

Religions and Development Research Programme

Dilemmas of Pride and Pain: Sectarian Conflict and Conflict Transformation in Pakistan

Mohammad Waseem

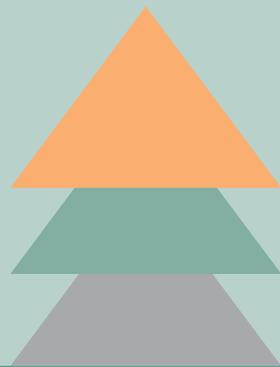
Lahore University of Management Sciences

In association with

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Katja Riikonen



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The Religions and Development Research Programme Consortium is an international research partnership that is exploring the relationships between several major world religions, development in low-income countries and poverty reduction. The programme is comprised of a series of comparative research projects that are addressing the following questions:

- How do religious values and beliefs drive the actions and interactions of individuals and faith-based organisations?
- How do religious values and beliefs and religious organisations influence the relationships between states and societies?
- In what ways do faith communities interact with development actors and what are the outcomes with respect to the achievement of development goals?

The research aims to provide knowledge and tools to enable dialogue between development partners and contribute to the achievement of development goals. We believe that our role as researchers is not to make judgements about the truth or desirability of particular values or beliefs, nor is it to urge a greater or lesser role for religion in achieving development objectives. Instead, our aim is to produce systematic and reliable knowledge and better understanding of the social world.

The research focuses on four countries (India, Pakistan, Nigeria and Tanzania), enabling the research team to study most of the major world religions: Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and African traditional belief systems. The research projects will compare two or more of the focus countries, regions within the countries, different religious traditions and selected development activities and policies.

The consortium consists of six research partner organisations, each of which is working with other researchers in the four focus countries:

- University of Birmingham, UK: International Development Department, Department of Theology and Religion, Centre for West African Studies, Centre for the Study of Global Ethics.
- University of Bath, UK: Centre for Development Studies.
- Indian Institute of Dalit Studies, New Delhi.
- Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research, Ibadan.
- University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
- Lahore University of Management Sciences, Pakistan.

In addition to the research partners, links have been forged with non-academic and non-government bodies, including Islamic Relief.

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Summary

This study is about Shia-Sunni conflict and the postconflict restoration of peace in Pakistan. It sets case studies of two 'contested cities' - Jhang and Gilgit – within a wider national and international framework, examining the historical roots of sectarian conflict, the trajectory and nature of the violence, and the restoration of relative calm. It draws on existing analyses of sectarian conflict in Pakistan and case studies in the two cities based on individual and group interviews with key informants, including political and religious leaders, government officials and residents. It argues that unless peacebuilding tackles the underlying dynamics of intra-religious conflict, it results in negative peace rather than conflict transformation.

Four stages in the historical progression of sectarian conflict can be identified:

- During the pre-conflict period, the dominance of an established social hierarchy enabled recurrent feuding and differences to be settled without disturbing the status quo.
- The origins of the inter-religious conflict can be traced to social, political, ideological and demographic changes brought about by the partition of India. Sunnis were numerically dominant in the new state of Pakistan and so nationalism tended to take the form of Sunni majoritarianism, which sought to marginalize religious and sectarian minorities. Although the constitution declares that all citizens have equal status and outlaws religious discrimination, the state has favoured Sunnis. Regional rivalry, particularly between Shia Iran and Sunni Saudi Arabia, has been played out within Pakistan, as well as through the *jihad* in Afghanistan in the 1980s. This and the *jihad* in Kashmir in the 1990s also cultivated a view of violence as a legitimate means to an end perceived as 'noble'. Sectarianism was institutionalized in Pakistani society through: Sunni-oriented educational curricula; Sunni interpretations of Islamic laws; the breakdown of social relations between people belonging to different sects, reflected in the emergence of separate areas of residence; and a public discourse that upheld the idea that Shias are not true Muslims. The emergence of powerful religious figures and political parties challenged existing power relations.
- Jhang has a Sunni majority while Gilgit has a Shia majority. The former is peripheral to the central province of Punjab, while the latter is the main urban centre in the remote northern region. In Jhang, local power dynamics were Sunni-ized, with a locally-based militant sectarian party - Sipah Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) - operating as the agent provocateur in recurrent attacks on Shia leaders and religious places and events. In Shia-majority Gilgit, the state itself encouraged in-migration by Sunnis, in order to change the demographic, social and economic balance. Rival groups of activists started to employ violence as part

of identity politics. In both cities an increase in the frequency of violence in the 1990s followed a mega-event that had continuing reverberations in the public memory. The 'new' can be distinguished from the 'old' sectarianism by an increase in both the amount of violence (acts of murder, street riots and attacks on holy places and processions of the other sect) and its occurrence in multiple locations across the cities, districts and provinces of Pakistan. State failure to prevent the violence and resolve the conflicts resulted in out-migration from the areas affected and increased residential segregation.

- The increased frequency of violence led to the displacement of people, breakdown of their local support systems and brutalization of social attitudes in general. Over time, people have settled down to a new pattern of normalcy, including living in neighbourhoods segregated on sectarian lines, but they also carry bitter memories of suffering and many uphold belligerent identities. There were few civil society organizations in either city in the 1980s and 1990s, with the exception of the well-established Aga Khan Rural Support Programme, which works in the rural areas surrounding Gilgit. Associated with the Ismaili sect, which remained aloof from Sunni-Shia conflict, neither it nor any other non-government organisation played a major role in peacebuilding. The state failed to play an active role in stopping the violence, providing relief or bringing criminals to justice, although eventually it did exercise its authority to contain the violence, re-establish its writ, and restore a degree of inter-communal peace. In recent years in both cities, 'peace' has been re-established: the SSP was banned in 2002, political power is increasingly sought and exercised through the electoral system and the frequency of violence has decreased.

However, ongoing relations between Sunni and Shia communities have been adversely affected and the underlying conflict has not been resolved. The real challenge lies in dealing with its roots and not merely its symptoms. The study argues that conflict transformation is blocked by

- Sunni majoritarian politics
- a persistent crisis of governance
- the absence of an all-encompassing value system based on pluralism, equal citizenship and the separation of religion and politics.

A new discourse is needed that promotes the values of pluralism and citizenship over sectarian beliefs and is fostered by religious actors as well as the state, but there are few signs of it emerging.

Glossary

<i>alim</i>	Islamic scholar
<i>Ahmedi</i>	Islamic sect declared infidel
<i>Asna Ashri</i>	Twelvers; a sub-sect of Shiism
<i>biradari</i>	caste-like kinship association (Muslims)
<i>Brelvi</i>	a Sufi sub-sect of Sunnis, followers of the Islamic seminary at Breilley (India)
<i>Deobandi</i>	followers of Islamic seminary at Deoband (India)
<i>fatwa</i>	Islamic decree
<i>hawala</i>	informal system of transfer of money (India)
<i>hundi</i>	informal system of transfer of money (Pakistan)
<i>imam</i>	prayer leader in the mosque
<i>imambargah</i>	Shia holy place
<i>Ismaili</i>	sub-sect of Shiism
<i>jihād</i>	(Islamic) struggle, striving, endeavour
<i>jihadi</i>	holy warrior
<i>khatib</i>	orator (in the mosque)
<i>khilafah</i>	kingdom of Islam
<i>khilafat</i>	Islamic state
<i>lashkar</i>	(tribal) militia
<i>lashkari</i>	member of a tribal militia
<i>madrasah</i>	Islamic seminary
<i>maharaja</i>	(Hindu) ruler
<i>masjid</i>	mosque
<i>Maulana/Mawlana</i>	title of respect for Islamic scholar
<i>maulvi</i>	Islamic divine
<i>muhajirin</i>	migrants
<i>Muharram</i>	Shia mourning month
<i>mujahideen</i>	holy warriors
<i>Nazim</i>	administrator (district)
<i>pir</i>	saint
<i>raja</i>	ruler
<i>Ramadan</i>	Islamic month of fasting
<i>sharia</i>	Islamic law

<i>Shia</i>	sect of Islam
<i>Sufi</i>	mystic
<i>Sunni</i>	sect of Islam
<i>tabarraḥ</i>	insulting the Prophet's companions
<i>tehsil</i>	sub-district unit for revenue administration
<i>ulema</i>	theologians of Islam
<i>ummah</i>	(global) Muslim community
<i>Wahhabi</i>	followers of Mohammad Bin Abdul Wahhab (Arab Islamist reformer of the 18 th century)
<i>zakaṭ</i>	annual Sunni tax on wealth (2.5 per cent of the value)
<i>Zikri</i>	sect of Islam

Acronyms

AIML	All India Muslim League
AKF	Agha Khan Foundation
AKRSP	Agha Khan Rural Support Programme
APMZA	All Pakistan Muslim Zikri Anjuuman
BNF	Balwaristan National
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
D. I. Khan	Dera Ismail Khan
DI	Dawat (-wal-) Irshad
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
FBO	Faith-based Organization
FCR	Frontier Crimes Regulations
GBDA	Gilgit-Baltistan Democratic Alliance
GBUM	Gilgit-Baltistan United Movement
HRCP	Human Rights Commission of Pakistan
ICRD	International Centre for Religion and Diplomacy
IGP	Inspector General of Police
IJI	Islami Jamhoori Ittehad
INC	Indian National Congress
ISO	Imamia Students Organization
JAH	Jamiat Ahle Hadith
IJI	Islami Jamhoori Ittehad
JD	Jamat Dawa
Jl	Jamat Islami
JUH	Jamiat Ulema Hind
JUI	Jamiat Ulema Islam
JUP	Jamiat Ulema Pakistan

LeT	Lashkar-i-Tayeba
LJ	Lashkar Jhangvi
MMA	Muttahida Majlis Amal
MNA	Member of the National Assembly
MPA	Member of a Provincial Assembly
MPO	Maintenance of Public Order
MYC	Milli Yekjehti Council
NALC	Northern Areas Legislative Council
NLI	Northern Light Infantry
NWFP	North Western Frontier Province
PML	Pakistan Muslim League
PML-Q	Pakistan Muslim League – Quaid-i-Azam
PNA	Pakistan National Alliance
PPP	Pakistan People’s Party
RAW	Research and Analysis Wing
RSS	Rashtariya Swayamsevak Sangh
SM	Sipah-i-Muhammad
SP	Superintendent of Police
SSG	Special Services Group
SSP	Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan
SSS	Sipah-i-Sahaba Students
SSWT	Sipah-i-Sahaba Welfare Trust
TJ	Tehrik Jaffria
TNFJ	Tehrik Nifaze Fiqah Jaffria
UP	Uttar Pradesh (previously United Provinces)

1 Introduction

Most studies on sectarianism in Pakistan do not identify the ways in which protracted sectarian conflicts have affected the communities concerned or address the resolution or transformation of such conflicts. This study focuses on analysing the actors and structures that sustain sectarianism and identifying how a transformative process aimed at reducing sectarian conflict can potentially be initiated and steered. It assumes that a process of conflict transformation must explore ways of moving from negative peace (the absence of violence) to positive peace, by restoring social relationships. It argues that there is a need to construct less rigid and exclusivist identities through the creation of social spaces for meaningful interaction and constructive resolution of conflicts. However, ultimately conflict transformation will have to go further than improving relations between communities to tackle the various ways in which sectarianism has been institutionalized both nationally and locally in the two communities under study.

This study of conflict and conflict transformation seeks to identify the scale and quantum of violence, as well as to assess efforts and initiatives for restoring peace. It is based on a comparative analysis of the two cities of Jhang and Gilgit, where many of the violent episodes during the 1990s occurred, which amply demonstrates that sectarian conflict is local, national and regional at the same time. It identifies a hierarchy of causal factors that both contributed to violent sectarian conflict and influenced the outcomes of attempts to restore peace and harmony in the two localities, ranging from the short-term instrumental input of individuals and organizations to long-term structural aspects arising from social, economic and political changes. The analysis is in four stages: i) the situation of pre-conflict peace; ii) the genealogy of the conflicts; iii) the nature of the violence, which was triggered by a mega-event, followed by a series of violent episodes; and iv) the situation of neo-normalcy. The analysis of each stage focuses on both the recurrent pattern of violence and attempts to restore order. Narratives about events during violent clashes or riots differ and are invariably confusing, posing a great challenge to comprehending their genesis and true meaning. History is made by longer-term and recurrent patterns of events, which are rooted in group dynamics and help to explain conflict and what happens in its aftermath. This study therefore examines what happened before, during and after violent episodes as well as the complex discourse used to portray the events. Events and the narratives associated with them together reveal their meaning, throwing light on processes of social disintegration as well as subsequent attempts to restore social order.

The field work for this study revealed that respondents describe 'facts' about events in culturally coded language. Their 'analysis' tends to be subjective. It expresses fear, depression, dissatisfaction and deeply partisan positions characterized by self-righteousness. Descriptions of violence are themselves political enactments inasmuch as they reveal how informants see the world outside their own dungeons of alienation and despair, revealing worldviews based on perceptions of conspiracy and aggression by 'the other'. The public discourse reveals an enmeshing of religion and politics, in that order, although it is interesting to note that researchers and analysts look at the issues in the opposite order, focusing on the politics of religion. The latter's relatively 'objective' view focuses on the relations of power in a locality. They interpret events through identifying the perpetrators and victims of violence, their social and economic grievances and their demands for justice. The use of a religious lens serves the purpose of identifying the dramatis personae of the power play unfolding on the political stage. It also characterizes the contextual setting for long drawn out conflicts in which patterns of domination are challenged or safeguarded, either partially or fully. Micro-histories can indicate the beginnings or ends of various events or phases during a conflict, but such events punctuate continuous lingering conflicts characterized by high and low points of violence.

Conspiracy looms large in people's accounts of the violence. The political discourse commonly refers to the presence of invisible hands behind the clashes and killings. It is argued, for example, by Mullick and Yusuf (2009, p 39), that the perception of conspiracy has bred "a culture of denial about the internality and actuality of the problems that Pakistan faces". The increasingly prevalent perception of conspiracy is partly due to the extension of sectarian conflict to extra-local levels - almost all the perceived inputs from outside a particular geographical area (district, province, nation or region) or the familiar world of a community is attributed to the conspiratorial designs of the powers that be. For example, as will be discussed in Section 4, Shias in Jhang city believe that the Washington-Riyadh-Islamabad nexus has sought to contain Iranian influence in Pakistan by unleashing Sunnis against them in their own locality.

In such a context, the role of the state is important. In the following discussion, the state is dealt with at two levels: as guardian of the political order, thus operating from outside the matrix of class and community at the local level; and as a *mélange* of contending social forces that shape, define and constrain its roles and functions (Migdal, 1996). Typically, a state is perceived in two diametrically

opposed ways: both as an alien, dark, remote, impersonal and interventionist system of authority given to machinations of regulation and control; and as a symbol of public morality and justice, duty bound to contain violence, rehabilitate displaced persons and punish the guilty. The latter is typical of postcolonial states that are founded on the Westminster model of government, including Pakistan. This study examines the role of the state, revealing the weakness of its conflict resolution mechanisms and its lack of potential to establish an equitable social order before, during and after the violence.

This analysis challenges some of the popular notions about the relationship between conflict and peace inasmuch as it raises questions about the potential of post-conflict relief efforts to transform the conflict. To identify ways in which conflict can be substantively transformed, it is necessary to go beyond the violent 'events' to the meaning of the conflicts themselves, which revolve around the dynamics of power in a locality. This needs a careful study of both the processes of change from pre-conflict peace and the factors that may demonstrate potential to change the status quo. In both instances, the role of the state emerges as a crucial factor. The scale of conflict and the potential for peace between two hostile communities can be explained in terms of either the institutional potential of the state or the prospect that one or more social forces can control the violence and build peace. This study finds that conflicts between local communities are linked to the extra-local interplay of power, which requires that inputs for building peace are needed at the corresponding levels.

Few non-governmental organizations were present in the case study cities and they played only a limited role in assisting people affected by the violence. Religious organizations assisted calamity-stricken people, generally from their own constituencies defined in religious and sectarian terms, and often with a covert agenda of creating support for their own sect. However, while religious organizations played short term roles after violent episodes by way of saving people from physical and psychological collapse, they have not played a role in processes of conflict resolution or transformation because most have a sectarian identity and explicitly non-sectarian religious organizations are not present in the cities under study. It will be argued that long term solutions must accommodate and mediate contradictory claims over economic, political, moral and ideological resources. This study demonstrates that sectarian conflict in Pakistan can be both destructive and constitutive of the social order, while conflict transformation with the potential to bring about a new equilibrium between the contending forces is difficult and unlikely in the short term.

The building blocks of the argument in this study include an array of ideological forces, economic and political interests, legal and constitutional provisions, the historical evolution of identity-based conflicts, the strategic interests of the state, and the influence of regional factors at local level. The prevalent discourse of events and opinions about street action, including oral narratives of the tragic loss of life and property, lays out the turf for an analysis of the sectarian conflict in Pakistan. Investigation of the character and potential of the religious agency in the two cities of Jhang and Gilgit, especially in its sectarian incarnation, is necessary to understand the clashes between groups and communities at the local level. In this context, the state is far from neutral. Nationalism, with its majoritarian foundations, emerges as the wellspring of the state's varying strategies, which range from tactical withdrawal to an interventionist mode of operation. Two broad spheres of the state's operations are identified: one characterized by Pakistan's colonial heritage of constitutionalism, parliamentarianism, federalism, an independent judiciary and adoption of the charter of human rights; and the other defined by increasingly indigenous, populist and revivalist doctrines of rule that lead it to engage in partisan activity.

In the present analysis of religio-sectarian conflict in Pakistan, a social constructionist approach is adopted (Beckford, 2003, p 2-5). The idea is that the contested domain of religious ideas, symbols, rituals and interpretations belongs to a living society imbued with individual and group action and thinking at any given time. Various interest groups seek to defend their brand of religious commitment. There is often a grey area in terms of the real motives behind conflict: are social interests mobilizing religious identity, or are identities mobilizing interests? The latter position is problematic insofar as it downplays agency. After all, the protagonists of religio-sectarian causes seek to fight their case with the state, which typically incorporates provisions for religious tolerance in its constitution (Beckford, 2003, p 14). As we shall see in this report, the question is whether and how the state diverges from its constitutional commitment to stay neutral towards and protect all religious groups from infringement from their rivals. The quest to control or be protected against the state's political and ideological resources generally takes the form of discursive practices in the public space, which serve two purposes. First, discourses consolidate sectarian groupings by providing them with a shared worldview and a common ideological and political orientation. Second, they draw a picture of a public sphere in which various social, cultural, financial and legal interests are present. The analysis will dwell on the discursive practices of sectarian protagonists in Pakistan. Religion, far from being a

generic source of identity for its followers, can be considered a second order concept inasmuch as it is not a prime mover and therefore not an independent variable per se. Instead, it derives its meaning and symbolic power from the networks of social relations that provide arenas for contending forces and a variety of local and extra-local contexts for public mobilization (Beckford, 2003, p 21-22). Given sectarian positions only acquire meaning in particular social settings and through specific power relations. This study shows how recourse to sectarian identity involved policy and strategic choices on the part of the protagonists, essentially in response to actual or potential changes in power equations at the micro or macro-levels.

Sectarian conflict is typically regarded as a clash between two exclusive models of a sacred cosmos, which do not allow space to each other. These models are generally sedimented in deeper levels of interactional and transactional systems of daily life that are nevertheless described as peace and social harmony. Conflict, as understood in the current research, brings to the surface ideological forces with great mobilizing potential. However, it is the wider phenomenon of movement between tectonic plates, in this context social, demographic, strategic and constitutional changes, that need to be studied even more than the eruptions of hate-based lava themselves. In Pakistan, the state's way of coping with a proxy war on its soil involving regional powers such as Iran and Saudi Arabia has served to destabilize power structures in particular localities. Jhang is a clear example. Alternatively, the state has tried to change local power dynamics through ambitious social engineering projects, for example in Gilgit. The two strategies are by no means mutually exclusive. This analysis leads to an understanding of sectarian conflict in Pakistan in terms of longer term, macro-level, low-pitched and incremental changes in social and ideological orientations of a sedimentary nature, as well as the role of 'agency' – religious, political, social and cultural. The reification of sectarian, group and religious identities engenders conflict, as opposing essentialisms emerge and space for communication and understanding between them shrinks (Salvatore, 1999, p 20). Various cognitive modalities are brought into play by opposite sides to serve their religio-sectarian projects, invigorated by nationalist aspirations (as in Gilgit) or pursuit of electoral victory (as in Jhang). For any attempt to inhibit the ideological proclivity to draw boundaries to be successful, it is argued that it will be necessary to challenge the prevalent institutionalized discourse and prevent it from being the basic reference point for ongoing power plays.

The present study is the outcome of research work carried out in three ways. First, literature dealing with theoretical and conceptual issues, as well as social, cultural, political and demographic changes in Pakistan in general and the two cities under study in particular, was reviewed. The case studies in Jhang and Gilgit also draw extensively on fieldwork. In-depth interviews were conducted with concerned citizens, sectarian activists, NGO staff, government officers, media people and politicians in Jhang and Gilgit, in order to identify attitudes to the sectarian conflict and the prospects for its transformation. Finally, two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were held in Jhang and two related to Gilgit, one in the city itself and the other in Islamabad, attended by participants from Gilgit and Azad Kashmir (see Appendix 1).

This paper has five sections. In Section 2, the turf for the present study is laid out in broad philosophical and theoretical terms. Here, an analytical framework in four parts is provided, as outlined earlier. Each part deals with specific characteristics of the current problematic under study, in a broadly chronological order, moving from perceptions about, and the reality of, pre-conflict peace and the way it overlaps with the next phase when conflict is brewing. This is followed by a discussion of the violence proper and, next, of postconflict transformation. The aim is to provide a framework for analysis of the causes of violence and the consequences of peace-building efforts. In Section 3, literature dealing with conceptual and empirical findings relating to the sectarian conflict in Pakistan is reviewed. Here, the structure and dynamics of the conflict, the agenda and process of Islamization, patterns of sectarian strife and the regional dynamics of the conflict are discussed. This section aims at pulling together the themes and explanations of faith-related claims and assertions, as well as various strategies adopted by policy-making and power-wielding institutions.

Section 4 deals with Jhang. First, it outlines the pre-conflict phase, including the colonial period and the long gestation period after partition. Second, a brief note is provided on the arch-sectarian party, the Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), a protagonist of violence par excellence. Third, the thorny process of peace-building in the city is described. Section 5 deals with Gilgit. First, the perceived idyllic past of this Himalayan region before the conflict started after partition is described. In this locality, the state's administrative and constitutional apparatus has played a deterministic role in shaping the conflict in pursuit of an ambitious project of integrating the region with the rest of Pakistan. Next, the

movement towards the precipice is described, followed by an analysis of violence and peace Gilgit-style. In the conclusion, the observations and findings are summarized and crystallized.

2 Setting the analytical context

Shia-Sunni conflict in Pakistan can be represented as a series of pyramids of heightened tension dotted by individual or group killings, as well as acts of arson and bomb attacks on holy places. The present study focuses on the sectarian march to the precipice and the downward curve of violence to the point of a simmering or even dormant non-peace that can be characterized as a neo-normal situation. Processes of displacement and resettlement present a scenario of people 'coming home' to where they 'should live' in terms of their identity-based community, as opposed to where they actually lived, in mixed neighbourhoods. This implies a post-conflict transition for faith-based communities: i) from region to religion as the defining variable for group dynamics; ii) from individual to collective identity as a reference point for everyday life; and iii) from a passive to an active identity, as it played out in the short term as a mechanism of change or a survival strategy.

2.1 'The garden of Eden': peace before conflict

This comparative study of conflict and its aftermath in Jhang and Gilgit takes as its starting point each local society at time zero, which is widely understood as peace. However, it is argued that peace at any given time is a historical construct wherein, onion-like, several layers of social networks carrying markers of identity embody internal tensions. The story of Shia-Sunni violent conflict in the two places under study covers a whole spectrum of social and political situations, ranging from confluence, contraction, contention and conflict to collapse of the given social order.

Post-facto explanations of sectarian conflict in Pakistan have generally identified a boiling cauldron of hatred that pre-dated the conflict. Adopting a 'patchwork' approach, these accounts highlight the local and extra-local input of *ulema* and other stakeholders in adding fuel to the fire. However, what is often missing is an understanding of the social forces that are competing for space. In practice, the pre-conflict social and political order operated as a historical spatial container for relatively un-problematized communal identities (Kaiser, 2002, p 230). The established order indirectly constrained the ability of different actors to seek change. However, 'peace' is, at any given time, a process more than a static situation, characterized by transactions between social and sectional forces that constantly meander through fragmentation, coalition making and quests for domination. Such a process operates under the social and cultural hegemony of one or a collection of factions, tribes, groups or communities. However, this hegemony is disturbed through a succession of events and

developments, until a new balance of forces emerges. In this context, the identity and role of catalysts of change in the status quo need to be identified.

In practice, the long peace before the frequency of violent incidents increased at the beginning of the 1990s was characterized by a series of micro-conflicts, which were constitutive of the prevailing social order. None were referred to the state, which was remote in terms of class, culture, education and even language - the emergent ruling class in British India obtained a Western education, operated in the English language, and displayed cosmopolitan patterns of behaviour. Instead, the warring parties interacted with each other in an endless low-intensity process characterized by rounds of feuding followed by mediation, in order to arrange and rearrange their shared space (Caton, 1995, p 4). The undercurrents of social bias operated to sustain non-disruptive everyday life-patterns, typically justified by reference to a normative order. In such contexts, the enactment of the past in the present is underscored by discursive practices that focus on continuity, stability and social harmony, together constituting a *grundnorm* in a locality. Previously, peace had been constantly negotiated within the parameters of the prevailing hierarchy. In our case study districts, a hundred years of British colonial rule, from the mid-19th to mid-20th centuries, resulted in a classic period of 'peace'. In Jhang, this was characterized by four generations of political ascendancy enjoyed by the Syed and Sial Shia elite families, which enjoyed state patronage as well as deference of the local public, partly because of this patronage and partly because of their association with saint worship.

It is only when understanding of the past based on a social and intellectual construction of events and ideas long accepted as legitimate encounters a challenge, a new paradigm, that social stability in the present starts to crumble (Caton, 1995, p 10). Sectarian conflict in Pakistan increased because of social, economic, demographic and ideological changes in Jhang, Gilgit and other localities, as well as diplomatic and strategic changes at the regional and global levels. These changes shaped the conflict by undermining the social and sectarian hierarchy that had been established for generations.

For example, in Jhang, as will be analysed in more detail in Section 4, the perceived invulnerability of the minority Shia elite was massively challenged by two factors after partition: first, the majoritarian idiom, which provided legitimacy to statehood for Pakistan based on previously Indian provinces with a Muslim majority; and second, the emerging pattern of electoral politics, which had not been in full

operation during most of the colonial period. When the electorate expanded from 15 per cent to the universal adult franchise after independence, the minority Shia leadership faced the challenge of keeping its following intact across sectarian boundaries, especially after the arrival and resettlement of refugees from India. Local electoral dynamics changed forever: the old 'peace' was doomed and the status quo faced a major challenge. Those with social power were obliged to deploy all their moral and material resources to safeguard their economic and political domination. Once it had passed in Jhang, 'peace' as the ideographed 'age of innocence' was never to return.

Gilgit's peace was even more idyllic. In this area, Shia domination had a populist as well as an indigenous character. The city was situated in the hinterland of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir under the indirect rule of British India. After the region called Northern Areas became part of Pakistan in 1947, it developed a sectarian profile, whereby (Twelver) Shias, along with Ismailis (a sub-sect of Shias), emerged as a majority – the only Shia majority region in Pakistan (see Section 5). The new geographic and demographic realities sowed the seeds of conflict. The old normalcy was, in both practice and perception, a historical construct rooted in the patchwork identity of the region inherited from colonial times. It was referred to as tradition, culture, custom and norm. Following our assertion that the pre-conflict period was characterized by a contested peace, there is a need to distinguish between old and new sectarianism. The 'old' sectarianism was part of the structure, the status quo and the 'peace'. Its capacity to destabilize established community relations was limited. However, the 'new' sectarianism has the potential to change the hierarchical pattern of social relations through the application of violence or, even more significantly, through legal, institutional and constitutional changes. In this process, supra-local forces led by the state, but including politically mobilized sections of the larger public as well as the international community, impinged on the 'peace' and permanently changed its fabric.

2.2 The genealogy of conflict

The two phases of the pre-conflict peace and the long prelude to the peak of violence characterized here as the genealogy of conflict overlap. In Pakistan, like elsewhere, the blundering, bewildering and in the end balancing process of 'peace' had all along operated within a putative negotiation space, which was bounded by the rules of engagement set by the colonial state. Thus the capacity of the rival social forces to produce violence was circumscribed by the inhibiting control of the outermost

structure of the ruling set-up. However, as noted above, the interface between the state and society acquired a new dimension with the expanding and deepening politics of Islam. Earlier, the state had operated within a secular, legal and institutional framework, imbued with the principle of territorial representation via electoral constituencies whenever there was a civilian dispensation. It included a mechanism for safeguarding human rights through the judiciary at the top and the magistracy at the bottom (Waseem, 1995). However, in the 1970s and 1980s, secularism in practice – if not in terms of the ideational sanction of the state – was overwhelmed by religious dynamics. Territory was replaced by ideology as the prime symbol in political discourse. Human rights gave way to divine rights as the ultimate source of state legitimacy. This provided space during the subsequent decades for new conflict based on ascribed identities. There were parallel trends in India, where bloody Hindu-Muslim riots in Gujarat and Bombay drew on the expanded space for religious politics that had been provided by the state in the previous decades.

In Jhang, migrants from India after partition asserted themselves as new political actors who, a generation after their settlement in the area, sought to counteract Shia dominance. In Gilgit, the state brought in Sunnis to 'contain' restive and resurgent Shias in the 1980s and 1990s. The state's strategy needs to be understood in the context of the perceived strategic importance of Gilgit, which is situated on the Karokoram highway leading to China's border. Jhang, on the other hand, is located in the backwaters of Punjab province. Here, Shias were numerically weak but politically strong. In Gilgit, Shias (combined with Ismailis) were numerically strong, but socially and economically weak, despite the emergence of a relatively stable and well-resourced Ismaili organisation, the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP), which was able to obtain significant donor money, enabling it to improve the educational and health services available to the Ismaili community. Shia sectarian organizations in Jhang are weak, almost non-existent, essentially because the Shia leadership operated through the mainstream political parties, such as Pakistan Muslim League (PML) and the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) rather than pursuing a sectarian cause.

The perpetrators of violence can be regarded as both upholders of identity and agents of change. First, if the state fails to adopt a vigilant, assertive and decisive role in preventing and resolving conflict, they can operate with relative impunity in the available space for manoeuvre. Secondly, they portray sectarian minorities as the 'enemy within', exploiting their majority position to act as both triggers of

violence (planners and financiers) and its executors (killers, looters, arsonists). While the earlier nationalist struggle against the erstwhile colonial empire or Indian nationalism externalized identity, after independence the project of nation-building injected inwardness, insularity and a commitment to bringing about a unified faith commensurate with the territorial boundaries of the state. In this context, various attempts to control and regulate the past were made, ranging from re-writing history to perpetrating violence on religio-sectarian minorities to screen them out of the national billboard. The national agenda in its mythical, historical, geographical, cultural, linguistic and behavioural expressions was based on a majoritarian conception of the state, with Sunnis using their majority status to operationalize a conception of national identity, even overriding the Shia minority identity of the father of the nation, Jinnah, and in fact of all three presidents of the All India Muslim League: Agha Khan, Raja Sahib of Mahmudabad and Jinnah himself.

At the heart of the strategy of the perpetrators of violence was the politics of exclusion. In Jhang, as will be elaborated in Section 4, local political entrepreneurs reworked, exploited and even generated symbols pertaining to the newly crystallized positions on the two sides. In particular, the change-oriented Sunnis sought to de-legitimize the pro-status quo Shias by seeking to throw them out of the pale of Islam altogether. Such an exclusivist sectarian agenda had earlier 'succeeded' in the case of the Ahmedis, who were declared 'infidel' by the National Assembly in 1974. Indeed, some of the ardent followers of the anti-Shia leadership of the Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) had belonged to the anti-Ahmediya movement at the beginning of their political careers. The ensuing conflict related to an agenda for change in the pattern of 'cultural status inequalities' (Langer and Brown, 2007) between the local, long-established Shia elite and the challenger in the form of the commercial middle class, in cohort with radical Sunni clerics. The 'intellectual entrepreneurs' of the rabid Sunni party SSP, which is headquartered in Jhang, and the relatively cosmopolitan but amorphous Shia intelligentsia spread all over the country constructed new social boundaries by consolidating or renewing divergent identities. During the decades of the 1980s and 1990s, what was widely billed as sectarian terrorism in the press reflected the weakening of the state's capacity for conflict management. Pakistan's strategic engagement in Afghanistan and President Zia's quest for legitimacy through a vehement programme of Islamizing laws, institutions, economics, politics, morals and manners, as well as education, led to Sunnification, disturbing every minority.

The state's partisan character contributed to increased sectarian conflict. At the national level, it abandoned its neutrality, failing to uphold its commitments to constitutional provisions and international accords relating to human rights. Also, at the local level, as will be discussed in Section 5, it played a proactive role in pursuit of a project of social engineering in Gilgit, in which it sought to transform the majority into a minority. A minority-majority construction of social relations can be judged against a model of governance based on the judicialization of politics, which remains the ultimate ideal of a democratic framework (Larkins, 1996). Such a model has three elements: two contracting parties constituting a dyad and one dispute resolver, thus making a triad. During the forty years following partition, the state in Pakistan - the triadic entity - moved from the position of a guarantor of a dyadic relationship (in this instance Sunnis and Shias) to a position of tilt towards one side. Since conflict is constitutive of any triad, triadic rule-making was adversely affected by this change. The loss of a 'neutral third' party contributed enormously to the collapse of the previously accepted rules of the game and the emergence of conflict.

For a century under British rule, the state had been the adjudicator in conflict: a religiously neutral triadic entity. In addition, the Constitution of Pakistan provided security to all citizens by giving them the right to worship freely:

Subject to law, public order and morality: (a) every citizen shall have the right to profess, practice and propagate his religion; and (b) every religious denomination and every sect thereof shall have the right to establish, maintain and manage its religious institutions (Article 20).¹

Similarly Pakistan, as a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, endorsed the following position:

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance (UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 18).²

Later, the UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion and Belief, with Pakistan as an official adherent, clearly maintained:

No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have a religion or belief of his choice and no one shall be subject to discrimination by any State, institution, group of persons, or person on the grounds of religion or other belief (Articles 1 (2) and Article 2 (1)).³

While the state upheld these provisions relating to equal citizenship, human rights and political freedoms across the boundaries of faith, its incorporation of discriminatory laws in the statute book violated its commitment to these universal principles. Zia instituted separate electorates for religious communities, which created a situation of what was condemned as religious apartheid (Waseem, 2002). The anti-Ahmedi laws, especially the 1984 Ordinance 20, represented a blatant rejection of the UN provisions. They became instruments for persecution of Ahmedis for simply following their faith. Similarly, anti-blasphemy laws provided legitimacy for acts of harassment, arson and murder at the hands of bigots. Indeed, the adjudication function of the state was itself under siege as judges were harassed and threatened with dire consequences if they reached a verdict that found the perpetrators of violence against perceived 'infidels' guilty. Some judges escaped the assassin's bullet, while others resigned from the bench. The triadic entity was threatened by sectarian militants who established a regime of terror to safeguard and expand the boundaries of their sect against its rivals.

The origins of sectarian conflict can be located in partition itself. The Pakistan movement had subordinated sectarian identities to the larger and more comprehensive Hindu-Muslim dichotomy. However, the Shia minority was apprehensive about the kind of *Sharia* that was to be implemented in Pakistan, given that the new nation would be Sunni-dominated. In fact, the Council of Action of the All Parties Shia Conference passed a resolution in 1945 to reject the idea of Pakistan, although the Shia community as a whole ignored it and endorsed the Pakistan project. Similarly, Ahmedis, who had been the target of Sunni parties such as Majlis Ahrar in Punjab and Kashmir in the 1930s, shifted their loyalty to Pakistan after their leader, Sir Zafrullah, pledged his support to Jinnah (Ahmed, 2009, p 157).

Once the battle was won for Muslim nationalism identified with Pakistan, sectional identities resurfaced, making contradictory claims to the state's ideological resources. Islamic parties, which had been marginalized by the Muslim League, led by modernist Jinnah, re-emerged to demand a

share of public space. Since people are born into a sect, increased religiosity may push them towards a sectarian agenda. Almost all the Islamic parties in Pakistan are sectarian, including Jamiat Ulema Islam (JUI - Deobandi), Jamiat Ulema Pakistan (JUP - Brelvi), Jamiat Ahle Hadith (JAH - Wahhabi), Tehrik Jaffria (TJ -Shia), along with lesser parties such as All Pakistan Muslim Zikri Anjuuman (APMZA - Zikri), as well as militant parties Lashkar-i-Tayeba/ Dawat (-wal-) Irshad (LeT/DI - Deobandi), SSP (Deobandi) and Sipah-i-Muhammad (SM - Shia) (see Appendix 2 for a list of sectarian organizations in Pakistan). Only Jamat Islami (JI) claims to be a supra-sectarian party, although its leadership, cadres and workers, as well as its religious ideology, are Deobandi. Islamic politics in Pakistan is therefore sectarian in both conception and operation. The more the state pursued its agenda of Islamization through legal and constitutional provisions and changes to educational curricula, as well as payment of Islamic taxes, the more its profile was identified with the majority Sunni community.

“Religion as a contested territory” (Esack, 1997) has moved to the centre stage of the struggle for domination between various denominational groups in Pakistan. The ruling elite consistently sought legitimacy for the state in the two-nation theory, to explain the reality of partition in terms of an ideological formulation. This led to what is termed as ‘the problem of theodicy’, whereby the ideal is conceptualized in terms of identification with the real, while at the same time lying behind or above it (Campbell, C., 2006, p 27). Theodicies are divine justifications for providing meaning to social and political experiences that threaten to render life meaningless (Campbell, R.A., 2006, p 90). Pakistan felt a compelling need to continuously re-establish its identity as a country, not only separate from India, but also suffering from an existential crisis at the latter’s hands. This worldview of the ruling elite grew into a “boundary-producing phenomenon” (Dijnik, 1996, p 5). It is in this context that sectarian cleavages in the predominantly Muslim population served as identity markers during the search for space in the professedly Islamizing state of Pakistan. The game for power was increasingly understood and explained in ideological terms, which defied crystallization and coherence as far as their ramifications for the formation of the political agenda were concerned. In the words of Justice Munir, the *ulema* were hopelessly divided in terms of defining what the ‘real Islam’ was (Munir Report, 1954, p 218). The quest to develop an all-encompassing definition of Islam continued to be at the heart of political discourse for over six decades.

The sectarian conflict can be located in the state-building project, which focused on pushing forward the incomplete agenda of partition in a territorial sense by liberating Kashmir from India and sorting out issues such as Rann of Katch, Sir Creek and later Siachin Glacier. Erecting and consolidating the boundary with India contributed to reshaping the community profile in the frontier regions. Northern Areas and its capital Gilgit occupied a significant position in the strategic calculations of the new state. Like the Muslim-majority state of Kashmir in Hindu-majority India, Gilgit represented a Shia-majority region in a Sunni-majority country. This put the initiative squarely in the hands of the arch-interventionist state pursuing security in the border zone, leading in turn to an ambitious agenda to change the demography of the region, its ideological underpinnings and its community profile. As will be discussed in Section 5, official policy favoured the settlement of Sunni migrants from outside and the extension to them of facilities relevant to commerce and other profit-making pursuits. This biased agenda reduced trust in the state on the part of the local majority comprised of Shias and Ismailis. It was part of a broader state-building project that focused on cultivating an Islamic identity commensurate with the geographical identity of Pakistan, favouring a national identity equated with the Sunni majority. The Shia minority, along with other minorities such as Ahmedis and Zikris (followers of a heretical sect), was reduced to a separate entity within the state, even to an anti-body. The more the national discourse of state-building used a religious idiom, the more were sacred barriers to national integration erected in the body politic.

The nation-building project was a natural successor of the Muslim separatist project in British India, in terms of pushing forward the agenda of the partition of hearts and minds in accordance with the boundaries of faith. It focused on de-Indianizing Muslims by shedding supposedly heretical beliefs and practices in order to crystallize Islamic teachings. Sufism to some extent, certainly Ahmedism and later, to a large extent, Shiism earned the opprobrium of the emergent power-wielding Deobandi *ulema* working hand-in-hand with Wahhabi *ulema*. The classical combine of the mosque and *madrasah* in the grand imperial tradition of the Caliphate made a historic comeback in the circles of the Islamic clerics who now enjoyed state patronage. Classical Arab-oriented Islamic scholarship joined hands with the reinvigorated Islamic fervour of millions of expatriate workers returning home from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states in the 1980s and 1990s. Religious and sectarian minorities stood apart, marginalized, frustrated and demoralized. In Pakistan, Hindus were suspected of working for India, Christians for the West, Ahmedis for the British ex-colonial masters and Shias for Iran. By pushing

forward the frontiers of 'pure and correct Islam', the agenda of partition externalized Pakistanis' sources of identity beyond the frontiers of the state into Southwest Asia.

The emerging globalized religious communities (Lechner, 2006, p 44) have inspired and shaped conflicts within the boundaries of individual states, including Pakistan. In doing so, they have enabled resources to be mobilized across regions. After Partition, only Iran was an ally of Pakistan – relations with India and Afghanistan were hostile, and those with China unfriendly. Gradually, the country extended its foreign policy links with the Arabian Peninsula within a pan-Islamic framework. In the late 1970s, Pakistan's relations with Iran were undermined by Khomeini's Shia revolution. Against the background of the war between Sunni Iraq and Shia Iran and the implementation of Shia jurisprudence in Iran as *sharia*, Khomeini's revolution was increasingly understood as a Shia sectarian revolution, which was perceived as a destabilizing factor in the surrounding Sunni region. In addition, the post-1973 oil boom encouraged Pakistan to export labour on a large scale to the Gulf. Its relations with the Gulf States were further strengthened in the 1980s by close strategic cooperation for *jihad* in Afghanistan. The Arab world emerged as the epicentre of the new world-of-Islam perspective, centred on Saudi Arabia. The latter's endorsement of *jihad* against the Red Army in Afghanistan, with diplomatic, financial and moral support, produced a major 'Arabist shift' from its traditional cultural orientation that was rooted in Iran and Central Asia (Irfani, 2004). New ideological constructs and power blocs in the region started to influence Shia and Sunni strongholds at the local level. Externalization of identities led to transnational networking and supra-state input into the sectarian strife within Pakistan. Thus regional currents of Shia and Sunni Islam flowed into Pakistan, providing religious sanctions, diplomatic support and financial assistance to the two warring sides within the country.

These horizontal patterns of interaction were compounded by the continuation of identity-based conflict over generations, even centuries. Re-creation of the past plays a major role in the genealogy of conflict. The past is powerful, operating from the dark alleys of memory as a rueful imaginary world of larger-than-life-size reified and sublimated icons of sacrifice and persecution, symbolized by Imam Hussain in the case of Shias and the four pious caliphs in the case of Sunnis. However, re-creating the past according to the majority national discourse pushes the minorities off the hill. Increasingly, minorities are obliged to adhere to the majority's ideational framework expressed as state ideology,

suffering de-recognition and debasement in the process. Post-revolutionary Iran spread (Shia) classical Islamic literature, with its anti-Sunni rhetoric, with a missionary zeal. Sunni activists in Pakistan translated these classics and several other Persian classics from the early days of Islamic history into Urdu, ostensibly to 'expose' Shia hostility to the holy companions of the prophet. The past in the present massively contributed to the genealogy of conflict.

In this section, we have argued that: i) the divination of the political landscape created space for renewed sectarian conflict; ii) Sunni majoritarianism has underscored the nation-building project in Pakistan, to the exclusion of the Shia minority; iii) the state's partisanship, social engineering and promulgation of discriminatory laws has contributed to the breakdown of religious and sectarian harmony, despite official commitment to upholding the constitution and international human rights commitments; iv) Islamic politics is inherently sectarian, thus Islamization has meant more sectarianism, carrying the potential for violent conflict; v) the large scale migration of Pakistanis to work in the Gulf has encouraged a process of Arabization and Wahhabization and also intensified the sectarian imbalance in terms of power and privilege.

2.3 “Anger be now thy song”: the anatomy of violence

The title of this section is taken from Caton (1994). In it, the nature and direction of violence perpetrated on sectarian adversaries in Jhang and Gilgit will be discussed. Violence redraws political boundaries. States such as Pakistan are vulnerable to violence and general instability because spatial reconfiguration resulting from the end of colonialism, in this case through partition, reinforces existing social relations based on ascribed identities (Rapaport, 1996, p 260). The re-sizing of the state by way of contracting frontiers and population shifts, through partition and migration in 1947, turned minorities into majorities and majorities into minorities (Singh, 2001). New identities bring new uncertainties and new vulnerabilities, attracting neighbouring countries to intervene. Partition itself was midwived by violence. It drew new territorial and national boundaries, buttressed by new political imaginaries. Subsequently, modern communication systems have widened the circuit for the mobilization of people for sectarian causes and the manufacture, transport and use of small arms have increased the quantum of violence manifold. These factors will be examined below. Finally, the discussion will focus on the operational aspects of sectarian conflicts through the two phases of the planning and perpetration of violence.

It is suggested by Sahlin that the dialectic between violence and its cultural rendering is played out by both perpetrators and victims in three phases: instantiation of cultural categories in the specific details of a crisis; the high tide – *denouement* – of mobilized and reinvigorated sectional forces; and return to the system, which is in some way transformed in the process (Sahlins, 2000). The dialectic is operationalized through identity politics, which lays out the turf for confrontation between the guardians of the old order and the protagonists of change. In the case of sectarianism in Pakistan, the enmeshing of violence and identity formation has all along underscored the conflict. Varshney sees in Kashmir the antinomies of nationalisms: the secular nationalism of India, the Muslim nationalism of Pakistan and the ethnic nationalism of Kashmiris themselves (Varshney, 1991). In Amartya Sen's formulation, singular and belligerent identities are the stuff of which conflict is made (Sen, 2006, p 2). Identity serves the purpose of cultural construction of a fear of the other, which lies at the bottom of modern hatreds. Sectarian identities in Pakistan crystallized and consolidated the positions of rival contenders for power, complicating the task of reconciliation between them. This analysis calls for investigation of the wellsprings of identity, in this instance through community profiles in the two localities under study. The historical, geographical, constitutional, electoral and ideological aspects of community life will be examined in the two case studies.

The framework of the postcolonial interventionist state rendered the old model of sectarian identity, which served the purpose of self-definition for groups and individuals, obsolete and redundant. The old model represented a nearly ossified symbolism rooted in medieval, tribal and dynastic loyalties, around which a whole edifice of rituals had been built. On the other hand, the

[n]ew sectarianism operated in a world characterised by extra-local ideological and political orientations underlined by a remote institutional-constitutional structure of values and norms which carried a deterministic potential in the long run. The sectarian activists sought to reshape the state's priorities while reacting to changes in their socio-cultural environment. As the state persistently considered their demands medievalist and fascist, many of these activists opted for exit from the system altogether. These groups typically took to the substitute culture of proselytization and projection of sectarian goals (Waseem, 2000, p 38-9).⁴

The crisis of governance, in terms of both establishing representative rule and performing the basic functions of public authority, underscored by the need for inculcating a normative set of values in the minds of citizens through a long and continuing process of civic socialization, has enormously

contributed to tensions between Shias and Sunnis (Waseem, 2000). The result has been sectarian bloodbaths and waves of religious extremism in many parts of the country (see Section 3). The state's failure to provide educational, health and employment services has created a crisis of governance augmented by the lack of continuity in the political system. The propaganda machinery of the state created projects such as the introduction of "Sharia, unity of *umma*, sovereignty and anti-Western sentiment" (Ali, 1999) but failed to ensure political representation of the masses in elected bodies on a regular basis. It excluded large sections of the society from decision-making mechanisms and deprived them of economic dividends and development arising from urbanization, industrialization and foreign remittances.

In operational terms, two factors distinguish the new sectarianism from the old sectarianism. First, mass communication has enormously widened the circuit for incoming information and violence across the boundaries of both locality and community and territorial units of administration such as districts, provinces and countries. Activists in Jhang and Gilgit districts drew heavily on the swift and expanded communication system to respond to perceived provocations in any part of the country, or indeed the world, in order to organize protest, file petitions in the courts or prepare retaliatory actions against the rival community. Apart from direct bank-to-bank transfers, the new facilities for transferring huge amounts of money across borders by way of the *hundi* or *hawala* system help to maintain a transnational support system. Diplomatic pressures to ameliorate the grievances of client groups in Pakistan, Shias in the case of Iran and Sunnis in the case of Saudi Arabia, operated in the name of providing security to both individuals and institutions. Direct and immediate communication by telephone, fax and internet for the purposes of planning and executing strategies of communal violence regionalized, even globalized, local conflicts.

The second major determinant of the nature and mode of the new sectarianism is the availability of lethal weapons, which took the level of violence to new heights. On the one hand, *jihad* in Afghanistan in the 1980s and insurgency in Kashmir in the 1990s mobilized a large number of *mujahideen*, many of whom turned into sectarian terrorists. On the other hand, the unregulated manufacture of small arms in the tribal areas, especially Darra Adamkhel, emerged as a significant factor in the rise of sectarian violence, buttressed by rampant smuggling of arms across districts and provinces as well as international borders. Various factors hindered official measures to stop the flow of arms to various

militias, *mujahideen* and sectarian killers. For example, arms dealers lobbied against a proposed ban on making and transporting weapons. Some army officials were allegedly involved in arms smuggling. Arms licenses were issued liberally, typically as part of political patronage (Siddiqa-Agha, 1996, p 8). Not surprisingly, throwing grenades in holy places, shooting with Kalashnikovs, blowing up buildings and cars with bombs and target killing have characterized violent incidents in recent decades. Gun-toting and slogan-chanting religious bigots earned a measure of legitimacy during the days of *jihad* in Afghanistan and later Kashmir. This led to ideological embedding of the idea of picking up arms in pursuit of a 'noble cause'. Not surprisingly, Pakistan was considered "an uncertain partner in the fight against terrorism" by US policy makers and think tanks (Fair, 2004, p 9). The supply of small arms was often linked to the production and trade in heroin. In the eyes of trigger-happy individuals and groups, drug trafficking was considered relatively acceptable, compared to liberalism of thought and practice, Western life-styles, blasphemy and apostasy, in escalating order of condemnation.

The mechanics of violence, just like the objects of violence, have been widely discussed and analysed. Paul Brass's functional analysis of Hindu-Muslim riots in India focuses on the careful planning of strategy, goals and targets by the perpetrators of violence (Brass, 2004). This study reveals that the SSP acted as the militant party, operating through a well-organized cadre of activists who possess the knowledge and training to inflict harm on their sectarian adversaries. Carrying Brass's idiom a bit further, analysis of 'the anthropology of an event' that sets the ball rolling in the direction of breakdown of the social order can be revealing (Caton, 1994, p 45). An event has several dimensions: the plotting phase, the hiring of perpetrators of violence and the high drama of violence from the perspective of 'accidental' happenings, immediate causes and 'sacrificial lambs'. An event reveals all the meaning in a microcosm: a hierarchy of religious values and rituals, tensions between power blocs in a community and electoral expression of public trust in leaders and their views. For example, the Bab-i-Umar incident in Jhang in 1969, discussed in detail in Section 4, was fateful in terms of bringing about the passing of a generation of the powerful Shia landed elite as leading politicians in the district. The sectarian upsurge changed politics in Jhang forever, although it was not until the early 1990s that the mutation was transformed into a killing spree. In Gilgit, differences over the sighting of the moon for Eid after the fasting month of Ramadan led to Shia-Sunni riots in 1988, which brought sectarianism to the centre stage of politics in this frontier region (see Section 5). However, after the initial humanitarian crisis caused by the violence, the aftermath was characterized

by state agenda-setting. The latter found in the episode not only a challenge that had to be addressed but also an opportunity that could be exploited to reshape the power structure in the locality. Such an understanding demonstrates the need to transcend the notion of an autonomous framework of events and ideologies. As our case studies will amply show, the concept of two local communities operating from their own volition needs to be challenged. In addition, a mere description of the ways in which their leaders coped with the aftermath of the violent episodes is insufficient in the light of the genesis of the conflict or to identify whether there is potential for conflict transformation.

2.4 The aftermath: conflict transformation?

In the aftermath of conflict, there are often noble ambitions to bring about peace and harmony. However, good intentions cannot in themselves root out the causes of the violence. There is need for caution in conceptualizing the future after a tense past and a violent present. Of course, the immediate need is to rehabilitate affected and displaced persons. The need to provide relief and resettle those affected can demonstrate the potential of both the state and society to deal with the tragedy. However, the provision of relief does not resolve the conflict. While rage subsides and the conflict's power to mobilize recedes, the relief effort neither targets the sources of the conflict nor seeks to resolve it by providing a set of new policies or new ideological formulations. Strategies to cope with the tragedy do not fall within the domain of conflict transformation, either empirically nor epistemologically. Instead, they represent measures to deal with the consequences of the failure of the old 'peace' to hold and there is no straight path from coping strategies to transformation of religiously conceived and operationalized conflicts.

Solutions to conflict lie in their genesis. Conflicts are essentially operative in the social realm, where they are far more endemic than revealed by the level of violence. The question is not only one of physical displacement, misappropriation, dislocation or resettlement, but also one of reconciling the hearts and minds of divided communities. Also, the question is whether violence and strategies to control and manage it should be defined only or even predominantly in terms of their effects, i.e. the ferocity of the attacks, the number of casualties and displaced persons, and the scale of relief efforts by state or non-state actors. In practice, the issue is larger than the matter of coping with the disastrous consequences of conflict. The real challenge is to re-chart the path of identity formation and re-conceptualize the rules of the game governing political representation and co-existence. On the

one hand, there is a need to understand how “sectarian utopian orientations” shaped relations between communities along adversarial lines (Eisenstadt, 1999, p 2-3). On the other hand, there is a need to concentrate on defining the building blocks of social peace within a reformist agenda.

Analysts differ about whether conflict transformation is only one stage in a process of conflict resolution, or something beyond it. As the term suggests, what needs to take place is “a deep transformation in the institutions and discourses that reproduce violence, as well as in the conflict parties themselves and their relationships” (Ramsbotham et al, 2005, p 29). Conflict transformation has to be understood as a process that embodies a positive concept of peace, giving rise to a transformed society free not only of direct violence but also of its structural and cultural forms. This has extensive implications for the concept of transformation, since it has first to identify and then address the wider discursive and institutional continuities within which conflict is usually embedded. Over time, conflict can be transformed into a new base line for defining one’s place in the social universe through routinization of the neo-normal situation that emerges in its aftermath. It is argued that the transition from perceptions of individual to collective security in the aftermath of conflict in our two case studies shows some potential to move from the restoration of calm to agenda formation and strategy building over the longer term.

It will be seen that initially, the cataclysmic changes in the life patterns of residents in the two urban centres reinvigorated sectarian identities, which superseded other identities based on friendship, neighbourhood and institutional collegueship and partnership, at least in a functional sense as a source of security and legitimacy. Quite a few of those affected moved from Jhang to nearby Faisalabad, or even Karachi, in search of new opportunities for earning a livelihood and living in a proper habitat. Often, they stayed with relatives initially. Thus, a kind of ‘retribalization’ took place, whereby larger family networks operated as security mechanisms. Those who stayed in Jhang and did not move to ‘safe havens’ closed in on themselves. For example, when approached for interviews during our fieldwork, women from affected families – widowed or otherwise – shied away from talking, even to female investigators, echoing numerous stories of women after partition, who hid in shame or refused to re-create tragedies by recounting them.

The attitudes of the parties in the conflicts to the state in general remained ambivalent. After all, despite being the supreme legal and institutional authority system, it had failed to protect people in Gilgit and Jhang, as well as elsewhere, from killers, marauders and rioters belonging to the other sect. Indeed, as will be detailed in Sections 4 and 5, the state was often alleged to be an accomplice, even the mastermind behind the conspiracy. However, the non-sectarian, even non-religious, laws and institutions of a remote, impersonal and 'modern' sector in a traditional society are the only mechanisms available for establishing peace, seeking justice against communal crime and ameliorating suffering at the individual level. Formally, victims demanded justice from the state but informally they were resigned to its inaction. Their legal imagination prompted them to activate the machinery of the state, but their political imagination prevented them from expecting a fair hearing against the perpetrators of violence.

Peace committees, which were sponsored, organized and administered by the district administration, functioned as 'marginal satisfiers' insofar as they provided vigilante channels for peace-building and peace-keeping. The state also constrained the potential of adversaries to inflict unbridled violence on each other. Elders, community leaders and 'doves' in general tried to bridge the gaps between sectarian communities, sought to co-operate with the state-sponsored initiatives for peace, provided food and shelter for the victims of violence, and thus kept the level of hate and the desire to take revenge under control. In this context, the state can best be conceived as part of the social control system, rather than a distinct monolithic entity operating from outside the scene of conflict. However, it will be argued that the pursuit of justice by individual victims of a collective frenzy was structurally constrained by the limited scope of the prevalent judicial system, which was essentially biased in favour of adjudication of individual crimes committed against individuals. The limited progress in securing justice through the maze of complex legal and judicial doctrines and corrupt institutional practices has resulted in rampant cynicism.

Comparison between Jhang and Gilgit, both ravaged by sectarian conflict, and the zone in northern Pakistan affected by an earthquake in 2005, in terms of the humanitarian aid provided by NGOs and faith-based organizations (FBOs) is interesting. Both types of organization provided assistance in cash and kind following the earthquake, but the area affected by sectarian conflict fared poorly in comparison. It can be argued that a natural calamity is ideologically neutral, inasmuch as it is

indiscriminate in terms of the disastrous consequences for the people affected. In 2005, it was seen as a supra-human uncontrollable tragedy, which brought into action both ideologically motivated people from FBOs and NGOs. On the other hand, humanitarian efforts following sectarian riots activated individuals and families on a partisan basis. In India, Muslim organizations came into action to support Muslim victims of religious riots in Bombay and Gujerat, who constituted an absolute majority of those affected. On the other hand, the victims of the Shia-Sunni riots in Pakistan, in terms of killing, displacement and trauma, belonged to both sects. There was no undisputed case of victimhood on one side. SSP ran a ferocious hate campaign and threw grenades at *imambargahs* and Muharram processions. Shias carried out high profile murders of SSP leaders. Both were victims in turn. The local administration found it expedient to keep religious organizations at bay while it struggled to control the conflict through mediation, vigilance and the selective use of coercion. It also controlled the relief effort with the help of the local elite on both sides of the divide. FBOs entering the terror-stricken areas to provide humanitarian assistance thus faced a difficult situation

It has been argued in this section that transitions from 'peace' to conflict are often mediated by identity politics. Individuals and groups seek change in the social and political hierarchy by taking a 'principled' stand on the basis of a divine source of legitimacy, strength of numbers or public morality. Often, they re-create the past, either to establish the villainy of the 'other' or to reinvigorate their own credibility, so that it can play a role in the present. In Pakistan, Sunnis claimed to rediscover the apostatic origins of Shia beliefs and practices, rendering them suspect as Muslims. In such a context, the role of the state needs to be discussed essentially in terms of the loss of its triadic role. It has been argued that, because of its own security calculus, the state created space for a majoritarian sectarian identity. Certain local social and political forces assisted it by pursuing their own agenda. Somewhat similar to the case of the RSS in India before and after partition, which played the role of the predecessor and icon of a successor generation of communalist politicians, the Sunni *ulema*, from the vantage point of late colonialism and the early post-independence period, inspired sectarian militants in Pakistan in the 1990s. In the following pages, the perspectives developed in this section, relating to a four stage process of conflict formation and transformation, and a broad framework of analysis that incorporates the perpetrators and victims of violence, the state's ambivalent role and a distinction between post-conflict relief work and conflict transformation, will be utilized for more detailed analysis.

3 Sectarianism in Pakistan

In this section, further context will be provided to the case studies of Jhang and Gilgit by first outlining the upsurge in sectarian violence nationally in the 1990s. In Section 3.2, international literature on sectarianism will be briefly reviewed, leading into an analysis of the Islamization agenda in Pakistan, existing literature on sectarianism in the country and finally, in Section 3.5, an further examination of external factors. Religious or sectarian differentiation has generally been overlooked by scholars as a social phenomenon impinging upon the structure of state and society. Only relatively recently, since September 11, has this issue entered into the mainstream of epistemic discourse.

3.1 The trajectory of sectarian violence in Pakistan

The decade of the 1990s witnessed a frightening upsurge in sectarian violence in Pakistan. Frequent clashes between Shias and Sunnis left hundreds dead and thousands injured across the country. Attribution of deaths and injuries to sectarian rather than other types of violence is not easy and accurate data do not exist. Instead attempts have been made to assemble data from a variety of sources. One estimate suggests that sectarian violence took 581 lives between 1990 and 1997 (Haleem, 2003, p 469), while another arrives at a figure of 994 between 1990 and 2002, 60 per cent of them Shias (see Table 1). 422 lives were lost in 395 sectarian incidents in the province of Punjab alone between 1990 and 1997 (Ali, 1999, p 1). A government estimate suggests that 1,149 persons were killed in 461 incidents between 1997 and 2006, of whom 773 were Shias (67 per cent) and 376 were Sunnis (GRP, 2006). The early 1990s represented a peak in the number of incidents (especially in Jhang), with further peaks in 1994 and again in 1997/8 (Figure 1). Violent incidents have continued to mar the 'peace' ever since, although the number has fallen since the early 2000s. In the year 1998, 150 persons were killed, 25 in one incident in Lahore's Mominpura graveyard during a funeral, and 15 in Hangu in FATA along with several injured (Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 1998, p 161; see Table 2).

A decade later, sectarian violence continues at a low pitch. In 2008 alone, 20 people were killed in a bomb attack on an *imambargah* in Peshawar, 1,000 killed and wounded in Kurram tribal agency, 30 killed and 40 wounded in D. I. Khan, 25 and 60 respectively in Bhakkar, six dead in Hangu and two in Kohat (Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 2008, p 75-6).

Beyond deaths and injuries, the 'infrastructure' of violence has continued to operate in the courts and streets and during electoral activity. For example, constitutional petitions have been filed to demand a ban on the building of a church and to disallow the appointment of a non-Muslim judge. The law has continued to prohibit Ahmedis from using the word mosque for their places of worship and *azan* for the call to prayer. In late 2008, three Ahmedis were killed after a cleric declared in a TV talk show that Islamic injunctions permitted them to be killed (Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 2008, p 74). Although fatalities peaked in earlier years, such micro-events have continued to adversely affect the social and political atmosphere.

Table 1: Shias and Sunnis killed in sectarian violence (1990 – March 2003)

Year	Total dead	Shia	Sunni	Police/workers of other law enforcement agencies
1990	32	13	14	5
1991	52	29	23	1
1992	58	22	16	7
1993	39	17	11	1
1994	73	39	23	7
1995	59	36	22	1
1996	83	56	34	
1997	200	105	90	5
1998	132	109	23	
1999	53	68	36	
2000	37	4	26	7
2001	154	80	64	10
2002	21	15	6	
Total	994	593	388	44

Source: Muhammad Amir Rana (2004) *A to Z of Jihadi Organizations in Pakistan*. Lahore: Mashal Books, p 586.

3.2 The structure and dynamics of sectarian conflict

For an analysis of conflict transformation in Gilgit and Jhang, it is imperative to understand the disposition and dynamics of sectarianism, in order to place it in historical and political context.

Sectarianism may be defined as

... a rigid adherence, excessive attachment to or undue favouring of a particular sect, party or denomination. It often implies denunciation of, and discrimination or even violence against, those outside the sect. The term is most often used to refer to religious sectarianism, involving conflict between members of different religions or denominations of the same religion on the basis of adherence to particular religious dogmas. It is also frequently used to refer to political sectarianism, generally on the part of a tight-knit political faction or party.⁵

This definition points to the outward-oriented nature of sectarianism, which implies a negative attitude towards 'others' while being attached to a religious persuasion. This is confirmed by Liechty and Clegg:

Sectarianism is a system of attitudes, actions, beliefs, and structures which arises as distorted expressions of positive human needs, especially for belonging, identity, and the free expression of difference and is expressed in destructive patterns of relating (2001, p 102-3).

The outward-oriented nature of sectarian conflict is framed within a concept of identity, which is related to a socio-cultural context. Indeed, sectarian conflicts can be categorized as identity-based conflicts. At the core of the definition is the notion that sectarianism leads to a destructive way of dealing with difference (Liechty and Clegg, 2001, p 152), with action emerging as an important feature i.e. the way that identity, or difference, is expressed and communicated to others. These definitions of sectarianism encompass both group and individual attitudes toward other sects or religious bodies. Sectarian claims are couched in pre-modern discursive practices within a contested framework of divinity and become problematic when they are exclusivist, enmeshed with politics and expressed through violence.

Thus, sectarianism is based on the exclusivist group identity of a religious body that can be classified as a political or militant entity. This group identity is imbued with a negative attitude towards its environment, often leading to social or political action in the form of denunciation of, and discrimination

Table 2: A decade of terror: description of incidents of violence 1988-1998

1988	150 Shi'i killed in Gilgit by vigilante Sunni mobs
1988	Assassination of Shi'i TJP leader, Arif Husaini
1989	Assassination of Sunni SSP leader, HaqnawazJhangvi
1990	Assassination of Iranian cultural attache in Lahore
1991	Assassination of Sunni SSP leader Israru'l-Haq Qasimi
May 1991	18 Sunni SSP workers killed in Gilgit
July 1992	15 killed and 40 injured in Peshawar in rioting during Shia Muhurram ceremonies
January 1994	6 killed and 21 injured in attack on Shia mosque in Multan
January-February 1994	5 retaliatory assassinations of Shia and Sunni leaders in Punjab
February 1995	8 Shias killed and 17 injured in attack on a Shia mosque in Karachi
February 1995	20 Shia killed in attack on 2 mosques in Karachi
March 1995	12 Shia killed and 28 wounded (including children) in a bomb blast at a mosque.
August 1996	7 Shias and Sunnis killed in rioting
September 1996	12 Sunni SSP workers killed in Karachi
September 1996	Over 200 killed in five days of Shia-Sunni fighting in Pachinar
October 1996	21 Sunnis killed in attack on a mosque in Multan
December 1996	27 Sunnis (mostly children) were killed in an attack on a mosque in Multan
1996	Assassination of 2 Shia TJP leaders in Lahore and Multan
January 1997	Assassination of Shia SMd leader, Murid Abbas Yazdani
January 1997	19 Sunni SSP leaders and workers killed in a bomb blast at a court house in Lahore (the blast killed SSP leader, Ziau'l-Rahman Faruqi, and seriously injured his second in command, A'zam Tariq.); torching of Iranian cultural centers in Lahore and Multan
January-May 1997	Assassination of 75 Shia municipal leaders and prominent community figures in rural Punjab
August 1-10, 1997	70 people killed various incidents of sectarian violence in and around Lahore
September 1997	Five Iranian military personnel assassinated in Rawalpindi
January 1998	22 killed and 50 injured in an attack on a Shia religious ceremony in Punjab
March 1998	15 killed in two days of sectarian violence in Hangu, NWFP

Source: Muhammad Aamir Rana (2004) *A to Z of Jihadi Organizations in Pakistan*, Lahore: Mashal Books, p 586.

- or even violence - against, those outside one's own community. Such identity-based mobilization can be seen as a process of border-building – separating 'us' from 'them' – and the systematic use of violence as a separating, dichotomizing tool (Conversi, 1999, p 564 and 570). Conflict and violence reinforce negative stereotypes of the other, legitimizing the use of violence. The idiom of identity should be understood as a discourse of self-legitimization produced by the violence that it appears to merely represent (Campbell, 1998, p 86). This type of sectarianism is at the heart of the conflicts studied

here. Moreover, in protracted conflicts group identity is inevitably constantly re-defined and reformulated during the conflict rather than merely being its 'pre-existing' cause.

Sectarianism can be analysed by looking at the context of where, why and how a sectarian identity is politicized, and why it is brought to the centre of the political practices. It is equally important to know about who is sustaining and supporting the sectarian discourse, and through what kind of action an identity is communicated to the 'other'. In the literature, two broad approaches to identity-based conflicts can be identified, depending on how the conflict is defined. One focuses on identity issues, such as demands for cultural autonomy or recognition of specific kinds of minority rights, leading to approaches to conflict resolution that seek practical solutions to counter discrimination.⁶ The second targets the relationship aspect of inter-group tensions, developing strategies to reduce and transform the negative stereotypes, fears, miscommunication and hatred that divide a society (Leatherman, 1999, p 192-3). It can be argued that such an implicit distinction between material and psychosocial aspects of a conflict is not tenable. Theorists who concentrate on the material causes 'behind' identity-related conflicts arguably reduce human agency to being determined mainly or solely by rational calculations about material benefits. They dismiss the possibility that human behaviour may equally, and more commonly, be oriented towards deeper concerns of identity and autonomy. As noted by Janie Leatherman, focusing on the substantive issues behind identity claims could encourage adversarial politics instead of contributing to resolution of the conflict, particularly when the conflict is already characterized by dichotomous reasoning (Leatherman, 1999, p 193).

Identity is not an independent variable and identity-claims are mostly formulated in political language, so it is necessary to bring in the political aspect of identity politics. While identifying the root cause of a conflict is important when attempting conflict transformation, an understanding of the cultural and historical dynamics, during which identity is crystallized, is equally important. In societies where sectarian conflict is protracted or where it has become a feature of daily life, it acquires a systemic nature, implying that a process of institutionalization of the conflict has taken place. This leads to sectarianism being fermented not only by those individuals and groups who incite hatred or those who perpetrate violence but by everybody whose actions reinforce the sectarian agenda, without necessarily intending to promote it. It also means that reactions to sectarian tensions and violence become embedded in social structures, sometimes resulting in segregated living patterns (Liechty and Clegg, 2001, p 12-13).

Thus Vivienne Jabri notes in her book *Discourses on Violence* (1996, p 131) that exclusionary identity discourses are not only manifest in specific situations of violent conflict but are also deeply embedded in discursive and institutional practices that are reconstituted through every exclusionary practice. Violence as a mode of conducting politics and doing religious activity means that the institutionalized practices of sectarian groups and religio-political forces take roots in a society and build structural bases for themselves (Tambiah, 1996, p 328; Nasr, 2002, p 101). On the one hand, the availability of modern weapons and readiness to use violence is sustaining sectarianism. On the other hand, a sectarian outlook can be found in other aspects of public life. In Pakistan, for example, it can be seen in the organization of education, the structure and functioning of the army, and the legal system, with the effect that social discrimination and cultural repression based on sectarian identity has come to be considered normal (ICG, 2005, p 6, 25). The wide range of factors involved help sectarianism to continue without specific and registered intentions of individuals, groups or communities to be sectarian.

3.3 The Islamization of Pakistan

Three broad perspectives can be identified in existing research on sectarianism in Pakistan. The first and most common adopts an interpretive approach to understanding sectarian behaviour. However, as Salvatore suggests, there is a need to go beyond the hermeneutics of texts to understand the ground reality that is shaped by the institutions and groups that authorize particular discourses (1999, p 25). Thus sectarianism in Pakistan is seen as embedded in post-partition changes in various aspects of economic and political life. This perspective significantly overlaps with the second, which focuses on the regional framework of politics, the so-called external dimension, which has tilted the scales in favour of one or the other party in conflict at different times and places. These horizontal and vertical patterns of sectarian activity are channelled, influenced and manipulated in particular localities by the structural presence of the state, which provides the third perspective. This review of existing research reveals the role of the state to be important, in terms of both the scale of the violence and the cessation of hostilities. The state emerges as a complex reality characterized by both conflation of and differentiation between religion and politics.

Several macro-level studies have focused on the local dimensions of sectarian conflict, its international dimension and the role of the unstable political context in exacerbating conflict at the national level. The local political and socio-economic context of the conflict in Jhang has been researched to some extent. However, as will be seen, Gilgit has been relatively ignored in the academic field of investigation.

Where does Pakistan stand along the spectrum of influence of religion on everyday life? The country inherited a dichotomy between a secular state apparatus and ideational sanction based on religion. Lapidus classifies the institutional configuration of Islamic societies into two types (1996, p 24-7): a) differentiated social formations, i.e. societies in which religion and the state occupy different spaces, and b) undifferentiated social formations, i.e. societies in which religion and state are integrated. In his view, most Muslim countries, including Pakistan, are in the category of differentiated social formations. They are the product of the process of decolonization in the last century, during which nationalist movements were spearheaded by relatively secular leaders. These new states defined their identity in nationalist terms, in many cases preserving the secular legal, educational and political institutions inherited from the colonial era. However, even in these differentiated states, religious elements in society fight to theocratize the state. Islamic revivalist movements in many Muslim countries denounce any trends towards secularization, calling for a return to a state that represents and embodies Islam and enforces an Islamic way of life based on Sharia and the primacy of religious institutions.⁷ Jeff Haynes asserts that “to Islamists, liberal democracy is fatally flawed and morally deficient” (1997, p 142). It is only considered relevant for a secular society. Instead, they seek the creation of an Islamic society, not only at home but also supra-nationally, through the establishment of *Khilafah*.⁸ In Pakistan, which aspires to be in some sense an ‘Islamic state’, sectarian conflict constantly interacts with broader issues concerning the place of Islam in public life.

Thus in the Pakistani context, the clue to understanding sectarian controversy lies in the macrosociological framework of Islamic discourse, which encapsulates the prevalent modes of thinking, planning and action. Islamization refers to attempts to introduce ‘Islamic’ norms and institutions through government policy. However, the legalistic ‘Islamization’ agenda pursued by Zia focused on the enforcement of *sharia* and not on implementation of Islamic principles of democracy, freedom, equality, tolerance, and social justice. This approach refurbished the existing sectarian divide

(Abbas, 2005; Ahmed, 2005). Zia's attempts to Islamize Pakistani society through the state apparatus were driven essentially by his quest for legitimacy. However, the convergence of his political instinct for survival and the propagation of Islamic ideology damaged the social fabric of the Pakistan society by unleashing the genie of sectarianism (Noman, 1988, p 146). Moreover, the state aligned itself with the Sunni brand of Islam, thereby alienating the minority Muslim communities. Although the Islamization project promised to "manifest a universal Islamic vision" (Nasr, 2002, p 88; see also Behuria, 2004, p 159), it did not accommodate different Islamic exegetical articulations. Instead, it was based on and promoted a specific Sunni (Deobandi) interpretation of Islam.

The need to counter a 'Shia threat' in Pakistan was brought home to the Zia regime by Shia protests following the promulgation of the Zakat and Usher Ordinance in 1979. The parliament in Islamabad was under siege by more than 50,000 Shias from all over Pakistan in July 1980 under the banner of Wifaq-e-Ulema-e-Shia Pakistan (Abbas, 2002, p 7).⁹ The Imamia Students Organisation (ISO) played a pivotal role in making the whole episode a remarkable success.¹⁰ Shias claimed that "the mode of Zakat collection enumerated in the Ordinance was not in conformity with their beliefs, and demanded that Shias should be treated in accordance with their personal law" (Abbas, 2002, p 7). Zia agreed to amend the Ordinance. For some time, the Shia clergy had thought of constituting an organization with the express objectives of opposing the blatant 'Sunnification' of the state and safeguarding the interests of their own community (Nasr, 2002, p 87-90). As a result, the TNFJ was formed in Bhakkar under the leadership of Mufti Jaffar Hussain (Zaman, 1998, p 694-5). TNFJ became palpably assertive in its political stance after Arif-ul-Hussaini, an Iranian-trained Toori cleric from Parachinar, succeeded Jaffar Hussain as its leader in 1984.¹¹ In 1993, a militant offshoot of TNFJ (later re-named TJ) called SM emerged under the leadership of Ghulam Reza Naqvi. By the end of 1994, SM had established its headquarters in a Shia stronghold in a suburb of Lahore, Thokar Niaz Beg.

Within this macro-framework of the instrumental use of Islam by the state and sectarian assertiveness, Islamists reacted to the state's ideology in the light of their local realities. Waseem highlights the following factors (2000, p 77-8):

- The state upheld the Islamic agenda for identity and legitimacy purposes.
- The Islamic lobby sought to change the character of the state along religious lines, in confrontation with both the West and 'Westernism' at home.

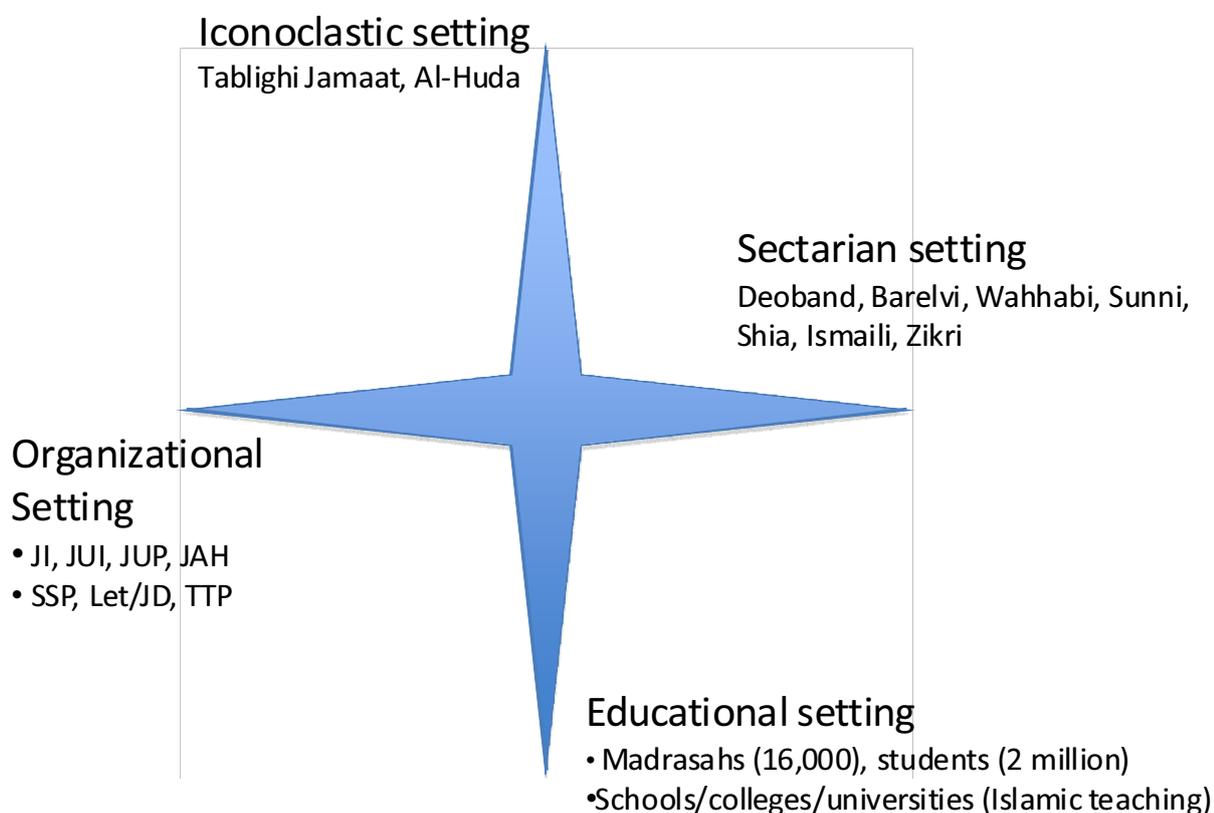
- Historical roots of sectarianism notwithstanding, sectarian conflict in a contemporary Muslim society such as Pakistan has to be understood in terms of local power politics, the constellation of powers at the national level, and regional and international politics.
- Sectarianism has its own roots in the vast area of public activity that is either not controlled by the state or is mismanaged and 'brutalized' by it.
- When it comes to operationalizing the pan-Islamic agenda of the state, intra-religious rivalries bring the suspicions of adherents of various sects into the open.

The state is therefore a key variable in our analysis. In Pakistan, the state is often accused of making alliances with certain religious segments of the society either, as noted above, to gain legitimacy or to promote regional security interests (Malik, 1997; Shah, 2004; Weiss and Gilani, 2001). Political observers, scholars and journalists understand it as a '*mullah-military*' alliance (see, for example, Ahmad and Desai, 2005, p. 133-4). The state's policies of using religious forces to fight proxy wars against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and India in the disputed region of Kashmir in the 1980s and 1990s respectively led to sectarian extremism. For example, Qadeer (1997), in his description of civil society in Pakistan, mentions the state's support for the religious segments of the society, which deepened the fault lines of sectarian conflict in Pakistan (see also Rehman, 2006). This line of argument supports the model of an 'interventionist state' that seeks to define and mobilize ethnic and sectarian identities to fortify its power.

Most significantly, state-led Islamization has helped to institutionalize sectarianism at different levels. The use of blasphemy laws is a clear example of how the court system has been used for sectarian purposes.¹² The most blatant form of institutionalization of sectarianism is the close, even 'symbiotic' relationship of sectarian groups with the mainstream Islamic parties, blurring the lines between the two. I have claimed elsewhere that sectarian parties are the prototypes of Islamic organizations (Waseem, 2004). The institutionalization of sectarianism has led some scholars to believe that "the religiosity and aspirations that sectarian subjectivities exemplify run through sections of the mainstream religious groups as well" (Irfani, 2004, p 163; see also ICG, 2005, p 4). However, others argue that the Shia-Sunni divide tends to be virtually irrelevant at the level of national politics (Irfani, 2004, p 154). Indeed, sectarian discourse is not very evident at the national level. However, in our view, national politics is not immune to the influence of sectarian elites. For example, the Pakistani state is

known for putting pressure on its officials to openly declare their religious background. The spread of exclusionary practices in mainstream politics may be influential in consolidating sectarianism in future.

Four decades of ideological movements, the state's politics of Islamization, along with the two *jihads* in Afghanistan and Kashmir, have led to the formation of what can be termed an 'Islamic establishment'. While not quite as strong as the state establishment in terms of power, privilege, financial clout and military prowess, the Islamic establishment is characterized by certain shared interests and concerns. It is opposed to the West, especially the US, and the Westernized Pakistani ruling elite that is held to have a secular framework of thought (especially in its tolerance of 'infidels' – religious and sectarian minorities) and controls a state system that is alleged to be colonial, non-Islamic and therefore, illegitimate. The Islamic establishment is comprised of sect-based religious groupings operating in political, educational and social domains of public activity. Figure 2 attempts to capture its main dimensions.

Figure 1: The Islamic establishment

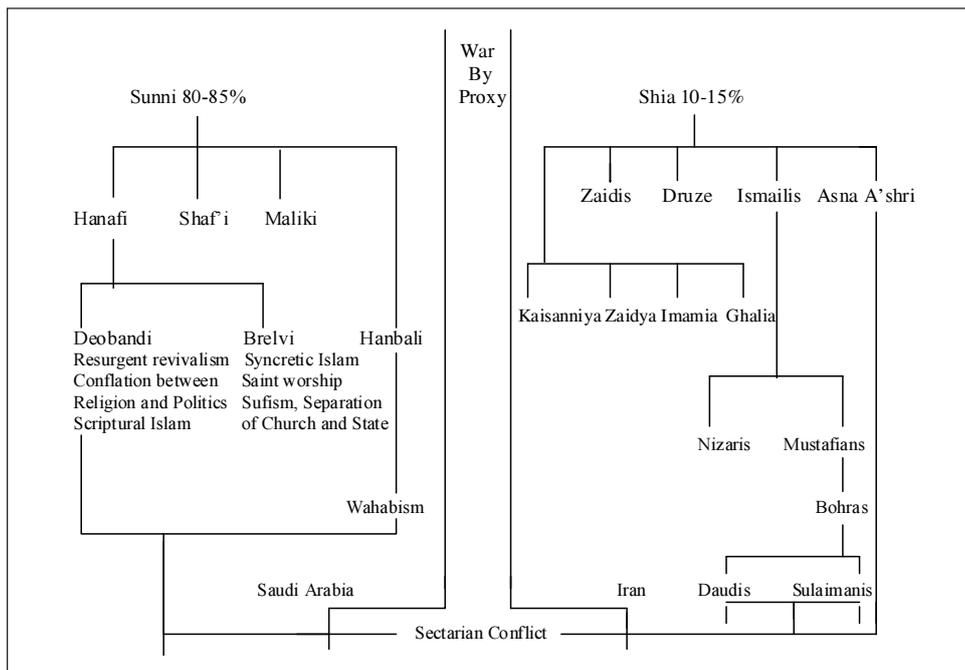
Source: author's diagram.

As Figure 2 shows, the Islamic establishment operates in four spheres of social and political life. The sectarian setting, which concerns us most here, functions through mosques and their networks. *Imams* and *khatibs* operate mosque establishments by managing shops that are rented out to shopkeepers, conducting marriage and death rites, and administering donations flowing in from local communities. However, it is primarily at the organizational level that sectarianism is kept alive with zeal and assertive messages. All the Islamic political parties project sectarian messages, implicitly or explicitly. In addition, the wide network of madrasahs is organized essentially on the basis of sectarian federations (*wafaqs*). The curriculum of madrasahs is closely supervised by sectarian *ulema*. Finally, there are manifestly apolitical Islamic organizations whose basic function is proselytization as well as the cultivation of piety. While non-violent in character, Tablighi Jamat and the women's group Al-Huda produce a religious and spiritual commitment among their followers, leading some to criticize these iconoclastic groups for keeping the embers of inter-faith and inter-sectarian rivalry burning.

3.4 A war of clerics by other means

In order to analyse the factors behind the mobilization of sectarian identities, the rise of sectarian politics and the intensification of sectarian tensions, it is necessary to understand the relevant discourses in Pakistan, and to identify their effects on the protracted sectarian conflicts in Jhang and Gilgit. Although sectarianism in Pakistan is usually understood as a conflict between the majority Sunni and minority Shia traditions, as portrayed above, arguably this description is too broad to be useful. Neither community is homogenous. Instead, each has sub-sects, local variants and different schools of thought (ICG, 2005, p 3).¹³ Even though most violence branded as ‘sectarian’ is violence between (Deobandi) Sunnis and Shias, the sectarian terrain in Pakistan is much wider. Both sectarian persuasions incorporate multiple sub-sects with contesting versions of their respective sets of beliefs, as mapped in Figure 3. For example, within Sunniism, Brelvis, Wahabis and Deobandis are in opposition to each other (Zaman, 2002, p 121). No sub-sect lets go of any opportunity to undermine another, disputing each other’s validity claims through hotly contested debates and sometimes armed confrontation. Although it is possible to identify supra-local sectarian communities, which encompass the aspirations and grievances of their members in different localities, all sectarian conflicts operate in different regional, linguistic and local contexts (ICG, 2005, p 131).

Figure 2: Sectarian conflict in Pakistan



Source: prepared by author.

A major finding of our research, as will be elaborated in Sections 4 and 5 is that *ulema* on both sides of the sectarian divide conceive, plan, lead and orchestrate religious campaigns in their respective areas of influence. However, conflicts branded as ‘sectarian’ are rarely about religion or doctrinal truths per se. Instead, identity-based groups are mobilized to use violence for various purposes, which may be justified within a sectarian discourse. In Pakistan, sectarian conflicts transcend a mere ontological threat to the competing sect in terms of its creed, rituals or congregational worship. Rather, conflicts are about controlling economic niches, competition in trade, challenges to traditional power-structures, and control over urban territory, cultural influence and local power.¹⁴ Such multicausal explanations are necessary to understand any conflict. Thus for conflict transformation to occur, it is necessary to identify not only the actors who sustain sectarian discourses, but also the ways in which sectarianism is embedded in social structures.

As discussed above, sectarianism in Pakistan has been seen in the context of the project of nation-building (see, for example, Jaffrelot, 2001, p 34-5; Rais, 2004, p 448). Some analysts think that the different Islamic traditions have yet to believe in the idea of Pakistan. As noted by Mary Anne Weaver (2002), the idea of a Muslim homeland has never fully worked to unite people in the name of Islam, because in Pakistan it is necessary to ask, ‘whose Islam?’ During the Pakistan movement, *ulema* were divided along sectarian and ideological lines. The mainstream Deobandi *ulema* of Jamiat Ulema Hind (JUH) and Maulana Maudoodi’s Jamat Islami (JI) were opposed to the idea of an independent Muslim state as propagated by Jinnah and his party, the All India Muslim League (AIML). JUH was involved in religio-military activism and had strong anti-colonial leanings. Its leadership was close to Indian National Congress (INC). It opposed the division of India on the basis of religion because it believed that this would result in the division of Muslims. Its foremost objective was to gain independence from the colonial empire. Maudoodi and his party (JI) considered nationalism a conspiracy hatched with the purpose of dividing the Muslim *ummah* (the community of Muslims). Thus, he opposed the idea of a separate Muslim state (Malik, 1997, p 45-6). Many other *ulema* with a similar religious outlook established their own parties, such as the Khaksar Tehrik and Majlis-e-Ahrar, with strong anti-colonial, anti-League ideological perspectives. Vali Nasr claims that the leading Deobandi *ulema* (Madni group) continued to oppose the idea of Pakistan, while the second tier of the Deobandi leadership, the so-called Thanvi group of ‘apolitical ulama’ who were not active in JUH, formed JUI in 1945 and joined Jinnah in his struggle for an independent Muslim state (Nasr, 2000, p 169). Zaman, however, contests Nasr’s conception of ‘apolitical ulama’. He claims that many JUI

leaders were actively engaged in determining the ideological contours of the constitution of the new state (Zaman, 2004, p. 133-5). Brelvi *ulema* and *pirs* (spiritual leaders) were local or regional influentials, lacking a countrywide programme, so that the AIML had to make special efforts to solicit their support.

Nevertheless, sectarian differences among the clergy largely remained confined to the pulpits of mosques, and there was no sharp sectarian feeling or tendency for violence between the Shia and Sunni masses at the time of partition (Munir, 1979, p 37). Despite the undercurrents of distinct sectarian consciousness, the Muslim nationalist leadership and the public lived together largely in peace.

It is a great paradox that the very creation of Pakistan in 1947 alienated the religious elite who were represented by JUH and JI, who refused to countenance the nationalist aspirations and wishes of Indian Muslims as espoused and articulated by the AIML. As a result of their opposition to the very creation of the emergent state, these *ulema* lost influence and the first challenge they faced was to restore their political influence and legitimacy. According to Nasr, the anti-Pakistan Deobandi leadership that gradually became active in JUI adopted a two-pronged approach to regain its influence in society. First, they wanted to create a space in the political arena in which they could operate; second, they planned to influence Islamic discourse, as well as Islamic institutions and structures of authority, in the country. This group chose not to become directly involved in the debate over constitution-making, which could have put its own record of opposing the creation of Pakistan on trial. Instead, they changed their strategy and focused instead on making allegations about the negative role of religious minorities, which they made into an explosive issue that would ensure them entry into the political arena (Munir Report, 1954). By shifting their focus from their own political legacy to their desire for Islamization of the new state and its leaders, this group hoped to alter the balance of power between Pakistani nationalists and the discredited Deobandis. Their concern for the Islamic nature of the state would, they intended, rehabilitate them in the new political setting after partition.

These *ulema* thus started to oppose the sectarian minorities, first Ahmedis and later Shias. Zaman (1998) argues that the Ahmedi controversy bears on sectarian conflict in Pakistan in at least two ways. First, as noted in Section 4.4.3 many of the leading activists of the professedly anti-Shia party SSP began their political career by agitating against Ahmedis. Second, the constitutional definition of a

Muslim to exclude Ahmedis led to further demands to redefine Islam so as to also exclude Shias. In a state that professes to be guided by the fundamental principles of Islam, controversy about Ahmedis contributed to the sectarian discourse by forcefully raising and keeping alive such questions as who a Muslim 'really' is and what position he would have in the state of Pakistan. The path adopted by the Deobandi *ulema* not only rehabilitated their credibility but also turned them into a force to be reckoned with, in terms of advancing the agenda of Sunni Islamization with zeal and zest. In this way, they strengthened the basis for sectarian cleavages and religious extremism in the country. All this means that the religious elite can be considered responsible for laying the foundations of sectarian violence in Pakistan. Sectarian discourse in contemporary Pakistan is sustained by *ulema*, whose role is pivotal in exacerbating sectarian antagonism.

3.5 The external dimension

Both Shia and Sunni activists draw upon external support. A new generation of Pakistani Shia clerics, who were educated in Qum (Iran), felt extremely energized. Several members of the Imamia Student Organisation (ISO), mainly from underprivileged socio-economic rural communities, were awarded scholarships to study in Iran (Abou Zahab, 2002). The establishment of Tehrik-Nifaz Fiqh Jaffria (TNJF) in 1979 and Shia demonstrations against the deduction of *zakat* (religious tax) directly from bank accounts alarmed Zia's military regime. It realized that Shias in Pakistan were becoming overtly mobilized in the wake of the Iranian revolution. The Sunni clerics' rhetoric hardened – while their reaction to Shias had previously been sporadic, the impact of the revolution was to spur a more consistent reaction.

Anti-Shia clerical decrees (*fatwas*) published in India by the Deobandi *ulema* were widely circulated to underscore the Sunni identity in suburban Punjab in the wake of the political activism of Shias after the Iranian revolution. Ardently supported by Saudi Arabia both financially and morally, these decrees gave rise to sectarian tensions. A famous book of Manzur Nomani in Urdu '*Irani Inqilab*' (Iranian Revolution) also merits mention here. This book was written in response to Imam Khomeini's book '*Al Hakumat ul Islamiya*' (The Islamic government) (Ahmed, 2008).¹⁵ Nomani's treatise, allegedly sponsored by Saudi Arabia, is an indictment of the Shia beliefs. It went into many editions, and was translated into English and Arabic, becoming "the gospel of Deobandi militant organizations that in the 1980s mushroomed across Pakistan to press the fight against the Shia" (Ahmed, 2007, p 165).

The Sunni reaction to the Iranian revolution provided the impetus for organization of sectarian groups on both sides. In 1985, a Sunni cleric from Jhang, Haq Nawaz Jhangvi, established the SSP. The Shia response to this was the formation of Sipah-e-Muhammad (SM). Both organizations were involved in various incidents of sectarian violence in Pakistan in the 1990s. The TNFJ benefitted from monetary and political ties with post-revolutionary Iran. It is, therefore, obvious that the religio-political activism of *ulema* played a major role in the “radicalization of Sunni and Shia identities and the far-reaching changes in the religious landscape that have accompanied it” (Zaman, 2004, p 111). Among other things, therefore, the 1979 Iranian Revolution emboldened Pakistan’s Shias to take up a political role that “abandoned the Shia tradition of political quietism” (Talbot, 2005, p 154).¹⁶

SSP spokesmen are quite strident in pointing to the huge amount of Shia literature produced in Urdu and freely distributed through the consistently widening network of Iranian Cultural Centres. In that literature, three companions of the Prophet, Abu Bakr, Omer and Uthman, are denigrated in an utterly brazen way.¹⁷ Sunnis also alleged that a surreptitious process of proselytization of Shiism was yet another form of Shia revivalism that was being vigorously pursued, evoking a sharp Sunni reaction. Drawing on the claim made by Sayyid Arif Husayn Naqvi, Zaman (1998) finds “considerable evidence of Shia proselytization especially in rural and small towns of Punjab”. Because Shia Muslims had succeeded in obtaining exemption from payment of *zakat*, its compulsory deduction from the bank accounts of Sunni Muslims became a reason for defections from Sunni ranks. Many non-practising Sunnis formally converted to Shiism just to avoid the annual deduction of *zakat* from their savings (Haqqani, 2006). With the Shia revival in Iran, as Nasr put it, “the years of sectarian tolerance were over. What followed was a Sunni-versus-Shia contest for dominance, [which]... grew intense” (Nasr, 2006, p 148).

The *jihad* against the Soviet incursion in Afghanistan was also crucial in strengthening existing Deobandi influence in Pakistan and directing it in favour of militancy. The unremitting flow of foreign funds into Pakistan during the 1980s saw a proliferation of Deobandi madrasahs in Punjab, Karachi and NWFP. Some of these were a prime channel for imparting *jihadi* training to the young students alongside ideological instruction. The total number of madrasahs in Pakistan in 1947 was 245. This rose to an astounding figure of 7,000 in 2003 (Riaz, 2005, p 8). In 2009-10, their number was estimated to be 16,000, with a corresponding increase in the number of students to approximately 2 million. All this swelled the ranks of Sunni militants.

State patronage and foreign funding also provided a favourable environment for the expansion of SSP and LJ in Jhang. When SSP held its Haq Nawaz International Conference in Islamabad in 1991, Maulana Abdul Qadir Azad, an employee of the Government of the Punjab and Khatib of Badshahi Mosque Lahore, was one of the speakers. Similarly, Senator Sami-ul-Haque's participation in the conference points to the state's favourable disposition toward the SSP.¹⁸ Maulana Abdul Hafeez Makki, a scholar from Saudi Arabia, was the chief guest, symbolizing the external sources of support for the SSP. The Zia-ul-Haq regime at that time saw the SSP as a check on the rise of Shia influence and gave it a free hand. Soon covert links had been established between it and Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), which managed official Pakistani support of *jihadi* operations in Afghanistan and Indian-controlled Kashmir. SSP cadres attended Afghan Mujahideen training camps and returned to kill Shia leaders within Pakistan. The rise of the Taliban in the 1990s further deepened the ties among Pakistan's various *jihadi* groups, Deobandi madrasahs and Sunni sectarian organizations like the SSP (Haqqani, 2006).

Muslim states, which are predominantly Sunni, felt the heat of Shia revolutionary rhetoric, which aimed at destabilizing authoritarian regimes. The Zia regime allowed Iraqi and other funds to flow to those fomenting anti-Shia propaganda.¹⁹ The Sunni Gulf states, Saudi Arabia and their allies in the West felt severely threatened by the Iranian revolution. International money started pouring into Sunni (especially Deobandi) madrasahs in Pakistan. Simultaneously, the Soviet incursion into Afghanistan in December 1979 institutionalized *jihad* as a means of defeating the 'evil' empire. Many Arab *mujahideen* also arrived to take part in the 'holy war' against communist 'infidels'. Even after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, the Pakistani state did nothing to reverse its policy of sponsoring religious schools. The new battalions of *jihadis* were allegedly recruited, trained and sent to Indian-held Kashmir to settle the longstanding dispute with India. The militant organizations were given a free hand to recruit *jihadis* and collect donations. One such organisation, Jamat Dawa (JD), formerly Lashkar-e-Tayeba (LeT), claimed that it had killed over ten thousand Indian soldiers and policemen at the cost of only 1,100 men of its own (Rana, 2004, p 333). This organization enjoyed a high level of legitimacy because of its role in serving Pakistan's foreign policy goals. It systemically organized its finance department to generate funds on an everyday basis, on a scale unparalleled by any other organization in the country. Before 2002, LeT's donation boxes for its *jihad* fund used to lie on the counters of shops all over the country and 500 permanent salaried employees, who were given motorcycles to perform

their job efficiently, used to collect the money from those boxes and send it to the central office. It was claimed that the daily income from the donation boxes alone was around Rs. 120,000,000. In addition, many rich businessmen gave generous donations to the organisation (Rana, 2003).

The state's sponsorship of *jihad* in Afghanistan and Kashmir had a domestic fallout. Some members of sectarian groups received training in *jihadi* camps, bringing new levels of violence into sectarian attacks in Pakistan. Ideological and functional relations were formed between sectarian and *jihadi* groups, which ended up advancing the sectarian agenda. Mariam Abou Zahab (2002) has identified the foreign connections of these organizations and the impact of the geopolitical situation of the region in radicalizing Shia and Sunni identities in Pakistan. It can be argued that if sectarianism in Pakistan is deeply embedded in the regional context, and is sustained by powerful regional actors, this dimension will need to be incorporated in any attempt to achieve a meaningful transformation of sectarian conflict.

Is transformation possible? Can *ulema* and their institutions, including *madrasahs*, mosques, philanthropic platforms and political parties, transcend their sectarian activities and seek harmony? Obviously getting *ulema* on board in creating a counter-discourse is not easy. Far more is needed than the annual pleas for sectarian harmony that fill the newspapers before the potentially violent month of Muharram. The public is aware that the *ulema* issuing these statements are often themselves engaged in sectarian hate-speech. Some counter-discourses are already in place: some *madrasahs* use clerics from the other sect to teach part of their curriculum, to emphasize the unity of the *ummah*.²⁰ This however, is not widely practised and is unheard of in *madrasahs* pursuing strong sectarian agendas. There have also been some efforts to engage *madrasah* leaders in training and education. For the past five years, the International Centre for Religion and Diplomacy (ICRD) has run teacher training programmes to promote curricular and pedagogical enhancement, with an emphasis on religious tolerance, human rights and critical thinking skills (Johnston et al, 2008). These approaches employ the 'islands of peace' theory, which suggests that inside conflicting parties (since they are never totally homogenous), there are people who strive against the politics of exclusion (Kaldor, 1999). However, the social and cultural environment discourages such elements within these groups and inhibits them from identifying themselves.

This review has covered a range of issues, including conceptualizing sectarianism and placing it within the national context of Pakistan. It finds that most of the research has concentrated on explaining sectarian conflict, explaining the interest of this study in the period after the apparent restoration of calm and the prospects for long term harmony. In addition, the review shows how little academic work has been done on the issue of how communities have been affected by sectarian conflict. An in-depth study of the role of various actors in the immediate, mid- and long-term aftermath of the conflict in Jhang and Gilgit still has to be accomplished. The present study aims to describe and explain the characteristics of the upsurge in violent sectarian clashes and the process of peace-building in Jhang and Gilgit by identifying the roles played by various stakeholders.

4 Jhang: a contested city

4.1 Introduction

In this section, we focus on Jhang city, the so-called capital of sectarianism in Pakistan, where a long history of protracted sectarian conflict has scarred social, political and economic life. We shall trace the genesis of this phenomenon to Muslim migration from India after partition, which underlies the shift from relative peace to endemic violence in both physical and cultural senses. The lineage of sectarian conflict can be traced through a century of simmering conflict along denominational lines that flared up in the context of structural and cultural changes linked to electoral politics based on a universal adult franchise and ideologization of sources of state legitimacy. These led to emergence of new players on the chessboard of politics. The analysis will dwell on the institutional character of sectarian conflict, represented by a militant group operating as the epitome of a perpetrator of violence. The institutionalization of violence will be a major theme. The analysis deals with Jhang city as an example of a meeting point of various cross-currents of micro- and macro- level politics. In recent years, peace after conflict has displayed a peculiar character - specifically holding back one's guns and providing space for the potential of the state's conflict management mechanism to deliver in the long run.

Before shedding light on Jhang as an epicentre of sectarianism, it would not be out of place to furnish a brief description of its geographical location. Jhang district is located in south-eastern Punjab, 210 kilometres from the provincial capital Lahore and 76 kilometres from Faisalabad, once its divisional headquarters (see Figure 4). Its alluvial plain is fed by two rivers, Chenab and Jhelum, which converge at Tarimmu, approximately 16 kilometres southwest of Jhang city. However, the hill tract of Chiniot and the Thal desert in Tehsil Ahmedpur Sial present a contrast to Jhang's otherwise uniformly flat topography that is conducive to agriculture. The city of Jhang consists of three distinct parts: Jhang City, which is the old historical site and the ruling seat of the Sials; Jhang Meghiana, a later addition, to which the British gave the name of Jhang Sadar and to which they shifted the District Courts and offices for fear of floods; and Satellite Town, founded during the 1960s. Jhang is part of the constitutional-administrative structure of the province of Punjab and is fully represented in the national and provincial legislatures. According to the 1998 census, the total population of the district was 2.804 million, out of which 2.149 million people lived in the rural areas and only 0.655 million (23 per cent) in the urban centres (387,418 in Jhang city itself).²¹

4.2.1 *The pre-conflict phase*

Jhang city is located in a region where Shia influence is clear and deep-rooted. Shia domination notwithstanding, it is reported that there was profound spiritual and cultural harmony. It was quite common to see Sunnis actively participate in the Muharram processions, while others would take part in remembrances of Hussain's martyrdom in other ways.²² Many of the beliefs held by Sunnis in the district could also be traced to Shia origins. This sometimes irritated Sunni clerics, who wanted people to embrace a puritanical or 'original' version of Sunni Islam. In their sermons, they severely criticized many of the rituals and practices that were common among local people as being heretical and a direct result of Shia influence. Implicitly, puritanical organizations such as Tehrik-i-Tahaffuz-i-Khatm-Nabuwwat (Movement for Protection of the Finality of Prophethood) had started taking shape from the 1960s onwards. This eventually provided a launchpad for the SSP to take off as a highly puritanical and sectarian outfit. In other words, the pre-conflict peace was not unmixed with dissent and a cultivated spirit of exclusion at a low level. However, the region has gradually moved from pluralism of belief and practice, expressed through an ambience of social harmony in the earlier times of 'peace', to essentialism and bigotry.

4.2.2 *Breakdown of the original peace*

The genealogy of conflict in Jhang can be located to the activities of the agents of change. Occasional incidents of sectarian violence occurred in the pre-independence years. However, their frequency and scale enormously expanded over successive decades up to the 1990s. While a number of incidents of violence were reported in the city in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, these were generally isolated events, mostly provoked by local and spontaneous causes, and resulting in clashes between groups from the two communities. In general, such clashes took place during or around the month of Muharram. In addition, sectarian identities were drummed up by rival candidates to mobilize and win over voters during election years.²³ The sectarian card proved increasingly successful, as aspiring politicians from the relatively lower ranks were able to put to rout established politicians from the landed elite of the district. The Shia-Sunni divide made a huge difference in terms of electoral results.

The antecedents of what emerged as sectarian conflict in Jhang can be traced to the partition-induced migration of Muslims from India to Pakistan, which changed the social fabric and demographic framework of the city. The government of Pakistan followed a strategy of 'communal' resettlement,

settling large groups of people who shared local, regional, linguistic and even caste-based identities (Waseem, 2004). Sectarian identity was not an explicit criterion - it was assumed that migrants were Sunni, who had come to a predominantly Sunni country. Jhang attracted migrants from across the emergent boundary between India and Pakistan. They were generally Sunni, Urdu-speaking and mainly from Eastern Punjab towns such as Rohtak, Hissar and Gurgaon.

Table 3: The demographic composition of Jhang, 1961

	District of Jhang	Jhang City (Municipality)
Total population	1,078,747	94,971
Migrants from India	98,286	35,437

Source: Government of Punjab, *District Census Report Jhang 1961*, Lahore: Government of Punjab Printing Press, p. 16-17.

It is clear from Table 3 that by 1961, migrants comprised more than one-third of the population of Jhang city, which provided an urban stronghold to those who were not used to living under the patriarchal hold of a landed elite, but accounted for less than 10 per cent of the population of the district as a whole, which meant a relatively thin presence in the rural areas compared to their high visibility in Jhang city. In ethnolinguistic terms, the two communities were distinct. Even in 1998, fully 11.2 per cent of people living in Jhang reported Urdu as their mother tongue (Government of Pakistan, 2000). Both Punjabi and Urdu-speaking in-migrants were allotted properties and businesses left by emigrating Hindus or state land when available. They constituted distinct communities wherever they settled, to ease the process of adjusting in an alien land. Speaking either Urdu or Punjabi with a different accent, they mostly married amongst themselves. Being better educated than the indigenous population and having gone through the experience of active participation in the Pakistan movement and later migration, they started to have political aspirations. In particular, cultural differences between Urdu-speaking settlers and the indigenous population resulted in challenges to the political influence and leadership of landlords on the basis of their perceived failure as politicians to deliver development or public services.

A second factor of great significance was the political heritage of sectarian politics. It is important to locate the growth of sectarian violence within the political context of Pakistan within the historical development of 'Islamic' politics that began during the late colonial period. With the emergence of

Majlis-i-Ahrar-i-Islam in 1929, a party composed of Punjabi dissidents of the Khilafat Committee, the Punjab witnessed a puritanical and agitational style of politics in the 1930s (Mirza, 1975, p 81-4). Its firebrand orators could spellbind their audiences for hours. The party's core ideology and principal leaders adhered to Deobandi Islam. It had an entrenched following among the lower middle income group of urban Muslims, especially artisans, in Lahore, Amritsar and Sialkot districts. Like other Punjab towns, Jhang too was tangibly impacted by the Ahrar's religious mobilization, which subsequently took on a sectarian as well as a communal profile. The Ahrar established its roots in Jhang city through the efforts of Chiragh Ali Chishti and Maulana Mohkam Din (Zubairi, 1973, p 371; see also Kamran, 2008). It had an avowedly antagonistic stance against Ahmadis and later Shias (Reetz, 2006, p 257). Its leaders, such as Mazhar Ali Azhar, Daud Ghaznavi and Ataullah Shah Bokhari, inspired the SSP leadership, particularly Haq Nawaz and Zia-ur-Rehman Farooqi.²⁴ The latter's father, Muhammad Ali Janbaz, was a committed Ahrari and instilled the same fervour in his son.²⁵

Thirdly, we need to focus on the group of Sunni clerics who played the pivotal role of communicating the sectarian message to their adherents. Within a generation after partition followed by migration, *imams*, *khatibs* and *ulema* belonging to the (Deobandi) Sunni as well as Wahhabi sects were able to develop a mechanism that enabled them to overcome the influence of the local power holders. They had developed an urban-based, prosperous, ambitious and widely networked constituency of religious zealots. Within the old landlord-dominated context, the role of local religious leaders had been subsidiary - they depended on landlords for their living or security, and would rarely challenge their authority. However, all that changed. Religious leaders either belonging to or serving the migrant community started to exercise relative autonomy, openly criticizing the landed elite, Shias or both. In time, as more towns emerged and the middle class expanded, more religious leaders came to enjoy multiple sources of patronage, enabling them to exercise greater freedom from the so-called 'feudal' system of social and political control. At the same time, these religious leaders began to affiliate themselves with religious and political parties operating at the national level. They now looked towards external systems of support, instead of being solely responsible to, and dependent on, local communities. This dealt a blow to the authority of the landed elite, which lost its ability to exercise effective social and political control.

Fourth, the patterns of economic change that challenged the initial balance between migrants and locals, which largely coincided with the dichotomy between urban and rural areas, are important. Financial inputs from outside the locality and the impact of the Green Revolution in the 1970s enormously empowered the urban sector. In Jhang, local merchants (sheikhs) and the artisan class, mostly weavers, are migrants from Gurgaon, Rohtak and Hissar in India. Like several other cities in Punjab, Jhang was a market centre rather than an industrial place (Kamran, 2008, p 65). In the 1970s and 1980s, remittances from Pakistani expatriates in the Middle East produced in the emergent petty bourgeoisie a desire to break free from what was increasingly perceived as the political stranglehold of the largely Shia landed elite (Talbot, 2005, p 157; see also Kamran, 2008).

As farms gradually mechanized in the late 1960s and early 1970s, peasants started to migrate to the towns where they could establish small businesses or take up jobs in the agro-industrial sector. This process was facilitated by both pull factors, i.e. opportunities in the towns, and push factors, especially the expulsion of share-croppers by large landholders in order to mechanize their farms and possibly earn more income. As a result, the existing towns expanded and new towns emerged across the district and the workforce that had previously been tied to the land was 'liberated'. The entrepreneurial class established ginning and oil seed factories in the towns and peri-urban villages where they could easily access raw materials such as cotton and cotton seed. The commercial middle class became larger and more influential. These economic changes encouraged the emergence of political aspirations.

The new aspirants from each of these groups – migrants from India, the emergent trading community and Sunni clerics - were acutely conscious that they could not succeed electorally unless they mobilized Sunni voters against the Shia elite that had exercised dominance for a century. In this situation, it was expedient to manipulate Shia-Sunni differences to weaken the hold of the Shia landlords. In almost all the elections for members of the national and provincial assemblies after 1947, sectarian differences were exploited to make political gains. Initially, this was done by political leaders from the migrant communities and Sunni landlords against the politically established Shia landlords. Later, businessmen and religious leaders also became involved.²⁶ People narrate incidents and stories indicating deliberate attempts by politicians on the Sunni side to provoke violence and mobilize voters against Shia candidates in the name of religion. By the late 1960s, social, economic and

political developments during the decades since independence had created a situation in Jhang that was ripe for exploding in a mega-event. The sectarian issue came to the surface with a clear target of defeating electoral contestants from the traditional Shia elite.

Kamran provides an account of the Bab-i-Umar incident based on interviews with observers. On a fateful day in 1969,

[t]he Bab-i-Umar incident occurred on the eve of a mourning procession on 7 Muharram in Jhang city. The procession originated from the Imambargah Muhajirin right after *fajr* [morning] prayer and, after taking quite a labyrinthine route, assigned by the district administration, terminated at Imambargah-i Qadim. There were two Deobandi mosques on the procession route, Masjid-Taqwa and Masjid-i-Ahl-i-Hadith. A day prior to the procession, a huge billboard was seen installed exactly on the designated route, very close to Masjid-i Taqwa. [One of the three gates of Jhang city, Khewa Gate, through which the procession had to pass, had been given the new name of Bab-i-Umar that year]. This worried the district administration because it was a clear provocation for Shias.²⁷ However, a compromise was reached on the condition that the procession would go its usual route without objecting to the billboard put up on the way. The only condition, put forward by the Shi'a organizers of the procession, was that the inscription on the board should be shrouded. After the compromise was reached, the procession started off. After coursing through the narrow streets of Jhang City, as it reached close to the two mosques, someone unveiled the board. Subsequently, a processionist by the name of Ashraf Baloch, an underling of the Sials from Jhang City soaked his shirt in the nearby drain, then hurled it on to where the name *Umar* was written. This was an act of utter desecration for the Sunnis. Tumult ensued. It was nothing short of a pitched battle between the rival sects. By the time the fury had subsided, six people had lost their lives including Mawlana Shirin, a *khatib* and prayer leader of Masjid-i Taqwa. That was the first instance of the two sects colliding head on. General Yahya Khan's coup d'état and [promulgation of a state of] emergency on the very day of the Bab-i Umar incident prevented further loss of life (2009, p 68-9).

However, a host of Sunni clerics launched a fully-fledged campaign against Shias that had a telling effect on the general public and even more on the outcome of the subsequent elections. It also changed the socio-political complexion of Jhang. The anti-Syed group capitalized on the charged sentiments of Sunnis. During the 1970 election campaign in all three National Assembly constituencies in the district, Sunnis "paraded the widows of those killed in the incident in black mourning dress in the Sunni [majority] areas of the city. This fanned sectarian emotions and overturned the political chessboard" (Kamran, 2009, p 69).

After 1970, when anti-Shia sentiments were successfully manipulated to win seats from the Shia leadership, it became clear that sectarianism was a powerful tool that could work against the Shia elite. The major beneficiaries were the Sunni landlords, Brelvi *pirs* and the newly ascendant business class. Out of the three seats for the National Assembly contested in 1970, one was won by a Brelvi *maulvi*, the second by a Brelvi *pir* and the third by a Sunni landlord. All the Shia contestants from the leading and established political families lost their seats. Similarly, one businessman was elected as a member of the Punjab Assembly on a JUI ticket. All of these winners had raised and exploited anti-Shia sentiments to mobilize Sunni voters in their favour. It was feared that the politics of the district in the following years would be significantly influenced and shaped by sectarian identities. However, in the 1977 elections, the ruling Pakistan People's Party (PPP) was challenged by the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA), an alliance of various religious and leftist parties. Sectarian differences were swamped by the anti-Bhutto hate campaign. Later, when the military took over and General Zia initiated the process of Islamization, the Sunni groups (Deobandis) and Wahhabis felt somewhat reinvigorated and empowered, while Shias and even Brelvis felt excluded and threatened.

The song of anger was sung ever more loudly in the following years. While until the early 1980s, the incidents of violence were localized and small-scale, parts of Jhang city experienced significant incidents of sectarian violence in the 1980s and 1990s. The nature and explanations of this period of protracted conflict will be discussed in the next section.

4.3 Sectarian conflict, violence and the role of the Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP)

The upsurge in violent sectarian conflict in Jhang city in the 1980s and 1990s involved assassination of senior religious and political leaders, murders and injuries suffered by hundreds of people, and burning of valuable properties as well as destruction of businesses. Most incidents of violence involved targeted killings, but mobs belonging to the two opposing communities also clashed occasionally. Conflict in Jhang has been relatively small scale and sporadic in character, but protracted in nature. It essentially affected only a few pockets within the city. There were fewer casualties than in, for instance, Gilgit or Karachi, and the violence was far less ferocious than in Gujerat in India. The total number of deaths related to sectarian violence in Jhang from the mid-1980s to the late 2000s was 82, the majority of which were calculated murders, especially of relatively famous sectarian figures. The

purpose was to extract the maximum mileage out of violence. While there were days and weeks of intense violence, at other times there was relative calm marked by increased tension and a general perception of insecurity, resulted in fewer contacts between the communities.

Several studies hold macro-level political developments responsible for encouraging the emergence of violent groups out of mainstream Islamic parties. As discussed in Section 3, Vali Nasr (2007), Qasim Zaman (2007) and Mohammad Waseem (2007) link the increased sectarianism with Zia's Islamization programme, the Afghan war, the proliferation of Deobandi madrasahs and the Iranian revolution. Others, including Mariam Abou Zahab (2004), Mukhtar Ahmed Ali (1999) and Tahir Kamran (2009), concentrate on local dynamics to explain the outbreak of hostilities in Jhang.

Violence in Jhang makes an interesting study inasmuch as its leading protagonist can be clearly identified. The SSP has functioned as a highly organized, ideologically motivated and well-armed sectarian group, ever since it was founded in 1985 by Haq Nawaz Jhangvi. Its mission-mantled leadership has thrived on the negative agenda of marginalizing, apostatizing and killing Shias. No serious study of sectarian violence in Jhang is possible without considering its role (Kamran, 2009). The party followed three broad strategies: a) sectarian propaganda, with the purpose of declaring Shias infidel, based on *fatwas* issued by Sunni *ulema* to that effect; b) contesting elections for the national and provincial assemblies as well as local bodies; and c) carrying out attacks on Shia leaders and processions, burning property belonging to Shias and pursuing court cases against them. The party almost created its own rival Sipah-i-Muhammad (SM), which borrowed its name and vowed to go for a tit-for-tat formula in terms of killing SSP leaders.

This report argues that this political organization, committed to elimination of the religiously conceived 'other' and drawing on a supra-legal source of legitimacy in the form of Islamic ideology, is the key to religio-sectarian conflict in Jhang. The idea is that the politics of violence cannot be sustained without the support of a political organization. SSP is the arch-sectarian party in Pakistan, along with its subsidiary militant organization Lashkar Jhangvi (LJ) (Kamran, 2009). The origins of SSP can be located in the wider political currents under Zia's martial law government, which were characterized by the rise of Shia-Sunni conflict in the context of the official Islamization programme. However, some view it as the creation of the intelligence apparatus of the state and look at its activities essentially in

terms of containment of the perceived Shia menace. The leading politician from Jhang, Begum Abida Hussain, from the Shia landed elite, had an interesting thesis about the emergence of SSP. She claimed that the ISI (Inter Services Intelligence) had reacted to the victory of Shia leaders from Jhang and surrounding electoral constituencies in Bhakkar, Layya, Shahpur, Chiniot and Pirmahal, among them five Bokharis (members of Syed *biradar*). According to her, the ISI picked up the two numbers nine and five, which are considered sacred by Shias, and decided to rebut the myth of divinely ordained Shia ascendancy by constructing SSP as a counter force.²⁸ The Afghanistan savvy generals, including General Hameed Gul, who later became Director General of ISI, she asserted, planned to crush the electoral power of the Shia elite, who were considered to threaten Zia's Islamization project.²⁹

The founder of SSP, Haq Nawaz Jhangvi, contested the 1988 National Assembly election. Although he lost to Abida Hussain herself, he proved himself to be a serious challenger, with a tally of about 40,000 votes, largely won in the urban parts of the constituency. SSP was also able to influence politics in other constituencies by supporting Sunni candidates. Before 1970, the domination of Shia landlords was widespread. No Sunni had ever won any significant position of authority in the district. The fact that in 1988 the firebrand religious leader Jhangvi, with a reputation of being an anti-Shia campaigner, was himself an electoral contestant raised the political temperature. The local political environment was charged with suspicion and a spirit of aggression. Until then, while sectarian tensions were on the rise, no major incident of sectarian violence had taken place for a long time in the city. Subsequently, SSP candidates typically won elections for at least one National Assembly seat and one provincial assembly seat, while also influencing the results in other seats. In addition, SSP won a sizable number of seats in the municipal committee elections. Ironically, SSP is the only political party in the history of Pakistan whose entire top leadership died unnatural deaths, from Haq Nawaz Jhangvi to Azam Tariq to Ali Sher Haidery. Amir Rana claims that "two hundred of its leaders and workers had lost their lives from the time of its inception till it was banned [in 2002], and it had been part of one thousand two hundred major incidents of sectarian clashes" (Rana, 2004, p 192).

Haq Nawaz in Jhang was influenced by all the national and international currents described in Section 3, as well as by the earlier model of sectarian mobilization provided by the Ahrar. It was under his leadership that Sunni sectarianism was institutionalized in Jhang. The SSP ideologues link the

emergence of their organization with such events as the *Tabarra* (vilification of the Prophet's companions) campaign conducted in Hassu Balail, Kaki Nau and Rodu Sultan at the behest of Shia landlords. The Bab-i-Umar incident in 1969, described above, was also a catalyst in exacerbating sectarian differences. Out of the eight aims spelt out by the founding members of SSP, five focused on circumscribing Shiism, if not completely extirpating it from Pakistan. From the outset, SSP adopted an aggressive posture. This was seen at the All Pakistan Conference for the Defence of the Prophet's Companion held on 7 February 1986 in Jhang. Haq Nawaz gave a welcome address that amounted to an indictment of the Shia community at large (Kamran, 2009, p 76-7). He used to hold a wooden hatchet (the symbol of the Ahrar) in his hand, displaying it during Friday sermons in the mosque, particularly at the outset of his career as a *khatib*.³⁰ SSP, like Ahrar, drew its leadership from the lower middle class. Both movements reposed an unflinching faith in the Deobandi version of scriptural, literalist Islam. Both used agitational and militant methods and relied on oratory. Both targeted minority groups. In 1951, Manzoor Ahmed Chinioti (1931-2004), one of the founding members of SSP, had received instruction at the Multan-based anti-Ahmedi seminary of the Ahrar's leader, Ataullah Shah Bukhari.³¹ Haq Nawaz himself came to prominence during the second anti-Ahmedi movement in 1974, which virtually acted as a prototype for the anti-Shia movement launched and fomented by him a decade and half later, with the aim of getting Shias apostatized through constitutional means similar to the declaration of Ahmedis as a non-Muslim minority in the 1974 Second Amendment to the constitution.

Sectarian killings began with the murders of Ehsan Ellahi Zaheer in 1987 and TNFJ leader Allama Arif-u-Hussaini in 1988. On 22 February 1990, the "tumultuous life and career" of Haq Nawaz himself came to an end (Kamran, 2009, p 78).³² The Punjab government was visibly disturbed about the law and order situation during the period of mourning after the murder of Haq Nawaz.

As a pre-emptive measure, the government called together urban notables and leaders of SSP for negotiations. Malik Saleem Iqbal, the Health Minister of Punjab, presided over the proceedings on 16 July 1990. [Members of the] district administration, the SSP leadership and other important persons were made part of the negotiations. [A peace treaty] was concluded to the satisfaction of the government.³³ But only a few days after the treaty, a bomb exploded at Chowk Bab-i-Umer in Jhang city, killing three Sunnis and injuring 28. This effectively sabotaged the peace efforts (Kamran, 2009, p 79).

The end of the Afghan war in 1989 left a large number of well-armed and well-trained militants without a mission. Some of these were attracted to organizations such as SSP, which were able to employ them. SSP was a cash-rich organization due to its alleged indirect funding from Saudi Arabia and even Iraq. Local donors, especially Deobandi sources, also swelled its coffers (Kamran, 2009). Traders and merchants from Faisalabad, Jhang, Chiniot, Lahore and Karachi had made significant contributions. Funds also came from foreign branches of the organisation (Rana, 2004, p 201). The Deobandi madrasah union Wifaq al-Madris, which had a head office in Multan, along with the Khair-ul-Madaris seminary, openly supported SSP (ICG, 2005, p 15). Young zealots, mostly recruited from the seminaries, were sent to Afghanistan for training in the art of guerrilla warfare. LJ, under the leadership of Riaz Basra, was comprised of militants who were well-instructed in the use of explosives and guerrilla tactics, and who also went to Afghanistan for training in a camp in Sirobi near Kabul, run by the Taliban Minister Maulvi Hameedullah.³⁴

The unstable regional setting across the borders of Pakistan directly impinged on the agenda and ambitions of SSP in Jhang. The Pakhtun dominated Taliban had been a great source of inspiration for the SSP leaders, who sought to replicate policies such as killing members of the Hazara ethnic group, in Pakistan. Azam Tariq, founder of SSP, while speaking at the International Conference on Defence of Prophet's Companions in Karachi in October 2000 declared: "SSP aims to transform 28 large Pakistani cities into model Islamic cities where television, cinema and music would be banned".³⁵ An ardent supporter of *jihad* in Indian-controlled Kashmir, when Masud Azhar founded Jaish-e-Mohammad in the aftermath of his release in Kandahar, following the hijacking of an Indian aircraft in December 1999, Azam Tariq pledged to send 500,000 *jihadis* to Jammu and Kashmir to fight the Indian security forces.³⁶

SSP activists had two major styles of operation, namely target killings and indiscriminate shootings at places of worship. A number of leading Shias were assassinated... By 1992, the activists had gained access to sophisticated weapons systems [allegedly as a result of Saudi Arabian funding]. In June of that year, they used a rocket launcher in an attack which killed five police personnel. They attempted assassination of the Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in January 1999 [although]... he was lucky that the bomb planted beneath the bridge on the Raiwind Road on the route to his residence exploded prematurely (Kamran, 2009, p 81).

SSP not only grew in fighting power but also expanded by multiplying its followers. Animosh Roul mentions six SSP splinter groups, namely LJ, Jhangvi Tigers, Al Haq Tigers, Tanzeem-ul-Haq, Al Farooq and Al Badr Foundation (Roul, 2005).

“During the 1990s, Iranian officials functioning in various capacities in Pakistan became the target of SSP militants. Most prominent among them was Agha Sadiq Ganji, Iranian Consul-General, who was gunned down on 19 December 1990 by a young lad from Jhang, Shaykh Haqq Nawaz.³⁷ Ganji is widely believed by SSP supporters to have master-minded Haqq Nawaz Jhangvi’s murder. However, there was no tenable evidence of Sadiq Ganji’s involvement, other than his presence in Jhang on the day of the murder” (Kamran, 2009, p 82). Hassan Abbas claims that “while Iranian Consul General Sadiq Ganji was shot by notorious terrorist Riaz Basra, the other person on the motorcycle with Basra conducting the Ganji murder operation was an ISI official named Athar, a low-level official from the Pakistan Air Force” (2005, p 207).³⁸ Muhammad Ali Rahimi, an Iranian diplomat, was also the victim of a target killing in 1997 in Multan. The Iranian Cultural Centre in Lahore was set ablaze the same year, allegedly in retribution for the assassination of Zia-ur-Rehman Farooqi along with 26 others outside the Lahore Session Court. Five members of the Iranian armed forces were fatally ambushed in Multan in September, sparking off a serious diplomatic row between Islamabad and Tehran. The targeting of Iranians was apparently meant to convey the message to Shia militants that not even their ‘patrons’ were safe.³⁹ SSP of Jhang operated far beyond the precincts of the city.

The cult of martyrdom was very effectively deployed by the successors of Haq Nawaz, which enhanced not only SSP’s electoral standing in Jhang but also its wider reputation. Shia theological discourse, which is structured around the cult of martyrdom, implicitly permeated the SSP’s discourse (Kamran, 2009, p 82). Scores of martyrs emerging out of the ongoing sectarian strife afforded SSP what Brass (2003, p 377) called ‘functional utility’ inasmuch as it contributed immensely to consolidation of the party’s hold over its constituency. The sectarian polarization enabled SSP to increase its vote bank, somewhat along the lines of communal violence in some Uttar Pradesh towns that strengthened the hold of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) through Hindu-Muslim riots. The cult of martyrdom thrived on the fact that it was the top leaders of SSP who lost their lives.

According to one estimate, SSP had 74 district and 225 *tehsil* level units before it was proscribed on 12 January 2002. It boasted of 6,000 trained and professional cadres and 100,000 registered workers.⁴⁰ It additionally had 17 branches in foreign countries, including Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Canada and the UK, and various associated organizations, such as the Sipah Sahaba Welfare Trust (SSWT) and Sipah Sahaba Students (SSS). The former had its central office in Jamia Masjid Haq Nawaz in Jhang Sadar, with Dr. Khadim Hussain Dhillon as its chairman. Its aim was to “look after the cases against its incarcerated workers, expenditure of those in jail and their families, the families of those who had died in action and poor and jobless party workers” (Rana, 2004, p 199). SSS sprang up in 1990 on the pattern of the Shia student outfit, ISO. The principal aim of SSS was to counter the influence of ISO and to “handle the organization’s work at school and college level”. Malik Umar Farooq was its first Central Chief and it developed an organizational structure throughout Pakistan, remaining quite active until 1997 in most colleges in the Punjab, Baluchistan and NWFP. It played a crucial role in widening the sectarian gulf amongst young people. SSS had its central office at Jamia Masjid Siddiq Akbar Mohammadi in Chungi North Karachi (Rana, 2004, p. 199-200) and was operative in Jhang through activist students as well as teachers.

SSP’s growing influence was buttressed by its penchant for violence. While Jhang was the primary scene of sectarian killings, SSP spread to other areas of Punjab and beyond. Although the party attempted to distance itself from the activities of its own militant wing LJ, which allegedly had links with international terrorist movements, this was never done convincingly.⁴¹ Miscreants and outlaws such as Anwar (alias Gaddu), Haider Butt and Saleem Fauji made inroads into SSP. In Mariam Abou Zahab’s view: “The sectarian situation was also manipulated by the drug mafia” (2002, P 147). Jhang is at the crossroads of drug production and distribution networks and heroin smuggling became an important commercial activity in Jhang after sectarian violence increased - undoubtedly the drug mafia had an interest in maintaining a certain level of tension, resorting to provocation whenever the situation was too calm.⁴² Electoral campaigns were allegedly financed by the profits of the drug business.

Many people urged SSP’s MNAs and MPAs to fulfil their promise of establishing Sunni Islam in the country: ‘We have done our bit. Now you must go to the parliament and deliver on your promises’. In a way, the place of action was no longer the streets of Jhang but the parliament. The leaders of SSP accepted the challenge. As territorial representatives of Jhang in the national legislature, they adopted

a relatively pragmatic approach, showing a new sense of responsibility for maintaining peace in the district. This posture was a response to the demand from various circles that peace should be restored – a demand that, as elected leaders, they needed to accommodate. With the victory of SSP leaders as MPAs and MNAs, the impression that the Shia landlords dominated the politics of the district declined fast, as the reality on the ground began to change.

4.4 From conflict to peace: a thorny path

Sunni politicians were now being elected not only because of sectarian politics but also owing to other changes that had taken place in the socio-economic and political fields. In the central Jhang constituency in the 1990 elections, Haq Nawaz's successor Esar Ul Qasimi secured 62,486 votes as the Islami Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI) candidate for the National Assembly. He also contested as an independent candidate for a Provincial Assembly seat, defeating the IJI ticket holder and favourite, Sheikh Iqbal, by a margin of almost 10,000 votes.⁴³ This showed the extent to which electoral politics and sectarian conflict were intertwined, inasmuch as the available public space was taken over by identity politics. Militancy not only intimidated Shias but also increased SSP's electoral support. One can draw a comparison with the expansion of electoral support of Gujarat's chief minister Narinder Modi in India after he was (dis-)credited by the killing of Muslims. However, the arena of electoral politics had also expanded. In 1970, there were only three seats for MNAs. Subsequently, the number of seats was increased to five, and then to six. The number of provincial assembly seats went up accordingly. This created space for accommodation of more and more aspiring politicians in the power structure. As a result, the political contest lost a bit of its intensity. In 2009, the District Nazim was a Sunni, while three out of six MNAs were also Sunni.⁴⁴ The expanded arena for electoral politics also meant that the kind of sectarian politics that was played out from the 1970s to the 1990s was no longer feasible. Thus political ascendancy through elections led SSP to exploit new forums such as the parliament for its sectarian agenda: it now sought influence in the National Assembly in order to amend the Constitution in pursuit of its agenda of Sunnification of the state.

People suffered from the violence in different ways. Many lost their loved ones, experiencing trauma with serious and long-term implications for their families, especially if those killed were their only breadwinners, while others were injured. Many, including children who lost their parents or guardians and women with children who became widows, had meagre resources with which to take care of their

dependants. Several respondents complained that there was no government assistance available. Sipah Sahaba Welfare Trust (SSWT), started by SSP, failed to flourish and after 2002 vanished into thin air after its parent body was banned by the government. It was reported that it failed to offer any meaningful assistance to the victims of violence. If any assistance was received, it was from close relatives, friends or neighbours.

In addition to deaths and injuries, people suffered as a result of the general environment of insecurity. Businesses suffered and the price of property plummeted, as many people wanted to move out of the affected parts of the city.⁴⁵ This migration from one part of the city to another, or even to other cities, had severe financial costs and also dislocated people's employment and businesses, as well as the education of children. As Haq Nawaz Dab, a local resident related:

a large number of people were displaced because of the protracted trouble in Jhang city, SSP's power bastion. Most of them shifted to Satellite Town, which is at a safe distance from Jhang city, or Piplan Walla Mohalla and Sultan Wallah Mohalla. These neighbourhoods too had been the hub of SSP's activism.⁴⁶

Apart from physical displacement, there was colossal damage to commercial activity. According to Sufi Murad, a resident of Jhang city, almost 90 per cent of the owners of power looms left for Faisalabad or Chiniot. Dislocation of enterprises had a negative effect on the legal economy.⁴⁷ In the days and weeks of violence, police arrested tens of people for their alleged involvement in sectarian violence. Many were reportedly innocent but had to suffer the results of suspicion and mistrust. As the judicial system of Pakistan takes years to dispose of criminal cases, scores of innocent people and their families had to go through unimaginable pain, agony for which they never received recompense.

The Shia-Sunni conflict led to deep mistrust between the state and the local community in Jhang. During the research, people cast all kinds of aspersions on the state for being remote and hostile. They portrayed it as hatching a conspiracy against the people in order to rule a divided society. The deficit of trust was compounded by the absence of a regularly operating participatory mode of politics that was capable of bringing the locality into mainstream politics along regional rather than religious lines.

The inability of Sunni activists to relegate the Shia community to the fate of being declared a non-Muslim community, as had happened to the Ahmedis, created a sense of frustration, leading these activists to fall back on theories of conspiracy by those who were outside their known world of daily routine. These 'ghosts in the dark' were constantly referred to in their discourse in focus group discussions. While recognizing that certain political interests in the city had incentives to incite violence, people also talked of conspiracies designed to 'divide or weaken Muslims'.⁴⁸ The general perception was that Zia wanted to contain growing Shia activism and that the Saudis and global powers were interested in containing the impact of the Iranian revolution. Respondents frequently talked about the role of the intelligence agencies, which allegedly had played a negative role in terms of inciting violence, supporting certain sectarian groups or not doing enough to deal with the problem.

People also talked about the negative role played by certain district administrators. They referred to abrupt transfers of important officers at critical moments, which they believed were meant to deliberately aggravate the situation. A general view was that, if the administration had worked fairly and efficiently, the sectarian menace could have been effectively dealt with. Some respondents pointed to initiatives that had succeeded, simply because the administration was serious and really wanted to improve the situation. On other occasions, they believed, it had simply did not acted, instead letting the situation deteriorate.⁴⁹ Some people also blamed Ahmedis for hatching conspiracies and inflaming Shia-Sunni conflict, believing that Ahmedis wanted to take revenge on both Sunnis and Shias, who had jointly demanded that Ahmedis be declared non-Muslims.⁵⁰ They cited incidents and referred to alleged negative behaviour by officials belonging to the Ahmedi community to support this view. People also talked about hateful literature and blasphemous and derogatory remarks against the companions of the Prophet and other sects as a reason for joining a particular sectarian group.⁵¹

The volatile situation prevailed for over a decade, during which SSP's popularity remained high. However, as noted above, changes at both local and regional levels changed the situation. Locally, fissures within its ranks, its growing loss of popularity, the gradual withdrawal of support by the state agencies and a crackdown by Nawaz Sharif's government considerably weakened SSP, with its electoral support dwindling correspondingly (Kamran, 2009). Erosion in its political support was accompanied by a downward trend in sectarian violence: the party's sectarian discourse had worked as an effective instrument for popular mobilization, but it had nothing concrete to offer by way of a

long-term solution to the sectarian conflict. Since 2000, untoward incidents of sectarian killings have been much more sporadic.

Dissension amongst SSP's leadership began immediately after the assassination of Haq Nawaz. After his death, all the SSP leadership hailed from outside Jhang, which led to some discontent among the local cadres. Similarly, quite a few SSP militants belonged to the Urdu-speaking in-migrant community. The two leading figures in the violence, Saleem Fauji and Anwar alias Anu Kamblia (a local term for those engaged in manufacturing blankets), had reportedly dealt in narcotics before joining SSP. Gradually, the involvement of extraneous elements along with Urdu-speaking militants contributed to the alienation of native residents from SSP.⁵² In addition, according to Mariam Abou Zahab (2002, p 146), SSP activists resorted to extortion and pilferage, which damaged its image and finally eroded its popular support. Moreover, the economic and political interests of its one-time financiers, transporters and contractors from Sheikh *biradari* were jeopardized by the protracted turbulence in the city. Traders and shopkeepers in general were thinking in similar terms. SSP politicians had also succeeded in gaining considerable local political influence, bringing with it the potential for accessing state resources. After the bonhomie between state agencies and SSP came to an end, the latter lost the sympathies of the urban bourgeoisie, with the result that its local sources of funds and political support dried up. In Jhang, the militant elements in SSP ranks were gradually becoming a nuisance for their own leaders. With guns in their hands and a certain heightened image of themselves, they were no longer easy to control or manage. This created internal rifts and tensions, which provided the elected leaders an opportunity as well as an incentive to firmly deal with them.⁵³

In Pakistan more generally, although fissures within the ranks of SSP had become visible immediately after Haq Nawaz Jhangvi's assassination, the cracks had widened by 1997. SSP splintered into several tiny groups with mutually exclusive agendas, amongst which the Sheikh Hakim group, Muavia group, Ahmed Ludhianvi group and Sultan Mehmud group were relatively prominent. For example, some of the residents of Jhang hold the view that Ali Sher Haidery (leader of the banned SSP) was killed in August 2009 in Sindh by a splinter group of SSP led by Ahmed Ludhianvi, rather than any Shia outfit. As the ranks of SSP became more 'pragmatic', the hawks, ideologues and 'true believers' opted out. The breakaway faction LJ started hitting Shia targets across the country through bomb blasts, target killings and acts of indiscriminate firing at Shia congregations. The government reacted sharply and either killed or arrested several LJ militants.

Nawaz Sharif's crackdown on militancy during his second stint in office (1997-99) led to a considerable decline in the number of sectarian killings in Punjab. Tens of 'terrorists' were arrested and some were killed, allegedly during 'fake police encounters'. The government began to recognize sectarian violence as a major threat requiring action at the highest level. In addition, at the regional level, the decade of the 1990s had witnessed a reduction in the tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran, following the end of the Iran-Iraq war and the death of Khomeini. Fear that the Iranian revolution would destabilize the whole region had subsided. After 1999, the new military government of Musharraf adopted a liberal posture and distanced itself from religious organizations, especially after 9/11. From January 1999 to December 2000, not a single incident of sectarian violence was reported. The military takeover on 12 October 1999 could be one of the reasons that militant groups assumed a low profile. LJ and SSP, along with their Shia rivals SM and TJ, were banned by President Musharraf in 2001 and 2002 respectively.⁵⁴ The post-9/11 change of heart of the government, demonstrated by its withdrawal from Afghanistan, was especially detrimental for SSP. As the war on terror was unleashed, the flow of foreign funding to SSP, especially from the Middle East, stopped, which compounded its difficulties.

The 2002 elections, held during military rule, led to a temporary reversal in the process. Despite the banning of SSP, its leader, Azam Tariq, was allowed to contest the elections as an independent candidate, a decision that evoked a sharp reaction from many quarters. Azam Tariq's victory reflects an important pattern in Pakistan, in which representatives of Islamic militant outfits tend to do well under conditions of 'guided democracy', because of the marginalization of mainstream parties by military governments. In return for supporting the Musharraf-backed Pakistan Muslim League Quaid-i-Azam (PML-Q), Azam Tariq was able to secure the release from jail of several SSP militants who had been charged with various acts of terrorism. However, in October 2003, Azam Tariq was killed in Islamabad. With twenty previous attempts on his life, his death was one of the most foretold events in the history of Pakistan. His murder was a death knell for SSP (or Millat-i-Islamiya, a name given to the organization after it was proscribed in 2002). The resulting leadership vacuum has rendered the organization rudderless. The current MNA, Sheikh Waqas Akram from Jhang city, defeated SSP's nominee by a considerable margin. SSP has thus failed to sustain itself as the dominant political force in Jhang.

By 2008, the city had been 'peaceful' for several years. How had peace been restored? First, as analysed above, SSP's support and influence had declined at the local level by the early 2000s. The city's administration believes that the use of strong arm tactics by the law enforcing authorities was a major reason for the restoration of peace (or more accurately, a ceasefire). Some political observers and intellectuals in the city also believe that the absence of sectarian violence can be attributed to the discipline imposed by the police, as well as legal proceedings and the financial hardships faced by the families of both the perpetrators and victims of sectarian killings.⁵⁵ Others think that the distribution of political dividends between Shias, Sunnis and their respective allies has resulted in relative calm. The leadership of SSP, after getting a sizeable influence in the electoral politics of the city, became interested in reducing hostility and restoring peace, distancing itself from its own militant wing LJ. Moreover, after the assassination of Azam Tariq, SSP lacked a charismatic leader and the cracks in its ranks deepened. In the face of the administration's tightening of screws around the perpetrators of violence and the political leadership tacitly distancing itself from them, the environment was considered to be conducive to dealing with the problem with strong arm tactics.

The international literature on conflict resolution suggests that civil society organizations can play a positive role in the immediate aftermath of violence and long-term peacebuilding. However, the vast majority of informants interviewed during the research in Jhang did not consider that social or civil society organizations had played positive roles, either to help the victims of violence or to promote peace.

When asked about the role of religious organisations in particular, there were three kinds of responses. Most said that these organizations had played an essentially negative role by making provocative speeches and inciting violence. Others were of the view that while they had not played a role in bringing about social harmony as yet, they could be effectively engaged or supported to work for peace. However, those with a positive view of such organizations were unable to provide specific instances of them playing useful and effective roles and could not identify any peace initiatives coming from religious organisations located in the city, such as attempts to facilitate inter-sectarian dialogue for peaceful co-existence.⁵⁶

While a sizable number of civil society organizations are engaged in charity or service delivery work in the district, few or none seems to be specifically working to promote peace and harmony. There may be two reasons for this: lack of required resources or skills, and the environment of insecurity and suspicion that makes it difficult to work for peace in a non-partisan way.

Some respondents did refer to the formation of Milli Yekjehti Council (MYC), which was an initiative taken by the major religio-political parties at the national level in response to Benazir Bhutto's announcement in 1995 of an official policy to audit the accounts of madrasahs, reform their curriculum and ban them from being engaged in guerrilla training. The major sectarian parties joined hands and thwarted the government's attempt to regulate madrasah education. MYC sought to create an image of sectarian harmony, which helped to contain the situation for a while, even if did not produce any tangible and lasting impact in terms of sectarian peace.

In addition, one can mention the role of the peace committee established by the district administration, sometimes for a short time before a scheduled and potentially dangerous event, such as the Muharram procession, but more often for a longer period. This committee comprises reputable individuals, who address micro-level issues from a purportedly peace-keeping perspective.⁵⁷ However, the role of peace committee has remained limited. It becomes active only when the district administration convenes it and when it is given a particular responsibility in a specific situation, such as during the Muharram procession. In addition, the composition of the committee is often criticized, for allegedly including 'favourites' of the administration with no standing in the embattled communities. At best, the peace committee provides a forum where individuals from diverse backgrounds and different sectarian affiliations can occasionally sit together and discuss the barriers to peace.

Some respondents also talked about the prominent role that Anjuman-e-Tajiran (the Traders' Association) has played in maintaining peace in the district. With representation from all the sects carrying major stakes in peace, this forum provides opportunities for inter-sectarian interaction and even takes specific initiatives aimed at averting violence. In the month of Muharram, for instance, its members serve as peace volunteers in the Shia processions and help their safe passage along the designated routes. It also closely liaises with the district administration and helps in keeping the channels of communication open among various stakeholders.

Our observations fully testify to our thesis that any attempt to understand sectarian conflict in a particular locality has to consider supra-local organizational and ideological inputs. Peace in Jhang can be characterized as the absence of a strident pattern of violent mischief. However, the idea that peace had arrived in the city was contested by Abida Hussain, ex-MNA from Jhang, who pointed out that SSP had not only continued to incite its followers against Shias but also organized the notorious anti-Christian riots in August 2009. She asserted that incidents of violence against Christians in Gojra near Jhang had been planned by one Abdul Ghafoor Awan from Gojra, now living in Saudi Arabia, and Muavia, son of Azam Tariq, SSP's slain leader.⁵⁸ Both sectarian and religious minorities remain the target of SSP's institutionalized system for perpetrating violence against those who it sees as the enemies of Islam.

The effect of a combination of defining electoral loyalties and identities along denominational lines and sectarian violence is a social and cultural divide that has acquired stability and a life of its own. As Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Ludhyanvi (President of SSP) told us: *"We don't attend each other's marriages and funerals"*.⁵⁹ Few organizations bridge the sectarian divide: no religious organizations, a peace committee convened by a local state that lacks legitimacy and a traders' association that primarily serves the interests of its members. Thus Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Ludhyanvi went on to note that *"We don't talk to each other except in the officially convened gatherings of city peace committees"* and Syed Safdar Hussain Shah (an advocate and Shia political leader) noted the limited nature of the inter-sectarian dialogue: *"We only talk about the routes of Muharram processions"*.⁶⁰ Thus, the share-out of political resources between the warring parties has yet to be translated into a durable understanding that precludes the option of resorting to violence. Until then, relationships between the Sunni and Shia communities will be marked by suspicion, mistrust and passive hostility - negative peace at best. In the absence of organizations and institutions working actively to promote peace and social harmony, it is clear that the ideal of postconflict transformation remains elusive.

5 Gilgit: a project of Sunnification

This section focuses on Gilgit as the scene of conflict, preceded and followed by actual and potential peace respectively. It will portray conflict in Gilgit as different from the pattern in Jhang but nevertheless as part of the wider current of sectarianism for which the latter served as a prototype. It will be argued that the perceived dysfunctionality of the Shia majority in Gilgit-Baltistan and the crucial position of this border region in the security calculus of the state engaged the latter in an ambitious project to reconstruct the social order on its own terms. The role of the Islamization programme that, like elsewhere, sowed the seeds of sectarianism will be discussed. In both localities, in-migration caused destabilization and unrest: in Gilgit, Sunni migrants from outside the town, like their counterparts from outside the borders of the new state of Pakistan to Jhang a generation earlier. As in Jhang, in working for peace after sectarian violence, the state as well as the local leadership of rival communities came forward and activated their institutional and moral potential, although religious organizations were absent in Gilgit as in Jhan.

The analysis of Gilgit is divided into four parts. In Section 5.1, Gilgit and the profile of various communities in the area are introduced in geo-historical terms. Determinants of the transition from peace to conflict in the city are identified in Section 5.2. This is followed by an analysis of the arch-interventionist state machinery that sought to transform the sectarian make-up of Gilgit and Baltistan, lead to the emergence of a nationalist-cum-sectarian movement of Shias. Here, the role played by the fractured state machinery, which provided an empty space for sectarian sentiments to sprout, will be highlighted. In Section 5.3, the nature of violence in the region and the uneasy peace that has been prevalent in recent years will be examined.

5.1 The origins and contemporary geo-political position of Gilgit

Figure 4: Gilgit in regional context



Source: Map drawn by Mirza Yousaf Baig

Gilgit is situated in the extreme northeast of Pakistan (see Figure 4). The mountain ranges of Karakoram, Himalayas, and Hindukush form a spectacular background to the sparsely populated area, which is of great strategic importance because it links Pakistan with both China and, across the Wakhan strip, with the Central Asian Republics.

The population of 'Sargin' or 'Sargin Gilit', later corrupted by the Sikhs and Dogras into 'Gilgit', was comprised of an ancient people who spoke a language that was intermediate between Persian and Sanskrit (Roy, 2009). Once ruled by a Hindu dynasty, when it became extinct, the Gilgit Valley experienced successive invasions by neighbouring rulers, until the Sikhs entered the area in 1842. When Jammu and Kashmir came under Gulab Singh's control in 1849, Gilgit was transferred with it. In 1852, the predominantly Hindu Dogras were driven out. In 1860, under Ranbir Singh, they returned to

Gilgit but then withdrew again after a short period (Roy, 2009). Despite resistance from local people, the British established a Political Agent in Gilgit between 1877 and 1881 and again in 1889, under the control of the British Resident in Jammu and Kashmir. In 1935, Britain insisted that the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir leased the territory to it for a period of sixty years. This lease and the Gilgit Agency ceased to exist when Pakistan and India became independent countries in 1947 (Roy, 2009).

The Kashmiri ruler, Maharaja Hari Singh, ceded the state to India on 26 October 1947. However, the British Commander of the Gilgit Scouts announced Gilgit's accession to Pakistan on 4 November 1947. Thus, Gilgit became a part of Northern Areas of Pakistan, which gave it a new identity separate from Pakistan-governed Azad Kashmir. The revolt against the Dogra Maharaja of Kashmir had been led by those who wanted a separate political administration for the region. However, this mobilized the Sunni leaders who, fearing future Shia domination, campaigned to join Pakistan instead.⁶¹ Hence, sectarian tensions can be traced back to the time of partition.

After Partition, the name Gilgit Agency was adopted by Pakistan to refer to the territory that formed its de facto dependency, bordered by China to the northeast, the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir to the south, Baltistan to the east and the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) to the west (Roy, 2009).⁶² In 1970, it was merged into the Northern Areas, which was re-named Gilgit and Baltistan in 2009. It was administered directly, initially from Karachi and later from Islamabad, separately from both the neighbouring state of Azad Kashmir and the princely states of Hunza and Nagar.

The region of Gilgit and Baltistan is thus constitutionally not a part of Pakistan. It has been governed directly by the federal government through the Northern Areas Council, which is headed by the Federal Minister of Kashmir and Northern Areas. The government set up the Northern Areas Legislative Council in 1999 to allow locals to choose their own representatives, but they have no representation in the national or provincial assemblies. The Council was elevated to become the Northern Areas Legislative Assembly in 2005. The sectarian composition of all five districts into which the Northern Areas are divided (Gilgit, Skardu, Diamir, Ghizer and Ghanche) is mixed. However, Shias have numerical preponderance over Sunnis in every district. If and when Gilgit and Baltistan is accorded the status of a province, it would be the only Shia-majority province in otherwise overwhelmingly Sunni Pakistan.

A majority of the population of Gilgit (60 per cent) belongs to the Shia denomination, including Ismailis,⁶³ who enjoy a stable, though not necessarily privileged, position in the area. Baltistan is 96 per cent Shia.⁶⁴ A partial explanation for the presence of a sizeable Shia population in the region, especially Ismailis, is the long historical period during which these groups were persecuted by the Sunni Caliphates and Sultans in the Middle East and India. This partly explains why Shias are concentrated in certain remote and difficult regions of Pakistan, as well as in Afghanistan.

The region is vital to Pakistan because of its strategic and economic importance. However, it has been accorded different political treatment. Residents are frustrated by their lack of democratic rights, while the region's lack of representation in the Pakistani Parliament has placed it outside the mainstream politics of the country and increased ethnic, cultural and sectarian tensions (Bansal, 2008, p 82). The problems of governance and the region's economic backwardness have fuelled a sense of alienation, although Islamabad has been impelled to give limited legislative powers to the local population successively in 1976, 1999, 2006 and 2009.

5.2 From peace to conflict

Prior to 1988, the Northern Areas in general and Gilgit in particular enjoyed sectarian peace, if not complete social harmony. The city played an important role in trade in Chinese cotton and hardware. Orchards in the surrounding area were justly renowned for their apricots, grapes, and apples. Until the 1980s, there was even an embryonic tourist industry, with a couple of rest houses and a luxury hotel. However, as noted above, Gilgit has been and still is in a strategic area. High above the snowline, as per a classic account of the region, "somewhere in the midst of the peaks and glaciers that wall in the Gilgit valley meet the long and jealously guarded frontiers of India, China, Russia, Afghanistan. It is the hub, the crow's nest, and the fulcrum of Asia" (Keay, 1979; see also Dani, 1987, 1991; Moonshee, 1868-9).

The increased sectarian conflict in Gilgit can be located in three major developments. First, as noted above, the pattern of governance in the area is administrative, not political. It is the bureaucracy - recruited, posted and controlled by Islamabad - which rules a region that has no input into the larger political system of the country. People in Gilgit are at the receiving end of the writ of the state, with no constitutional rights. As long as the Kashmir dispute is not settled, the government of Pakistan is

expected to shy away from fully integrating the region with the mainstream national framework of politics. Secondly, the clash between the two sectarian identities of the perceived rulers, the Sunni administrative elite on the one hand and the majority of residents, both Shias and Ismailis, on the other has played havoc with social peace. Thirdly, there is a feeling among Shias that the incoming migrants from the rest of the country are brought in by the state as part of its grand project of Sunnification of the area. The purpose, they believe, is to change the demographics of the region in order to create a Sunni majority. The Sunni in-migrants are generally influential: businessmen and technocrats, as well as retired bureaucrats who choose to settle down in the area to which they have been posted. As will be explained in the following pages, the pattern of conflict in Gilgit has been defined by a deficit of trust on account of these three sources of local grievances, i.e. bureaucratic, non-representative government; perceived sectarian discrimination; and ethno-regional resistance to the state.⁶⁵

In the following analysis, the role of the state will be treated as an independent variable, entailing a discussion of the process of institutional and constitutional development in Gilgit and Baltistan, the operational dynamics of the security apparatus and Islamabad's agenda of reforms in response to local grievances. A profile of the response of local communities along sectarian lines will then be drawn. The aim is to outline the role of the state as an agent of change in the sectarian balance. The varying patterns of violent action by various communities in pursuit of their strategies of survival and domination will also be defined and analysed.

5.2.1 The state: mechanisms of control and manipulation

Pakistan took over the control of Gilgit-Baltistan on 16 November 1947. For a considerable time afterwards, the constitutional status of the area remained undefined. In 1947, the Chief Minister of NWFP, Abdul Qayyum Khan, proposed that Gilgit agency be transferred to the Governor of NWFP and treated like other tribal areas, so that over a period of time it could be merged into the province. The foreign office opposed the idea. It was not ready to consider Gilgit to be independent of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, because Gilgit was a vote-bank for a possible future plebiscite on the issue of Kashmir, to be held under the auspices of the United Nations. This complex problem of identity posed grave dilemmas for local people in the long run. Sometimes, Gilgit is shown on maps as part of Pakistan; sometimes, it is clubbed with the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir. It is not mentioned in the Constitution of Pakistan and has no representation in Pakistan's Parliament, because technically it

remains part of the disputed area of Kashmir. Hence, the basic political rights of the people have been denied.

The government of Pakistan initially managed the administrative affairs of the region through the provincial government of NWFP, based on Frontier Crimes Regulations (FCR) and local *rajas*. Later, the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas was set up to look after the region. The *raja* system and FCR were abolished in 1972 and 1974 respectively. The Northern Areas Legislative Council was conjured up in 1993-94.⁶⁶ Certain judicial reforms were also introduced to fill the legal vacuum that had emerged after the abolition of FCR. However all along, the autonomy of these area remained in jeopardy - the Minister of Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas continued to act as the chief executive by default.

In the case of Gilgit, constitutional-administrative issues are inextricably mixed up with sectarian issues. In effect, Shias saw themselves as being ruled by Sunnis. Right from its inception in 1993-94, members of the Northern Areas Legislative Council (NALC) were both directly elected (six representatives each from Gilgit and Skardu and three each from other districts) and indirectly elected, with one reserved seat for a woman and one for a technocrat from each of the six districts. The Council was given power to formulate only laws that were municipal and local in nature. Thus, the representatives had only constricted powers. Their influence was further curtailed, because laws became valid only after their vetting by section officers sitting in the Kashmir Affairs Ministry in Islamabad and bills passed by the NALC required the chief executive's approval to become law. If there was a discrepancy between federal laws and those passed by the NALC, the former prevailed. The NALC could not even overrule administrative functioning when formulating laws relating to business and there was no provision for a vote of no-confidence in the Council to be passed (Bansal, 2008, p 87). An unelected Chief Executive unaccountable to anyone in Gilgit headed the Council, with no provision for a leader of the opposition. While the elected leader of the house was the Deputy Chief Executive, he was bereft of the executive powers of even a district officer, with the Deputy Commissioners being accountable to the Chief Secretary, who was answerable to the unelected Chief rather than elected Deputy Chief Executive.

Gilgit is a bureaucratic fiefdom. On 28 May 1999, the Supreme Court of Pakistan stated that people of Northern Areas had been deprived of their fundamental rights without any reason. It further declared that it was a great cause of concern as to, why in spite of being assured otherwise in the Constitution, people were denied their rights. In its judgement, the Court asked the Pakistan government to ensure that people in the region could enjoy their fundamental rights within six months. However, no action was taken. The widespread apathetic attitude of the electorate towards the NALC elections in October 2004 demonstrated its unpopularity. The locals believed that Islamabad exercised power in the region through the federal Minister of Kashmir and Northern Areas, to the exclusion of local representatives. In the absence of meaningful representation, excessive involvement of the bureaucracy in the administrative affairs of the area has stunted the political process. In a half-hearted attempt to address some of the issues, President Musharraf eventually issued a provisional legal framework order in 2006.

The absence of institutional link-ups between the state and society has been a sure recipe for sectarian conflict. The Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas has blocked political parties in Azad Kashmir from extending their branches into Gilgit and Baltistan since 1950. Ambiguity regarding the constitutional status of the area created a vacuum in the local political system. Politicians of the region accuse the bureaucracy of following a policy of divide and rule, precluding any possibility of arriving at a consensus. Political parties in Gilgit can be described as *gemeinschaft* associations where solidarity is based not on a convergence of interests, but on kinship and organic ties. In other words, social cohesiveness is wrought by shared identities and beliefs around bonding social capital instead of bridging social capital. The underdevelopment of the political process in Gilgit provided an environment conducive for certain groups to flourish, assume power and inflict violence on others. Participants in FGDs and various individual respondents interviewed during this research alleged that such groups enjoyed the backing of state agencies. However, with the collapse of the princely state apparatus and traditional tribal-kinship structures, historical and cultural continuities were ruptured. This created a vacuum that was subsequently filled by sectarian groups, which carved out a niche for themselves in the socio-political structure of Gilgit through violent means.

FCR, as framed and implemented by the British colonial government, controlled the lives of the people for a considerable period of time. Under this law, each resident has to report to the local police station every month, visitors must report to the local police station on arrival and departure and people are not

permitted to file a case in High Courts or the Supreme Court. The denial of self-governance and the absence of a local judicial system have resulted in desperation and political despondency among the people, exacerbated by the government's failure to plough direct and indirect taxes collected locally back into the development of the region.⁶⁷ In addition, despite the civilian set-up described above, the army is the prime mover in this area. Army officers oversee recruitment and appointments in the civilian sector, and even approve government contracts and tenders. People feel that they are not given their due share of vital government posts, and also that the business world is dominated by non-locals.

"Political instability is rooted in the government's refusal to allow devolution of power to the region and grant of the status of a political entity".⁶⁸ Organizations such as Gilgit Baltistan Democratic Alliance (GBDA), Gilgit-Baltistan United Movement (GBUM) and Balwaristan National Front (BNF) have emerged during the past decade, demanding either autonomy or secession. The demand for autonomy was recently addressed through the Gilgit-Baltistan (Empowerment and Self-governance) Order 2009, to which President Zardari affixed his signature on 7th September 2009. The Order established a legislative assembly with 24 elected members, as well as six reserved seats for women and three for technocrats. The members elect a chief minister for Gilgit and Baltistan, assisted by six ministers and two advisers. According to the autonomy order, the Assembly is empowered to legislate on 61 subjects. Furthermore, Gilgit-Baltistan is to have its own Public Service Commission, Election Commissioner and Auditor General. As in other provides, a Governor appointed by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister, will represent the federation.⁶⁹ These reforms were meant to inculcate much-needed goodwill among the local population towards Pakistan by enabling them to enter into the mainstream of the Pakistani politics and become an integral part of the federation. However, how the reform package will help bring sectarian normalcy to the area remains a big challenge for the new ruling dispensation in Islamabad. Elections for the reformed Gilgit and Baltistan Assembly were hotly contested in November 2009, followed by the formation of an elected government by PPP.

People are generally nostalgic about the past, when there was peace and little conflict, and when some families would not shy away from entertaining visitors from rival sects, even if separate crockery had to be provided.⁷⁰ However, the religious leaders of both Shia and Ismaili communities are quite

sensitive about the distinctiveness of their religious and social ethos, considering themselves to have separate religious rather than composite regional identities. Our respondents pointed to the crisis of governance and the issue of identity as the main factors behind the rise of sectarianism in Gilgit.

A strong sense of sectarian difference emerged and became politically significant after the formal integration of the Northern Areas in the early 1970s, partly in response to the growth of nationalist voices in Gilgit, including demands for equal citizenship. What followed was widespread suspicion that the state had a divide-and-conquer project that “aimed at creating disunity along sectarian lines, in order to thwart regional solidarity and secular-nationalist aspirations” (Ali, 2009). In general, people in Gilgit have an acute sense of being discriminated against economically and politically. The higher positions within the local bureaucracy tend to be dominated by non-local down-country officials belonging to the Sunni sect. When a Shia Deputy Commissioner was appointed for the first time in 1994, local Sunnis created a furore, showing how bureaucratic positions of power had become a presumed Sunni privilege (Ali, 2009).

As elsewhere in Pakistan, two contradictory movements of ideas and ideologies clashed with each other in Gilgit: the Iranian (Shia) revolution and the Afghan (Sunni) jihad. The opening up of Gilgit and Baltistan, which were hard to access or get out of for centuries, enabled a number of local Shia clerics to study in prominent centres of religious learning in Qum and Mashhad in Iran. The Iranian revolution and their return to Gilgit started the politicization of the Shia community. Many Shias in Gilgit joined the newly formed Tehrik Nifaze Fiqah Jaffria (TNFJ), and later its militant offshoot Sipah-i-Muhammad (SM).

In Khaled Ahmed’s view:

It was on Musharraf’s watch as Army Chief that Pakistan’s Kashmir jihad policy increased the ranks of Islamic extremists in the Northern Areas. In the 1999, the Kargil conflict resulted in the influx of Sunni jihadi elements into the region. Extremist organizations like the SSP, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Muhammad, Al-Ikhwan and Harkatul Mujahideen have since opened offices there. Places like Chilas and Gilgit have become the hub of Sunni jihadi training and anti-Shia activism. And every Sunni attack has resulted in a tit-for-tat Shia response (2008, p 15).

The Afghan war of “Deobandi-Wahhabi temper” altered the power structure in the region (Kamran, 2009; see also Noman, 1988), a shift that the local Shia leadership believes to have been encouraged and deepened by the Pakistan government. For instance, the President of the Pakistan Muslim League Gilgit and Baltistan, Abdul Wahid, alleged that some government officials were indulging in sectarian politics in the area, and that there was no check on their undesirable activities. He blamed some government officials for misleading the masses and (mis-)briefing the clerics to satisfy their personal interests, including promotion, transfers to desired stations and covering up corruption, claiming in 2005 that he was ready to identify the official employees involved in sectarian politics.⁷¹

Bureaucratic and Sunni domination was accompanied by the perceived targeted suppression of the Shia community, beginning with the banning of the traditional Muharram procession in 1974, which led to a major sectarian clash. In popular memory and discourse, that period is routinely identified with the beginning of the sectarian conflict (Sökefeld, 2003). However, the year 1988 is pointed out as the real turning-point, in terms of a systematic anti-Shia campaign, when well-equipped Sunni *lashkaris* (militias) – mostly from the NWFP – were allegedly brought into the area by the Zia government to orchestrate sectarian riots (Aase, 1999; Rieck, 1995).

5.2.2 Towards the precipice

In May 1988, the whole of Pakistan was preparing to celebrate Eid the following day. However, most of the Shia population in the town Gilgit was already celebrating Eid, because their religious leaders claimed that they had sighted the Eid moon, which the Ro'et-i-Halal Committee of the federal government had not yet seen. Gilgit's Sunni population was still fasting. Seeing Shias eating during what was, in their view, still the time of fasting infuriated a few Sunni zealots, who thrashed non-fasting Shias in the small town of Kashtore.⁷² This violence did not take long to spread to other parts of the area. The situation became explosive and the district administration had to call in the army. The Special Services Group (SSG) led by Brig. Pervaiz Musharraf, who later became a general and the President of Pakistan, was assigned the task of restoring peace and eliminating the ‘miscreants’. His operations were intended to counter the presumed Iranian influence on local Shias, by customizing the blueprint for the Sunni-supported ‘Afghan jihad’ fought against the Red Army in the 1980s to handle the situation in Gilgit, with the help of tribal Pakhtuns and Afghans. About 700 Shias were slaughtered in the process. In addition, “scores of Shia villages were pillaged and burned, and even livestock were

slaughtered” (Ahmed, 2008, p 15). Many believe that the tribal *lashkaris* had been constituted and facilitated by certain segments of the civil-military establishment, which in their view wanted to crush the brewing Shia uprising for separate political status or even independence for Gilgit and Baltistan.⁷³ As Khaled Ahmed (2008, p 15) observes,

The (Sunni) *lashkar* consisted of thousands of people from Mansehra, Chilas, Kohistan and other areas in the NWFP. They had travelled a long distance to reach Gilgit, but the government did not stop them. No government force intervened even as killings and rapes were going on. Instead, the government put the blame on RAW, Iran and CIA.

Meanwhile, some Sunnis from Gilgit and Baltistan reportedly got involved in the jihad in Afghanistan, not only receiving guerrilla training but also establishing contacts with hard-line Sunni militant groups.⁷⁴ After the Red Army withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989, some undertook a new mission to infiltrate Indian-held Kashmir. Some training camps for Mujahideen were established in the region, for which local people, mostly Sunnis, were also recruited. Shia leaders took strong exception to the army’s intervention and expressed reservations regarding the central government’s *modus operandi* for managing the prevalent tinderbox situation, suspecting that the Sunni-Deobandi Islamic state under Zia was trying to purge Shias from the region. The situation was compounded by the negligible representation of Shia and Ismaili communities of Gilgit in the army, which is dominated by Pakhtuns and Punjabis. Along with their lack of political representation, their suspicions rekindled their Shia identity.

The May 1988 episode highlighted the ethnic tensions in the regional power struggle following the start of local insurgency in the Srinagar Valley in 1987, as well as the sectarian nature of the conflict. As part of the wider agenda of Sunnification, local people allege that Musharraf encouraged tribal Pakhtuns and Afghans of the Sunni sect to move into the region, in order to counter Shias’ influence and numerical strength and serve as a constituency for the Sunni military regime.⁷⁵ As a result, the following decade saw an expanded Sunni presence. Currently, these, along with Sunni Punjabi in-migrants, constitute 40 per cent of the population in Gilgit. The Sunni Punjabi settlers, who mostly hold Deobandi-influenced beliefs, have good connections with the civil bureaucracy and the army, have formed an alliance with the Sunni Pakhtuns and Afghans, maintain ties with their areas of origin, have resisted cultural adaptation and integration, and have no qualms in denouncing Shias as infidels. They have achieved dominance in trade and business, and increased their share of trade with China. Local people have protested, sometimes violently.

The state-sponsored *jihād* in Kashmir, during Musharraf's watch as army chief, expanded the ranks of Islamic extremists in the area. In 1999, a Northern Light Infantry (NLI) battalion seized the Kargil heights, which were the other side of the Line of Control in Indian-administered Kashmir. A number of young volunteers from Skardu, the other town in the region where the NLI is based, joined it to fight the Kashmir *jihād*. The Kargil conflict resulted in an influx of other Sunni *jihadi* elements into the region. Extremist organisations such as SSP, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Muhammed, Al-Ikhwan and Harkatul Mujahideen opened offices in the region. Places like Parachinar, Chilas and Gilgit became the hub of Sunni *jihadi* training as well as anti-Shia activism and sectarian killings on both sides (ICG, 2005; Ahmed, 2009, p 15).

During the fieldwork, some respondents linked sectarian violence with competition for votes, alleging that candidates invoke sectarian identities to mobilize people during elections. It was noted that incidents of sectarian violence increased after the establishment of local elected institutions in the 1970s and 1980s. Since then, there have been disputes about the delimitation of constituencies, as candidates want them to be delineated in a way that suits them. It may also be noted that TNFJ has been active in launching and running campaigns for its candidates. This gives the electoral process a sectarian dimension and contributes to sectarian tensions.⁷⁶

Sectarian controversy spills over into education. For example, Shias demanded a change in the curriculum for Islamic Studies, which they believed to be primarily of a Sunni Deobandi orientation. Perceptions about anti-Shia bias in school textbooks have led to frequent school boycotts and occasional clashes and curfews. In addition, poverty-stricken parents educate their children in *madrasahs*, which operate as breeding houses of sectarian hatred.

Until recently, Ismailis (a different Shia sub-sect) remained outside the sectarian politics. However, the Aga Khan Foundation's (AKF) development activities in the region, most notably in the field of education (for example the creation of the Aga Khan Education Examination Board) provided Sunni Islamist parties and militants with a reason for provoking anti-Ismaili sentiment.⁷⁷ This resulted in attacks on AKF offices and personnel (ICG, 2005, p 20).

The growing sectarianism in the region was widely attributed to government policies of Sunni-based Islamization, as well as Zia's antipathy to PPP, the popular party of choice (ICG, 2005, p 19), exacerbated by "external involvement, mostly from brotherly Islamic countries, a weak judicial system,

proliferation of small arms, mushrooming of sectarian madrasahs and external and internal policy objectives” (Bansal, 2008).

5.3 Escalating violence and its aftermath

The official strategy of encouraging Afghan, Pakhtun and Punjabi Sunnis to migrate to the Gilgit region, somewhat like a divide and rule policy, has not worked according to plan. It has created discontent among the local Shia population, matched by the hostility and ill-will of the Sunni in-migrants towards the locals. The frequency and severity of violent incidents, including killings, public protests, burning of property and kidnapping, was at its peak during the first half of the 2000s (see also Varley, 2010).

The two communities have an unequal share of political power and economic resources, which is exaggerated in their imaginations. Gradually, this led locals to question the legitimacy of state institutions, especially the law enforcement agencies. For example, the police were widely perceived to be partisan and their involvement in suppressing the popular movement was a major contributory factor in triggering sectarian violence. For instance, police arrested two local Shia leaders in December 2005 under Section 16 of the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) on the charge of holding a sectarian gathering. People protested that the provocative police action against these leaders was actually an attempt to sabotage the peace process in Gilgit. In return, embattled police officials often experienced the rancour of agitated Shias. Even the NLI was assaulted when it passed near rival sectarian militant groups. In March 2005, a former inspector-general of police of Gilgit and Baltistan, Sakhiullah Tareen, and his four guards were killed in an ambush by gunmen, who also wounded his son and daughter-in-law.⁷⁸ Similarly, an unknown gunman shot dead a judge dealing with anti-terrorism cases in June 2006. Judge Jamshed Khan and his bodyguard were on a Saturday evening stroll in a park when a man rushed towards him and shot him.⁷⁹ Three Superintendents of Police declined to stay in service after witnessing assaults on policemen.

In 2003, local Shia students violently protested over the contents of the curriculum for Islamic Studies. Angry mobs pelted hundreds of shops, offices, hotels, schools and vehicles with stones, damaging buildings, including a Pakistan International Airlines reservation office and setting the office and vehicle of the superintendent of police in Skardu in fire. Locally made bombs were used to target journalists, politicians, religious leaders and high ranking state officials. At least five people were injured, one of

them critically, in an explosion caused by a locally-made device hidden in a pickle jar at an *imambargah* in February 2004 in Nagaral locality, on the Shaheed-i-Millat Road.⁸⁰ In July 2005, an unidentified man threw three bombs at the house of the president of the Gilgit Press Club, Khurshid Ahmad.⁸¹ In September 2005, armed men assassinated a local politician in Gilgit, with the subsequent exchange of fire between rival sects turning the city into a virtual battleground and the Inspector General of Police claiming that the rival groups might have used heavy arms.⁸² In October 2005, following clashes between the security forces and Shias in which ten people died, the Northern Areas administration sealed the main *imambargahs* and mosques in Gilgit and arrested top Shia and Sunni leaders. About 600 Shias from Nagar subdivision gathered at Haraspoor Dass and blocked the Karakoram Highway for several hours, demanding immediate replacement of the Rangers stationed in Gilgit, on the grounds that they were hostile to the Shia community and were not performing their duties impartially.⁸³

Government responses to the violence in Gilgit were minimal or temporary. From the 1990s onwards, as the frequency of violent incidents increased and the state failed to take effective steps to restore peace, people lost any feeling of security.⁸⁴ Those responsible for violent attacks or for planning or inciting violence were not brought to justice. As a result, a perception of insecurity prevailed and people felt that they had to fend for themselves. This feeling appears to have led to improvements to the organization of sectarian groups, as well as amassing of small arms. Over time, the Shia and Sunni groups substantively armed themselves.⁸⁵ After the incidents of 2004 and 2005, the city was almost taken over by sectarian groups, and paramilitary forces had to be called in. Subsequently, the administration, as well as other political actors, made serious efforts to restore peace.⁸⁶ A *jirga* (tribal assembly of elders) comprised of members of all the communities was convened, some victims of the violence were compensated and the government strengthened the capacity of the law enforcement agencies to respond to violent situations.

As noted in Section 1, the research was interested in the roles adopted by a variety of stakeholders, including civil society organizations. The area's remote location, traditional social structures, longstanding insecurity, and government dominance has deterred the evolution of civil society organizations, including faith-based organizations involved in development activities. However, as noted above, there is one large and internationally known organization, the Aga Khan Rural Support

Programme (AKRSP), which is active in the area. What have the scope and impact of its activities been for the economic, social and political evolution of the region, and in particular, what role has it played in conflict and its aftermath?

The AKRSP was established in Gilgit in 1982. Its objectives include doubling the per capita income of the rural population, developing a replicable development model and creating sustainable local institutional mechanisms. It is supported by many international donor agencies, such as Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the UK Department for International Development (DFID). The Pakistan government also provides financial support to the programme because of its widely acknowledged supra-sectarian development goals.

The managers of the programme claim that all its plans are realized and executed with people's participation, indirectly filling the vacuum created by the absence of representative politics (Fazlur-Rehman, 2007, p 335-6). The programme seeks to organize the masses in two ways: at the village level and by organizing women. While the first programme benefits all, regardless of their religious affiliation, the latter programme is limited to the Ismaili community, because Sunnis and Shias do not allow their women to pay the nominal membership fee (Rs300)(£2.20) and participate in the activities. The programme has successfully established village organizations, in which each member contributes an amount that is jointly deposited in a bank account and then provided as loans for initiating businesses or other livelihood activities.

The AKRSP is widely acknowledged to be an effective and non-partisan development organization, enabling it to access substantial international and government funding. Despite its Ismaili origins, it functions more like a secular NGO than a faith-based organization. However, it has played no role in mediating between the antagonistic Sunni and Shia communities. First, the Ismaili community, which is the 'natural constituency' of AKRSP, has not been an active party in the sectarian conflict between Shias and Sunnis (although as noted above, it is sometimes targeted by extremist groups)(see also Rehman, 2006). Second, the AKRSP's role is professedly developmental in nature, in that it addresses issues of poverty, women's emancipation and the building of local infrastructure, while generally shying away from involvement in political conflicts. Finally, its activities are concentrated in

the rural areas, spilling over into Gilgit town only because its main office is located there, and some conferences and similar activities take place there.

Although tension over elections continues, there was a general feeling that since 2005, 'peace' had returned and was still holding in 2008, despite occasional incidents of violence.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, some respondents pointed out remaining risks and asserted that further steps need to be taken to build and sustain the peace.⁸⁸ The Pakistani state has in theory adopted a two pronged-strategy to handle the violent situation: using force to control 'anti-state' elements and supporting the region economically to appease the public. However, its capacity to play a significant positive role is limited by its reluctance to accord Gilgit's population full democratic rights and its earlier attempts to contain and marginalize local Shias numerically, politically and economically in order to create, cultivate and promote a pro-Pakistani - which for all practical purposes means pro-the Sunni establishment – constituency, comprised mainly of migrant Afghans, Pashtuns and Punjabis.

6 Conclusion

All the trappings of sectarian conflict, exacerbated by extra-local inputs, both ideological and political, have been operative in the case study cities for decades. Today, although the intensity of violence has lessened in both, the underlying tensions that provoked the increased frequency of violent episodes observed in the 1990s remain. There is still violence in the air, although it has decreased on the ground. In practice, there is a balance of terror that is termed 'peace'. However, the current peace in both Jhang and Gilgit seems to be based on a form of restriction on the deep wishes and ambitions of sectarian militants, who nevertheless have the wherewithal to become involved in violence again. The cause, the cadres and the expertise are all present, but currently, it appears that the cost of entering a new phase of hostilities, following the loss of leadership and credibility associated with the 1990s violence, would be too heavy.

In both localities, the role of the state has been central, both as an agent of conflict and as chief arbiter of sectarian strife. The control and manipulative mechanisms of the bureaucratic apparatus, generally identified with the Sunni sect, have been most important in Gilgit, whereas electoral dynamics exacerbated sectarian divisions in Jhang. The state's use of sectarianism and nationalism has contributed enormously to perceptions in the two cities that it is alien and domineering. Although it has taken various measures to address the desire of those living in Gilgit and its wider region for democratic representation, in the form of governance and legal reforms, the evidence presented in this analysis suggests that in general it has exacerbated rather than seriously attempted to ameliorate sectarian grievances by its actions.

The stateWhat comes out clearly from the phenomenon of sectarian violence in Pakistan is the need to tackle conflict transformation by first locating the sources of conflict and their potential to disturb the relations between communities. Apart from the institutionalization of dichotomous frameworks of thought and practice, which played a crucial role in pushing hearts and minds further apart, identities are consistently reformulated through local rituals, the larger educational and legal systems, and electoral politics. The post-conflict march towards a new normalcy has been complicated by the state's partial abdication of its role as a 'neutral third party', as well as regional instability.

For the political and ideological basis for sectarian conflict to be changed requires that the "the power of discourse" be prioritized over "the discourse of power" (Salvatore, 1999, p 23). The latter implies manipulation and domination whereas it is suggested that the former promises the attenuation and transformation of conflict. What is direly needed is the introduction, crystallization and communication

of a counter-discourse aimed at changing conflictual relationships in ways that build the practices, processes and structures of peace (Saunders, 1999, p 9). This entails the transformation of the symbolic and institutional orders underpinning the violent conflict. Since these orders constitute public or political space, the counter-discourse must also be located in the public space (Jabri, 1996, p 146 and 158). In the particular case of sectarian violence, without denying the diversity of identities (Kaldor, 1999, p 97-8), the discourse must challenge exclusivist identities and the dominance of public space by exclusionary discourses that legitimate violence and conflict. Its aim must be to transform the ideological commitments of ordinary residents and eventually those of the protagonists of violence. Transformation of conflict has to come from replacing, overwhelming, defeating, discrediting and delegitimizing identities of exclusion. The agenda of establishing peace and harmony across the boundaries of sect requires engagement of both state and non-state actors at the micro and macro levels. Transformation involves an open-ended, continuous process that addresses the conflict parties, improving future relationships between them by empowering local actors and enhancing the local ability to build peace. What is required, in short, is a continuous, gradual process conducive to change in structures and attitudes, to reconciliation, and to transformation of the relationship between the warring parties. Rather than focusing on elimination of conflict per se, the aim of the process is to transform conflict into a peaceful process of social and political bargaining (Ramsbotham et al, 2005).

This paper does not attempt to identify specific ways in which demobilization, justice, rehabilitation and coexistence might be fostered. However, key to any such process is a question of which agencies might play positive roles in bringing about change towards pluralism and conflict transformation. Possible protagonists include the parties in conflict, civil society organizations, religious bodies and the state. The parties in conflict, in this instance Shia and Sunni activists, including both leaders and followers, remain entrenched in their partisan positions, perceiving themselves as victims of the others' physical or behavioural offences. Even though the number of fresh and direct wounds inflicted in the two case study cities has declined in recent years, the process of accumulation of mutual hostility continues, fuelled by violent incidents that continue to occur in other places, hindering conflict resolution. A change initiated from outside the parties in conflict, such as a shift in the content of the discourse, patterns of national leadership, or input from global or regional powers might produce an attitudinal shift from bellicosity to harmony.

Civil society organizations in general (in particular NGOs) have the advantage of being non-partisan and committed to order for its own sake. However in Pakistan, civil society is too cosmopolitan to

consider sectarian identities and commitments to be anything more than primitive, medieval, irrational and instinctive behaviour – secular CSOs and religious organizations regard each other as rivals (Rehman, 2006). NGOs are typically urban-based, middle class and supra-sectarian, within a society that is still largely peasant and tribal. Their lack of local roots limits their potential to carry the larger public with them towards the goal of the restoration of peace. Their secularist and pluralist approach, though noble in itself, undermines their potential to bring the combative parties to the table for the protracted negotiations necessary to transform their conflictual standpoints into formulas for peace and harmony.

Can religious bodies succeed where NGOs fail? Many faith-based organizations in Pakistan are extensions of religious or sectarian parties. Their social work, such as Jamat Dawa's relief operation after the devastating earthquake in northern Pakistan in 2005, has a proselytizing character. In the context of relief work following sectarian conflict, FBOs' role is far from satisfactory. Two factors impinge upon their capacity to deliver: first, they tend to favour members of their own sect; and second, they are not trusted by the rival sect. Nor can they be relied upon to address outpourings of sectarian hatred, because they are essentially and often professedly associated with a particular sect. For such organizations, it is extremely difficult to transcend their own worldview, which they perceive as divinely ordained. Thus they lack the intellectual or organizational wherewithal to transform sectarian conflict, because any change in their discourse could alienate their parent organizations. As noted above, therefore, FBOs cannot be expected to play a substantive peace-making role in the areas affected by sectarian conflict.

This research reveals a widespread perception that the state in Pakistan has not only played a partisan role but also failed to provide prompt relief to the victims of violence. While the state is a modern constitutional system of authority with no explicit sectarian bias, it is committed to a majoritarian system. In practice, therefore, the state's nationalist ideology is inextricably identified with the majority Sunni community, which to date has kept the tension unresolved. Nevertheless, the ultimate concern of any state is to cultivate political stability and social order. It is therefore the responsibility of the state as the biggest stakeholder in peace and order to reinvigorate its triadic role, by guaranteeing observance of the legal rules of the game and providing justice to aggrieved persons and groups in an expressly non-partisan way, as well as fostering a new discourse of inclusive citizenship.

Notes

- ¹ Constitution of Pakistan, Article 20: www.sdpi.org/networking/know%20you%20rights%20The%20Constitution%20of%20Pakistan.htm
- ² UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 18, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>, accessed on 13 June 2009.
- ³ UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion and Belief, Articles 1 (2) and Article 2 (1) <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/religion.htm>, accessed on 13 June 2009.
- ⁴ On Sunni – Shia relations in Chitral see, Magnus Marsden (2005).
- ⁵ Religions and Development Research Programme “Towards a common understanding: some key terms on the theme of religion” www.rad.bham.ac.uk/index.php?section=24. Accessed 28 April 2009.
- ⁶ The list of authors who have focused on assessing the practical resolution models is long. See, for example, Horowitz (1985); McGarry and O’Leary (1995); McRae (1990); Ross (2000); and Sisk (1996).
- ⁷ During the Islamization campaign of General Zia-ul-Haq, Sharia and Hudood laws were introduced. However the law enforcing authorities had the power to charge criminals either under Islamic law or in accordance with the Pakistan Penal Code, which is based on the British system of justice. The religious political parties have continuously demanded that there should be only Islamic criminal law, while secular forces oppose this.
- ⁸ *Khilafah* is the system of governance observed in the early history of Islam during the rule of first four caliphs after the demise of Prophet Mohammad.
- ⁹ However Nasr (2006) gives a figure of 25,000 Shia activists (p 161).
- ¹⁰ A group of students from Lahore University of Engineering and Technology founded ISO on 22 May 1972 to provide a country-wide Shia platform. The numerical strength and organizational capability of ISO leaders became evident during the 1979-80 agitation of Shias against Zia’s Zakat and Ushr Ordinance.
- ¹¹ Allama Arif Hussain Al Hussaini was a Turi Pukhtun from the Shia stronghold of Parachinar in northern Pakistan. He had received instruction from Najaf and Qum. He was allegedly sent to Pakistan by the Iranian Government in 1978. According to his official biography, he was expelled from Iran before the revolution (Abbas, 2002, p 8).
- ¹² For more details, see Rais (2004), p 460.
- ¹³ This is not to say that there is not ‘ecumenical collaboration’ between the groups when needed.
- ¹⁴ See for example: Tambiah (1996), p 164; Jaffrelot (2001), p 34; Behuria (2004), p 162. Too often power is cited as an explanation for a conflict. The crucial question then is ‘what type of power?’ Is it to gain more funding, political influence, or religious legitimacy?
- ¹⁵ For more on the importance of clerics and *fatwas*, see Ahmed, 2007.
- ¹⁶ Here political quietism denotes *taqiyyah* or dissimulation.
- ¹⁷ Sunnis hold the three companions of the Prophet (Abu Bakr, Omer and Usman) in high esteem whereas Shias condemn them as usurpers. Shias consider Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, as his rightful heir instead of the first three Caliphs. Interview with Maulana Ilyas Balakoti, Jhang, August 2006.
- ¹⁸ Weekly *Zindgi*, Lahore, 8-14 June 1991
- ¹⁹ “The danger within”, *The Nation* 10 October 2003
- ²⁰ Interviews conducted by Katja Riikonen in madrasahs around Peshawar, May 2008
- ²¹ See weekly *Herald*, ‘Election 2008’, December 2007, p. 72-75; also available at <http://www.dawn.com/weekly/herald/herald40.htm>
- ²² This information was shared by the participants in a Focus Group Discussion held in Jhang on 11 October 2008.

- ²³ Interviews with Sana-ul-Haq Trimzi, Jawad Naqvi, Iftexhar Abbas Jatiana and Muhammad Nawaz Jaffery held on 3 March 2009.
- ²⁴ In the course of an interview with Balakoti, he used the phrase *muqarir i bebadal* (orator par excellence) to describe Haq Nawaz.
- ²⁵ Maulana Mujeeb ur Rehman Inqilaabi (Hafazahullah), *Hadhrat Maulana Zia ur Rehman Farooqi Shaheed (Rahimahullah); A Caller to the Unity of the Ummah*, www.pitas.com/dailyislam/zia_farooqi.html accessed 3 March 2007.
- ²⁶ Interviews with Sana-ul-Haq Trimdhi and Sohaib Farooq held on 3 March 2009
- ²⁷ Shias accuse Umar, the second caliph after the Prophet, of being extremely harsh toward the Prophet's daughter, and hate him for being one of the three usurpers of power after the passing of the Prophet.
- ²⁸ Interview with Abida Hussain, ex-MNA, 30-31 September 2009
- ²⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁰ Interview with Mehr Sher Muhammad, the elder brother of Haq Nawaz Jhangvi, Mauza Chela, Jhang August 2006.
- ³¹ Later on, Chinioti imparted instruction at Banuri Mosque, Karachi "in his speciality of condemning the Ahmedi community as apostates". See Khaled Ahmed, "Maulana Chinioti the Great Apostatiser (1931-2004)", *The Friday Times*, Lahore, 13-19 August 2004.
- ³² Maulana Zia-ur-Rehman Faruqi became the chief patron of SSP after Haq Nawaz Jhangvi's assassination. Before that he was Imam and Khatib of a mosque run by the Auqaf Department at Sumundri, District Faisalabad. *Zindagi* Lahore, 14-20 March 1991.
- ³³ Along with Malik Saleem Iqbal, Arshad Lodhi, Deputy Commissioner, Superintendent of Police, those who took part in the negotiations were Maulana Rashid Ahmad Madni, Mohalla Chandanwalla, Dildar Ali (Secretary Anjuman-i-Tajran), Haji Muhammad Ali (President, Anjuman-i-Tajran), Mian Iqbal Hussain, Muhammad Zahur Chuhan Advocate, Sheikh Muhammad Iqbal (Chairman Municipal Committee, Jhang), Muhammad Farooq (President Anjuman-i-Tajran, Jhang City), Muhammad Rafique Saqi (General Secretary Anjuman-i-Tajran Jhang city), Muhammad Aslam (Joint Secretary Anjuman-i-Tajran, Jhang City) and Maulana Esar-ul-Qasimi. See, *Aman Muahida (Manzur Shuda) Zilai Intizamia wa membraan e Committee Anjuman-i-Sipah-i-Sihaba wa Muazizeen-i-Jhang*, (Urdu) (Jhang, 1990).
- ³⁴ Owais Tohid, "An Eye for an Eye, In Death, as in Life: Interview-Qari Shafiqur Rehman", October 2003 <http://www.newslines.com.pk/newsoc2003/stopoc1.htm>
- ³⁵ Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan, Terrorist Group of Pakistan <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/Pakistan/terroristoutfits/Ssp.htm> accessed 3 March 2007.
- ³⁶ "In the Spotlight: Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP)", July 9, 2004, [www.cdi.org/.../friendly version/printversion.cfm](http://www.cdi.org/.../friendly%20version/printversion.cfm) accessed 3 March 2007.
- ³⁷ Weekly *Zindagi*, Lahore, 14-20 December 1991. Sheikh Haq Nawaz was later hanged in Mianwali jail on 28 February 2001. Kaka Balli, kinsman of Amanullah Sial, was sentenced to life imprisonment for the assassination of Haq Nawaz Jhangvi. See Azmat Abbas (2002), p13.
- ³⁸ Also see *South Asia Tribune*, 15 September 2004.
- ³⁹ Owais Tohid, "An eye for an eye" 15th October 2003. <http://www.newslinemagazine.com/2003/10/an-eye-for-an-eye-2/>, accessed 19 August 2010.
- ⁴⁰ Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan, Terrorist Group of Pakistan, *South Asia Terrorism Portal*, June 21, 2004, <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp?countries/Pakistan/terroristoutfits/ssp.htm> accessed 23 February 2007
- ⁴¹ The core objectives of LJ were: targeting Western interests in Pakistan and the Shia community, as well as the eventual transformation of the country into a Taliban-style Islamic state. It was associated with assassinations and attempted killings of prominent politicians and religious leaders in Pakistan and overseas.

- ⁴² Drug and alcohol trafficking witnessed an increase of 250 to 300 per cent after the onset of sectarian violence, according to Hasan, “Live and Let Die”, *The Friday Tims*, 3-9 September 1992.
- ⁴³ Government of Pakistan, General Elections Report, 1990, Islamabad, p 243. The Islami Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI) was formed in September 1988 to oppose the Pakistan’s People Party (PPP) in elections that year. The alliance comprised nine parties, of which the most important members were the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) and the Islamic organization Jamaat-i-Islami (JI). The IJI won only 53 seats in the National Assembly, mostly in the Punjab, compared with 92 won by the PPP. In the 1990 elections the IJI, under Nawaz Sharif, won 105 seats versus 45 by the Pakistan Democratic Alliance (PDA), of which the PPP was the main component. In the 1993 national elections, the IJI coalition no longer existed to bring together all the anti-PPP forces. Ul Qasimi contested the 1990 provincial election from the JUI (Sami-ul-Haq Group) quota. See *Zindagi* Lahore, 14-20 March 1991.
- ⁴⁴ It is difficult to identify some politicians as either Shia or Sunni. They do not make their affiliation clear, either for political reasons or simply because they practise a mixed kind of religion, changing their statements frequently. Thus it is difficult to identify at least one of the MNAs elected in 2008 as either Shia or Sunni, because respondents’ perceptions of their allegiance vary – some even saying that this MNA has ‘no religion.’
- ⁴⁵ Focus Group Discussion held on 11 October 2008.
- ⁴⁶ Interview with Haq Nawaz Dab held on 7 September 2009.
- ⁴⁷ Interview with Sufi Murad, a longstanding resident of Jhang and small businessman, 9 October 2009
- ⁴⁸ Interview with Mukhtar Farooqi on 3 March 2009. Some participants in the Focus Group Discussion held on 11 October 2008 also held this view
- ⁴⁹ This was the opinion of many participants in the Focus Group Discussion held on 11 October 2008
- ⁵⁰ This view was openly expressed by at least 3 persons during the Focus Group Discussion held on 11 October 2008
- ⁵¹ People belonging to SSP particularly talked about the blasphemous literature produced and provocations made by Shias. For instance, this issue came up during an interview with Abdul Ghafoor Jhangvi held on 4 March 2009.
- ⁵² Interview with Sufi Murad, 9 October 2009.
- ⁵³ Interviews with Sana-ul-Haq Trimzi and Abul Hassan held on 3 and 4 March respectively.
- ⁵⁴ For further detail see Ch. Akhter Ali, ‘Reference under 6(2) of the Political Parties Act (as amended)’, Supreme Court of Pakistan, Islamabad, 29 January 2002
- ⁵⁵ Interview with Sheikh Sultan, Advocate in the District Court and a renowned local political observer, July 6 2007
- ⁵⁶ These views were collected and confirmed through interviews of victims, interviews with key informants and Focus Group Discussions held in the district.
- ⁵⁷ Interviews with, among others, Javed Islam, District Police Officer, Asad Islam Mahni, and District Coordination Officer Sohaib Farooq held on 3 and 4 March 2009; similar views were expressed during the Focus Group Discussion held on 11 October 2008.
- ⁵⁸ Interview with Abida Hussain, ex-MNA, 30-31 September 2009
- ⁵⁹ Interview with Maulan Muhammad Ahmad Ludhiyanvi, President of SSP on 5 July 2007.
- ⁶⁰ Interview with Syed Safdar Hussain Shah, Advocate and a Shia Activist on 6 July 2007.
- ⁶¹ Interview with Qazi Nisar Ahmad, a Sunni religious leader, 23 May 2008
- ⁶² See the website, http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/topics/Gilgit_Agency
- ⁶³ The Ismaili branch of Islam is the second largest part of the Shia community, after the Twelvers (Ithna-ashariyya). The Ismaili get their name from their acceptance of Ismail bin Jafar as the divinely appointed spiritual successor (Imam) to Jafar al-Sadiq, wherein they differ from the Twelvers, who accept Musa al-Kazim, younger brother of Ismail, as the true Imam.

- ⁶⁴ “The story of Gilgit: deaths foretold”, *Daily Times*, 10 January 2005
- ⁶⁵ See also Varley (2010). The focus of Varley’s research is on the effects of sectarian conflict on access to health care (specifically obstetric care for women) in Gilgit.
- ⁶⁶ For details, see Aziz Ali Dad, “Violent association”, *The News*, 23 Oct 2005; Aalso M. Ismail Khan, “Gilgit - a man-made calamity”, *The News*, 31 Oct 2005.
- ⁶⁷ Vox Populi, Save Gilgit-Baltistan, <http://globalpoliticsnews.com/?p=163>, accessed on 26 June 2009
- ⁶⁸ Khalid Hasan, “Sectarian conflict looms over Pakistan”, *Daily Times*, 14 May 2007
- ⁶⁹ *The Dawn*, Karachi, 8 September 2009
- ⁷⁰ Interview with journalist Israr Uddin, 22 May 2008
- ⁷¹ *Dawn*, 15 May 2005
- ⁷² Jaan Haider, “Gilgit: the paradise lost”, *The Post*, 7 January 2006.
- ⁷³ Interviews with Burhan Ullah, Safdar Ali, Shujaat Ali and Ali Haider Taj, members of Democratic Alliance, 22 May 2008.
- ⁷⁴ Interview with Syed Asad Ali Zaidi, Deputy Speaker, Legislative Assembly, 23 May 2008
- ⁷⁵ One is reminded of similar allegations in the context of Indian-held Kashmir after partition, when the Indian government considered the option of changing the demographic balance of that region in favour of Hindus, thereby settling the issue of its allegiance once and for all.
- ⁷⁶ Interview with Syed Asad Ali Zaidi, Deputy Speaker, Legislative Assembly, 23 May 2008
- ⁷⁷ Javed Jabbar, “Allegations most unbecoming”, *Dawn*, 3 June 2004.
- ⁷⁸ *The News*, 24 March 2005.
- ⁷⁹ *Dawn* 26 June 2006.
- ⁸⁰ *Dawn* 17 February 2004.
- ⁸¹ *Daily Times* 26 July 2005.
- ⁸² *The News* 10 September 2005. It was also known that sectarian groups in Gilgit provided support to sectarian militants in other parts of the country. For example, Syed Hussain Shah alias Abbas from Gilgit was arrested for the murder of the SSP MNA from Jhang, Azam Tariq.
- ⁸³ *Daily Times* 16 October 2005.
- ⁸⁴ Interview with Syed Asad Ali Zaidi, Deputy Speaker, Legislative Assembly, 23 May 2008.
- ⁸⁵ Interview with Syed Nizam Uddin Shah, Superintendent of Police, Special Investigation Unit, 23 May 2008.
- ⁸⁶ Varley (2010) notes that civil security measures focuses on government offices, banks, tourist centres and the homes of prominent businessmen, politicians and Army officers, while issues related to health service provision, physician safety and patient access were under-prioritized – both Sunni and Shia doctors were attacked, leading many Sunni doctors to abandon their private practices and flee to Islamabad. Opposition to aspects of reproductive health service provision from radical Sunni *ulema* had resulted in under-provision of facilities in Sunni-dominated *mohallas*. While Shias and Ismailis were able to access health facilities in Shia-dominated *mohallas*, Sunni women were either unable to reach facilities to give birth or left too soon afterwards because it was unsafe for their male relatives to accompany them. Perceptions of sectarian discrimination were, however, difficult to disentangle from the generally poor attitudes of staff in government facilities towards patient care.
- ⁸⁷ Interview with Malik Muhammad Miskeren, Speaker, Legislative Assembly, 22 May 2008
- ⁸⁸ Interview with Qazi Nisar Ahmad, a Sunni religious leader, 23 May 2008.

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Appendix 1

List of interviews

Jhang: participants in Focus Group Discussion 11 October 2008

Major ® Muhammad Ghulam Sarwar	Active member of Jamat-i-Islami in Jhang/ also a successful businessman
Dr. Niaz Ali Mohsin Mighiyana	Surgeon Doctor/ Author of several books on literature
Eng. Mukhtar Hussain Farooqi	Civil Eng., running an educational institution, the Quran Academy
Mahar Bahadur Khan Jhaggar	Former Distt. Ameer of Jamat-i-Islami, Jhang, also running a private school
Commander (R) Muhammad Nawaz Jaffary	Retired naval officer
Mian Azher Hussain Khokhar	Director, Sufi group of industries
Mahar Ghulam Muhammad Jhaggar	Professor of Geography at Govt. College, Jhang
Bilqees Akhtar Hashmi	Social worker/ also running a private school
Zainab Bibi	Social worker
Jawad Hussain Naqvi	Professor of History, Govt. College, Jhang
Ch. Shahbaz Ahmad Gujjar	Advocate/ Deputy Secretary of Jamiat Ulma-e-Islam (JUI), Punjab
Fazal-ur-Rehman Juya	Advocate/ Member Distrist Bar Jhang

Gilgit: participants in Focus Group Discussion Islamabad 29 June 2009

Since the senior research team was unable to travel to Gilgit because of frequent flight cancellations, a focus group discussion was organized in Islamabad. Participants were people from Gilgit but working in Islamabad:

Ejaz Ali	Consultant
Sher Ali	Social Researcher
Adeel Relay	Representing K.S.O
Syed Sabit Rahim	Social Researcher
Ejaz Hussain	Social Worker
Aziz Ali Dad	Social Scientist / Columnist
Sana Khan Amin	Humanitarian aid worker
Tasawar Isturi	President BNSO
Ahmad Wali Khan	Benazir Income Support Program
Karim Johar Khan	Businessman
Prof. Mark Khaleeque	Ex-President-JKNAP & Information Secretary APNA
Mohammad Arif Khan Shahid	Secretary General JKNLF
Ali Ahmad Jan	Social Researcher
Iqbal Hussain	

List of key informants

Jhang: 3-4 March 2009

Mukhtar Farooqi, Mohtamim, Quran Academy, Jhang
Javed Islam, District Police Officer, Jhang
Abdul Ghafoor Jhangvi, District President, Sipah-e-Sahaba
Sana-ul-Haq Trimzi (advocate), Tehrik-e-Jafria
Jawad Naqvi, Professor of History, Government College, Jhang
Iftekhhar Abbas Jatiana, President District Bar, Jhang
Muhammad Nawaz Jaffery, President, Human Rights Foundation
Vazir Ali Zaidi, advocate
Shahbaz Ahmad Gujjar, Deputy Secretary Information, Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam (JUI-F)
Sohaib Farooq, Director, Ghazali Schools, as well as a UC Nazim
Muhammad Ghulam Sarwar, Jamat-i-Islami
Haroon-ur-Rashid, Deputy District Officer (Revenue), Jhang
Sheikh Muhammad Akram, leading politician and businessman, also a former Tehsil Nazim
Abul Hassan, Pakistan Muslim League – Nawaz (PML-N)
Asad Islam Mahni, District Coordination Officer (DCO), Jhang

Gilgit: 22-23 May 2008

Mr. Izhar Hunzai, General Manager, Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP)
Malik Muhammad Miskeen, Speaker, Legislative Assembly
Syed Nizam Uddin Shah, Superintendent of Police, Special Investigation Unit
Maulana Qazi Nisar Ahmad, Sunni Religious Leader
Syed Asad Zaidi, Deputy Speaker, Northern Areas Legislative Assembly
Mr. Israr Uddin, Journalist
Ehsan Ali, Advocate
Mr. Burhan Ullah, Democratic Alliance
Mr. Safdar Ali, Democratic Alliance
Mr. Vazir Shafi, Democratic Alliance
Eng. Shujat Ali, Democratic Alliance
Ali Haider Taj, Democratic Alliance

Additional interviews

Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Ludhiyanvi, President of SSP, 5 July 2007

Mehr Sher Muhammad, the elder brother of Haq Nawaz Jhangvi, Mauza Chela, Jhang August 2006

Sheikh Sultan, Advocate in District Courts and a renowned local Political observer, 6 July 2007

Syed Safdar Hussain Shah, Advocate and Shia Activist, 6 July 2007

Interviews conducted with heads of madrasahs by Katja Riikonen around Peshawar, May 2008

Haq Nawaz Dab, 7 September 2009

Abida Hussain, 30 September 2009

Appendix 2

Sectarian organizations in Pakistan

Hanafi/Deobandi organizations

Party or organization	Central Ameer Nazim/leader	Date established	Type	Central Office
Malis-e-Ahrar-e-Islam	Syyad Attaul Maheen Bukhari	1929*	Political/Sectarian	Dar Bani Hashim, Mehrban Colony Multan
Jamiat Asha'at-o-Tauheed-o-Sunnah	Maulana Ziaullah Shah Bukhari	1939	Political/Sectarian	Lala Musa District Gujrat
Pakistan Ulema Council	Maulan Qazi Abdul Latif	2000	Political/Sectarian	Akora Khatak, District Noushehra
Sipah Sahaba	Maulana Azam Tariq	1985	Sectarian	Jamia Masjid Farooqia, Shahdara, Lahore
Tehreek-e-Difa Sahaba	Maulana Ataullah Bandialvi	1987	Sectarian	Jamia Masjid Mua'awia, Water Supply Road Sargodha
Jamiat Ahle Sunnat	Maulana Mufti Mohammad Eesa Gurmani		Sectarian	Masjid Saddiqia, Satellite Town
Swad Azam Ahle Sunnat	Asfandyar		Sectarian	Gujranwala
Tehreek-e-Khudam-e-Ahle Sunnat	Maulana Mazhar Hussein		Sectarian	Jamia Masjid Mandi Chakwal
Lashkare Jhangvi (Defunct)	Akram Lahore	1996	Sectarian	Lahore
Lashkare Jhangvi (Qadri Group)	Qadri Abdul Hai	2000	Sectarian	Karachi
Majlis-e-Tasneequl Islami	Maulana Fazlur Rehman, Maulana Fidaur Rehman Derkhwasti	2001	Educational (Sectarian based)	Peshawar
Majis-e-Ta'awun Islami	Mufti Nizamuddin Shamzai		Sectarian	Jamia Islamia Banoria, Gurumandir, Karachi
Mashaikh Pakistan	Maulana Syed Sher Ali Shah		Sectarian	
Majils Ulema-e-Ahle Sunnat	Maulana Abdul Karim Nadim		Sectarian	
Sipah Sahaba Students	Maulana Iqrar Abbasi	1987	Sectarian	Chawranghi, Karachi

Source: Muhammad Amir Rana (2006) *A to Z of Jihadi Organizations in Pakistan*. Lahore: Mashalb Publisher, pp 157-160.

* Abdullah Malik, *Punjab key siyasi tehreekain* (Lahore: Kosar Publishers, 1986).

Ahle Hadith organizations

Party or organization	Central Ameer Nazim/leader	Date established	Type	Central Office
Jama'at Ahle Hadees	Maulana Mohammad Hussein Sheikhpuri	1919	Tableeghi-Sectarian	Jamia Masjid Ahle Hadees Chowk
Jamiat Ulema Ahle Hadees	Abdul Qadeer Khamosh		Sectarian	Lahore
Anjuman Ahle Hadees			Sectarian	Lahore
Tahafuz-e-Harmain Sharifan Movement Pakistan	Maulana Abdul Ghafoor		Sectarian	Jamia Ulum Asaria, Jehlum
Ahle Hadees Youth Force	Shahid Rafiq	1986	Sectarian	106 Ravi Road Lahore
Shaban-e-Ahle Hadees			Sectarian	Burns Road, Karachi
Ahle Hadees Janbaz Force	Maulana Mohammad	1994	sectarian	Karachi

Source: Muhammad Amir Rana (2006) *A to Z of Jihadi Organizations in Pakistan*. Lahore: Mashalb Publisher, pp 301-302.

Hanfi/ Barelvi organizations

Party or organization	Ameer /Nazim/Chief	Date established	Type	Central Office
Tehreek Minhajul Quran	Allama Tahirul Qadri	1989	Sectarian	Model Town Lahore
Sunni Tehreek	Mohammed Abbas Qari	1990	Sectarian	27 A Mueen Plaza, 1 st Floor, Baba-e-Urdu Road, Karachi
Jama'at Ahle Sunnat	Syed Riaz Hussein Shah	1953	Sectarian	Nizam Building, Opposite Lady Wellington Hospital, Azadi Chowk, Lahore
A'alami Jama'at Ahle Sunnat	Pir Afzal Qadri	1998	Sectarian	Naikabad, mararrian Sharif, Gujrat
Mutahida Ulema Council	Maulana Abdul Rauf Malik	1998	Sectarian	Lahore
Anjuman Naujawan-e-Islam	Tariq Mehboob	1998	Sectarian	Karachi
Mustafai Tehreek	Ghulam Murtaza Saeedi	1996	Sectarian	Union Press, Circular Road, Opposite Mochi Gate, Lahore

Hanfi/ Barelvi organizations - continued

Party or organization	Ameer /Nazim/Chief	Date established	Type	Central Office
Itehadul Mashaikh(Q)	Sultan Riazul Hassan Qadri		Sectarin	Haq Bahu House, Shahdara Station, Lahore
Itehadul Mashaikh (Z)	Doctor Khalid Raza Zakori	1953	Sectarian	Zakori Sharif, Dera Ismail Khan
Tanzeem Mashaikh-e-Azam	Masood Ahmad Siddiqui	2001	Sectarian	Faisalabad
Jama'at Raza-e-Mustafa	Maulana Abu Daud/ Haji Mohammed Siddiqui		Sectarian	Office Raza-e-Mustafa, Zeenatul Masajid, Chowk Darusalam, Gujranwala
Sunni Ulema Council	Nazakat Hussein		Sectarian	Lahore
Sipah Mustafa	Allama Allah Bukhsh Nayyar	1989	Sectarian	Jamia Masjid Purani Eidgah, Jhang Sadar
Karawan-e-Islam	Mufti Mohammed Khan Qadri		Sectarian	Jamia Islamia, 1 Fasih Road, Islamia Park, Lahore
A'alami Idara Tanzeem Islam	Allama Saeed Mujadidi	1999	Sectarian	Gujranwala

Source: Muhammad Amir Rana (2006) *A to Z of Jihadi Organizations in Pakistan*. Lahore: Mashalb Publisher, pp 354-357.

Shia organizations

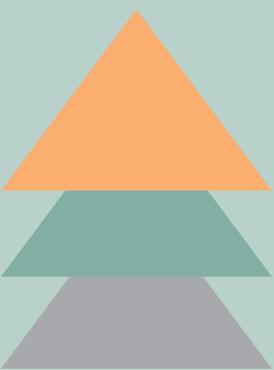
Organisation or party	Ameer/Nazim/Chief	Date established	Type	Central Office
Tehreek-e-Jafferia (Defunct)	Allama Sajid Naqvi	1979	Political/Sectarian	Jamia Al Muntazir, H Block, Model Town, Lahore
Tehreek-e-Nifaz-e-Fiqah-e-Jafferia	Allama Hamid Musvi	1984	Political/Sectarian	Ali Masjid, Satellite Town, Rawalpindi
Pasban-e-Islam		1989	Sectarian	Underground organization
Tehreek-e-Tahafuz-e-Haqq-e-Shia	Hafiz Riaz Hussein		Sectarian	Jamia Al Muntazir, H Block, Model Town, Lahore
Tehreek-e-Haqq-e-Jafferia	Mushtaq Hussein Jaffery	1990	Sectarian	740 Q Block, Model Town, Lahore
A'alami Majlis Ahle Baet	Mohsin Ali Najafi		Sectarian/ Tableeghi	P.O. Box No. 1613 Islamabad
Sipah Mohammed	Allama Rai Jaffer Raza	1990	Sectarian	Thokar Niaz Beg
Tanzeem-e-Ghulaman-e-Ahl-e-Imran	Al Haj Mohammed Iqbal Hira		Sectarian/ Reformatory	Lahore
Azadari Council	Syed Ali Raza Gardezi	1991	Sectarian	Multan
Imamia Students Organization	Agha Hassan Qizilbash	1972	Sectarian	5/ A Muslim Town Mor, Lahore
Jamiat-e-Tulaba Jafferia		1972	Sectarian	
Shia Supreme Council	Ghazi Abdullah Jin	1972	Sectarian	Dera Ismail Khan
Imamia Organization		1976	Sectarian	36 Haider Road, Islamic Centre, Islampura, Lahore
Imamnese		1999	Sectarian	Lahore
Anjuman Wazifa Sadat Momineen	Syed Iftexhar Hussein Jaffery	1999	Sectarian	Lahore

Source: Muhammad Amir Rana (2006) *A to Z of Jihadi Organizations in Pakistan*. Lahore: Mashalb Publisher, pp 403-304

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