

Weapons of mass instruction? A preliminary exploration of the link between madrassas in Pakistan and militancy

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English summary

This study conducts a preliminary investigation into the link between madrassas in Pakistan and Islamic militancy. Available literature is reviewed and pitted against findings from primary sources – such as interviews, news articles and information extracted from jihadi websites.

For the purposes of this report, Islamic militancy in Pakistan has been divided into four main categories, based on a group's perception of its key enemy:

- global violent struggle (against Westerns targets)
- cross-border jihad into Afghanistan/Kashmir/India
- violent campaign against the Pakistani government and security forces
- sectarianism

An attempt is then made to understand how madrassas are involved in one or several of these violent expressions – that is, the role played by madrassas in promulgating militancy. Examples of madrassas, and evidence of their links to certain extremist organization(s), are given to illuminate this role.

From promoting a jihadist ideology to kidnapping young boys, and from sheltering militants to acting as sites for jihadi gatherings, the roles played by Pakistani madrassas in expanding extremism are variegated. One should bear in mind that, insofar as inciting Islamic militancy is concerned, some functions of madrassas are easier to judge than others. It is difficult, for instance, to determine the exact ideology imparted in a given religious seminary and understand how it encourages madrassa students to partake in violent jihad; most of the textbooks in madrassas are in Arabic (a language not understood by the majority of Pakistanis). Hence, it is oral lectures (conducted in Urdu or Pashto) transmitted by the seminary teachers that are bound to have the greatest impact in moulding the students' psyche. Although valuable, it is practically infeasible to visit and study each individual madrassa in Pakistan. Evidence (in the form news articles, or visual or audio tapes found online) of a madrassa's participation in rallies or gatherings held by extremist organizations, or incriminating speeches given by a madrassa's leading figures, can, however, help evaluate the madrassas-militancy connection.

The present study finds a tentative link between Pakistani madrassas and Islamic militancy. While there is little evidence supporting a connection madrassa involvement in “global jihad”, weak to strong bonds are discernible for all other types of violent jihads in Pakistan's context.

An additional discovery of the present research is that jihadi teachings may not be the exclusive purview of madrassas, and an overemphasis on madrassas can be misguided and misleading since the curricula used in Pakistani public schools (70% of all enrolled students) also contain inflammatory literature that might create a narrow worldview which is susceptible to extremist ideology. This segment of the education system therefore deserves greater attention.

Sammendrag

Denne rapporten gir en foreløpig analyse av forbindelsene mellom religiøse skoler (madrassaer) i Pakistan og militante grupper. Tilgjengelig litteratur blir diskutert og vurdert i forhold til funn fra primærkilder som intervjuer, nyhetsartikler og informasjon fra ulike jihadistiske nettsider.

Rapporten deler islamske militante grupper i Pakistan inn i fire kategorier ut ifra hvem gruppene oppfatter er sin hovedmotstander:

- den globale kampen (mot vestlige mål)
- grenseoverskridende kamp ("cross-border" jihad) i Afghanistan, Kashmir og India
- politisk vold mot den pakistanske regjeringen og sikkerhetsstyrkene
- sekterisk-religiøs vold

Studien forsøker å forstå i hvilken grad og eventuelt hvordan madrassaer er involvert i en eller flere av disse voldelige retningene og hvilken rolle madrasser eventuelt spiller i å fremme voldelige aksjoner. Enkelte madrassaer og deres forbindelser til militante bevegelser blir analysert.

Det er viktig å huske på at enkelte sammenhenger er enklere å vurdere enn andre. For eksempel er det vanskelig å avgjøre hvilke ideologiske retninger som er gjeldende for hver enkelt religiøs skole og hvorvidt og hvordan denne oppfordrer studentene til å ta del i en voldelig kamp. En grunn til dette er at mye av det formelle undervisningsmaterialet ofte er på arabisk (et språk flertallet av pakistanere ikke forstår). Det er derfor de muntlige leksjonene (på urdu) som vil ha størst innvirkning på studentene. Det er i praksis nærmest umulig å gjøre en systematisk kartlegging av dette.

Eksempler på deltakelse i demonstrasjoner og møter organisert av ekstremistiske organisasjoner, eller anklagende taler av ledende madrassa-ansatte, kan være med å styrke linken mellom madrassaer og militante grupper.

Studien finner liten støtte for påstanden om at det er svært tette og direkte forbindelser mellom pakistanske religiøse skoler og den globale jihad. Man finner imidlertid større grad av involvering med andre typer voldelig kamp.

Et annet funn i denne studien er at den jihadistiske læren ikke er unik for madrassaer, og å legge for mye vekt på madrassaer kan bli mistolket og være misledende p.g.a at pensumet som blir brukt i offentlige pakistanske skoler (der 70 prosent av alle registrerte elever studerer) også inneholder litteratur som kan skape et snevert syn på verden, og som kan gjøre en mottagelig for radikale ideologier. Denne delen av utdanningssystemet krever derfor større oppmerksomhet.

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1 Introduction

This report examines the link between madrassas in Pakistan and Islamic militancy. It reviews available literature on the topic and measures the findings against primary sources, such as interviews with journalists, newspaper articles and jihadi websites.¹ Militancy has been divided into four categories: (i) a global violent struggle against Western targets, (ii) cross-border attacks into Afghanistan/Kashmir/India (including groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammad), (iii) a violent campaign against the Pakistani establishment (this includes primarily the Pakistani-Taliban), and (iv) sectarian violence (Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Sipah-e-Sahaba).

With regards to a link between Pakistani madrassas and global jihad, this report finds little evidence. However, weak to strong links are discernable for all other types of violent Islamic extremism in Pakistan.

From ambiguous to incontrovertible roles, madrassa's connection to violent Islamic extremism appears to exist on several different levels. This diversity, coupled with the sparse research on the topic, renders it difficult to fully understand the relationship between Pakistani madrassas and militancy. To overcome this, the present report employs various proxies to gauge the possible involvement of madrassas in expanding extremism. Inspired by one of the few empirical studies undertaken on testing the madrassa-militancy link, the proxies used have taken a leaf out of Saleem Ali's² study. Ali addressed the issue of whether the prevalence of sectarianism in rural and urban cities is linked to madrassa involvement. He applied the following proxy indicators:

- Any madrassa visited by a leading militant leader whose documented speeches have clearly incited violence towards other sects and/or beliefs
- If the students or in-charge of a madrassa participate in militant procession or gatherings of militant Islamic groups
- If madrassa administrators lobby for or provide leadership to jihadi issues (for example, collecting monetary support for militant groups)
- If madrassa managers or students were reported to have been involved in violent crimes by extremist groups³

Madrassas to exhibit one or more of these features were categorized as sectarian proclivity in Ali's study. Since the present report deals with Islamic militancy on a broader level, the

¹ By *jihadi* in this context is meant that which is prone to "Islamic militancy" or advocates violence in the name of Islam

² Saleem Ali is an Associate Professor of Environment Studies at the University of Vermont and on the adjunct faculty of Brown University's Watson Institute for International Studies

³ Saleem Ali, *Islam and Education: Conflict and Conformity in Pakistan's Madrassahs*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) A manuscript was emailed to the author in August 2007

admission of “militancy” (in lieu of “sectarian”) is made to all proxies. Where possible, the “type” of violent jihad is distinguished.

For present purposes, a fifth proxy is introduced by way of addendum:

- Online Islamic extremist literature and how they relate to madrassas; this involves reading articles posted on jihadi websites or forums, listening to audio lectures/speeches available on their websites or in various Internet chat rooms .⁴

Where data indulges any of these proxies, the madrassa concerned can be said to have linkages to militancy. As mentioned above, some bonds are stronger than others and it is not within the scope of the current report to rate their tenacity. Also, understanding the skills gleaned from madrassas should provide an indication as to the type of jihad they could serve; for instance, traditional, and the most common type of madrassa in Pakistan, teaches students to rote-learn the Quran and other outdated texts. As a result students carry a very retrograde interpretation of Islam – such “skills” are not of much use to an international terrorist organization that is looking to recruit militants with advanced technological know-how, fluency in English, and so on. On the other hand, for the recruiters of sectarian groups, unskilled and unemployed madrassa students might be ideal candidates.

Understanding what a madrassa “is” and administering the above proxies to available data, then, creates an image of madrassas as serving various different functions that cater uniquely to different tanzeems or organisations, depending on the type of jihad the tanzeem aims to wage. Adherents of global jihad, for example, might – due to lack of facilities – only allow their madrassas to be used as transit points, brief visitations or as safe havens. Those sloganeering to amass recruits for jihad in Afghanistan, like the Rabita chain of madrassas during the anti-Soviet war, published and disseminated specific extremist literature aimed at inducing and mobilising public sentiment. Currently, the Pakistan-based extremist group Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) appears to be following a similar line of practice as evidenced by the content of its many magazines – it actively proselytizes violent jihad to a madrassa audience.⁵

The Pakistani Taliban, with its factions spread across the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), in some cases run their own madrassas; for example head of Pakistani Taliban in Swat, Maulana Fazlullah, led the Imam Dheri madrassa. In other incidences, clergy members of various madrassas have shown affiliation with the Pak-Taliban, and this point shall be discussed further in the following chapters. Finally, there is empirical evidence that sectarian outfits commonly prey on madrassas (those corresponding with their particular Islamic sect) for recruits.

⁴ A thorough analysis of *all* suspect websites that may incriminate madrassa links to certain jihadi organizations is beyond the scope of the present study

⁵ This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2

Chapter 2 of this report offers a panoramic view of what a “madrassa” is; its background and evolution and how it pertains to the study of militancy. The context in which this is detailed is exclusive to Pakistan. Chapter 3 delves into an exploration of the link between madrassas and militancy based on the research data available and the author’s own preliminary probe into relevant information provided by newspapers and jihadi websites. Here the proxies mentioned are used to assess militancy in connection with madrassas. Different functions of madrassas in encouraging Islamic militancy are discussed. This is accompanied by case studies; such as that of the Red Mosque in Islamabad which was raided by the Pakistani army in July 2007, and the relationship between Jaish-e-Mohammad (extremist group) and Wafaq-al-Madaris-al-Arabia (madrassa organization). Chapter 4 looks at the flip side of the coin by presenting arguments against the conceived link between madrassas and militancy. This section also scratches the surface of some budding theories and lines of approach and gauges their efficacy as possible research avenues for further study. Finally an extract of these three chapters is presented in the conclusion and suggestions for future research are proposed.

2 Background

Ever since 9/11, it has been de rigeur to portray madrassas or religious seminaries as the breeding fields for Islamic militancy; the notion came to be widely inflated by the media but only narrowly supported by empirical data. Some research by international observers and agencies has focused on the role of madrassa curricula, and debate has centred on whether their syllabi incite enmity against “alien” beliefs and motivate youngsters to engage in violent jihad. The common speculation has been that 10% of madrassas in Pakistan were linked to militancy.⁶ However, this figure is seeped with suspicion as publicly verifiable information on the topic is lacking.

2.1 What is a Madrassa

A madrassa (plural madaris) is to be distinguished from a Quranic school or a maktab –whereas the latter is a place where Muslim children read and recite the Quran only at a very elementary level, a madrassa offers a more organised institutional structure and different academic levels of religious studies. The bulk of Pakistani madrassas are affiliated with one of the five Islamic school boards, or Wafaq: three Sunni madrassa boards (Deobandi, Bareilvi, Ahl-e-Hadith), one for Shia, and one for Jamaat-e-Islami (JI). The madrassas system is supported largely by communities through trusts, endowments, donations and zakar (religious tithes) contributions.

With the exception of a few madrassas managed by the provincial government (Auqaf) departments, madrassa education in Pakistan is mainly at the auspices of the private sector; most

⁶ Nadeem Iqbal, “Medievalism and Pakistan’s Madrassas,” *Asia Times Online*, 29 August 2002

are registered with the government as charitable corporate bodies and as such have acquired tax exemption.⁷

The sine qua non of a madrassa is that it teaches – either in full or in part – a specialized curriculum called Dars-e-Niazami which was first introduced by Mullah Nizamuddin Siharvi (d. 1747), a scholar in Islamic jurisprudence and philosophy in Lucknow, India. A madrassa’s primary aim is to prepare students for religious duties. Irrespective of their sectarian tilt most Sunni madrassas impart a typical Dars-e-Niazami course, the template for which consists of 20 subjects divided into two broad categories – al-alum an-naqaliya (transmitted sciences) and al-alum al-q qaliya (rational sciences).⁸ The subject areas include grammar, rhetoric, prosody, logic, philosophy, Arabic literature, dialectical theology, life of the Prophet, medicine, mathematics, polemics, Islamic law, jurisprudence, hadith, and tafsir or exegesis of the Quran. Urdu is learnt from the government textbooks.

Levels of education at a madrassa can be furcated into ibtedai (elementary), vustani (middle), and fauqani (advanced). At the lower levels Hafiz-e-Quran (one who can fully memorize the Quran) and Qari (one who can recite the Quran with good pronunciation and in a melodic tone) are produced. The higher levels yield an Alim or an Islamic scholar whose Alim certificate is deemed equivalent to a Master of Arts degree in Islamic Studies or Arabic from a regular university. The option to specialise in hadith, tafsir, or fiqh is available in some madrassas. However, all in all, few madrassas have the facility to teach all subjects and/or degrees, and most textbooks used in the curriculum are grossly outdated – some dating back to the 7th century.

The general program of a madrassa study is as follows:

⁷ Christopher M. Blanchard “Islamic Religious Schools, Madrassa: Background,” (CRS Report for Congress 2008) Federation of American Scientist, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RS21654.pdf>, Accessed 14 February 2008

⁸ The early religious seminaries from the 11th century in Baghdad were created with the intent of producing a class of ulema, muftis (counsel), and qazis (judge) who would administer the Muslim empire. Little of the core curriculum from that time has changed and remains divided between “revealed sciences” (namely, Quran, hadith, Quranic commentary, Islamic jurisprudence) and “rational sciences” (that is, Arabic language and grammar, logic, rhetoric).

<u>Level (or darja)</u>	<u>Duration</u>	<u>Certificate (or sanad)</u>	<u>In mainstream</u>
Ibtedai	4-5 years	Shahadatul Tehfeez ul Quran	Primary (5th grade)
Mutavasatta	3 years	Shahadatul Mutavasatta	Middle (8th grade)
Sanviya Amma	2 years	Shahadatul Sanviya ul Amma	Matric (10th grade)
Sanviya Khasa	2 years	Shahadatul Sanviya Khasa	Intermediate
Aliya	2 years	Shahadatul Aliya	BA
Alamiya	2 years	Shahadatul Alamiya	MA9
phil Uloom Arabia vul Islamia			

Source: Christine Fair, "Islamic education in Pakistan", March 2006, United States Institute of Peace website, http://www.usip.org/events/2006/trip_report.pdf

Figure 2.1: The general program of a madrassa study.

Whereas some scholars recount madrassas in Pakistan to follow more or less a uniform Dars-e-Nizami syllabus, others – such as a recent International Crisis Group (ICG) report – declares this to be a “common misperception,” arguing that every madrassa has its own variant of the curriculum which is characteristically sectarian.¹⁰ For instance, it states that the prescribed readings of Deobandi and Bareilvi (both Sunni-Hanafī sects) madrassas are mutually conflicting and all subjects are taught using a specific sectarian lens.¹¹ Indeed Radd or refutation of other sects, sub-sects and “heretical” beliefs and philosophies is an integral part of most madaris. Tariq Rahman¹² cites the example of a supplementary reading list circulated in Deobandi madaris which refutes capitalism, socialism and feudalism, and may be used in arguments by the teachers.¹³

⁹ This degree is the equivalent of an MA in Arabic and Islamic studies, and is recognized by the government of Pakistan as such.

¹⁰ Uzma Anzar, “Islamic Education: A Brief history of Madrassas with Comments on Curricula and Current Pedagogical Practices” (March 2003), University of Vermont, <http://www.uvm.edu/~7Eenvprog/madrassah/madrassah-history.pdf>, Accessed 31 August 2007; Mumtaz Ahmad, *Continuity and Change in the Traditional System of Islamic Education: the Case of Pakistan*, Craig Baxter and Charles H. Kennedy, eds., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Mumtaz Ahmed, “Madrassa Education in Pakistan and Bangladesh” (Spring 2004), Asia Pacific Centre for Security Studies: <http://www.apcss.org/Publications/Edited%20Volumes/ReligiousRadicalism/PagesfromReligiousRadicalismAndSecurityinSouthAsiach5.pdf>, Accessed 2 September 2007

¹¹ “Pakistan: Karachi’s Madrassas and Violent Extremism,” (29 March 2007), International Crisis Group, http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/south_asia/130_pakistan_karachi_s_mdrasas_and_violent_extremism.pdf, Accessed 18 August 2007

¹² Dr. Tariq Rahman is Professor of Linguistics and South Asian Studies at the Quaid-e-Azam University in Islamabad, Pakistan

¹³ Tariq Rahman, “Madrassas: Religion, Poverty and the Potential for Violence in Pakistan,” (Winter 2005), Islamabad Policy Research Institute, <http://ipripak.org/journal/winter2005/madrassas.shtml>, Accessed 23 August 2007

In the average madrassa, Arabic and Persian Dras-e-Nizami texts, along with their explanations, are rote-learned by the pupils. It is primarily the transmission of oral lectures (held in Urdu or Pashto) that are internalized by the students. It is these lectures, rather than the textbooks, that help shape the students' mindset to a particular religious and sectarian interpretation of Islam. Thus it could be that the Dars-e-Nizami pattern is common across the madrassas spectrum but the quality of oral discourse that is imparted is kept in tune with an individual madrassa's religious, political or jihadist, proclivity.

Violent Islamist texts – that is, those advocating violent jihad against other religious sects, are not traditionally part of the madrassa curricula; however militant pamphlets or magazines are presumably circulated in certain madrassas, especially those openly aligned with a particular militant group. This point shall be discussed later in the report.

In early 2009 survey conducted by the Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) in Islamabad revealed that 59% of Pakistani madrassas are affiliated with religious political groups; 82% of the hard-line Deobandi madrassas have political affiliations and the corresponding figures for the Ahl-e-Hadith, Shia and Bareilvi madrassas were 70, 48 and 27 percent respectively.¹⁴

Indeed in Pakistan, religio-political parties have exerted considerable influence on madrassas; the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) party, for example, has its own chain of madaris. JI and Jamaat-e-Ulema Islami (JUI) together run over 65% of all madrassas in Pakistan; and one of the largest seminaries is Haqqania madrassa near Peshawar in Akora Khattak, headed by Sami ul-Haq of the JUI-S faction.

2.2 How many madrassas?

At present there is no comprehensive census of madrassas in Pakistan; estimates have ranged from 10,000 to 45,000. A 2004 Congressional Research Service report, "Terrorism in South Asia"¹⁵ puts the number at 10,000 – 20,000, the trail of seminaries extending along the border of Afghanistan, from Karachi to Baluchistan and continuing into the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA). According to former President Pervez Musharraf there are "approximately 14,000 madrassas in Pakistan with about one million poor students."¹⁶ The former Interior Minister Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao stated in 2007 that there existed 13,500 madaris in Pakistan, of which 12,006 were registered under the Societies Registration Act of 1860.¹⁷ The Ministry for Religious Affairs has put the figure at 8,202 (in addition to 6,000 already registered).¹⁸ Some estimates have been as exaggerated as

¹⁴ Muhammad Amir Rana "Mapping the Madrassa Mindset: Political Attitudes of Pakistani Madrassas," *Pak Institute of Peace Studies*, (24 March 2009)

¹⁵ "Terrorism in South Asia", (13 December 2004), Federation of American Scientists, <http://www.fas.org/irp/crs/RL32259.pdf>, Accessed 4 February 2008

¹⁶ Pervez Musharraf, *In the Line of Fire: A Memoir*, (USA: Free Press, 2006)

¹⁷ "18 Jehadi Outfits Banned: Sherpao," *The News International*, 17 January 2007. According to Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, 95 per cent of Pakistan's supposed 13,000 madrasas have been registered.

¹⁸ Ali Waqar, "Punjab Madrassas 1,132 'less'," *The Daily Times Pakistan*, 27 July 2007

40,000.¹⁹ However, reliable statistical data on the matter persists to lack as no governmental body or independent agency has conducted a thorough survey of the madrassa sector. Figure 2.2 shows the number of registered madrassas (of difference sects and political affiliation) in Pakistan from 1960 to 2002.

	Deobandi	Barelvi	Ahle Hadith	Shiite	JI	Unknown	Total
1960*	223	98	55	18	3	55	
1971*	292	123	47	15	41	390	
1979*	354	267	126	41	57	900	
1984*	1097	557	76	76	107		
1988**	1840	717	161	47	96		2861
2002**	7000	1585	376	419	500		9880

Notes:

* Total numbers for 1960, 1971, 1979 and 1984 may not be consistent with Table 1 for these figures are derived from the respective Madrassa Boards, and affiliation of a large number of madrassas remain unidentified.

** 1988 figures from GOP, 1988; and 2002 figures are drawn from the report of Sindh Police published in Dawn 16 January 2003.

Source: Ali Riaz, “Global Jihad, Sectarianism and Madrassas in Pakistan”, August 2005, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (Singapore)

Figure 2.2: Sect-wise classifications of madrassas, 1960–2002

Christine Fair has argued that it is nearly impossible to ascertain the overall number of madrassas in Pakistan; due to the conflation of madrassas with maktab which results in a stark overestimate of madaris number.²⁰ There also exist deficiencies in the way madrassas are registered and stored by the state; as mostly outdated methods are used. There is also the issue of the madrassa’s unwillingness to register itself, and the state’s inability to register is as not all madrassas look the same; they can take on all sorts of shapes and sizes from sprawling compounds to dingy, one-room quarter areas.

In addition to the uncertainty over the exact number of madrassas in Pakistan, the number of madrassa pupils, too, is riddled with unverified data; most reported figures are speculative at best. To help defuse this divisive issue, Andrabi and colleagues perused through articles in mainstream American and international newspapers, reports by Pakistani and American, as well as international, scholars affiliated with international think tanks and the government.²¹ The team

¹⁹ “Editorial: Pakistan’s Madrassa Troubles,” *The Daily Times Pakistan*, 14 July 2007

²⁰ Christine Fair, “Militant Recruitment in Pakistan: A New Look at the Militancy-Madrassa Connection,” *The National Bureau of Asian Research*, Asia Policy no. 2 (July 2007), 107-134

²¹ Tahir Andrabi et al “Religious School Enrollment in Pakistan: A Look at the Data,” (March 2005), The World Bank,

found that the enrolment estimate ranged from 500,000 to 1.5 million and that not a single article validated the number of students enrolled using established data sources.

According to Andrabi's team, madrassas in Pakistan account for less than 1% of all enrolments in the country with no substantial increase in madrassa enrolment in recent years.²² As household-based surveys exclude group(s) of potential madrassa students, e.g. orphans and homeless children, and are somewhat outdated, Andrabi's team adjusted their estimate accordingly (for the omitted groups as well as population growth), and by accounting for these biases arrived at a figure of 475,000 full-time madaris pupils. This is less than 3% of all full-time enrolments, again exposing the widely held fallacy that madrassas enjoy a high market penetration.

Seminary students make up a higher proportion of the enrolled population along the Pak-Afghan border in the "Pashtun belt", as opposed to other regions in Pakistan. But here, too, that figure barely signifies 7.5% of all enrolled students. A caveat in the Andrabi study is that the data did not encompass various areas of FATA and NWFP where madrassa enrolment could be much higher. Furthermore it remains unclear whether estimates of seminary students include pupils who attend madrassa as part-time or as an extracurricular activity.

Outside the Pashtun belt, madrassa enrolment is thinly and evenly spread throughout the country. Andrabi looked at this cohort of households (1%) and found variations which challenge the previously conceived theories of madrassa enrolment based on household-level attributes, such as income or religiosity. They discovered that among the households, less than 25% send all their children to madrassas, 50% send their children to both madrassas and public schools, and 27% to private schools. The finding is accordant with a 2006 ICG study that interviewed madrassa administrators belonging to the top ten, "high quality" madrassas in Pakistan; they noted that substantial portions of their student bodies came from the middle class and that their families can afford other options – pointing to a demand-side component in parental selection of madrassas.²³ More recently in 2009, statistics revealed a boom in female madrassa where the phenomenon does not appear to be associated with poverty; sections of the Pakistani lower middle class are nowadays showing an increasing appetite for a conservative Islamic value system.²⁴

However, the studies do not discriminate between the various types of madrassas or pay heed to the moderate to militant undercurrents of individual seminaries. The Andrabi study was concerned only with the kind of schools utilized, not the kind of education obtained. Violent

http://www.wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2005/02/28/000112742_20050228152509/Rendered/PDF/wps3521.pdf, Accessed 28 August 2007

²² Andrabi et al "Madrassa Metrics: the Statistics and Rhetoric of Religious Enrolment in Pakistan," The Leaps Project, http://www.leapsproject.org/assets/publications/madrassa_metrics.pdf, Accessed 10 July 2009

²³ This also suggests that parents who choose to send their children to madrassas might harbour extremist views: Samina Ahmed, "Testimony on Madrasas and U.S. Aid to Pakistan Before the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs," International Crisis Group, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=4827&l=1>, Accessed 13 August 2007

²⁴ Ibid.

Islamist or jihadi didactics are certainly not the exclusive purview of madaris. Instead, as discussed below, research suggests that public schools might also stimulate attitudes supporting violent extremism.

2.3 History of madrassas in Pakistan

The aetiology of madrassas in the Indian subcontinent can be traced to the Darul Uloom Deoband which was established in pre-divided India in 1867 – from here originated the modern development of Deobandi schools. After the British exiled the last Muslim emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar, Islamic scholars founded a madrassa in Deoband (near Delhi) that came to espouse Wahhabi-like manners and mien. According to historian William Dalrymple, the religious seminary was created in retaliation against the perceived degenerate ways of the old elite. Filled with puritanical zeal it sought to revert to a literal and orthodox interpretation of Quran, and advocated a purification of Islam that would strip from its curriculum any vestiges of European and Hindu influence.

It was largely madrassas with such leanings that spread across Northern India and Pakistan in the course of the 20th century. Gradually, competing sectarian movements (Barelvi, Ahl-e-Hadith, and Shiite), as well as Jamaat-e-Islami political party, also sought to establish themselves. In 1955, the Ahl-e-Hadith school of thought brought its madrassas under the umbrella organisation Markaz-e-Jamiat-Ahle-Hadith – later named Wafaq-al-Madaris-al-Salafia. Shortly afterwards, by 1959, other sects organised similar boards: the Deobandis created Wafaq-al-Madaris-al-Arabai, the Barelvis grouped under Tanzim-al-Madaris-Arabai, and the Shiites set up Wafaq-al-Madaris Shiite. Jamaat-e-Islami also began establishing madrassas of its persuasion to popularise the philosophy of Abdul Ala Mawdudi.

During his presidency President Zia ul-Haq helped to nourish and flourish these religious seminaries. According to Kamal Matinuddin, a retired Pakistani general, Zia “established a chain of deeni madaris along the Afghan-Pakistan border [...] in order to create a belt of religiously oriented students who would assist the Afghan mujahideen to evict the Soviets from Afghanistan.”²⁵ In fact, Zia’s all-encompassing Islamisation policy allowed for the permeation of religion into all aspects of the educational system, in accordance with what he deemed to be the religious ideology of Pakistan. The very constitution of Pakistan proclaims Islam to be the state religion; Article 227 requires existing laws to be brought into conformity with the injunctions of Islam, whereas Article 228-31 require Islamiyat or Islamic Studies and Quran be taught in all schools.

Most historical texts recount the “anti-Soviet jihad” as playing a pivotal part in the mass production and radicalization of madrassas in Pakistan. These madaris did not necessarily provide pupils with weapons or military training but rather encouraged them to join the mujahideen fighting in Afghanistan. For example, Pakistan’s politico-religious party Jamaat-e-Islami is claimed to have had a special chain of seminaries – Rabita madrassas – which gave impetus to the

²⁵ Hassan Abbas, *Pakistan’s Drift into Extremism*, (USA: Yale University Press, 2005)

jihad against the Soviets through its dissemination of literature extolling the duty and virtues of jihad and its mobilization of public sentiment (ICG, 2002).

When the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in 1979, countless Afghans fled to neighbouring Pakistan where makeshift refugee camps and madrassas came to serve as the new homes for these displaced people. Meanwhile, under the patronage of Zia ul-Haq, zakat was formalized and money deducted from bank balances and dispersed at the local level to religious institutions like madrassas. The public education system on the other hand headed into a downward spiral with less than 2% of Pakistan's Gross National Product (GNP) going to it, and to this day that figure has not increased.

No organised educational program was offered to the uprooted families from Afghanistan and so, devoid of alternatives most refugees opted for the madrassa as the only viable (or at times, preferred) school to enrol their children in. In addition to free education, madrassas also provided free food and clothing, adding to the appeal of a madrassa as a parallel institute to the government's sub-par public schools. William Dalrymple interviewed Javed Paracha, a "dedicated Islamist" who had founded two sprawling seminaries in the NWFP. Mr Paracha emphasised the government's incompetence as a reason for the popularity of alternative forms of schooling and even governance, such as the Taliban:

"The books are free. The food is free. The education is free. We give them free accommodation. In a poor and backward area like this, our madrassas are the only form of education. The government system is simply not here. [...] There are 200,000 jobless degree holders in this country. Mark my words; a more extreme form of the Taliban is coming to Pakistan. The conditions are so bad. The people are so desperate. They are waiting for a solution that will rid them of these feudal-army elite. The people want radical change. We teach them in the madrassas that only Islam can provide the justice they seek."²⁶

The political atmosphere of the region during the late 70s and early 80s was also affected by the burgeoning Iranian revolution – causing tension between Shiites and Sunnis, fuelled by the fear that Shiites may take their movement cross-border. To water down their influence, rich individuals and Islamic charities, mainly from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, acted preemptively: pumping money into the stream of madaris subscribing to the orthodox view of Sunni Islam and Wahhabi theology. This factor, coupled with the aforementioned resistance war against the Soviet occupation in Afghanistan and the policy of Islamization led by General Zia, have led to what Olivier Roy has called the "shift from Islamism to neo-fundamentalism"²⁷ which entailed a "Wahhabization" of curriculum in religious seminaries across Pakistan.

However, the historic role of madrassas as peaceful and egalitarian institutions should not be overlooked. JM Butt has argued, for example, that the initial madrassa movement – sprung in

²⁶ William Dalrymple, "Inside Islam's 'Terror Schools'" *New Statesman*, 28 March 2005

²⁷ Olivier Roy, "Islamic Radicalism in Afghanistan and Pakistan" (January 2002), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

response to the Indian Mutiny of 1857 – was committed to a peaceful endeavour, and the Tabligh movement they spawned was allowed to operate freely in several countries on account of its peaceful message and preaching. He further argues that Deobandi religious scholars have traditionally weighed in against violent forms of Islam, acting as bulwarks against extremism.²⁸

William Dalrymple has also brought attention to the role of madrassas as offering hope to the poor; it allows them an opportunity to gain literacy and employment. Where the state apparatus is lacking, madaris have come forward as a parallel system of education that is more viable for the impoverished.²⁹ Madaris also function as shelters and orphanages for many young children, runaways and refugees.³⁰

2.4 Why are madrassas relevant for the understanding of militancy?

In recent times, notably since 9/11, madrassas have continually come under spotlight for being implicitly or complicity involved in acts of terrorism. Is the manpower for militancy to be found in madrassas, and what are the ways in which these seminaries link to terrorism?

Qari Abdullah, a Pakistani-Taliban commander “in charge of child recruitment”³¹ and who himself studied at a madrassa (and later joined the jihad in Afghanistan), confessed to using children as young as 5-7 years old for militancy and justified using child soldiers by claiming:

“Children are tools for achieving God’s will... whatever comes your way you sacrifice it, so it’s fine... [the children] want to join us because they like our weapons. They don’t use weapons to begin with; they just carry them for us.”³²

This emphasises the importance of young children to militant leaders, to carry out their nefarious biddings. Some extremist leaders, dedicated to recruiting child soldiers, have established their own madrassas so to mentally and physically train young boys to militancy. Others find alternative ways to hire child martyrs by preying on different madrassas and its students. The ways in which madrassas promote violent Islamic extremism, then, becomes relevant to the study of militancy.

In March 2009 the Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies conducted field research into the political attitudes of Pakistani madrassa. They interviewed madrassa clergy across various areas and sects, and found that fifty-seven percent of the respondents viewed the war on terrorism as aimed exclusively against Islam and Muslims. A majority – 77% – opposed Pakistan’s involvement in

²⁸ JM Butt, “Controversy: Targeting Madrassas to Curb Extremism,” *Daily Times*, 22 September 2005. JM Butt is a British graduate of the Deobandi Darul Uloom and an official Muslim chaplain at Cambridge University, England.

²⁹ William Dalrymple, “Inside Islam’s ‘Terror Schools’” *New Statesman*, 28 March 2005

³⁰ An account of this can be found in a video by Saleem Ali (2006) “Children of Faith: the Madrassa Students of Pakistan”, <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-3234950266145914423>

³¹ Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, “Pakistan: Children of the Taliban,” (14 April 2009), PBS, http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/pakistan802/video/video_index.html, Accessed 24 May 2009

³² Ibid

the international campaign against terrorism; the Deobandi seminaries suggested that Pakistan deal with terrorism without taking “dictation from the West.”³³ More alarmingly, eighteen percent of the madrassas surveyed by the Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies in March 2009 admitted jihadi affiliations (sectarian).³⁴ If we accept the clergy’s confession, the role of madrassas becomes relevant in studying militancy.

The nature of lectures delivered by madrasa teachers, for example the “siege mentality” that Islam and Muslims are under attack by the U.S. and its allies, bears ramifications for the level of susceptibility of madrasa students to radical ideology – the kind of susceptibility preyed upon by extremist ring leaders.

In early 2007, Farhat Taj³⁵ visited the Jamia Hafsa madrasa in Islamabad where the female students viewed Osama bin Laden and Mullah Omar as their “heroes” and were “ready to become suicide bombers to kill the ‘enemies of Islam’ in Pakistan and abroad.”³⁶ Such conditions in a relatively modern girl’s madrasa in Pakistan’s capital city beget the questions: to what extent do violent Islamic ideologies prevail amongst Pakistani madrassas, and, whether or not this radicalised mentality takes expression in violent extremist action?

It has been reported that girls’ madrassas in Pakistan are expanding rapidly – there are thought to be over 1,900 registered seminaries for girls – and the phenomenon appears not to be correlated to poverty.³⁷ If there are more madrassas for females mushrooming across Pakistan, the question of concern is how many of these emulate the views and violence expressed by the Jamia Hafsa seminary?

A recent analysis of the profiles of suicide bombers who struck the Punjab province of Pakistan revealed that two-thirds of the attackers had attended madrassas.³⁸ More than half the madrassas in Pakistan are said to be in Punjab, concentrated mainly along the southern rural region of the province.³⁹ Given the innate religious conservatism of the countryside, coupled with the lack of public schooling in the areas, the influence of madrassas is thus magnified. People living in rural areas often are bereft of ways to distinguish between ordinary madrassas and that which imparts a violent ideology⁴⁰, so it is not surprising that extremism flourishes in such areas.

³³ Muhammad Amir Rana “Mapping the Madrasa Mindset: Political Attitudes of Pakistani Madrassas,” *Pak Institute of Peace Studies*, (24 March 2009). The survey interviewed madrasa teachers of 172 madaris; the teachers were interviewed with the view that their oral messages play a determining role in shaping the minds.

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Farhat Taj is a Research Fellow at the Centre for Gender Studies at the University of Oslo and a member of the Aryana Institute for Regional Research and Advocacy based in Pakistan.

³⁶ Farhat Taj, “Jamia Hafsa must close down”, *The Daily Times Pakistan*, 3 February 2007

³⁷ “Girls’ Madrassas Expanding at a Dramatic Rate,” *The Daily Times Pakistan*, 16 May 2009

³⁸ Sabrina Tavernise, “Pakistan’s Islamic Schools Fill Void, but Fuel Militancy,” *The New York Times*, 3 May 2009

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Hassan Abbas “Pakistan can Defy the Odds: How to Rescue a Failing State,” (May 2009), Institute for Social Policy and Understanding, http://ispu.org/files/PDFs/ispu-pakistan_can_defy_the_odds.pdf, Accessed 12 May 2009

Poverty and dearth of employment opportunities also means that these seminaries stand more susceptible to militant propaganda. That is to say, even if a madrassa, by itself, does not manufacture terrorists it is likely to create a narrow worldview – this worldview, combined with their poor socio-economic conditions, can create a mindset and state of desperation that welcomes militancy. However, this depends ultimately on the individual madrassa and the “jihadi” inclinations of its clergy.

Several other incidences have also catapulted madaris to notoriety as nefarious nurseries of militancy: in late 2006, a suicide bomber who attacked a government building in Kabul was found to have been trained, along with his three accomplices, at a madrassa attached to Masjid-e-Noor mosque in Karachi. They were supposedly sent on their suicide mission by the head of Masjid-e-Noor madrassa who was allegedly a member of the militant group Harakat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM).⁴¹

These examples suggest that madrassas pose a potential danger to Pakistan’s domestic security as well as the international community. The word Taliban literally means “students” and the movement clearly has roots in the madrassas of Pakistan. It is widely believed that it was a cohort of madrassa-educated individuals that came of age in 1979 (when Soviets invaded Afghanistan) from whence the Taliban movement initially sprang. The alumni records of Haqqania madrassa in Akora Khattak (near Peshawar) are star-studded with numerous high-profile Taliban members, including cabinet ministers and military commanders. Even in the latter half of the 1990s, Haqqania madrassa in Akora Khattak, whose graduates include Jalaluddin Haqqani, continued to act as a fertile ground for militants: it is known to have regularly sent its students to fight in Afghanistan.⁴²

A recent report by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has claimed that half of the suicide attackers used by the Taliban in Afghanistan are foreigners, the recruitment for whom takes place primarily in madrassas in Pakistan.⁴³ One of the failed suicide attackers interviewed by UNAMA, “Munir”, was a self-professed member of the militant group Harakat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM) and had studied 4 years in Jamia Farooqia seminary in Karachi. When justifying his actions, he explained that his madrassa instructors had declared jihad and suicide attacks to be a religious farz or obligation. In the case of another young boy, “Ghulam”, it was not the ideological teachings of his madrassa that evoked his decision to go on a suicide mission – rather, he purports to have been duped by his madrassa headmaster to go to Afghanistan under the (false) promise of receiving a large sum of money if he “exploded himself and killed ‘a big commander.’” It is not uncommon for seminary students to be persuaded to go

⁴¹ Carlotta Gall, “Pakistan link seen in rise in Afghan suicide attacks,” *The New York Times*, 14 November 2006

⁴² Olivier Roy, “Islamic Radicalism in Afghanistan and Pakistan” (January 2002), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

⁴³ “Suicide Attacks in Afghanistan 2001-2007,” (9 September 2007), United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)

on suicide missions to Pakistan under various ruses, most incentive of which is monetary rewards.⁴⁴

On the logistical front, UNAMA attests to the importance of madrassas in Pakistan – from where suicide attackers in Afghanistan draw their support. It singles out madrassas run by Haqqani in North Waziristan (in Pakistan’s tribal area) but does not detail how, or to what degree, they act as harbingers of violence in its neighbouring country.

Pakistani madaris have also been suspected of having links to al-Qaeda. On 30 October 2006, a madrassa in Bajaur (in Pakistan’s tribal belt) was destroyed by a major air strike carried out by the Pakistani government at the time. The strike allegedly killed Liaqat Hussain who was second in command of Tehreek-e-Nifaq-e-Sharia-e-Mohammdi (TNSM), one of the active, anti-government militias in Pakistan, now a member of the Tehrik-e-Taliban alliance.

The madrassa was also famously linked to al-Qaeda leaders such as Ayman al-Zawahiri and Abu Ubaidah al-Misri, who had apparently visited the madrassa and had relations with its leaders.⁴⁵ The madrassa was purportedly being used by the Taliban as a militant training camp: ex-President Pervez Musharraf stated in a security conference: “they were militants doing military training. We were watching them closely for the last six or seven days – we knew exactly who they were and what they were doing.”⁴⁶

Arrests of foreign militants in Pakistani madaris further give support to the suspicion that religious seminaries have been participatory in international terrorism. A leading member of Indonesia’s Jemaah Islamiyah was apprehended in Jamia Abu Bakr (in Karachi) in 2003. Nineteen other Indonesian and Malaysian students were arrested from Jamia Darasitul Islamia, an Ahl-e-Hadith madrassa run by the outlawed group, Jamaat-ud-Dawa.

These examples demonstrate that madrassas have played, and may continue to play, a role in promoting and perpetuating violent extremism, but the nature and extents of this impact needs to be explored further, and that is why madrassas have increasingly become pertinent to the study of militancy.

⁴⁴ There is the example of 14 year old Rafiqullah who was led to Khost where his handler threatened to kill him if he did not obey his instructions, “Taliban Recruiting Children for Suicide Attacks; 3 Teen Bombers Trained in Pakistan,” *Associated Press*, 15 July 2007

⁴⁵ Abu Ubaidah al-Misri was connected with an alleged plot to blow up a transatlantic aircraft; Phillipe Naughton and agencies “Missile Strike School ‘Linked to al-Qaeda No 2 and Air Plot Man,’” *Times Online*, 31 October 2006

⁴⁶ Phillipe Naughton and agencies “Missile Strike School ‘Linked to al-Qaeda No 2 and Air Plot Man,’” *Times Online*, 31 October 2006

3 Madrassas and Militancy

This chapter attempts to discern trends within certain madrassas that may be indicative of the extent and nature of their involvement in militancy. The analytical framework used is the proxies outlined in Chapter 1.

3.1 Madrassas and ideology

The role of madrassas in propagating violent Islamist ideologies is a key aspect of the madrassa-militancy relationship. Many authors claim this to be the case. According to Vali Nasr madrassas often teach a militant version of Islam through organizing and tailoring school curricula to this effect.⁴⁷

Robert Looney also suggests that the “problem comes down to the type of education the madrassa imparts”⁴⁸ – that is, the ideology indoctrinated in the madrassa students. Weeks after 9/11, Hussain Haqqani visited the infamous Darul Uloom Haqqaniya in Akora Khattak where he himself had once been educated. Upon visitation, Haqqani noted that the “quietest version” of Quranic passages taught to him were now being delivered and interpreted in a more radical fashion at the madrassa. Tahir, a 9 year old boy interviewed, gave his interpretation of a Quranic excerpt as follows:

“The Muslim community of believers is the best in the eyes of God, and we must make it the same in the eyes of men by force. We must fight the unbelievers and that includes those who carry Muslim names but have adopted the ways of unbelievers. When I grow up I want to carry jihad in every possible way.”⁴⁹

Similarly, according to Christine Fair, JI’s Rabita madrassas are a prime example of a network of madrassas created solely to indoctrinate a specific kind of ideology in its pupils; that is, to “produce jihadi literature, mobilize popular sentiment, and provide a platform from which to recruit and train mujahideen.”⁵⁰ Reinforcement of a militant ideology in a madrassa enhances the chances of it being used as recruiting fields for terrorist acts.

The case of “Munir” (from the UNAMA study cited above) also points to the ideological factors inherent to some madrassas that legitimises the madrassa graduates decision to partake in militant acts. Munir was a self-professed member of the militant group Harakat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM)

⁴⁷ Vali Nasr is a professor at the Naval Postgraduate School, an Adjunct Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, and the author of *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts Within Islam Will Shape the Future*

⁴⁸ Robert Looney, “Reforming Pakistan’s Educational System: the Challenge of the Madrassas,” *The Journal of Social, Political and Economic Studies*, 28 no. 3 (Fall 2003)

⁴⁹ Husain Haqqani, “Islam’s Medieval Outposts”, (November/December 2002), *Foreign Policy*, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=2459&page=0, Accessed 23 August 2007

⁵⁰ Christine Fair, “Islamic Education in Pakistan,” (March 2006), United States Institute of Peace, http://www.usip.org/events/2006/trip_report.pdf, Accessed 21 August 2007

and had studied 4 years in Jamia Farooqia seminary in Karachi. When justifying his actions to UNAMA interviewers, he explained that his madrassa instructors had declared jihad and suicide attacks to be a religious duty (or, farz).

Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy⁵¹ interviewed a student named Shaheed at a madrassa located in the slums of Karachi, who expressed his wish to join the Taliban and carry out a suicide attack “if I get the permission from my parents then inshAllah I will do it... when I look at suicide bombers younger than me, or the same age as me, I get the passion and inspiration from their terrific attacks.”⁵² The head of the said madrassa was also interviewed;⁵³ in response to the question “Who do you think will win this war [between the Pakistani army and the terrorists]”, replied:

“It’s in the blood of Muslims to have this passion and character, that no matter how many Muslims die, there will never be an end to this stream of sacrificial lambs [...] Non-Muslims only think about this world, but Muslims think about the after-life; they see this as an opportunity to achieve martyrdom. One who sees death as a blessing and is not afraid of it – who can kill such a man?”⁵⁴

This could be interpreted as a pro-Taliban attitude where the headmaster favours the militants, defending them as honourable Muslims willing to embrace death in the name of religion. Such “ideology” or variants of it are most likely taught at his madrassa, and absorbed by his students – views echoed by Shaheed are a case in point.

Militant ideology endorsed in madrassas is discussed further in Section 3.2.2 (Sectarian and jihadi literature).

However, overall the theory that Pakistani madrassas impart a specific brand of Islamic education that might be conducive to producing terrorists has been implied but seldom tested. Tariq Rahman’s work remains one of the rare few of its kind; it compares opinions on jihad, religious minorities and armed conflict of madrassa students and teachers, as well as pupils and instructors at government and private schools.⁵⁵ Rahman administered an attitudinal survey of 488 students (from the 10th grade) in Urdu medium public schools, English medium private schools, and students in religious seminaries. The same survey was also administered to the students’ teachers. In it, he inquired the respondents about their views toward open war with India, toward religious minorities and women, support for jihadi groups, and the utility of peaceful means to resolve

⁵¹ Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy is a Pakistan-born journalist and documentarian

⁵² Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, “Pakistan: Children of the Taliban,” (14 April 2009), PBS, http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/pakistan802/video/video_index.html, Accessed 24 May 2009

⁵³ The headmaster gave a diplomatic answer to the interviewer when aware of the camera on him; however when he felt that the camera had moved away, his answers took on a different, possibly more truthful, tone, and reflected in the quotes given here.

⁵⁴ Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, “Pakistan: Children of the Taliban,” (14 April 2009), PBS, http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/pakistan802/video/video_index.html, Accessed 24 May 2009

⁵⁵ Tariq Rahman, “The Madrassa and the State of Pakistan: Religion, Poverty and the Potential for Violence in Pakistan,” (February 2004), Himal South Asian, <http://www.himalmag.com/2004/february/essay.htm>, Accessed 16 August 2007

conflicts. Rahman found that madrassa students, as compared with public and private school students, are more likely to support war with India and the use of militants in Kashmir, and are less likely to support equal rights for women and minority groups.

When asked whether the students would be ready to give equal citizenship rights to Ahmadis, Hindus and Christians, respectively, 13/17/18% of the madrassa students, 47/47/66% of the Urdu-medium and 66/78/84% of the English-medium students responded in the positive. With regard to militancy, 60% of the madrassa students supported the idea of taking Kashmir away from India by open war and 53% thought Pakistan should support jihadi organisations to fight with the Indian army. Corresponding figures for the Urdu and English medium students were 40/26% and 33/22%, respectively (see Table 3.1).

	% in favour of equal citizenship rights to Ahmedis	% in favour of equal citizenship rights to Hindus	% in favour of equal citizenship rights to Christians	% support for open war with India to take Kashmir	% in favour of Pakistani support of jihadi organizations to fight India
Madrassa students	13	17	18	60	53
Urdu-medium students	47	47	66	40	26
English-medium students	66	78	84	33	22

Table 3.1: Students and nationalist-religious militancy in Pakistan

So, whether these madrassa students make it to the final pool of observed militants or not, it can be inferred from Rahman’s observations that madaris do indeed foster support for terrorism. A disturbing outcome of his study showed that public school students do not vary all too significantly from their madrassa counterparts. That is, Rahman’s findings support the notion that madrassas are likely to inculcate a more narrow-minded and militancy-inclined ideology in its students – but, it also reveals signs that such ideology might prevail in public schools too. Rahman’s results, however, may be somewhat unreliable given the small sample size used, as well as a lack of any statistical testing of output.

Nonetheless, public school involvement in jihadi activity has been implicated by several journalists and scholars as well. Syed Shoaib Hasan during his investigation into claims that pro-Taliban militants were kidnapping school children in Tank (on the edge of Pakistan’s tribal belt); through his interviews with local teachers he found that Taliban “convinced” students that it was their religious duty to carry out jihad and that “as many as 30 students from each of the four government schools in Tank had ‘enlisted.’ A similar number have also joined from private

schools.”⁵⁶ There is, however, no mention of how many madrassa students had enlisted so as to render possible a comparison. Nonetheless, it is interesting to note that both public and private schools are also likely to yield young recruits. Similarly, some interlocutors interviewed by Christine Fair in Pakistan and United States maintained that as much as “40 percent of militant manpower actually comes from Pakistan’s public schools and higher education institutions.”⁵⁷

It should be recalled that Zia ul-Haq’s Islamisation policy during the 1970s and 80s ensured that religion ran deep through the veins of the education sector. It was a more conservative interpretation of Islam and “Pakistan as an ideological state” that made its way to the syllabi of most schools. Naeem Shakir has observed the transformation of the education sector under Zia ul-Haq’s era (1977-1988) and commented that three generations of Pakistanis were

“Taught how to become a war hero and how bad guys were non-Muslims. The concept of jihad was propagated at state level through literature and mass media.... Mullahs spread orthodoxy and obscurantism and sectarian violence through the madrassas.”⁵⁸

A 2003-2004 report by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) analyzed the curricula and textbooks up to 2002 for the subjects of Urdu, English, Social Studies and Civics in general schools in Pakistan and discovered that “madrassas are not the only institutions breeding hate, intolerance, a distorted worldview, etc. The educational material in the government-run schools do much more than madrassas. The textbooks tell lies, create hatred, inculcate militancy, and much more.”⁵⁹

Another analysis by Yvette Claire Rosser of the curriculum of Social Studies revealed that the history of the Indian subcontinent was rewritten in textbooks where the cultural and religious diversity of the region was ignored and a more orthodox version of Islam was used to legitimize Pakistan as a Muslim homeland.⁶⁰

Hence, as public school comprise 70% of Pakistan’s enrolled students (according to Andrabi et al, 2005), a positive correlation between public school students and support for militancy would yield a potentially much broader support base for terrorism than currently assumed. Future research may profit from considering the role of public schools, instead of keeping a narrow focus on just madaris (student enrolment for which is less than 1% in Pakistan, as per Andrabi et al, 2005).

⁵⁶ Syed Shoaib Hasan, “Profile: Islamabad’s Red Mosque,” *BBC News*, 27 July 2007

⁵⁷ Christine Fair, “Militant Recruitment in Pakistan: Implication for al-Qaeda and Other Organizations,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 27 no. 6 (November 2004), 489-504

⁵⁸ Quoted in Oddbjørn Leirvik “Religion in School, Interreligious Relation and Citizenship: the Case of Pakistan,” *British Journal of Religious Education*, 30 no. 2, (March 2008), 143-154

⁵⁹ “Sustainable Development Policy Institute: Annual Report 2003-2004,” Sustainable Development Policy Institute, http://www.sdpi.org/about_sdpi/annual_reports/2003-4.pdf, Accessed 5 May 2008

⁶⁰ Y. C. Rosser, *Religious Fundamentalism in the Contemporary World*, (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2004)

Generally speaking, the kind of ideology taught at madrassas is difficult to ascertain; for example, a young boy recruited by the Taliban in Swat stated in an interview that “they [Taliban] first call us to the mosque and preach to us. Then they take us to a madrassa and teach us things from the Quran...” followed by months of military training where “they teach us how to use Kalashnikov machine guns, rocket launchers, grenades, bombs... they tell us to use them only against the infidels. Then they teach us how to do a suicide attack...”⁶¹

It is unclear from this whether the ideological conditioning took place at the mosque, madrassa or during the military training. And it remains ambiguous what exactly was taught at the madrassa; reading the Quran of itself does not indicate a motivation towards Islamic extremism. It is a particular kind of interpretation of the Quran that is transmitted in a madrassa that may serve to radicalize children.

The Quran and other books taught in madrassas are in Arabic, a language not understood by most Pakistanis children, and are rote-learned. So the ideology of the madrassa teacher, or its head(s), becomes important as they direct the course of oral lectures taught in class (in a language familiar to the students.) If the headmaster of a madrassa is known to be leaning towards a certain “jihadi” ideology, it is likely that his madrassa promotes that ideology through oral lectures and/or by circulating “jihadi” literature in Urdu or Pashto.

Immense empirical field work would be required to investigate the exact teachings of every madrassa in Pakistan. For the purposes of the present report, the “jihadist” leanings of particular heads of madrassas were analysed on the basis of available online sources. This is discussed in greater depth in the following sections.

3.2 Madrassas as sites for recruitment

There are strong indications that certain madrassas in Pakistan play an important role in recruiting child soldiers to carry out militant operations. In the village of Kotki in South Waziristan, a fourteen year old boy, Rafiqullah, and two other teenagers were enlisted by Taliban recruiters. They were shown videos of suicide attacks, taught to drive cars and told to cross the border over into the Afghan city of Khost. There, under the duress of his handler, Rafiqullah was coerced to launch a suicide attack. According to Rafiqullah, a man at his madrassa sought out would-be suicide bombers and encouraged them with speeches: “He said, ‘Do you want to go to heaven? Then you should launch a suicide attack. The people who live in Afghanistan are not Muslims.’”⁶²

Here, madrassa’s role as a recruitment agency for militancy is again highlighted, but with a focus on duping or brainwashing young boys under false pretences rather than inculcating them with a

⁶¹ Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, “Pakistan: Children of the Taliban,” (14 April 2009), PBS, http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/pakistan802/video/video_index.html, Accessed 24 May 2009

⁶² “Taliban Recruiting Children for Suicide Attacks; 3 Teen Bombers Trained in Pakistan,” *The Associated Press*, 15 July 2007

deeply ingrained jihadist philosophy that occurs over a longer period of time.

Explaining the rise in number of child fighters streaming into Afghanistan from Pakistan, an Afghan intelligence agent stated to the UN that:

“These madrassas are far away from their villages, and the boys are sent away for six or seven months at a time. During that time they can brainwash them very easily. They separate them from the group, show them fake films of U.S. soldiers going to the bathroom on the Quran. Those films encourage them to carry out attacks.”⁶³

It is interesting to note that certain pupils were “selected” and “separated” from the rest of the group for militant purposes. Why these individuals were chosen over others might reveal something about the criteria militants employ to screen potential candidates, and a better understanding the backgrounds of those chosen could also reveal the socio-economic and psychological factors involved in persuading a particular person to jihadi activities.

Mimicking this trend of ushering (sometimes in a bullying fashion) children into a life of violent jihad are news stories hailing from Swat in the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan. For instance, on 24 March 2008, nine madrassa-going teenagers in Swat were believed to have been kidnapped by suspected militants “for suicide attack training.”⁶⁴ Again in May 2008, six madrassa students were caught by the Pakistani security forces in Swat in conjunction with plotting suicide strikes. One of the students – allegedly belonging to a madrassa run by Maulana Fazlullah, head of TNSM – was reported as saying:

“I learnt 18 siparah of the Quran at the madrassa. Then, during the military operation, Maulana Fazlullah and his spokesman Sirajul Haq, compelled me to wear a suicide jacket and target the district courts of Swat.”⁶⁵

Madrassas are evidently an attractive field for militant recruiters, from whence they can pluck future jihadists. Presumably, by feeding on the naivety of madrassa-going children, their destitution, and their easy accessibility, militants have gained the necessary leeway to prey on these young seminarians.

The example of “Ghulam” from the UNAMA study (see above) also portrays a picture of Pakistani madrassas as platforms for conditioning and luring impressionable boys. For “Ghulam”, it was not the ideological teachings of his madrassa that evoked his decision to go on a suicide mission – rather, he purports to have been duped by his madrassa headmaster to go to

⁶³ “Suicide Attacks in Afghanistan 2001-2007,” (9 September 2007), United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)

⁶⁴ “9 Swat Teenagers Kidnapped ‘For Suicide Attack Training,’” *Daily Times Pakistan*, 24 March 2008

⁶⁵ “30 Madrassa Students Arrested for Child Militancy in Swat,” *Daily Times Pakistan*, 15 May 2008

Afghanistan under the (false) promise of receiving a large sum of money if he “exploded himself and killed ‘a big commander.’”⁶⁶

UNAMA officers interviewed 23 persons incarcerated or awaiting trial in connection to suicide attacks in Afghanistan. Two were Pakistani nationals and the remaining 21 were Afghan. A key insight was that most prisoners with education had received it from madrassas. Except for the stories of Munir and Ghulam, the UNAMA report does not relate the cases of other prisoners with links to madrassas. It is therefore difficult to draw parallels between the various madrassa-educated prisoners or make any tentative claims about the way in which madrassas figured in their decision to carry out suicide attacks. As the sample interviewed comprised of individuals allegedly involved in suicide attacks (some of whom backed out from their mission), it cannot be representative of those who did successfully launch their attacks – the latter group could include a decidedly different cadre with disparate, if any, links to madrassas.

To determine where the logistical support for suicide terrorism in Afghanistan comes from, UNAMA interviewed national and international intelligence officers, military and police personnel, as well as local interlocutors, and garnered information from press accounts from Pakistani and international media. The respondents underscored the “importance of madrassas and madrassas staff in Pakistan’s settled and tribal Pashtun areas.”⁶⁷ Haqqani’s madaris in North Waziristan were especially mentioned, but no elaboration is offered on the matter that would delineate a clearer picture of their involvement.

A poignant way in which madrassa students are preyed upon by militants is the affiliation of a particular madrassa’s clergy to terrorists. On 17 March 2009 police arrested a madrassa teacher of “masterminding” the suicide attacks that took place in Pakistan earlier in the year; a suicide vest, along with “explosives, a Kalashnikov, a computer, 70 cassettes and jihadi literature” were allegedly seized during a raid on his house.⁶⁸ The madrassa teacher was suspected of having links to Baitullah Mehsud’s group.⁶⁹

The investigation at that point had not revealed whether the madrassa teacher had used his students to carry out the attacks. However it can be speculated that teacher in question used his madrassa as a site from whence to recruit soldiers to perform Baitullah’s orders and the weaponry and literature found were used by him to this end.

⁶⁶ “Suicide Attacks in Afghanistan 2001-2007,” (9 September 2007), United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)

⁶⁷ Ibid

⁶⁸ “Police Arrest Alleged Mastermind of Charssada Suicide Attack,” *Karachi Dawn Online*, 18 March 2009

⁶⁹ Ibid

3.3 Sectarianism and madrassas

A survey administered by the Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies in March 2009 found that at least 18% of the madrassas were affiliated with sectarian outfits.⁷⁰ Indeed the limited empirical research so far carried out on the connection between Pakistani madrassas and Islamic extremism find a positive relationship between religious seminaries and sectarian violence.

Saleem Ali sought to test the involvement of madrassas in sectarian violence by looking at the cases of rural (Ahmedpur) and urban (Islamabad) cities in Pakistan.⁷¹ He looked for the linkages between madrassas and regional conflict, based on the recruitment and career placement dynamics of madrasa graduates. Methodological approach employed by Ali was comprehensive: Geographical Information System Based Analysis⁷² was used for demographic comparison; primary data collection by establishment surveys of all madrassas in the two regions; interviews were carried out with various stakeholders⁷³, as well as focus group discussions with leading religious leaders and government functionaries to revalidate the findings.

Ali's overall findings showed that sectarian violence is more likely to occur in localities where madrasa penetration is highest. By assessing the scale of an individual's jihadi engagement, Ali unpacks the notion of jihad into 3 types: "(i) Jihad to establish theological purity and prevent adulteration of Islamic doctrine (includes sectarian violence); (ii) Domestic jihad (against oppression and/or state reluctance); and (iii) Pan-Islamic jihad (to help fellow Muslims in need and preserve the vitality of Ummah, or the Islamic body of adherents, by establishing Islamic government in historically Islamic lands.) The aim is to establish Islamic government in historically Islamic lands."⁷⁴

Ali found that (i) and (ii) are closely linked to madrassas, whereas the connection between (iii) and madrassas was relatively weak. In Ahmedpur, Saleem found that amongst the three types of jihadi organizations operating in the Ahmedpur area, most fall under category (i), which underlies the link to sectarian violence. Translating Ali's results to fit the jihad prototypes outlined in the present report, we see that madrasa-jihad link between type III (domestic violence against the

⁷⁰ Muhammad Amir Rana "Mapping the Madrasa Mindset: Political Attitudes of Pakistani Madrasas," *Pak Institute of Peace Studies*, (24 March 2009)

⁷¹ Saleem Ali, *Islam and Education: Conflict and Conformity in Pakistan and Beyond*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)

⁷² Data on household income, literacy, environmental factors (agricultural productivity, access to water and food)

⁷³ This included managers and teachers at madrasas and schools, leaders and officials of local government, alumni of madrasas and notable donors from the community, senior government officials dealing with the issue at the Federal and Provincial level, in the Ministry of Interior, Home, Education and Religious Affairs, members of the newly established Pakistan Madrasa Education Board and law-enforcement officials who have records of any complaints of sectarian violence from madrasas. Anonymous interviews with the Criminal Investigation Department and Crises Management Cell (departments responsible for anti-terrorism operation) to determine any direct linkages between Madrasa graduates and terrorist/criminal activity were also carried out

⁷⁴ Saleem Ali, *Islam and Education: Conflict and Conformity in Pakistan and Beyond*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)

establishment) and IV (sectarianism) are supported, while a feeble link is observed for type I jihad (global jihad).⁷⁵

Sect	Total Madrassa	Involved in Sect	Not Involved in Sect	Percentage Involvement
Deobandi	166	133	33	80%
Barelvi	166	42	124	25%
Ahl-e-Hadith	21	03	18	14%
Shia	10	07	03	70%
Total	363	185	178	51%

Source: Saleem Ali, “Islam and education: conflict and conformity in Pakistan and beyond”.

Figure 3.1: Sectarianism in Ahmedpur, Pakistan

In the case of Islamabad, content analysis of newspapers for the period 2000-2005 revealed that acts of sectarian violence in the city are connected with madrassa proximity and involvement of seminary students. The riots involving mostly Deobandi madrassas on 7th October 2003, when Maulana Tariq Azam was killed, for example, led to grave acts of vandalism and arson of a gas station owned by a US company, a new movie theatre and a Barelvi shrine. According to Pakistani authorities a majority of those arrested were from local madrassas.

A drawback of Ali’s study is that it focuses only on two cities in Pakistan and cannot be said to be representative of Pakistan as a whole. It is probable that studying madrassas in the FATA and PATA regions would yield different results, showing a more significant correlation between “Pan-Islamic jihad” and madrassas.

3.3.1 Binori Town madrassa

A few madrassas in Pakistan appear to have very close links to violent militant groups; one such example is the Binori Town madrassa which has strong bonds to various terrorist groups, including JeM, HuM and SSP. Amir Rana goes so far as to claim that Jamia Binoria is the “backbone” of banned militant group Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM).⁷⁶ An ICG report published in 2007 supports Rana’s assertions, claiming that the madrassa has helped establish and sustain these groups.

The Binori Town madrassa is also known to be at the heart of anti-Shiite and anti-Barelvi violence. In the last decade, Shiite and Barelvi militants have assassinated at least four leading scholars of this seminary. The aforementioned ICG study has reported on the link between sectarian militancy and madrassas in the context of Karachi, Pakistani’s largest city. A sect by sect survey of Karachi madrassas and militant groups revealed that a considerable number of

⁷⁵ See Chapter 1 for details on jihad types

⁷⁶ Muhammad Amir Rana, *A to Z of jihadi organizations in Pakistan*, (Pakistan: Mashal Books, 2005)

madrassas in the city continued to house members of banned militant groups, most infamous of which is the Binori Town madrassa.⁷⁷

The Deobandi extremist organizations, such as Sipah-e-Sahaba (SSP) and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) reportedly have an “umbilical link” with Karachi’s jihadi madrassas, according to an ICG report. It also portrays the madrassa as imparting a specific sectarian ideology, again underlining the role madrassa play in perpetuating ideology which breeds extremism.⁷⁸

Ludhianvi’s books, speeches and audio messages can also be found on the JeM website, further highlighting the links between Binori Town madrassa and JeM. Indeed Ludhianvi, Shamzai and Binori Town madrassa-graduate Masood Azhar are alleged to have set up JeM together, pointing to more direct links between the militant organisation and the madrassa.⁷⁹ Masood Azhar, leader of JeM, studied at this Deobandi madrassa from 1980–1989 and later lectured in Arabic to foreign students.⁸⁰ The madrassa allegedly caters to thousands of students from around the world.⁸¹

As SSP is known to partake in acts of terror against members of other sects, and JeM for its jihadi activities in Kashmir (and Afghanistan), Binori Town madrassa can be seen as providing a platform for recruitment for both these kinds of jihads. The fact that Binori Town madrassa was found to “house members of banned militant groups” points to an additional role of madrassa as safe havens for terrorists.

The ICG study also found that a Barelvi madrassa chain, Faizan-e-Madina, believed to be militant, carried out jihadi activities geared against members of the Deobandis and Ahl-e-Hadith sects. The madrassa chain is run by Dawat-e-Islami, an off-shoot of which, Sunni Tehrik, is a sectarian militant group.⁸²

A problem with the ICG report is that it does not fully explain these linkages between sectarian terrorism and madrassas; for instance, in what ways do the madrassas support militancy? Is the link direct (are these “jihadi” madrassas students and teachers being recruited to partake in sectarian militancy – that is, on an operational level) or indirect (madrassa leaders are offering to house members of the sectarian groups?)

⁷⁷ The team visited madrassas and interviewed madrassa administrators, and journalists and researchers in Pakistan

⁷⁸ “Pakistan: Karachi’s Madrassas and Violent Extremism,” (29 March 2007), International Crisis Group http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/south_asia/130_pakistan_karachi_s_madrasas_and_violent_extremism.pdf, Accessed 18 August 2007

⁷⁹ Ibid

⁸⁰ Mariam Abou Zahab & Olivier Roy, *Islamic Networks*, (London: C. Hurst & Co. Ltd., 2004)

⁸¹ Laurent Gayer “A Divided City: ‘Ethnic’ and ‘Religious’ Conflicts in Karachi, Pakistan,” (May 2003), Centre for International Studies and Research, Sciences-Po

⁸² “Pakistan: Karachi’s Madrassas and Violent Extremism,” (29 March 2007), International Crisis Group http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/south_asia/130_pakistan_karachi_s_madrasas_and_violent_extremism.pdf, Accessed 18 August 2007

3.3.2 Sectarian and jihadi literature

Producing and disseminating hate material is a common practice amongst many madrassas in Pakistan, and a lion share of this literature is targeted against other sects.⁸³ As the aforementioned work of Tariq Rahman concluded, “opinions against other sects, sub-sects, views seen as heretical by the ulema, Western ideas – may be the major formative influence on the minds of madrassa students.”⁸⁴ Through the vilification of other beliefs and stressing the importance of safeguarding the purity of the greater Muslim community, jihad is extolled. It is such mentality and attitude that renders madrassa students ideal candidates for sectarian groups seeking cadres.

Within the Deobandi fraternity of Karachi, Yusuf Ludhianvi, of Binori Town madrassa, is widely read. His seminal works, *Ikhtalaf-e-Ummat aur Sirat-e-Mustaqeem* (Dissent in the Ummah and the Right Path) critiques and denounces other creeds, like Barelvi, Ahl-e-Hadith, Shiite and so on. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan has described such material as “poisonous and the single major source of increasing sectarianism in the country.”⁸⁵ Azam Tariq, head of sectarian group Sipah-e-Sahaba, was a graduate of this madrassa.

Jamaat-e-Islami’s Rabita madrassas have often been cited as a platform from which mujahideen were recruited and trained during the jihad against the Soviets; the madrassas were established to propagate jihadi literature and foster a pro-jihadi public psyche which would be conducive to producing a pool of manpower willing to fight in Afghanistan. Currently JI boasts about 800 madrassas in Pakistan but, according to the interlocutors interviewed by Fair, it employs a different tactic to attract sympathizers and potential recruits for JI-affiliated groups. Supposedly it exploits its social services infrastructure in the kacchi abadi (slum areas) to attract manpower. This unveils an alternative source of manpower, namely slum areas – suggesting that other avenues (besides madrassas) also deserve attention as providers of an ample supply of jihadists.

Despite the ban on hate speech through books, newspapers, pamphlets, handbills, and audio and visual tapes, mosques, madrassas and public arenas in Pakistan continue to disseminate jihadi messages. Speeches by leaders like Abdul Aziz (former cleric of Lal Masjid in Islamabad), Jamaat ud Dawa’s Hafiz Saeed, Jaish-e-Mohammad’s Masood Azhar and Qari Hanif Jalandhry⁸⁶

⁸³ Ali Riaz, “Global Jihad, Sectarianism and the Madrassas in Pakistan”, August 2005, Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies, <http://www.idss.edu.sg/publications/WorkingPapers/WP85.pdf>, Accessed 1 September 2007; Christine Fair, “Militant Recruitment in Pakistan: A New Look at the Militancy-Madrassa Connection”, *The National Bureau of Asian Research*, Asia Policy no. 4 (July 2007), 107-134

⁸⁴ Tariq Rahman, “Madrassas: Religion, Poverty and the Potential for Violence in Pakistan,” (Winter 2005), Islamabad Policy Research Institute, <http://ipripak.org/journal/winter2005/madrassas.shtml>, Accessed 23 August 2007

⁸⁵ Christine Fair, “Militant Recruitment in Pakistan: A New Look at the Militancy-Madrassa Connection”, *The National Bureau of Asian Research*, Asia Policy no. 4 (July 2007), 107-134

⁸⁶ Qari Hanif Jalandhry heads Pakistan’s largest madrassa network, *Wifaq-ul-Madaris Al-Arabia* which belongs to the Deobandi school of thought. He is also one of the leaders of the umbrella alliance of the five main madrassa networks in Pakistan – *Ittehad Tanzeematul Madaris-e-Deenya* (ITMD). Jalandhry runs the *Khair ul Madaris* in Multan. Interestingly, he is also a member of the inter-religious network the World

of Jamia Khair-ul-Madaris, among others, as well as the ongoing circulation of jihadi weeklies and monthlies, demonstrate the continued active proselytising of extremist views.

Indeed Saleem Ali found the following “Islamist” magazines to be in circulation at the madrassas he studied. These magazines are thought to have helped formulate the madrassa students’ ideology in sectarian terms. The sect-by-sect survey of madaris in Karachi by the ICG also testifies to level of hate material that continues to be dispersed in Pakistan: “jihadi media is popular in madrassas”, it claims, citing the example of jihadi magazines like Zarb-e-Momin and Islam which continue their circulation.⁸⁷

Organization	Publication
Lashkar-e-Taiba	Voice of Islam (monthly, English) Al-Ribat (monthly, Arabic) Majallah al-Dawa (monthly, Urdu) Tayyibat (Urdu publication for woman) Zarb-e-Tayyaba (Urdu monthly for students) Al-Jihad (Urdu)
Harakat-ul-Mujahideen	Sada-e-Mujahid (monthly, Urdu) Al-Hilal (weekly, Urdu)
Al-Rasheed Trust	Islam (Urdu) Zarb-e-Momin (Urdu and English)
Jaish-e-Mohammad	Jaish-e-Mohammad (biweekly, Urdu) Binaat-e-Ayesha (Urdu monthly for women)
Barelvi organisations	Zarb-e-Islam (monthly, Urdu) Dawat-al-Islam (monthly, Urdu)
Various organisations	Jihad Times (weekly, Urdu)

Sources: The list is compiled from a variety of sources, including Saleem Ali, “Islam and education: conflict and conformity in Pakistan and beyond”.

Figure 3.2: Jihadi publications in Pakistan

Jamaat ud-Dawa’s (JD) website consists of archives of sermons, many of which carry a pro-jihadi tone, as well as articles and news items. JD’s radio station, Ad-Dawa is freely available to listen to on Inspeak. In a sermon dated 3 August 2007⁸⁸, delivered from one of the JD mosques, Hafiz

Council of Religions – Pakistan (WCR-P) which includes leaders of the 5 *Wafaqs* and Church of Pakistan bishops

⁸⁷ “Pakistan: Karachi’s madrassas and violent extremism,” (29 March 2007), International Crisis Group, http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/south_asia/130_pakistan_karachi_s_madrasas_and_violent_extremism.pdf, Accessed 18 August 2007

⁸⁸ Jamaat-ud-Dawa’s Urdu website, www.jamaatuddawa.org

Saeed speaks of the virtues of jihad against the “kufr,” in particular the US and its “agents” (Pakistan army) and enlists reasons it should be promulgated – one of which is to protect mosques. He also criticises the Pakistani military regime for being “extremists” who “want to destroy madrassas to show the international media that they’re a frontline state in fighting terrorism.” JD/LeT predominately operates in Kashmir and India but we hear Hafiz Saeed speak of jihad against the “US and its agents (presumably referring to Musharraf’s army)” – indicating a type III militancy.

Jaish e Muhammad’s (JEM) weekly and monthly magazines – such as al-Qalam, Bannat-e-Ayesha, and Musalman Bachay are available online⁸⁹ and presumed to be in circulation at various madaris (see Saleem Ali’s book cited above). Archives of bayaan (speeches) by its luminaries, as well as books published by the same, can also be accessed.

Sipah-e-Sahaba is suspected of being active in a chat room on PalTalk; in this chat room, madrasa lecturers also come to give talks. For instance, Jamia Ashrafia’s professors appear frequently to address bayaan (statement/speech) on different topics. Given the decidedly sectarian nature of this chat room, Jamia Ashrafia’s presence is indicative of the sectarian nature of the madrasa and its managers.

Loudspeakers in mosques and madrassas are also used as a tool to spread extremist messages, along with illegal radio stations.⁹⁰ Maulana Fazlullah, head of the TNSM, is renowned for the numerous FM radio channels he broadcasts his jihadi messages from; it has proven to be an effective way to rally support for his militant calls.⁹¹

Not only that, in Swat’s city of Mingora, children are known to started shop selling jihadi CDs that include interviews of young suicide bombers and depictions of decapitations, and these CDs apparently sell very well with the youth.⁹²

In Karachi, also, videos glorifying child martyrs are readily available; where young boys are heard chanting lyrics like:

“If you try to find me after I have died, you will never find my whole body, you will find me in little pieces.”⁹³

⁸⁹ www.alqalamonline.com, www.musalmanbachay.com, <http://www.alqalamonline.com/banat/index.html>

⁹⁰ “Misuse of Loudspeakers”, *The News International*, 7 January 2007

⁹¹ Interview with Syed Irfan, correspondent for Pakistan’s daily newspaper, Dawn. Irfan mainly covers conflict areas in Pakistan – most notably in the tribal regions and the North West Frontier Province. He also covered the Lal Masjid operation in July 2007. He was interviewed by the author in February and March 2008

⁹² Syed Irfan Ashraf “Will they Grow up to be Militants?” (2 May 2009), Aryana Institute for Regional Research Advocacy (AIRRA), <http://www.airra.org/analysis/Willtheygrowuptobemilitants.html>, Accessed 21 May 2009

⁹³ Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, “Pakistan: Children of the Taliban,” (14 April 2009), PBS website, http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/pakistan802/video/video_index.html, Accessed 24 May 2009

In fact many jihadi songs, or “taranay” in Urdu, are sung by young boys⁹⁴, indicating the extremist’s effort to appeal to a younger population, and/or, their confidence in achieving a higher success rate with this target group.

3.4 “Aiding and abetting” militancy

A considerable portion of research which has looked at the madrassa-militancy link has inferred a more variegated role of madrassas in generating religious extremism. With regards to transnational links between religious extremists in Pakistan and the Taliban and al-Qaeda, Mariam Abou Zahab and Olivier Roy noted that madrassas provide a convenient “organizational base.” In the militant world, “everything rests on personal connections, the connections of the madrassas, chance meeting in training camps and community of interest.”⁹⁵ Hence, madaris play a critical role, as do mosques and public proselytizing events, by serving as important gathering places where tanzeems, current militants, religious ideologues, and potential recruits can interact.

A crucial example is that of the 26 April 2008 JeM conference in Bahawalpur’s Eid Gah mosque, gathering prominent JeM members (including columnists for JeM magazines), and representatives from various madrassas across Pakistan, as well as madrassa students, and members of al-Rehmat Trust.⁹⁶ A key guest and speaker was Maulana Makki from Saudi Arabia. A sizable audience was present at this congregation and efforts were regularly made by speakers to sway the crowd into chant jihadi slogans. Such congregations in mosques are likely to provide the kind of platform needed by militant organizations to mingle and network with fellow jihadists and financiers, and to influence more people with their ideology, thereby attracting new recruits. Here we see JeM using a mosque as a platform from where to influence and possibly recruit jihadi hopefuls. However, the crowd composition at the conference is not known – along with a significant madrassa contingent, it could include numerous laypersons (rickshaw drivers, shopkeepers, businessmen, and so on). As the conference was freely advertised across the city of Bahawalpur, it would not be surprising to see a diverse audience present on the occasion.

In addition to their conventional role, seminaries have also acted as transit points for foreign militants who are eager to join the Taliban or al-Qaeda. In June 2006, Umer and Hamid Hayat were arrested in Lodi, California for alleged ties to al-Qaeda and military madaris in Pakistan. Hamid Hayat claimed to have attended an al-Qaeda camp in Pakistan, run by JUI leader Maulana Fazlur Rehman, where he learned to “kill Americans.”⁹⁷ This madrassa could be eyed as one supporting jihad type I aimed at Western targets, and the role of the madrassa as a militant camp where the suspects were trained to “kill.”

⁹⁴ <http://ghazwah-urdu.sitesled.com/Tranay/new.tranay.htm>

⁹⁵ Mariam Abou Zahab & Olivier Roy, *Islamic Networks*, (London: C. Hurst & Co. Ltd., 2004)

⁹⁶ JeM appears to be working under the aegis of this Trust: audio messages, downloaded from Rang-o-Noor, a Jaish-e-Mohammad website

⁹⁷ This case example is given by Moniza Khokhar, “Reforming Militant Madaris in Pakistan,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 3 no. 4 (April 2007), 353-365

In 2003, Rusman Gunawan⁹⁸ was apprehended from Karachi's Jamia Abu Bakr madrassa, and 19 Indonesian and Malaysian students were arrested from Jamiar Darasitul Islamia, an Ahl-e-Hadith madrassa run by Jamaat-ud-Dawa – drawing on the presence of “al-Qaeda cells” in the capital of Pakistan's Sind province. There are thought to be up to 21,000 foreign national students in the madrassas of Sind.⁹⁹ Furthermore, in the Chaman district of the Balochistan province, multitudes of Afghan men are suspected of “attending madrassas while awaiting orders to fight in Afghanistan.”¹⁰⁰

These examples serve to illuminate yet another dimension of the role madrassas play in “aiding” militancy; in addition to conditioning its students with an ideological mindset befitting the religiously narrow template offered by Pakistani extremist groups and acting as a fertile fields from whence terrorists can “pluck” would-be bombers, madrassas are also complicit in oiling the more global militant machinery by playing cordial hosts to members of foreign terrorist networks.

Another way in which madrassas act as “transit points” is highlighted by a young Taliban member from Swat who details how “they [Taliban] first call us to the mosque and preach to us. Then they take us to a madrassa and teach us things from the Quran ... [and then] they teach us how to use Kalashnikov and machine guns, rocket launchers, grenades, bombs... Then they teach us how to do a suicide attack”¹⁰¹ Here we see madrassas role as an intermediate stage in the creating of a suicide bomber. The “things” taught at the madrassa are presumably important for preparing the boys for the military training that follows.

During and after the military operation on Lal Masjid in July 2007, Maulana Fazlullah used the airwaves to rally a large group of armed people at his Imam Dheri madrassa. According to a Peshawar correspondent for Dawn newspaper in Pakistan:

“He [Fazlullah] used to sit there [at the site of his madrassa] mostly addressing his followers (students were not admitted as the Madrassa as it was in process of completion) about issues related to Islam with stress on Jihad. His Juma Khutba and addresses on his illegal FM station was the main source of his links with the people. He used to address a sizable portion of 1.6 million people of Swat. Secondly he did not teach from any syllabus... the life of the Holy prophet is explained out of context to attract the people with the help of fiery speeches and other means.”¹⁰²

Fazlullah's Imam Dheri madrassa, despite being under construction, was presumably used as a site to gather supporters and discuss “issues related to Islam with stress on jihad” and also a site from where to rally his followers who would carry out his instructions.

⁹⁸ Younger brother of al-Qaeda lieutenant Hambali and leading member of Indonesia's Jemmah Islamiyah

⁹⁹ Laurent Gayer “A Divided City: ‘Ethnic’ and ‘Religious’ Conflicts in Karachi, Pakistan,” (May 2003), Centre for International Studies and Research, Sciences-Po

¹⁰⁰ Dina Temple-Raston, *The Jihad Next Door*, (PublicAffairs, 2007)

¹⁰¹ Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, “Pakistan: Children of the Taliban,” (14 April 2009), PBS website, http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/pakistan802/video/video_index.html, Accessed 24 May 2009

¹⁰² Excerpt from a phone interview with Syed Irfan

It is important to note here that it was not Fazlullah’s madrassa (or its curricula) that was used to impart a specific ideology; rather the “fiery speeches”, which he delivered orally – using the madrassa grounds as a symbolic podium from whence to educate his audience – enabled him to influence the masses and garner support for his militant missions.

In May 2008, security forces reportedly found “eight piles” of improvised explosives and suicide jackets at Fazlullah’s madrassa, and where at least 30 students were suspected of being trained to become “child militants.”¹⁰³ This again signifies the outreach of madrassas; their ability to extend beyond a pedagogic role and assume both logistical and recruitment role for militant organisations.

An additional role of madrassas involves fatwa or religious edicts: is not uncommon for madrassas leaders to have issued edicts against other groups, giving an imprimatur to violence. For example, within North West Frontier Province, Sind, and Baluchistan, their statements have played a key role in turning localized Shia-Sunni disputes into acts of terror.

3.5 The case of Lal Masjid

Men allegedly belonging to Jamaat-ud-Dawa (widely considered to be the front organization for the banned Lashkar-e-Tayyaba) were amongst those to have surrendered during the Lal Masjid raid in July 2007.¹⁰⁴ Along with Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), members of Harakat-ul Jihad-i-Islami (HuJI) were also purportedly found in the Red Mosque during the army siege in July 2007, pointing to links between the madrassa and some of Pakistan’s most prominent militant groups.¹⁰⁵ Masood Azhar, leader of JeM, had also launched diatribes against Musharraf from the seat of the Lal Masjid prior to the raid. This somewhat satisfies the first proxy point: militant leader visiting a madrassa and delivering speeches from its pulpit.

A more direct involvement of a Lal Masjid affiliate in carrying out terrorist acts lies in the case of the suicide blast that hit Sargodha (Punjab) on 1 November 2007 – directed at the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) base.¹⁰⁶ Abid Hunzala was found to be the perpetrator behind this attack. This fulfils the 4th proxy for inferring militancy to madrassas – namely, “madrassa managers or students were reported to have been involved in militant crimes”. Abid was enrolled in Lal Masjid at the time of the raid against it, and was educated in a madrassa in Islamabad in his early life after which he went to fight in Afghanistan (post-9/11).¹⁰⁷ Head of terror cell to have executed the PAF base attack, retired army Major Ehsan-ul-Haq, confessed to the Crime Investigation Department that the group had used Hunzala as the suicide bomber to attack the PAF target.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ “30 Madrassa Students Arrested for Child Militancy in Swat,” *The Pakistani Daily Times*, 15 May 2008

¹⁰⁴ In July 2007 the Pakistani government under the instruction of President Pervez Musharraf conducted “Operation Silence” on the Red Mosque and its adjacent madrassa Jamia Hafsa in the heart of Islamabad

¹⁰⁵ “Red Mosque: Militants Nest that Surprised Pak,” *Khaleej Times*, 10 July 2007

¹⁰⁶ سرگودھا: فضائیہ کی بس پر خود کش حملہ , *BBC News Urdu*, 1 November 2007

¹⁰⁷ شدت پسندوں کے بدلتے طریقہ کار , *BBC News Urdu*, 6 February 2008

¹⁰⁸ “Suicide Bomber in Sagodha Blast Identified,” *The Daily Times*, 25 January 2008

It is then tempting to assume that Abid Hunzala set foot on his path of radicalisation first in a madrassa which led him to become a soldier in Afghanistan, and later Lal Masjid radicalised him further to the point of committing himself to a suicide strike. However this conjecture should be treated with caution since Abid carried out the suicide attack after the Pakistani army's attack on the Red Mosque where he was studying at the time – and it could be the military raid per se, rather than the teaching or ideology of the madrassa that pushed him to undertake suicide strike.

Lal Masjid and its adjacent madrassa, Jamia Hafsa, started showing their militant stripes when its students, in the aftermath of the assassination of Azam Tariq, organized riots and acts of public vandalism.¹⁰⁹ Azam Tariq was the former leader of Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP),¹¹⁰ and the bemoaning and mobbing by Lal Masjid students at his passing can be said to be symptomatic of the mosque's sympathy, even affiliation with, militant groups. Furthermore, the Shariat plan (i.e. introduction of Islamic law) that was being ardently endorsed by Lal Masjid bears a close resemblance to that of Sipah-e-Sahaba.¹¹¹ To an extent this could be said to exhibit the madrassa's lobbying for sectarian issues (proxy 3).¹¹²

After the Lal Masjid siege it was alleged that Abdul Aziz (its head cleric) and his brother, Abdul Rashid (the deputy cleric), worked on the directive of al-Qaida's second in command, Aymen al-Zawahiri: senior officials claimed to have found letters inside the Lal Masjid written from Zawahiri to Abdul Aziz and Abdul Rashid.¹¹³ These claims have not been corroborated; what is clear, however, is that al-Zawahiri and other al-Qaida leaders dealt extensively with the Lal Masjid episode in their speeches. Using both visual and verbal aides, al-Zawahiri condemned the military's raid on the mosque, dubbing Musharraf and his army the "Crusader's hunting dogs" – and calls upon the Pakistani people to stand up against Musharraf's regime and partake in jihad.¹¹⁴

Rearing its radical head in the first half of 2007, warning and threats by Abdul Aziz came to surface: he threatened that if Sharia law was not implemented by the government the seminary students will take it upon themselves to cleanse Islamabad of "immoral activities". He intensified

¹⁰⁹ Suzanne Koster, "The Red Mosque and the Talibanisation of Pakistan", (10 July 2007), *Militant Islam Monitor*, <http://www.militantislammonitor.org/article/id/3040>, Accessed 10 August 2007

¹¹⁰ Sipah-e-Sahaba is a rabid anti-Shia terrorist group

¹¹¹ The Lal Masjid personnel also pushed for their cause by distributing fliers across Islamabad, listing four key demands: "immediate reconstruction of the demolished mosques in Islamabad, immediate declaration of Shariat in Pakistan by the government, immediate promulgation of Quran and Sunnah in the courts of law and removal of the un-Islamic clauses of the Women Protection Bill, immediate discontinuation to declaring jihad as terrorism by the government as it is the great sacred religious duty of Muslims;" Noreen Haider, "Grabbing Attention," *The News*, April 2007

¹¹² The Lal Masjid had historic ties to anti-Shia activism. The mosque's "godfather", and father of Abdul Aziz and Abdul Rashid, Maulana Abdullah was known for his anti-Shiite sentiments and was allegedly assassinated by a Shiite militant in the late 1990s

¹¹³ Nelson and Ghulam Hasnain, "Bin Laden's Deputy Behind the Red Mosque Bloodbath", *Times Online*, 15 July 2007

¹¹⁴ Ayman al-Zawahiri's audio message, "The Aggression Against Lal Masjid", <http://www.w-n-net/showthread.php?t=30045>, Accessed 17 July 2007. The same message is to be found in the Urdu jihadi magazine, *Hittin*, Issue 2, p. 28-31

his stance by announcing, in addendum, that the government will pay the price (in suicide attacks) if it dared to launch an operation against the mosque or madrassa: via their illegal FM station, a threat was broadcasted on 12 April 2007:

“There will be suicide blasts in the nook and cranny of the country. We have weapons, grenades and we are expert in manufacturing bombs. We are not afraid of death...”¹¹⁵

This threat was later reiterated when the clerics claimed that there were over 100,000 suicide bombers on standby in Pakistan, including 10,000 in the Lal Masjid and its madrassas.¹¹⁶ Umme Hassan, the head of Jamia Hafsa madrassa, also gave vitriolic, anti-government speeches from the seat of her seminary compound. In one of the video clips of her speech before a large gathering of burqa-clad students she announces that “we women have entered the jihad battle.”¹¹⁷ Although these proclamations and threats are worrisome in their own right, it is difficult to say whether they were followed through. For example, there have not been many cases of burqa-clad suicide bombers!

3.6 The case of Jaish-e-Mohammad and the Wafaq al Madaris

On 26 April 2008, the militant organisation Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) held a conference in the Pakistani city of Bahawalpur. Audio recordings of the conference available on the group’s website reveal a young madrassa student to be one of the speakers. Mohammad Umar Ibrahim was introduced as the nephew of Masood Azhar (leader of JeM) and a student at the Jamia Masjid Usman-o-Ali.¹¹⁸ This particular madrassa apparently co-hosted the conference¹¹⁹ – indicating a direct participation of madrassa administrators and students in militant gatherings (proxy 2) and active lobbying for a militant organisation’s (JeM) issues (proxy 3).

Preceding Mohammad Umar’s speech, the presenter proudly declared that: “...like women, children too have been fighting. Ghazwa Badr etc are proof of this. I invite Mohammad Umar Ibrahim to come present his jazbah jihad (passion for jihad) to you all...” The student’s “jazbah jihad” was presumably meant to endorse similar jazbah in other students present in the audience. In a vehement and vitriolic tone the boy extolled the Masood Azhar’s new book entitled “Fath-ul-Jawwad”¹²⁰ which he addresses as the “book of Allah and his tafseer (exegesis)” – the tafseer which the “infidel world has united to eradicate”:

¹¹⁵ Quoted in Pervez Hoodbhoy, “Pakistan – The Threat from Within,” *Pakistan Security Research Unit*, Brief no. 13 (23 May 2007)

¹¹⁶ “Over One Lakh Suicide Bombers in Pak: Cleric,” *Rediff News*, 31 May 2007

¹¹⁷ The same clip was used in several jihadi videos by different militant groups, including the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)

¹¹⁸ Further investigation is required to learn more about this madarassa but its affiliation with JeM was made apparent in the conference

¹¹⁹ The presenter, whose name was not revealed, announced Jamia Masjid Usman-o-Ali to be his madrassa and Mohammad Umar as one of his students

¹²⁰ The book offers detailed exegesis of certain passages from the Quran and Hadith which justify violent jihad

“[The book] will stay until doomsday and when Mahdi’s army unleashes its terror on the enemy, Fath-ul-Jawwad will be in their hands to help them understand jihad. [...] What purpose does Fath ul Jawwad serve? Jihad has been yanked out of our hearts, and Babri Mosque looks on accusingly... look at the streets Kabul... our historic jazbah (passion) needs to be revitalized. Now Fath ul Jawwad has arrived and will perch this Ummah back on jihad, and will strike such a blow that the infidel powers will be ruined forever, inshAllah.”

The very presence of a madrassa student on a platform such as this suggests that madrassas are important to militant organisations. Using an illustrious – due to this relation to Masood Azhar – madrassa student to promote jihad before a presumably madrassa-dominated audience appears to be a strategic tool aimed at inspiring other madrassa students to join the jihadi cause.

The case of the JeM conference seems to fulfil proxies 2 and 3. Moreover, a browse through JeM’s website reveals its magazine for children, aptly titled “Musalman Bachay” (Muslim Children) and contains propaganda material explicitly directed at a younger audience (male and female), including madrassa-goers (see excerpt in Figure 3.3). This satisfied proxy 5 pertaining to online jihadi websites and their association to madrassas – and, taken in conjunction with the speech by Masood Azhar’s nephew, it seems clear that the JeM targets as its support (and recruitment) base madrassa students.

From the March 2009 edition of *Musalman Bachay*:

In one story, penned by Masood Azhar, Commander Sajjad Khan’s “exemplary sacrifice” for Masood is portrayed as an Islamic ideal to be sought; that is “to take the noose from around the neck of your Muslim brothers in distress, and put it around yourself.”

Another article entitled “I will be a mujahid” relates the tale of Nauman, a student who, when asked by his 5th grade Urdu teacher what he aspired to be when he grew up, replied “Master sahib! I will be a mujahid.”

And later: “Mother, as you already know I want to be a mujahid like Usman bhai and kill the enemies of Islam.”

For one year he sent Hindus to hell” whilst providing “protection to his mothers and sisters.” Eventually, Nauman, the “seeker of martyrdom” would find eternal peace in killing 20 kufr.

Nauman’s life/death is glorified; being a “mujahid” assumes a higher status than that of “doctor” or “engineer” (which a few other students in the story claimed to aspire to, but it didn’t win them the teacher’s praise.)

Figure 3.3: Excerpts from Musalman Bachay

Christine Fair who has conducted rounds of field interviews (2001-2004) in Pakistan on the issue of madrassas and militancy, finds that religious organizations such as Jamaat-e-Ulema-Islamia (JUI), control various mosques and madrassas which sympathize with extremist groups such as

HuM, JeM, and SSP; Imams of a given mosque may target various households to convince parents to send their children to particular madrassas for “indoctrination.” Once ensconced at the madrassa, they may be recruited by extremist groups to enjoin a militant camp.¹²¹

Another tactic might involve holding congregations at the mosque where specific speakers come to deliver sermons that are aimed at stirring emotions and enticing audience members to join their mission. Lisa Curtis explains this madrassa-militant link thus: “Madrassas and associated militant groups have an interdependent relationship in which the militant groups provide armed backing for the madrassas, and the madrassas in return provide motivated recruits for the militant organizations.”¹²² The above-mentioned JeM gathering is a case in point.

According to an ICG report from 2007 Jamaat-e-Islami’s network of madrassas, Tanzeem Rabita al-Madaris, 97 of which are located in Karachi with 8,000 students, have “long maintained links with jihadi organizations.”¹²³ After interviewing JI officials, the researchers learnt that certain JI madrassas – such as Markaz Uloom-e-Deeniya’s Alfalah Academy, Jamiatul Ikhwan and Jamia Darul Islam – provided recruits for Hizbul Mujahideen and claimed to have had their “mujahid” students martyred in Afghanistan, Kashmir and Bosnia. However, as per a leader of the JI’s student wing Islami Jamiat-e-Taleba (IJT), JI’s jihadi manpower came from disparate sources, including universities: “the jihadi movement of the 1980s had found more recruits from colleges and universities than madrassas.”¹²⁴

The claim the Deobandi madrassa union, Wafaq al-Madaris (of which Qari Jalandhry is the head) and Jalandhry’s Khair-ul-Madaris seminary (“the national centre for Deobandi instruction”) in Multan, allegedly provide support to the SSP and JeM.¹²⁵ Like Binori Town madrassa, Jalandhry’s madaris also support both the SSP and JeM, indicating an interest in both type II and IV jihads.¹²⁶ According to Mariam Abou Zahab, SSP is “merely the sectarian wing of JeM”¹²⁷ – rendering it of little surprise that there is considerable overlap between the two groups.

Ayesha Siddiqi maintains that there is no general causal link between madrassas and militancy, and that attention should be given to the nuances within a particular madrassa that may render it more militant – such as who the “godfather” of the madrassa is and how “inclined” he is to

¹²¹ Christine Fair, “Militant Recruitment in Pakistan: Implication for al-Qaeda and Other Organizations,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 27 no. 61 (November 2004), 489-504

¹²² Lisa A. Curtis, “U.S. Aid to Pakistan: Countering Extremism Through Educational Reform,” (8 June 2007), The Heritage Foundation, http://www.heritage.org/Research/AsiaandthePacific/upload/hl_1029.pdf, Accessed 17 August 2007

¹²³ “Pakistan: Karachi’s Madrassas and Violent Extremism,” (29 March 2007), International Crisis Group, http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/south_asia/130_pakistan_karachi_s_madrasas_and_violent_extremism.pdf, Accessed 18 August 2007

¹²⁴ Ibid

¹²⁵ “The State of Sectarianism in Pakistan,” (18 April 2005), International Crisis Group, http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/south_asia/095_the_state_of_sectarianism_in_pakistan.pdf, Accessed 16 January 2008

¹²⁶ The emerging pattern here seems to be that madrassas supporting SSP also show affinity with JeM

¹²⁷ Mariam Abou Zahab, “Sectarianism in the NWFP and the Tribal Areas: Local roots and Punjabi Connections,” Speech delivered during a seminar in Oslo, Norway on 20 March 2009

radicalism.¹²⁸ Bearing this in mind, let us look at the case of Qari Mohammad Hanif Jalandhry, head of Wafaq al Madaris al-Arabia.

In a workshop entitled “Learning about the Other and Teaching for Tolerance in Muslim Majority Societies” held in November 2005 in Istanbul, Qari Hanif Jalandhry was nominated as the Muslim participant from Pakistan. Jalandhry offered a somewhat defensive and polemical perspective by criticizing the very title of the workshop, arguing that historically it is Christians who have been “intolerant” whereas “Muslims on the whole are much more tolerant than any other religion, race or class.”¹²⁹ Moreover, he fended the blasphemy law and legislation against the minority group, Ahmediya.

Qari Hanif Jalandhry echoed identical views at the JeM conference in Bahawalpur in April of this year.¹³⁰ Jalandhry was a key speaker at this congregation, indicating his support for, and high standing within, the JeM network. He defended Islam as a peaceful religion and the “infidels” as the real terrorists:

“Those who bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and those who killed countless Muslims in Bosnia, and those bombing Iraq, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Palestine, taking innocent lives – they are not Muslims, they are your people, O infidel.”¹³¹

He emphasizes that it is part of Western propaganda to present Islam as a religion of violence and war, whereas it is Islam that “preaches amman (peace and harmony) even in the times of war: [we] do not attack the enemy’s women, children, elderly or any innocent person, and do not attack the enemy’s place of worship. But you [infidel] take the lives of all these people. If anyone is bleeding right now it is the Muslims.”¹³²

Part of his underlying message is that “terrorism has no links to jihad” and those linking the two are not of “our faith” and have ulterior motives for perpetuating such propaganda. Jalandhry advocates jihad by de-linking it from terrorism, hence legitimising it and making it more acceptable to his audience. As the conference was a tribute to Masood Azhar’s latest book, *Fath-ul-Jawwad*, Jalandhry, like the speakers before him, spends a considerable amount of time lauding the book and all its merits. Recurrently, Jalandhry turns to the crowd for sloganeering, encouraging them to “raise your voices and tell me who started the war against Iraq? Against Palestine? Against Afghanistan? Over 700,000 Muslims were killed in Bosnia – who instigated that?” He often addresses the crowd as “mujahideen”.

¹²⁸ Ayesha Siddiq-Agha is an independent security analyst on Pakistan and the author of *Military Inc.: Pakistan’s Military Economy*. She was phone-interviewed by the author on 12 February 2008

¹²⁹ Quoted in Oddbjørn Leirvik, “Religion in School, Inter-Religious Relations and Citizenship: the Case of Pakistan,” *British Journal of Religious Education*, 30 no. 2 (March 2008), 143-154

¹³⁰ Recording of Jalandhry’s speech from a conference organized by JeM, downloaded from Rang-o-Noor, a Jaish-e-Mohammad website; <http://www.rangonoor.com/biyanaat.htm>

¹³¹ <http://www.rangonoor.com/biyanaat.htm>

¹³² Ibid

He calls upon the crowd to raise their hands and voices in agreement over whether the government should release all religious leaders (including Lal Masjid's Abdul Aziz), all jihadi people who were arrested under the "wrong policies of the government", and most urgently, Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan should be released.

On another occasion during his speech, whilst defending madrassas against "Western" allegations of being terrorist breeding grounds, he addresses the crowd thus: "Answer me! What is taught at the markaz you study in?" This may indicate that a majority of the audience members are likely to be madrasa students or associates who are being convinced of the righteousness of jihad.

With regards to teaching jihad at his madrassas, Jalandhry bluntly professes:

"... Jihad is the foundation of our faith and I swear before you all that madaris will stay till doomsday and the jihadi education will also stay on till the end of time, and jihad will stay on forever. I said [to Western journalists] that we teach jihad and will teach it forever. Because jihad is part of the Quran and Sunnat, and no one has the right to take it out of the Quran, not even the Prophet himself."

Most likely due to his own status as a high level madrasa administrator, the Qari spends a great deal of time discussing the virtues of madrassas:

"They are the centre of dawa and tableegh, the centre of Islam and jihad! ... Madrassas are guardians of Islam and Wafaq-ul-Madaris [the Deobandi board of madrassas of which Jalandhry is head] is guardian of these guardians. Wafaq-ul-Madaris is a huge umbrella organisation and under its belt are operating 12,000 madaris from Karachi to Peshawar, Quetta to Gilgit, with 17 'lakh' students."¹³³

Qari clearly exaggerates the size of Wafaq-ul-Madaris, and he ends his speech with "Strengthen the madaris, strengthen wafaq, and heighten your jazbah ittehad and jihad!" This is followed by loud crowd cheers for "Wafaq-ul-madaris al Arabia."

Jalandhry clearly advocates a strong emphasis on the passion for jihad, or jazbah jihad.

Jalandhry's speech also contains hints of a tendency towards what Saleem Ali has called "Pan-Islamic jihad": he relates to how Geert Wilder's Fitna talks about the: "increase in mosques, madrassas and halal shops in Europe" and how

"they [Europeans] are afraid Islam will take over and inshAllah it will. In every household Islam has to enter. Tomorrow belongs to the Muslims. ... We've defeated one superpower [Soviet] and now we, the bearded maulvis, will destroy the other superpower [US]."

He uses the mujahideen's victory during the anti-Soviet jihad to encourage his followers to

pursue yet another jihad against another enemy, who is not always clearly defined, but includes India, Shiites, and the West.

Jalandhry did not at the time look unfavourably upon the new government, whose dialogue policy and peace deals with militant groups Jalandhry finds to be the “true path... you [army] were never supposed to fight your own people. Do not fight others’ war. Ours is a great army, it should fight for Muslims.” Thus his speech was more acidic towards the West rather than Pakistani political officials or government authorities. However, it should be remembered that this conference took place in April 2008, shortly after a democratically elected government was installed in Pakistan, and therefore Jalandhry’s relative optimism towards the policies of the state could be considered premature.

A year after the Bahawalpur conference, in April 2009, Maulana Jalandhry wrote a column for Jaish-e-Mohammad’s online magazine, al-Qalam, in which he asserted that every since the Pakistani army’s operation against the Red Mosque two years ago, the “propaganda” against madrassas has stepped up.¹³⁴ Jalandhry claims madrassas are being subjected to harassment and policies based on force and fear, which have failed in the past, are being implemented again.

Jalandhry appears to be pro-jihadi and being the head of the largest madrassa umbrella organisation in Pakistan, as well as the head of Khair ul-Madaris seminary in Multan, madrassas – it is likely that these madaris teach extremist views. Given his links with JeM personnel, who invited him as a key speaker at their congregation and publish his work on their websites, it is not far-fetched to assume that Jalandhry returns the favour by offering his madrassa students for JeM’s jihadi activities.

Jalandhry is not the only al-Qalam contributor to speak in defence of madrassas; the weekly online magazine often posts articles dedicated to saving the honour of religious seminaries from a perceived Western propagandax. For example, writer Mudassar Jamal penned an article on “Madrassa reformation” in a July 2009 edition; the recurring harangue to reform madrassas, he claims, is part of a “well thought-out and cunning scheme” and a call to “war against the establishment of madrassas.”¹³⁵ He relates the slogans of “madrassa reformation” to “honey-coated poison” whereby certain parties with vested interests appeal for foreign funds; these appeals come with the inherent threat that without foreign funds madrassas, or these harbingers of terrorism, cannot be “reformed” thus leaving open the possibility of an attack against the West.¹³⁶

The above-mentioned JeM conference also showed support for the Taliban. Masood Azhar’s (addressed as “Mullah Omar’s brother and son”) own pre-recorded speech was played in the latter half of the conference to much appreciation and cheer. Being a prolific writer, he spoke

¹³⁴ Maulana Qari Mohammad Hanif Jalandhry “دینی مدارس اور دہشت گردی کی تازہ لہر” (29 April – 6 May 2009), Al-Qalam, http://alqalamonline.com/idarti/idarti_1.htm, Accessed 30 April 2009

¹³⁵ Mudassar Jamal “مدارس اصلاحات” (1 – 8 July 2009), Al-Qalam, http://alqalamonline.com/idarti/idarti_1.htm, Accessed 6 July 2009

¹³⁶ Ibid

eloquently and even poetically. He spoke of the mujahideen fighting in Afghanistan and Kashmir – presumed to be JeM members – and used the examples of their bravado to illustrate the muscle power of JeM whom the “Americans and the Indians have not been able to defeat! While we [JeM] are breaking their [Americans/Indians] legs!” This incriminates JeM’s involvement in both the ongoing violence in Kashmir, as well as Afghanistan; part of the conference agenda was to amass greater support and recruits for JeM missions – i.e. type II cross-border jihad.

Another speaker, Maulana Mufti Waheed of al-Rehmat Trust (a charity organisation suspected of financing JeM), promised spreading Masood Azhar’s tafseer in “every madrassa and household” in Pakistan, and proceeded to persuade the audience members into promising that they, too, will spread the book and its message as far and wide as they can. Again, madrassas are seen as places to circulate jihadi literature and madrassa students as promoters of this message.

Along with Masood Azhar’s father, another chief guest present at this conference was Maulana Abdul Hafeez Makki, a scholar from Saudi Arabia. Makki was also an eminent guest at an SSP conference in 1991, which illustrates the “extraneous sources of support furnished to the SSP.”¹³⁷ His presence at a JeM congregation might also be indicative of a similar support, extending to madrassas.

Several other madrassa leaders were participating in the JeM summit – pointing to a vast madrassa support base for JeM. Participants at the conference included several madrassa figures and it is reasonable to presume that Makki, along with JeM members present, all had prior connections with one another, offering ideological, financial and possibly operational support to one another. Some madrassa managers to figure prominently in this conference, as to be especially mentioned by the presenter were Maulana Sher Bahadur of Darul Uloom hijra Attock, Mohammad Shah Saleem of Darul Uloom Bannu, and Maulana Qari Khalil Ahmad Bandhani of Jamia Ashrafia Karachi. The presence of these madrassa heads at a JeM procession signals their affinity with the militant group’s ideology. Hence the madrassas they teach can be viewed as professing a militant ideology and possibly offering manpower for JeM’s jihadi missions.

4 Madrassas and No Militancy

Much of the media hype surrounding madrassas and how all of them function as “laboratories” for creating jihadists has been mainly and merely boilerplate, offering little verifiable evidence. While a small number of madaris clearly are closely linked to violent extremist group, this is not the case with all madrassas.

4.1 Weak links to global jihadism

Alexander Evans has spoken against the much-publicized notoriety surrounding madrassas; in his experience of having visited dozens of religious seminaries across India, Pakistan and Bangladesh

¹³⁷ Tahir Kamran, “The Political Economy of Sectarianism: Jhang,” (9 May 2008), *Pakistan Security Research Unit*

he found that the madrassa system is “characterized by both orthodoxy and diversity and is host to a quiet debate about reform.”¹³⁸ Such views are shared by a prominent group of scholars who have challenged the mainstream notion of madrassas as “weapons of mass instruction.”

Other madrassa revisionists like Dalrymple have added that the majority of madrassas are more “neo-fundamentalist” in their outlook than they are “Salafi jihadist.”¹³⁹ Their focus, he insists, is more puritanical in nature; ensuring proper Islamic behaviour, like the correct fulfilment of rituals and ablutions, public covering of women, and so on, so to keep society morally in tact – rather than participation in violent struggles or revolutionary activities.

Insofar as “global jihad” and madrassas are concerned, the link is feeble. The much-touted involvement of Pakistani madrassas in the case of the 7/7 bombing in London also appears superficial upon closer inspection. Three of the four suicide bombers had some college education and none had attended a madrassa until adulthood – then, too, their attendance was restricted to brief visits lasting from a few weeks to some months. Hasib Hussain, of Pakistani descent, underwent his primary and secondary education in Holbeck and Leeds in Great Britain. He came into contact with two other bombers, Shehzad Tanweer and Mohammad Siddique Khan, in England where they frequented the Stratford Street mosque and the Hamara Youth Access Point which is a teenage centre in Leeds. Both Siddique Khan and Tanweer completed their elementary and secondary education in the UK, after which both boys carried on with higher education. The mosque these young men attended in the UK denied having any role to play in influencing Tanweer to study at madrassas in Pakistan

The fourth suicide bomber was a Jamaican-born Germaine Lindsay who had also completed his secondary education in the UK and converted to Islam at the age of 15. The radicalization of this group of youth appears, then, to not have been driven by a madrassa education as such.

Pakistani madrassas have also been notoriously linked with foreign terrorist groups such as Jemmah Islamiyah; in 2003 this group’s leading member was arrested from Karachi’s Jamia Abu Bakr religious seminary. Nineteen other Malaysian and Indonesian students were also apprehended from an alleged Jamaat-ud-Dawa madrassa in Karachi.

However, these incidences are not telltale signs of a direct involvement of the said Pakistan-based madrassa in propagating militancy; in most cases the madrassas were only briefly visited or used as a transit point or safe haven. With regards to global jihad, the role(s) of madrassas falls under the “Aiding and abetting” category (see above). At this point it is unclear to what degree this form of complicity leads to actual acts of terrorism; the question arises as to whether and how these madrassas serve to radicalize, or further radicalize, its foreign students. Are their militant urges given impetus, leading them to inflict greater terror upon returning to their home countries? As with the case of the 7/7 bombers, it is difficult to say in what way their visit to madrassas in

¹³⁸ Alexander Evans, “Understanding Madrassas,” *Foreign Affairs*, 85 no. 1 (Jan/Feb 2006), 9-16

¹³⁹ William Dalrymple, “Inside Islam’s ‘Terror Schools’” *New Statesman*, 28 March 2005

Pakistan “aided” them in carrying out their subsequent act of militancy once back in their homeland.

In August 2007, it was reported in the media that three militant organizations – Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) and Sipah-e-Sahaba (SSP) – to have “joined al-Qaeda to increase terrorist activities, targeting Pakistan Army, government personalities and installations.”¹⁴⁰ While certain groups, like Ji and LeT, have been seen to provide safe houses and such to al-Qaeda members, as well as political and ideological sympathy, there is scant proof of a new alliance involving both an operational and logistical level. For example, the attack on the U.S. consulate in Karachi in 2002 has been described as “al-Qaeda in conception and local in execution.”¹⁴¹ However, it hasn’t been conclusively established whether Naveed ul-Hassan – the alleged perpetrator of the crime and member of “Harakatul Mujahideen al-Almi”¹⁴² – or his group were subcontracted by al-Qaeda. Also it remains unsettled whether there is a rigid madrassa infrastructure in place in Pakistan that candidly serves as a launching pad for global terrorism.

Even if a bond between jihadi organizations in Pakistan and global terror groups was determined, the implicit role of madrassas would still remain vague, because, as shown below, the type of terrorist acts conducted on an international scale usually require a more educated and “sophisticated” candidate not found in madrassas. So even if madrassas are producing terrorist-hopefuls by the dozens, it is debatable if these men are taken up by international terrorist organizations. Up till now, militancy in Pakistan shows itself to be driven by the sectarian rift, and to that end it remains a domestic affair.

Both Fair and Haqqani have reiterated that there is no “compelling” evidence showing militancy to feature strongly in the actions and agenda of madrassas in Pakistan.¹⁴³ They have put forward the fact that most terrorist organizations practice a stringent kind of quality-control whereupon they seek only “higher quality” terrorists – those with higher education and extensive accomplishments, including linguistic and technological skills, as well as the ability to blend into Western communities.

This mimics Bueno de Mesquita’s theoretical model that terrorist groups behave like rational employers, imposing quality control in their recruitment efforts and selecting the most qualified

¹⁴⁰ Shakeel Anjum, “Three Militant Outfits Join Hands with al-Qaeda,” *The News*, 27 August 2007

¹⁴¹ Quoted in Christine Fair, “Militant Recruitment in Pakistan: Implication for al-Qaeda and Other Organizations,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 27 no. 6 (November 2004), 489-504. Fair conducted fieldwork and interviewed South Asian analysts who suggested that ties between al-Qaeda and Islamic and militant organizations in Pakistan are informal, and Pakistanis providing assistance are not among the al-Qaeda cadre

¹⁴² Iqbal Khan Yousufzai, “Alleged Mastermind of Attack Outside US Consulate Nabbed in Lahore,” *Asia Tribune*, 19 November 2004

¹⁴³ Christine Fair & Husain Haqqani, “Think again: Islamist terrorism,” (January 2006), Foreign Policy, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=3359, Accessed 17 August 2007; Christine Fair, *The Muslim World After 9/11*, Angel M. Rabasa et al, eds., (USA: RAND Corporation, 2004); Christine Fair, “Militant Recruitment in Pakistan: A New Look at the Militancy-Madrassa Connection”, *The National Bureau of Asian Research*, Asia Policy no. 4, (July 2007), 107-134

candidate for the “job” – subject to any resource constraints the organization faces.¹⁴⁴ Given the general dearth of secular subjects (math, English, sciences) in religious seminaries, madrasa students (without mainstream education) are not likely to be desirable to international terrorist groups, especially when higher quality recruits are available. However, as a subordinate clause the authors do acknowledge that even while it is likely that Pakistan’s madaris do not contribute significantly to the supply of terrorist manpower, they may foster conditions that are conducive to public support for terrorism.

Marc Sageman has declared the notion that madrassas brainwash young Muslims into becoming terrorists a “myth”. He compiled and analyzed the profiles of 172 “Salafist jihadists” to have targeted foreigner governments or their people. The majority of the terrorists were not from poor or undereducated, and instead appeared to be more skilled than other members of the societies from which they are drawn (Sageman, 2004). The researcher also examined 400 al-Qaeda affiliates and found that only 13% emerged from madaris¹⁴⁵ – the practice was specific to Southeast Asia where the best madrassas students were recruited to form the backbone of Jaamah Islamiyah, the Indonesian al-Qaeda affiliate.¹⁴⁶

Bergen and Panday comport with these conclusions; they studied the backgrounds of 79 terrorist involved in numerous anti-Western terrorist attacks by perusing information available in US, European, Asian and Middle Eastern newspapers, US government reports and books about terrorism, and noticed madrasa involvement to be atypical, whereas the “masterminds” of the attacks mostly held university degrees.¹⁴⁷ More specifically, they found that, of those who did attend college and/or graduate school, 48 percent had attended schools in the West, and 58 percent attained scientific or technical degrees.¹⁴⁸ It is in light of such findings the French scholar Gilles Kepel commented:

“The new breeds of global jihadis are not from the urban poor of developing world, but the privileged children of an unlikely marriage between Wahhabism and Silicon Valley.”¹⁴⁹

This assertion can be supported by the fact that many high-profile terrorists belong to Diaspora communities living in the Gulf States or the West, such as Khalid Sheikh Mohammad, Sheikh

¹⁴⁴ Ethan Bueno de Mesquita “The Quality of Terror”, *American Journal of Political Science*, 49 no. 3 (April 2005), 515–530

¹⁴⁵ Marc Sageman, “The Normality of Global Jihadi Terrorism,” *The Journal of International Security Affairs*, No. 8 (Spring 2005)

¹⁴⁶ 87% of the terrorists studied in the sample had a secular academic background. 84% were radicalized in the West as opposed to their country of origin

¹⁴⁷ Peter Bergen and Swati Pandey, “The Madrasa Scapegoat,” *The Washington Quarterly*, 29 no. 2 (Spring 2006), 117-125

¹⁴⁸ Engineering was the most popular subject studied by the terrorists in their sample; a strong correlation between technical education and terrorism was evident, suggesting that perpetrating large-scale attacks requires not only a college education but also a facility with technology. This type of education is simply not available at the vast majority of madrassas

¹⁴⁹ Quoted in William Dalrymple, “Inside Islam’s ‘Terror Schools’”, *New Statesman*, 28 March 2005,

Omar, Asif Mohammed Hanif and Omar Khan Sharif.¹⁵⁰ Profiles of other prominent terrorists also renders false any link between madrassas and global terrorism; al-Qaeda's leading henchman Aymen al-Zawahiri used to be a paediatric surgeon, Ali Mohammad (al-Qaeda's military trainer) is a former Egyptian army major with a degree in Psychology, and Osama bin Laden himself who is a college-educated son of a billionaire. The relatively sophisticated attacks on US embassies in Africa or the World Trade Centre in America, for example, can only be conducted by a technically literate genre of terrorists – such education or skills are not provided in most madrassas.

The discussion in this chapter hitherto has dealt with the role of Pakistani madrassas in perpetuating a global form of jihad. With respect to other types of jihads, this paper has found that they link to madrasa involvement. However, Christine Fair, who oversaw her own survey of 130 families in Pakistan who have lost at least one son to militancy in Kashmir and Afghanistan, collected extensive background information on these militants and found no evidence that madaris are a principle place for their recruitment.¹⁵¹ This somewhat contends the findings of the present report which finds that certain madrassas serve as important indoctrination and recruitment centres for jihadi organizations, such as JeM and suggests that more research is needed to review the links between madrassas in Pakistan and type II jihad (cross-border).

4.2 The "Supply-side theory"

The supply-side theory, then, rests on the premise that Islamist militant organizations (or tanzeems) behave as conventional employers by practicing a set of standards for recruitment purposes, and rely upon a plethora of proxies to evaluate a candidate's suitability for a particular mission. These proxies may include the candidate's academic background, previous work experience and his reputation in community or through personal contacts. Expectedly, then, more qualified individuals (with greater human capital endowment) will be assigned targets that are of high value to the tanzeem. Given considerable availability or "supply" of qualified candidates, a madrasa student is less likely to be recruited. However, some madaris do combine worldly and secular subjects to their curricula (like Khair-ul-Madaris in Multan, Jamia Ashrafia in Lahore, Jamia Darul Uloom Korangi in Karachi, and Jamaat-ud-Dawa's chain of madrassas and schools across Pakistan) and hence may be able to offer competent and desirable recruits.

This implies that if the opportunity costs of failure are high, militants are less likely to use volunteers exclusively trained in madrassas. Where a madrasa education confers operational benefits – as in sectarian attacks – these students may be preferred. That is, depending on the standards of terrorists' organisations and market availability of manpower, a madrasa-educated volunteer may or may not be taken on as a recruit.

¹⁵⁰ Hanif and Sharif were British citizen of Pakistani origin who were allegedly involved in the suicide bombing in the Tel Aviv in 2003

¹⁵¹ Christine Fair, "Islamic Education in Pakistan," (March 2006), United States Institute of Peace, http://www.usip.org/events/2006/trip_report.pdf, Accessed 21 August 2007

However, there are setbacks to this theory: as mentioned before, there are numerous madrassas which combine religious education with more modern subjects. Hence it could be argued that these madrassas also provide their students with skills similar to those gained by students trained in public schools. Case in point is the chain of seminaries (and schools) run by Jamaat-ud-Dawa, one of which was allegedly attended by the 7/7 suicide attacker Shahzad Tanweer. In appearance Markaz Taiba was described as a “wealthy private school in Britain; red-brick buildings housing the classrooms, wide playing fields, a large swimming pool” by the journalist who visited it in Muridke, Pakistan.¹⁵² In addition to religious studies, the madrassa taught computer science, engineering and medicine, and had a university. Madrassa students interviewed by Saleem Ali also demonstrated knowledge and use of computers.

Christine Fair has asserted that “under prevailing conditions in Pakistan, willing supply of militant labour likely exceeds the demand tanzeems have for labor.”¹⁵³ If the supply of jihadists is significant, militant “head-hunters” would rather opt for a more highly qualified candidate (found in schools or universities, not madrassas.) Fair suggests that during conditions of economic downturn “high-quality” persons may become unemployed or underemployed, thus diminishing the opportunity costs imposed by participating in terrorism. Such a scenario paves way for an increased supply of possible recruits with a higher calibre that would benefit certain tanzeems more.

It is plausible to assume that madrassas – especially those with alleged ties to banned militant groups and teaching secular subjects and technology – are as tempting a source for recruiters as ordinary schools or universities. So, even if the “supply” of terrorist-hopefuls is vast, madrassa students may still prove the more suitable candidate. In the case of Markaz Taiba, they also possess the unique advantage of being (allegedly) affiliated with a well-established and modern tanzeem – a trait that may stand out on their “CV.” Moreover, many madrassas are known to have links with militant organisations, more so than public schools – thus making it easier for them to simply use available madrassa contacts instead of forging new ties with public schools that can be risky.

Another possibly problem with the supply-side theory could have to do with methodology; in practice, how is “supply” of militants to be measured? At any given time, how can it be learned that there is a great “supply” of militants that exceeds such a limit that recruiters can be highly selective in their screening process? Unless there is clear-cut evidence that certain tanzeems have used madrassa students as militants, no conclusion can be reached. It has been very difficult, in the case of Pakistan, and especially Afghanistan, to identify who the perpetrators of many suicide attacks are, and the statements issued by Pakistani officials regarding the culprits are treated with dubiety. For specific acts of terrorism, militant organizations like the Baitullah group¹⁵⁴ or

¹⁵² Justin Huggler, “Inside the Pakistani School Accused of Teaching Terrorism,” *The Independent*, 16 July 2005

¹⁵³ Christine Fair, “Militant Recruitment in Pakistan: Implication for al-Qaeda and Other Organizations,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 27 no. 6 (November 2004) 489-504

¹⁵⁴ During his correspondence with spokesmen for Baitullah Mehsud, Syed Irfan, a journalist for *Dawn* newspaper, reports that they acceded to some allegations imposed on them. For most of the attacks to have

Taliban in general have claimed responsibility for the attacks, but it cannot be derived from this whether the actual attacker was associated with a madrassa.

Within Pakistan, the issue of “educated terrorism” looms large and deserves more attention. Attaur Rehman, leader of the group, Jandullah, that tried to kill the Karachi corps commander, had a university-training and was formerly of the student wing of JI, and had broken away from it to form his own extremist group. The two doctor brothers, Akmal and Arshad Waheed, arrested in Karachi for allegedly providing medical assistance to the Jandullah terrorists, were members of the Pakistan Islamic Medical Association (PIMA) and had a history of being active in Afghanistan under the Taliban.

4.3 The “tanzeem approach”

Tanzeem approach: Instead of asking whether militancy is linked with madrassas, it would be more fruitful to approach this issue from the perspective of the militant groups. For instance, examining the recruitment and training strategies of different militant organizations, the scope of their operations and their *modi operandi* could shed light on the type of human capital that is demanded of them. In this vein Christine Fair’s report from July 2007 argues that analysts should consider the “objectives, tactics, theatres and ‘quality of terror’ produced, as well as the preferred ‘target recruitment market’ of each particular group in question.”¹⁵⁵ That is, madrassa students may be suitable for some operations, but not others.

By way of illustration, Fair cites the example of LeT versus LeJ and SSP: LeT is known to primarily operate in India and Indian-administered Kashmir whereas LeJ and SSP are primarily Deobandi sectarian groups known to operate within Pakistan. As LeT objective has mainly revolved around “liberating” Kashmir from India this has entailed attacks deep within India (e.g., the 2001 attack on Delhi’s Red Fort, the 2006 Mumbai metro assault, and the November 2008 Mumbai attack).

Also LeT cadre, in order to cross into Indian-administered Kashmir at the high-altitude Line of Control (LoC), must be capable of enduring harsh physical conditions as well as the ability to evade the Indian counter-insurgency grid. In addition, Fair’s fieldwork in Kashmir, found that notebooks belonging to militants give detailed (often in English) accounts for building improvised explosive devices – suggesting that these individuals are “literate and numerate.”¹⁵⁶

LeT militants may also need to possess various language faculties fluently in order to blend in the target surroundings. All these skills are not generally taught at *madaris*. LeJ militants, in contrast, operate within Pakistan, where language requirements are not constraining. Note that LeJ tends to target civilians in markets and Shia mosques with low-end tactics such as grenade tosses. Fair’s

taken place in the tribal belt and NWFP in recent times, Mehsud’s spokesman, Maulvi Mohammad Omar has claimed responsibility

¹⁵⁵ Christine Fair, “Militant Recruitment in Pakistan: A New Look at the Militancy-Madrassa Connection”, *The National Bureau of Asian Research*, Asia Policy no. 4 (July 2007) 107-134

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid*

analysis of these groups indicated that few LeT operatives are madrassa products and that the few who do come from madrassas are unlikely to become operatives unless they also either attended a public school or confer particular advantages to LeT. LeT could use low-quality recruits from madrassas or elsewhere for missions against soft targets, however, LeT is not currently known for these kinds of operations. In contrast, LeJ operations tend to be less sophisticated; suggesting that, in principle, given its sectarian mission, students with some madrassa background may be preferred to those without madrassa experience, all things being equal.

Fair concludes by saying that “while analysts currently do not observe madrassa products in tanzems for many theatres, madrassa products could become more desirable should group objectives, tactics, or preferred theatre change— or if the recruitment market changes.”¹⁵⁷

As little research has been conducted to test this theory in Pakistan’s context it is difficult to claim its efficacy. However, at first blush, certain snags do appear in the approach. It is probably wrong to assume that detailed and precise information is readily known about the wide spectrum of militant organizations in Pakistan, their ties to international terrorists, and record of their violent operations in the Indian subcontinent.

In the example cited above of LeT and LeJ, for example, it does not appear crucially necessary for the purposes of LeT’s theatre and tactics that it recruit exclusively from a non-madrassa populace. Even a madrassa graduate can “blend in” Kashmir or India given the language similarities, and does not need “proper” schooling or higher education to camouflage his nativity. Educational background is also not an important factor in acclimatizing to the harsh weather conditions along the LoC. Training camps which presumably give militants the physical preparation required for combat would be necessary, and given that madaris have traditionally had a closer link to training camps¹⁵⁸, it might be more logical to assume that madrassas facilitate an easier transition to training camps than schools. And this could serve as an added incentive for tanzems to target madaris, as opposed to other educational centres. Moreover, as suggested before, a range of madaris offer secular, up-to-date subjects which boost the literary and numeric acumen of its students – thus enmeshing the perceived advantages or disadvantages of being a madrassas/non-madrassas graduate.

Fair suggests attention be directed at the tanzem’s tactics and “primary theatre of operation” to discern whether it will prefer to recruit madrassa graduates or not; however, both theatres and tactics may overlap considerably. For example, SSP’s (deemed to be a sectarian outfit operating within Pakistan) Azam Tariq was an ardent supporter of the jihad in Kashmir. He pledged to send “500,000 militants to Jammu and Kashmir to fight Indian security forces”¹⁵⁹ in 1999, soon after JeM’s Masood Azhar was released. Tactics, too, overlap at times when LeJ is seen as using

¹⁵⁷ Ibid

¹⁵⁸ See, for example, those referred to in the UNAMA report

¹⁵⁹ Quoted in Tahir Kamran (2008) “The Political Economy of Sectarianism: Jhang,” (9 May 2008), *Pakistan Security Research Unit*

suicide missions as part of its modus operandus.¹⁶⁰ SSP activists, for instance, are known to have used rocket launcher in attacks targeted at the police, as well as having used bombs in assassination attempt at Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's life in 1999.¹⁶¹ In practicing, gauging a madrassa-militancy link by looking at a tanzeems theatre, tactics and targets may have significant caveats.

5 Conclusion

The present study identified four types of jihads and their relation to madrassas in Pakistan. Of these, only type IV (sectarianism) has been researched empirically. To a more limited extent, so has type II (cross-border jihad into Afghanistan and Kashmir/India). However, type III relating to the Pakistani-Taliban and jihad against Pakistani authorities has received less attention due to its newness. Primary sources researched by the author found type II and IV jihad to be linked to madrassas; most madrassas linked to one of these two jihads were seen to also support the other kind. Type I global jihad was found to have the weakest connection to madrassas in Pakistan, and has been rejected by many scholars (Chapter 4).

Thus it can be concluded that madrassas in Pakistan to various degrees are linked to local and regional forms of militancy (cross-border raids into Afghanistan or Kashmir/India) and type IV (sectarian violence), and, to a lesser extent, attacks against the Pakistani army/state. The latter is mainly carried out by the Pakistani-Taliban, a recent and fast growing phenomenon on Pakistan's militant landscape. Since the write-up of this paper, sections of previously Kashmir-focused jihadi groups, as well as some sectarian groups in Pakistan, have immersed with the Tehrik-e-Taliban, resulting in an overlap between the different types of jihads outlined in this report. This would then imply that jihad type III banks on madrassas (linked to type II and IV) from whence to receive its manpower.

Madrassa involvement in propagating militancy is diversified – it ranges from being a direct player to a more ambiguous, indirect one. The role of a madrassa does not directly relate to the type of jihad it supports. For example, the Binori Town madrassa has acted as a “safe haven” for members of militant groups – yet, it is believed to also be a great advocate of sectarian and militant ideology (based on its close ties to SSP and JeM).

Madrassas can impart a militant ideology that invariably leads its students along the path of violent jihad. They can impart a religiously conservative ideology which, although not directly responsible for leading students to terrorism, can create the conditions (a particularly prejudiced mindset, attitude, and so on) that makes madrassa students more susceptible to extremist groups and their propaganda. A well-established example is that of Radd – refutation of other

¹⁶⁰ Animesh Roul, “Lashkar-e-Jhangvi: Sectarian Violence in Pakistan and Ties to International Terrorism,” (2 June 2005), *Terrorism Monitor*, http://www.jamestown.org/terrorism/news/uploads/ter_003_011.pdf, Accessed 10 September 2007

¹⁶¹ “Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan, Terrorist Group of Pakistan,” *South Asia Terrorism Portal*, <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/Pakistan/terroristoutfits/Ssp.htm>, Accessed 3 March 2008

sects/beliefs – that is common in most madaris. With such schooling, it is not surprising that madrassa students have been often linked with sectarian violence in Pakistan.

We saw also in Chapter 3 that madrassas act as sites of recruitment from where militants cajole and coerce children into joining their gangs. They are also used as “transit points” by local and international terrorist groups, however further investigation needs to be conducted in order to understand *how* these transit points encourage violent Islamic extremism. A most incriminating manner in which a madrassa can be said to be involved in militancy is by the affiliation of its leaders with terrorist leaders/groups. JeM and its Usman-o-Ali madrassa in Bahawalpur, as well as JeM’s links to Wafaq al Madaris’ head Qari Jalandhri, are a case in point, along with the examples of madrassa teachers arrested for having links to militant leaders or their violent activities.

Public school students – making up 70% of Pakistan’s enrolled students – have shown comparable levels of support for violent groups. Therefore, focus should also be directed at public schools, not just madrassas which control a very small share of Pakistan’s educational market.

There is little mention of actual schools run by banned militant groups, or organisations connected with outlawed terror groups, in existing literature. However we see that Jamaat ud Dawa (the banned Lashkar-e-Tayyaba’s political wing) boasts a network of schools (and madaris) across Pakistan. There are reportedly “30 Model Schools” run by the Jamaat-ud-Dawa in Sindh alone, where JD also has the Ahl-e Hadith Jamia al-Darshat-ul-Islamia university. JD’s head, Hafiz Saeed, has pushed for jihad and the advancement of modern education alongside Islamic teachings at his various madaris (Ad Dawa Model Schools) with the goal of producing “a reformed individual who is well-versed in Islamic moral principles and the techniques of modern science and technology, to produce an alternative model of development and governance.”¹⁶²

This category of educational institutes (run under the auspices of extremist groups) appears to have been under-represented in the studies hitherto conducted. It is reasonable to presume that “model schools” being operated under the auspices of outlawed organisations may be indoctrinating their students with their specific jihadi ideology – made all the more dangerous by their combined teaching of secular and modern subjects, possibly rendering students more qualified to partake in “high-value” terrorist attacks (e.g. cross-border into Afghanistan or Kashmir/India, or on an international level). Analysing and comparing these schools with mainstream public schools may also prove beneficial to the debate on the link between public schools and extremist ideology and violence. Extant research on militancy and education and Pakistan has not yet proceeded along these lines.

¹⁶² Saeed Shafqat, *Nationalism without a Nation?* Christopher Jaffrelot, ed., (London: Zed Books, 2002), 138-148

It is clear that greater research is required into this subject before the precise nature and extent of the links between madrassas and militancy can be established. However, the discussion presented in this paper will hopefully serve as a good starting point from where to direct and gear future study.

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