
Alternative Narratives for Preventing the Radicalization of Muslim Youth

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Introduction

The international jihadist movement has declared war. They have declared war on anybody who does not think and act exactly as they wish they would think and act. We may not like this and wish it would go away, but it's not going to go away, and the reality is we are going to have to confront it.

(Prime Minister Steven Harper, 8 Jan 2015)

With an increasing number of Western Muslims falling prey to violent extremist ideologies and joining Jihadi organizations such as Al-Qaida and the ISIS, Western policy makers have been concerned with preventing radicalization of Muslim youth. This has resulted in a number of government sponsored efforts (e.g., MyJihad, Sabahi, and Maghrebia (Briggs and Feve 2013)) to counter extremist propaganda by arguing that extremist violent tactics used by Jihadist organizations are not congruent with Islamic tenets of kindness and just war. Despite the expenditure of significant resources since 2001, these efforts have had limited success. This article argues that in order to succeed we need to better understand Muslim core social identity beliefs (i.e., their perception of what it means to be a good Muslim) and how these beliefs are connected to Muslims perceptions of Westerners. A better understanding of the interdependent nature and dynamics of these beliefs will allow us to design counter radicalization strategies that have a better chance of success.

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Development of Muslim Social Identity Beliefs

Social identity theory (SIT) is a model of how intergroup perceptions drive intergroup interactions including violent conflict (Tajfel and Turner 1985, Tajfel and Turner 1986). According to SIT, people belong to groups primarily to satisfy their need for a positive self-esteem. People derive part of their self-esteem from membership in various groups. Thus higher the status of a group a person belongs to, the better that person will feel about herself. People compare the status of their group with other groups present in their information environment. People carry out various social identity management strategies to maintain and enhance their group's status because an increase in a group's status would result in an enhanced self-esteem for them. *Social mobility* strategies involve dissociating oneself from an ingroup. *Social creativity* involves "redefining or altering the elements of the comparative situation" (p. 43) (Tajfel and Turner 1979). *Collective action* strategies involve competing for resources with outgroup members (sometimes resulting in open conflict) to better the ingroup's status at the expense of the outgroup. Thus SIT allows us to understand violent collective action strategies such as terrorism and suicide attacks which are harder to make sense of through the lens of traditional rational choice theories alone (although an integration of the two approaches is possible (Upal 2015)). According to SIT, group members engage in violent conflict against an outgroup if they believe that doing so will enhance their group's status and lower the outgroup's status. Suicide bombing against outgroup members (or those perceived to be allied with outgroup members) can increase the ingroup status by demonstrating their group's bravery and conviction and can lower outgroup status by showing the outgroup's vulnerability and fears (Schwartz, Dunkel et al. 2009). Suicide bombings demonstrate the intergroup differences expressed in the phrase oft repeated by Islamists, "we love death more than you love life."

One of the social creativity strategies is to reinterpret the dimensions of comparison between groups so that ingroup's status looks better relative to the outgroup. Ingroup members can

elevate the importance of positive ingroup characteristics and downgrade those dimensions on which an outgroup looks better (Lemaine 1974, van Knippenberg 1978, Mummendey and Schreiber 1984, Lalonde 1992, Jackson, Sullivan et al. 1996). Lemaine (1974) randomly divided holiday summer camp children into two groups and asked them to engage in a hut-building competition. One group did not receive an important tool needed to build a hut. He found that the disadvantaged group attempted to introduce new “criterion of judgment than that or those which were implicitly contained in the instructions, to differentiate themselves from the others” (p. 35). Lalonde (1992) asked members of a losing men’s hockey team to rank themselves and their opponents on a number of dimensions considered critical to a team’s success by hockey coaches. They found that while losing team members recognized their opponents to be better “skilled” and more “motivated,” they ranked themselves better on the dimension of “dirty” play. By creating the myth that “even though we keep losing to other (more motivated and skilled) teams, we are better than them because play a cleaner game” may have allowed the losing team to preserve their social self-esteem.

Cultural scientists studying real world groups have found that these groups also engage in such creative myth making to preserve their group’s positive distinctiveness (Koh 1997, Alexandre, Monteiro et al. 2007, Powell 2011). Koh (1997) studied Singapore secondary school students and found that delinquent students attached “lower importance to values that non delinquents consider as important, such as getting good marks, keeping school rules, being courteous and pleasing parents” (p. 240). Instead, delinquents placed higher value on being “tough and cool.” As Koh points out, myths created to attain a positive self-esteem end-up increasing social distances between poorly performing and better performing students making the problem worse. Similarly, Powell (2011) argues that because black Americans look worse than white Americans when compared along the dimensions of wealth and educational achievements, socially creative ghetto culture shifts the dimensions

of comparison to street toughness and physical prowess because these dimensions of comparison make ghetto youth look better.

Frustrated by a social order in which ascendancy was thwarted, marginalized primarily African- and Latino-American communities invented their own alternative system in which their ruggedly countercultural personas are privileged. Encoded in its narratives, apparel, embellishments, and actual physiology, the hip-hop subculture manifests rejection of the dominant culture's systematized mores, norms, institutions, and legitimacy. This public spectacle of the urban black, principally male, domain is at once deeply grounded in the harsh realities of postindustrial ghetto life, as well as the long-standing menacing black brute trope...

This hip-hop hyperrealism conveys the inventiveness of urban black group-based identity enhancement in its rejection of dominant culture mores by normalizing and heightening the saliency of disparaged characteristics. For example, violence, criminality and incarceration are recast as rights of passage in the hip-hop world. Other dominant culture devalued traits such as misogyny, hypermasculinity, and children out-of-wedlock are all imbued with in-group social value. (p. 462) (Powell 2011)

Social psychologists traditionally contrast social creativity (largely viewing it as positive) with violent collective action against an outgroup (largely viewing it as negative). However, cultural scientists studying strategies used by minorities to cope with their marginalization have observed that social creativity strategies often work hand in glove with violent collective action. Far from working against each other, the two strategies often work in tandem with creative strategies providing the ideological framework necessary to support

violent collective action against outgroups and intergroup violence vindicating the ideologies created by social creativity. A study of the Black American social movements by Powell (2011) shows that social creativity strategies that result in development and propagation of myths of Black ghetto males as hypermasculine tough-guys who fearlessly confront an oppressive and unjust police can also result in an increase in collective violence against the police. Powell (2011) argues that an unchallenged glorification of perceived in-group strengths can result in intense expressions of outgroup hatred such as the 1992 Ice-T hit song “Cop Killer.”

I’m bout to dust some cops off!

COP KILLER, it’s better you than me

COP KILLER, [expletive] police brutality

COP KILLER, I know your family’s grieving [expletive]

COP KILLER, but tonight we get even

... DIE, DIE, DIE PIG, DIE! ...

[expletive] THE POLICE, yeah!

[expletive] THE POLICE, for Darryl Gates.

[expletive] THE POLICE, for Rodney King.

[expletive] THE POLICE, for my dead homies.

[expletive] THE POLICE, for your freedom.

[expletive] THE POLICE, don’t be a [expletive].

[expletive] THE POLICE, have some [expletive] courage.

[expletive] THE POLICE, sing along.

COP KILLER!

COP KILLER!

COP KILLER!

COP KILLER!

COP KILLER! Whaddyou wanna be when you grow up?

COP KILLER! Good choice.

A similar dynamic can be seen at work among Muslim social and religious movements (Akyol 2011, Al-Raffie 2013). Many of these movements have their roots in the anti-colonial struggle by Muslim societies against their Western colonizers. During the colonial period, dominance of the West in material wealth and military technology became hard to deny even for the most chauvinist Muslims. Most of the creative Muslims thinkers including Sunni (Abul-ala-Moudoodi, Jalal-ul-Din Afghani, Syed Qutb, Hasan Al-Banna, and Fethullah Gulen), Shia (Imam Khomeini, Sheikh Hasan Nasrallah), and heterodox (such as Mirza Ghulam Ahmad) leaders found Muslims receptive to their social identity redefinition attempts. They argued that spirituality and family values count for more than material wealth and individual freedom and that while the West has material wealth and individual freedom, Muslims have spiritual wealth and strong family bonds (Funk and Said 2004). As a result of at least a century of persistent redefinition efforts by Muslims social identity entrepreneurs (Haslam, Reicher et al. 2005, Upal 2005), in most of the Muslims world, Westerners are perceived to be irreligious and too focused on their pursuit of individual desires at the expense of their family's needs (PewGlobalAttitudesProject 2011). This also suggests another reason why our current and past efforts to promote women's and minority rights in Muslims societies have been less than successful. Even in the Muslims countries where we have recently intervened militarily (namely, Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, and to a lesser extent in Pakistan and Yemen) the situation for women and minorities may not have improved much since our involvement. In fact, in some of these countries such as Iraq, Libya, and Syria, it may be significantly worse than it was before we intervened. A 2011 Zogby poll found that 78% Afghans thought that they were better off

before the US-led invasion (Zogby 2011). A whopping 86% Afghans said that their political freedom has been negatively affected since the US-led overthrow of the repressive Taliban regime and almost all Afghans (97%) viewed the US unfavourably. According to an opinion poll conducted by the Iraq Centre for Research and Strategic Studies and the Gulf Research Center in 2006, 90% of respondents thought that the situation in their country was better before the US-led invasion (GlobalResearch 2007). More Iraqi respondents to a 2011 Zogby poll felt that women’s rights and political freedoms in Iraq have declined due to US intervention than those who felt that the US intervention has been helpful. Despite this, a majority of Americans continue to believe that their intervention has been helpful and their nation’s actions have led to more political freedom and women’s rights for Iraqis (Table).

	Iraqis			Americans		
	improved	worsened	Same	improved	worsened	same
Political Freedom	33	48	16	50	18	11
Women’s rights	26	37	26	38	16	22

Table 1: Responses by Iraqis and Americans to a 2011 Zogby poll question, “since the US forces entered Iraq, how do you feel the following areas of life have been impacted” (Zogby 2011).

The more we promote women’s and minority rights as our cherished values the more these causes become suspect in the eyes of Muslims. Because our status as an adversarial outgroup is so firmly established in the cultural fabric of the Islamic world, our motives are always suspect. Even when we think that our actions are so obviously altruistic that they cannot possibly be doubted (e.g., when we help victims of earthquakes or tsunamis or help vaccinate people against deadly diseases), we’re suspected by many Muslims to have nefarious motives (e.g., trying to sterilize Muslims). Social psychological research inspired by social identity theory helps shed some light on why this happens.

Social psychologists have found that motivations of outgroup members when criticizing the ingroup norms are considered more suspect than motivations of ingroup members when

they engage in the same critique (Rabinovich and Morton 2010, Esposito, Hornsey et al. 2013). A recent study by Esposito et al. (2013) wanted to see whether argument quality would make outgroup criticism more influential. They presented Australian students with messages of varying quality criticizing Australian racism attributed to other Australians (ingroup members) or Americans, British, or Canadians (outgroup members). They found that outgroup message was rejected regardless of the argument quality. Esposito et al. argue that this was because Australians suspect that Americans, British, and Canadians do not have the best interests of Australians at heart. This is what happens when Australians who have a favorable view of Americans (2/3rd view US favorably (PewForum 2012)) respond, one can only imagine how Egyptians, Jordanians and Pakistanis (with 10, 12 & 14 percent favorability ratings) would respond to American attempts to influence their beliefs and behaviors.

DeBartolo (2008) found that the Western brand is indeed so toxic that when values, such as individual freedom and democracy (which on their own are perceived as positive), are associated with the US, they become suspect and are more likely to be rejected! (DeBartolo 2008). He points out that the World Values Survey found that Middle Easterners value democracy.

While 52.4% of Americans think that a democratic political system is a “very good” way to govern the U.S., over 80% of Moroccans believe that democracy is a very good way to govern Morocco; 67.9% of Egyptians believe democracy is a very good way to govern Egypt; and 58.6% of Iraqis believe democracy is a very good way to govern Iraq... In no Middle Eastern country surveyed did less than 49% of the people believe that democracy was “very good.” These results are confirmed in another question, in which Middle Easterners in almost every country feel strongly that “Democracy may have problems, but it’s better than any other form of government.” While 41.6% of Americans

strongly agree with this statement, that is dwarfed by the number of Moroccans (77.6%), Egyptians (63.6%), and Iraqis (51.2%) who strongly agree that democracy is better than any other form of government... In every country, the number of people who responded positively exceeded 69%, including Jordan (89.9%), Turkey (88.3%), Saudi Arabia (74.2%), and Iran (69.2%). (Page 3)

The United States has spent considerable resources in efforts to promote democracy in the Middle East through funding the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), and other programs (Sharp 2006). However, Middle Easterners appear to be less than impressed by US democracy promotion efforts. In fact the situation seems to be getting worse. The 2011 Pew Survey found that global Muslim perceptions of American and European hostility had actually increased since 2006 “with the percentage describing Americans as hostile rising 11 percentage points in Turkey and Pakistan, six points in Egypt, and five in Jordan... The view that Europeans are hostile has become more common since 2006 in Turkey (+13 percentage points), Jordan (+11), Egypt (+7), and Pakistan (+7)” (PewGlobalAttitudesProject 2011). According to DeBartolo:

There is a widespread and powerful perception in the Middle East that the U.S. is not sincere in supporting democratic reform... in one 2004 poll, a majority of respondents in each of the five countries surveyed said that the U.S. does not “support the practice of democracy in the world.” In Syria, Palestine and Egypt, the percentage of respondents saying that the U.S. supports democracy was less than 30%... In a 2006 poll, “the U.S. does not support democracy in Jordan” was the third-most chosen “obstacle to democracy” in Jordan. (Pages 10-11)

The evidence used by Middle Easterners to support this assertion includes:

- US/British overthrow of democratically elected Prime Minister of Iran Mohammed Mossadeq in 1953,
- Western support of unelected military dictators and kings throughout the Islamic world including Egypt, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and United Arab Emirates,
- Western support for military's annulment of the 1991 elections in Algeria in which Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) had won 47% of the vote,
- Western sanctions in response to 2006 election victory of Hamas in the Palestinian elections,
- Western acceptance of Egyptian military's overthrow of Islamic Brotherhood's government led by President Muhammad Morsi in 2013.

In order to arrest these negative developments, we need to better understand the social identity dynamics of the Islamic world. Just like redefinition of Black males as hypermasculine tough guys has resulted in propagation of myths and expectations that leave sports stars and gang members as the only identities open to them, the intense focus on the dimension of religiosity among Muslims has resulted in being a devout Muslims as the only acceptable way to be a good person. It is in this atmosphere that Jihadists find easy recruits. Far from providing Muslims an alternative to religious extremism and violence, socially creative ideologies actually prepare the fertile ground where Jihadism flourishes. As Sara Khan, Director of British Muslim women's rights organization Inspire, recently said:

What non-violent extremists are very good at doing is that they take people by the hand and they take them to the front door, and... violent extremists open that door and so ISIS then opens that door and that's why you are seeing

so many young people leave this country to join ISIS. There is a connection there. (Ware 2015)

Thus while traditional social scientists have often contrasted social creativity with collective violence (and sometimes even in the national defence and security circles, some argue that we should support Islamic subgroups such as the Gulen Movement and Ahmadiyya Jama'at that engage in social creativity strategies and appear to reject violence against outgroups), the reality is that the myths created by the creative thinkers end up becoming foundations that support the ideological infrastructure of Jihad.

While social creativity is often seen through the lens of an underprivileged minority group as the group's valiant struggle to construct a positive image for their marginalized group (Galinsky, Hugenberg et al. 2003), it can also be seen as an attempt by outgroup to affect core social identity beliefs of another group. Thus by collectively stereotyping Blacks as brutes and Jezebels, Whites Americans were able to influence Black Americans to redefine their core social identity beliefs in what it means to be a good Black American. This suggests that by understanding the social identity dynamics, a dominant group can affect core social identity beliefs of a marginalized group. This is contrary to the argument (often offered as definitive conclusion) by some social scientists that it is not possible for the West to positively affect core social identity beliefs of Muslims and that only other Muslims can engage in the battle of ideas against jihadists. It suggests that the West can actually play an active role in positively affecting the social identity beliefs of Muslims.

Why Does the Jihadi Message Resonate With Some Muslims

The jihadi message has been successful in motivating some Muslims to join their cause because it is a natural extension of the dominant narrative in the Islamic world and it

follows the *arcing pattern* (Figure) that successful messages of social change possess (Upal, Packer et al. 2011). Arcing narratives acknowledge that our group is currently not doing well, remind the group of its glorious past, and promise that making a change to group's shared beliefs will restore that glory in the future. A series of studies sponsored by DRDC found that such narrative structure was more persuasive than other structures especially on those group members that identify strongly with the group and are especially resistant to most social change messages (Upal, Packer et al. 2011).



Figure 2: Arcing pattern of glorious-past-inglorious-present-glorious future that successfully overcomes a group's natural resistance to messages of change.

Key tenets of the Islamist narrative created and propagated by creative Islamic thinkers are as follows.

N 1.

The world was a terrible place before Islam especially for the vulnerable such as women and orphans.

N 2.

Arrival of Islam ushered in a golden era of human rights, prosperity, and happiness for all. The first Muslims followed Islam to the t and were therefore rewarded by Allah with victory after victory over non-Muslims. This era lasted till the end of fourth Islamic caliphate.

N 3.

After this, Muslims moved away from Islam. As they did, Allah started taking away his blessings. There were several valiant attempts at slowing down this degradation but for the most part it continued. Things hit bottom when Crusading Colonials occupied Muslims lands. Now they control Muslims through oppressive puppet regimes.

a) Those who support the West and its puppet regimes in Muslims countries are not Muslims but apostates. Apostates who actively plot against Muslims deserve to be punished with death.

N 4.

The only way to regain the lost Glory of Islam and to ensure a fulfilment of God's promise to Muslims of a final victory of Islam over all other religions is to go back to following Islam closely.

a) In particular the doctrine, institution, and culture of Jihad needs to be reconstituted to ensure a final victory of Islam.

Upal (2015) points out that the historical roots of the above narrative go back to 13th century Muslim defeat to Mongol invasions and at this point it is so deeply embedded that a broad spectrum of Muslims regardless of their sectarian, social class, or political backgrounds broadly agree with most of the above four propositions (PewForum 2012, Moaddel 2014). A 2002 Gallup survey of about ten thousand Muslims from eight Muslim countries (Lebanon, Kuwait, Jordan, Turkey, Pakistan, Iran Morocco, and Indonesia) found that "sacrificing one's life for the sake of Islam/God/a just cause" was considered to be the primary meaning of Jihad by 15% (the response that received the most support) of Muslims (Burkholder 2002). Another 9.5% proposed "fighting against the opponents of Islam" as the meaning of Jihad. Thus the Jihadist message which affirms the above four propositions and only adds the proposition that "our organization is best suited to lead to the final victory of

Islam” resonates with most Muslims around the world despite their regional differences. This is because the Jihadist message is minimally counterintuitive for most Muslims and thus best suited to attract the target audience’s attention and yet be sensible enough to be accepted by them (Upal 2014). A series of studies by Upal and colleagues (Upal 2005, Upal, Gonce et al. 2007, Upal 2009, Upal 2011, Upal 2014) found that people better remember those ideas that violate a small number of their expectations as compared with ideas that do not violate any of their expectations or ideas that violate a large number of their expectations.

The problem with our current counter-narrative efforts is that they do not challenge the beliefs that define what it means to be a good Muslim. Without countering the core of the Islamist narrative, suggestions by “moderate Muslims” that military Jihad is forbidden in modern times simply make them bad Muslims in the eyes of their fellow Muslims. The 2002 Gallup poll on Jihad found almost no support for this view with only 0.4% of Muslims agreeing that “Jihad only existed in early times of Islam” (Burkholder 2002). Unfortunately, this loss of credibility means that such “moderate” messages have little effect on its intended audience (even though they sound great to their Western funders).

A Effective Alternative Narrative of Islam

What we sorely need today is a comprehensive alternative narrative that is as comprehensive as the dominant Islamic narrative that doesn’t just defensively challenge small fringe elements of the dominant Islamic narrative but goes on the offensive by offering Muslims around the world an attractive alternative. While this is a challenging task, I believe that it is possible to develop such a narrative. The reason for this optimism is that

over the last century there have been numerous social movements in various parts of the Islamic world that have successfully challenged the traditional Islamic narrative. For varying periods of time such movements succeeded in making their narrative as the dominant view in their part of the world. This includes for instance the socialist movements in various Arab and non-Arab countries. The socialist movements sought to use social creativity by arguing that the reason for Muslim decline was to be found in Western Capitalist oppression of the poor (Ismael 2009). They argued that Islam's message at its core is about egalitarianism and equality. They traced the roots of their movement back to the prophet Muhammad who (along with his family) lived the life of poverty. Whenever he was given any gifts, he'd promptly distribute them among the poor. They argued that Prophet Muhammad's most prominent companions and successors, Abu-Bakr and Umar instituted state support for the poor guaranteeing a minimum living standard for all. When this started to change during the tenure of the third successor Uthman, another companion of the prophet, Ab-Dhar al-Ghifari, protested against the accumulation of wealth by Uthman and his family (Esposito 1995). Islamic socialists argued that West believes in capitalism and inequality among people while egalitarianism and social welfare are Muslims values. Islamic socialism became the dominant narrative in many Muslims countries in the 1970s including Libya, Pakistan, Syria, Iraq, and Egypt.

While socialist revolutions in Arab countries were spearheaded by leaders of military coups, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto won Pakistan's first universal suffrage elections by campaigning in part on the slogan of Islamic socialism. After resigning from his positions as a foreign minister in Ayub Khan's government, he founded Pakistan People's party in December 1967 on the slogan of "Islam is our religion, democracy is our politics, and socialism is our economy" (Bhutto 1973). Lacking personal credibility as a champion of Islam needed to advocate a change in social identity beliefs of Muslims, Bhutto recruited a number of Islamic politicians, such as Jamat-e-Islami's Kausar Niazi, to sell his message of Islamic socialism to

Pakistanis. Bhutto argued that socialism was not born in Europe through the writings of Marx and Lenin but a 1400 old idea with Arabic roots. He said, “As a matter of fact, the first seed of socialism flowered under Islam, the Islam of the days of our Prophet, the Islam of the four Khalifahs. That is the Islam which gave birth to the principles and concepts of socialism” (p. 53) (Bhutto 1973).

Bhutto also sought to associate capitalism with the West and argued that capitalism was “a manifestation of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Thus capitalist influence had to be purged from Pakistani society and the ideals of Islamic socialism promoted instead” (Shah). By opposing social justice for the poor, Moudoodi’s Jamaat-e-Islami was distorting Islam to serve its “imperial masters” in the West argued Bhutto (Shah).

Wrapping himself up in the Islamic terminology and symbolism, Bhutto argued that he was the true champion of Islam. According to Shah:

Bhutto also employed potent religious imagery and symbolism by designating the “sword” as his party’s election symbol, and presenting it as the “Zulfikar-i-Ali” -the legendary sword of Hazrat Ali. Bhutto’s first and middle names were “Zulfikar Ali”. Moreover, the sword in Islamic polemics conjures up the symbolism of Jihad, and Bhutto constantly mentioned that in domestic affairs he intended to launch a jihad against the evils of capitalism and feudalism and against exploitation and injustice in general. He also excited the people that he was prepared to lead Pakistan into one-thousand year long -jihad against India and celebrate “Shaukat-i-Islam Day” (a day commemorating the victory of Islam) in New Delhi and Srinagar. He declared that no sacrifice was too great for the glory of Pakistan, and all his party members stood ready and willing to shed the last drop of their blood for the sake of their beloved homeland. (p. 95).

Counter to the dominant Islamist narrative, he argued that Islam came to liberate humanity from inequality. Speaking at a commemoration of Prophet Muhammad's birthday, he said:

He [Muhammad] emancipated man from the bondage of superstition and dogma. He brought a message of love, peace and compassion. He liberated the human mind and lit up with reason the dark recesses of ignorance in which mankind languished for centuries. He exemplified the perfect life through his conduct and taught men how to fulfil their temporal and divine obligations.

He crusaded against tyranny and injustice and preached tolerance and of noble descent himself, went forth and embraced as equals the lowly and the poor. He was the first true revolutionary. (p. 67) (Bhutto 1972)

Bhutto pointed out that Moudoodi had actually opposed Pakistan's Independence movement arguing that Pakistan's founder Muhammad Ali Jinnah was too secular. Bhutto argued that Jinnah was a true Muslim who had created Pakistan in the name of Islam:

At the outset of Pakistan, the rights of each individual Pakistani had been fully recognized. On the 26th of March, 1948, Quaid-i-Azam said: "you are only voicing my sentiments and the sentiments of millions of Mussalmans when you say that Pakistan should be based on the foundations of social justice and Islamic socialism which emphasizes equality and brotherhood of man. Similarly, you are voicing my thoughts in asking and in aspiring for equal opportunities for all...." Quaid-i-Millat Liaquat Ali Khan reiterated this theme in August, 1949 by declaring...."There are a number of issues being talked about now-a-days. But we are convinced that for us there is only one issue, namely, Islamic socialism which, in a nutshell, means that every person in this land has equal rights to be provided with food, shelter, clothing education and medical facilities. (p. 54) (Bhutto 1972)

The traditional Islamic parties sensed the dangers to their fortunes that a redefinition of Islam would entail, so they joined together in a grand alliance to fight back against Bhutto and his fellow Islamic socialists labelling them as “evil innovators” who did not follow Islam in their personal lives. A fatwa signed by 113 prominent Muslims scholars declared that socialism is “the greatest of all dangers to the security and well-being of Pakistan and called upon all Muslims to rise against this ‘accursed’ ideology” (p. 90) (Shah). Given their status as Islamic clergy, the Islamic alliance leaders expected Pakistani Muslim voters to reject Bhutto but the opposite happened and PPP won an overwhelming majority of votes in West Pakistan in the 1970 elections.

After taking reigns of power, Bhutto not only carried out socialist policies, nationalizing all schools, universities, and industries, but also continued efforts to portray himself as a true champion of Islam. The new constitution that he wrote and steered through parliament in 1973, renamed the country, “Islamic Republic of Pakistan,” declared Islam as state religion, made a belief in Islam as mandatory for holding a number of top offices including President and Prime Minister, vowed to eliminate usury from financial institutions, and established the Islamic Ideology Council to examine all laws to make sure that they were compliant with Islamic sharia within 10-years. He established a ministry of religious affairs and took over administration of a number of mosques throughout the country. He also organized an annual Seerat Conference to commemorate the life of Prophet Muhammad. At the inaugural conference he said that his government “does not believe in sanctimonious pretensions to gain mundane popularity, nor in self-righteous heroics but steadfastly pursues ... the cherished goals of promoting Islamic ideals and values.” Fighting for re-election in 1977, he promised that if re-elected he would move the weekly holiday from Sunday to Friday, ban sale of alcoholic drinks, and Islamize all laws in six months instead of six years as promised in the 1973 constitution. He accused the alliance of Islamist opposition parties as being puppets of Western imperialism who were being supported by the United States to

derail Pakistan's nuclear program. Bhutto's PPP overwhelmingly won the 1977 elections but the opposition refused to accept the results. When police proved incapable of stopping the opposition's street agitation, military led by General Zia-ul-Haq overthrew the PPP government and hanged Bhutto in 1979. The ease with which Zia government was able to roll back Bhutto's socialist policies has caused many to argue that Bhutto had failed to firmly embed Islamic socialism in social identity beliefs of Pakistani Muslims. I believe that it also indicates the challenges of attempts to redefine social identity beliefs. Such efforts can take decades and centuries of persistent effort by dedicated groups of people who believe in the truth of their cause.

Conclusion

This paper argues that our current efforts to counter Muslims radicalization have not been as successful because of an inability to understand dynamics of social identity beliefs and the connections between the Jihdist narrative and the traditional Islamist narrative dominant in much of the Islamic world. This paper outlines a scientifically informed effort that appreciates the nuisances of social identity beliefs and messages of successful narrative design.

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