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Editors' Note

While Pakistan faces many challenges, perhaps the most pressing issue its policy makers face is abysmally low tax revenue collection. Widely considered as the Achilles' heel of the economy, chronically low tax revenues compounded with bourgeoning fiscal deficits not only limit development spending but consequently fuel inflation and retard economic growth. Increasing reliance on external sources to bridge the fiscal gap, on the other hand, erodes government policy space and autonomy, while raising future external debt payments. This year the story is no different. The concerted opposition to taxing agricultural income and creating a direct progressive tax structure makes it apparent that the class enjoying most of the economic and political power is unwilling to contribute its due share to the national exchequer. Hence, the political rhetoric of self-reliance and independence coming from certain quarters lacks credibility.

The social contract between a state and its citizens stems from the obligation of paying taxes in return for public goods and services. Yet many in Pakistan who fall within the tax net have opted out of this contract, partly because of a weak tax collection mechanism and more importantly due to the absence of any sense of obligation towards the state. The standard explanation for this breakdown of social contract is that both government corruption and inadequate public service provision dampen incentives to pay taxes. Moreover, easy access for the affluent to private education, health, electricity and now even security has minimized their dependence on the state, further eroding incentives to contribute towards the provision of public services. This distortion of interests of the privileged few has had a significantly negative impact on the vast majority of the population which still remains dependant on the state. Lack of revenues from direct taxes has not only led to the attrition of public good and service delivery, but has also meant greater reliance on highly regressive indirect taxes. So the poor majority of the country is twice hit—first, directly from lack of access to basic services such as education, health, or clean drinking water and second, indirectly by higher inflation caused by both indirect taxes and chronic fiscal deficits.

Hopefully, for the poor – orphans of a failing state – sustained democracy might be a solution to at least some of these ills, as it may align the incentives of the political representative (or the 'patron') to those of the electorate, thereby improving the supply of public goods and services. However tax collection will only rise on a sustained basis if the rich realize that increasing inequality of income and lifestyle is untenable and poses an imminent threat to their own security and welfare in the country.

This issue of the *Social Science and Policy Bulletin* contains three articles. In the first article, Faiza Mushtaq looks at the nexus between social class and religious movements in her study of the *Al-Huda* movement in Pakistan. She notes that the collective action of *Al-Huda* members does not spring out of their pre-determined class interests or grievances, but is a function of their unique position in the changing social configuration of urban Pakistan. Next, ShahBano Ijaz examines how aid can effectively be channeled to ensure growth in conflict-stricken countries by proposing that aid should not only be aimed at recovery, but at the larger challenge of how to break the cycle of conflict itself. She also recommends encouraging local partnerships in the delivery of aid, and in ensuring that local actors commit themselves to policies. In the final article, Nick Robinson highlights the paradox inherent in the logic of good governance coups and their political supporters in countries like Bangladesh and Pakistan and suggests that attention should instead be focused on devising long term institutional mechanisms to check corruption within a democratic set-up.

The Role of Social Class in Religious Movements

By Faiza Mushtaq



Conventional accounts of Islamic activism in Pakistan assume a straightforward link between the social origins of a movement and the type of religious ideas and practices that its members are inclined towards. For instance, poor and illiterate sections of the population are seen as the primary source of support and recruitment for extremist and militant Islamic groupings. Radical religious activity is thus attributed to young men without access to jobs or social services, and particularly those armed with a *madrasa* education. On the other hand, Islamic schools in Pakistani cities run by the *Al-Huda* movement attract much negative attention for targeting women from upper- and middle-class backgrounds. Critics of the movement from across the ideological spectrum in Pakistan ridicule the activism of these privileged women, believing their religious concerns to be superficial and temporary.

Social factors play a much more complex role in influencing religious expression in these and other cases than such explanations allow. This article uses the example of *Al-Huda* to argue for a more nuanced understanding of this relationship.

Religious Typologies and Socio-Economic Indicators

The assumption that religious faith belongs most comfortably to the poor and dispossessed has had an illustrious history in the social sciences. Karl Marx famously observed that religion expresses the suffering of the oppressed, and over the decades, sociologists of religion developed that insight into typologies of social deprivation with associated religious responses. Emile Durkheim's thesis that social change and breakdown produce anomie has been invoked by numerous social scientists to explain religious revivalism. According to this line of reasoning, those facing strain, social dislocation, urbanization, and other conditions of rapid modernization, find solace in a return to faith and traditional values.

Yet recent empirical studies of Islamist movements find little difference between their social composition and those of nationalist, socialist or other comparable mobilizations, and challenge the association between social marginalization and religious ideology or activism.[1] Sociologists of religion, such as Stark (2003), have examined historical evidence from Christian sects and saints, various ascetic movements and contemporary church attendance records to conclude that religious belief and participation are not a preserve of the lower classes. Instead, wealthy and powerful social groups are over-represented on most dimensions of religiosity.

Schoenfeld (1992) proposes a scheme which classifies religious belief systems as being inclusive, exclusive, militant or submissive. He argues that these theological stances correspond to the class interests and ideologies that they reflect, so that ascending classes espouse values of equality and social justice and retrenching classes those of individual freedoms and love. An emphasis on charity and decorum is prevalent amongst the *bourgeoisie*, while total compliance with the religious group is common amongst alienated classes.

When applied to a case like *Al-Huda*, such an approach does not account for selective participation in the movement by Pakistan's upper- and middle-income

segments. Indeed, some individuals with social profiles very similar to those of *Al-Huda* members — those expected to hold shared class interests — are sharply critical of the group's worldview and choose very different religious values. A systematic analysis of *Al-Huda's* teachings by this author also shows it to combine values and beliefs from across Schoenfeld's types, with no neat correlation with the class backgrounds of members.

Urban Modernity and Puritanism

Many observers have noted the presence of educated middle classes and women in social movements that define their agendas in reformist and revivalist terms, such as the temperance and anti-slavery activists of 19th century United States. Islamist elites in 20th century Turkey emerged as a new class from an urbanizing population with access to higher education and professional careers. Muslim reformers in colonial India who pushed for the education of women in their communities, similarly belonged to professional and bureaucratic middle classes, perceiving themselves as the new nobility of manners, rather than of blood (Minault, 1999). Turner (2008) observes the "distinctive merger of personal wealth and piety in the new middle class, especially among educated women" with reference to the Islamic revivalist movements of contemporary South and Southeast Asia.

Rather than Marx or Durkheim, such religious movements appear to resonate with Max Weber's insights about the inner-worldly, ascetic religion practiced by *bourgeois* Protestants leading to a rational accumulation of capital. Movements that aim to inculcate pious virtues in their followers can also be seen as seeking reform, rationalization, and ultimately modernization of their lifestyles.

Gellner (1981) has argued that this affinity between a disciplined puritanical religion and urban modernity can be found within Muslim societies. He juxtaposes a folk version of Islam — ridden with superstition and ritualistic ceremony, intercessionary and hierarchical in structure, and practiced in rural and tribal settings — with an Islamic High Tradition that is textualist, legalist and individualist, and favored by traders and artisans in cities. While both have co-existed, the latter has emerged triumphant in modern times, being closely associated with the processes of urbanization and the spread of literacy.

How accurate is this model of a commercial *bourgeoisie* practicing a sober, scholarly style of Islam that disavows all ritual and mysticism? Not very, as many historical and contemporary studies find. The *Ahl-i Hadis* sect of Sunni Islam in South Asia would appear to be a good example of Gellner's puritanical urban Muslims. This school of thought (which the *Al-Huda* women's movement in Pakistan also subscribes to) advocates a literalist interpretation of the Quran and *Hadis*, rejects all other secondary textual sources and customary practices, and assigns each individual the responsibility of following a self-consciously austere lifestyle. Riexinger (2008) examines the *Ahl-i Hadis* movement during its inception in the second half of the 19th century and finds that its membership — although more urban and wealthy than rival groupings at the time — was drawn from small towns and their rural surroundings rather than major commercial and administrative centers. The *Ahl-i Hadis*' emphasis on intellectual discipline and morality co-existed with belief in miracles, myths, and the intercessionary powers of pious leaders.

The Social Base of *Al-Huda*

The *Al-Huda* network of Islamic schools was founded in Islamabad in 1994 and has since expanded to approximately 70 locations in big cities and small towns across Pakistan. It caters to female students of all age groups through its lectures, short courses and intensive diploma courses, focusing on Quranic study and its application to everyday life. *Al-Huda* has attracted a loyal following under the leadership of the organization's founder and primary teacher, Dr. Farhat Hashmi.

That following has become more socially diverse as it

has grown. Students applying to the initial course offerings were required to possess a bachelor's degree as the minimum qualification. Now some *Al-Huda* programs accept the intermediate degree that colleges in Pakistan confer after twelve years of formal schooling, while others accept applicants who have completed ten years of education and matriculated from high school. Given the extremely low rates of literacy among Pakistan's female population, *Al-Huda* is still drawing from a restricted pool of women with a secondary or higher education.

The wealthy elites who used to dominate *Al-Huda* gatherings in its early years — professional women, as well as wives of senior military officials, government bureaucrats and industrialists — are increasingly joined by representatives from middle-income urban groups.[2] While some of the women hail from wealthy families and make sizable donations of money and property to *Al-Huda*, others require financial support in order to afford these classes (which charge nominal fees), and many are simultaneously engaged in other educational or occupational careers.

In interviews, senior movement leaders frequently mention the prestigious universities and colleges in the country whose graduates are *Al-Huda* participants and proudly mention those who have built careers in multinational corporations, banks, and educational institutions, while sustaining their commitment to the group. Some who work as teachers, administrators, librarians, receptionists, etc. in the *Al-Huda* organization donate their time voluntarily to the movement, but others accept the modest salary attached to internal staff positions. *Al-Huda* becomes the workplace of choice for women who have never held a paid job, as well as for others who have formal work experience, skills, or a desire to find employment in an environment they consider respectable.

The largest concentrations of *Al-Huda* schools are located in upper- and middle-income neighborhoods of three Pakistani cities: Karachi, Lahore, and Rawalpindi-Islamabad. Some of these have attached hostels where women from far-off neighborhoods and from outside these cities can be lodged while they are enrolled in a course. In addition, there is an increasing *Al-Huda* presence in all of Pakistan's major urban centers (including the eight largest cities), and in the densely populated, urbanizing districts of the central Punjab region.

The boundaries of *Al-Huda's* support base are not determined by income or wealth levels. Instead, the impact of women's socio-economic backgrounds is mediated through two significant factors: the requirement of literacy and the urban locations of *Al-Huda* activities. These factors place decisive limits on who can participate and how far the influence of the movement extends.

The Missing Link

Al-Huda consists of urban, literate women who believe their education sets them apart from others they judge to be illiterate, rustic, and morally suspect. The teachings and interactions among group members help foster the belief that they are part of an 'educated class' and thus responsible for setting the standards of moral conduct for the rest of the society. They are aware of differences in class and status within their own ranks but emphasize their commonalities as participants: their mastery of text-based knowledge, the scholarly qualities of their leader, and the discipline and moderation acquired through their program of character training. They distance themselves from the religious learning of the *madrasa* system, while claiming superiority over the secular educational institutions of Pakistan.

There is an intermediary level that links large-scale abstract categories like social class to the beliefs held by individuals, i.e. the specific social contexts and group settings in which ideas are communicated and meaning is created. This missing layer of analysis is crucial for understanding how individuals from varying backgrounds come to hold similar ideas and ways of expression

through their recurrent participation in a group. It is the collective interactions and performances in *Al-Huda* classrooms that persuade members that they are part of a special and morally superior mission. The spread of educational opportunities for Pakistani women is the institutional context in which this activism is made possible. This explains how a wealthy resident of an elite Karachi neighborhood and a migrant from a small town in Punjab who is not fluent in English, both consider themselves amongst the same privileged group. Their conviction that reading, understanding and acting upon the text of the Quran confers virtue, builds upon shared assumptions about the social and symbolic benefits of education in general.

There is another way in which an organizational filter helps clarify *Al-Huda's* appeal amongst the educated urban classes of Pakistan. As Chaves (1998) notes, many world religions are characterized by an "ethic of restless activism" which has ambiguously defined goals, like living out one's faith and doing good deeds in this world. Religious elites looking to do useful work sometimes channel their commitment into winning new converts or preserving existing group loyalty and identity. They also frequently end up applying their organizational resources and solutions to problems of social reform or provision of social welfare services (Chaves, 1998).

Al-Huda's organizational network similarly encourages entrepreneurial activities by its members and channels their funds, skills and resources towards new ends. These can include setting up a new branch of the school, volunteering to teach, donating money or property, designing a brochure, delivering essential goods to a flood-affected village, and so on. Participants understand their own activities in terms of discharging religious obligations, earning God's favor, strengthening the movement, and gaining spiritual or other personal satisfaction. Outsiders occasionally perceive them as a misuse of elite power and resources, voiced in complaints about *Al-Huda* events being held free of charge at five-star hotels or *Al-Huda* schools operating in residential zones.

The social positions of some *Al-Huda* members grant them access to powerful offices and influential networks that they avail strategically. At the same time, these elite Pakistani women are denied full rights, with little participation as autonomous agents in public life and in dominant institutions like religion and the state. Social movement theorists recognize the paradoxical potential of such a semi-insider status. As Clemens (1997) puts it, it is "the least marginal of the marginalized, the most advantaged of the disadvantaged" who have the resources and familiarity with institutional rules to push for change. The collective action of *Al-Huda* women does not spring out of their pre-determined class interests or grievances, but is enabled by their simultaneous location as insiders and outsiders in the changing institutional configuration of urban Pakistan. Not all women from these broadly similar social backgrounds become involved with the movement, or turn to religious beliefs, or indeed, any kind of activism. Some, however, do find meaningful experiences, new group identities and scripts of action at *Al-Huda* that turn them into committed religious reformers.

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Notes

[1]On this point, see Munson (2001): 490-4 and Starrett (1998).

[2]The organization does not share any data on income levels or other socio-economic characteristics of its membership. This study relies on indirect measures to gauge these women's social backgrounds, including the residential location of participants and their families, educational attainment and occupational status.

ODA in Conflict-Affected States: Can it Assist Economic Growth?

By Syeda ShahBano Ijaz



The world of international assistance is currently faced with two important trends: not only has the amount of Official Development Assistance (ODA)[1] committed to developing countries steadily increased, but a substantial amount of it is now being channeled towards conflict-affected states. From 29 percent of total aid in 1996-98, it rose to 41 percent in 2006-08 (World Bank, 2011). Most of this ODA flows under the head of humanitarian assistance and is aimed at post-conflict recovery. Bilateral donors channel aid to post-conflict states in order to assist their economic growth, as such states tend to have a supra-normal growth potential in the first post-conflict decade and aid helps to exploit this peace dividend (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). This raises two important questions: a) does aid have any impact on growth? and b) given the large amount of aid flowing to conflict-ridden states, how can it be made effective? The World Development Report (WDR) for 2011 focuses on how conflict hinders development, and its module on international assistance seeks to answer these very questions.

Despite a number of empirical studies, the evidence on the aid-growth link remains inconclusive. Early studies that find a positive relationship are based on the two-gap model[2] and assume a one-to-one relationship between aid and investment. Later studies using better econometric methodology find that aid either has a statistically insignificant impact on growth or that its positive impact is conditional on a good policy environment. It is only at the micro level that the positive impact of aid has been incontrovertibly established wherein project and sectoral level studies demonstrate that an inflow of aid often leads to increased positive returns.[3]

How does this relationship hold in conflict-affected states? Armed conflict is one of the major hindrances to the development trajectory of a number of states today, and most of this violence is internal. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (2011), most of these armed conflicts were intra-state and were fought for control over government; only two of the 29 conflicts over the period 2001-10 were inter-state. Post-conflict states receive aid that is, on average, around 10.2 percent of their GDP. Given this reliance on external assistance, it is worth investigating how these aid flows are utilized.

At the outset, it is important to realize that countries experiencing conflict are characteristically different from those at peace: the latter have infrastructure and institutions that are either weak or nonexistent. This compromises their *capacity* to utilize aid, while raising questions as to how this aid can be used for reconstruction, *without simultaneously developing the institutions of the state*.

A prominent characteristic of humanitarian aid is that it is committed to reconstruction and rehabilitation, not to conflict prevention. Estimates suggest that although the post-conflict recovery period may hold promise for economic growth, the costs of conflict prevention are significantly smaller than those of reconstruction. Third party intervention at the pre-conflict stage is, however, not the norm. There are both diplomatic difficulties to conflict prevention, as well as implementation challenges. Even where individuals do step in to assist mediation, it is often not possible for them to see the imple-

mentation stage through. Subsequent deadlocks in talks or later developments frequently result in a suspension of the conflict-prevention effort. The lack of demonstrable results is what often stops donor agencies, be they multilateral organizations or bilateral governments, from stepping in to promote conflict prevention.

Interestingly, it is not only conflict-prevention that is not seen through to its end — reconstruction efforts, too, require consistent follow up. The World Development Report (2011) points out that the major challenge in the case of internal conflict is not that it occurs, but that it follows a cyclical path; around 90 percent of last decade's civil wars occurred in countries that had already experienced a civil war in the past 30 years. If a country relapses into conflict, the effect of past relief efforts is almost wiped out. Post-conflict aid should, therefore, not only be aimed at recovery, but at the larger challenge of how to break the *cycle* of conflict itself. This involves a restoration of confidence in the state's institutions as well as the creation of an inclusive political process that allows actors on both sides of the fault line to participate in the country's legislative processes.

Instead of being stable, however, aid flows tend to be extremely volatile as well as unpredictable. Not only do the statistics reported by the OECD Creditor Reporting System show significant deviations between aid commitment and disbursement data, the coefficient of variation of net ODA (excluding debt relief) is also higher for countries that have experienced more violence since 1990 (World Bank, 2011). Inconsistencies in aid allotment make it difficult for recipient countries to plan and budget policies, while volatility makes it difficult to sustain policies if planned. Particularly for conflict-affected states, where policies should be aimed at institution-building, it is even more important for aid flows to continue for at least a minimum of 15 years (World Bank, 2011). Is it reasonable to assume that donor agencies, in the wake of the recent WDR findings and suggestions, would be able to predictably commit steady flows of aid for as long as 15 years? It appears unlikely that this would be the case. What then, are the other ways through which external assistance can alleviate conflict in such states?

Firstly, it is important to foster *local participation*. While peacekeeping efforts as well as ODA disbursements have been increasing, there is still a third-party flavor to them. Peace-keepers are generally not indigenous to the region they are deployed in, and there is a general lack of female representation in such missions (World Bank, 2011). In conflict-affected states, where governments are often not trustworthy, aid is channeled through international NGOs that have a short-term presence in the area. Not involving local actors in external assistance efforts, thus, not only places a limit on the effectiveness of the aid, but also on the longevity of its impact. Where possible, these partnerships should focus on involving the local government. Other ways of involving local actors includes charting out transitional reforms with local NGOs and encouraging healthy political dialogue. In this way, withdrawing aid from a particular fragile state will not result in immediate suspension of the transitional process — it can be continued by the local partners even after external assistance has been pulled out (DFID, 2005).

Furthermore, *all aid is not homogenous*. Most empirical studies assume that ODA is a blanket term and that each category of aid will have a similar impact on growth. Contrary to this assumption, aid is committed for both long-and short-impact projects, as well as for humanitarian relief. Findings show that short-impact projects are most likely to have an effect on growth in the next four years, whereas long-impact aid, which mostly consists of infrastructure and investment projects, will increase growth after a longer time lag. The largest amount of humanitarian aid is committed to conflict-affected states, but it is least likely to influence growth; it has no investment component and consists largely of material supplies and food (Clemens et al., 2004).

It is possible to introduce a growth component to humanitarian aid if its delivery and commitment

mechanism makes use of local partnerships. The Natural Resource Charter, for example, involves civil society and private actors in the responsible use of natural resources in the wake of a disaster: this establishes a local commitment mechanism, which continues even after third-party personnel are no longer present (World Bank, 2011). Such possibilities allow humanitarian aid to assist transitional and institutional reforms where such reforms can support growth, even if aid itself cannot.

To conclude, international actors use Official Development Assistance to intervene in states consumed by conflict; in fact, as current trends show, an increasing amount of ODA is being committed to such countries. To answer the questions posed at the beginning of the article: a) it is not possible to empirically determine whether ODA has a significant impact on growth; and b) the fragility of aid-growth models possibly reflects the fragility of growth models themselves (Roodman, 2007). Even if a positive aid-growth linkage were to be hypothesized, it is crucial to remember that aid is a temporary cash flow, which can be made effective if it encourages long-term development in the country itself. This can be done both by fostering local partnerships in the delivery of aid, and in ensuring that local actors commit themselves to policies. This still leaves us with the problems of aid volatility and unpredictability, but perhaps the solution is for conflict-affected states to progressively reduce their reliance on external assistance so that their policies are not vulnerable to unsteady ODA flows.

Internal conflict is anti-developmental. This is why the international donor community has turned its attention to fragile and conflict-affected states. Whereas the recent World Development Report (2011) makes an important contribution in terms of delineating the kinds of conflict and providing policy recommendations to both local and international actors, it only lightly touches on the issue of the underlying motives that lead to conflict. Perhaps an empirical investigation of the economic costs and motivations of conflict, supplemented by case studies, is the next step in trying to explain why conflict occurs, and why it has become increasingly cyclical.

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Notes

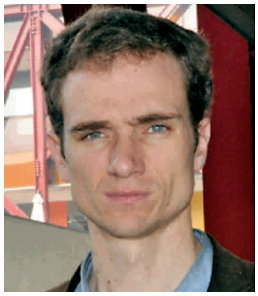
[1]Official Development Assistance, as defined by OECD, includes flows of official financing given to promote the economic development and welfare of developing countries. ODA is concessional in character with a grant element of at least 25 percent (using a fixed ten percent rate of discount). ODA does not include military aid.

[2]The two-gap model developed by Chenery-Strout in 1966 assumes that countries often experience low savings or investment which hinders their growth; this gap can be made up by external flows, such as foreign aid.

[3]See Hansen, H. & Tarp, F. (2000).

The Anti-Corruption Paradox[1]

By Nicholas Robinson



From Tunisia to Egypt, anger over the corruption of autocratic Middle Eastern regimes has spurred on the so-called Arab Spring. The role the issue of corruption has played in ushering in these new, if frequently fledgling and besieged, democratic movements should not be surprising. In the post-cold war world accusations of corruption have arguably become the primary language of regime change. Yet, despite events in the Middle East, we should not assume that fights against corruption and the rise of democracy go hand-in-hand.

In fact, the good governance coups of the past decade or so, in countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh, paint a very different picture. Here civilian politicians were judged to be incompetent and engaged in petty squabbles that threatened economic development (not to mention political sanity). They were also seen as corrupt — horrendously corrupt. Tales of Swiss bank accounts, fleets of luxury cars, and European second homes became part of the national discourse and shame. Transparency International rankings dredged abysmal lows and the "international community" spoke in pitying tones. Seeing their countries drained by extravagant and seemingly kleptocratic politicians riled the middle class and the poor alike, the left and the right, the religious extremists and the secularists. Anger at corruption united the people of these countries in a way perhaps no other issue could.

But how could this rot be removed? Democracy was broken. The poor weren't educated enough to understand who they were voting for, the middle class were apathetic, and the civilian elite were lost in the social trappings of an incestuously sycophantic lifestyle. Such an exposed polity was a greedy politician's paradise. Leaders were needed who were above in-fighting and petty graft; who were pure, forward-thinking, and had the nation's interests at heart.

It was this narrative into which the military stepped. A narrative that, as we will see, was often actively promoted by the security and military forces themselves. The generals would assume the burden of guiding the country until strong institutions and a fair political climate could be created that would finally give the people a government worthy of their name. And anyone who questioned the wisdom of this takeover was on the side of the politicians — and corruption.

This, broadly put, was the basic choreography of these good governance coups. It also contains the heart of the anti-corruption paradox: anti-corruption rhetoric and efforts can systematically (even if unintentionally) empower the military, while under-cutting civilian politicians, with far-reaching implications for both fighting corruption and democracy. Although anti-corruption efforts may frequently seem to be apolitical and simply promoting 'good governance' in these countries, they become not only political, but in fact a primary mechanism for regime change.

To those in a country ruled by military in recent years, the above characterization may sound crude, and coming from an outsider, maybe even belittling in its emotive reductionism. But it should not be unfamiliar. Countries generally revere their military — those who are willing to risk their lives for something greater than themselves. They vigilantly guard us from the unknown other and the Hobbesian abyss, as we go on with the relative

trivialities of life. In countries with military coup-cycles, they are not only perhaps the only institution that realistically has the capacity to govern on short-notice, but they are also amongst the only institutions which has a chance of garnering the people's respect. Even when public opinion turns against the military, as it arguably has in Pakistan at present, it is usually short-lived. If a particular general or officer was corrupt, he becomes the exception. The institution's past misdeeds are too often quickly forgotten or discounted. In the political imagination, the military breeds integrity. It practically manufactures it. The next set of officers is sure to be purer than the last.

As a result, during anti-corruption campaigns and in periods of backlash against corruption, the military almost always fares better than politicians. There is an in-built emotional asymmetry that both favors and guards the military. The military is not to be criticized as corrupt, or indeed even capable of it, by politicians, media, civil society, and certainly not foreigners. Meanwhile, politicians are assumed to be corrupt. The political climate encourages them to trade charges of corruption against each other, and the media and civil society to make ever-larger and grander accusations. Put simply, it is not a fair fight.

An examination of Bangladesh and Pakistan's anti-corruption experiences helps detail these similar patterns over the use of corruption charges as a political tool, including in the most recent good governance coup in each country. These two countries' intertwined histories make their experiences closer than many. However, they are also instructive for other countries that regularly suffer good governance coups like Thailand, as well as new democracies like Egypt that may be susceptible to such coups given their strong militaries and corruption-charged political climates.

Bangladesh and the Good Governance Coup

From independence, Bangladesh's fledgling democratic government faced serious internal challenges from military and political factions. As a result, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared the new country's first state of emergency in 1974. A year later, members of the armed forces assassinated Sheikh Mujib and his family members, citing corruption and misrule to defend their takeover. Such justifications would become a norm. When martial law was imposed after General H. M. Ershad came to power, overthrowing a civilian-led elected government in a bloodless coup in 1982, he also pointed to corruption under the previous regime as the primary reason for seizing power.

However, as is often the case when military leaders are in power for very long, accusations of corruption began running the other way. In the late 1980s, the two major political parties, the Awami League (AL) and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), spear-headed a mass movement for democratic government that highlighted allegations of gross corruption by General Ershad and his government. He was eventually convicted for corruption in 1991.

Countervailing allegations of corruption by political party leaders at national and local levels became commonplace in the new democratic environment, rising to a crescendo each time elections drew nearer in 1996, 2001, and finally 2007. Transparency International ranked the country as the most corrupt in the world from 2001 to 2004, and donors like the United States and European Union consistently demanded Bangladesh do more to combat corruption.[2]

In January 2007, a military-backed government would declare an Emergency and take over once again. Although a botched election was the immediate cause, the scourge of corruption was presented as a key motivation. Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed, the former World Bank economist who led the new government with the military's backing, explained in his first speech to the nation that "(i)t cannot be denied that if the country is not freed from the adverse influence of corruption and crime, ascending on the path of democracy is not possible."[3] He vowed to reconstitute a truly independent

and activist Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), and on February 23rd, a retired army general was named the new chairman of the ACC. In one of his first major speeches during the Emergency period, Bangladesh's Army Chief Moeen U. Ahmed said he envisioned a political system with new players, instead of the same old corrupt leadership.[4]

Civil society generally applauded the takeover and there was initial widespread popular support of the anti-corruption drive initiated by the military-backed government. The regime also received the support of Western diplomats, which reportedly saw the military as 'a last resort and necessary evil' to take on the corruption of the political parties and bureaucracy. Indeed, some claimed these Western donor countries were instrumental in the coup itself.[5]

During the months after the takeover, the newly reconstituted ACC not only pressed corruption charges against both Sheikh Hasina and Begum Khaleda Zia, the leaders of the AL and BNP respectively, but dozens of top leaders from both parties. It went after powerful businessmen and then started taking on more petty corruption cases by the thousands. This was many an anti-corruption activist's dream. Finally, someone was going after the corruption scourge, leaving no rock unturned. Freed from corruption, the economy would take off to new heights and the country could fulfill its long-hijacked potential.

Yet, it was not to be. First, some in the middle class began to realize that in the zealous prosecution of corruption, they too were being targeted. Like in much of the developing world, many people's property had been bought with black money and income tax returns were fudged. Suddenly, millions of people were the potential target of the ACC, decreasing its political support. Second, people began to question the military's motives and purity. Huge swaths of the political class were targeted in the anti-corruption drive, but the military's supporters were conspicuously absent. And although the military was still generally viewed as not being as corrupt as politicians, many in the public began to question whether the military was using state resources to secure more luxurious homes for its officers or other lavish perks.

Finally, the political parties began mobilizing more successfully against the military-backed government's takeover. Importantly, the judiciary lent credibility to these efforts. Most military-backed good governance coups seek out the judiciary for validation to help make up for their lack of democratic legitimacy, and highlight that they are in many ways 'more legal' than the previous 'corrupt' regime. However, in the ACC's haste to prosecute as many politicians as quickly as possible, several procedural rules had not been followed making their cases open to challenge. Bangladesh's newly passed anti-corruption laws made corruption charges non-bailable offences, but the High Court claimed constitutional grounding to be able to grant bail if they wanted and began doing so. Although the Supreme Court quickly over-turned these cases, they provided a rallying point for opponents of the military-backed government to question the legitimacy of their takeover and actions. Suddenly, with their armor of legality chinked, the military-backed government was on much more perilous ground.

New elections were held at the end of 2008. In preparation, a number of high profile leaders were released from jail and the Awami League led by Sheikh Hasina won an overwhelming victory. Afterwards, the ACC was revamped again and the cases against leading politicians were either withdrawn or began to fall apart. The public's faith in the government's ability to tackle corruption sank to new lows. In the end, the institutions — the ACC, Parliament, and judiciary — that were most likely to be able to eventually take on corruption were undermined in the name of a supposedly good governance coup.

Pakistan's Anti-Corruption Experience

Perhaps unsurprisingly given their common history, the

story of the use of anti-corruption charges in Pakistani politics has not been that different from Bangladesh. General Ayub Khan justified the military's first coup in 1958 as a reaction to the "political chicanery, intrigue, corruption, and inefficiency manifest in every sphere of life."[6] He painted the army as the only institution disciplined enough to save the nation from these 'evils' and lay the foundation for democratic constitutionalism. Such accusations of corruption amongst civilian politicians have become a trademark of regime changes in Pakistan, and arguably the dominant discourse of the civilian political parties themselves.

For example, Benazir Bhutto was elected Prime Minister in 1988 in the first democratic election in over a decade, but removed twenty months later by President Ishaq Khan amidst charges of corruption. Nawaz Sharif then became Prime Minister vowing to end the corruption of Benazir Bhutto's government. However, just three years later in 1993 President Ishaq Khan again dissolved his government on charges of corruption, nepotism, and extra-judicial killings. Benazir Bhutto was re-elected Prime Minister later that year, only to be removed by President Farooq Leghari in 1996 — yet again, on corruption charges. Sharif returned to power in 1997 with both Bhutto and Sharif trading accusations of corruption against each other, which ultimately led to Bhutto being convicted of corruption and going into self-imposed exile in early 1999.

In 1999, after dismissing Sharif's government in a successful coup, Musharraf pointed to a weak economy, poor national morale, and "corruption of horrendous proportion" to justify military rule, stating that "good governance" was a prerequisite to solving the country's problems.[7] Musharraf sold the idea of his takeover to donor countries like the United States on the grounds that only he and the military were in a position to tackle corruption and religious extremism.

In 2000, Sharif, who was in exile in Saudi Arabia, was convicted of corruption for failing to pay taxes on a helicopter. Shortly before Sharif unsuccessfully tried to return in September 2007 to run for Parliament, the government reopened past corruption cases against him.[8] Interestingly, commentators in Bangladesh have claimed that the Bangladeshi military was trying to model itself on the Pakistani military (albeit less successfully) in similarly attempting to use corruption charges to exile Bangladesh's civilian leadership (i.e. Hasina and Zia).

The Musharraf government's claims of legitimacy based on cleaning up corruption ultimately failed to withstand the scrutiny of time. Overall the perception of corruption in the country remained static with Pakistan's rankings on Transparency International's index moving little for better or worse under Musharraf's government. Several army officers were seen as corrupt, but untouched by the regime's anti-corruption commission known as the National Accountability Bureau (NAB); while several civilian politicians supposedly had corruption charges against them dropped for supporting Musharraf in the 2002 elections.[9] High profile opposition political figures, such as Yousaf Raza Gilani and Asaf Ali Zadari, spent several years in jail under the Musharraf regime on corruption charges, although they were never convicted by the NAB. If this spotty prosecution record wasn't bad enough, eventually Musharraf ended up trying to protect even his one-time political opponents from corruption charges. In 2007, to pave the way for Benazir Bhutto's return and open elections, Musharraf issued the National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) which granted amnesty for many politicians and bureaucrats who had had corruption charges brought against them.

Musharraf's government itself was also dogged by accusations of corruption. One of the critical moments that brought on the Musharraf government's showdown with the Supreme Court that would eventually lead to the return of open elections, was the Steel Mills case. The alleged under-valuing of the Steel Mills privatization led many to question whether President Musharraf's government was any less corrupt than those it had deposed. In 2008, the Pakistan People's Party's proposed an impeachment charge sheet against President

Musharraf (who resigned before it could be brought to court), including hundreds of pages of charges of misconduct, financial irregularities, and violations of the Constitution.[10] Ultimately, like in the case of Bangladesh's military-backed government, Musharraf's government would also be forced to give up power under questions of its own legality, partisan bias, and inability to fight corruption. The NRO would be struck down by the Supreme Court as unconstitutional in 2009, but so far little has resulted from this order besides throwing the country into further political turmoil. In the end, Musharraf and his government were unable to lay the groundwork to successfully tackle corruption in the country.

Moving Forward

Clearly corruption is a real problem in countries that suffer from good governance coups like Pakistan and Bangladesh. It is morally wrong, it delegitimizes democratic governments, and it hampers economic development and individual freedom. People are understandably sickened by their leaders' corruption and justified in demanding something be done.

However, this does not mean that all actions taken in the name of fighting corruption are desirable. This article's primary aim has simply been to indicate how understandable reverence for the military creates an asymmetry in which military leaders can make credible sounding — though in actuality usually flawed — claims that they can clean up corruption. This gives an artificial sense that there is an institution above politics which can step in and save democracy from itself. Yet, pointing out that no single person or institution is coming to the rescue is actually a useful starting place. It cautions against false hopes and so suggests better alternatives, even if they initially appear messier or less alluring. The idea of the pure leader in many ways harkens back to an older, more traditional form of politics. The polity will only be strong if its leaders are not corrupt. Much rested on the shoulders of having a 'good' king. It was even better if the people were also morally pure. Mahatma Gandhi pleaded for a triumphant, if reformed, return to this older ideal of political morality, sickened by the self-interest and short-sightedness he saw amongst British parliamentarians and modernity more generally (Gandhi, 1909). In this, Gandhi and the military leaders of today's good governance coups make strange bedfellows.

Most constitutional democracies, including Pakistan, take a different tact, at least on paper. This is not to say that people who live in these countries are not concerned about the corruption, or morality, of their leaders. They are and should be, but the premises built into the political order are different.

For a historical perspective, take the United States. Its founders believed the new country faced an existential crisis from corruption. The constitutional convention debates of 1787 are littered with delegates bemoaning the corrupt state of affairs in the new country (Teachout, 2009). Many thought their efforts for independence would eventually be doomed by the corrupt politicians they saw within their midst. The famous Madisonian response was to create a system of checks and balances in which, as James Madison wrote in Federalist No. 51, "ambition must be made to counteract ambition." The self-interested motivation of leaders was to be presumed, but be made to work as best as possible to the advantage of the country. It was a sadder, more ruthless, view of human nature, but one that for better or worse has been adopted in many countries around the world because of its seeming success in controlling errant politicians.

In this way, constitutionalism is counter-intuitive. Instead of asking us to aspire to the best of our ideals, it instead focuses on guarding against our worst tendencies. It pleads for obedience to an abstract law that allows for no deference or bias to the honorable heart-beat of even our most soaring leaders. It demands checks and balances, not purges by the pure. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the *dalit* leader, chairman of India's constitutional drafting committee, and a supporter of the Pakistani independence movement, famously warned when

introducing the draft of the constitution to India's constituent assembly that "Democracy in India is only a top dressing on an Indian soil, which is essentially undemocratic." He claimed Indians had not yet internalized the values of constitutionalism. He worried that they would be too ready to cast aside an imperfect system of laws and institutions for a good king. With this Muhammad Ali Jinnah, a committed constitutionalist, would likely have agreed.

Constitutionalism or democracy is certainly no panacea for corruption. And all democratic forms of government are not created equal in their ability to battle corruption, but it is in working to improve this system that seems to be the most promising path forward.

Regular and periodic elections are a vital accountability mechanism and a source of citizen empowerment, that have all too often been stopped from properly developing, by military takeovers in countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh. Yet, elections also face their own deficiencies when it comes to fighting corruption. It costs money to run political campaigns for office, thus making corruption tempting — and some political leaders claim necessary — to win office. More generally, elections are frequently too broad an accountability mechanism to provide a realistic check on corruption. Even politicians who enter office genuinely wanting to clean up corruption find they may have limited means to do so.

More is necessary. A focus on constitutional and administrative institutions and procedures is pivotal. An independent judiciary, independent auditors, independent election commissions, counter-corruption commissions, properly incentivized parliament, strong accountability mechanisms within the bureaucracy, reformed procurement procedures — the list goes on and on. There is no space to explore all these innovations here. They are part of the array of components available for the machinery of modern governance. They presume distrust of those governing and therefore set up elaborate monitoring and compliance schemes. A vibrant academy can play an important role in appropriately adapting these, at times, complicated and technical, tools.

Now, focusing on these constitutional and administrative institutions and procedures to tackle corruption is not novel in countries with good governance coups. In fact, the military often claims it is trying to institute many of these 'good governance' measures in their takeovers. Yet, the military is generally not particularly adept at such a task, and it is worthwhile momentarily considering why.

The military certainly has governing strengths. For example, it can make and execute commands quickly and efficiently. Moreover, the institution's honorable national mission places them in a unique place to unite the country. But these advantages are also weaknesses. Its self-understanding as apolitical means it lacks self-awareness when its leaders make obviously political decisions. Its much-celebrated efficiency places too much faith in the sanctity of orders from the top. Military hierarchy is good at carrying out clear missions such as repelling invading armies, but it purposefully does not have built-in checks and balances, nor is it good at integrating competing political pressures. It is an organizational model with an inherent tendency against constitutional ordering. It is no surprise that military coups consistently fail to further constitutionalism, even when this is their stated objective.

Into this context, traditional anti-corruption efforts can, quite unintentionally, cause grave damage. Such efforts have an in-built bias that usually benefits the military, and so has the potential of undermining civilian politicians particularly and constitutionalism more broadly. Anti-corruption advocates can no longer pretend otherwise. Courts, which the military frequently relies on for legitimacy, should be particularly sensitive, and on guard, to this paradox of anti-corruption efforts. So should foreign powers and international proponents, who often view their anti-corruption interventions and calculations as apolitical. Finally, anti-corruption

commissions and prosecutors need to be wary of how they can and have been used for political ends by the military (and political parties).

It is politically unlikely, and perhaps untenable, that anti-corruption advocates will start to focus on corruption within the military with as much zeal as they do against civilian politicians, meaning this asymmetry will continue. In the face of this scenario, anti-corruption advocates should recommit their efforts to strengthening the instruments of constitutionalism. Strong anti-corruption agencies are frequently proposed by anti-corruption proponents as an important way to check corruption, even though their own records have been mixed and even when they are not being used to further their creators' political ends. Still, anti-corruption agencies can be part of promoting a constitutionalism that reduces corruption. They should slowly and strategically build their credibility, choosing the most egregious instances of corruption, where they know they have strong backing from a broad cross-section of the people and media. Such an agency, while itself being politically unbiased, needs to understand that it is helping lead an ongoing political movement to reduce the bane of corruption; a goal that must compete with other interests in society. A successful anti-corruption agency should be part of a country's political process and constitutional set-up, not above it.

Investing in such constitutional and administrative agencies and procedures may not provide a magical solution for corruption, but it does provide more opportunities to successfully battle it. At the very least, such a strategy guards against supporting the military's frequently counter-productive anti-corruption claims that play out against the backdrop of an all too often self-defeating anti-corruption politics.

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Notes

[1]Parts of this article have been adapted from an article on the most recent good governance coup in Bangladesh, which I co-authored with Nawreen Sattar, and will appear in the Fordham International Law Journal later this year.

[2]*Transparency International Bangladesh*. Available at <http://www.ti-bangladesh.org/index.php? page_id=216#b>

[3]Saiful Huda, Fakhruddin promises sweeping reforms, *New Age*, Jan. 22, 2007. Available at <http://www.newagebd.com/2007/jan/22/front.html#1>

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[5]International Crisis Group, *Restoring Democracy in Bangladesh* 7 and 9 (April 2008)

[6]Haqqani, H. (2006). History repeats itself in Pakistan. *Journal of Democracy, 17* (4): 118.

[7]*General Musharraf address to nation*, October 17, 1999

[8]Pakistan revives corruption case against Sharif, *The New York Times*, Sept. 7, 2007. Available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/07/ world/ asia/07iht-pakistan.1.7418984.html>

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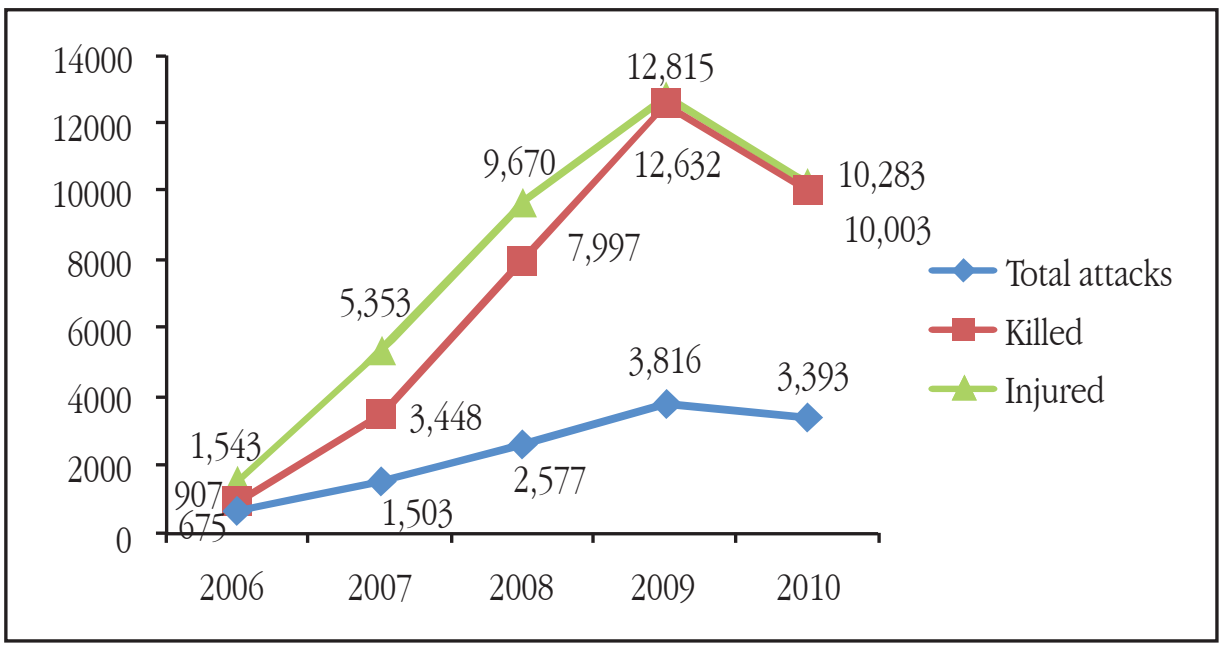
[10]Amir Wasim, Musharraf may face corruption, murder charges, *Dawn*, Aug. 11, 2008. Available at <http://www.dawn.com/2008/08/ 11/top1.htm>

Revealing Facts: Conflict in Pakistan

Pakistan has become a country embroiled in conflict. This conflict is not limited to the war on terror, even though the latter has deepened existing schisms in the country along religious, ethnic, tribal and class lines. Pakistan has had a long history of urban and ethnic strife, with the recent spate of events in Karachi causing deaths of more than 300 people in the month of July alone, a sharp reminder of that fact. This statistical annex attempts to quantify this immense human misery in order to grasp its scale. To that end, we present below recent trends and geographical break-down of conflict in the country.

As shown in Figure 1, violent attacks and resulting casualties escalated from 2006 and reached an all-time high in 2009 (with over 3,816 attacks and 12,815 people killed). There were fewer attacks in 2010 as compared to 2009 (an 11 percent decrease) but these were more than those in 2008. Yet, the decrease in violence has not been uniform across the country. Violent incidents have increased in Sind, Punjab and Gilgit-Baltistan in 2010 as compared to 2009, indicating growing urban violence and terrorism.

Figure 1: Violent Attacks and Casualties in Pakistan (2006-2010)



Source: *Annual Security Report* (2010). Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies. Available at <http://sanpips.com/index.php?action=reports&id=psr_list_1>

Within Pakistan, the regions of FATA, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan have witnessed the most violence. In 2010, FATA suffered the most casualties, while the greatest number of attacks occurred in Balochistan.

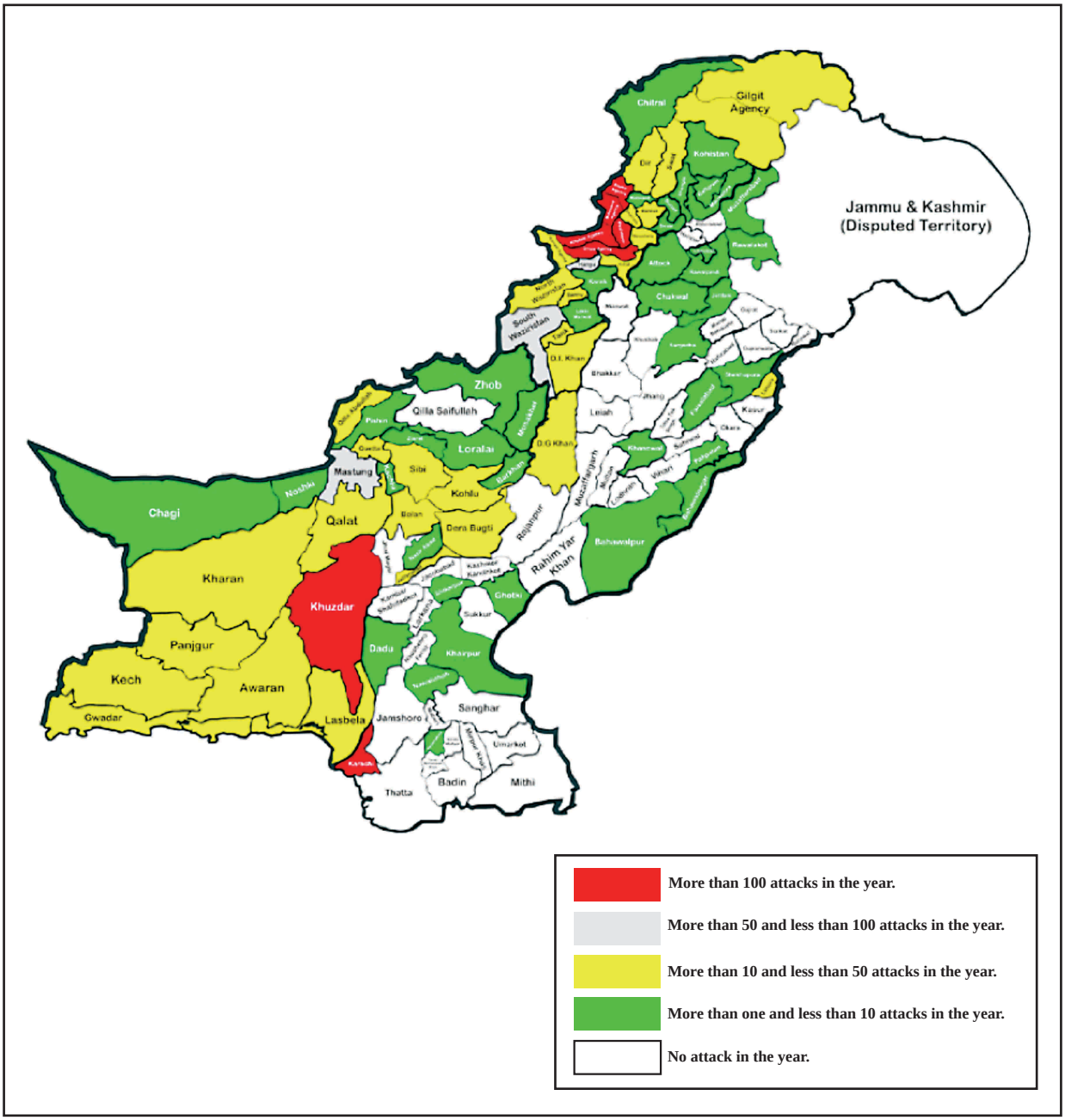
Table 1: Casualties across Pakistan (2010)

Province/Area	Total Attacks	Killed	Injured
FATA	720	904	1433
KPK	459	836	1832
Balochistan	737	600	1117
Punjab	62	309	897
Karachi	93	233	436
Rest of Sindh (excluding Karachi)	18	5	30
Gilgit-Baltistan	13	7	16
Azad Kashmir	5	4	28
Total	**2113**	**2913**	**5824**

Source: *Annual Security Report* (2010). Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies. Available at <http://sanpips.com/index.php? action=reports&id=psr_list_1>

The map below provides a clearer picture of how conflict affects the different areas of Pakistan.

Figure 2: District-wise Intensity of Conflict in Pakistan (2010)



Source: *Annual Security Report* (2010). Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies. Available at <http://sanpips.com/index.php?action=reports&id=psr_list_1>

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