

PAKISTANI TEXTBOOKS AND ORIENTALISM IN REVERSE

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ABSTRACT

The research investigates the textbooks as a key site for national identity construction in the postcolonial state of Pakistan. The study is a qualitative content analysis of textbooks of three textbooks of Pakistan Studies, which are taught in all public schools across the country. Through the lens of “orientalism in reverse”, the research explores the issues of national identity construction, its imagining through the use of historical narrative, and the elements used to define group members (self) and the outsiders (other). It is argued that the construction of social identities in the textbooks is implicated on the same “oriental” forms of understanding the world, which takes the existence of ontologically different East and the West as a starting point of a social inquiry. However, there is an important distinction. While in classical orientalism, the Occident enjoyed a superior status in every respect vis-à-vis Orient, in “reverse orientalist” framework, this role has been inverted in favor of the East.

INTRODUCTION

The rise of publicly funded mass schooling has been explained from various theoretical perspectives. From a functionalist view, schools perform a crucial role in promoting social cohesion and solidarity by socializing the young generation into common norms, values and beliefs (Durkheim, 1956; Parson, 1959). Thus, the education system is seen as a kind of social glue that keeps society together. However, critics of this view situates the public education system in context of social conflicts on various grounds. Critical theorists (Althusser, 1984; Apple, 2004; Bernstein, 1977) see education as an extension of dominant social groups’ effort to maintain its hegemony and control. In this view, the education system is deeply political and the knowledge propagated, through this institutionalized mechanism of schools, serves the needs of dominant social groups. For critical theorists, textbooks are part of the state’s ideological apparatus (Althusser, 1984) to propagate certain kinds of views which are instrumental in maintaining the status quo.

This study lies in the critical tradition of social research. From this perspective, the research analyzes the textbooks, which are taught in the

public school of Pakistan. The research maintains that the school textbooks are ideologically laden and are written from a particular perspective which serves the political agenda of the state. Through the teaching of subjects like geography, history, and languages, the state tries to promote a particular kind of national identity and citizenship ideals. These norms often carry political bias, prejudice and hatred towards other communities. The research aims to analyze the political and ideological contents of the textbooks from a critical perspective. It is argued that the Pakistani textbooks are strongly influenced by the ideology of political Islamism. Through the theoretical lens of “orientalism in reverse”, the research argues that the construction of national identity in school textbooks is a “reverse oriental” project. The discursive construction of the Pakistani “self” and the “Other” are done in a same oriental fashion which describes mutually exclusive social groups with different “natures”.

Literature Review

Pakistani Textbooks have been subject to many research endeavors. These studies can either be

categorized according to the methods employed or the themes explored in the textbooks. Here, the review of relevant literature is thematically presented. Reading through the research works, one can easily identify the themes according to which the Pakistani textbooks are explored and analyzed. These themes range from simply highlighting the historical inaccuracies and falsehood to more nuanced and theoretical analysis of the text through application of concepts from gender studies, sociology and political science. For our purposes here, the review is presented according to three major themes. They are relating to (i) historical inaccuracies and misrepresentation of facts (ii) bias and hatred against social groups based on religion, language, ethnic, nationality, gender etc. (iii) promotion of fundamentalist ideology, narrow nationalism, and militaristic values. It is to note that these themes are not exhaustive and by no means cover the whole literature on Pakistani textbooks. The intent here is to employ these themes simply as a categorizing tool.

Historical inaccuracies and misrepresentation of facts:

Aziz's (1993) work is considered to be the foundational in textbooks analysis. In his book, "Murder of History", Aziz analyzed Pakistani textbooks for distortion of facts, inaccurate and misrepresentation of historical events and personalities in the history textbooks of Pakistan. He selected 66 school textbooks for his research, which are taught to children of different grades in public schools. His analysis revealed that the history contained in these books does not capture the realities of Pakistani national struggle for independence. He highlights massive amount of exaggeration, falsehood and distortion of facts, which permeates the history textbooks. Being an historian, Aziz called for reforming history textbooks and also included in his research a "correct" version of historical events. This is a major work and paved the way for other researchers to study the textbooks from various perspectives.

Safdar Rehman Ghazi, et al (2011) carried a content analysis to textbooks of two high school subjects. These subjects include 8th grade Social Studies and 10th Pakistan Studies. The study explores the content of these two textbooks to highlight bias against other religions. The

researchers argue that, although curricular objectives clearly state to promote plurality and religious harmony, the textbooks have clearly failed to achieve these objectives. The study finds that the selected textbooks are replete with contents which are prejudicial to religious minorities of Pakistan. It claims that such content is responsible for inculcating in children bigotry and intolerance from a very young age. However, the scope of the study is both limited in terms of its focus on the textbooks of only one province of the country and also has focused on two textbooks.

Another work which focuses on the errors in historical narrative and national history is that of Mubarak Ali (2002). Ali claims that national histories are always written from a particular worldview, which glorifies the "insiders" and vilifies the "outsiders". Thus, official history contained in school textbooks is always an ideological construction of the nation's past, which tends to highlight particular events and personalities, while at the same time, engages in the process of erasing other people's history. Ali also takes a comparative view of textbooks from around the world. He claims that Pakistan is not the only country to write history from an ideological standpoint, but it represents a norm rather than an exception.

Pervez Hoodbhoy's (1985) work represents a more nuanced version of content analysis of Pakistani textbooks, which tries to understand the national history in textbooks from the perspective of politics. The author claims that textbooks promote a vision of the state which ultimately supports the dominant political structures particularly Pakistan's army. He claims that depiction of Pakistani national identity as based on Islam was absent from earlier history of the nation. However, during the military dictatorial regime of General Zia, Pakistan was projected as a "dungeon of Islam" with army as its protector. The study also talks about other changes during that period. For example, it claims that the nation's struggle for independence was dubbed as a religious struggle against so-called Indian Hindus. It also portrays a highly secular and liberal founder of Pakistan – Jinnah, as a religious person. However, more than analyzing the content of the textbooks, this study tends to be revolving around the construction of national identity and power struggle, but nonetheless, it provides insight about how the

textbooks were changed according to political expediencies of the dominant military.

However, the more recent effort to find historical inaccuracies is the report *Subtle Subversions* (Nayyar & Salim, 2005) produced by a think tank Sustainable Development Policy Institute. This study focuses on a wide range of school subjects including English, Urdu, Civics, and Social Studies, with the intent to spearhead the debate about textbooks reform. The research focused on the themes like promotion of militarism and “jihad”, incitement to violence, glorification of war, hatred towards gender and religious minorities etc. Besides content analysis, the report also focused on pedagogy practices which are antithetical to the development of children and fosters docility and discourages students to think critically.

Bias and hatred against social groups:

Pakistani textbooks have also been researched for its attitude towards the representation of gender identities. Hazir-ullah (2013) has focused on the government's effort to eliminate gender inequalities in the educational system of Pakistan. He has particularly focused on the textbooks as a means to perpetuate the gender stereotypes in society. The study is a qualitative content analysis of twenty-four textbooks of Urdu, English and Social Studies textbooks, which are taught in the government primary schools of Pakistan. The study concludes that the textbooks contain gender biased messages and portray a stereotypical representation of male and female.

Rubina Saigol's work on Pakistani textbooks is ground breaking in terms of bringing-in the sociological lens to the textbooks' analysis. Through her application of theories, her work deviates from earlier literature on textbooks, which were mostly limited by methods and more often than not, carried by historians or people from outside the domain of social sciences. Saigol's (1995). “Knowledge and Identity: Articulation of Gender in educational discourse in Pakistan” is an application of feminist theory to deconstruct the school textbooks in Pakistan. Her primary focus is to highlight how the textbooks are implicated in the reinforcement of patriarchal norms and values in Pakistan. She contends that the stereotypical representation of girls and gendered division of social roles are propagated through

institutionalized mechanisms of education. The representation of girls as a house-maker, pictures showing them in kitchen, taking care of younger siblings and depiction of men in the roles of agriculture, scientist and industrial worker inculcate gender-based discriminatory attitude in the children.

In another work, Saigol (2005) deconstructs the textbook history to highlight the precarious and vulnerable Pakistani self. She narrates the national history as a construction of a nation which is surrounded by enemies from within and without. She articulates that the concept of internal enemies refers to those citizens who represent themselves in terms of their regional and ethnic identities instead of the religious one. Textbooks often construct them as traitors and a threat to national security and solidarity. Similarly, she also reveals the underlying discourses regarding the enemies which are outside the national boundaries such as Indian (often described as Hindus), Bengalis and Christians. These enemies are portrayed in textbooks as an existential threat to the existence of Pakistan. The article maintains that the construction of the besieged self lends itself to a strong unitary and authoritarian state.

Promotion of fundamentalist ideology, narrow nationalism, and militaristic values:

Lall (2008) takes a Comparative analysis of textbooks of Pakistan and India. Her particular focus is on the educational reforms taken during the period of Islamization in Pakistan under the military dictator General Zia (1977-1988). She compares these reforms with educational changes in India during the BJP-led government in India (1998-2004). Her research highlights that national curricula in both Pakistan and India are colored by Zia's Islamization and BJP's Hindutva ideologies in their respective countries.

Ayaz Naseem (Naseem, 2014) analyzes the discourses revolving around the construction of an ideal Pakistani citizen and its manifestation in school textbooks. The author particularly focuses on what he calls the “textual constitution of militarism and militaristic subjects in and by educational discourse” in Pakistan. The research samples two subjects of Social Studies and Urdu for discourse analysis. Drawing upon the poststructuralist technique of deconstruction, Naseem tries to dismantle the grand narratives

employed in the construction of war and enemy and its infiltration into the educational discourses. He argues that classrooms have become the sites where the young minds are subjected to the narratives of militarism and violence, which are articulated and propagated through the technology of textbooks. He calls for radical transformation of textbooks in order to move towards peace and harmony in society.

Zaidi (2011) takes textbooks as an ideological project of the state to disseminate ideas of the dominant group. Zaidi situates textbooks in the political context of the country and focuses on its historical evolution. His study of textbooks reveals the content which propagate fundamentalist views of religion and Muslim nationalism. He argues that the school textbooks serve the need of the dominant military and its associated religious groups, and acts as an ideological bulwark against the secular nationalist movement within the country.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of the research is inspired by the work of Sadik Jalal Al-Azm (2000). In his work "Orientalism and Orientalism in reverse", Al-Azm builds upon the classical work of Edward Said (1978), which was originally published in 1978 with the title "Orientalism". In its original formulations, Said uses the word "Orientalism" in various but interrelated connotations. Broadly speaking, Said situates orientalism in an historical context of European expansion, with its accompanying forms for institutions, epistemologies, and body of knowledge. This expansion entails a "whole set of progressively expanding institutions, a created and cumulative body of theory and practice, a suitable ideological superstructure with an apparatus of complicated assumptions, beliefs, images, literary productions, and rationalizations" (Said, 1978, quoted in Al-Azm, 2000).

However, orientalism is also used in a more restrictive sense. The academic orientalism, as Said calls it, means that "anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient - and this applies whether the person is an anthropologist, sociologist, historian, or philologist - either in its specific or its general aspects, is an Orientalist, and what he or she does is Orientalism." (Said, 1978, p. 2). Thus, the endeavor to scientifically understand the cultures, religions, and languages of orient and

project it as an objective knowledge about those people is an inherent part of academic orientalism. It is these latter connotations of Orientalism that Al-Azm dwells upon to formulate his theory of "Orientalism in reverse".

Said argues that one of the most persistent beliefs of orientalism is the existence of two ontologically different categories of "Occident" and the "Orient". Orientalism is a "style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between the Orient and (most of the time) the Occident (Said, 1978, p. 2). Many of the western intellectuals, scholars and administrators have accepted this idea of the "East" and the "West" as a starting point of their thinking and building a body of knowledge upon these foundations.

Furthermore, the ontological difference between the orient and the occident is explained in terms of the fundamental differences in their "essential natures". The western culture, society, people, thinking and so on, are always considered to be inherently superior to that of the Orient. Said argues that the ontological differences also form the basis for epistemological differences between the two groups. Epistemological differences entail that the western theoretical and conceptual frameworks are not applicable and relevant to explain the oriental societies. This line of reasoning is nicely captured in the statement by H.A.R Gibbs arguing that the "psychology and mechanics of Western political institutions to Asian or Arab situations is pure Walt Disney" (Said, 1978, p. 107). In another instance, Said quotes the assertion of Bernard Lewis that using western concepts like liberalism, progressivism and conservatism to explain Muslim politics will be "as accurate and as enlightening as an account of a cricket match by a baseball correspondent" (Said, 1978, p. 318). Thus, oriental scholarship is produced upon the assumption of fundamental ontological and epistemological differences between the East and the West. This meant that the historical context of Muslim societies, and its evolution as an interplay of complex socio-economic, political, cultural, religious and other factors are completely lost in the oriental scholarship. Instead, the explanations which emerge from this approach put forward certain "enduring Oriental (or Islamic) cultural, psychic or racial essence, as the case may be, bearing identifiable fundamental unchanging

attributes” (Al-Azm, 2000, p. 230). This construction of ontological categories of Orient and the Occident is what Sadik Jalal-Al-Azm calls as “Ontological Orientalism.”

Ontological Orientalism is foundational to the image of Orient by the West. However, this image of the Orient has not remained confined to occidental spaces only but has also informed the mind of Orient itself. Thus, being mindful of the temptations of using the oriental framework, Said warned the subjects of Orientalism against the dangers of “applying the readily available structures, styles and ontological biases of Orientalism upon themselves and upon others” (Al-Azm, 2000, p. 231). In this context, Al-Azm argues that the appropriation of the orientalist lens by its victims of Orientalism have actually taken place and has been widely used in the contemporary Muslim world. This is what Al-Azm means by “Orientalism in Reverse” or “retaliatory Occidentalism”. Thus, reverse orientalism is in effect the Orientalism of the Orient.

Al-Azm argues that reverse orientalism exists in two distinct forms in Muslims societies, particularly the Arab world. The first is the secular Arab nationalist movements, while the second is the Islamic revivalist movements, as embodied in the principles of Political Islamism. The reverse orientalism in the secular nationalist movements manifests itself through the use of language as a means to understand the “primordial Arab mentality” (Al-Azm, 2000, p. 231). Al-Azm contends that there have been many attempts to know the “essential nature” of Arabs through philological analysis and language speculation. For example, he cites a work of a Syrian author, who from an Arabic word “insan” (man) infers companionship, sociability and friendliness. This is then juxtaposed to the Hobbesian philosophy about the nature of human beings. Thus, from the nationalist perspective, every man is a “brother unto other men” while for the west, “every man is a wolf unto other men”. It is worth quoting the para in full

“In classical Orientalist fashion, the essence of the ‘Arab mind’ is explored by an Arab thinker through language only and in hermetic seclusion from such unwelcome intrusions as socio-economic infrastructures, politics, historical change, class conflicts, revolutions and so on. This primordial Arab ‘mind’, ‘psyche’ or ‘essence’, is

supposed to reveal its potency, genius and distinguishing characteristics through the flux of historical events and the accidents of time, without either history or time ever biting into its intrinsic nature.” (Al-Azm, 2000, p. 232)

This route to get the “real knowledge” about the ‘orient’ is deeply entrenched in orientalist scholarship. This was made quite evident by Said, who pointed that “the exaggerated value heaped upon Arabic as a language permits the Orientalist to make the language equivalent to mind, society, history, and nature. For the Orientalist the language speaks the Arab Oriental, not vice versa” (Said, 1978 quoted in Al-Azm, 2000, p. 232). For Al-Azm, the secular Arab nationalist movements have appropriated the same oriental lens to view themselves and the West. It builds upon the oriental assumptions about the existence of ontologically different social groups, which can be described according to their essentially differing natures and qualities.

Islamic revivalism and political Islam have also influenced the development of reverse orientalist thought in the Muslim world. The Islam revolution of 1979 in Iran left a profound imprint on the minds of the conservative sections Muslims world, as well as on those, who were disillusioned by the cold war politics and the rise of secular nationalist movements in the Muslim world. For them, the “national salvation so eagerly sought by the Arabs since the Napoleonic occupation of Egypt is to be found neither in secular nationalism (be it radical, conservative or liberal) nor in revolutionary communism, socialism or what have you, but in a return to the authenticity of what they call ‘popular political Islam’” (Al-Azm, 2000, p. 234). Al-Azm contends that at the heart of political Islamism is the same discredited oriental frame of thinking, which takes the orientalist assumptions about the fundamentally different East and West, and Islam and Europe. However, the only difference is that the assumptions about the superiority of the Christian West against the Muslim East is being reversed in favor of the latter.

Reverse orientalist thought has created a view which characterizes the West as driven by material forces, economic struggles and class conflicts. However, the East is not “moved” by material forces, but rather, it is the religion Islam which is the prime mover of the Muslim East. Thus, the

views of retaliatory orientalists are also founded upon the assumptions of two fundamentally different East and the West. The basic assumption of this view, which they argued is quite evident in Iranian revolution, is that Muslims societies evolve according to beliefs, ideas and religious precepts, which is fundamentally different from a society which is driven by material forces. Thus, the western social sciences are deemed inappropriate to understand the Muslim societies. Western knowledges are not equipped with the basic requisites and cannot be extended to the Muslim world.

The political Islamist or what Al-Azm calls as Islamanics call for re-arrangement and re-prioritization of values and to give “ultimate importance to the cultural and ideological factors which move the masses and to proceed to reformulate scientific, economic and social truths on this basis” (Al-Azm, 2000, p. 235). Furthermore, the reverse orientalists proceed to describe the essential traits of the Western civilization in order to distinguish it from the East. Al-Azm argues that western ‘essence’ is described as “technologism and not originality” (Al-Azm, 2000, p. 236). Thus, west is characterized as having a “system, order, method and symmetry while the East is “the prophetic, the visionary, the magical, the miraculous, the infinite, the inner, the beyond, the fanciful, the ecstatic” (Al-Azm, 2000, p. 236). The reverse orientalist views are also at odds with modern concepts of democracy, human rights, women rights, rule of law etc. According to them, Islam cannot accept any further qualifiers like classical, medieval or modern Islam. Similarly, it does not make sense to discuss whether Islamic republic will be democratic or not. Islam is Islam, and all other debates are irrelevant to it. Thus, Al-Azm contends that “Ontological Orientalism in Reverse is, in the end, no less reactionary, mystifying, ahistorical and anti-human than Ontological Orientalism proper” (p. 236).

To summarize the basic precepts of reverse orientalism and to mold it into a workable theoretical framework, the research takes reverse orientalism as an (i) emulation of the already discredited original orientalist framework (ii) having its origin in the political resentment in the Muslim world against the globalization and western hegemony (ii) belief in “essentialism” which is common to both classical orientalism, as

well as, retaliatory orientalism, to the point that history merely becomes the description of essences of the two fundamentally different social realities.

Research Questions:

The textbooks are analyzed for the following questions:

- How are the social groups defined and represented in the textbooks of Pakistan Studies? Does it support the oriental view about the existence of ontologically different social groups or are they defined differently?
- What are the descriptions offered about the “nature” and “essence” of the social groups, nations, and states?
- What is the nature of the relationship of the Pakistani “self” with the modern concepts like democracy, rule of law, human rights, equality, nationalism etc.?

Methodology:

The study is a document analysis. However, the term “document” in the “document analysis” defies any fixed categorization. It is a broad category and can take various forms, including but not limited to “paintings, tapestries, monuments, diaries, shopping lists, stage plays, adverts, rail tickets, film, photographs, videos, engineering drawings, the content of human tissue archives and World Wide Web pages.” (Prior, 2003) Prior (2003) argues that the debate over what qualifies to be called as a document is beyond the point, because, there are no essential qualities intrinsic in the document which differentiate it from “non-document”, neither the intention of the creator of document can serve any valuable purpose. Prior suggests that documents are not stable and static objects with fixed characteristics but should be understood in context of network or field of action. Thus, the “status of things as ‘documents’ depends precisely on the ways in which such objects are integrated into fields of action, and documents can only be defined in terms of such fields.” (p. 2) The field of action consists of the various actors like the producers of the document, the consumers and the content of the documents.

In this context, the research takes textbooks as “document”. The production of textbooks is highly regulated in Pakistan. They are written within strict ideological parameters, which is enforced by the ministry of education. Textbooks are scrutinized

and only the recommended textbooks by the ministry are taught in the public sector schools in Pakistan. Similarly, the textbooks are consumed differently. The most obvious consumption of textbooks is for the purposes of exams. However, the textbooks for getting scholarships, jobs, entrance tests of various colleges and universities across Pakistan. The subject of Pakistan Studies is a mandatory requirement for all entrance tests, even for medical and engineering universities. Not only that, for all government jobs, candidates must appear on the test of Pakistan Studies. Thus, from the perspective of consumption, the textbooks of Pakistan Studies are very important documents.

However, due to the nature of the research questions, the study focuses only on the content of the textbooks. Thus, the production and consumption of the textbooks, which are indeed important, are beyond the scope of the research. Thus, the study is primarily a content analysis of the document. Content analysis can take different forms. It can be done both quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative content analysis mostly takes the form of enumerating certain words, themes or items in the document, and highlighting its importance based on the frequency with which it appears in the document. In contrast to the quantitative analysis, the qualitative analysis of the text aims to highlight that “how ideas and images [as well as discourses] are interrelated into a complex meaningful whole, which in turn organizes the experiences, perceptions, and actions of individuals or groups in a particular time and place.” (Balso & Lewis, 2012)

Furthermore, the method of qualitative content analysis is guided by the theoretical framework of the research. Thus, the research does not seek to analyze the text through a grounded theory approach. With the help of theory “orientalism in reverse”, three broad processes have been identified which involve the construction of identities, defining the qualities of social groups and relationship of self with the modern concepts of democracy, rule of law, equality etc. Thus, it is the theory which will guide the process of qualitative content analysis.

Sample and Data collection

A purposeful sampling technique is used to select the textbooks. The selection of the textbooks is made on personal judgment of the researcher.

There are many school subjects which are informed by politics and dominant ideology. These subjects include Language, Social Studies, Islamic Studies and Pakistan Studies. The selection of Pakistan Studies as a research subject was primarily based on my personal judgment, keeping in view the richness of the case. The textbooks of these subjects present a combination of history, politics and culture of the country. More than any other subject, the Pakistan Studies has remained the most contentious of all and has remained steeped in various controversies like promotion of hatred against religious and ethnic minorities, militarism, falsehood etc. Thus, the selection of sample has been the result of my personal judgment and school experience.

The subject is a compulsory requirement in all Secondary Schools across the country and has profound political significance. It was introduced after the breakup of the country in 1971 as a state’s effort to promote social cohesion and nation building. It is a collection of politics, history and geography, all combined in one subject. Since Pakistan is a federal state, each province publishes its own textbooks of Pakistan Studies. The research focuses on the textbooks of Pakistan Studies, which are published in the largest province of the country, i.e. Punjab. The reason for selecting textbooks of Punjab province has to do with its largest population size. However, it is to note that the content of the subject is similar across the country because of strong federal oversight. There are two (2) textbooks in total - Pakistan Studies Class 9th, Pakistan Studies Class 12. These textbooks are available online and can be downloaded from the website of Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board, Lahore. https://pctb.punjab.gov.pk/download_books

Data Analysis

The introductory chapters of each textbook are dedicated to the ideology of Pakistan. These chapters represent a complex amalgam of history, philosophy, religion and social sciences, which are weaved together in ways which are hardly intelligible even to the adult minds. It establishes Pakistani exceptionalism by claiming to be the only country in the world which is founded on “ideology”. It is followed by the definition of ideology, which is not understood as a sociological concept. The world ideology is translated into the

Arabic word “Nazariya”, whose meaning is then determined etymologically by looking at the root-word in Arabic language. Pakistan is said to be established as an ultimate purpose of Islam. This view is authenticated by citing the verses from Holy Quran. Throughout the text, the terms Islam and ideology of Pakistan are used interchangeably, which gives an impression that both are two sides of the same coin.

For the research question exploring the creation of ontologically different social groups, these chapters provided rich insight about the social categories. In light of the theoretical framework “reverse orientalism”, the textbooks were explored about the existence of mutually exclusive, and unchanging social realities, which had always existed outside the realm of ‘time’. The research found a strong support of the view that textbooks construct social realities, which are represented as ontologically different from each other. These social groups are depicted as antithesis of each other.

The primary element of the difference between Pakistan and the rest of the world is that, the former was created on the basis of an ideology, while latter is the outcome of socio-historical processes. The textbooks explicitly establish Pakistani exceptionalism by claiming to be the only country in the world to have a “strong ideology”.

“Most of the countries got freedom on racial, linguistic or territorial basis. Pakistan is the only country which came into being on the basis of a strong ideology. The basis of the ideology of Pakistan lies in the religion of Islam which provides guidance to the Muslims in every sphere of life. It has basic principles with reference to social, moral, political, religious and economic fields.” (Pakistan Studies Class 9th, p. 1)

This point is stressed upon and reiterated on multiple occasions.

“Pakistan came into being on the basis of strong ideology. The basis of ideology of Pakistan is Islam that guides Muslims in all fields of life. Islamic system comprises the fundamental principles of sociology, ethics, politics, religion and economics. The guidance is provided in the light of the teachings of Quran and the sayings of Hazar Muhammad (PBUH).” (Pakistan Studies Class 12, p. 1)

Thus, the fundamental difference between Pakistan and other countries is the adherence of the former

to a “strong ideology”, which is lacking in the case of latter. Furthermore, the ideology of Pakistan is said to be founded on the principles of Islam. Thus, Islam is at the core of ideology of Pakistan. However, the representation of Islam which is presented in the textbooks is radically different from the western conception of religion. Islam is depicted as religion which is complete in every respect and provides guidance in all spheres of human activity. As evident from the above quote, Islam is said to have its own distinct principles about society, law, politics, morality and economics. However, this notion of religion as “complete code of life” and providing guidance in “all spheres of human life” is instrumental in creating ontological difference between Islam and Christianity. This view is in direct confrontation with the Western ideal of society, which is characterized by a large secular public sphere, with religion as part of individual’s private life. Thus, the description of Islam as “all comprehensive” and “all-inclusive” is motivated by the oriental zeal to depict western religions as incomplete and lacking public utility. The following passage reveals further differences between the West and Islam.

“Don’t presume that your nation is like the nations of the West, the people who believe in the Prophet (PBUH) have distinctive formation of the nation. The Western community depends upon territorial and racial basis whereas your (Islamic) community is strengthened by the force of the religion.” (Pakistan Studies Class 9th, p. 13)

As Al-Azm has rightly pointed out, the reverse orientalist view has a strong conception of the West as a materialist force. If the above text is analyzed – with race and territory as constitutive elements of the West and Ideology in case of Muslims – these conceptions are rooted in “retaliatory oriental” thinking which takes West as a material force, while East as spiritually enlightened one. The race and territory have clearly a material and worldly essences. Thus, the Western civilization manifests itself in the textbooks as a materialistic force against the spiritually enlightened and ideologically driven Islamic community.

However, the West is not the real subject of the textbooks. It does play a role of “other” in constructing a national “self”, but its place is rather confined and limited. The West as an ontological reality manifests itself mostly as a co-

conspirator against the Islam and Muslims, rather than the real “enemy”. This latter role is exclusively accorded to the primary subject of the textbooks – the Hindus.

This brings us to the two primary protagonists of the story of Pakistan, namely Muslims and Hindus. They are the only realities existing in the sub-continent. Their descriptions are highly consistent with our theoretical framework, which highlights the creation of ontological difference accompanied by homogenization and silencing of other social realities. Regarding Hindus and Hinduism, textbooks are very explicit and often times contemptuous.

“The two nations [Muslims and Hindus] were entirely different from each other in their religious ideas, the way of living and collective thinking. Their basic principles and the ways of living are so different that despite living together for centuries, they could not intermingle with each other.” (Pakistan Studies Class 9th, pp. 9-10) Again,

“The Muslims are a separate nation in every respect because their civilization, culture, language, customs and philosophy of life are different from those of Hindus.” (Pakistan Studies Class 9th, p. 10)

The descriptions of Hindus and Muslims do not take place in a historical context and their actions, behavior, and political struggles are explained not as an outcome of socio-economic, political and cultural factors, but as manifestations of their natures and essences.

This creation of ontological difference is accompanied by internal homogenization of social realities. It also entails the subalternization (Spivak, 1999) of people on grounds of ethnicity, political ideology, religion and sects. Thus, the process of creation of national identity of Pakistan is a process whereby the distinct social groups are welded into two ontological realities – Hindus and Muslims. They are said to be different in every possible way to the effect that each is the negation of the other. While doing so, it not only silences the voices of many peoples, but also constructs a diversity and plurality as an inherent threat to the existence of Pakistani self.

The construction of differences lays the foundation for interpreting the history of subcontinent, whereby, each historical moment reveals the “true nature” of the Hindus and the

Muslims, their political parties Congress and Muslim League, and their leadership Gandhi and Jinnah. On this view, history takes a form which is devoid of social basis. Every historical event is explained not as an outcome of a complex interplay between social, political or economic forces but as a battle between good and bad individuals. Thus, the textbooks history unfolds as a result of conflict between forces of good against evil. At the end, the forces of good always stand triumphant, which is evident in the creation of Pakistan. With this classical oriental template, the Muslims, Islam, and Pakistan are always at the right side of history, while Hindus, and the West are depicted as the “evil” which are ever ready to plot against the Islam and Pakistan.

Although India was a British colony and both Hindus and Muslims (along with all other nations and peoples) were colonial subjects, the textbooks’ representation of history suggests Hindus as a primary source of Muslims’ miseries, with the British as co-conspirator and allies of Hindus. Consider the following two passages:

“The future [of Muslims] looked bleak and unsatisfactory. The presence of Hindu majority on the soil of British India was the root cause of their worries.” (Pakistan Studies Class 12, p. 14)

“With the help of Allah Almighty, Islamic Republic of Pakistan came into being on 14th August 1947 but Indian National Congress did not accept the creation of Pakistan from the core of its heart. Lord Mountbatten and Sir Radcliffe connived with the Hindu leaders to create a weak Pakistan that would ultimately confederate with Indian Union.” (Pakistan Studies Class 12, p. 27)

The textbook representation of the “evil nature” of Hindus takes varied forms. Since history is a description of “essences”, the most obvious lesson drawn from history is that Hindus want to enslave the Muslims. There are no socio-historical causes provided for their desire to “enslave Muslims”, but rather, it is understood as a fundamental “Hindu nature”.

“In the start of twentieth century, the Muslims of the sub-continent organized their political party named All India Muslim League. Muslims wanted to get rid of dual sort slavery. They continued their struggle against the English and the expected slavery of the Hindus.” (Pakistan Studies Class 12, p. 5)

“Hindu leaders had a dream of establishment of their own government in the name of democracy. Democracy is the rule of majority . . . in this way Muslims would have become the slaves of Hindus. Under the leadership of Quaid-i-Azam, the bold, intelligent and matchless guide, All India Muslim League led the Muslims who at last succeeded in establishing an independent sovereign state.” (Pakistan Studies Class 12, p. 5)

Thus, it was the slavery of Hindus not that of British which the Muslims feared. This desire to make Muslims their slaves is ingrained in the nature of Hindus. Thus, the freedom struggle launched by Muslim League under the leadership of Quaid-i-Azam (Jinnah) was directed not against the British colonial power, but, the expected slavery of Hindus. Besides their inherent desire to dominate Muslims, there have many historical instances in the textbooks which have revealed other characteristics of the Hindus as well. The most recurrent theme in historical narrative of textbooks is centered around the “scheming”, “cunning” and “conspiratorial Hindu mindset”. This image of “Hindu mindset” runs throughout the textbooks. The Indian leadership, which led the freedom struggle, particularly Gandhi is represented as an epitome of this image. Gandhi is represented not as a leader of the independence movement, but as a cunning person whose primary intent is to undermine the creation of Pakistan. Most of the historical accounts and descriptions offered in the textbooks end up revealing the “true nature of Hindus and Gandhi”. Consider the following:

“Gandhi got a golden chance to exploit the Muslims power for his own purposes. He supported the Khilafat movement and participated in the meetings of the Muslims.” (Pakistan Studies Class 12, p. 11)

“Muslim leaders could not comprehend the conspiracy of Gandhi and followed his guidelines. It effected the economy, education and social conditions of the Muslims very badly. Now they fully realized the real face of Gandhi, but it was of little use as they were already ruined.” (Pakistan Studies Class 12, p. 12)

The person of Jinnah, the leader of Muslim League who led the Pakistan movement, is ascribed the characteristics which are exactly the opposite of Gandhi. While cunningness and conspiracy was the essence of Gandhi’s personality, Jinnah is

portrayed as visionary, honest, bold, matchless, intelligent, sharp, farsighted. He is said to have an ideal personality, having political acumen and a man of integrity. These qualities enabled the Quaid not only to detect the scheming and cunning Hindus under the leadership of Gandhi but also steered the struggle to get an independent country for the Muslims. The following passages reveal the nature of two leaders.

“The desperate Gandhi changed his tactics and turned towards the Muslim League. Gandhi Jinnah dialogues were arranged. The former wanted to entrap the latter. The Quaid very well understood his mind. He did not agree to enhance the strength of the Gandhian movement.” (Pakistan Studies Class 12, p. 16)

“The leaders of Indian National Congress were confused. The table was turned. Congress could not realize sharpness, the foresightedness and political acumenship [sic] of the Quaid-i-Azam. He had the skill to present his case in a befitting manner.” (Pakistan Studies Class 12, p. 22)

“Quaid-i-Azam adjudged that the style adopted by Gandhi is nothing but cheating and hypocrisy and cunningness. He emphasized that the British must settle the issue of Pakistan before the freedom of India because Congress and Hindus could not be relied upon.” (Pakistan Studies Class 9th, p. 25)

But given the chance, the Hindus will not deter from committing the most heinous of crimes. When the Hindu plans does not succeed or met with failure due to wise Muslim leadership, Hindus will adopt other plans to undermine the Muslims. Democracy and the rule by Indians, which is always depicted as Hindu Raj, is presented as the most dreaded thing. The Self-rule means the annihilation of the Muslims. Whenever Hindus got an opportunity to govern in whatever limited ways it had, it meant destruction for Muslims. The portrayal of the Indian war of independence, the Hindu fundamentalist movements and the Congress ministries of 1937 were all instances which revealed the “true nature” of Hindus.

“British and Hindus did everything to crush the Muslims after the war of independence 1857. Though the large party of Hindus were with the Muslims but they succeeded [convinced] the government that they were not a party against the

British government in the war.” (Pakistan Studies Class 12, p. 5)

“The Congress ran the government in a number of provinces from 1937 to 1939. during Congress Ministries, the Muslims were maltreated and deprived of their rights. Hindu did everything to crush the Muslims in all spheres.” (Pakistan Studies Class 12, p. 13)

“A large number of inhabitants of sub-continent used to be the victims of communal riots every year. The Muslims were massacred by the Hindu militants time and again, in an organized ways.” (Pakistan Studies Class 12, p. 12)

To address the final research question regarding the relationship of Muslim Pakistani self with modernity, the study focused on the concepts like democracy, human rights, women rights, secularism, rule of law and social justice. The study reveals that, except for secularism which is seen as the conspiracy of the west, most of these ideals are not described as alien to the Islam and Pakistan. In fact, on many occasions, textbooks actively recruit the concepts of human rights and women rights as fundamental to the self, in order to contrast it with Hindu caste system and their custom of ‘Satti’¹.

On other occasions, the relationship of the Pakistani-Muslim self with the modern concept becomes ambivalent at best. Western modernity is praised, but at the same time, it is not depicted as “Western”, but are said to be the product of our own Islamic legacy. For example:

“The concept of Human Rights was first given by the Prophet fourteen hundred years ago, which was a charter of Human Rights. It laid the foundation of fundamental human rights.” (Pakistan Studies Class 12, p. 60)

“He [Caliph Umar] introduced many administrative reforms and presented the real concept of administrative theory and practice.” (Pakistan Studies Class 12, p. 76)

Thus, the evidence for the last question is contradictory and ambivalent. These ideals are not clearly defined. In certain contexts, these are described as “best practices”, while in others, they are seen with suspicions. However, regarding

secularism, the textbooks are unambiguous. Secularism is denounced and depicted as a western plot to corrupt the Muslims. Thus, there is always an element of conspiracy regarding the concept of secularism.

Conclusion:

From the data analysis section, it is evident that the textbooks of Pakistan Studies have been profoundly influenced by the ideologies of political Islamism. The theoretical framework of the research “reverse orientalism” is instrumental in explaining the construction of national identity and representation of other social groups. The analysis found that the project of identity construction of various social groups like Muslims, Hindus, West, British, India, Pakistan etc. is done in a highly oriental fashion. These groups are represented as mutually exclusive categories. These groups are presented not as a product of historical evolution of complex interplay between socio-economic and political forces, but as an ontological reality. The difference between these groups are explained not historically but according to their different “natures”.

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¹ Hindu custom - when a widow burns herself on the funeral pyres of her husband.

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