

Political Psychology: A Case Study of Malala Yousafzai Nobel Peace Prize Holder

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Introduction

In Pakistan, the Taliban has a very strong network. Their Madarasa (religious school) network is considered conventional religio-political point. The Taliban believe in traditional, but radical Islam. According to their viewpoint, women who are receiving education are going against the rules of Islam especially in combined educational system where there are boys and girls together. They do not allow any concept of modernization in their culture. They are strict followers of Imam Abu Hanifa, a famous Muslim jurist. Politically they follow Saudi Arabia in their political system.

Khaibar Pakhtun Khwa, a province for Pashtu speaking people in Pakistan is a place where the Taliban reside and launch their religiopolitical movement. They also have very strong connections with the Taliban of Afghanistan, Persian and Pashtu speaking people. Having a basic idea regarding the Taliban we understand that they are deadly against women's freedom which is why we see the incident that occurred with Malala when they attacked her at her school. The school received many warnings by the Taliban groups to cease girl's education, and when the school refused to answer to or listen to the warnings given, the Taliban showed that they were not all words, but could prove to be dangerous.

The news of the attackers spread very rapidly. For example Dawn newspaper of Pakistan posted this update on Malala's story:

"In September last year (2014), Director General of the Inter-Services Public Relations Major General Asim Bajwa had announced the arrest of 10 men in connection with the attack on Malala Yousafzai in Swat.

He said the men had been receiving orders directly from Mulla Fazlullah, the fugitive chief of the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan.

Malala was shot in the head when she was returning from school. She was first taken to a military hospital in Peshawar and later flown to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Britain.

She was attacked because she advocated education for children and women.

Malala was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize last year for her contribution to the rights of children, especially their right to education.

She now lives in Britain with her family."¹

Pakistan is a developing country which is far away from an actual democratic system which is implemented in other developed countries of the western world. Malala was a very young female Pakistani who did not know that she would become a bridge for the youth of Pakistan as well as the rest of the world when she stood up to and challenge a conventional power, the Taliban in Pakistan. Her brave acts indicate that she directly challenged political interest articulated group. Her psychological reaction created a very different youth political school of thought, which again created some indicators to inform the world that the youth of Pakistan, especially females, know how to protect their rights and protect their friends in their schools as well as their communities. Malala had strong beliefs when it came to women's rights, but it was always in the limits of Islam. As she states in her book, *I am Malala*:

"In Pakistan we had had a woman prime minister and in Islamabad I had met those impressive working women, yet the fact was that we were a country where almost all the women depend entirely on men. My headmistress Maryam was a strong, educated woman but in our society she could not live on her own and come to work. She had to be living with a husband, brother or parents.

In Pakistan when women say they want independence, people think this means we don't want to obey our fathers, brothers or husbands. But it does not mean that. It means we want to make decisions for ourselves. We want to be free to go to school or to go to work. Nowhere is it written in the Quran that a woman should be dependent on a man. The word has not come down from the heavens to tell us that every woman should listen to a man."²

She made it clear that her thoughts were not on disobeying the path of Islam. This kind of thought process which led to all her selfless acts can be called Malala's political psychology, because she knowingly stepped into the situation as a challenger to the Taliban because she was born in Khaibar Pakhtun Khwa, former and W.F.P.

¹ "Attack on Malala: 10 Militants Jailed for Life." Dawn Newspaper, 1 May 2015. Web. 25 Dec. 2015

² Yousafzai, Malala, and Christina Lamb. *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot By the Taliban*. First edition. Little, Brown, & Company, 2013. P 110.

province which does not allow women to be activists due to their backward traditions. Reflecting back on her birth, she describes her community's as well as her family's reactions to a girl being born. While the community did not celebrate girls, her father and his beliefs were different and he knew she was special from day one when he looked into her eyes. As she describes it in her book, *I Am Malala*:

“When I was born, people in our village commiserated with my mother and nobody congratulated my father. I arrived at dawn as the last star blinked out. We Pashtuns see this as an auspicious sign. My father didn't have any money for the hospital or for a midwife so a neighbor helped at my birth. My parents' first child was stillborn but I popped out kicking and screaming. I was a girl in a land where rifles are fired in celebration of a son, while daughters are hidden away behind a curtain, their role in life simply to prepare food and give birth to children.

For most Pashtuns it's a gloomy day when a daughter is born. My father's cousin Jehan Sher Khan Yousafzai was one of the few who came to celebrate my birth and even gave a handsome gift of money. Yet, he brought with him a vast family tree of our clan, the Dalokhel Yousafzai, going right back to my great- great- grandfather and showing only the male line. My father, Ziauddin, is different from most Pashtun men. He took the tree, drew a line like a lollipop from his name and at the end of it he wrote, 'Malala'. His cousin laughed in astonishment. My father didn't care. He says he looked into my eyes after I was born and fell in love. He told people, 'I know there is something different about this child.' He even asked friends to throw dried fruits, sweets and coins into my cradle, something we usually only do for boys.”¹

This remote area where she lived had turned into a new phase of politics when Malala began to stand up for what she believed in, letting the world know that Malala is only a symbol for women's rights and freedom, but in fact there are thousands of girls who have such courage to challenge extremist elements and push them downwards. Her bravery has proved that she knew the psyche of the tradition and was also sure that she would have to face serious threats, but she did not care about possible situations and her actions were selfless. Due to her bold steps on October 10, 2014, Malala Yousafzai, who has become a strong advocate of youth education equality, became the youngest person to ever win the Nobel Peace Prize.² For many years she has been a symbol of the millions of children around the world who are not going to school, and has aimed to be the one to change that. She believes that education can empower the youth, especially young girls, to stand up, unite, and bring about positive change in the world. As the expectancy-value theory states, one has to understand her strong beliefs and values of standing up for girl's rights and ensuring that everyone has access to an education, which can then be used to comprehend her powerful actions and influential behavior of speaking to world leaders, standing up to the Taliban, and shedding light on the issue so that we can all work together for the cause.

Just after the attack on her, she used a very strong theory of political communication which allowed her to be connected with the world media and experts of international relations, policy makers, and international diplomats. She was seriously considered as a very important person for world peace from such a remote area in which men are not allowed to challenge the Taliban, but she proved that women are capable to doing what even sometimes men cannot. This set a very good example for all girls around the world that they too can have the confidence to stand up for what is rightfully theirs. International media considered her a symbol of change in Pakistani society due to her political statements about stopping the Taliban and activities of extremist groups of Pakistan and her political skills. Those who opposed Malala, considered her an agent of the western world or the U.S. and she was criticized by many religio-political elites who felt that she was not represented the true Islamic culture properly because she was being used by the western world.

Apart from this debate, the liberal Muslims appreciated Malala because she stood up against extremism and fought for the restoration of her as well as all the girls' of Pakistan's basic social rights.

Malala's Achievements

Malala Yousafzai, jointly won the Nobel Peace Prize along with Kailash Satyarthi, who protested child trafficking in India and saved millions, “for their struggle against the suppression of children and young people and for the right of all children to education.”³ Malala has, for many years, been an advocate of giving girls the right to their own education. She started when she was 11 years old by writing an anonymous blog about how the Taliban had imposed their strict rules and threatened her home, an area in Pakistan called Swat Valley, from sending girls to school. Her father, Ziauddin, then the owner of one of the schools in the area, did not comply with the orders, and continued to support his daughter and encourage her to further her education. Malala began

¹ Yousafzai, Malala, and Christina Lamb. *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot By the Taliban*. First edition. Little, Brown, & Company, 2013. P 113.

² Alter, C. (2014, Oct. 9). Malala Yousafzai Wins Nobel Peace Prize 2 Years After Shooting. Retrieved from <http://time.com/3482434/malala-yousafzai-wins-nobel-peace-prize/>

³ Nobel Peace Prize Committee. (2014, Oct. 30) The Nobel Peace Prize 2014 - Press Release. Retrieved from http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2014/press.html

wondering why girls were being denied one of the most basic rights: a proper education.

One day, when an interviewer from one of the news stations came to the area to interview the school, she decided not to stay silent anymore. Later explaining her actions to CNN's anchor, Christiane Amanpour, talking about the problem "was a better idea, because otherwise they were going to kill us – so it was a better idea to speak and then be killed," silence was no longer a choice for her.¹ From then on, her courage and bravery only increased, and she gained worldwide recognition when, in 2012, a member of the Taliban attempted to murder her. Surviving the gunshot to the head, she came back stronger than ever and was reassured by the millions of people around the world that she was not alone in this cause.

Now, with so much support she was able to take her opinions and beliefs to the international stage. She began to reach more and more people, and even talked to many world leaders, including president Obama, about her goals and vision for the world. She not only became a voice for the girls in her hometown, but had become a voice for all the suppressed children all over the world who do not have access to education. With encouragement from her father, she was able to use her own situation as a model for other men and families to follow: do not hamper a girl's dreams, let her have the freedom to get an education and make a life for herself. Only by doing this, will we be able to capture the priceless potential of the millions of kids, especially girls, in the world.

Winning the Nobel Peace Prize elicited tons of positive feedback and support from influential and popular people. Many, expressed their congratulations through social media, including Norway's Prime Minister, Britain's Prime Minister, and the United Nations, and others released official statements of their congratulations including UK's former Prime Minister, and Pakistan's Prime Minister.² Thus, the overall reaction to Malala receiving the award was clearly the world uniting for the common cause that started it all. Even though Malala was the one who won the award, it really turned out to be an achievement for all the children she represents because it means that she is gaining support and is getting closer and closer to changing the world.

Expectancy-Value Theory

The expectancy-value theory states that you must understand the person's beliefs and values to be able to understand their actions and behavior. This means that you cannot fully comprehend what that person wants and why they want it unless you truly realize and take into account their background. Without looking at how the person was raised, what they were taught, how they perceive the world, or what they lived through, there is no way someone would be able to predict, or value the actions that person takes. Basically, because someone was exposed to certain things, or taught something specific at a young age they will always have those things to influence them and their actions. It will either be a guiding factor through their life, or it will be an end result that they are trying to achieve. Thus, through their experiences, and what they have seen in life, they will take certain actions to achieve certain goals.

Importance of the Theory

This theory has two parts: the beliefs and values of the person involved in the event, and their actions because of it, which eventually leads to a goal. For Malala, this theory can be used very well to explain her being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and her entire story behind it. Her beliefs were strongly impacted by her childhood experiences of where and how she lived, as well as, the example her father set for her. Her actions are very strong portrayals of her vision for the world, and her beliefs and experiences very much influenced them. Without this theory, you can still understand that what Malala wants to bring is important, but you cannot understand why she is so passionate and how personal this fight is to her without fully understanding her background, her beliefs, and her experiences. Because all the supporting leaders, and influential figures knew her story, and knew where she came from, they reacted by congratulating and encouraging her when she was acknowledged for her work and truly appreciating that a girl from her background went through so many troubles, but is still determined to work very hard towards bringing a change that will be beneficial to all.

At a very young age, Malala saw how certain radical groups tried to impose unfair restrictions on girls, and also saw how her father reacted. Because he refused to back down, she learned not to be afraid. Ziauddin, played a very important part in his daughter's rising to become a public figure, and that all started when he disagreed with the extreme views of restricting girls. He always encouraged his daughter to further her education, and even encouraged her when she wanted the same for others. When he was asked how he got his daughter to become so passionate about women's rights, he said, "I did not cut her wings," referring to "the innate beauty, power, strength, and inspiration inside his daughter, and so many other girls, who we never get to see fly, as their

¹ Krever, M. (2014, Oct. 11). The Bravest Girl in the World. Retrieved from <http://amanpour.blogs.cnn.com/2013/10/11/the-bravest-girl-in-the-world/>

² Gibson, M. (2014, Oct. 10). How the World Reacted to Malala and Kailash Satyarthi Winning the Nobel Peace Prize. Retrieved from <http://time.com/3489227/malala-kailash-satyarthi-nobel-peace-prize-reaction/>

wings are cut by the men in their lives.”¹ He sets an example not only to his daughter, but to other families around the world who see that because one father saw the potential in his daughter and nurtured her to rise to her potential, she became such a prominent advocate who has brought so much beneficial change to the world. Because of the support he gave his daughter, she was able to have the confidence to be the one to make a difference in the lives of many. One girl really can have that much impact, but that is only if you let her.

When Malala realized that she wanted to stand up to the Taliban, and change the norm of children not getting an education, she began to make her voice heard. Her belief that speaking up is better than living in silence also contributed to her confidence to spread her message. She wants peace and compassion in the world to replace all the violence and hatred; she wants unity and support to replace domination and oppression. In a United Nations Conference on her 16th birthday, she stated that “one child, one teacher, one book, and one pen can change the world; education is the only solution; education first,”² which clearly showed how important she felt it was for bringing change. Malala also knows that the power to bring change not only lies in the hands of the world leaders, but also in the families of the oppressed, the girls who need to stand up for their rights, and the fathers and brothers and husbands who need to realize that educating a girl will only bring benefits. She strongly believes that education is a basic right that every single child deserves, it empowers girls to rise to their full potential, and it can make an enormous impact on poverty in the world – which is precisely why it’s worth dying for.

Malala’s behavior very much reflects the beliefs and values she has developed until now. To achieve this goal of making education accessible to all children, she has worked very hard through her brave actions. Her never ending support for the children she represents is portrayed through the countless speeches she’s given. Attending many events, and speaking publicly and even globally to many different audiences shows that she is willing to do whatever it takes and that she knows that there are people out there who can make it happen, but we all just need to unite to do that. She has spoken to many world leaders and has been in the company of US President Obama, England’s Queen Elizabeth, Jordan’s Queen Rania, Nigeria’s President Jonathan Goodluck, and Pakistan’s previous president, Asif Ali Zardari.³ By meeting all these high officials, she has been able to portray her goals of global education for children face to face with them and push them to help because they play a huge part in solving the problem. She really has been standing up for what she believes in which is the whole definition of this theory – by understanding where she’s coming from, we can understand why this means so much to her, and why she wants to bring the change that she does.

Not only has she brought change simply by bringing this issue to light and raising awareness, but she is also supporting it financially. She recently opened up the Malala Fund, which “will make grants to organizations and individuals supporting girls’ education in Pakistan and around the world” meaning that girls who want to go to school, will be able to.⁴ Additionally, because her goals include helping girls worldwide, she has donated the \$50,000 World’s Children’s Prize to Gaza schools, to help them recover from the recent violence. She believes that everyone can do their part to help the cause, whether that’s world leaders, individual families, religious leaders, or even just the girls and children themselves.

Thus, Malala winning the Nobel Peace Prize is a much deeper story than it looks. To fully understand the depth and importance of this cause to her, one must go into understanding her beliefs and values. To do that, we have to rewind and look at her whole life and her whole story. Once we understand her past, the Taliban she faced, the oppression she went through, the immense support from her father, the tragic near-death experience she had, we see that they all combine to contribute to the fact that she believes in equality, in giving girls fundamental rights, and in improving the future. She believes that the pen is mightier than the sword and that, through education; we can solve the world’s problems.

Being a recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, her services of education were admitted by the world. Her belief in the power of the pen reveals that the pen is a symbol of peace which can defeat extremist behaviors. Her belief of promoting education is a source to promote democracy in the world, especially in Pakistan. She is very much concerned about the promotion of educational democracy and freedom of women in Pakistan. Although, she is young she knows and understand the skills of communication and meaningful applied aspects of social sciences which distinguish her from others in her age group.

Her contribution towards liberty and freedom of youth is being followed in Pakistan as a sociopolitical model

¹ Shahid, S. (2014, March 8). A Tribute to Malala’s Father, Ziauddin, Our Favorite Male Feminist, on International Women’s Day. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/malala-yousafzai/a-tribute-to-a-male-feminist-my-father_b_4925813.html

² Salass, N (2013, July 12). Malala Day at UN: Teen Activist Shot By Taliban Said 10 Moving Things That Gave Us Goosebumps. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/07/12/malala-day-at-un_n_3586266.html

³ Gresko, J. (2013, Oct.11). Obama Meets Malala Yousafzai, Pakistani Teen Shot by Taliban. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/11/obama-malala-yousafzai_n_4086585.html

⁴ Couch, R. (2014, Oct. 10). The 5 Most Important Things Malala Has Done in 2014. P1. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/10/10/malala-nobel-peace-prize-winner-important_n_5965490.html

due to her outstanding and courageous performance. The contemporary school girls in Pakistan believe that they can come forward to save their educational and democratic system. Malala's thoughts do not represent classical theories or ideal perceptions about bringing change in society, but she believes in radical change and revolution in the society through the participation of the youth in the community.

The world press has attributed to Malala's performance and has appreciated her throughout the world as a symbol of empowerment which has uplifted the name of Pakistan. It has also accomplished the task of promoting peace and tolerance on the global scale. The country was previously notorious for extremist activities; caused stereotypes to be formed of Pakistani girls and communities which do not allow these girls the right to basic education that other girls all over the world are guaranteed. In such a scenario, Malala changed the world's opinion creating a positive image of Pakistan that the majority of Pakistani's don't recognize and support extremist or terrorist groups and instead are in favor of female education. As women are also stakeholders of Pakistan's political community as voters, activists, politicians in Pakistan's political system. Malala defines herself in the following statements which elaborate on her personality, perception of the world around her and their reactions to her actions, as well as on her sociopolitical school of thought.

"I speak not for myself but for those without voice... those who have fought for their rights... their right to live in peace, their right to be treated with dignity, their right to equality of opportunity, their right to be educated."¹

In other statements she narrates:

"When someone tells me about Malala, the girl who was shot by the Taliban - that's my definition for her - I don't think she's me. Now I don't even feel as if I was shot. Even my life in Swat feels like a part of history or a movie I watched. Things change. God has given us a brain and a heart which tell us how to live."²

Malala's commitment and beliefs reveal that she has a very strong personality which is due to her father raising her in a way that she can be strong and believe in herself. Her strong upbringing and ideals as well as the values instilled into her shaped her ideas to be in line with sociopolitical thought process meaning that when she knows that she, as well as other girls like her, deserve to have education then she will stand up and fight for it. However, she will not fight in the way the Taliban have fought, instead, she will fight in a way that will harness the attention of the world and change the ideals of the community around her. This way of fighting is not a physical attack, but rather an aim at changing the mindset of the community towards girls getting an education as well as the viewpoint of the rest of the world of how Pakistan is a backwards society towards a modern and more positive view of Pakistan's youth as those who want to bring change to their society in order to allow progression in the right direction. She believes in dialogue for peace. She suggests in the following words:

"If he [the Talib] comes, what would you do Malala? ...If you hit a Talib with your shoe, then there will be no difference between you and the Talib. You must not treat others...with cruelty...you must fight others but through peace, through dialogue and through education...then I'll tell him [the Talib] how important education is and that I even want education for your children as well... that's what I want to tell you, now do what you want." --*In a Daily Show interview.*³

Her referred words invite thinkers to understand her democratic behavior and respect for all, including the Taliban. She believes in powerful dialogue politics and has firm belief that dialogue can solve many existing problems pertaining to extremism and terrorism in Pakistan. On other occasions she expresses her viewpoint in the following words:

"People say Malala's voice is being sold to the world. But I see it as Malala's voice reaching the world and resonating globally. You should think about what is behind Malala's voice. What is she saying? I am only talking about education, women's rights, and peace."⁴

Conclusion

Finding facts through the previous discussion that education and the Pakistani educational institutions are creating a sense of revolution in the light of progressive education. Malala's statements explore new dimensions for the youth of Pakistan who are hopeful for a future filled with peace and tolerance. The balanced personality of Malala has also drawn the world's attention that a young girl can be such a strong symbol of education, dialogue, and courage to challenge terrorism. Her trust in the law of equality and equity for the promotion of

¹ "Malala Yousafzai." BrainyQuote.com. Xplore Inc, 2015. 24 October 2015.
<http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/m/malalayous569373.html>

² "Malala Yousafzai." BrainyQuote.com. Xplore Inc, 2015. 24 October 2015.
<http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/m/malalayous569380.html>

³ "Malala Yousafzai." BrainyQuote.com. Xplore Inc, 2015. 24 October 2015.
<http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/m/malalayous569376.html>

⁴ "Malala Yousafzai." BrainyQuote.com. Xplore Inc, 2015. 24 October 2015.
<http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/m/malalayous569382.html>

peace and tolerance is a great hope for the democracy in Pakistan.

She believes that hatred cannot allow a peaceful political culture. The Taliban must be brought to the process of dialogue and the message of moderate behavior and respect for humanity should be conveyed. Malala has created a powerful impact in the world which has resulted in a Nobel Peace Prize for Pakistan, a unique and remarkable service done by Malala for her country.

Malala has practically proven to the world that even the youth can become powerful symbols in the world. The way she was brought up and taught from a young age that everyone deserves an education proves that family, especially parents play a vital role in shaping the ideals of their children and transforming them into powerful, confident speakers who are not afraid to speak up for what is right. This gives a perfect example to many around the world that girls, especially Pakistani girls and girls from developing nations have the capabilities if only they would be encouraged in the right direction to speak their minds and bring positive change in their families, communities, and nations. In this way Malala has become not only a symbol for female education, but for female empowerment in general all over the world.

Her ability to change the world proves that the world doesn't only depend on its older generations leaders, but rather is also very heavily influenced by the world's youth who are very passionate about their strong beliefs of unity, empowerment, and positive change. It all depends on if they are nurtured in a way that harnesses their full potential rather than shot down just for being young, or worse, just for being a girl. Underestimating our world's youth, especially the girl population would be a big mistake because we would not be tapping into our full potential.

Malala's thought also confirms that she is one of the best hopes for the democracy of Pakistan and she can be a reliable ambassador for peace from Pakistan to the world. She mediates authoritarian school of thought and terrorist supremacy. She trusts in God and strongly believes in the theory of functionalism which is the participation of an individual in the society for the betterment of the people.