kashmir issue. Such advocates include groups in Pakistan who are deeply devoted to the Kashmiri issue and in keeping Pakistan familiar with its Islamic character. Indeed, Marc Gaborieau has put forth that the politics surrounding religion can be “characterized as outbidding: by putting the stakes higher and higher, the religious groups compelled the modernizing elites to concessions on the religious nature of the state”. Just as Pakistani politicians are being pushed to take a strong stand on domestic issues concerning Islam, they may also be pressed to take a stronger irredentist positioning towards Kashmir. Hence, Islam is again being instrumentalized to fuel irredentist nationalism towards Kashmir, both by politicians for the sake of increased legitimacy, as well as by

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other key actors and interest groups in Pakistan who advocate for keeping Pakistan Islamic.

Alternative Explanation: Primordialism

The relevance of the application of primordialism to the aspect of “ummah” in relation to the case of irredentist nationalism towards Kashmir is, for many, based on the fact that Pakistan has, since partition, regarded Kashmir as something more than a territorial issue. The aforementioned assumption is based on a primordialist perspective, and thus the case of Kashmir from such a viewpoint is perceived by Pakistanis as a moral responsibility. Further from this line of thought stems the belief that the Pakistani public owes it to their Kashmiri brothers and sisters in faith to advocate and fight for their self-determination from the Indian state. That is because Kashmir is envisioned as an inherent part of Pakistan, based on the primordial attachment that connects the people to the same “ummah”. In other words, the fight for Kashmir from a primordialist perspective is seen as a unification-of-the-ummah project.

The primordialist rationale on which the integration of Kashmir into Pakistan is further justified, is through the use of symbolic rhetoric by the state leadership with the aim of conveying a romanticised view of the relationship between Pakistani and Kashmiri Muslims. The use of symbolic Islamic rhetoric may be seen as a primordialist argument, because the very essence of primordialism is to address inner motivations which symbolic rhetoric arguably expresses. For example, in 1947 Pakistan challenged the accession of Kashmir to India on the grounds that Kashmir had a majority Muslim population. The first Pakistani Prime Minister (PM), Liaquat Ali Khan, used a primordialist reasoning based on the “ummah” idea to substantiate his irredentist argument about the inclusion of Kashmir into Pakistan:

“Geographically, economically, culturally and religiously, Kashmir is part of Pakistan due to the overwhelming Muslim character of its population (...), the flow of its rivers, the direction of its roads (...), the continual intimate association which binds it to the people of Pakistan (...), link Kashmir indissolubly with Pakistan.”

With such a language of primordialist character, which even speaks of the natural characteristics of Kashmir as something that inherently links the Kashmiri Muslims to those of Pakistan, further speaks to the role of the “ummah” idea in strengthening irredentist sentiment. This additionally strengthens the perception of Kashmir as an inherent part of Pakistan. Other examples of the use of primordialist language that fuel irredentist nationalism include statements by the President of JK, Sardar Masood Khan. In a meeting in December last year, Khan said that “the Muslim Ummah is like a human body. The pain endured by our Kashmiri (...) brothers is felt by the entire Ummah”, further painting the cause for Kashmiri incorporation into Pakistan as a project of ummah-unification. This again is driven by the irredentist sentiments that it reinforces among Muslims in both areas.

Moreover, in their quest for Muslim separatism, Pakistan’s founding fathers, Muhammad Iqbal and Jinnah frequently termed Muslim culture as the core of the Muslim national identity, which Pakistan from their point of view was essentially built on. This suggests that although Jinnah and Iqbal were aware of the vast cultural diversity within the Muslim community, they were firmly convinced that the “ummah” idea was the unifying force of the Muslims in Pakistan and Kashmir and went beyond the different regional cultures. Nevertheless, the bond created by the common belonging to the Muslim community was not enough to stop, for example, the secession of East Pakistan in 1979, which today forms Bangladesh. In hindsight, the separation of Bangladesh from Pakistan had two consequences central to the case of irredentist nationalism facing Kashmir. Firstly, it can be argued that Bangladesh’s independence has demonstrated the inaccuracy of the claim that in reality there has ever been an inherent primordial attachment that has connected all Muslims in South Asia to one another through the idea of being part of one “ummah”. Secondly, following the latter proposition, one can continue to ask: if the Islamic faith in itself is not capable of being the basis of national integration between Pakistan and Kashmir, what prerogative does Pakistan have over its fellow Muslims in Kashmir?

The Islamization of Pakistani Nationalism and Jihadism

The following section examines and discusses how Islam has influenced Pakistani irredentist nationalism towards Kashmir, focusing on the Islamization of Pakistani society by former Pakistani leaders, and how this is further related

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to the promotion of jihadism towards Kashmir.

Through the Lens of Instrumentalism

After Pakistan's independence in 1947, a number of different factors led to the development of the militarization and Islamization of power, which have been important instruments for fuelling irredentist nationalism in Pakistan towards Kashmir. Take for instance PM Liaquat Ali Khan, who himself was not a very religious person and belonged to the secular elite. However, the issue of multiple identities in Pakistan may have motivated Khan to pursue a line of Islamization of society and declare Pakistan an Islamic state. The experience of protests in East Pakistan and the aversion from Kashmir illustrated for Khan and his government the importance to stir up irredentism in public, in order to secure the areas mentioned by integrating the various individual group identities in the country into one common Pakistani identity. He did this by making a Pakistani identity synonymous with an Islamic identity. As put by Farzana Shaikh, Kashmir facilitated the possibility that foreign policy could function "as a vital compensation for [Pakistan's] lack of clearly defined sense of nationhood". Hence, the Pakistani leadership by strengthening the country's bond to Islam and further fuelling irredentist nationalism, saw Kashmir as an external answer to its serious problem of internal unity. In this way, Islam was seen as the easier tool to promote irredentist nationalism, with the aim of mobilizing and uniting a fragmented Pakistan for the Kashmiri cause.

Another Pakistani leader who, like Khan, instrumentalized Islam to foment irredentist nationalism with the purpose of promoting Muslim unity and advancing Kashmiri integration was General Muhammad Zia ul-Haq. Even as Islam has had an important role in Pakistan ever since its foundation, the Islamization campaign of the country seriously gained its strength during the rule of Zia from 1977 until 1988. Zia is known as one of the central figures who succeeded introducing Islam into the political sphere of the country. By politicizing Islam to such an extent, he was able to further an Islamization campaign unlike before to pursue one of Pakistan's main foreign policy goals: to facilitate the closer integration of Kashmir into Pakistan by ousting India from the area. Zia is also the person who took the militarization of the country to another level. He nurtured and supported the jihadist ideology that threatens to destabilize much of today's Islamic world, but through which Zia saw himself advancing the nation-building project that included the incorporation of all of Kashmir into the state of Pakistan. Hence, as it was for PM Khan, General Zia also saw Islam as the perfect tool to fuel irredentist nationalism in the Pakistani public and sense of unity, by strongly promoting the Islamization of society for further integration of Kashmir.

Approaching the case of jihadism further from an instrumentalist view, it is about how Zia and other leaders have used Islam as an instrument for fuelling irredentist nationalism in order to increase jihadist fighters, as they have been central in their Kashmir strategy. Zia can be seen as someone who consciously used Islam as a tool to achieve his personal and political objectives in a country where the general population has a strong attachment to Islam. One of the aims behind introducing hard-line Islamization in the country to foment irredentist nationalism may be connected to financial interests. Zia wanted to get financial contributions from Arab Muslim states (e.g. Saudi Arabia) in order to fund jihadist groups, who till this day are cooperating with the Pakistani state in their fight against India in Kashmir. Furthermore, the selective government support of jihadist groups in Kashmir indicates that such irredentist-motivated jihadists are mostly seen as tools by the Pakistani government to achieve their goal of Kashmiri integration. If the jihadist group prioritizes Pakistan and the Kashmiri project over other Islamist causes, it would be supported by the Pakistani government. If the prioritizations would be different or reverse, the government would not support the jihadist group. This illustrates how Islam has been used to fuel irredentist nationalism in Pakistan by leaders, with the purpose of increasing jihadist activity for their own financial interests and for the foreign policy goal of Kashmiri integration.

Furthermore, also jihadists have personal interests when they fight for Pakistan in Kashmir, where they see jihadism as an instrument for achieving their own goals. Islam is thus being added an instrumental value in order to promote irredentist nationalism for a specific objective. Jihadism in Kashmir has for instance strong financial gains, which further incentivizes the fuelling of irredentist nationalism among Pakistanis to keep the fighting ongoing as long as there are economic gains to be made out of the conflict. Jahadi groups benefit very well financially from generous funding through what are termed as "anonymous donations". In fact, according to the World Bank, a mid-level manager in a jihadist group in Kashmir earns more than seven times what the average Pakistani makes.

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Consequently, as long as the war in Kashmir is profitable, there is an incentive for both state leaders and jihadists to recruit Pakistani Muslim fighters by using Islam as a tool to fuel irredentist nationalism. Moreover, Atle Mesøy in his research on extremism in Pakistan found that there is reason to believe that in poor countries like Pakistan there is a causal link between high poverty levels and radicalisation into violent extremism. Poor young men in Pakistan have few opportunities but to make a living by joining jihadist extremist groups. It is clear from such an argumentation that jihadism, which has its basis in Islamic thought and the Islamization of society, is used by jihadists in Pakistan as a tool to foment irredentist nationalism in order to recruit other fighters to obtain financial resources.

Alternative Explanation: Primordialism

While the instrumentalist view argues that Islam was used by leaders like Zia as a tool for specific foreign policy and socio-economic goals, it can also be argued from a primordialist standpoint that it was rather an inherent Islamic conviction within Zia that generated such strong irredentist feelings towards Kashmir. Former Pakistani Ambassador to the U.S., Hussain Haqqani, presents a primordial view of Zia's motivations for promoting irredentist nationalism. He states that, "[w]hereas Zia ul-Haq's predecessors had seen Islam only as an instrument of policy, Zia ul-Haq had the fire of a true believer". Already in his first speech to the nation, Zia promised that he would put in substantial effort to create a true Islamic society, in which Kashmir was arguably considered to be included. Zia is depicted to be a genuine devout Muslim who was closely tied to the Islamic values. In an interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Zia elaborated on his primordialist Islamic conviction, where he states that he had a duty to "[bring] Islam 'back (...) in its purity'". Such statements from Zia not only indicate that he was strongly convinced of the necessity of Kashmiri integration to Pakistan as part of the "bringing Islam back" project, but also because he believed he was giving "99 percent of the people [what they wanted]". Thus, looking at Zia's motivations from a primordialist perspective, the bond through Islam, which by its very nature connected Pakistan and Kashmir, naturally fostered irredentist nationalism and made the desire to integrate Kashmir an apparently natural next step in the Islamization of Pakistan.

Another primordialist reasoning for the fuelling of irredentist nationalism in Pakistan focuses on how Zia and others have viewed the fight for Kashmiri integration as jihad, meaning as something of spiritual-value (relative to instrumentalism which emphasizes jihadism as a tool for the pursuit of specific goals). Several Pakistani insurgents and jihadists are – as a result of the Islamic attachment that connects them to the Kashmiri Muslims – therefore spiritually dependent on the ongoing "freedom war" for the Kashmiri people. Madrasahs (Islamic schools) in Pakistan frequently teach their students about jihad from an extremist school and imply that jihad is a spiritual duty rather than something of instrumental value. The fight against alleged Indian infidels who oppress their Muslim fellow citizens in Kashmir can therefore be seen as a moral duty that deserves the highest respect and honour – which most of these fighters seek to achieve in life after death. Waging war in Kashmir is consequently not necessarily seen as a mean to achieve some higher goal, but rather as a moral and spiritual duty in light of belonging to the Islamic faith. One could, based on such a line of thought, argue that even jihadists who see the fighting in Kashmir as a moral cause still have an undertone of instrumentalist argumentation in their reasoning, seeing as jihad is seen as a mean to be granted a place in paradise. Nonetheless, the core of the primordialist argument is based on a particular attachment that links the Muslims in Pakistan with those in Kashmir which inherently fuels irredentist nationalism. This further makes it a natural and moral duty to engage in jihadist activity for the "freedom" of fellow Muslims in Kashmir.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to look at the case of how Islam has influenced irredentist nationalism in Pakistan vis-à-vis Kashmir. When approached from an instrumentalist view, Islam was used by the Pakistani leadership and Muslim elite to fuel irredentist nationalism in order to strengthen the Muslim unity and idea of "ummah" – for the sake of independence, as well as to secure their own power after partition. Such a theoretical approach also shows that Islam has been used by the Pakistani leadership to strengthen domestic legitimacy and by religious interest groups in keeping Pakistan familiar with its Islamic character. Islam and increased Islamization was furthermore used to fuel irredentist nationalism by the leadership to unite and mobilize a fragmented public towards the goal of Kashmiri integration, largely through jihadism. The paper also puts forth an instrumentalist reasoning for jihadism among Pakistanis in their fight for Kashmir, which challenges the view that jihadism is something that only stems from an

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inner spiritual and primordial motivation.

A challenge with picking most-likely case studies (including the case that has been dealt with in this paper) is that they are often applied in a way which makes it difficult to quantify probabilities. Qualitative properties cannot necessarily be converted into numbers and figures, which consequently may make it difficult to translate qualitative data into specific hypothesis and probabilities. Yet, one should also notice that the use of most-likely case study in many ways demands stronger transparency, in that the author has to “explain why exactly one believes that a case is a most-likely case”. Based on the empirical material and scholarly contributions gathered, the case seems to fit the theory of instrumentalism very well, and this theory has therefore been able explain the case theoretically to a large extent.

Even as the main emphasis has been on the instrumentalist theory, that however, does not mean that instrumentalism independently can explain all the aspects related to the phenomenon of how Islam influences irredentist nationalism in Pakistan. Primordialism (relative to instrumentalism) is able to address the way in which the inner Islamic motivations of state leaders is something that naturally fosters irredentist nationalism. Primordialism furthermore is able to address the inherent connection between Muslims in Pakistan and in Kashmir through the belonging to the same “ummah”, which is essential in forming a sense of mutual solidarity. The sense of solidarity is further seen as indispensable for collective action, which explains how the Pakistani public has been able to mobilize for what they see as jihad for their fellow Muslims in Kashmir.

This paper has shown that understanding the role of Islam, and the way in which it has influenced irredentist nationalism in Pakistani vis-à-vis Kashmir, is central to comprehend the continued presence of the Kashmiri conflict that has lasted for around seventy years. The conscious instrumentalization of Islam by various leaders and interest groups in Pakistan for the pursuit of their own socio-economic and policy goals, explains to a large extent the lasting presence of irredentist nationalism among the Pakistani public since partition. Adding to that the strong primordial ties that Muslims in Pakistan feel towards Kashmiri Muslims, which inherently fosters a sense of irredentist nationalism, further is a point of relevance in explaining the continued presence of the Kashmiri conflict.

This study has thus illustrated the importance of challenging the traditional view that Islam and nationalism have nothing to do with each other. Seeing these two concepts in relation to each other and dealing with them in the same sphere is essential for understanding complex aspects of long-lasting conflicts, like the Kashmiri dispute. The prospects of a permanent agreement between India and Pakistan over the Kashmir issue in the near-future look slim. This is particularly true after hostilities between the two countries peaked in August 2019 with the revocation of the special status of JK (which granted JK limited autonomy from the Indian state). This is compounded by the current Hindu-Muslim hostilities, which were again violently demonstrated in February and March this year. Nevertheless, addressing and recognising the important relationship between nationalism and religion, particularly Islam, could prove to be one of the steppingstones towards a lasting regional solution.

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