

Communication

Interpreting Ethnic Movements in Pakistan*

SOOFIA MUMTAZ

My difficulties with this paper relate primarily to the methodology. Professor Christophe Jaffrelot has chosen to omit the section on Kashmir that figured in the version first presented at the Fourteenth Annual General Meeting, of the Pakistan Society of Development Economists. The omission reinforces the exception I have to the approach. In my comments therefore, I will include some inter-related, and overlapping dimensions of the subject addressed, the exclusion of which, to my mind, hampers an holistic analysis. I will draw attention to the ‘role of Islam’ in Indian Muslim politics before partition, and the question of national identity since the creation of Pakistan. I will also highlight some of the features of the phenomenon of ethnicity itself that help explain the dynamics of the nature, content, and process of identity formation, and hence, an understanding of the mechanics of the identity that became pertinent during the Pakistan Movement. Similarly, I will comment on the ethnic expressions (that have been defined and re-defined) within the national context since the creation of Pakistan.

Professor Jaffrelot attributes ethnic tensions in Pakistan to instrumentalist strategies of frustrated élite groups in reaction to over centralisation, and irredentist tendencies. He focuses on the fifty year history of the country, and its situation at the “cross-roads” of Iran, Afghanistan, and India. Since the Baloch, the Pashtuns, and the Kashmiris are spread on both sides of the borders, the foreign policy of Pakistan is discussed as being conditioned by regional geo-politics. I agree with much of Professor Jaffrelot’s assessment. The endeavour to explain ethnic tensions in Pakistan by examining each province without referring to the larger historical background, or selectively inspecting national and cross-border aspects of the dynamic however, suggest the choice of an approach designed to establish an *a priori* position of the author.

Let me begin by commenting on the ‘primordialist’ versus the ‘modernist’ debate between social scientists studying ethnic movements (to which Professor Jaffrelot refers at the beginning of his paper). The primordialists indeed challenge the homogenisation of historical experiences. Their quarrel with the modernists

Soofia Mumtaz is Chief of Research at the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, Islamabad.

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however, relates to the reduction of “historical experiences to casual explanations in the path of progress” [Panday in Verkaaik (1994), p. 6], and therefore the assumption that modernisation follows a unilineal evolutionary scheme. By rejecting the notion that ethnicity is a non-political phenomenon of the past that will disappear with modernisation and the transformation of societies into nation states [Barth in Verkaaik (1994), p. 2], I do not believe the primordialists imply that traditional forms (and their ideological component) that become the basis of the criteria for defining (and redefining) an ethnic boundary (to meet the needs and ambitions of the present) represent “vestiges of an ancient past” [Hobsbawn and Ranger (1983)]. Unlike the modernist discourse (also known as the colonial or the orientalist discourse) which considers ethnicity to be not only ‘illogical’ and ‘unwanted’, but also ‘unnatural’ [Verkaaik (1994), p. 6], the primordialists oppose the denial of history and a political consciousness to dominated peoples. Primordialists moreover, do not presume ethnicity to be a structure. Although in the process of change and variation, moments of discontinuities may cause a given identity to become momentarily frozen, ethnicity and its boundaries are subject to continuous flux [Barth in Verkaaik (1994), p. 4]. Hence, I am unable to agree that the “malleability of national identities is diametrically opposed to the primordialist viewpoint.”

Christophe Jaffrelot considers the Gellner-Brass thesis best suited for “interpreting the politics in Pakistan”. He finds the thesis equally relevant for explaining “the shaping of the ‘two nation’ theory”; and for illustrating how “Islam failed to be the cementing force of the country”. According to Paul Brass, the Muslim élite had manipulated the Islamic ideology during the Pakistan Movement in order to legitimise their bid for power, which arose primarily from social and economic compulsions. I find such an assertion inherently reductionist, if not fundamentally flawed. Self-determination did not take shape, nor come about in quite the manner in which it was initially proposed by Jinnah¹ (which proposal, if implemented, would have been far more in sync with historical legacy, and would have engendered the path towards an ‘endogenous modernity’). However, by referring to the negotiations during the climactic years of British rule to explain partition, Professor Jaffrelot is unable to account for the larger historical, political, and ideological factors that compelled the creation of (at least) two states in the wake of de-colonisation.

¹According to Jinnah’s argument, Hindus and Muslims (on the basis of distinctive traditions) constituted ‘two nations’. Hence, “a transfer of power from British to Indian hands necessarily entailed the dissolution of the unitary centre created by the colonial masters. Any reconstitution of the ‘Union of India’ would have to be based on either confederal or treaty arrangements between Hindustan (representing the Hindu-majority provinces) and Pakistan (representing the Muslim majority provinces). Partition as it came about however, did not entail the division of India into the ‘successor’ states. It was India that inherited British India’s unitary central apparatus. Pakistan consisted of Muslim majority areas that were merely seen as ‘contracting out’ of the Union of India.” As such, Pakistan was “cast in the role of the seceding state” [Jalal (1990), p. 264] and began its independent existence without the semblance of a central state structure.

Since their first inception in the region, the Muslims of the sub-continent (their size enlarged by unidirectional conversions) have retained their distinct sociopolitical identity. The centuries of pre-British Muslim domination in the sub-continent, and the quasi-autonomous status of the local rent-yielding units, facilitated concordant social existence. The Moghul politics of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion', and the land settlement policies of the British, as Ali (1998, forthcoming) has observed, served to reinforce the identity distinctions. From the period of the Montagu-Chelmsford constitution, and formulation of separate electorates, political divisions along communal lines were further consolidated. The factor that gave the impetus for partition however, was the impending emergence of an 'empire-state' in the aftermath of independence.

Historically, the sub-continent has been home to multiple kingdoms. Empire-like structures, notes Ali, "have existed only briefly and spasmodically (not necessarily covering all of South Asia or even significant proportions of it), and they have come up after very wide intervals of time." Downfall (as in case of the Moghul empire as well) has followed soon after attaining a sizeable extent (*ibid*). During the Moghul period, the varied socioeconomic components of the sub-continent retained their quasi-autonomous status. Colonial rule did not marshal them into a single, culturally homogeneous entity. For the Hindus moreover, British rule had meant only a change of masters. The gearing towards adopting the nation state category in the aftermath of de-colonisation provoked tensions that have historically disallowed empire-like structures in the sub-continent to assume any degree of permanence. Unlike Europe where the category evolved in the course of history, the concept of a nation state was alien to the historical pattern of social co-existence.² The Congress slogan of 'democracy'³ and 'nationalism' during the five or six decades prior to independence, held no appeal for the Muslims. A parliamentary system of government signaled the relegation of Muslims to a marginal status. The Muslims also could not relate to a nationalism that sought to uphold *Ram Rajya* as the defining character of the independent country (thereby pretending that the events of the last thousand years had somehow never occurred).

The simultaneity of anti-colonial struggle with the involvement of the colonised with colonial rule, Mitra has observed with reference to the post-colonial state in Asia, tended to retard, but "could not cancel out" the strength of underlying differences (1998), p. 1). The idea of a separate Muslim majority centre similarly

²Despite the desire of post-colonial states to 'succeed' as states, the tensions generated by the encapsulation of 'old societies' within 'new states', reveals the governance difficulties of opting for a framework out of sync with historical legacy. Mitra (1998) for instance, has questioned the historical legitimacy of de-colonised states to having universally accepted the nation state category as their inevitable destiny, and thereby foregone the option of an alternative, and more endogenous future. He finds the validity of the course adopted all the more dubious, after the move in Europe (where the nation state category evolved, and which the de-colonised states have sought to mimic) towards the creation of a supra state organisation through the EEC (to brace for the economic offensive from non-European states).

³Raised by some of its 'western educated leadership'.

crystallised in response to a combination of political, economic, and ideological concerns, against a given historical background. The Muslims turned to the Muslim League because the forum provided the opportunity, once the British left, to safeguard Muslim interests in at least one part of the country. In this way they believed they could become the guarantors of Muslim interests in the rest of the country. The section of the population that became the torchbearers of the Pakistan Movement was logically the Muslims of the minority provinces. Their involvement in the negotiations for the transfer of power was also greater (given their proximity to the seat of government in Delhi). The manner and rapidity with which the Movement evolved thus, caused the politics of Muslim provincialism to be abandoned in favour of Muslim nationalism.

The creation of Pakistan therefore did not imply 'separatism' from a purported 'whole'. It was not so much a case of "inventing a nation" where none existed, but conversely, assuming the existence of a nation (from which Pakistan supposedly 'seceded') where none did. The observation that the struggle for Muslim self-determination was merely an élitist movement is also unsubstantiated. Although the Muslim League had obtained its earliest adherents in the minority provinces, it was only when the League had captured Bengal and Punjab that Pakistan became possible. The élite of the majority provinces, who had campaigned from the late 1920s against the introduction of a responsible government at New Delhi, capped on the Pakistan Movement to create a centre of their own [Page (1987), p. 259]. Unlike Christophe Jaffrelot's postulation however, the support for Pakistan was not restricted to the powerful Muslim élite voters (whose influence could not be discounted in the given socioeconomic structure of the majority provinces). Culture and history are not simply "something that happens to people" [Ortner (1984), p. 159]. Unlike Brass's 'instrumentalist' understanding of the role of Islam in Indian Muslim politics of the 1930s and 40s, the growing tendency is to treat culture and history as phenomena in which people play a role within the very powerful constraints of the system in which they are operating.

The success of the Muslim League in being able to "turn the tables on its rivals" lay (as Talbot postulates) in the League's linking of Islamic appeals to the solutions of the rural population's economic and social difficulties. Although many Muslims had not fully grasped the implications of Pakistan for their region,⁴ the support for the Pakistan demand was "widespread and sincere, and went well beyond the influential élite" (*ibid*). For the masses (of Bengal and Punjab) moreover, this support was devoid of self-seeking interest (as it continues to be for the Kashmiris).

⁴"Pathan support for the Frontier Congress" Talbot has noted, "did not mean wholehearted agreement with its parent body's All India aims and interests". He quotes the Governor of the Frontier Province as having observed, that "the Pathan simply cannot conceive of a situation in which his comings and goings would really be regulated by an out-side non-Muslim authority". He had therefore warned the Viceroy that "It would be quite dangerous...to assume from the present set up that the Pathan as such will be quite happy in a unified India" (1990, p. 19).

“The changing national political context of 1945-6 presented the regional Muslims with choices of a religious, as well as a political nature” (*ibid*, p. 109). They were pressed to determine whether they wanted to be “under Muslim or Hindu government? How best the integrity of the Muslim community was to be maintained? Where did their primary allegiances lie—to their faith, or to their ethnic and linguistic grouping?” (*ibid*). The Muslim identity that gained salience thus represented the resolve to exercise the right of self-determination. A rejection of Hindu dominance did not tantamount to an affirmation of Islam. The reaction of the masses somewhat mandated the confirmation of that distinction during the final stages of the Movement.

Most of the earlier literature on ethnicity had concentrated on form rather than content. The shift towards interpreting history, and giving it a meaning has drawn increasing attention to the content of ethnic boundaries as well. Accordingly, we may note an instance of the ideological underpinnings of the identity idiom. The growing sense of Muslim community and brotherhood during the final stages of the Pakistan Movement, observes Talbot, played an important part in “undermining the support for G.M. Syed⁵ and his followers in Sindh, and the Khan brothers in the Frontier” (Talbot. *Ibid*, p. 110). The revulsion of the populations of these provinces “at the Hindu attacks on Muslim minorities in Bombay and Bihar” in 1946 (as indicative of things to come), decided the dissident vote in these provinces in favour of Pakistan in the 1946 elections (*ibid*). Professor Jaffrelot makes a point of mentioning the “boycott of the referendum” by “Ghaffar Khan and his supporters”, and attributes the boycott to the cause of the Frontier province acceding to Pakistan. For the sake of perspective, it is perhaps more relevant to note the overwhelming support for Pakistan demonstrated in this province, and the “boycott of the referendum” by the Red Shirts as a tacit acknowledgement of that verdict. Similarly, Jinnah’s dismissal of Dr Khan Sahib (Khan Sahibzada?) related to the de-legitimisation of the latter’s government by the people (illustrated by their verdict in favour of Pakistan), rather than the other way round. These observations not only refute the ‘instrumentalisation of Islam’ by the élite, but are further proof against the argument (despite all odds) that Pakistan was created by a mere handful of “paranoid” Muslim élite from Northern India “alienated from its own society by the very fact of its education”.

The popular enthusiasm for Pakistan thus could not prevent its creation. Before commenting on Pakistan’s difficulties since independence, we may make one last comment on the ‘failure of Islam to be the cementing force of the country’. Rather than the often-conjectured Muslim League’s cynical manipulation of religion in the 1946 elections, identity distinctions, as Tonkin remarks (1989), make sense in a context of relativities. Individuals in a society moreover, Hannan explains, simultaneously subscribe to multiple identities (1979). They are members of a

⁵G.M. Syed left the Muslim League in early January 1946. His parting of ways with the League therefore preceded, rather than follow the creation of Pakistan, as asserted by Professor Jaffrelot.

family, clan, village, language group, region, etc. The widely shared identities, which relate an individual to successively larger populations, may be cultural, or some other, depending on the identity that becomes pertinent in a given context, and the conditions under which smaller identities may be subsumed, or may re-emerge.

The Muslim identity that had been defined in opposition to the majority Hindu population of the sub-continent, and which had become highly salient and symbolic during the Pakistan Movement, lost its point of reference (and therefore its relative validity) after the creation of Pakistan. In Pakistan, the right to Muslim self-determination was nowhere at risk. In case of Kashmir where the distinction remains relevant, so also does the Muslim identity. This is similarly true for the distinction between Bangladesh-Pakistan, and Bangladesh-India relations, and continues to constitute the cause (as in case of Pakistan, also a party to the dispute) of Bangladesh's support for the Kashmiris' right to self-determination. That distinction, rather than "shatter the two nation theory" (which no doubt was India's intention, and explains why she trained the *mukti bahini* in Indian camps, and eventually attacked Pakistan) also made a non-issue of Bangladesh becoming part of the Indian federation after seceding from Pakistan. India's desperate attempts to hold on to Kashmir by fair or foul means⁶ (apart from regional hegemonistic ambitions, and the fear that other Indian provinces will follow suit) also has to do with proving the viability of the 'secular' proclamation of the state.

Within the national context, the historical legacy of the distinct (and autonomous, or quasi-autonomous) pattern of existence of the diverse socioeconomic components of the sub-continent, and consequently that of the provinces inherited by Pakistan, regained pertinence (as it has in India). The absence of any degree of 'stateness' prior to independence, on the one hand; and the policies adopted for the exercise of national sovereignty, on the other; have collectively impacted on centre-province, and state-society relations, and have defined the path that Pakistan has followed since independence.

In constructing a state structure in the newly independent state,⁷ the early leadership was concerned with creating conditions that would guarantee the sovereignty of the state,⁸ and enable Pakistan to play the role they perceived for it in the international political system. Both these concerns favoured the creation of a strong centre, and rationalized the pursuit of a political economy of defence [Jalal (1990), p. 265-267]. Like states that became independent during the course of the de-colonisation process in the second half of the last century, and the universal adoption

⁶Read: 'genocide'; rape as a weapon of war; armed repression (to the tune of one soldier to every four Kashmiris), and other atrocities (as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights). The legality of the Indian occupation of Kashmir (on the basis of an alleged document, purportedly signed by the Hindu Maharaja of the state in 1948) is questioned on the basis of its sustainability against the wishes of the Kashmiri people, the UN Resolutions, and the tenets of international law.

⁷Since the British unitary state apparatus was inherited by India.

⁸By prioritising defence against India, and warding off the potential threat of a Soviet attack on the North-western frontier.

of the 'nation state' category thus, Pakistan also sought to create a centralised form of government with strong bureaucracies. The accession of the bureaucracies to a position of prominence in the state structure (in addition to the absence of an existing state structure) was favoured by the restriction of the support base of the élite representatives to the confines of their respective provinces. Unlike the minority provinces, the organisation of the Muslim League in the Pakistan areas was also weak.⁹ This contrasted with the "relative autonomy [of the bureaucracies] from the internal class structure" Jalal (*ibid*, p. 262). Both Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan furthermore, relied on the bureaucracies for the formulation and execution of state policy [Noman (1988), p. 9]. The latter bureaucracies therefore rose to a position of prominence.

Exercising sovereignty for Pakistan has meant not only the desire to be a free actor in modern international society, but also undertaking measures that would guarantee the defence of national frontiers against threats of dismemberment, and/or destabilisation.¹⁰ The priority attributed to defence thus increased the role, either direct or indirect, of the army¹¹ in the authority structure and governance of the state. National security concerns also determined the alliances (primarily with the United States and China) that were formed to cater to that objective. The preoccupation with defence moreover, rationalised the maintenance of a large defence budget, and has continued to justify the centralisation of state authority. The administrative mode of governance engineered at the outset thus stunted the development of political processes. An excessively large defence budget furthermore, led to a negligence of

⁹In a bid to obtain quick results after the 1937 debacle, League officials had relied on the ready made networks of the élite representatives of the majority provinces, rather than going through the slow and painful process of building up party support. Whereas this method enabled the attainment of the Pakistan objective, it has had detrimental consequences for the task of nation building [Talbot (1990)].

¹⁰India continues to be in effective denial of the creation of Pakistan. The overtures of 'friendship' by the Indian premier as recently as the bus trip to Lahore for instance, included (insults to the sovereignty of Pakistan in his) decrying partition. (The trip, to begin with, was undertaken in response to pressure from the international community (after the nuclear tests), and the tacit agreement that Kashmir would no longer be a contentious issue. In statements uttered within hours of returning to India, even that pretense of 'friendship' was dropped). In violation of the Atlantic Charter hence, such a mind set translates into varied expressions of hostility, and a relentless pursuit of opportunities to destabilise, or maneuver Pakistan to a position of disadvantage. Strategies intent on either by-passing the will of the Kashmiri people, or aspiring to appropriate Kashmir by denying its contested status (for which a just solution is necessary), promote neither trust, nor peaceful bi-lateral relations. Apart from attacks on Pakistan's 'international' border (as in case of East Pakistan in 1971), and the proxy war along the LOC (more appropriately, the cease-fire line as far as the Kashmiris are concerned), acts of Indian aggression have included the capture of the Siachin glacier. To the build up of Pakistan-specific weapons furthermore, India has announced its (more evil and wider in range) nuclear doctrine. A systematic multi-pronged propaganda campaign against Pakistan (tacit as well as explicit) continues to be pursued at the public and diplomatic levels by way of official policy.

¹¹The army in the Pakistan areas was in place before partition. As noted by Professor Jaffrelot, the bulk of the British Indian army had been recruited from the 'martial races' of certain districts of the Punjab alone, and was therefore ethnically Punjabi. The prominence of the Punjabis in the state structure is thus due to the dominance of the Punjabis in the military bureaucracy. The other reason for "the Punjabisation of Pakistan", as Professor Jaffrelot will have it (unlike his statement about the promotion of Urdu, which is not the language of Punjab), was (as Professor Jaffrelot rightly observes) the benefits of the Green Revolution accruing to the Punjab.

the service sector and basic needs. Concerns with ensuring the sovereignty of the state (in addition to warding off external threats to the sovereignty of the state) translated into vigilance against internal political threats to state authority from within the provinces as well. The definition, and redefinition of ethnic boundaries in Pakistan has thus become the means of associating with a larger or smaller group (sharing a particular criteria), that offers a better chance of political self assertion. Ethnicity hence serves to register opposition to the highly centralised, non-representative nature of state structure, dominated by the bureaucracies. The tensions between the centre and provinces however, represent a protest against the denial of participation. They do not tantamount to a refusal (as in case of Kashmir) of the federating units to participate in the national political process.¹²

The question of national identity needs to be understood against this multifaceted background. Although it has become rhetorical to state that Pakistan was created 'in the name of Islam', the foregoing illustrates the dynamics of the forces at play that collectively brought about the partition of the sub-continent, and have shaped the nature of centre-province relations thereafter. We continue however, to a large extent, to remain within the mode of the 'two nation theory' in so far as Pakistan-India relations are concerned, even though in case of India the evidence is better concealed. If the defining character of Pakistan is the Muslim identity of the state, its counterpart is found across the border, where the Hindu identity defines the character of India. A manifestation of this (in earlier tacit, and not so tacit Indian policies)¹³ has become unambiguous in recent years with the coming to power (through the ballot box) of the *Hindutva*-subscribing leadership. Despite the secular mantra, and the trappings of democracy, the incidence of violence against the minority religious groups has consequently intensified with impunity. The BJP slogan of effecting a 'coming home' has given rise to fanatical trends, such as burning of churches; demanding an apology of the Pope for conversions that took place some four hundred years ago; razing of the Baberi mosque etc. The *akhund bharat* ideology however, continues to be refuted by the sixteen to eighteen odd on-going insurgencies.

Although the orthodoxy has never been voted to power in Pakistan, the country has had to face its own dilemma as to the kind of state it was to be. The attempts to reconcile the universalism of Islam to the confines of a nation state have revealed the difficulties of the exercise. However, the "look west" (towards the Islamic world) policy, rather than the lure of petro-dollars, as assessed by Professor

¹²Not that Kashmir is a federating unit of India.

¹³For instance, sanskritisation of the vernacular to 'cleanse' it of Arabic and Persian words. In the wake of partition moreover, Muslims were evicted from their ancestral homes (which were declared 'evacuee property' even as they lived in them). Land reforms also took place first in UP, where most of the Indian Muslims held properties. The housing localities of Muslims were attacked, after telephone lines and electricity supply had been cut off. Muslims are always negatively portrayed in Indian literature, the media etc.

Jaffrelot, has more to do with Pakistan's desire to confirm its separate existence from India. The *Regional Cooperation for Development* initiated between Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan during the early 1960s, has more recently been expanded into the *Economic Cooperation Organisation* with the inclusion of the Central Asian Republics. The Islamic Summit organised by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in Lahore in 1974, and the role that Pakistan has played in the OIC, also correspond to the same policy. In order to secure her western frontier moreover, Pakistan sought the establishment of a friendly government in Afghanistan. Her front line state status during the Afghan war with the former Soviet Union saw the arrival of Afghan refugees, and the import of automatic weapons. The force unleashed in the camps and *madrassahs* set up in Pakistan with the support of the American administration and the CIA, to train "the brave *mujahideen*" to fight the American war in Afghanistan against the former Soviet Union, could not be dismantled simply because Washington no longer needs any bastions against communism. The domestic backlash of the combative spirit nurtured during the training imparted to the "mujahideen" under the banner of "helping Muslim brethren in trouble" has increased the incidence of armed activism within the country. Pakistan has been left to clean up the American act, and atone for the ill-conceived complicity of the Zia regime in the American scheme.

Before concluding, a few singular comments may be in order. The capital for instance, moved to Islamabad in 1959. Zia-ul-Haq moreover, supported the *Mohajirs*, rather than the Punjabis, as stated by Professor Jaffrelot. The 'feat' of creating the MQM, and defining the Sindhis as the opponents of the *Mohajirs* in fact, is laid at the threshold of Zia-ul-Haq in his bid to subvert the potential threat to his authority from the Sindhis under the leadership of Benazir Bhutto. The author's remark about the *Mohajir* claim to having "created Pakistan and made great sacrifices for this cause", being a "view of the past" couched within the realm of myth is perplexing. Although other qualifications (discussed earlier) are necessary, there is no denying the pioneering role of the Muslims of Northern India in the Pakistan Movement, nor their earliest adherence to the Muslim League. The loss of life and property suffered by the *Mohajirs* in consequence of their resolve to migrate to Pakistan also, is not a figment of their imagination. A 'wholesale butchery' was carried out during partition. In addition to the lower, and middle classes moreover, nearly all the affluent class (including former nobility) from Northern India moved to Pakistan, leaving their worldly possessions behind. Similarly, why should the Sindhi pride in their ancient Mehran culture tantamount to a 'mythical' extolling of "the historical and linguistic grandeur of Sindh"? A study of the historical importance of this province for the sub-continent (and all it has stood for through the centuries) will prove otherwise. The comment about the minority syndrome generating an 'inferiority complex' among the *Mohajirs* is the most curious. Not only has Feroze Ahmed (whom Professor Jaffrelot quotes in this context) made the opposite

observation, but the sense of ethno-linguistic arrogance that pervades the *Mohajir* psyche is acknowledged by all the populations of Pakistan. The *Mohajirs* claim to be the custodians of Moghul culture, and consider themselves (and are considered) to be infinitely cultivated. The sophistication of North Indian Muslim culture is also tacitly acknowledged by the Indians. In view of the 'psychological strains' of centuries of subordination¹⁴ however, it is not the policy of 'secular' India to let such observations (if not inverted) become public knowledge. Judging from the conditions to which Indian Muslims have been reduced, the uninitiated cannot imagine otherwise.

Any understanding of the Pakistani state and society hence, necessitates an analysis of the historical precedents that brought about its genesis, and that define the contours of its social content. It also requires an examination of the conditions that necessitated the construction and definition of the parameters in which the state structure was cast, and the regional and international politics that have determined the path that Pakistan has followed since independence. Such an analysis also needs to take into account the determinants of culture, size, and economic endowment, as well as the ideological dimensions.

Given the disadvantages with which Pakistan began its independent existence,¹⁵ the policy decisions that were consequently taken,¹⁶ and the nuance of the difficulties that are peculiar to the circumstances of the polity,¹⁷ the problems of Pakistan (in substantive terms) however, are no different from those faced by other post colonial states, particularly in Asia.¹⁸ Conflicts resulting from ruptures between the pre and the post independence patterns of social existence everywhere are marked by the stress of encapsulation of de-colonised societies within the nation

¹⁴Indian insecurities, born from her subordination syndrome (and the precarious domestic scenario), has unleashed a fierce pursuit for 'unlimited hegemony'. Strategies such as 'dis-information'; the nuclear doctrine etc. represent machiavellian expertise in maneuvering cherished goals by making a travesty of international law. The complicity of the 'powers that be' is secured in the name of interpretations provided to fit the singular obsession of the latter with "Islamic terrorism" (regardless of the cause, or nature of the problem in question; nor of the offense the religious twist may cause the Muslims). No 'principle' seems too great to sacrifice at the altar of converging interests, and the expediency of power politics.

¹⁵Ref: the absence of a central state structure. Pakistan's share of the sterling balances Britain owed to undivided India (which was held in a common pool at the Reserve Bank, pending an agreement as to how it was to be released) moreover, was estimated at only 17.5 percent. Pakistan's main foreign exchange earners (raw jute and raw cotton) furthermore, had hitherto been manufactured in factories located in India (Jalal, *ibid*, p. 265). Apart from Bengal and Punjab, Pakistan also inherited provinces where the pattern of subsistence economies pre-dominated.

¹⁶Centralisation of state authority; the priority attributed to the defence of national frontiers; the pursuit of a political economy of defence; etc.

¹⁷Stunted political processes; the politicisation of state institutions; the attributes of earlier forms of social existence that colour the manner in which executive functions are discharged etc.

¹⁸State institutions everywhere have largely retained their colonial character. Local influences on the functioning of state institutions, their inadequacy, if not breakdown vis-à-vis defined objectives, is also not singular to Pakistan, nor is corruption, nepotism as a 'normal' means of social ascension.

state structure, and the modifications in the traditional patterns of living as a result of their integration within the monetary market system. The difference is merely one of scale.

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