

Indigenous Cultural Resources for Peacebuilding

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan's Philosophy and Conflict in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan

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Abstract

*Indigenous peacebuilding has introduced numerous challenges to the approach of liberal peacebuilding that is well advocated around the world. The conflict in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan presents one such challenge for the local peacebuilders – whereas the implementation of the liberal peacebuilding has failed. Adopting a subaltern perspective, this article examines indigenous cultural peacebuilding resources for this conflict. Prominent among these resources is the philosophy of non-violence and self-restraint of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his **Khudai Khidmatgar** non-violent movement. The article discusses Khan's philosophy and the movement it inspired, while making a case for the value of such indigenous resources in the development of culturally appropriate responses for countering militancy and violence in FATA. The article uses the writings of Ghaffar Khan together with secondary resources to suggest measures to counter the contemporary violent extremism by the Taliban and draw upon indigenous approaches to make peacebuilding more effective in FATA.*

Keywords: Islam, Khudai Khidmatghar, Taliban, Pakhtuns, liberal peacebuilding.

1 Introduction

The Global War on Terror is an ambiguous war with undefined objectives. It has variously been termed as a war over historical narratives, a war of memories, a cosmic war, a religious war, an ideological war and a war over natural resources (Aslan, 2009; Tibi, 2008). The word 'war' itself denotes the reliance on military means to deal with this conflict. This suggests that if peace is achieved at the end of this conflict, it will merely be a 'negative peace', indicating an absence of war or violence as a condition for the maintenance of peace (Galtung, 1996: 3). In the aftermath of attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001 and the subsequent military response of the United States, the conflict that emerged in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan may be understood as a local phenomenon with global dimensions. As the cause of

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conflict in FATA, violent militancy, terrorism and extremism by al Qaeda and the Taliban has been countered by a military solution of operations and tribal militias by the state of Pakistan, while the US contributes drone strikes as part of its global 'War on Terror'.

The article argues that introducing liberal understandings of peacebuilding only strengthened jihadist arguments about Western imperialism. The use of military operations/intervention and the projection of Western liberal ideals of peace and transformation onto Muslim and tribal societies through 'peacebuilding' and 'reconstruction' is producing negative political trends. Viviane Jabri (2010: 41) argues that this approach and practice of conflict intervention is different from more traditional ones, as it rests on liberal societies' acting as agents of transformation of target societies rather than working towards resolving underlying conflict causes. In FATA, this has resulted in militants targeting both government/military installations for acting as a Western puppet, NGOs as symbols of Western peacebuilding initiative, schools as educational institutions promoting Westernization and also foreigners and embassy personnel.

The liberal peacebuilding project may be understood as institution building and governance within a global matrix of war emphasizing Western notions of a vibrant civil society, democracy and participatory process, human rights, market economy and good governance, thereby constituting a form of Western imperialism. Andrew Williams (2010: 59, 68) argues that negotiation with terrorists as a form of conflict resolution has been completely rejected, and instead 'reconstruction' through military intervention/operations has been adopted as a policy tool for transformation of these societies, exactly the policy that was pursued in the case of Germany and Japan after World War II. Consequently, this form of state-building is defined as 'peacebuilding'. The purpose of this type of peacebuilding is to redesign target societies, seeking to transform them into liberal societies that could then be termed 'peaceful'.

In FATA, both religion and culture generate a sense of identity among *Pakhtun*¹ people that can be leveraged for indigenous peacebuilding. Culture offers an important lens through which to interpret the behaviour of the 'other'. While placing culture at the centre of conflict analysis is in some ways problematic, possibly discounting history and even 'de-historiciz[ing] the construction of political identities' (Mamdani, 2002: 61-62), cultural resources may also be utilized to generate strategies for indigenous peacebuilding. John Paul Lederach considers conflict to be an expressive, dynamic and dialectical process that is not static but emerges owing to the perceptions and meanings assigned by humans to events in a conflict situation. Lederach contends that the events of 9/11 are embedded in a cycle of history that he terms "actions, reactions, and counteractions" (Lederach, 2005: 25). The core of his approach is a process of transformative social change through the development of an infrastructure for peacebuilding as 'process structure' to transform a war system into a 'peace system'. The main emphasis in this process is not on ending conflict, but rather on "building relationships with new patterns, processes, and structures" (Lederach, 1997: 84).

1 *Pakhtun* is a variation of *Pashtun* and *Pukhtun*, and reflects the local pronunciation.

Lederach (1995) proposes an elicitive approach to peacebuilding as it utilizes and promotes human and cultural resources from within a culture, rather than importing solutions from other conflict settings, which he calls prescriptive. The elicitive approach to peacebuilding, unlike the prescriptive approaches, emphasizes values and communication techniques that exist within the community. It involves community-held knowledge related to peacebuilding and conflict transformation found in local cultures and society in conflict. The elicitive approach is an indigenous based model rooted in the common memory and cultural epistemology of the people involved. Moreover, the elicitive model focuses on the inherent wisdom of the community and the culture, which makes it organic and involves actors at multiple levels and roles (Lederach, 1995: 55-64). Abu-Nimer (2003: 74) further suggests that the application of peacebuilding approaches should include not only approaches developed by Western theory, but also indigenous approaches. To achieve this goal, he suggests the use of religious-cultural resources for peacebuilding approach based on structural transformation as a framework for Muslim societies.

Theoretically, conflict analysis in this article is situated within the constructivist school of international relations. In this tradition, analysis of conflict through a cultural lens represents multiple lived realities. It is the interaction of these multiple constructed worlds that is understood to create conflicts, as explained by David W. Augsburger (1992: 17):

[In a culture] social reality is constructed of networks of subjective realities; it may be defined as collective shared meaning. It is created by the interplay of consensus and conflict. As consensus breaks down, conflict emerges; as the conflict is resolved, a new consensus containing and reframing the old social reality emerges.

Andrew Bradley Phillips (2007: 60) points out that the emphasis of constructivists is mainly on the non-material factors in international relations that consider transformative international change. This article aims to (a) examine the validity of the liberal peacebuilding in the FATA conflict and (b) to suggest a proper indigenous peacebuilding method, namely that of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan's² philosophy and his movement in the Pakhtun region, (c) focuses on *Pakhtunwali*, the cultural code of *Pakhtuns* (the people of Pakistan), honing in on Khan's philosophy and his *Khudai Khidmatgar* movement as a form of indigenous peacebuilding. Lastly, it suggests prescriptive findings for peacebuilding in the FATA in light of Khan's philosophy.

Methodologically, the approach in this article is primarily literature-based on secondary sources that provide the contextual platform, while prescriptive analy-

- 2 Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan was born in 1890 in Utmanzai (charsada) district of Peshawar, in Pakistan. He studied at Aligarh and later started working as a social activist in his home town. Later in his life he waged an anti-colonial struggle against the British to gain independence for India. After the partition, he was imprisoned by the government of Pakistan for his nationalist activities. He died in 1988 and was buried in Jalalabad, Afghanistan.

sis is based on the autobiography of Ghaffar Khan as a primary source providing first-hand knowledge of his philosophy, movement and the historical events of that era.

2 FATA: Basic Facts

Intent on informing the discussion of FATA conflict framing, a few background points about the region, its communities and power structures are helpful. Strategically, FATA is located on the border of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province (previously the North-West Frontier Province) and Afghanistan. It was a part of Afghanistan before the Durand Line agreement was signed between the Afghan and British governments in 1893. The border is 450 km long, and the FATA area covers 27,220 km² (Haq *et al.*, 2005). The predominantly Sunni Muslim people of this area, called *Pakhtuns*, are divided into many tribes with a total population of 3.5 million (Shinwari, 2012: xi).³ The entire area consists of seven tribal agencies,⁴ namely Bajur, Khyber, Kurram, Mohmand, Orakzai, South Waziristan, North Waziristan, and six federal regions.⁵

This region has semi-autonomous status in the federation of Pakistan. It is administered under the Frontier Crime Regulation (FCR) Act of 1901 of the British colonial administration with only minor modifications. The Act gives political representatives of the state power to control social, economic and judicial processes in the tribal areas. FATA comes under the President of Pakistan according

3 Shiite communities are mostly found in Orakzai and Kurram.

4 The term 'tribal agency' was used during the British colonial era to denote different administrative units.

5 Frontier Regions of Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Tank and Dera Ismail Khan.

to the Articles 247 of the Constitution.⁶ Although the government of Pakistan introduced social, political and judicial reforms in 2011, they are insufficient to address the discriminatory power structure as compared with the other federating units of Pakistan and development processes in FATA. The lack of justice is also visible in the distribution of development funds, deliberate lack of infrastructure and socio-economic and political reforms. Moreover, during the June 2014 military operation, there was no free access of media to the conflict zone, killing of journalists, indiscriminate bombardment of the area without differentiating between civilians and the terrorists. This contradicts the principles of justice as the people of FATA cannot challenge the acts of the government in the courts of Pakistan (Insight on Conflict, 2014).

An important aspect of conflict in the tribal areas of Pakistan is that one of its causes lies in the structures of relationships that have propagated the conflict among ordinary people and escalated violence in the area (Uddin, 2014). FATA, Pakistan's most underdeveloped and impoverished region, has 60% of its popula-

6 Article 247:

- 1 Subject to the Constitution, the executive authority of the Federation shall extend to the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, and the executive authority of a Province shall extend to the Provincially Administered Tribal Areas therein.
- 2 The President may, from time to time, give such directions to the Governor of a Province relating to the whole or any part of a Tribal Area within the Province as he may deem necessary, and the Governor shall, in the exercise of his functions under this Article, comply with such directions.
- 3 No Act of Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament) shall apply to any Federally Administered Tribal Area or to any part thereof, unless the President so directs, and no Act of Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament) or a Provincial Assembly shall apply to a Provincially Administered Tribal Area, or to any part thereof, unless the Governor of the Province in which the Tribal Area is situated, with the approval of the President, so directs; and in giving such a direction with respect to any law, the President or, as the case may be, the Governor, may direct that the law shall, in its application to a Tribal Area, or to a specified part thereof, have effect subject to such exceptions and modifications as may be specified in the direction.
- 4 Notwithstanding anything contained in the Constitution, the President may, with respect to any matter within the legislative competence of Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament), and the Governor of a Province, with the prior approval of the President, may, with respect to any matter within the legislative competence of the Provincial Assembly make regulations for the peace and good government of a Provincially Administered Tribal Area or any part thereof, situated in the Province.
- 5 Notwithstanding anything contained in the Constitution, the President may, with respect to any matter, make regulations for the peace and good Government of a Federally Administered Tribal Area or any part thereof.
- 6 The President may, at any time, by Order, direct that the whole or any part of a Tribal Area shall cease to be Tribal Area, and such Order may contain such incidental and consequential provisions as appear to the President to be necessary and proper:
Provided that before making any Order under this clause, the President shall ascertain, in such manner as he considers appropriate, the views of the people of the Tribal Area concerned, as represented in tribal jirga.
- 7 Neither the Supreme Court nor a High Court shall exercise any jurisdiction under the Constitution in relation to a Tribal Area, unless Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament) by law otherwise provides:
Provided that nothing in this clause shall affect the jurisdiction which the Supreme Court or a High Court exercised in relation to a Tribal Area immediately before the commencing day.

tion living below the poverty line. The literacy rate is 17.42%, compared with the national average of 56% (with male literacy at 32.6% and female literacy at 3%) (ICG, 2006: 9). Political representatives of the state of Pakistan control development funds and planning with little input from the local population. Agriculture is the main source of livelihood. About 7% of FATA land is cultivated for agricultural purposes, although 44% of this relies on rainfall. A full 82% of the land is not available for agricultural purposes because of difficult topography and lack of irrigation (Shinwari, 2012: xi-xii).

The aforementioned structural factors affect conflict intractability owing to a difference in the level of economic development compared with other federating units of Pakistan, capacities for different ways of fighting through inclusion of criminals and youth, cultural patterns of violence and lack of decision-making institutions. The lack of development and employment opportunities, together with low educational levels in the FATA, has made people susceptible to militancy as a way to earn a living and gain power in society (Shinwari, 2012, xi-xii).

In this regard, the Soviet–Afghan war of 1979–1989 is crucial to this story, with the establishment of religious seminaries and the training of *Mujahedeen* (jihadi fighters) in the area, which laid the groundwork for the current militancy (Rubin, 2002: 3). In addition to this, the ideological borrowing from al Qaeda of Salafai ideology and Islam versus the West conflictual tendencies within political Islam was influential in generating the ‘self’ (Muslim) and the ‘other’ (non-Muslim) religious identity among the Taliban in FATA (Rashid, 2009: xii, xi). These factors have influenced self-conceptions and identities, how grievances are experienced and interpreted, what goals are formulated and the methods used to attain them. All this in turn provided the canvas on which relationships are depicted. Since these structures are socially constructed their transformation can potentially lead to peaceful change.

3 Background to the Conflict in FATA

The attack on the Army Public school in Peshawar, Pakistan, by the Taliban on 16 December 2014 has become a watershed event in Pakistan’s fight against terrorism and militancy. In this attack, more than 150 schoolchildren were brutally killed and injured. This was unprecedented in the history of Pakistan, as earlier only military personnel or civilians were targeted by the Taliban. This prompted immediate unified action by the government and military, which was earlier trying to resolve the issue through dialogue. Although the government has started military operations, code-named ‘Zarb-e-Asb’,⁷ under the National Action Plan to counter militancy and terrorism, it has yet to achieve its objective of restoring peace in the FATA.

Violent militancy, terrorism and extremism in FATA emerged after the October 2001 US-led invasion of Afghanistan as part of its global ‘War on Terror’. The shifting of al Qaeda’s leadership along with the Afghan Taliban and Haqqani net-

7 Zarb e Asb means sharp strike. Asb was the name of the sword of the Prophet Mohammad.

work into the tribal areas after the 2001 US-led invasion of Afghanistan brought local grievances into focus and the need to address them (Rashid, 2009). The question of tacit approval of the government of Pakistan to allow them to stay in the tribal areas is still debatable; however, this has made tribal areas a centre of conflict and terrorist activities and a hub for transnational militant Islam. On the ground, traditional tribal power structures within society were being supplanted by the religious-oriented leadership of the Taliban and al Qaeda.

The establishment of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (or TTP, the local chapter of the Taliban movement in Pakistan) in FATA in 2007 provided a base through which to express local grievances in religious-cultural terms and also to launch violent attacks against civilian and military installations in Pakistani cities (Abbas, 2008: 2). This resulted, on the one hand, in the deaths of more than 70,000 innocent civilians in bombings and violence in Pakistani cities and, on the other hand, in death and displacement of inhabitants of FATA owing to military operations and drone strikes. The conflict has had a devastating impact on Pakistani society, in general, and on tribal society in the region, more specifically (Yamin & Malik, 2014).

Since 2004 the military and government of Pakistan have made efforts to deal with the violent militancy and extremism through military operations in FATA and by entering into peace agreements with the militant factions (Amnesty International Report 2010, n.d.). They have so far met with little success as they have focused mostly on ceasefire between the military and TTP factions without taking a long-term view of solving the conflict. Although the dialogue process started before June 2014, the negotiating teams from both sides (TTP and government of Pakistan) reflected lack of seriousness, not only in the composition of the teams but also in the absence of an agenda for the peace talks. International pressure has been applied on the Pakistani government for the last few years to start military operation, specifically in North Waziristan (Malik, 2014). This operation, under the code name 'Zarb-e-Asb', is spreading to the other agencies of FATA. After the operation the question of identity became critical and has been raised owing to the ban imposed on the movement of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to other provinces of Pakistan. This deals with the status of the people of FATA as being 'Pakistani'.

4 Failure of Liberal Peacebuilding Approach in FATA

Since 2004, the government of Pakistan has launched some liberal peacebuilding measures in the FATA in the shape of building infrastructure, introducing reforms and improving education and human rights problems, funded by the American government and the international community. One of the problems with these peacebuilding measures is the lack of understanding of the cultural-religious settings of the region. In other words, there has been no focus on 'indigenous peacebuilding'. Most of the peacebuilding measures depict liberal peace projects by emphasizing peacebuilding according to Western notions. The article argues that new approaches are required such that peacemaking and peacebuild-

ing efforts would benefit from drawing on the cultural resources available from within the region.

Economic reforms in the area were started in 2003-2004 by the government of Pakistan with the help of the international community. In 2005, for FATA's reconstruction, the US proposed the establishment of a Reconstruction Opportunity Zone (ROZ) in FATA. Under the FATA sustainable development programme 2006-2015, \$2.46 billion was pledged. In 2006 the FATA Development Authority was established with the aim of boosting development in the area. But none of these efforts produced the desired results owing to continuous military operations and administrative problems. Although there have been few development projects such as construction of roads and dams or the exemption of industrial estates from the jurisdiction of FCR, the general condition of the people of FATA is deteriorating owing to the displacement of 3 million people since 2009, while 1.4 million people, mostly women and children, are still displaced after the military operation in North Waziristan since June 2014 (Insight on Conflict, 2014).

The peacebuilding approach pursued as part of the US AfPak strategy and adopted by Pakistan's government, suffers from the same dilemmas of the liberal peacebuilding project. By way of example, state-building in Afghanistan through the epistemological construction of a 'civilizing mission' and a 'responsibility to protect' are reflective of this, in many different ways (Jabri, 2010: 42). From 2002 to 2006, the US supported President Musharraf's efforts in the 'War on Terror'. Nevertheless, with the strengthening of the al Qaeda and the Taliban in the tribal areas, their re-emergence on the South Asian regional scene and continuous terrorist activities, the US built its strategy on the analysis that the problem lay with Pakistan's strategic culture, education system, especially *Madrassahs* (religious seminaries), which need reform, socio-economic issues, democratic needs and the unmet development needs of the society, all of which were pushing people towards militancy (Hussain, 2005).

As a result, on the one hand, the US invested in democratic and peacebuilding initiatives not only in FATA also more generally in Pakistan, chiefly for education and development purposes, as part of the US AfPak policy. In this regard, The FATA Sustainable Development Plan (SDP) 2007-2015 by the government of Pakistan is important for the discussion as it is one of the key documents unveiling plans for peacebuilding in the area (FATA Sustainable Development Plan 2007-2015). On the other hand, the peacebuilding measures under the AfPak strategy of the US in Pakistan and FATA also seemed to be futile as they rested on the use of military operations, ignoring on-the-ground realities or conflict-sensitive approaches intent on understanding the local dynamics and the conservative nature of the tribal society of FATA.

Peacemakers would do well to inform their approaches with the observations of Irani and Funk (1998: 13-14), who argue that "[i]ndigenous as well as non-indigenous peacemakers need to draw upon local cultural resources and harmonise their practices with [Arab] Islamic culture and relevant subcultures". To overcome the intractability and recurrence of such conflicts, local and indigenous peacebuilding in general and in FATA should be fundamentally bottom-up and rooted in local cultures and traditional practices. In the AfPak region (as well as in

the Middle East and elsewhere), there is incongruity between such approaches to peacebuilding and the liberal peace paradigm, which is both individualist and institution-centric (Richmond, 2010: 29; Williams, 2010: 61).

5 Indigenous Peacebuilding Approaches

5.1 *Pakhtunwali as a Cultural Code*

In this regard, reiterating the indigenous approach to peacemaking and peacebuilding, it is valuable to turn to culture and society in FATA, and, more specifically, the *Pakhtunwali* cultural code, which literally means 'the way of *Pakhtuns*'. The code covers most, if not all, the structures and processes that underpin social, political and economic life in *Pakhtun* society. *Pakhtunwali* is integral to *Pakhtun* identity and is referred to as *Pashto* or *Pakhto*, which denotes both the language spoken and the ethnicity of the people. The cultural code has a subculture of honour, which serves as the foundation of its customary law. This subculture encompasses hospitality, honour and revenge.

Oliver Roy (1986: 35-36) gives an insightful description of *Pakhtunwali*, stating that it is an ideology and a body of common law having its own sanctions and institutions. The equilibrium that it tries to achieve concerning the role of religion and culture within the tribal society gives it a central position in the life of *Pakhtuns*. Nevertheless, Palwasha Kakar (2007) observes that for a *Pakhtun*, there is no contradiction between being a Muslim and *Pakhtun*, even if some religious scholars draw such a distinction.

In short, the *Pakhtunwali* code includes the protection of honour (*namus*), and the honour of women (*purdah*, veil), noting the value placed on the rigid maintenance of gender boundaries. One has a right to compensation or *por* when one is wronged. Revenge (*badal*) is tolerated and even encouraged as bravery (*tureh*). Steadfastness (*sabat*), righteousness (*imandari*) and persistence (*isteqamat*) are important. *Nanawati*, which means seeking protection/sanctuary or shelter, and obligatory acceptance of truce offer (*nanawati*), offering hospitality (*Melmestia*) are encouraged, while *Hujra*, or guestroom, is central to *Pakhtun* culture. *Tarboorwali* (patrilineal rivalry over land and assets) is an important factor in relationships. Finally, the *Jirga* is to be obeyed (Dupree 1978; Ginsburg, 2010: 11; Naz and Chaudhry, 2011: 24). The institution of *Jirga* is responsible for the resolution of all kinds of conflicts within *Pakhtun* society and has social, political, religious and judicial functions. In this council, tribal elders make decisions on the basis of Islamic law and *Pakhtunwali* (Wardak, 2003).

Although Taliban are not merely *Pakhtun* nationalists nor is the movement confined to *Pakhtun* membership as it includes the Punjabi Taliban also, the movement originated in the *Pakhtun* region of Afghanistan and Pakistan with the tacit support of Pakistan. Nonetheless, it is an Islamist religious movement, which makes it important to use an approach combining both culture and religious factors for peacebuilding. For instance, it is alleged that al Qaeda and the Taliban were given refuge in FATA under the cultural norms of *Pakhtunwali*. Conversely, Farhat Taj (2011) argues that it is the Pakistani government's leniency

and tacit approval that led to foreign militants entering the area. Blaming *Pakhtunwali* and the local people for giving them shelter on the basis of *Melmastia* (hospitality) is not based on reality.

5.2 Ghaffar Khan's Philosophy as a Resource for Cultural Peacebuilding

Intent on sketching an innovative peacebuilding approach for FATA, the Ghaffar Khan's (1890-1988, known as Badshah or Bacha Khan, a *Pakhtun* from the North-West of Pakistan) philosophy of peace and non-violence and the *Khudai Khidmatgar* (Servants of God) movement is presented as one such indigenous cultural resource. Khan spent more than thirty years of his life in prison for his anti-colonial struggle against Britain and later against Pakistan because of his opposition to the partition of the subcontinent in 1947 and support for *Pakhtun* nationalism. In June 1947, Khan, while presenting conditions for his cooperation with M.A. Jinnah (Pakistan's first Governor General), called for changing the legal status of FATA and its merger with North-West Frontier Province (Abbas, 2014: 40). Jinnah agreed to this demand, but the Bannu Jirga (tribal council), in 1948, decided otherwise.

The basic purpose of Khan's philosophy was to bring improvement and change in the life of ordinary *Pakhtuns* and empower them to take charge of their destiny through capacity building. This article takes his philosophy of non-violence and peace from a 'subaltern' perspective. While colonial theory deals primarily with élites and their perspectives, alternative postcolonial theory looks at the world from 'the subaltern' perspectives of ordinary people and subordinate classes (Gupta, 2002). The subaltern perspective is important here, given the British Orientalist discourse's cultural stereotyping of *Pakhtuns* as a violent people lacking an indigenous tradition of peace and non-violence.

The basic principles of Khan's philosophy rested on non-violence and self-restraint as well as reform at the social, political and economic levels. Service to humanity, truth, purity and struggle were at its core. Banerjee (2000: 52-53) observed that Khan's philosophy shed important light on the relationship between Orientalist images, stereotypes and development of perception and images (influenced by the colonial historiography) through stereotyping of *Pakhtuns* in a specific way. As religion is one of the important markers that is identified and recognized in the *Pakhtun* society, Khan did not shy away from emphasizing religion in his non-violent strategy.

Although Khan's philosophy is generally considered to be secular in nature owing to non-inclusion of religious figures in the movement, his heavy use of religious connotations for patience, forgiveness, peace and non-violence depicts his recognition of the religiously conservative nature of the *Pakhtun* society and how to respond to it. He acknowledged that religion and *Pakhtunwali* had historically united *Pakhtuns* and had acted as a force for social change. Nevertheless, he took care to avoid the inclusion of religious figures in the movement, especially *Mullahs* (prayer leaders) and any move that might give it a religious character, while the *Mullahs* also initially opposed the *Madrasahs* or Azad schools established under this reform movement (Khan, 1981: 75).

Khan relied on the definition of *jihad*, which calls for a struggle guided by patience against one's ego as well as for a just and lawful community (Torjorn, 2008). This became a formidable principle of his struggle. He strove for the right of self-determination and ending structural violence through his movement and philosophy. His philosophy reflected his own spirituality and Islamic education together with his experiences of being raised in a traditional *Pakhtun* society (Khan, 1981: 24-25). He believed that the principle of non-violence is also an important aspect of Islam, as Prophet Mohammad followed non-violent ways during the thirteen years of his life in Mecca while spreading his message, which depicted forgiveness and patience as primary virtues and a foundation of struggle for spreading the message of Islam and dealing with opponents.

Indeed, the philosophy of peace and non-violence maintained by Khan, also a Gandhian, is central to countering the stereotyping of *Pakhtuns*. However, Khan differed from Gandhi (a major influence on his philosophy) in that his philosophy had self-restraint and self-control as a principle of non-violence, while Gandhi relied on active suffering and sacrifice, by men and women, to confound the adversary (Banerjee, 2000: 212). Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan (1981: 73-74) was inspired by and participated in the non-violent movement led by Gandhi against British colonial occupation for the independence of India although the British banned Khan from visiting the tribal areas, fearing unrest. Shah (1990) points out that it is wrong to consider Khan's non-violence as inspired by Gandhi. He contends that Haji Shahab Turangzai's armed struggle against British colonial occupation in 1897 and its failure was one of his important influences, leading him to pursue non-violent struggle against the British. In later years, Khan and Turangzai would eventually work together for social welfare and peace through self-restraint and established *Dar ul Uloom* (Islamic school) at Utmanzai and Ghaddar (Mardan, Pakistan) in 1910 (Shah, 2010). Khan's philosophy rested on carefully carving a path of non-violence through Islamic values and principles (Khan, 1981: 55-57).

5.3 *Khudai Khidmatgar Movement: A Subaltern Perspective through Ordinary People*

This article considers the *Khudai Khidmatgar* movement, led by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, as a resource for 'peacebuilding'; a form of peacebuilding led by the ordinary people for the conflict in FATA, making individuals the stakeholders. Within the historical-cultural resources of peace in Muslim societies, the voluntary movement of *Khudai Khidmatgar* represents a departure from the elite history of Islam since it gives importance to the role of individuals in the transformation of society, cultural codes and promoting basic religious understanding through setting a personal example among ordinary people. In line with the Orientalist discourse, Islam's historiography can also be interpreted as an elite history with no account taken of the role of everyday people in the historical process.

Khan started the movement with a reform society for *Pakhtuns*, called the *Anjuman Islah ul Afghania* (Movement for Reform of Afghania⁸). Later, it was named the *Khudai Khidmatgar* (Servants of God) movement. This movement was established in 1929 in the North-West Frontier Province of British India and was later banned in 1948 by the state of Pakistan. The *Khudai Khidmatgar* movement had an estimated membership of 100,000 (Shah, 1990). Its members used to wear locally handwoven and red-dyed dress with a belt and were called 'red shirts' or 'surakh posh'. Banerjee (2007) observes that

The *Khudai Khidmatgar* movement was a largely Pashtun movement. It was guided by a whole new ideology made up by combining elements of its existing culture. Thus, this anticolonial movement was inspired by suras from the Qur'an in facing the colonial oppression with patience and non-violence, its members drew on their mainly Pashtun virtues of honor and courage to face the enemy armies unarmed and resurrected a Pashtun identity which was last in evidence in the revolt against the Mughal Empire.

The development of the historical stereotype of Islam and *Pakhtuns* had a tremendous influence on the depiction of the *Khudai Khidmatgar* movement. The study of this movement is important as it focused on non-violence in a society that has been stereotyped as violent in most of the narratives of cultural historiography (Banerjee, 2000: 11).

The movement fought against the colonial laws by resorting to civil disobedience, picketing, filling the jails, boycotting British goods as well as the discriminatory social norms within society itself. It combined the democratic norms, traditional structure through the Jirga process and British military organizational structure within the movement, and was given military ranks like generals, colonels and captains. The oath of the movement involved sacrifices of wealth, comfort, obeying lawful order, not keeping enmity or opposing anybody, helping the oppressed, abiding by the principle of non-violence, service to humankind and seeking the will of God. It took the meaning of non-violence as unarmed resistance through the weapon of *Sabr* (patience) rather than a mere absence of violence (Shah, 1990).

This movement was a clear departure from the culture that had traditionally prevailed among *Pakhtuns*, which took pride in bravery, aggressiveness and revenge. Khan's social movement focused on community and forgiveness rather than excessive individualism and revenge. It was the first social movement of its kind in *Pakhtun* society, calling for education, gender equality, societal reform and the fostering of discipline among the young. It had the chief aim of training youth, reforming society and fighting against British colonialism and in favour of independence (Khan, 1981; Shah, 1990: 107-108).

8 Afghania refers to both Afghanistan as it was before the 1893 Durand Line agreement, including the *Pakhtun* areas comprising the North-West of the British Empire, and later Pakistan. The use of the term 'Afghania' refers to the ethnic relationship between the *Pakhtun* community on both sides of the border.

The basic principle of the *Khudai Khidmatgar* movement was *khidmat*, or service to the people. It had a three-tier structure: a social welfare organization, an anti-colonial political branch of the Indian National Congress to resist the British and a rural protest force supporting a civil disobedience movement. Its role for social reform and welfare is a dramatic break in the history of the social movement of *Pakhtuns*, which is mostly marred by militancy, resistance and struggles as depicted by Sher Shah Suri, Shah Ismail Shaheed, Ahmed Shah Abdali and Haji Shahab Turangzai.

Khan's movement was a departure from creating heroes on the basis of militancy; he focused on creating peaceful heroes among ordinary people through grass-roots social mobilization. One of the more important aspects of Khan's non-violence movement and philosophy was the attempt to bring about social and educational reforms focusing on women within *Pakhtun* society by establishing schools and encouraging education for women (Khan, 1981: 69). These reforms were long overdue because of discrimination against women, factionalism, violence, intertribal killing, prevailing illiteracy and the lack of development opportunities.

Khan dealt with the violent tendencies and factionalism within *Pakhtun* society by stressing the attributes of forbearance and non-violence, and charging the *Khudai Khidmatgar* movement with the task of reforming society on the basis of religion and culture (Khan, 1981; Shah, 1990). An examination of his philosophy shows that he firmly believed in the superiority of religion as a guide to practical living over the norms of cultural practice. Khan's greatest achievement was in fostering a philosophy of non-violence in a society that takes pride in having guns in their hands. Instead of looking to guns or other weapons as a source of pride, Khan upheld religion as a source of pride, as well as forgiveness and patience as virtues. This represented a dramatic break from the *Pakhtun* notion of pride and honour that was embedded in their culture.

6 Prescriptive Findings of the Study

The current militancy and violence in the tribal belt of Pakistan in the post-9/11 period is a product of the same factors that Khan had described decades ago, including underdevelopment, lack of education and social reform, discrimination against women, non-inclusion of FATA in the mainstream political structure of Pakistan and the predominance of religious figures and their control over society. Intertribal rivalry, non-inclusion of youth in the decision-making process and low levels of religious knowledge within the religious community together with the selective interpretation of religion has resulted in militancy and violence at the local level, and has been exploited by the transnational organizations in spreading their ideology. Nevertheless, the international and transnational aspects of the post-9/11 period cannot be denied in the rise of extremism and militancy.

This article has argued that framing has been used as a strategic tool by Pakistan to make sense of the complex strategic policies based on Islamic identity, rationalize self-interest in FATA and/or to promote preferred outcomes. Thus,

this conflict in FATA is viewed by locals and the government in terms of a zero-sum framing (or a 'no win' situation) and an overlapping identity framing of 'self' and 'other'. Hence the use of military operations and violent militancy by both the parties. The main findings of the study are as follows:

- a Since most conflicts are the product of competing narratives and identity-making processes, their resolution and transformation involve reframing these very factors. In the tribal areas, the way conflict has been framed in the post-9/11 period, as a 'clash of civilizations', is itself fundamentally problematic. Overall, reframing may then be designed to help find ways to create understanding and build bridges between different parties' positions, though doing so does not necessarily lead to conflict de-escalation. As discussed earlier in this article, such reframing can meaningfully be informed with local cultural resources for peacebuilding involving critically examining Ghaffar Khan's philosophy and the movement he inspired, a key to reframing used for peacebuilding, and its limitations in FATA.
- b Both Khan's movement and the Taliban depict a break in the traditional structure of the *Pakhtun* society. Rajmohan Gandhi (2008: 3-6) further points out that 9/11 brought the image of Khan back to the minds of the people and contrasts his ideas with the philosophy of Taliban leader Mullah Omar. With the Taliban using methods like targeted bombing, using youth for suicide bombing, bombing schools especially of girls, Khan's emphasis was on peace and non-violence. In comparing Khan's movement with the Taliban, Gandhi (2008: 8) notes that Khan's movement was more inclined towards social reform, *Pakhtun* nationalism, love of humanity and forbearance. In contrast, the Taliban movement had power as its main objective, while promoting traditional hierarchy, favouring transnational Islamism and organizing in opposition to foreign attacks.
- c The biggest difference was that Khan mobilized *Pakhtuns* for peace and non-violent resistance and attempted to change their code of revenge through self-restraint and patience. He stressed forgiveness, the idea that non-Muslims were equal to Muslims, the importance of women's education, respect for the Buddhist period of *Pakhtun* history and opposition to double standards in politics. On the other hand, the Taliban movement under Mullah Omar, and in Pakistan under TTP, rests on violent resistance, pursuance of the anti-imperialist struggle against the American invasion of Afghanistan, an instrumentalization of the *Pakhtunwali* code by justifying the giving of refuge to militants through cultural hospitality, use of revenge, killing of non-Muslim minorities and the desecration of their religious places and stopping women from receiving education. The Taliban also endorsed the killing of Muslims who supported foreign troops by drawing on the edict of *Takfir* (rejection), allowing Muslims to kill other Muslims by declaring them apostates.
- d In this regard, an analysis of cultural approaches to peacebuilding shows two important trends. First, Khan's philosophically introduced the concept of a non-violent force, the *Khudai Khidmatgar*. This translated practically as he actually formed a non-violent force that voluntarily worked in society by

shaping, sharing and dispensing the positive virtues and peaceful messages of Islam. This non-violent force originally sought to oppose British colonialism or imperialism of any sort. Second, the movement set up camps for disciplinary training, feeding the poor, voluntary work, sanitation drives, repairing houses and broken infrastructure and acting as arbitrators during conflict or tensions (Shah, 1990; 2010). This makes individuals stakeholders in the future peacebuilding approaches.

- e Instead of forming tribal *Lashkars* (militias) to confront the Taliban in the FATA region, a volunteer-based non-violence force of youth could be developed, drawing inspiration from Khan's movement. Such a force would serve two purposes. First, it would provide a positive outlet of activities for youth facing unemployment, drug addiction, terrorism and other problems. Second, it would play a key role in advancing social reforms while providing training in peaceful and non-violent methods of solving conflicts within society through negotiation, mediation and dispute resolution at the local level. Finally, it would promote literacy among *Pakhtuns* through the formation of schools and educational institutions, thereby bringing youth closer to religion and concepts of peace, harmony, development and prosperity.
- f Although Khan was a *Pakhtun* who believed in the cultural code of honour, he made subtle yet important efforts to change it by reshuffling the order of its priorities (Khan, 1981: 76). Traditionally, the *Pakhtunwali* takes precedence over Islam, because *Pakhtuns* believe it predates the arrival of Islam in the region. The Taliban has also used this strategy, but to promote violence, while Khan has pursued peace and non-violence. Khan's approach of self-restraint against anger and practice of the values of forgiveness, patience, hospitality and honour offer a workable way of achieving peace in the conflict zone. It also serves to dissociate Islam from the concepts of revenge and killing. This approach also rejects the edict of *takfir* (unilaterally declaring others as non-Muslims), which was used by the Taliban to manipulate elders and youth who opposed their ideology and methods.
- g The stereotyping of Muslims and *Pakhtuns* as being prone to violence has generated misperceptions and conflict-generating tendencies in this region. Khan's approach to self-restraint as a form of non-violence targeted this aspect effectively. During the struggle against British colonialism, he realized that *Pakhtuns* were behaving in a way that had been stereotyped. The aim and purpose of his movement was to resist these stereotypes. He brought humility, conflict resolution against pride and feud, self-reform and indigenous and self-reliant institutions against 'ungovernability'. The adoption of this approach not only by the *Pakhtuns* but also by Muslims at large would contribute to dispelling the stereotypes to which they have been subjected. Such engagement and practices of non-violence and self-restraint (which challenged, surprised and discomfited the British) would contribute to opening the political space for dominant international Western powers to reflect on their own practices and, hopefully, pursue more peaceful responses and policy changes.

- h Khan's movement also provides guidance on the value of pursuing a broad range of socio-economic and political reforms in FATA, with the state of Pakistan playing a more active and positive role in the fields of development, education and employment. From a conflict-sensitive perspective, this would entail a more specifically targeted (and amplified) federal budget that does not offend local sensibilities. It is imperative to repeal the Frontier Crime Regulation Act (1901) and to end FATA's exclusive character by fully integrating it into the state of Pakistan. Extending the federal judicial system to FATA would end the monopoly of political agents and tribal elders over decisions of the *Jirga*, thus preventing international state or non-state actors from exploiting the fragile situation.
- i One of the approaches necessary for peacebuilding in a conflict situation is to build a counter force, a counter way of thinking; of cooperation not confrontation, to have heroes of peace, not heroes of war. This is all the more important after the Peshawar attack on school children to produce a counter-narrative and thinking. Khan is one such hero. He believes that people never feel proud of peace; rather, they are proud of victories. He suggests the need to inculcate a mindset and a culture of change that makes Muslims proud of peace and development. Khan's approach of non-violence and self-restraint as practised by the *Khudai Khidmatgar* movement focused on forgiveness and social reform, which can play an effective role in promoting peacebuilding in the conflict zone of FATA. As a *Pakhtun* himself, Khan's espousal of forgiveness instead of revenge symbolically offers a significant contribution to the dialogue.
- j The *Pakhtun* people have generally been termed as '*Gayoor*' or 'honourable', valuing and safeguarding their dignity to the end. Their displacement, especially of women leaving their homes and living in camps, waiting for food in long queues for hours, the checking and behaviour at the military check posts, has generated a sense of humiliation among IDPs. Additionally, the integrity of the operations and the real motives of the government in launching military operations, lack of seriousness to continue the dialogue process and the release of the Coalition support fund by the American government for the next fiscal year (it was linked to the North Waziristan operation) have raised serious questions. Therefore, in order to transform the conflict and renew peacebuilding efforts, it is important to work within the framework of restoring the dignity of IDPs by ensuring their safe return, establishing integrity by making sincere efforts towards peace and dealing with the issues of identity by extending justice in the FATA region.

7 Conclusion

The peacebuilding and reconciliation process in FATA is a long-term and resource-intensive project that requires taking into consideration the local sensitivities, social, political and economic grievances and the failure of liberal peacebuilding projects to establish peace. Based on the philosophy and movement led

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by Ghaffar Khan, FATA requires a model of peacebuilding that is locally driven and owned by individuals as the stakeholders. The drivers of development in FATA should be seriously taken up by the state of Pakistan for a long-term reconciliation process as banning IDPs to other provinces can have serious repercussions for the identity of people of FATA as 'Pakistanis'.

The failure of liberal peacebuilding in FATA proceeds from the understanding that an indigenous cultural approach will supplement peacebuilding strategies since it critically overcomes the sensitivity of the local people. It is also the responsibility of the international community to play an active part in ending the conflict that has been prevalent in the area since 9/11. The drone attacks, whose extent is seldom reported, currently fuel negative feelings and instil support for militant retaliation. This is where the international community can help transform this conflict. This article has provided evidence of cultural resources for peacebuilding approaches within the tribal *Pakhtun* society in the FATA that can be used to extend peacebuilding efforts in this conflict. The main concerns that emerge out of the discussion and suggestions provided in this article are: locally owned peacebuilding process, FATA's integration in Pakistan and developmental opportunities to reduce the possibility of a liberals-Islamists divide. However, these suggestions are not complete without the participation of diverse people and grass-roots leaders together with the sincere and active involvement of the federal government of Pakistan. Nevertheless, they can be considered a step towards long-term transformation and peacebuilding in this conflict and other conflicts involving similar dynamics.

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