



Dynamics of Extremism and Resistance Against It: An Anthropological Study of University Students

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Abstract: *The present anthropological study attempts to document and inform about Extremism, its types, nature, and resistance against it to understand the phenomenon of Extremism in universities' youth. It includes studying extremist behaviors in universities' youth such as radical, religious, linguistic, ethnic-based, and other forms of Extremism. Descriptive qualitative research methodology is used to conduct this research. The primary data is collected over six months from 37 in-depth interviews achieved through the snowball sampling method. Observations as a participant, life histories, and case studies have been used to describe the contextual dynamics of Extremism. Findings show that religious Extremism is most common in university students. The resistance of this religious Extremism is also extremist, which results in conflicts and extremist construction of students' identities in the university. Further, this study will also be helpful for resilience against Extremism and developing peacemaking culture, which is the main agenda of SDGs goals.*

Key Words: Extremism, Resistance of Extremism, Violent Extremism

Introduction

In this postmodern era, people are developing one side but facing many problems on the other side. Peace and harmony is the fundamental need of human society. But in this world, still, everyone is frightened of the other due to the extremist identities of others. Extremism is becoming a widespread disease that needs to be studied anthropologically. So at the first stage, it is indispensable to understand Extremism contextual in our community, especially in our university youth, because youth is the present and future of any nation. In the Asian context, especially in Pakistan, youth is considered very aggressive and ardent. This research investigates the construction of Extremism and its resistance of individuals (university students) in a society in its natural

settings. Extremism has its understanding, and its definition varies from culture to culture. This study suggests the contextual meaning of Extremism that "Extremism is the idea that the success or survival of an in-group is inextricably linked to the need for hostile action or hatred behaviors against an out-group." Various types of Extremism are observed in university students, but religious Extremism, ethnic Extremism, single issue-based, and sect-based hatred acts are alarming. Lack of exposure, zero critical thinking, miss leading of Religio-political pioneers, and socialization of radicalization support the construction of violent Extremism in university students. This study deals with Extremism's religious and social dynamics that how these behaviors and extremist germs evolve into violent Extremism.

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There are a lot of differences in our social settings. We may differ in radical, political, ethnic-based, linguistic, geographical, religious, or other senses. Still, the study revealed how these differences create hatred and promote extreme acts against others or out-group? The study explored that Extremism is not an actual problem of society because everyone might consider extremists in any sense or any way. Still, the problem comes to the present when these extremist behaviors become a hotbed for violation. This current research deals with those actual problems of the construction of Extremism and its resistance.

The research is very anthropological because it is ethnographic research, and a holistic approach is used to study this phenomenon. Anthropology provides a cultural strategy to explore the social phenomenon of Extremism that how a culture of Extremism and radicalization evolve through socialization. This research also offers evidence-based empirical data that could prevent Extremism and peacebuilding of society which is the main agenda of SDG 16th goal. The quotation about anthropology is also an inspiration of this study, President Kennedy, who said, "The purpose of anthropology is to make the world safe for human differences." (ALLEN, 2005)

Literature Review

There is considerable literature on Extremism, construction of violent Extremism, extremist identities, and behaviors in a social setting of society. In the Oxford Dictionary of English, The term "extremist" refers to someone or anything that "holds extreme political or religious views." ([Extremism, 2021](#)). However, as Schmid described, The term "extremist" is a relative term that requires a criterion "that is more mainstream, ordinary, centrist, or normal as compared to the extreme political fringe." ([Schmid A. P., 2013](#)). In other words, as Neumann also pointed out, "extremism" can only be defined by comparing it to recognized socio-political cohesion. J.M. Berger is a prolific writer who has appeared in social scientific and journalistic publications. One of his most recent

scholarly works is on Extremism. Berger ponders what Extremism is and gives three easy takeaways: "Extremism is rarely simple." Extremism is not limited to one race, religion, or political Ideology. Extremism can have a significant impact on societies." ([Berger, 2018](#))

As a result, most academics avoid using a single values-based definition of "extremism." According to Neumann, a group or individual might hold "extremist" beliefs without necessarily engaging in "extremist" behavior. As a result, "connecting religious extremism with religious militancy is a serious error" ([Neumann, 2013](#)). [Iannaccone and Berman \(2016\)](#) point out that 'Extremism is divided into three types by *Wintrobe*: groups or persons with extreme goals who use powerful techniques; organizations or individuals with extreme goals who do not employ extreme methods; and individuals or groups who have conventional goals but use extreme tactics to accomplish them. ([Iannaccone & Eli, 2006](#)). *Wintrobe's* first category covers what is now recognized as violent Extremism, while his second covers non-violent extremism. ([Wintrobe, 2006](#))

Humayoon and Basij presented a report about Extremism and Afghan women. According to this report, Extremism was perceived as having negative overtones in all provinces. In particular, violent Extremism was considered a severe threat to people's lives, careers, and general well-being. ([Humayoon & Basij-Rasikh, 2020](#)). *Wiktorowicz's* theory of extremist socialization adds to these ideas about identity construction by stating that radicalization happens gradually and progressively. ([Wiktorowicz, 2003](#)).

Violation is the next step of Extremism. There is a lot of scholarly work to describe pathways from Extremism to Violent Extremism. *Jaap Timmer (2002)* stated that violence is a cultural phenomenon taught, remembered, transmitted, traded, and copied within communities and beyond borders. ([Timmer, 2002](#)). In our research, anthropologists' different case studies suggest that people who progress to violence form small groups of action-oriented peers. They have little theological knowledge beyond the

fact that they believe themselves real Muslims who must fight adversaries near and far to protect their comrades and the faith that unites them. (Hawkins, Atran, & Ginges, 2009). Borum presented a four-stage conceptual model for creating a "violent extremist mindset" in an article initially published in the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin. (Borum, 2011). Harper highlighted conceptual issues. He believes that Individuals join a violent extremist group for two reasons. It is either in rejection of/rebellion against a given state of affairs or motivated by personal rewards and subsequently allowed by situational factors. (Harper, 2018). In Pakistan, Islamist violent extremism is rising day by day. Islam is used and manipulated by different political agendas to manifest powerful discourses. (Vermeulen & Frank, 2012)

Research Methodology

The methodology of research depends upon the episteme of knowledge. The objective of this study is to document and understand the phenomenon of Extremism in university students. The research question investigates the profound process and nature of Extremism and resistance against it in university students. Descriptive research methodology is used to accomplish this qualitative research using different anthropological methods and tools such as observation, interviews, interview guide, participant as an observer, in-depth interviews, observatory checklist, life histories case studies, and behaviors profiles. The locale of this study is a renowned university of Islamabad, with a diverse youth population of over 12000 students. To interview all these targeted 12000 populations is not reasonably possible. That's why the researcher targeted various socially active people in University. Using snowball sampling, the researcher selected 37 samples from the whole population and interviewed them. After the figure of 37, there was the saturation point of data. The sample of 37 consists of 15 female students and other male students. The name of the University and respondents are hidden due to ethical considerations and sensitivity of the research topic.

Result and Discussion

The term extremism has not had specific universal meanings. The aspects and dynamics of Extremism might be the same at the global level of the world. Still, the local understandings of the term extremism are varied culture to culture, intellect to intellect, and even individual to individual. I learned about the term extremism in the local context, field narratives.

Native's Perspective on the Term Extremism

There are various views and perceptions about Extremism in Pakistan. The researcher asked different people about the term extremism. A religious scholar from Islamabad, Maulana X Qadri, replied that:

"Extremism is Shiddat-pasandi. An extremist is a person who acts emotionally in every matter instead of acting rationally. It means his temper is emotional and is air-headed. He cannot tolerate his opposition. This person can do anything for his Ideology, even thrashing".

As another intellectual said about Extremism:

"Coercion is extremism, and it does not matter if it is a strategy in religion, politics, or any aspect of life."

A female respondent of 24 years old, a university student in the discipline of Islamic Studies, gave her views about Extremism that

"Extremism means intransigency. If you pre-judge people without listening and understanding their opinions, you are an extremist".

President of Law Student Federation in a University, Islamabad commented about Extremism that

"Extremism is being a state of out of control behaviors. It is compulsory related to the violation. If anyone is extremist in his views, definitely he would be a violent extremist. I think as a nation our youth have extremist behaviors because we cannot bear critique at ourselves".

A female student of 20 years old from the *Usool-ul-Deen* department related Extremism to religiosity. She stated:

"To impose religious views on others is called Extremism, I think. In my opinion, boys are more extremist in religion than girls."

So, in short, we can define Extremism collectively from scholarly definitions, general perceptions, and students' understanding about Extremism that "Extremism is the idea that the success or survival of an in-group is inextricably linked to the need for hostile action against an out-group. The in-notion group's success must include aggressive behavior. Hurtful behaviors can vary from insults and denigration to discrimination, assault, and even genocide."

Violent Extremism

We all know what "violence" is or think we do, and many believe that "non-violence" is just the absence of violence. However, "violence," like "terrorism," is a contentious concept. State-sanctioned violence frequently refers to "force," a term that also refers to "defensive" violence, which can lend legitimacy to the imposition of bodily injury on a person. The belief that the success of an in-group is inextricably linked to

violence against an out-group. The violence may be characterized as defensive, offensive, or pre-emptive by a violent extremist ideology (Schmid, 2014). During an in-depth interview, a respondent commented about Extremism that:

"Extremism is not to be a state of peace of mind. It is a state of intolerable to its opposition. It is affront behavior to its different or opposition. The use of indecorous words, language, and symbols for others is the nature of Extremism. These all behaviors make an individual from extremist to violent extremist. So violation is the last stage of extremism".

Parameters for Extremism

Extremism is a diverse term and has its contextual meaning in different scenarios. Fieldwork data recommended some basic parameters and essential characteristics of Extremism which are very interconnected. These parameters are explained as follows:



Figure 1: Hierarchical Characteristics of Extremism.

Extremism in Youth of Universities

In today's educational system, Extremism in Universities is not a new occurrence. This research investigates students' attitudes toward Extremism in Pakistani higher education. Different organizations in universities demonstrate their authority by doing heinous acts to create a terrifying and hazardous environment for students both within and outside of the campus. Students at universities develop their own identities based on their ideologies and surroundings; they join various political and religious organizations because these forms are readily available in Higher Education Institutes. By employing that robust tool, *David and Bar-Tal (2009)* described how every young individual has an identity in the community and shares the norms, values, beliefs, and ethics. Youth join various groups searching for identity and promoting their culture and cultural norms. Unfortunately, the plurality of ethnic populations on-campus challenges developing campus identity. ([Atif, Mahmood, & Chaudhary, 2019](#))

Types of Extremism

Extremism has different kinds in its nature. Differences work into the development of the extremist classification of people. The research explored some significant types of Extremism in University students are as follows:

Racial/Ethnic

The terms race and ethnicity are occasionally used interchangeably. The concept of ethnicity refers to people with similar characteristics that distinguish them from most other people in the same society. It incorporates language, religion, demarcation of territory, and other cultural traits. Ethnic differences are inevitably linked to violence on a grand scale. In some instances in university students, ethnic diversities lead to violence and conflicts. One of the most common *causes of ethnic conflicts* is that students prefer members of their group and have active antipathy towards out-group members, making disputes inevitable. If the antipathies due to ethnic diversities are so deep

that they cannot be resolved, separation is the only workable solution left. In terms of ethnic composition, Pakistan is comprised of five major ethnic groups *Punjabis, Pashtuns, Sindhis, Seraikis, Muhajirs, and Balochis*. The *Urdu-Bengali conflict* is one primary example of *ethnic and linguistic conflicts in Pakistan* that gave birth to Bengali National Movement. University students belong to different native ethnic groups or smaller ethnic groups.

In some cases, These differences grow up to the hostile and hatred behaviors against other and out-groups. Although both occur, whether a radical in-group is a majority or a minority in its host culture determines the character of a racial extremist movement. There are several Seraiki and Sindhi or other ethnic conflicts in university students. Different fights among students accrued due to the ethnic groupings of the students. For example, some ethnical radicals in the University criticize the authority of the Religious dominant party named *IJT* for extreme. Although fighting for equal legal protection is not necessarily extremist.

Religious

The vast majority of religious ideologies portrayed their beliefs and practices are superior to others. Religious extremists, unlike racial extremists, typically contain some established method by which members of the out-group might join the in-group through conversion, whether freely or under duress, utilizing a generally uniform approach ([Baloch & Musyani, 2018](#)). In this way, religious Extremism is less complicated to combat than racial Extremism, but religious extremists are capable of incredible brutality and intolerance. Religion is the best tool in the subcontinent, especially in Pakistan, to manipulate people. Due to Religious domination in most of Pakistan's social institutions, *IJT* is a vast and influential group of students in University. The X University of Islamabad was founded in the name of Islam and is financed by Saudi Arabia. That's why the Islamic narrative of Saudi Islam is powerful and can manipulate all other counsels of students. Religious Extremism is

most prominent at the locale. Some case studies explored that sect-based violation and hatred acts are ordinary in university Students.

Single-issue based Movements

Extremist acts or other forms of violence are carried out by various movements based on particular issues. Although they may not wholly develop extreme actions, these groups may create an identity construction as part of their worldview. The in-group for these movements comprise individuals on the right side of a specific issue. But on the other hand, the out-group consists of them on the wrong side. In Pakistan, single issue-based movements can be observed at various places. Such as '*Tahaffuz-e-Namoos-e-Rislat*' throughout the country and recent angry students' protests to demand physical exams turned violent. In these harsh clashes, a student lost his life (DND, 2021). These single issue-based movements become the platform for violent Extremism. For example, people are more aggregate and aggressive even if they can sacrifice their lives or give others' lives for the slogan of "*Tahaffuz-e-Namoos-e-Rislat*." This slogan is manipulated for different unlawful acts. It is presented as justification for all those criminals who attempted the brutal murder of Mashal Khan in a university in northwest Pakistan in April 2017. University students show anger and hatred against France and all other liberal people in the country and outside the country. The National Commission for Justice and Peace data shows 776 Muslims, 505 Ahmadis, 229 Christians, and 30 Hindus have been accused under various clauses of the blasphemy law from 1987 until 2018. (Salamat, 2018)

Diversity at University

There is a diverse cultural representation at universities from different areas of Pakistan and the Globe of the World. Various ethnic and religious groups are working between students. In student unions, *IJT (Islami Jamiat-e-Tulaba)* is a solid and dominant group that significantly influences the University from students level to administration. *Jamiat* is made upon the name

of Islam and has its Islamist identity. Some other students' unions on ethnic and linguistic bases include *Saraik counsel, Pakhton Counsel, Balouch Counsel, etc.* There are also some other counsels of students based on Educational purpose and working as well others. However, *IJT* has its hold all over other parties. University faced different types of extremist accidents that had very deep-rooted in extremist identities of the youth of University.

Intolerant and Extremism in University Students

Violence, bigotry, and Extremism on college and university campuses are not new phenomena in Pakistan. There are many fights, clashes, and conflicts in University, accrued due to intolerant behaviors of the students. The students do not accept diversity positively but expect others to think and act according to them. Mostly debates between students on serious issues result in conflicts and hatred separation. There is significantly less capacity in most students to face harsh critique. Especially, The matter of religion is compassionate for discussion. A respondent gave his views about that

"We all as a nation are not humble and tolerant. We are very aggressive in all matters. We get hyper very quickly. This is due to less exposure and zero critical thinking, I think".

Socialization at the University

Socialization is a life-long process that begins at birth and continues until death. A person learns language, culture, values, conventions, attitudes, and actions, shaping their personality and shaping them into social creatures. Family is crucial in the socialization process since a child's personality is heavily influenced by their parents. After that, formal and informal educational institutes are significant for socialization. (Khan, Ajmal, & Amin, 2020)

The University has its environment for the socialization of the students. The X University is based on Islamist agenda because it is built up by Saudi aid and funded. So the University has Saudi Islamist thoughts and teachings.

Religious groups, especially *IJT*, are fully supported from administration to the whole infrastructure of the University. Islamist teachings are imposed on all students of the University by hook or by crook. There is no compromise or flexible behavior for any activity against Islamic education or values. For example, music is strictly prohibited in the University. Female students must have scarves in the class. Coupling, dating, or even sitting or meeting boys and girls are not allowed. There are different environments arranged for boys and girls to avoid mix gatherings. It means the University has no diverse environment for the students. There is only dominant religious culture. Based on religion, it is widespread to discriminate or insult students who do not fit in Islamic teachings according to dominant religious discourse. As Y, Student of University said that

"Once, there was a conference about women's empowerment in the University. For promotion purposes, banners of this conference are displayed at different spots of the University. But in a bit of time, these all banners are rived by IJT giving the justification about showing physical of women, and it is promoting raunchy. It is not according to Islamic teaching. There is very strictness for girls on the name of Hijab and boys are open to doing for everything".

That's why most students are not critical thinkers in their views, especially in religion. To answer, do you think you might be wrong and your opposite religion or sect is right? All of the respondents replied that

"No, I do not think about my religion or sect that it might be wrong, but I believe I am right in my religion, sect, beliefs, and practices."

The research revealed that university students' extremist behaviors and violent acts are their socially learned behaviors. Students learn and live in a culture where radicalization and hatred against out-groups are considered loyalty for in-group bonding. Here is the point to make peace and harmony for a society. Peacebuilding can be injected into students' behaviors through their socialization. If the provided environment is open, acceptable, and loveable for all out-groups, it would greatly

influence students' socialization at University. This study suggests that it is the best and only positive approach to overcoming, preventing, and resilience extremism in university students.

Case Study

The X University of Islamabad has not had an accessible environment for diverse thoughts or perspectives. But, there is only a single dominant school of thought, of *Islami Jamiat-e-Tualaba*. A 25-year-old female student from the anthropology department told her personal experience about this theme. She studied here for four years, and now she has applied here for a visiting faculty job. She is called for the meeting as well as others. There were 30 participants in the forum. This meeting was only for girls, and there was no man. Most females in this meeting were in *Hijab* and had covered heads. But there were also some girls without any scarf and covered heads as I was one of them.

The meeting started with the Recitation of the *Holy Quran*. Then, the president of the session delivered her all speech about *Hijab* and advised that we should follow the teachings of Islam. If we want to serve Pakistan, our nation, we must follow Islamic instructions. In Islamic teachings, *Hijab* is very compulsory for we women. If we see in history, the beloved daughter of our Prophet, *Hazrat Muhammad S.A.W*, is ideal for all women. We should follow Her. She never likes the women that do not do *Hijab*. After that, Ma'am quoted a lesson incident of *Bibi Fatima Zehra S.A* from history about *Hijab*.

Madam delivered her lecture about *Hijab*, and all the women were watching us very severely, and it was a very embracement movement for me. This meeting is not scheduled to deliver a lecture on Islamic teachings or practices. Still, Ma'am targeted us and pointed out this phenomenon to embrace guys who had not proper *Hijab*. This case shows how the Islamist Ideology of *IJT* is imposed on all students. It is not only in this matter of *Hijab*, but it can be observed in all other aspects which are not accordingly *IJT* Islamist Ideology. It is a socialization process at X University,

Islamabad, in which students evolve their thoughts and do not become critical. It makes students extremist in their Ideology.

Role of Students Unions

Violence did not usually emerge in Pakistani student organizations. Before the 1980s, the culture was distinct due to student unions. Many of the student groups were merged to establish student unions. They came from various intellectual and political backgrounds, yet they all worked together on the same platform. They aimed to improve students' educational and political standing by liaison between students and the management. But the present situation of Student Unions is getting gloomy day by day. These have become a hotbed for extremist acts and conflicts in educational institutes. They facilitate newcomer students in administrative issues, but their benefit is nothing compared to their destruction. An X Chairman of an ethnic council said that

"Student unions and students councils are not the same. There is an obvious difference between them. Students unions represent the entire university population of the University, but student councils represent only specific ethnicity, language, religion, etc. That is why students unions have a broad circle that treats all students in a positive political way. On the other hand, student councils facilitate their specific territory and have a rigid nature, resulting in hatred, conflicts, and clashes between different councils. In short, students councils are responsible for promoting Extremism in the University. They should ban if we want free extremism environment in the universities".

Balouch stated in his study that "The ban on student unions essentially banned student politics. "At the period, general politics, especially student politics, were ideological and progressive," stated Zahid Hussain, a well-known writer and novelist.' To fight the progressive and liberal elements, Zia outlawed student unions and patronized the IJT. By banning student unions, Zia arrested students and sowed the seeds of radicalism and discrimination. Everything from law to

education curriculum to literature was Islamized throughout this time. He backed jihadist doctrine by hook or crook at the request of the United States. (Baloch & Musyani, 2018). In this regard, the researcher spoke with many students and politicians, believing that if the state does not patronize and promote radical ideas, student unions should be reinstated quickly. Students also stated that

"We demand that student unions be restored in Pakistan immediately. Student unions should be re-established if political authorities want to return to the lovely and peaceful days of the 1970s."

The Dominance of only one Flag in University

Despite the decades of the year, the IJT remains much too powerful to challenge any other student organization. It has also been noticed that the IJT is a solid and influential group at the X University of Islamabad. Other organizations frequently hold the IJT responsible for campus violence.

However, X, the secretary of the IJT at University, denied it by saying this:

"The primary objective of the IJT is to build an Islamic welfare state similar to Rezasat-e-Medina and mold the students' lives following Islamic teachings. You can see our party plan that is available in both languages of Urdu and English. No rule or point in this plan could promote Extremism or violent Extremism."

Further, he gave his view about co-education that

"In my opinion, there should be separate educational institutions for both boys and girls. Otherwise, they must follow Islamic principles."

Z, a Sharia and Law student, said that

"You never know when they'll name you a blasphemer. As a result, I hesitate to ask questions or participate in arguments about atheism, secularism, and evolution for fear of being lynched."

Another student of Sharia and Law of IIUI, X, stated the same.

Youth Extremism and an Exclusive Islamic Identity

General Zia ul-Haq in the 1980s assisted the propagation of individuals' extreme fundamentalist identities in Pakistani youth and adults. These are supported by religious and political groups seeking to distinguish themselves from everything else, even indigenous culture. (Haque, 2014) Young Pakistani respondents mentioned strong affiliation with religious-based world views in interviews done for this article and earlier research with students at the X University of Islamabad. As an example, most of the respondents stated that

"Religion is our fundamental. We are Muslim before

everything. Our primary identity is our religion. We can do everything for our religion. Our state Pakistan is based on Nazria-e-Islam. That's why our national identity is also dependent on our Islamic identities. We are firstly Muslim, then Pakistani, and Our religious identity matters considerably more than our national identity."

At its most extreme, this rigid, homogenized, and limited self-identity can

foster youthful Extremism, leading them to accept, if not condone, violence against the other groups in the name of Islam.

One Killed and Dozens Injured

There was a black day at X University, Islamabad, when a student was murdered in a fight between the *IJT* and the *Seraiki* Students Federation in December 2019. This fight is proof of Radical/ ethnic and religious extremism existence in the University.

A First Information Report was made at the *Sabzi Mandi* police station on the complaint of a student, X, under Sections 324 (murder attempt), 302 (premeditated murder), 148 (rioting, armed with a deadly weapon), and 149 (every member of unlawful assembly conviction of the offense committed in litigation of the everyday item) of the Pakistan Penal Code. According to the FIR, the suspects continued to beat those present, shattering several of the students' bones. Many police officers and paramilitary forces (Rangers) took over campus security to prevent repeat incidents. Additionally, the institution's management has declared the University closed until further notice. (Qarar, 2019)



Figure 2: Picture the Funeral of a Killed Student in a Clash at University, Islamabad

Case Study

This incident is of 2019. The fight between *Jamiat* and *Seraiki* Council ended in a death of a boy named Tufail's expiring. There are different narratives about this story. The ones

in the newspaper are different, but the descriptions of victims who were in the fight are other.

The Happenings of the Day in the Words of a Victim

I was the chairman of the *Seraiki* council in 2018. I am an eye-witness to this incident. This fight was not unanticipated. It had different events in two to three years in its background. Since then, *Jamiat* has always held at University and has manipulated their power.

On the other hand, *IUSF* is a council that was the main body of all *Seraiki*, *Punjabi*, *Pakhton*, and other committees. Both *Jamia* and *IUSF* used to have constant confrontations/fights before this incident. Mainly on organizing and celebrating cultural week that was allowed by the University in which all *Pakhtoon*, *Siraiki*, *Punjabi* councils used to participate in celebrating their cultures. We used to organize cultural events and dances etc., *Jamiat* had a problem with that, and they banned those cultural events from University. The *IUSF* immediately resisted the ban. They asked the administration to ban *Jamiat's* religious affairs, but *Jamiat* had a hold in University. They only refused our events through administration.

Jamiat continued to have their events. They had this event 'Expo,' annually in which they invite *Ulamas* from all over the country. We all knew University had this law that nothing would be used from outside the University. Not even a sound system, not even guests were allowed outside, but *Jamiat* used to violate all these laws and organize significant events. So in 2019, when *Jamiat* was organizing their event, *IUSF* wrote an application to the administration. The chairman of all councils was a signatory that the University should not allow this event as they are breaking laws. The administration promised to stop this event, but as *Jamiat* had a hold in the University, they could not stop it. During the event of 2019, *Jamiat* had a guest out of University giving a speech. All other councils gathered and asked the administration to stop the event. Therefore, the administration had to take the stand because of *IUSF* pressure, and they agreed to stop the event. The administration forcefully started to switch off the hall's lights, where the event was and

stopped their event as the guest was giving a speech. On this administration action, *Jamiat* got offended and started protesting around 5 pm. I was with my friends in the cafe, and they shouted my name by saying, "Who is this person," I responded I am. It was the time when I was in the middle of a sentence when I got hit by a large wooden stick on the back of my head. My friends called the police and my family, then filed FIR while getting treatment. I was in the hospital till 8 or 9 pm. I don't know what happened while in hospital, but I know that fight had started. My friend in *Seraiki's* council also fought with *Jamiat* after they had attacked me. As I was in PIMS hospital, I saw another injured boy admitted to PIMS, and people around him were saying I had hit him even though I was in the hospital all this time. They filed FIR against us, too, then. The situation had gotten critical. After a long fight, when a member of councils left and returned to their rooms, *Jamiat* attacked them again. They thrashed, undressed, and made videos of many members of different committees. The situation somehow got to the point where a member of the *Seraiki* council was on the roof, and *Jamiat* was on the ground. I don't know how but there was a stone on the wall of the top someone threw it, or it dropped, but it hit that boy Tufail who got injured and later on died, and the situation got to extreme and fight got very serious. The University took action against us, expelled five students, and detained fifteen students. I was one of the five students, and we are still fighting the case in the high court. This stand was only against the council and not against *Jamiat*. I spent seven days in the police station and nine days in jail and then got bail, but the case is still in process. All subjects were created against the councils. There was no action taken against *Jamiat* because they had support from the University and political parties.

Extremism on Ideological Grounds

It is a prevalent type of Extremism that exists in youth. On ideological grounds, Nationalistic/political or religious Extremism is the most common type. At my locale, the

background of Islamism is observed in constructing Extremism in university students. Overall, it is a particularly imposing interpretation of Islam on society, and its followers regard it as the whole philosophy. Its proponents believe that Islam should be placed at the heart of an individual's identity as the central or exclusive source of that identity. The Islamist worldview divides people of the world into two parts: "Muslims" and "the Rest." As several respondents stated that

"Islam is not our matter, but it is a broad and social matter."

Literature also helped out these findings that Ideology is a tool that violent extremists utilize selectively to develop their system of meaning' in response to psychosocial and strategic reasons" ([Haroon, 2016](#)). According to Living Safe Together, religious violence is justified by misinterpreting ancient sacred writings, teachings, and guidance from famous persons. Still, it can also be politically motivated at its heart. ([Nielsen, 2008](#))

Resistance of Extremism

It is discussed and detailed about the environment, socialization, and culture of X University, Islamabad. The research explored dominant religious discourses that accrue in the University. There are different groups and unions of the students at University. Still, at least and last, the religious group of *IJT* is most prominent and dominant at the University. It is from students to teachers, administration, and the whole infrastructure of the IIUI. Due to *IJT* dominance, Islamist teachings, values, norms, and practices are appreciated and prohibited acts against them. From an Islamist perspective, the plan of only *IJT* is appreciated, not other sects or religions. Different types of Extremism are present in the University, but religious Extremism is most significant due to religious and spiritual power and discourse.

In the resistance of religious Extremism and hold of *IJT*, the opposite school of thought is not based on intellectual and positive resilience. According to observation and interviews with students, there are very few positive behaviors to prevent Extremism. There

are two extreme schools of thought in the University; the first is Islamist and rightist extremist, and the second is the leftist extremists. The second school of thought is the reaction of the first group's extreme nature. So in the environment of International Islamic University, Islamabad, it would not be wrong to say that the "resistance of extremism is also extremism in nature." The behaviors of the resistance actors proved right the statement of Extremism that Extremism has its extremist resistance in the University. During interviews, some students showed hatred against *IJT* by saying *Jamati Loundy* for showing hate for them. Further, they claimed that *IJT* is the only one responsible for all extremist acts in the University. *IJT* should be treated as same as they treat others in an extremist way.

According to this study, youth extremism and radicalization in Pakistan are the outcomes of the interaction among strictly Islamic identity and strong and unchecked Islamic identity-based social movements. Which has more possibilities to spread its signal and allocate support within Pakistan's political and military foundation. Radical/ethnic-based Extremism is common in universities. Lack of exposure, fear from diversity, no critical thinking, misunderstanding or wrong interpretation of religion, and lack of education are like root maps for Extremism and its journey from Extremism to Violent Extremism.

Conclusion

Extremism is not a recent occurrence. It is rooted historically and worldwide. The Globe of the world is facing Extremism in different ways that are very harmful to the global peacebuilding approach and projects. Extremism has its understanding, and its definition varies from culture to culture. This anthropological study filled this gap in the literature and portrayed Extremism's contextual dynamics in university students of Islamabad. The research is conducted on University youth because youth is considered the brain of any nation who either can develop or destroy it. This study revealed different types of Extremism, such as religious Extremism,

radical/ethnic, and single issue-based movements. Studying the resistance to Extremism is an integral part of the research. The research findings show religious Extremism getting dangerous in X University, Islamabad. It is a comparatively restricted, repressed environment observed at the locale, which is getting hotbed to the construction and socialization of extremist behaviors of students. A particular sect uses its power and manipulates others by justifying religious narratives and religiopolitical Discourses. The resistance against this religious Extremism is also extremist, which results in conflicts and extremist construction of students' identities in the University. According to this Research, youth radicalization and Extremism in Pakistan results from the interaction of exclusively Islamic identity and a solid and unchecked Islamic identity-based social movement, which has more opportunities to promote its message and mobilize resources within Pakistan's political and security framework. Radical/ethnic-based Extremism is also

common in universities. Lack of exposure, fear from diversity, no critical thinking, misunderstanding or wrong interpretation of religion, and lack of education are like root maps for Extremism and its journey from Extremism to Violent Extremism in the university students. Understanding Extremism from a contextual perspective is also helpful for resilience against Extremism and peacemaking culture. This research suggests that socialization is the only positive approach for peacebuilding in university students. We need to make a culture of peace and harmony, which leads to youth socialization. The 16th goal of SDGs is to create societies safe and peaceful for human beings.

Recommendations

- There are also doors open to study comparison between university students and Madrasatudents to explore the roots of Extremism in the identities of youth.

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