

**THE EXTRA-RELIGIOUS FUNCTIONS OF MADARIS:
IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNITY PLANNING IN PAKISTAN**

by

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ABSTRACT

The current mantra of development advocates macro level, top down approaches which largely ignore the potential for change inherent within existing indigenous grass root social structures. One such indigenous social institution prevalent in the Islamic World is that of the religious school locally known as the *madrassa*. After 9-11, madaris have been prominently featured in the international media as a potential breeding ground for terrorists and fundamentalists and has become a policy concern for both the American and Pakistani governments. Recent policy interventions have included steps to centralize madaris, curriculum revisions along with a renewed interest in improving existing public and private schools as an alternative to religious schooling. Most of these steps have been rejected by the *madrassa* community and there is ongoing antagonism between *madrassa* officials and government authorities.

This research examines how *madrassa* mission and mandate intersect with community development goals as well as with the national project of development and modernity, and how they create linkages and multiplier effects within the local culture and institutions particularly in the absence of social support services. It utilizes a mixed method approach based on ethnographic interviews, mapping, content and discourse analyses and participant observations to uncover the daily patterns of the research participants' lives in two selected research sites in Islamabad, Pakistan. The research develops recommendations based on the perspective of *madrassa* students, alumni, administrators, teachers and local community members.

The study argues that madaris have the ability to reach out to Pakistan's marginalized and disenfranchised. It is important for the madaris community to get recognized by the state to gain access to state funding and aid agencies. However the government needs to be very flexible with

its policy of reforms and needs to allow the madaris to operate in the academic spaces they deem fit. The purpose and intent of madaris should be preserved and allowed to remain intact. This is where planners and development practitioners fit in. They need to mobilize a participatory dialogue between the state and the madaris community and exact this crucial integration of indigenous institutions such as the madrasa into mainstream development policy.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the madaris community of Pakistan and all grassroots, indigenous institutions of the world who are battling to retain their social legitimacy.

It is also dedicated to all the victims of the 2005 Pakistani earthquake.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION - REIMAGINING THE MADRASSA DISCOURSE

Introduction

George Tenet, then Director of CIA commented in 2002 before the United States Senate Armed Services Committee:

“All of these challenges [the connection between terrorists and other enemies of this country; the weapons of mass destruction they seek to use against us; and the social, economic, and political tensions across the world that they exploit in mobilising their followers] come together in parts of the Muslim world, and let me just give you one example. One of the places where they converge that has the greatest long term impact on any society is its educational system. Primary and secondary education in parts of the Muslim world is often dominated by an interpretation of Islam that teaches intolerance and hatred. The graduates of these schools- ‘madrassas’- provide the foot soldiers for many of the Islamic militant groups that operate throughout the Muslim world” (As quoted in Riyaz, 2005, p. 2).

This quote from George Tenet connects the dots between madaris and the so called foot soldiers for Islamist terrorist groups. As a Pakistani national who studied in British schools in Islamabad and universities in Canada but who also studied in a local madrassa in Islamabad for a year, I feel this quote completely misrepresents the purpose of a madrassa. It completely ignores the complex roles these religious institutions have been playing for centuries in Islamic societies. Furthermore this quote fails to make the connection between local indigenous institutions and the crucial role they can play in the local and national development process.

Background to the research

The current mantra of development calls for macro-level, top-down approaches which largely ignore the potential for change inherent within existing indigenous grass-roots social structures. Interventions in Third World Nations by nongovernmental organizations and international bodies sometimes lack the social and cultural contexts which govern the everyday lives of citizens. One such example is that of the Islamic World where religion plays a pivotal role in the structuring and ordering of society. Growing up in a Muslim country (Pakistan) where the separation of the church (in this case the mosque) and the state is not always clear, I am familiar with this lived experience where there is no guarantee whether this boundary can ever be clearly demarcated. Development observers have argued that the best course of development (i.e. helping marginalized people better their lives) needs to be done in the context of the institutions and the political, socio-cultural forces shaping people's lives.

One such indigenous social institution prevalent in the Islamic World is the religious school locally known as the *madrassa*. "Madrassa," which in Arabic literally means "school," is not a uniformly defined term. Madaris (plural for *madrassa*) are basically religious schools where students can be enrolled part-time or full-time, residential or otherwise and which can teach anything from memorizing the Quran to partial or complete coverage of a curriculum prescribed by some private accreditation body. There is great variety in the form, structure and affiliation of madaris. As a researcher, I feel there is limited value in defining a *madrassa* but it is more appropriate to understand the madaris as a fluid structure, which can take on many shapes and forms. Instead of disputing definitions, it is important to locate the madaris within the socio-economic, cultural and political landscape characteristic of the Islamic World and understand the distinct social spaces the madaris occupy.

In Pakistan, madaris can be concentrated in both urban and rural areas and attract a large proportion of students from a distinct socio-economic group because of various factors which will be discussed in detail in later chapters. The number of madaris students enrolled in the country are estimated to be anywhere from 40, 000 (Stern, 2000, p. 119) to more than 2 million¹ (Candland, 2005, p. 151). There is no clear data to confirm these figures, however there is ample contextual evidence from which it can be logically inferred that the madaris are prominent social institutions, which are supported and validated by communities themselves.

After 9-11, madaris have been prominently featured in the international media as potential breeding grounds for terrorists and fundamentalists, largely profiled in the media as young single men, and have become a policy concern for both the United States and the Pakistani government. The focus is often on madaris that cater to the education of boys and young men, even though there are also madaris exclusively for young girls and women. Recent policy interventions have included steps to centralize these religious schools, curricula update and develop infrastructure along with a general interest in improving existing public and private schools as an alternative to religious schooling. Most of these steps have been rejected by the madrassa community and there is ongoing antagonism between madrassa officials and government authorities. In a way this growing conflict demonstrates a contestation of identities and a group's struggle to regain access and participation in the national agenda.

This thesis argues that the current understanding of the madrassa and its role in society is flawed, in its emphasis on the political outcomes of the madrassa at the expense of their social and community development implications. It is not enough to research madaris only in relation to

¹ This includes both male and female students.

terrorism and as units of resistance against state control. Rather madaris need to be conceptualized more holistically; as locally validated social institutions which perform multiple community development functions and serve as social safety nets for those who manage to fall through the cracks of an imperfectly modernising Pakistani nation.

Relevance and rationale

The implications of the madrassa system catering to 0.04 million to 2 million youth in Pakistan are very complex and far reaching. One prominent reason for madrassa's centrality stems from the weakening of the Pakistani state. The madaris have become more popular as they are more accessible to the marginalized lower socio-economic classes for whom the Pakistani state has failed to provide adequate access to education and social services. Structural adjustment policies propagated by the World Bank to open markets and liberalize trade have resulted in massive expenditure cuts particularly in the social sector (in such crucial areas as health, education, assisted housing, food etc) throughout the developing world and Pakistan has not been an exception.

In 1988, the government of Pakistan and the IMF signed an agreement on the IMF proposed Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) for the country. The exact details of the proposed program are beyond the scope of this research but I will outline some of the broader social effects the program has had on the country.

There appears to be a direct association between the implementation of the SAP and deterioration in the standard of living of lower income groups, particularly women (Zaidi, 1999, p. 328). To increase government revenues, steps were outlined to increase prices and user charges for utilities such as electricity, natural gas and water (Zaidi, p. 317). The program also advocated

increased charges for higher education and health (Zaidi, p. 317). Similarly to decreased governmental expenditure, subsidies on fertilizers on farmers were lowered and eventually eliminated (Zaidi, p. 317). Other subsidies removed included subsidies on wheat, sugar and cooking oil which are important components of the total consumption of low income groups (Zaidi, p. 317). The decline in subsidies was accompanied by an increase in the prices of wheat. Similarly the price of kerosene and petrol rose by almost 50% between 1987-88 and 1990-91 (Zaidi, p. 317). Taxes on the poor increased by 10.3% while those on the richest group declined by 4.3% between the same time periods (Zaidi, p. 317). Amongst the clerical, sales, services, agriculture, production and related workers categories, unemployment increased dramatically over the period between 1987-88 and 1991 (Zaidi, p. 317). It can also be argued that the SAP exacerbated income inequalities between different socio-economic groups as outlined in the following table:

Table 1.1: A snapshot of income distributions in Pakistan from 1987-1999

Year	Household lowest 20%	Income middle 60%	Share highest 20%	Ratio of highest 20% to lowest 20%
1987-88	8.0	45.3	43.7	5.5
1990-91	5.7	45.0	49.3	8.6
1992-93	6.2	45.6	48.2	7.8
1993-94	6.5	46.3	47.2	7.3
1996-97	7.0	63.6	49.4	7.1
1998-99	7.2	40.5	42.3	5.9

Source: (Kemal, 2001, p. 13)

Pakistan's education system is regularly cited as one of the most serious impediments preventing the country from achieving its potential. The UN Development Program's Human Development Report gives Pakistan the lowest education index score of any country outside Africa (Hathaway,

2005, p. 2). According to the International Crisis Group, Pakistan is one of only 12 countries in the world that spends less than 2 percent of its GDP on education (2005, p. 167). There is much value in trying to understand the role of the madrassa as a popular response to the government's inability to provide public education and social welfare.

The madrassa is an “evolving institution visibly marked by the world-transforming forces of our age: religious reform, the ascent of the West, nationalism, the developmentalist state, and mass education” (Talib, 2008, p. 449). The mission of contemporary madaris is likely to devote as much attention to developing spirituality and moral values or ‘akhlaq’ (character) and ‘adab’ (good behaviour, civility) as with providing an alternative to public education, when availability and the quality of public schooling is limited (Boyle, 2006, p. 480). Often described by its proponents as one of the largest networks of nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), madaris, at the very least, provide a “basic education safety net; socialisation to certain norms of proper behaviour and knowledge, and an awareness of an Islamic identity” (Park & Niyozov, 2008, p. 332). There is a scarcity of research and literature that offers an in-depth analysis of the community building and social development aspects of the madrassa. And even though some authors (e.g McClure, 2009; Evans, 2008; Blanchard, 2008; Hefner, 2007; Berkey, 2007; Coulson, 2004; Kronstadt, 2004; Blustein, 2002) have tried to link madrassa enrolment with socio-economic conditions, the link has not been exhaustively and thoroughly studied. Madaris also need to be studied in relation to broader changes in the national character of Pakistan such as changing values, shifting public morality, economic instability and global Islamic resurgence.

It is important to point out that Protestant and Catholic schools, universities have found commonplace acceptance unlike Islamic schools and universities. Religious education in

Pakistan (more specifically Islamic education) has failed to take off in a respectable way in the country. Such issues of relevance and acceptance are not even worthy of consideration in other Islamic countries like Malaysia, Indonesia and Saudi Arabia where the Islamic religion is part and parcel of everyday socialization including in schools and universities. One prominent reason for this difference is the antagonism between the State and religious organizations such as the madrassa and their inability to discover a common ground. The Pakistani State has been unable to holistically integrate Islamic education into its mainstream educational and development ideals. This is partly because of the State's construction and interpretation of what it means to be a 'modern' nation state.

Historically, religion has always been a prominent shaper of society and a strong motivator for development (such as Weber's classic treatise of Protestantism informing capitalist development and Confucianism or neo-Confucianism fuelling the rise of some East Asian countries such as South Korea). Religion has always been allowed to cast a wider net and inform development and national trajectories. But if one looks at the growth of post-World War II development studies; modernization theorists, following in the footsteps of Émile Durkheim and Max Weber, were busy building typologies of 'modern' and 'traditional' societies in order to purvey their development strategies to the newly decolonized states of Africa, Asia, and Latin America (Amin-Khan, 2009, p. 546). These modernists "were ostensibly pitching capitalist modernity by offering the framework of culturalist emulation - promoting the emulation of Western values through the adoption of the ideas of 'progress' and 'development' as the ticket to the club of "modern" (market-based) community of nations" (Amin-Khan, p. 546). Pakistan's independence in 1947 from the British Empire and the subsequent cultururation of its ruling classes in such conceptions of development never really left any room for religion.

This research examines how madrassa mission and mandate intersect with community development goals as well as with the national project of development and modernity, and how they create linkages and multiplier effects within the local culture and institutions particularly in the absence of social support services. Community development functions of madaris in Pakistan are explored using a qualitative method of inquiry resulting in interpreting the madrassa as a marginalized population's effort to collectively organize and overcome the limitations of the development project and the increased selectivity of the globalization movement.

Community development affairs of madaris include both religious as well as extra-religious functions. Religious functions include but are not limited to providing a rigorous religious education, socialization to Islamic norms and the individual and collective reaffirmation of an Islamic identity. These religious functions are not limited to the enrolled students but extend well into the community through various community-based education initiatives like public lectures and regular consultation services. The madrassa represents a perceived struggle to preserve and protect Islamic teachings, to reproduce within society certain Islamic roles, which are traditionally filled only by the madrassa graduates.

Extra-religious functions include providing alternative routes to free education especially to those who otherwise would not have the opportunity to receive any formal education (this includes religious, as well as elementary to advanced level of general/secular education depending on the resources and capacity of the madrassa). This is particularly relevant for rural communities which have the least access to the collective gains of the state. All madaris offer boarding and lodging to their students free of costs or at minimal costs and are thus positioned as need-blind, highly inclusive institutions. Madaris typically depend on the community for financial support to

help meet all operational as well as strategic costs. The Government of Pakistan does not support madaris financially. There is also some speculation of the Saudi Arabian government funding certain madaris in the country but due to the sensitive nature of this issue it is impossible to verify this claim. This issue is sensitive because of the national appreciation for Saudi Arabia as the centre of the Islamic World and Islamic scholarship. This is largely because Saudi Arabia houses the two most important religious centres for Muslims: the Ka'abah and Masjid Al-Nabvi. Also the region is the birthplace of Prophet Mohammed and hosts one of the most respected Islamic universities in the world: Madina University. Saudi Arabia is also a prominent donor for Pakistan and supports various development and public work projects in the country. An investigation of the kingdom's involvement with Pakistan's madaris system is expected to stir up some contention between the two countries and so far Pakistan has carefully avoided such a confrontation.

Madaris also provide their graduates with better access to the formal and informal economy for a variety of religious and secular roles. Madaris have also been very active in humanitarian work through various trusts and produce graduates who have an exceptionally strong desire to transform society not only religiously but also socially. Madaris are sometimes the only platform outside of the household that have a sympathetic attitude towards the impoverished and marginalized and enjoy great respect all over the country across many socio-economic groups. This appreciation however is not shared by the ruling class who at best are ambivalent to the madaris system altogether. Madaris graduates also enjoy a markedly distinguished social status (the role of a religious scholar is highly esteemed and respected) which is unique in the sense that

it is not directly linked to upward socio-economic mobility². It can be argued that for certain socio-economic groups, a madrassa education is an accessible means through which community members can participate in their communities and contribute positively towards them³.

The discourse will be situated within the current debate regarding the disparate education systems in Pakistan, the rise of the Taliban and identity politics, changing societal values and social relations, madrassa reforms and foreign pressure, and the systematic exclusion of the madrassa community from the gains of the state. References will also be made to the effects of the 2005 earthquake on schools and communities, and the position of the madaris within the broader national and international response to the disaster. It will briefly touch upon the tension and co-existence between religion and the state, including the state's attempt to regulate religious institutions in the face of recognition and assertion of religious beliefs in public space. The paper will also highlight the devastating effects of eradicating indigenous institutions and argue that culture and religion construe social capital without which communities cannot thrive.

Research objectives

This research aims to problematize the existing discourse surrounding madaris in Pakistan and challenges the position that religious institutions are anachronistic to the rise of the modern state and the development process. The primary research questions this thesis addresses are:

² A religious scholar despite being highly respected in society makes very little money and often does not even have a stable income. Since a madrassa education does not cost anything everyone can afford to pursue it. The primary means for upward social mobility is education which cannot be accessed by a vast section of the Pakistani population.

³ What I am trying to state here is that for many other community leadership roles an extensive education (mediated by a high financial investment) might be required. But this is not the case for becoming a religious scholar. Also since religion is such a powerful force in Pakistani society, life is usually centred on the religious leader in many communities.

1. What community development roles are madaris currently playing in the Pakistani context as gleaned from the case study of two communities?
2. What distinct social spaces do the madaris and its graduates occupy?
3. How do the madaris interact with the city and community?
4. How can the madaris system be understood as a marginalised population's effort to overcome the limitations of the development project and the increased selectivity of the globalisation movement?

In addition to these, the following subsidiary questions will also be addressed in varying depths:

1. How can the madaris be strategically used and modified within the larger context of the social development agenda and mainstream development efforts within the country particularly for rural areas?
2. What is the role of the madrassa in urbanisation and the social milieu they have created by situating 'disadvantage rural' youths within comparatively affluent city neighbourhoods?
3. What would be the effects of completely eradicating the madaris or radically altering them with respect to the creation of social capital, community empowerment and community participation?

Position of the researcher and research methodology

This study took place in Islamabad, Pakistan during the months of May – August (inclusive) 2009. I, the researcher am a legal citizen of the country and have lived in Islamabad for twenty years. Besides being fluent in the national vernacular (Urdu), I am comfortable with the social customs and cultural sensitivities of the region and maintain close links with the madrassa community as a former part-time student in one of the two madaris used as case studies. Additionally I had personal contacts with the families of several madaris students and volunteers

who periodically support these institutions. As a researcher, I believe I have an ‘insider’s advantage’ but at the same time was considered an ‘outsider’ by the madaris community. My “outsider” status is based on my being associated with a foreign university, belonging to a different socio-economic class, and having been trained in a different educational philosophy than graduates of madaris who more often than not come from low-income families. And yet, my very identity as a former madrassa student complicates this stereotypical view of the social and economic backgrounds of madaris students, for madaris are an open access institution that have students from both low-income and affluent backgrounds, and are in the process of incorporating curricular reforms that combine religious and secular state-mandated course programs. Yet I share some commonality with most madaris students who are motivated by Islamic religious ideals and values as central to our socialization.

The madaris have always been a personal area of interest because they are sites of these complex dynamics of class-culture-religion-education linkages. They also represent the common person’s struggle to remain afloat in an otherwise sinking country as madaris offer a way for orphans, displaced youth and children from poor families to get an education. The very institution of a madrassa represents the resilience of the human spirit and people’s capacity to organize and take initiative. The madaris signify the continuous negotiations that take place between tradition and modernity in an increasingly globalised world. They also signify the importance of local knowledge and the fact that despite how ‘poor’ and ‘impoverished’ a community appears to be- it does not necessarily need to be ‘rescued’. Madaris also reflect my lived experience of the growing internal debates about madaris in Pakistan, particularly around the regulation of religion in public space and whether secularism is just required to prevent religion from interfering in the affairs of the state or the state from interfering with religion. I should also point out I attended the

elite British school system in Pakistan, attended universities in Canada and both my father and brother hold prestigious positions within Pakistan's Ministry of Defence in a country which invests heavily in their defence budget but cannot still clothe, feed and educate its citizens. Hence, I consider myself straddling between two familiar worlds of Western secular education, and a Pakistani educational system that is pulled in different directions of a government-run public education system, elite private schools, and madaris system of instruction. It is through these double lenses that I collected and analysed my data and wrote this research.

I conducted the research during very interesting national circumstances. In May 2009, at the time I was conducting my research, the Pakistani army had recently launched a large military offensive against perceived Taliban strongholds in the northern regions of the country (Swat and tribal areas). This had profound effects on the city of Islamabad: thousands of internally displaced people relocating to the city, frequent suicide bombings on public and national targets, visible increase in security personnel, fortified buildings, and periodic sandbagged check points. The city was under siege, the national mood was of fear and uncertainty. This fear and distrust was reflected by a few madaris that I approached for this research, but on the whole, access to the madaris was fairly easy after I had provided them with relevant documentation to prove my identity and intent of research.

Hence I approach the research process with some caution. Just two years before I conducted this research, in 2007, the much publicized and politicized Lal - Masjid (Red Mosque) incident occurred in Islamabad. The mosque housed two large madaris one for males and females. Under the influence of a prominent religious leader, the students from both the seminaries laid a siege in the surrounding community, burning down video shops, public libraries, government offices and

demanded the imposition of Sharia (Islamic law). The uprising was crushed by the Pakistani military and resulted in hundreds of deaths⁴. This event is now sketched in the Pakistani national imaginary as a tragedy and perhaps in the larger imagination of madaris by outsiders as the breeding grounds of radical fundamentalists and terrorists. I consider that uprising of this scale to be an isolated incident. It is much more common perhaps to hear of Imams advocating Sharia law, but not madaris students, whose voices tend to speak louder than their actions. And yet, I am aware that madaris can become hotbeds of extremist indoctrination when left unchecked and fallen under the leadership of radical religious leaders. Hence, I am interested in exploring ways by which the positive functions of the madaris can be articulated for a wider audience and enhanced for the purpose of a more layered and nuanced reading of madaris and their extra-religious roles and functions.

The study is essentially exploratory in nature and employs a qualitative research paradigm. The research is shaped as a case study and as an institutional ethnography. Institutional ethnography (IE) is a method of inquiry that allows people to explore the social relations that structure their everyday lives. It was first developed as ‘sociology for women,’ by Dorothy E. Smith, and is now being used by researchers in the social sciences, education and policy research. IE uses interviews, participant observation, text analysis and mapping as techniques to illustrate the “interface between individual lives and some sets of institutional relations” (McCoy, 2006, p. 109). The concept of institution directs attention to “clusters of ruling or administrative relations organized around specific functions, such as health care, law, finance, social services, or municipal government” (McCoy, p. 124). It is purported that institutional ethnography is a

⁴ For a chronology of events leading up to this incident, refer to the online newspaper article in DAWN <http://www.dawn.com/2007/07/04/nat6.htm>

sociology that does not objectify people but preserves their presence as subjects (Smith, 2006, p.2).

This research identifies participants' social locations in relation to their social contexts i.e. of the madrassa and their broader life worlds. The research moves outside the local setting (where ethnographic fieldwork is conducted) and explores how the social is 'put together' in the way that people experience it. Inquiry is framed as much as possible without relying on academic theories, professional language and discourse, or administrative terms and categories. Rather, I try to highlight what people know about their lives, what they actually do every day, and how they express this knowing and doing in their own terms. As a researcher, I attempted to make sense of their expressions of experience and undertake an inquiry that traces the social relations organizing particular people's lives. In this context these social relations include participants' relationship with the madrassa, the surrounding community, their families and communities back home⁵ and the larger Pakistani state.

The fieldwork was conducted in Islamabad, Pakistan in the period May-August 2009 (inclusive) and two madrassa sites were chosen. For the purpose of this research a madrassa is defined as: 'A residential facility which offers full 8 years of Dars-i-Nizami syllabus under the Wifaq-al-Madaris accreditation board. The madrassa may or may not be offering general secular education along with its religious curriculum.' I surveyed a total of 14 madrassa sites in Islamabad using a short list of questions to determine the interest of their administrators to participate in the research. These initial surveys helped establish the connections between madaris and the

⁵ Despite being located in major cities such as Islamabad, madaris typically enrol students from all over the country. Thus the immediate community in which a madrassa might be situated is different from the community of origin of its students, administrators and teachers.

community development function of disaster management⁶. The results of these were tabulated and used to support the qualitative analysis of participant interviews.

I chose to work with two madaris who were willing to give me access to their facilities, faculty, administrators, students and alumni. Both madaris are interesting case studies because of their location, living arrangements, population, and links to the community. They are both residential in nature and accept only male students who are provided boarding and lodging within the campus premises. They both have more than 100 full-time students and are classified as a medium to large madrassa. One of the madrassa offers a secular/general education along with its religious curriculum in an organized way. The other madrassa offers limited secular/general education. Both madaris are situated within 2 kilometres from both residential houses and markets/businesses. These characteristics facilitate investigating the interaction of the madrassa with its surrounding community.

I chose at least one madrassa which offered general/secular education in a systematic way is because this feature greatly expands the parameters of the social landscape madrassas occupy and I felt it would be useful to bring this into the debate. It should also be acknowledged that separate madaris exist for women and girls. However this research only focuses on madaris catering to males because of accessibility issues and more importantly, because it is the male madrassa student who is usually personified as a terrorist in the international media.

I further collected primary data for this research by doing semi-structured interviews and participant observation. The semi-structured interviews gave voice to the opinions of the

⁶ There has been significant media coverage on the involvement of madaris in the disaster relief efforts following the 2005 earthquake. I felt it would be interesting to investigate this important community function of madaris in considerable detail.

madrassa community, a voice which is seldom heard and a group which is not usually included in the planning process. Therefore, care was taken to gain a balanced insight into the discourse and participants were divided into ‘community participants’ and ‘expert participants’. Community participants consisted of those members of the madrassa community, which had a direct or indirect stake in the madrassa establishment but were not associated with the ‘madrassa inner circle’ by means of employment or association. These included:

- Current madrassa students
- Parents of madrassa students
- Recent madrassa graduates
- City residents

Conversely, ‘expert participants’ consisted of those members of the madrassa community who had a direct interest in the madrassa by means of direct employment or as formal partners to the madrassa mission and mandate. These included the following groups of participants:

- Madrassa teachers
- Madrassa administrators
- Non-profits working with the madrassa

The research was initiated by contacting Mr. Faisal Kasmi, a close friend and former Arabic tutor who agreed to cooperate in this study. Faisal had just completed his 8-year madrassa course and is now an MPhil student at the International Islamic University in Islamabad, Pakistan studying comparative religions. Faisal helped me identify relevant madaris in the region and gained permission to post advertisements to recruit participants in strategic locations such as madaris notice boards. The inclusion criterion for these participants was any individual, 19 years old or

older who belonged to any one of the above mentioned groups. Prior to conducting the interviews, an approval certificate was obtained from the University of British Columbia Ethics Review Committee and all the procedures outlined in it were strictly followed. The certificate is attached in the appendix (Appendix A).

All interviews were recorded using a voice recorder. Inferences and analytical notes were made using these recordings and several relevant quotes were transcribed verbatim. The names of all interviewees have been changed for privacy considerations. The following matrix organizes interview respondents into ‘community’ or ‘expert’ groups and tabulates them accordingly:

Table 1.2: Matrix displaying the number of interview respondents belonging to each interview category and research site

Community (15 participants)					Experts (9 participants)		
	Parents of Madrassa Students	Madrassa Students	Madrassa Graduates	City Residents	Madrassa Teachers	Madrassa Administrators	Relevant Non- Profits
Site A (9 participants)		2	3		2	2	
Site B (8 participants)		2	2		1	2	1
No specific Site (7 participants)	4			2		1	
Total	4	4	5	2	3	5	1
Site A: Jamae Omer Anwarul Quran (Islamabad, Pakistan)							
Site B: Institute of Islamic Sciences (Islamabad, Pakistan)							

Lastly I relied on my participant observation notes. I spent considerable amount of time in each of the chosen sites during which I was allowed to sit in classrooms, the library (if any) and play ground/ court-yard. During this time I engaged in recording personal observations and informal

discussions with members of the madrassa community. This allowed me to become acquainted with the daily patterns of the participants' lives, and the dynamics of the selected research site. These observations greatly helped in the contextual analysis of the interviews.

In the course of my research, there are numerous points at which personal biases and intrusion can occur from the initial choice of topics and methods to data collection and interpretation (Bryman, 2004). Affection and sympathy may develop along the way (or may have been there from the beginning) or antagonism between researcher and participants may prejudice the researcher and his inferences (Karlsson & Mansory, 2007, p. 19). In both cases it may be difficult to remove these emotions from the interview process.

I recognize that I am personally interested in the participants of this research and there are certain normative beliefs guiding my work. Madrassa policy in Pakistan has only marginally taken the madaris communities' views into account and my aim was to make these stories heard. However aware of the risk of being too empathetic, I have strived at being self-critical and self-reflective by continuously reassessing and challenging the inferences I present in this research. I also feel that the language and theoretical tools used in the madrassa discourse are ineffective and insufficient to accurately capture the issues at large and have thus tried to use more contextually relevant language and intellectual constructs.

Limitations and future work

The study deals with several broad themes, each of which represents an entire topic in its own right. The holistic approach taken here necessarily implies that breadth is favoured instead of depth. However in my opinion, the anticipated connections between community development, lack of social services and the madrassa justify such a broad approach.

It has not been possible to link or compare this study to a vast body of previous knowledge simply because extensive research has not yet been done in this area, though I recognize that parallel research has been done on the extra-religious and development functions of Buddhist (Macy 1991), Catholic (Hefferan 2007), Protestant, and Jewish schools as well as faith-based organizations (Flannigan 2009, Lean 1995, Narayan & Purkayastha 2008). The closest research I found was a paper by Masooda Bano (2007) who studied a Deobandi madrassa in Rawalpindi, Pakistan. She too tried to explore the social milieu of madaris. Other than that, most research on madaris in Pakistan just mention madaris and their social context in passing.

There are certain limitations in this research, which offer plenty of room for future research, some of which are discussed in this section. During my field research, I discovered that the standard length of the curriculum of a comparable female madrassa is actually four years shorter and the syllabus too is different⁷. This raises questions about gender parity and warrants an investigation comparing the two syllabi and the kind of gender roles being supported by each. It would also be beneficial to study the curriculum of the madaris and compare and contrast the world views presented within it with those from secular schools. Also ideally I wanted to compare urban madaris with rural madaris but could not do so due to inaccessibility of certain key rural areas around Islamabad because of conflict and insurgency. It would also be useful to do a comparative research studying madaris in other countries particularly Indonesia which has developed a sophisticated madrassa tradition of its own. Another excellent example is that of the Singapore based organization ‘Majlis Ullema Islam’ who have done exceptional work through their madrassa reform projects for madaris in Singapore.

⁷ Recently there has been some discussion in expanding this syllabus to 6 years for female students but no changes have been made yet.

Organization of the study

The study is organized into six chapters. Chapter one introduces the reader to the intent, scope and methodology of the research. The second chapter lays out the context of the thesis and argues that Pakistan is not a ‘blank slate’ but has inherited a complex social and cultural dynamic shaped by a variety of interconnected factors. The third chapter conducts a historical analysis of the madrassa system in Pakistan from pre-colonial times to present day highlighting that the madrassa is not a stoic institution but has mostly adapted relatively well to external circumstances and the changing political mood. The fourth chapter presents detailed case studies of two carefully selected madaris in Islamabad, Pakistan depicting the social spaces madaris typically occupy. Chapter five explores the various community development functions of madaris in Pakistan. The role of the madrassa in the disaster response to the 2005 Northern Areas earthquake within the context of minimal state provision of social services is highlighted. Finally the last chapter tackles the highly contested issue of madrassa reform. Policy implications of this study and recommendations are also discussed in the final chapter.

CHAPTER TWO: THE CONTEXT- SITUATING MADARIS IN LOCAL, NATIONAL AND GLOBAL SPHERES

Introduction

Contrary to dominant conceptions of the Pakistani state, Pakistan is not a clean slate -- a blank page conceived in 1947 waiting for the ruling elite to write upon and folded into a modern nation- state. Rather it has a complex inheritance of colonial traditions (i.e. modernity, development, secularism, suppression of indigenous institutions), which have permeated the social landscape and continuously intersect with the local context in rather perplexing ways. This chapter aims to re-analyze these interactions and put into perspective the country within this socio- cultural dynamic with reference to the complex positioning of madaris in Pakistan. I will also point out that the existing language, theoretical constructs and Western-worldviews are insufficient to describe these phenomena and new modes for theorizing the social landscape of the Islamic world are required. This chapter contextualizes the madrassa in Pakistan and tries to weave together the various corollaries and tangents that are shaping the madrassa discourse.

Religion in development theory

Selinger (2004) argues that the failure of the development movement as evident by rising poverty, mounting international debt and un-employment can be attributed to the “the absence of recognition of culture, and more specifically religion, in development theory and strategy” (p. 524). The author defines culture as the “social, political, economic and religious systems that interact to create society” (p. 524) and firmly asserts that “religion, as a central and definitive element of culture, has to be addressed if development is to be both successful and sustainable” (p 524).

There are two ways religion can be conceptualized; in a purely spiritual sense (Haynes, 2002, p. 17) or in a “material sense, where religion defines and unifies social, political or community-based groups or movements” (Haynes, p. 17). Scholars agree that it is the second conceptualization of religion as a social and political construct, which holds important elements for a sustainable development theory (Selinger, 2004, p. 525). Then why is the nexus of ‘religion and development’ ignored in mainstream development literature when religion is clearly very important in a majority of South countries? Whether this is “consciously avoided” (Ver Beek, 2002, p. 58) is debateable but religion is all too often dismissed as just another component of culture which impedes development (Selinger, 2004, p. 525) or as a client-patron relationship that maintains the status quo in a way only beneficial to the more powerful actor.

A number of reasons have been postulated for the historical avoidance of religion within development literature. Marshall (1999) echoes that by linking religion with only the spiritual, and the state with only the material, the religion-state dichotomy has also been inherited by the religion and development debate (p. 1-5), thus religion is often not seen as an aid to development but as being against development. Ver Beek (2002) offers a number of ancillary explanations like fear of creating conflict, lack of knowledge, and the paranoia of imposing a foreign perspective as reasons for theorists to not incorporate religion within development theory.

A major force driving this “institutional and academic marginalization of religion” (Selinger, 2004, p. 526) is that of modernization theory which places economic growth in the centre of development theory (Selinger, p. 526). Modernity essentially “represented so much confidence in man’s powers, theoretical and applied, that any reference to the transcendent or spiritual was felt to be redundant” (Esposito & Watson, 2000, p. 17) thus it “pushed the idea of religion from

public sphere into private life” (Selinger, 2004, p. 527) dramatically changing the way the “state responded to and perceived religion” (Selinger, p. 527).

Historically the rapidly changing structures of everyday life accelerated by increased urbanization, disproportionate division of time between work and home life (Selinger, p. 526) gradually dissociated social structures and institutions, culture and religion from the advancement of nations casting the entire debate purely in terms of economic growth (Selinger, p. 526). Thus religion was marginalized as an ‘individualistic’ preference, away from public life. Secularisation of society and modernisation were perceived as complements (Herbert, 2003, p. 35).

It can be easily pointed out that the economic motive has reigned supreme in all developmental discourse, whether it is the colonial era (Selinger, 2004, p. 528) or the rise of the neo-liberal economic agenda of the 1980s; globalisation, minimalisation of the state and the growth of the corporate sector all maintain economic growth as the main driver of change (Selinger, p. 528). It is not a surprise religion has never occupied the centre stage of development theory. Thus any modern day intervention whether it is through the World Bank or the United Nations is deeply rooted within this matrix of secularisation and economic growth and largely ignores religion as a positive enabler of society.

Religion as a reaction to modernization and development

Religion as an important development agent is now being understood with links to Islam, for example in reference to the Iranian revolution in 1979 (Selinger, p. 529) and as the ideological inspiration for the growing Taliban movement in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Similarly in the aftermath of U.S intervention in Iraq, different sects of Islam are now being factored into the

redevelopment plans of the country (Selinger, p. 529). These global events have begun to evoke intelligent discussions and dialogue about religion in countries all over the world irrespective of which religion they adhere to (Selinger, p. 529).

The resurgence of religion in Southern countries is commonly being interpreted as a reactionary force and “when a secular, modernist movement encounters other cultures conflicts occur, as secularization has failed to accommodate religion, a force, not easily placated” (Juergensmeyer, 1993, p. 2) and the “global resurgence of religion is a response to the widespread crisis in secular materialism” (Thomas, 2000, p. 38). Academics go onto note that in developing countries the failure of development and the consequent disillusionment with neo-liberal economic policies (Selinger, 2004, p. 529) has resulted in “dissatisfaction with the project of the postcolonial secular state and [have led to a] conflict between religious nationalism and secular nationalism (Thomas, 2000, p. 49).

Even though this is a fairly accurate generalization, it should be kept in mind that religion has always existed as a socio-political force in countries in the South and has dominated the national landscape far before any foreign influence. The North is guilty of undermining the importance of religion in the South and not understanding that religion extends beyond mere superstition and outdated beliefs and has always expressed itself in a very real and tangible way in public life and national culture. It is important to understand that “religion will not just dissolve away” (Selinger, 2004, p. 540) as a consequence of the development of Third World nations and where religion reacts to modernity, modernity also reacts to religion. There is a dynamic two-way interaction in place and not just mere ripples in the otherwise calm sea of modernity.

Secularizing Islam

The secularism doctrine originated at a specific juncture in history to grapple with problems and conflicts unique to Christianity⁸ (Asad, 1999, p. 179, p. 185). While secularism as a theory has several theoretical paradoxes which are beyond the scope of this chapter, it does seem plausible in its claims to allow everyone (including minorities ethnic or religious) equal access to citizenship, freedom of choice and the protection of basic human rights. It must be kept in mind that like any other doctrine, secularism too is essentially a tool of social ordering and control and is intrinsically tied to the survival of the modern, nation-state which requires a common allegiance based on an inclusive identity (as opposed to a communal identity based on ethnicity or religion) (Asad, p. 183).

Inspired by the Enlightenment conceptualization of religion, secularism aims to reduce and assign religion into neat spheres of private life, individual experience and rituals. It aims to dissociate religion from its distinctive socio legal institutions which have made many religions (Islam being one) promote totalizing ways of life, with their unique emphasis on the “disciplined ordering of social and political life” (Galanter, 2005, p. 246). This flows from the anthropological (i.e. a generalized universal, trans-cultural and trans-historical) definition of religion much contested by Asad who unlike Geertz argues that there cannot be a universal (i.e. anthropological) definition of religion not only because its constituent elements and relationships

⁸ The Enlightenment can be delineated as a long struggle against the regime of truth that was “centred in and championed by the medieval church” (Lincoln, 2006, p. 2). Though weakened by the Reformation and Wars of Religion; the church managed to retain control over most aspects of social, political, intellectual and economic life (Lincoln, p. 2). Those who waged this war (from Bayle to Kant, Hume, Diderot and Voltaire) aimed to constrain and de-privilege this hegemonic control; open up spaces for the secular sciences and the arts, and to challenge the prevailing political economy (Lincoln, p. 2).

are historically specific, but because that “definition is itself the historic product of discursive processes” (Asad, 1993, p 29)⁹. Thus, from being a “concrete set of practical rules attached to a specific processes of power and knowledge, religion has come to be abstracted and universalized” (Asad, p. 42). This has laid the grounds for furthering the secularism debate.

In the case of a religion like Islam, it seems secularism isn’t dynamic enough to accommodate such a public religion. The radical distinction required between those areas of behaviour which are ‘religious’ and those that are ‘non-religious’ or secular is made problematic by Islam which seeks to transcend the boundaries of religion virtually into all other spheres such as politics, education, economics, social welfare etc and disturbs the clarity of separation resulting in the creation of “modern hybrids” (Asad, 1999, p. 179).

It is important to understand the distinction between modernity and secularism and that the “de-privatisation of religion” (Asad, p. 179) is not a refutation of a modern society, if it occurs in ways that are “consistent with the basic requirements of modern society including democratic government” (Asad, p. 179). What is important is how religion becomes public and religion can indeed contribute to the construction of civil society and the promotion of liberal values (Asad, p. 179). Nationalism itself can be interpreted as a modern, secular religion which requires everyone’s allegiance to the state - all what public religions like Islam aim to do is make the state subservient to the ‘laws of God’ and position the ‘Ummah’¹⁰ as the unit of citizenship instead of nation states (Asad, p. 183).

⁹ See Geertz, Clifford. 2002. Religion as a cultural system. In *Reader in the anthropology of religion*, ed. Michael Lambek, 61. London: Blackwell.

¹⁰ Ummah is a perceived Islamic community not necessarily united by a common geography.

However as later chapters will reveal, secularization can also be interpreted as a tool to protect religion from the interference of the state and not just the state from interference from religion. But this debate has rarely been positioned in the Islamic world this way. The following sections move from this general discussion to how such debates have taken root in Pakistan.

The duality of Partition

It is difficult to say what the real intentions were behind the creation of Pakistan. The common understanding is that it was separated from India on the basis of a religious (Muslim) identity. This is problematic because the ‘founder’ of Pakistan Mr. Jinnah, had little or no affiliation with religion and was a secular modernist¹¹. This is further complicated by the fact that when Mr. Jinnah advocated for a separate Muslim country, he simultaneously envisioned a secular government (as opposed to an Islamic government):

"You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed – that has nothing to do with the business of the State.... You will find that in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the State." [Aug 11, 1947, Jinnah’s address to the First Constituent Assembly].

This quote suggests that Pakistan’s elite ruling classes were modernists who had faith in a secular society and had imbued the ideals of modernity which called for a complete removal of religion from public debate and the development ideal. Nonetheless institutions like the madrassa were

¹¹ It is interesting to note here that the traditional Ullema (i.e. religious scholars) opposed the division of India solely on the basis of religion.

replicated in Pakistan and many Ullema (i.e. religious scholars) did migrate to Pakistan despite their initial lack of support for the Partition. The country's government tried to incorporate 'traditional' with 'modern' societal structures, as long as they did not impede with their developmental goals and it was not difficult to sense the government's obvious inclination towards a secular state.

The ruling elite argued that the creation of Pakistan was not necessarily to guarantee its people a space for religious practice but rather a space for socio-economic development which could not be fully realized in unified India. In contrast, religious groups continue to raise the slogan that the logic of Partition was to ensure the Muslims opportunity to live up to the Islamic ideal and establish an Islamic state. The truth lies halfway; these boundaries were intentionally blurred to win support from both groups for the justification and legitimacy of the Pakistani state. The post-colonial ruling elite were quick to identify that the Pakistani people had not much in common: there was a broad spectrum of ethnicities, languages, cultures and it still is difficult to speak of a single Pakistani culture, language or tradition¹². Pakistani nationalism and sense of identity was crafted as a religious identity (i.e. a Muslim identity) to hold the nation together¹³ (Metcalf, 2004, p. 236-238).

¹² See Ahmed, Feroz. 1996. Ethnicity, class and state in Pakistan. *Economic and Political Weekly* 31, (47): 3050.

¹³ For example in an attempt to isolate Bengali nationalists in the 1950s, "slogans of Islamic ideology and Islamic identity were taken up" (Alvi, 2002, p. 5119) in Pakistan. Instead of looking at the underlying causes of Bengali discontent, the ruling government put forward an argument that "we are all Muslims and Pakistanis and therefore we cannot be Bengalis or Sindhis or Baluch or Pathan" (Alvi, p. 5119). This was essentially an ethnic redefinition which had little to do with religious values as such (Alvi, p. 5119).

The country is still trying to find a political configuration, which can uphold the religious principles of its citizens, support plurality of discourse and contribute to the requirements of the nation state and the developmental state. Every attempt is a constant renegotiation of such interests. The class division of society, which is essentially a capitalist problem, further fuelled the need to unify the masses on a religious extra-class basis. Religion is and was used also to overcome the various socio-economic problems associated with capitalism and politicians continue to accept the morality of unrestricted capitalism and deploy Islamic measures at the same time to ameliorate the conditions created by the capitalist economic system. This has resulted in the failure of popular Islam which was not given the tools to challenge the capitalist economic configuration and instead further consolidated the privileges of the elite landed classes, the feudal lords and the industrialists.

Metcalf (2004) rightfully points out that interestingly in Pakistan, “the language of any political debate is dominated by religion and that there are no alternatives, whether Marxist, liberal or other, that exist as a counter to dominate ideology” (p. 236). Whether supporters or critics of the status quo, “everyone has learned to argue with Islamic symbols and terminology” (Metcalf, p. 236). She makes the accurate observation that “Islamic language [has] become dominant in public life, and there is no coherent, fully developed rival language to challenge it, whether couched in terms of Islam or liberalism, or anything else” (Metcalf, p. 260). The best example of this is the Taliban in current day Pakistan who also employ a very familiar Islamic rhetoric and aim to reshape the national Islamic identity. Conflict in Pakistan is often a contestation of Islamic identities.

After Pakistan's independence in 1947, there was an almost identical reappearance of social classes as during British rule: it seemed as if the colonial rulers were merely replaced by a new ruling class¹⁴ (Alavi, 2002, p. 5124) which maintained similar social structures and advocated very familiar agendas of development and modernity closely allied with western philosophies rooted in the Enlightenment (Amin-Khan, 2009, p. 545). The ruling elites¹⁵ have maintained a patronizing and condescending attitude towards indigenous institutions and traditions. This is reflected in the state's attitude towards the madaris, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

The madaris within General Zia's Islamization project

General Zia's regime (1977-1988) was a crucial incubator for the madaris system in Pakistan. Having ousted a popular and elected prime minister, Zia faced considerable domestic opposition. However his attempts to consolidate power were assisted by events in both Central and West Asia. The Iranian revolution had given a new direction to Shia fundamentalism and the Iran-Iraq war of 1980-88 had united Sunni Arabs against predominately Shia Iran (ICG, 2002, p. 9). While both these groups wrestled for influence in adjacent Muslim countries, the United States and

¹⁴ The ruling class can be further deconstructed to include the landed feudal class, the industrialists and the military generals. It is also interesting to note how porous and overlapping these three categories often are.

¹⁵ Jinnah's political party, the Muslim League represented only the Muslim elite (Alavi, 2002, p. 5122). The Muslim masses; the workers and peasants, were largely unrepresented (Alavi, p. 5122). The mullahs, who were behind the Khilafat movement, (The Khilafat movement (1919-1924) was a political campaign launched mainly by Muslims in British India to influence the British government and to protect the Ottoman Empire during the aftermath of World War I) did not voice the demands of the Muslim peasant class and working class either; their methods remained restricted to elite negotiations at the top (Alavi, p. 5122). It can be argued that the Pakistan Movement had little to do with the country's peasant and working classes who were merely pushed into the ensuing turmoil.

Arab states joined to help the Afghans wage holy war against the Soviet Union and also to ‘contain’ the growing influence of Iran (ICG, p. 9).

General Zia’s attempts to consolidate his authority through Islamization at home and ‘jihad’ in neighbouring Afghanistan profoundly transformed not only the madrassa system but the social fabric of the country. The various Islamic sects in the country specially the ones not favoured by the military regime closed ranks and fortified themselves stunting healthy dialogue and lateral communication between various schools of thought (ICG, p. 9).

General Zia privileged Islam during his regime and set a new tone for the country. The process of Islamization took place at two levels. First, changes were instituted in the legal system and special Sharia¹⁶ courts were established. This was accompanied by specific Islamic legislations such as eliminating interest based banking and compulsory deduction of Zakat¹⁷ from bank accounts (ICG, p. 10). Second, the public avenues of communications such as radio, television, print media and mosques were used to assist in the Islamization process. A plethora of new ordinances was issued to Islamise public morals, the civil service, armed forces, education system, research organisations and even science and technology (ICG, p. 10).

The madaris system was more formalized; rules and regulations were instituted for every religious institution (ICG, p. 9). In June 1980, the University Grants Commission was instructed to equate the eight year madrassa certification with a Masters¹⁸ degree in Islamic Studies or

¹⁶ Sharia courts are courts which process cases in accordance to Islamic law.

¹⁷ Charity mandatory on individual Muslims at prescribed rates for those who can afford it.

¹⁸ In Pakistan, a bachelor’s diploma is awarded typically after 14 years of education and masters after 16 years.

Arabic. This was a way to bridge the gap between the two education sectors and allow for transferability between the two. Madrassa graduates could then enter PhD programs in public or private universities and even apply for jobs in the public and private sector. It should be noted there was not a corresponding shift in the nature or content of the madrassa certification to reflect this equivalence.

The Islamization process helped General Zia's regime gain domestic legitimacy and undermine his main political opposition: the mainly secular political elite¹⁹ (ICG, p. 10). Support from madaris was also garnered through extensive pledges to make the madaris system "an integral part of our educational system" (Malik, 1996, p. 132). A national survey was conducted, and the report of the committee (The Halepota Report) proposed improving the economic condition of madaris and modernising them with the aim of eventually integrating the religious and the formal education sectors while "conserving the autonomy of madrassas" (Malik, p. 139). Other than institutionalizing financial assistance from the government (usually through Zakat funds which later declined), creating limited number of jobs for madaris graduates and equating madaris certifications with a masters degree; no concrete 'strategic' changes were made to the form, intent and mission of madaris. It can be stated that General Zia's regime was a missed opportunity for more considered madaris reforms as he enjoyed the full support of the madrassa community which no other political regime has enjoyed till today²⁰.

¹⁹ Hence state-controlled Islamic bodies, such as the Council of Islamic Ideology, suggested measures to proscribe parliamentary democracy as a "Western and therefore non-Islamic model" (Waseem, 1994, p. 387).

²⁰ There is also the widely supported theory that madaris during General Zia's regime provided majority of the 'Mujahideen' fighters for the war in neighbouring Afghanistan. This is a

Foreign debt, globalisation and public morality

It is important to keep the realities of Pakistan's mounting foreign debt in mind and its struggle to repay it to donors, mainly the International Monetary Fund and the Paris Club. In 2008, the country had nearly \$3 billion in commercial foreign debt and \$38 billion in concessionary loans from these lending agencies (Srivastava & Balfour, 2008). In 2008 alone, debt servicing cost more than \$3 billion that year, according to a government estimate (Srivastava & Balfour).

Historically this has been internalized as periodic and significant cutbacks in the already dismal amounts budgeted for the social sector. Some measures to facilitate debt repayments in line with the Structural Adjustment Programme in Pakistan in the 1980s and 1990s included increasing user charges for gas, electricity and water and more importantly passing on more costs to the public for health and education (Zaidi, 1999, p. 317). Furthermore defence spending has suffered significantly smaller cuts because the army occupies many important roles in the country from politics to disaster management, and a cut in defence often implies a cut in the privileges of the ruling class itself (Zaidi, 1999, p. 301).

Globalisation is often argued to be the final stage of capitalism, or of "global market fundamentalism, and has caused the retreat of the state, as well as the demise of traditional values and culture" (Karlsson & Mansory, 2007, p. 91). It can be claimed that globalisation is equivalent to modernisation or westernisation that is, to processes understood as being spread world-wide via "capitalism, industrialisation and dissemination of values such as rationalism, secularism and individualism" (Karlsson & Mansory, p. 91).

contested theory and requires a separate research thesis on its own. But it should be kept in mind, perhaps this was the 'strategic' use of madaris which General Zia chose to operationalize.

Pakistanis feel perturbed by many features of globalisation such as “individualism, purposive rationality, commoditisation of life and relations, and secularisation of education” (Karlsson & Mansory, p. 96). Pakistanis are generally supportive of development and modernisation and the economic benefits it brings, but are weary of the cultural constructs that the ruling elite have interpreted as being synonymous with the processes of development and modernity. Modernity does not necessarily mean westernisation and westernisation does not automatically imply modernity²¹. This culture of modernity has been central to the “inferiorization of the colonized and imperialized peoples— impelled as they are by colonial subjugation and post-colonial imperial domination” (Amin-Khan, p. 546, 2009) which creates the adoption-abandonment binary (the adoption of the colonizer’s culture and the abandonment of the culture of the colonized) (Fanon, 1967).

Pakistani society is also witnessing changes in societal relations, cultural norms and public morality. The process of modernity, development and globalisation are sometimes perceived as an attack on local values and cultural norms. One example is the “sexualisation of society” (Karlsson & Mansory, 2007, p. 314) which is generally associated with the exploitation of women’s bodies and can be a result of economic liberalization and commoditisation (Karlsson & Mansory, p. 314). This is reflected in the way women’s bodies, nudity and sexualisation have become prominent in public space as portrayed by the media. Many groups including the madaris

²¹ There is also the idea of ‘multiple modernities’ which calls for the “recognition of the vacuity of the Eurocentric modernization hypothesis” (Amin-Khan, 2009, p. 548). Multiple modernities “is an attempt to claim that agency needs to be afforded the peoples of the Third World” (Amin-Khan, p. 548). However a detailed exploration of the concept is beyond the scope of this research.

community are committed to preserving the boundaries of shared public morality and feel challenged by the shifting discourse surrounding morality and individual freedoms.

A revival of moral and values education has occurred in many countries particularly in Asia, and Pakistan is not an exception. For example in the Muslim areas of the Philippines, integrated madaris have been initiated outside the public education system: “In a social climate plagued by drug smuggling, kidnapping... armed insurgency, there is a widespread assumption that only Islam can offer an ethical system... to counter” (Milligan, 2006, p. 417). This has similarly become part of the madaris community mandate in Pakistan and was brought up by many interview participants during my fieldwork. This will be discussed in detail in the following chapters.

Educating Pakistan

According to the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the state is responsible “...to provide basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, housing, education and medical relief for all citizens, irrespective of sex, cast, creed or race [Article: 38(d)]”; and “...to remove illiteracy and provide free and compulsory secondary education within a minimum possible period [Article: 37(b)]” (Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973).

In Pakistan budget allocations for education are extremely modest due to poor prioritization²² and the inordinate adherence to donor agency debt repayment guidelines. According to 2008 Education for All Global Monitoring Report by UNESCO, in 2008 Pakistan spent only 2.4% of its GDP on education against the UNESCO-recommended minimum of 4%. The following table compares this figure with those from some other developing countries:

²² Debt repayment and military expenditure are considered top national priorities.

Table 2.1: Percentage of GDP spent on education in 2008

Country	Percentage of GDP spent on education (2002)
UNESCO recommended	4 %
Maldives	7.5%
Chad	6%
Iran	4.7%
India	3.8 %
Nepal	3.4%
Pakistan	2.4 %

Source: (UNESCO, 2008)

The bulk of this expenditure is on overheads such as teacher salaries, which make up 90% of the total expenditure (NEPR, 2006, p 21). Funds are rarely allocated for programs to effectively deal with the country's growing educational demands.

Pakistan's adult literacy rate was 51.6% in 2006, which is highly variable across gender and the rural-urban divide. These figures are known to be inflated, due to the dubious definition of what constitutes being 'literate'. In 1998, the Pakistan Census Board defined literacy as the ability to "read a newspaper and write a simple letter in any language" (Choudhry, 2005, p 4). The following table illustrates the country's adult literacy rates broken down by province and across the urban rural divide:

Table 2.2: Pakistan’s adult literacy rates broken down by provinces and across the rural-urban divide

Administrative unit	Population % (2005)	Rural population % (1998) ²³	Adult literacy rates (2006-2007)	Urban adult literacy rates (2006-2007)	Rural adult literacy rates (2006-2007)
Pakistan	100	67.5 (65.1 in 2005)	52	70	41
Punjab	55	68.7	54	71	45
Sindh	23	51.2	54	71	33
NWFP	13.8	83	42	58	39
Baluchistan	5.2	76	37	57	31
Northern Areas	2.3	83.1	49.9 (in 2008)		
Tribal Areas	(insufficient data)	97	17.2		
Kashmir		87	62		
Islamabad Capital	0.69	34	72.9		

Source: (Federal Board of Statistics, 2007; United Nations, 2007; Population Census Organization, 1998; Government of Azad and Jammu Kashmir, 2009).

Pakistan has also succumbed to the privatisation clause of donor agencies, which establishes governments as inefficient providers of services. The education sector in Pakistan too has a large private sector involvement. This has produced two consequences:

- 1) A sharp rise of elite private schools that often use the British System of O-level/A-level examinations as external clients of the Cambridge University and the University of London in England²⁴. Since they charge high tuition fees they cater solely to the nation’s elite and contribute to the polarisation of Pakistani society. Such schools are situated mostly in urban areas and posh neighbourhoods. There is also the option of American schools that usually cater to the children of foreign expatriates living in Pakistan.
- 2) Private schools, through various cost cutting measures charge tuition fees that are substantially lower than that of government/public schools. These target the lower to lower

²³ The last official census conducted by the Pakistan was in 1998. The next census is planned for mid 2010.

²⁴ This itself is an indication of the colonial legacy and the continued fascination of the country with British systems of education.

middle class economic groups and are more located near rundown parts of cities, urban slums and peripheral areas where the urban intersects the rural. They are also found amongst large villages and small towns. However they compromise on quality (as a way to cut down costs) and the standard of education provided in the absence of state regulations is usually appalling.

Parents are thus faced with three choices when deciding the schooling of their children:

- a) Those who can afford usually prefer sending their children to private schools offering the British system of education.
- b) Those who cannot afford the British system of education, usually send their children to schools offering the public curriculum, these can be private or public depending on affordability, quality of education and access.
- c) The poorest of families have no choice but to send their children to public schools.

The public schools usually offer low standards of education and sometimes parents will strive to send their children to affordable private schools. This negotiation is between cost and quality of education. Since there is little or no government regulation, low cost private schools can also sometimes be even worse than government schools in terms of educational quality and rigour. However on the average, private schools offering the national curriculum are superior in terms of quality of education to equivalent public schools which are free of charge.

This decision-making matrix is complicated by another option: the madrassa. In rural communities, sometimes the quality of government schools and private schools is exceptionally poor, or that no private schools exist (even if they do exist, parents cannot afford them) or neither of the two types of schools exist. This influences the parental decision to send their children to

urban or rural madaris, which offer a high quality of education (sometimes superior to private schools even) at no cost. This does not imply that all students attend the madrassa because of financial reasons but marks this as an important factor which parents do have to take into account. This will be discussed in detail in the coming chapters.

In an essay combining demography and policy analysis, Burki (2005) offers some striking demographic figures that underscore the extent of the challenge facing Pakistan. Pakistan, the world's sixth most populous country, has one of the youngest populations in the world. In 2005, half of its 155 million populations (current total 180 million) was below the age of 18 (Burki, p. 18). Moreover, even with further reductions in the birth rate, Pakistan could gain another 100 million people within the next quarter century, and by 2030 could have 132 million youths below the age of 18 (Burki, p. 18). Unless Pakistan's "dysfunctional educational system" (Burki, p. 15) is transformed, it will continue to churn out "large numbers of unemployable young people" (Hathaway, 2005, p. 3) who will add to the country's army of the disillusioned.

In this context, it would thus be prudent for the government and policy makers to consider using indigenous institutions such as the madaris which have existed for hundreds of years in the region, are trusted and respected by the locals and have the capacity to integrate the country's poorest and disenfranchised more holistically into the national development framework.

The political economy of education spending in Pakistan

Public investments in education in Pakistan heavily favours those who are from well to do backgrounds, helping to preserve inequality in access to education. Without earmarking of funds and opportunities, public investment rather than acting as the vehicle for the social mobility of the poor invariably ends up benefiting those who already have the majority of resources. The

following table helps to reveal that in Pakistan the median percentage of government expenditure on education captured by the poorest household quintile was about 14%, while the richest household quintile received just over twice that amount, 29% (Holsinger, 2005, p. 298). From this data it can be inferred that Pakistan’s education policies favour the rich and are formulated and legalized by an entrenched elite. Thus a minority of the population has the majority share of educational attainment, enabling them also to secure a majority share of income (Holsinger, p. 307). Inequality of educational attainment and inequality of income are closely linked perpetuating a process of social reproduction.

Table 2.3: Public spending on education (primary and secondary) by household income quintile in 21 developing countries, various years (%)

Country	Year	1 st (poorest)	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th (richest)	Difference between richest and poorest (%)
Armenia	1996	7	17	22	25	29	414
Jamaica	1992	18	19	20	21	22	122
Kazakhstan	1996	8	16	23	27	26	325
Kenya	1992-93	17	20	21	22	21	123
Kyrgyz Republic	1993	14	17	18	24	27	193
Morocco	1998-99	12	17	23	24	24	200
Nepal	1996	11	12	14	18	46	418
Pakistan	1991	14	17	19	21	29	207
Tanzania	1993	13	16	16	16	38	292

Source: (Holsinger, 2005, p. 299)

It can also be seen in the following table that Pakistan’s investments in higher education have been increasing considerably over the last decade:

Table 2.4: Pakistan's spending on higher education from 2001-2002 till 2004-2005

Indicator	Fiscal Year			
	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005
Higher education spending/ GDP (%)	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3
Higher education spending/total education spending (%)	6.9	10.7	11.2	14.4

Source: (World Bank, 2006, p. 13)

Further, tables 2.5 and 2.6 reveal that enrolment figures drop dramatically with each successive level of education, indicating that expenditures per pupil are disproportionately high at the higher education level.

Table 2.5: Gross enrolment rates % for selected countries in each successive levels of education

Country	2007 Gross enrolment rates %		
	Primary	Secondary	Higher
Pakistan	88	32	5
Norway	98	113	76
USA	98	94	82
Malaysia	98 (2006)	69 (2005)	29 (2005)
India	112	57	13
Tunisia	108	90	32
Indonesia	121	76	18
Philippines	108	81	27 (2005)

Source: (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2010)

Table 2.6: Pakistan's increasing expenditure per-student on higher education

Spending indicator	Fiscal year				
	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Enrolment (#)	132, 226	155, 995	180, 422	204, 054	226, 756
Total higher education spending (Rs millions)	3,904	8,132	10,021	14,236	17, 388
Per-student higher education spending (Rs.)	29,524	52,132	55,544	69,766	76,682

Source: (World Bank, 2006, p. 15)

Psacharopoulos (1977) argued that public subsidies to higher education exacerbate inequalities. Intuitively, political elites pump money into the higher education system which is accessed by their own families and members of their socio-economic class. This is because it is the elite and the middle classes who attain higher education. The poorest households who are already struggling with attaining primary and secondary education usually do not make it that far.

As Bourdieu and Passeron (1990, p. 155) point out, the proportion of population which eliminates itself at each successive level of education is “not randomly distributed among the different social classes”. The “objective probability” of entering a stage of education that is attached to a class as mediated through examinations, promotion procedures and subjective circumstances. Thus the mobility of individuals far from being “incompatible with reproduction of the structure of class relations” (Bourdieu & Passeron, p. 167) can conserve the structure by guaranteeing social stability through controlled selection of a limited number of people. Bourdieu and Passeron worked out the probabilities of entering higher education across different social groups for France in the 1960s (p. 225). In 1965-66, children of farm workers had a 2.7 probability of entering higher education as opposed to industrialists who had a 71.5 probability. These figures will not be any different for current day Pakistan.

The “objective probability” of entering a stage of education that is attached to a class as mediated through examinations, promotion procedures and subjective circumstances is rather a “theoretical construction providing one of the most powerful principles of explanation of these inequalities” (Bourdieu & Passeron, p. 156). While I will not flesh out Bourdieu and Passeron’s theory around reproduction of the status quo in detail due to the lack of space, even intuitively one can understand in a country like Pakistan the poor have least access at all levels of education

due to factors as obvious as affordability and more problematic as the ‘uselessness’ of available education. The educational system is well adapted in concealing its “social function of legitimising class differences behind its technical function of producing qualifications” (Bourdieu & Passeron, p. 164). By delegating the power of selection to academic institutions, the privileged classes appear to be surrendering to perfect neutrality (the power to select a country’s elites) by renouncing the “arbitrary privilege of the hereditary transmission of privileges” (Bourdieu & Passeron, p. 167).

Selectivity of globalisation and the development project

There is a resentment building up in Pakistan. Civil society is polarized into two camps; the educated segments of the population who have benefitted from modern education, employment opportunities and capitalism and the disgruntled, poverty stricken populations²⁵ who have been conveniently sidestepped by the forces of capitalism and globalisation. As the country develops (progress narrowly defined as a % growth of GDP), the latter segment of the population is being pushed onto the margins of society. In a country where all the sign boards are now being written in English, even though they cannot be read by majority of its citizens, where most jobs require at least a high school diploma despite the government’s poor record at providing it, they are very few alternatives left for the masses.

Pakistan might be developing but the question is who are reaping the benefits of this progress? It is no surprise that there are strong forces which want to fill in the gaps (or gaping holes) left by development; whether these are the Taliban who want to reinforce a selective form of Sharia law,

²⁵ These could be either the rural poor or the urban poor. This distinction is no longer relevant as influenced by developments such as urbanization.

or more moderate²⁶ and mainstream religious clerics who demand the public participation and expression of religion in state affairs. Traditional local social forms and religious institutions will not just disappear under an “effective, standard model of progress” (Clarke, 1998, p. 3) and it is becoming evident that “any future progress will need local specialist knowledge and institutions, suitably adapted to modern technical requirements” (Clarke, p. 3).

Development strategy as the expansion of a capitalist economy driven by free trade and consumption is not working in Pakistan. The masses are being excluded not only from the material gains of economic development, but are also being disenfranchised culturally and socially. Those who are being excluded feel that their very way of life is being challenged and they must reinvent their beliefs just to ‘fit in’.

Influences from the Arab World

The ‘Arabization’ of Islam at the expense of local roots is an ongoing phenomenon in Pakistan. There is a noticeable subversion of these indigenous, local roots (as exemplified by Sufi traditions and many other cultural practices) which are often labelled as ‘un-Islamic’. While this is a highly controversial issue (the legitimacy of local Islam versus that of a more centralized and standardized ‘Arab’ Islam), it is useful to point out some of the various conduits by which this is realized in Pakistan.

Wahhabism stems from an 18th-century revival of Salafism²⁷. Based in Saudi Arabia where it is inseparably linked with the Saudi royal family; Wahhabism promotes an “abstemious” (Schmidt,

²⁶ The term ‘moderate’ itself is a contested term when used in the context of Islam.

²⁷ Salafism originated from the teachings of Ibn Taymiya, who taught a literal interpretation of the Qur’an in the 14th century. In deference to early generations of believers—the ‘pious

2008, p. 31) and stricter version of Islam which centres on returning to ‘original’ Islamic sources. Wahhabi teachings also provided the spiritual support for the House of Saud’s military conquest of the Arabian Peninsula in 1932 (Schmidt, p. 31).

This revivalist movement was founded by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, whose daughter married into the Saudi royal family in the mid-18th century (Schmidt, p. 32). Thus Wahhabism draws the “bulk of its financial support from followers among Saudi Arabia’s royalty and the country’s other wealthy families” (Schmidt, p. 32). It is purported that Wahhabism is transferred to madaris in Pakistan via charitable donations (synonymous with conditional aid). However it is impossible to approximate the total income of madaris in Pakistan since no madrassa is audited or submits any financial statements (ICG, 2002, p. 15). It is important to point out that the volume of direct foreign assistance (if any) is a matter of speculation. During my fieldwork, administrators of both study sites denied any form of financial arrangements with Saudi financiers.

Contacts in the Arab world are a matter of pride for the religious community. It is a mark of distinction if a scholar has spent time at a prestigious Arab university such as the Madina University in Saudi Arabia. Many religious scholars and madrassa teachers maintain close ties with such universities and have access to scholarships which they routinely award to outstanding madaris students. These students then continue with their education in such universities abroad. It can be expected (though this very general claim requires close scrutiny and further research) that these students might become influenced with a particular version of Islam such as Wahhabism which is the dominant discourse in Saudi Arabia and in many parts of the Arab world.

predecessors’—Taymiya sought to purge modern influence from Islam in an attempt to maintain its original character.

Approximately 12% of Saudi Arabia's population is of South Asian origin (including 1.1 million Pakistani migrant workers) (Kapiszewski, 2006). There is a constant flux of these migrant workers back and forth to Pakistan because of family ties and unstable Saudi immigration policies. Wahhabism or Wahhabi form of thought is part and parcel of their 'religious baggage' and social capital. This topic is again worthy of an entire research thesis on its own. However, this discussion helps us situate the madaris system along another dimension: the struggle between a local, 'Pakistani' Islam and an almost standardized Islam- vying for control and acceptance amongst the same people and institutions.

The next chapter studies the madrasa as an indigenous institution from pre-colonial times to present day and highlights that the madrasa represents a vehicle of change, hope and inclusion for the country's disenfranchised and disillusioned.

CHAPTER THREE: THE MADRASSA AS AN INSTITUTION, COLONIALISM AND POST-PARTITION LANDSCAPES

Introduction

The madrassa system of education is often referred to as a community based, non-formal educational network, which insufficiently educates its students (Etzioni, 2006, p. 14; Schmidt, 2008, p. 29). This kind of categorisation and language is abundant in policy circles and in the international media which dismisses the historic and modern day legitimacy of the madaris and fails to recognize them as socially validated, sophisticated institutions. This chapter outlines the historical and modern day discourse surrounding the madrassa, its evolution and present day configurations. In this chapter, I want to locate the madaris in their historical and colonial contexts, as well as their evolution during post-partition independent Pakistan. I argue that the current efforts to reform the madaris system emanate from various directions and attempts at restructuring – from decentralization to structural adjustment programs – that partly explain why there are intense internal debates in contemporary Pakistani society on the role of religion in public spaces, the increasing influence of various Islamic sects, such as Wahabism, and the appropriate directions of madaris reforms.

Situating the madrassa: historical and colonial context

The first madrassa was founded in the province of Khurasan in modern-day Iran in the 10th century and spread to Iraq, Egypt, Turkey, Spain, and India by the 13th century (Hefner, p. 5-6, 2007). They emerged as a major centre of organized learning and superseded all other centres of education (Talbani, 1996, p. 68). The madrassa gradually became the “source through which all forms of knowledge were legitimized” (Talbani, p. 68). The curriculum typically consisted of the Quran, traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (known as hadith), jurisprudence (known as fiqh) and the Arabic language. In the majority of the madaris particularly in the Indian subcontinent

vocational education was mandatory. This included contemporary skills such as masonry, carpentry, wood work, medical sciences, arts, architecture etc (Mahmud, p. 3). The madaris enjoyed high prestige and respect in society and produced civil servants and judicial officials (Bano, 2007, p. 14) and were a prominent component of the elitist machinery.

More advanced forms of knowledge such as science and mathematics were pursued privately. Thus majority of Muslim intellectuals who outshone in fields as diverse as medicine and astronomy (amongst others) all had been schooled in this traditional system before branching out to others forms of knowledge. This is comparable to a liberal arts education in the West, where students study a broad based curriculum before progressing into totally unrelated disciplines like law and medicine²⁸.

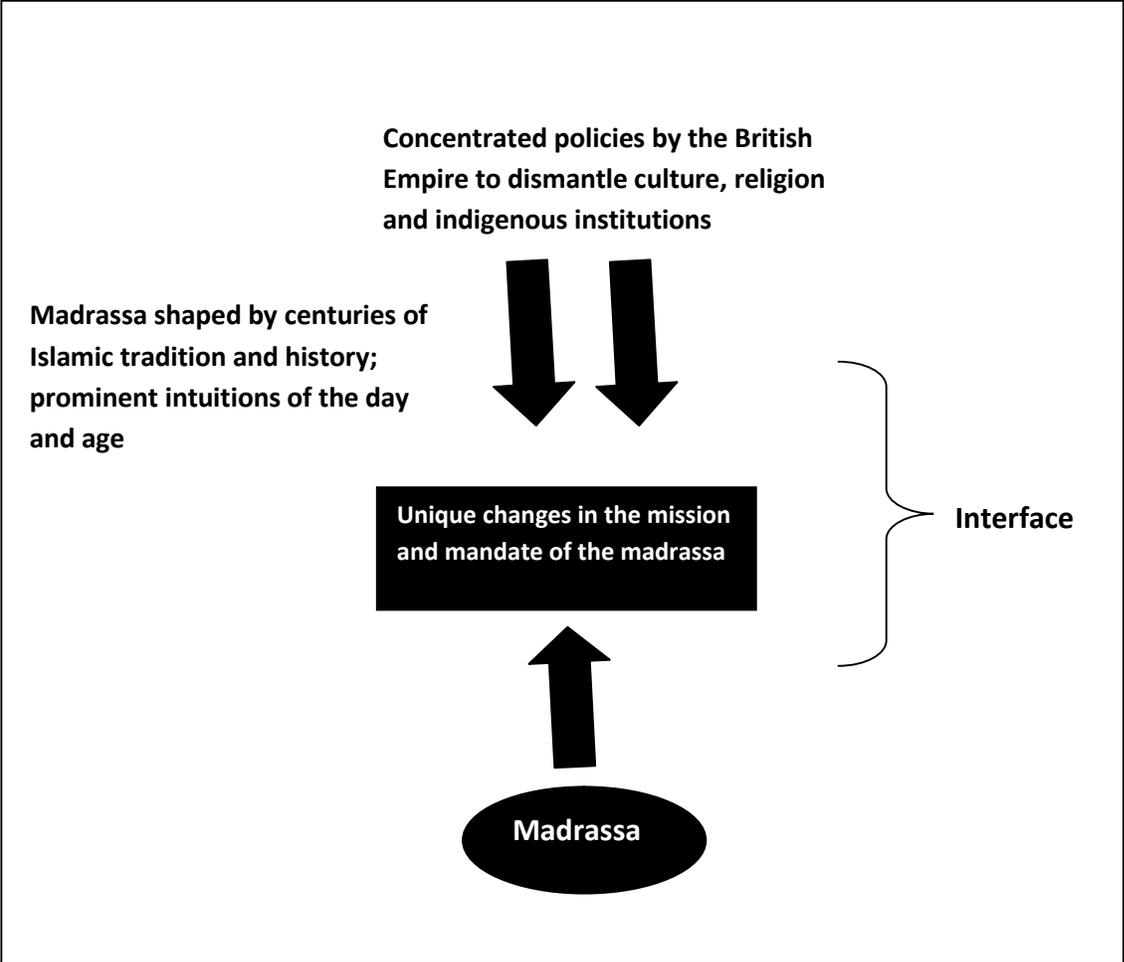
It is simplistic to state that the Indian subcontinent first encountered modernity during the British colonisation of India. The Arabs had already maintained extensive trading routes with the subcontinent, and globalisation as the spread and interference of different ideas was already taking place long before the consolidation of the British Empire. Nonetheless, British colonisation was a concentrated and forced attempt to wipe out traditional knowledge and institutions within the Indian subcontinent²⁹. Modernity (as exemplified by the colonists) was a reaction to the forces of tradition, religion and culture. This interaction was not just a simple matter of indigenous institutions (such as the madrassa) reacting to the onslaught of colonialism,

²⁸ I am just making a point that you don't need to be schooled in a Western education system before you can start studying medicine for example.

²⁹ Colonialism can be problematized even further. The forces of colonialism also spurred a huge renaissance of Islamic 're-discovery', development of Orientalism and the creation of new social spaces such as the Aligarh University. However a full discussion on the complex effects of colonialism is beyond the scope of this research.

as commonly claimed. It was during this ‘interference’ that the madaris took on a unique characteristic, which permeates the institutions until today. The following figure displays this interference:

Figure 3.1: Interface of unique changes in the mission and mandate of the madrasa



In 1830, Lord Macaulay³⁰ was sent on a special commission to India to study and analyze the local educational landscape (Mahmud, p. 5). When objections were raised regarding the delay in Macaulay's recommendations, he responded:

“If I had shut down all the local schools, cancelled the Arabic script prevailing in the country, I would have failed. The effects of whatever I am doing, will become apparent in a few years. I have traveled the length and breadth of India, but failed to come across a single beggar or thief. The morals of these people are exceptionally high, and they hold their pure values very dear. We can never truly conquer India until we break its backbone. And that is their spiritual and social infrastructure, taught and strengthened by their system of education. Therefore I strongly recommend that their established system of education must be replaced. If we are able to convince the locals that English is the best language and we are the master race, they shall lose their self esteem. When that happens, they will submit to us absolutely” (Lord Macaulay's 1835 speech to the British Parliament) (Cited in Mahmud, p. 5).

Colonial rule changed the socio-economic and political conditions affecting the madaris (Bano, 2007, p. 15). Targeted policies were designed to systematically dismantle all indigenous madaris and these institutions were denied state patronage. Such measures included the forced confiscation of properties owned by religious organizations including madaris (Talbani, 1996, p. 72) and the imposition of a parallel educational system (Bano, 2007, p. 15). Secular education as

³⁰ Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800-1859) was a member of the British Empire's Supreme Council of India and the founder of the Indian System of Education (1834-1838).

mandated by the British was made a prerequisite for employment³¹ (Talbani, 1996, p. 72) and the “colonial bureaucracy opened new employment opportunities that made secular education mandatory for entry” (Talbani, p. 73). The colonial government also made the registration of madaris mandatory to enable close monitoring and regulation (Bano, 2007, p. 28). This placed great pressure on the Muslim population who eventually began to undermine their own educational system in order to secure employment and acceptance into this new economic configuration. British colonists were blindly driven by the very same ideals of the Enlightenment which maintained secularization of society and dissociation from culture and religion as a prerequisite for development.

Muslim scholars and intellectuals were initially involved in armed resistance against the colonial powers but were “no match for English strategy, weaponry, cunning, and deep rooted conspiracies supported by traitors within the ranks of Muslims” (Mahmud, p. 10). A large portion of these Ullema were killed in these struggles (Mahmud, p. 10) who finally retreated to the backdrop of the madrassa and reconfigured the madaris as silent sites of resistance against British encroachment. It is during this period that many scholars claim a transformation in the madrassa system. Its role was highlighted, as useful not only in schooling and socialising the masses, but also in fighting off British ideology. The shock of defeat and failure “resulted in the Muslim scholars of the day to shun any pursuit of worldly knowledge” (Anzar, 2003, p. 4) to solely concentrate on safeguarding and disseminating the wealth of Islamic education as the only way for the Muslims to regain their cultural capital and position in society. Thus madaris

³¹ This was based on the assumption that one has to be schooled according to the Western system of education to be doctors, scientists, government officials etc. It should be noted that Muslims educated in madaris already occupied these positions before British intervention. Every student educated from the madrassa wasn't necessarily a religious cleric but students were encouraged to study secular subjects after they had attained a base level of religious knowledge.

withdrew from all social spheres of Indian life and secluded themselves as institutions devoted purely to preserving religious sciences. It is interesting to note that a similar attitude developed at the fall of the Muslim empire after the Crusades (Anzar, p. 5)

Reforms were made particularly through the Deobandi movement, which positioned the madrasa at the forefront of the resistance against British cultural imperialism (McClure, 2009, p. 337). Religious scholars and intellectuals wanted madrasa education to have a “fixed institutional character” (Berkey, 2007, p. 49) with a standard curriculum, frequent examinations and a more scripturalist curriculum that centered on the Qur’an and Hadith³² (Berkey, p. 49). Stressing uniformity over creativity, leaders essentially fashioned a single voice to be transmitted to Muslim youth, a voice that with time earned respect for its refutation of foreign influences (McClure, 2009, p. 337). The madrasa was remodelled as institutions for cultural and religious stability against an uncertain and shifting social landscape where traditions and cultural values were being increasingly threatened and challenged. The success of these (mostly Deobandi madrasa) reforms was their ability to simultaneously incorporate popular colonizer education models and criticize Western immorality (McClure, p. 338). Educational reform was both “driven by and shaped by competition from those missionary enterprises, in a complicated *pas de deux* intertwining both admiration and hostility to Western culture” (Berkey, 2007, p. 52).

As mainstream institutions in British India were forced to adopt English as a medium of instruction, the madaris became further secluded. The certificates and diplomas of these institutions were reduced to pieces of paper, “valuable to only those who obtained them” (Mahmud, p. 12). The once qualified graduates of these madaris who formed the intellectual elite

³² Sayings of the Prophet Mohammed verified and compiled as an important religious source.

(Mahmud, p. 12) were no longer equipped to participate in the mainstream economy. The madrassa was essentially marginalized and forced to occupy a very small space in traditional Muslim society.

This marginalization of traditional education was maintained till independence in 1947 and was dutifully inherited both by Islamic Pakistan and secular India. Unfortunately since independence, there has been little initiative taken by the madrassa community to reposition madaris and redefine their mission and mandate enabling them to become more prominent social institutions in the Pakistani landscape and not just as sites of religious preservation and reproduction.

Partition and the educational ideal

After decolonisation, the ruling elites maintained a preference for western education (since it helped preserve the status quo and their individual powers) and madrassa education continued to operate on the fringes of society (Anzar, 2003, p. 20). The first independent Pakistani government proposed that a course focussing on Islam and Islamic history (present up till now in all school curriculums in the country and referred to as Islamiyat) be made mandatory for all levels of classes (Talbani, 1996, p. 74) and a department for Islamic studies to be set up at the university level (Talbani, p. 74). This was interpreted as a ‘token’ step by the country’s religious thinkers and philosophers because clearly they wanted more dynamic structures in place that would not only preserve the Islamic educational ideal in the country but also expand into civil life and governance.

Pakistan was to be a modern nation-state (as opposed to a theocracy), which is comprised of a majority Muslim population and where the official state religion was to be Islam. The idea was to establish a separate country on the basis of a Muslim identity but at the same time incorporate

modern tools of education and governance to run the country. However, Partition in a way further consolidated the ‘traditional’ versus ‘modern’ dichotomy in the country. Over the years, the two camps further splintered over all aspects of civil life, developing their own socio-political demands and objectives. The struggle is continuous in Pakistan and occurs on a daily basis. This includes matters as trivial as making Friday³³ a holiday instead of Sunday, women being required to wear head scarves on national television, to more complex matters as changing the curriculum of madaris (i.e. Islamic schools) to imposing Sharia law.

The period after independence was characterised by debates and attempts to reshape Islamic educational institutions. The debates centred on the type of reform, to what degree should any reform incorporate secular education components, and what purposes these reforms should serve (Park & Niyozov, 2008, p. 360). While the majority of Muslim intellectuals agreed that traditional Islamic education should be reformed, there were substantial differences among them. Some Muslim intellectuals like Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817–1898 C.E.), Allama Iqbal (1877–1938 C.E.), and Fazlul Rahman (1919–1988 C.E.) suggested the need for acceptance of science and Western education achievements. They did not perceive a conflict between Western science and Islamic principles of unity of knowledge. Others, such as Sayyid Abul A’la Mawdudi (1903–1979 C.E.) and those from the Deobandi schools in India rejected the acceptance of Western science and methods and suggested reform from within strictly Islamic frames. For them, Western advancement was not “progression but a regression because it moved away from Islam which they regard as the culmination of progress and the benchmark of development” (Park & Niyozov, p. 326).

³³ Friday afternoons is when Muslims attend a communal prayer service.

A consensus was never reached but the former viewpoint garnered more extensive political support and state backing. The inconclusive results of these ideological conflicts can be witnessed in the “current dialectic found among Islamic educational institutions and their philosophical approaches to teaching and learning across Asia” (Park & Niyozov, p. 327) and in the country’s educational policy which maintains this sharp distinction.

Madaris in their current configuration

In modern day Pakistan, madaris exist as formal institutions of Islamic learning, which follow a certain ordered and sequential syllabus punctuated by periodic examinations. Madaris of repute align themselves with an educational board that “oversees their curricula, collects examination fees and administers examinations” (McClure, 2009, p. 335). Pakistan currently has five madaris boards of which the ‘Wifaq-al-Madaris’ is the most subscribed to and respected. Madaris accredited with the Wifaq- al-Madaris train their students to write external exams with the board. Students write external exams with the board every two years to a total of four times in eight years.

Each board is aligned with a specific school of thought of Islam and thus incorporates interpretations and characteristic unique to that sub-sect.

Table 3.1: Various kinds of madrassa accreditation boards operating in present day Pakistan

Name of madrassa board	Associated sub-sect of Islam	Date established
Wifaq al-Madaris	Deobandi	1958
Tanzim al-Madaris	Barelwi	1960
Wifaq al-Madaris (Shia)	Shia	1962
Wafq al-Madaris al-Salafia	Ahl-i Hadith	1978
Ratat al-Madaris al-Islamia	Jama’at-i Islami	1986

Source: (McClure, 2009, p. 335, Rehman, 2004b, p. 311)

Madaris typically use an eight-year-long syllabus known as the Dars-i-Nizami. Students are accepted into the madaris after grade eight (however currently most madaris are pushing towards a minimum entry level education of grade ten). Madaris typically correspond to secular education at the intermediate level between secondary and tertiary education (McClure, p 335). Those students who do not meet the minimum criterion of a grade eight education (and grade ten in some cases) are either denied admission or admitted as a special cohort where their schooling is first brought up to the desired level before allowing to take Dars-i-Nizami classes. Thus the successful continuance of a madrassa education is highly dependent on the secular education system, which is generally responsible for inculcating in students the desired levels of literacy required to succeed in a madrassa.

Madaris can be situated in urban or rural areas. The most important and reputed ones are usually concentrated in urban centres due to close proximity to funding sources and attract a large number of students from distant rural locations. Madaris have minimal interaction with the state as far as funding is concerned and operate as autonomous structures outside the state's formal and informal educational network. They are entirely supported by surrounding communities and have become important sinks for receiving charity and donations in modern day Pakistan. The following table compares the average cost of education in the various educational systems as borne by the state and the student. The arrow indicates rising costs borne by the student and thus signals a corresponding position in socio-economic class.

Table 3.2: Cost per student in each of Pakistan’s education system as borne by the state and the student

Institution	Average cost per student per year (Rs.)	Funder(s)	Cost to the state per student per year (Rs.)
Madaris	5, 714 (tuition, boarding and lodging)	Community, religious organizations	None (some contribution towards books and other educational materials in some madaris)
Public schools	2, 264.5 (tuition only)	The state	2, 264.5
Cadet colleges	96, 061 (tuition, boarding and lodging)	Parents and the state	14, 171
English medium schools	96, 000 for ‘A’-level (tuition only), 36, 000 for other levels (tuition only)	Parents	None (except for provision of subsidised land)

Source: (Rehman, 2004b, p. 316)

Proponents of madrassa education insist that the purpose is not to produce engineers and doctors but to train scholars “to interpret Islam in relation to the demands of the specific time” (Alam, 2002). Within the Pakistani landscape, madrassa education has been linked with increased employment in a variety of informal and formal job settings (Daun & Arjmund, 2005, p. 377). Students educated to become devout and knowledgeable Muslims occupy many of the traditional leadership roles in their respective communities and are engaged in activities, which are typically responsibilities of the state such as humanitarian work³⁴. The range and scope of madaris are broad and have profound multiplier effects both for the student and the society. Some of these multiplier effects have been listed in chapter 1 and will be fleshed out in detail in the next chapter using two case studies.

Local and global forces shaping the madrassa: the argument for reforms

Current discourses on development theory advocate decentralisation, devolution and community involvement however quite the opposite is expected for Islamic education (Karlsson & Mansory,

³⁴ More on this in chapter 5

2007, p. 201) in Pakistan. There is an expectation for the state to centralize and closely manage all Islamic education.

Foreign interest in the madrassa peaked in the post 9-11 era sparked by a hypothesized correlation between madaris students, militancy and terrorism. Observers who assert this relationship often rely on insufficient data and have very little evidence to account for. The basic hypothesis is that madaris students are educated and indoctrinated to hate Western civilisation and systems and thus the curriculum needs to be radically altered. Despite being in school for 8 years, the graduates of madaris are often categorized as “functionally and economically illiterate” (Singer, 2001, p. 5) and are considered to graduate outside of “the mainstream of the 21st century” (Singer, p. 5). It is interesting to note that the majority of the hijackers involved in 9-11 were individuals educated in secular institutions and not the madrassa.

This hypothesis³⁵ has readily been translated into U.S foreign policy in the form of agenda-driven foreign aid (channelled through the USAID) into Pakistan’s education sector to revive the country’s schooling system. The logic is, that by improving local education and making it more accessible, madaris will face competition (Singer, p. 7) and madrassa enrolments will decline, as students will now shift to secular schools. Similarly, USAID has also taken on projects to remove any extremist elements from school curriculums and this has resulted in a massive drive to rewrite school text-books to accommodate the spread of Western institutions and ideals (like capitalism and secularism). The U.S also maintains its largest Fulbright program in Pakistan for graduate studies and most applicants are handpicked to study public policy and education policy

³⁵ This hypothesis is inherited from historical colonialist attitudes and therefore is actually not at all surprising.

in leading American universities. The logic maintained is that educating young Pakistanis according to American ideals and traditions will make it easier to implement structural changes within the country. The U.S also continues to exert a large amount of political pressure on Pakistan to regulate the curriculum of its madaris and establish a framework to monitor them. This ‘framework’ is designed as a nationwide madrassa registration and monitoring system, through which local madaris are encouraged to get registered and enter the patronage and accountability to the state³⁶. Succumbing to this pressure, President Musharraf’s government embarked on an ambitious plan to ‘reform’ the madrassa. This involved altering the curriculum to include subjects like maths, science, social studies, English and IT (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 15). The government has also offered to bear the costs of teachers’ salaries, students’ textbooks, and basic classroom stationary (Ali, 2005). Rs. 1.225 billion were earmarked during 2003-2004 for these reforms, dubbed as the “mainstreaming of madaris” (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 15). Interest has also been expressed in starting vocational education in these madaris (Singer, 2001, p. 8).

Pressured by these reforms, the various madaris boards operating in the country formed an alliance called the ‘Ittehad-e-Tanzimat-ul Madaris-e-Deenia’ (ITMD) (McClure, 2009, p. 339). They felt that such reforms challenged their autonomy and was a clear example of government efforts to transform the character of madaris and their approach to preserving Islamic heritage. Calls for regulation from the West are judged by the ITMD and their supporters as an “assault on Islam and Pakistani culture” (Riaz, 2008, p. 205). ITMD asserts that the Western desire to regulate and modernize the content of madrassa curricula reflects a fundamental

³⁶ Currently, majority of madaris in Pakistan are not registered with the government and operate exclusively as non-state actors in the ‘informal’ education sector.

misunderstanding of the purpose of madrassa education—that is, to educate children to become spiritual leaders in a modern Muslim society (Riaz, p. 205).

Many of Pakistan's Ullema agree that madrassa reform is necessary to sustain the true meaning and social relevance of Islam. There is apparently broad support among Ullema and educators today for a more progressive form of Islamic education (Candland, 2004). However educators remain divided over the nature and intent of the reforms needed. Despite the appearance of significant reforms within Pakistan's madaris, Ali (2005) argues that "one must recognise that science and other modern subjects are all welcome to the extent they do not disturb the fundamental Islamic core, which is considered to be true for all times to come". There is also a strong desire for madaris leaders and administrators to preserve a more 'authentic' vision of Islamic education and the popular aim of madrassa education still appears to be one largely based on the mission of strengthening Islam and removing the doubts and misconceptions spread by non-Muslims. It seems that, in this case, the question therefore, is not just about reforming the curriculum and methods of teaching in madaris, it is fundamentally a question of what kind of Islam or interpretation of Islam one is talking about and how that interpretation is enacted in the curriculum, pedagogy, and student-teacher interactions continually capitulated to the religious right on education reform (Ahmed, 2005; USAID, 2004).

Much of the literature available states that the latest reforms are unlikely to succeed, not because the madaris are not in need of progressive adaptations to the curriculum, but because the reforms were designed and implemented without acknowledging the voice and concerns of the Ullema and were often implemented with a high degree of "heavy-handedness" on the part of government authorities (Park & Niyozov, 2008, p. 340). A second rationale explicating why

many of the reform efforts are counterproductive is because the government's own educational materials have been found to contain many historical inaccuracies, omissions, and insensitivity to the existing religious diversity of the nation, and even incitement to militancy and violence (Park & Niyozov, p. 340). The problem here is that the national curriculum and textbooks may give greater sanction to intolerance towards religious minorities and to sectarianism than to the curriculum of the madaris (Candland, 2005; Nayyar & Salim, 2002). In other words, reform efforts may be doomed for the same reasons that the public education system is failing its students: "top-down educational administration, a lack of grassroots ownership, few promising alternatives, and generalised perception of the madaris and Ullema as resisters to change" (Park & Niyozov, 2008, p. 340). These reforms ignore that many of the non-registered madaris across Asia emerged to fill the vacuum created by the absence of adequate educational provision by the state (Park & Niyozov, p. 340).

The rationale presented in government documents is "through these reforms, the government hopes to alleviate poverty and give madrassa graduates access to subjects and skills that will allow them options for gainful employment" (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 14). It seems that these reforms are aimed at wiping out the madrassa system completely and forcing it to converge with secular schooling. These are based on the assumptions that not only are secular schools superior to the madrassa schools but are also more relevant and important. There is very little appreciation of the fact that the madaris represent an alternate education philosophy and do not seek to educate their graduates solely for the attainment of jobs. These reforms are in sharp contrast to those initiated by General Zia's government as discussed in the previous chapter. Since much of these events are currently unfolding in Pakistan, there is very little academic research studying the effects of these structural adjustments and it is too early to comment. But it

is not unreasonable to assume that these reforms will lead to a further rejection of ‘Western secular systems’ and contribute to the growing unrest in the country.

It is fair to say that the madaris of the twenty-first century face a multitude of challenges in preparing students for life in “rapidly modernising societies and emerging globalised knowledge economies” (Park & Niyozov, 2008, p. 330). The vast majority of madaris across Pakistan are labelled as “substandard, underfunded, under-resourced, and staffed by teachers of generally low quality” (Park & Niyozov, p. 330). Yet some madaris are better equipped, cleaner, and safer than the prevalent public and private schools and sometimes they are all a student has access to. Successful madrassa reform ultimately rests on the successful reform of the country’s disparate educational system. This requires a critical rethinking of the implications of the various types of schooling in Pakistan, which have “contributed to the stratification and division of the Muslim societies along class, ethnic, gender, and other lines” (Park & Niyozov, p. 348).

Foreign intervention in Pakistan’s madrassa dilemma has arrested internal dialogue and debate. The politicians and public have both failed to develop an internally generated national consensus conceptualizing the problem and solution. Ever since independence, policy makers have pushed the issues at large aside only dealing with them on a piecemeal basis. The current Taliban incursion has once pushed the raging debate into focus and opened up the discourse for greater questions, such as the intended and desired role of religion and the madaris in Pakistani society. According to anthropologist Gregory Starrett, the term “functionalization” refers to the process by which elements of Islamic tradition “come to serve the strategic or utilitarian ends of another discourse” (as cited in Mandaville, 2007, p. 231). This term aptly describes the manner in which madaris, as interpreted by the Western media, scholarly works and government policy documents

have become tools to preserve U.S security interests in the emerging world order after September 11, 2001.

Dismantling the madaris

Burki (2005) points out that there is a fundamental incoherence with the three streams of education in Pakistan (public, private and religious) and all three have striking different world views not always compatible or aligned with the interests of the Pakistani nation state. Madaris graduates are recognized as being under utilized by the Pakistani economy and unable to realize their full potential due to their continued lack of vocational skills and an employable education. Graduates are considered pseudo-educated intellectuals who are incapable of gaining meaningful employment in the formal sector and contributing to the progress of the Pakistani nation. They are considered anachronistic to the Pakistani state for many reasons. This includes their antagonism towards capitalist systems and at a basic level they lack the capacity to fulfill their mandated role as breadwinners.

The madaris and associated Islamic world-view do not hold the nation-state as the smallest unit of governance and adherence but rather loyalty is towards a borderless and idealized universal Muslim Ummah (an 'imagined' global community). Similarly those national laws which are interpreted as being oppressive, inequitable and going against the directives set by Islam are challenged and even revolted against. The madaris community upholds strict humanitarian values and notions of social justice, which the Pakistani state often does not reflect in its own laws and directives.

Similarly, the madaris and an Islamic way of life directly challenge consumerism and notions of targeted national consumption upon which the very foundations of capitalism and market

economies exist. For a devout Muslim, material objects hold little value and more is interpreted as less. Madaris inadvertently support subsistence economies, which are seen often interpreted as negative to the state since they cannot be regulated. The madrassa are interpreted as an obstacle to the economic growth and nationalistic agendas of the ruling elite by promoting a specific vision of the world (Bano, 2007, p. 1). These motivations are easily concealed behind the government's blanket accusation of madaris producing intolerant militants.

It is interesting that religious education is often seen as a threat to the nation state rather than a tool for social development and integration. This fear can also be tied back to the premise of 'secularisation as a prerequisite for modernisation' theory/belief. More so, I have come across in my field work many times the conscious efforts made by madaris to realign their goals with that of the nation state and interestingly madrassa administrators now use the familiar language of nation building and social development. It is difficult to say whether this is an adjustment to the state's belligerent attitude towards religious education or whether it is a novel and more complex interpretation of Islamic education.

Poverty is not just the lack of material wealth and assets but is also the inability to contribute to one's community (Sen, 1999, p. 4). This ability to give back to society is embedded within a community's culture and belief system. If the government of Pakistan attempts to dislocate its citizens from their religion and culture in the name of progress, then it will strip society from all the elements and traditions people recognize. This will result in the breakdown of social capital and will alienate communities who despite being physically present within the country will have very little to relate to.

The madrassa is a symbol of certain traditions and values, the people of Pakistan have been long accustomed too. Communities are designed and built around a central mosque and madrassa, which are respected and esteemed by the members. By deconstructing and removing the religious school from the cultural landscape will create yet another void which certain malicious and hostile elements in society will be more than willing to fill. These can be the Taliban recruiting students who do not recognize and feel comfortable with a secular system of education or political forces (such as the Al-Qaeda) mobilising these disorientated students against existing governments and political parties in the name of Allah and Jihad. Candland posits that militancy and sectarianism did not arise organically within the madaris and were not the product of an Islamic approach to education but by-products of a stagnant but complex economic, social, and geopolitical environment (Candland, 2004, p.10-16).

Recruitment for terror networks is a complex process that extends beyond the institution of the madrassa or mosque. Terror recruiters can sometimes fill the abyss of poverty by providing their members with both material wealth as well as a social support network for their family and loved ones³⁷. More importantly, they give the disillusioned and the marginalized who no longer feel themselves to be an integral part of society, something to believe in. Current madrassa reforms and the government's general hostile attitude (informed by international development agencies and foreign governments) towards indigenous institutions and arrangements will do nothing less but contribute to these armies of disillusioned Pakistanis.

³⁷ This is not to say that every terrorist is 'poor' or 'impoverished' such as the case of the 9/11 hijackers. But poverty and increased social capital are certainly facets of this complex process. See Lincoln, Bruce. 2006. *Holy terrors: Thinking about religions after September 11*. second ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, for a brilliant exploration of certain aspects of recruiting for terrorism.

Madrassa and the polarisation of society

The dual system of education in Pakistan, broadly defined as secular versus religious, has profound implications for society. This system of classification has been translated into stratifications in society according to world-view and social class (Rehman, 2004b, p. 307). Similarly, differences in language of instruction (one being predominantly in English and the other in Urdu and Arabic) has resulted in social bifurcations, where one group cannot even understand the language of the other; it seems that each exists in parallel worlds (Rehman, 2004b, p. 308). Rahman (2005a) contests the neutrality of education and points out that it is a fallacy to assume that education leads to peace and stability but can lead to just the opposite.

This is an added source of tension in society and according to some critics who point out that there should be a uniform system of education in Pakistan where students are given basic education until high school and then allowed to specialize in whatever fields that they desire including religious studies. Some assert that this basic level of education should incorporate substantial amounts of Islamic education, while others advocate just the opposite. Similarly, there is an equally strong voice, which sees no problem with the existence of two fundamentally different educational systems.

One interesting facet of this multilayered debate is how different socio-economic classes have become aligned with the existing educational system as demonstrated in Table 3.1. It is also alarming how little interaction participants have with those from the other education streams.

Madrassa and the state: the missing synergy

Some parents favour religious education over secular education “much more than international education reformers have generally been inclined to accept” (Nelson, 2006, p. 699). Experts

believe that market forces are leading to the “convergence of education norms around the world” (Nelson, p. 699) and that parents will no longer want a religious education for their children. Whereas others argue that faced with these changes, parents will be drawn even more than before towards the enduring importance of Islam (Nelson, p. 699).

In Pakistan, the apparent growth in religious school enrolment has been attributed to the weakening of the state, which has been unable to provide adequate public education to the masses (Tamuri, 2007, p. 371). Another popular rationale for the growing popularity of madrassa education is that parents send their children to the local Islamic school in the hope of inculcating religious values in their children and strengthening their faith, which is perceived to be under threat from the growing un-Islamic trends in media, popular fashion and social life in general. Then there is also the factor of personal interest, some students simply want to learn Islam in an academic setting and desire specialization in such a body of knowledge. Madaris also became immensely popular amongst refugee camps of predominantly Afghan populations, whom the Pakistani state and international agencies failed to provide proper access to education (Andrabi et al, 2006, p. 446).

The fact that both Islamic and Western types of education have continued to exist in parallel since the country’s independence indicate that they have different aims and objectives. Sikand (2006) observes that when researchers criticise the madrassa system of education, they tend to compare it with the modern schooling system and perhaps forget that the purpose and intent of a madrassa is in fact very different. The madaris need to be evaluated within their own “respective cultural, social, and economic context” (Park & Niyozov, 2008, p. 330) using a criterion that reflects the successes achieved in furthering their aims and objectives.

The madaris are not a backward, anti-modern institution. They proactively “appropriate modern concepts and pedagogies to suit their respective religio-political aspirations” (Park & Niyozov, p. 324). They are not institutions specific to the production of terrorists and religious fanatics but genuine places of “observance of Islamic values, transformation, and social mobility for the marginalised” (Park & Niyozov, p. 324). Milligan (2004) notes another important goal of the institution; that is, Islamization of knowledge that comes from secular academic disciplines.

Madaris act as sieves and attempt to promote a “selective accommodation of the elements of modernity” (Park & Niyozov, 2008, p. 324) without compromising on the essential tenets and worldview offered by Islam. Through their diversity, madaris have also become catalysts in the internal debate about what is Islam, who is a Muslim, and how to relate to diversity within Islamic and non-Islamic societies (Park & Niyozov, p. 324). They also contribute to the plurality of society and keep an alternate ideology alive.

A survey of non-profit providers conducted by John Hopkins University documents madaris as the largest group of non-profit providers in Pakistan (Pasha et al, 2002a, 2002b). The madaris system needs to be interpreted as a large intricate network of grassroots organizations (GRO’s), which have the incredible ability to reach those who have been excluded from the globalisation process and are surviving on the margins of society. At the very least, they provide a basic education, access to a safety net and appropriate socialization to certain norms of proper behaviour and knowledge deemed fit by the locals themselves (Park & Niyozov, 2008, p. 332).

The unity of an Islamic identity before Partition is a contested terrain. A detailed exploration of a Muslim identity in pre-Partition Pakistan is however beyond the scope of this research. But it can still be argued that Partition in a way created an illusion, that the newly created Pakistan

supported a singular mono-culture (Alavi, 2002, p. 5122). Madaris process this national diversity really well. While there are numerous madaris in various parts of the country which use the regional vernacular as the medium of instruction (e.g. Pashto, Sindhi, Saraiki), most use Urdu. A close inspection of any of the large madaris in any Pakistani city will reveal that students from all ethnicities and regions are featured; some in more numbers than others.

The next chapter moves from general to specific; towards two madrassa sites in Islamabad, Pakistan and examines them in considerable detail by unearthing the complex multiplier effects these institutions have within Pakistani society.

CHAPTER FOUR: RE-CONSTRUCTING THE MADRASSA THROUGH COMMUNITY VOICES - A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TWO STUDY SITES

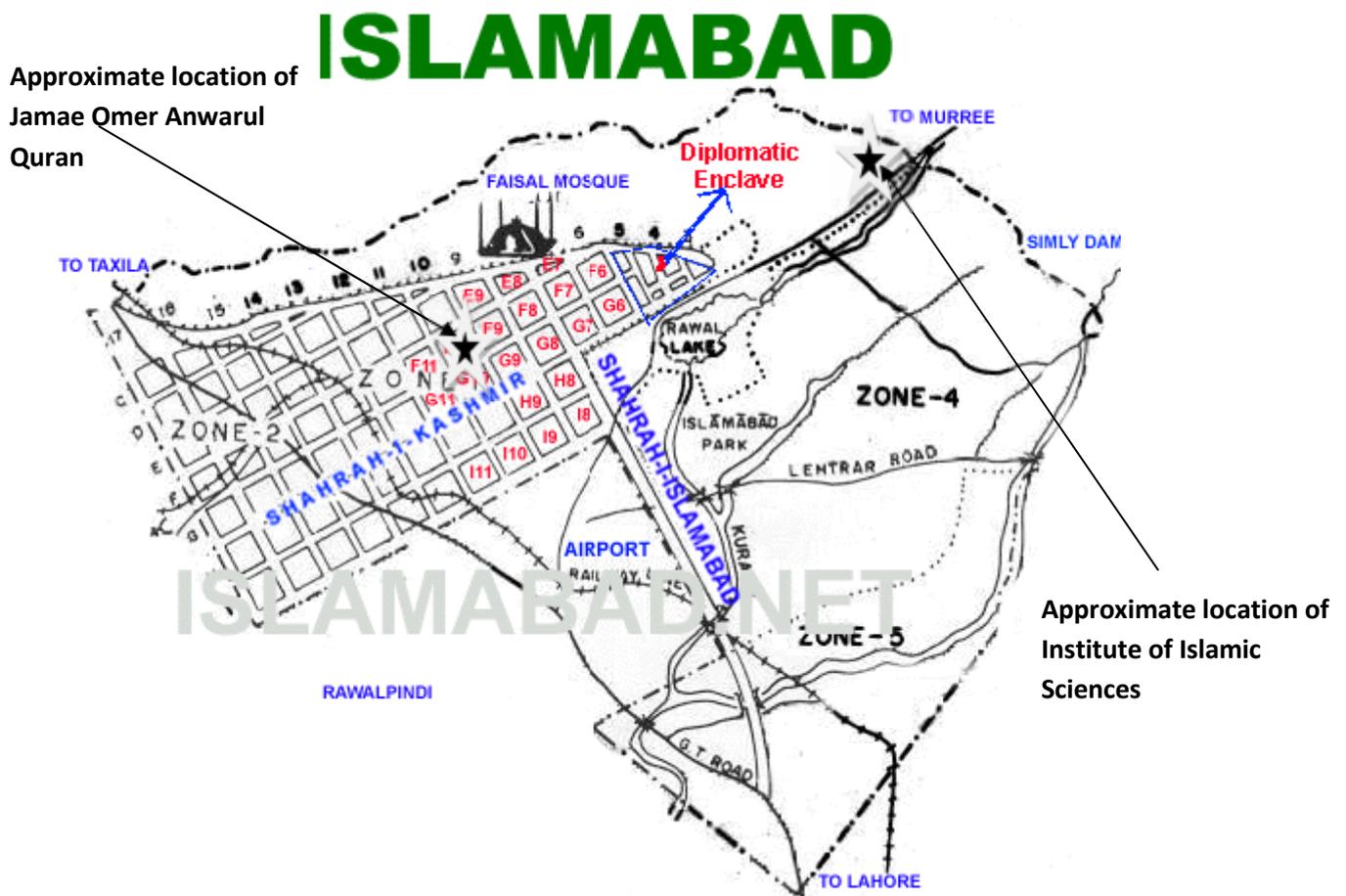
Introduction

The madrassa for me is not just the site of my study. It is also the place of my short-lived schooling, the place where my friends study, work and live, as well as the spaces of contestation, debates and continuous change that reflect local voices and perspectives. In this chapter, I present data based on my in-depth interviews, unless otherwise stated. A complete list of the interviewees including their roles/positions is included in the appendix as Appendix B. In reading this chapter, it is crucial to keep in mind the diversity within madaris in Pakistan -- each institution is unique and has its own specific strategic vision, linkages with the community and institutional complexities. Each madrassa needs to be individually identified and characterised so as to have a more nuanced understanding of what madaris are and how they are embedded with the fulfilment of Pakistan's diverse social needs. Considerable variations exist within madaris even within the same geographical location. This makes the urban- rural dichotomy complex and somewhat redundant as this is no longer the only differentiating factor. In this chapter studies, I examine two unique madaris in Islamabad, Pakistan as constructed and conceptualized by the madrassa communities themselves. I try to bring to the forefront the aspirations of these communities and how they are in sync with national priorities. This is followed by an analysis of certain key themes and important points worthy of consideration.

Two case studies

The following map of Islamabad points out the respective, approximate locations of the two study sites:

Figure 4.1: Map of Islamabad showing the approximate locations of the two study sites



(Source: http://www.islamabad.net/guide_maps.htm, accessed on 31st March 2010)

The two study sites are located in two very different regions of Islamabad. This is discussed in detail under each study site's respective section.

Jamae Omer Anwarul Quran³⁸

Haroon Qureshi, the madrassa's Director of Education and Academic Affairs promised to meet me at 9:00 a.m. to give me a formal tour of the facility before I got started with my interviews. However he did not arrive until 10:00 a.m. Upon further inquiry about why he was an hour late, we realized that both of us were following different times! I was following the new day light saving time format mandated by the Government of Pakistan and him the older format. Thus the time we agreed upon on the phone earlier actually meant 10am on the older time format. Ali revealed that a majority of the madaris community had decided not to follow the day light saving time format because it upset prayer timings (which are mediated by the position of the sun and not the actual time itself) and created confusion for the worshippers.

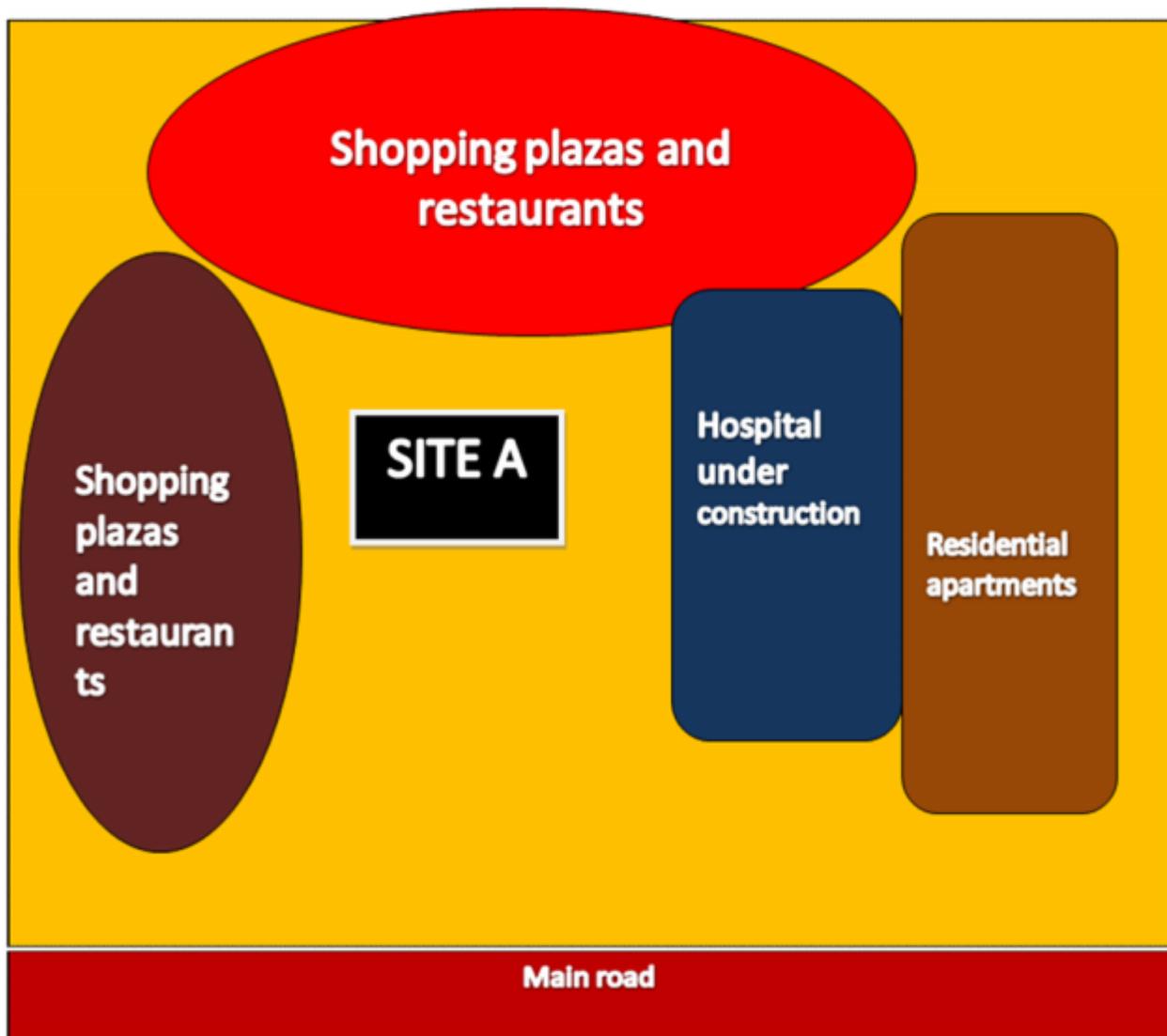
This small, seemingly insignificant incident reflects the gaping fissure that exists between the madaris community and the state, and the continuous antagonism between the two parties. Qureshi explained that for Muslims, the day begins a bit before dawn (for Fajr prayers) and thus the concept of day light saving is redundant and irrelevant as everyone is expected to start their day right before dawn anyways (Interview with Qureshi, 15th July 2009).

Jamae Omer Anwarul Quran (JOAQ) is a modest sized residential madrassa in the posh F-10/3 sector of Islamabad. The madrassa is part of the larger Dewan Mosque named after the

³⁸ Since Jamae Omer Anwarul Quran is part of a unified mosque complex (is attached to a mosque), it is pretty much an open access institution. I was freely able to access the premises, walk around and take down notes and record observations. However Institute of Islamic Sciences is more along the lines of a walled private educational institute (like all of the institutions in Pakistan where there is restricted entry due to security reasons). Thus I did not have open access to the location and have a limited understanding of the spatial arrangement of the campus, everyday student routine and other dynamics. My level of description for both these institutions varies considerably across certain dimensions.

prominent industrialist who helped built it. The Dewan mosque was built in 2002 by the Dewan Mushtaq Group and its sister company Dewan Suleman Fibre Ltd. The red brick building is surrounded on two sides by shopping plazas, a newly constructed hospital and the main double road linking the F-10 sector with downtown Islamabad. The location is central, easily visible and accessible by adjacent residential neighbourhoods as well as those working in the shopping centres. The area is moderately dense. This research was conducted in May-August 2009 when the Pakistan military offensive against the Taliban in the north-west parts of the country was at its peak. While the rest of the city was cordoned off with barb wire, metal fences, guards and sandbags; the mosques and madaris were left completely unguarded. The following figure displays the spatial location of the madrassa:

Figure 4.2: Spatial location of Jamae Omer Anwarul Quran (this map is not drawn to scale).



The mosque-madrassa complex is divided into two floors and both share a common entrance. At the front is a large parking lot which is usually occupied by cars during the time of prayers or by the madrassa students playing cricket in their break times. It is a bustling place, people (students, teachers, worshippers) can be seen exiting and entering the premises at most times. At the top of the minarat (a larger dome on top of the mosque) is a large loudspeaker used to broadcast the

‘azan’ or ‘call to prayer’ five times a day. It is also used to publically broadcast the khutba (sermons) particularly during the larger Friday prayers. Just across the marbled staircase is a modest shack made of tin which acts as a small bookshop selling religious texts, CDs, DVDs, tiny ‘ittar’ bottles (non-alcoholic perfumes) and other religious accessories such as prayer beads, skull caps and miswaks (branches of certain trees such as olive which are used to clean one’s teeth). Sometimes lectures from prominent Islamic scholars are played aloud on stereos to attract people. Also usually available at this bookshop are local publications belonging to the madrassa community, such as community newspapers, magazines, locally authored books etc. The community newspapers are crucial grapevines for the madrassa community throughout the country and link one madrassa with another through the mutual sharing of anecdotes, essays, opinion pieces, news reports etc all through the lens of religion and equity. These grapevines or forms of communication, also establishes a unique link between local communities, citizens and the madrassa community itself.

Another important observation is the aggregation of beggars; mostly children, women and the elderly (often severely disabled by the removal of body limbs) outside the madrassa premises begging for small alms. The madaris/mosque complex is also the centre for charity, and thus full of people who are destitute and seeking help.

The madrassa facility: The building is divided into two stories: a ground floor and a basement. The ground floor has the main prayer hall, an outdoor courtyard, a wudu (ablution) facility³⁹ and a small room called the ‘Darul Iftah’ (centre of issuing Fatwas). The Darul Iftah is the

³⁹ Wudu or ablution is mandatory before one can offer prayers. A wudu facility typically looks like a series of taps and stools for the individual to sit on.

community interface of the madrassa where anyone is allowed to come and ask specific questions usually regarding religious matters which are then answered by an expert.

The basement is the main madrassa and hosts a singular large class room. This is the only class room, which doubles as a prayer space in the summers when the main hall is full beyond capacity and it is too warm to pray there. The class-room is spare; the floor is carpeted, a few book shelves line the walls and little knee high tables are spread around which the students use to study while sitting on the floor. Many classes operate simultaneously in the same space at a given time. Right outside the main class room are two small rooms: one is marked as “Office of the Director of Education”, the second is a staff room where teachers are allowed to rest in between classes. However during the night and day time nap hours, students can also be seen sleeping there due to the lack of space.

Financial links with the community: JOAQ is entirely dependent on the community for its financial resources. It does not charge any of its students either a tuition fee or a fee for room and boarding. Outside the main entrance to the mosque-madrassa complex is a black metal box with a clamp on it. It is an alms box where people are encouraged to drop spare change to contribute to the running costs of the institution. Inside the building are further three large metal trunks conspicuously painted red, blue and green? Each trunk is marked for the following specific functions:

1. Alms for madrassa
2. Alms for electric and gas bills
3. Alms for the publication of Quran and Hadith (and other religious texts)

Before Friday prayers, when everyone is seated and attendance is large, few young men circulate the prayer hall crisscrossing between the rows of worshippers, each holding one end of a cloth allowing the sheet to droop down like a canopy. People are encouraged to drop money into this. In times of dire need, the Imam makes public announcements after prayers encouraging people to donate money for certain urgent matters such as the repair of the water pump. Other important times of the year when the Imam makes an appeal for donations are the month of Ramadan (in which Muslims fast and realize the spirit of charity) and the two Eids (religious celebrations/festivals). Budget is drafted at the beginning of the academic year, which corresponds with the month of Ramadan.

Strategic visioning: All members of JOAQ share a broad understanding of the institution's goal and strategic vision. Even though everyone has a different description of this institutional vision, they are all centred loosely around preserving Islamic knowledge, spreading Islam, encouraging people to do good and preventing them from doing evil (Interviews with Haider, 20th July 2009; Qadir, 15th July 2009; Qureshi, 15th July 2009). There is also a desire to overlap the goals of the madrassa with national development goals to achieve a synergistic relationship: “[We want to] create a good individual for society, where one may work as a Khateeb⁴⁰, as an Imam, as a Qari or in a madrassa, but could also come to good use for the country” (Interview with Qureshi, 15th July 2009).

According to an interview with Haider (20th July 2009) JOAQ is ultimately positioned to serve humanity. It gives an opportunity for Muslims to link with God and provides a social space to realize their Islam. JOAQ graduates are trained to be selfless and keep other people's welfare in

⁴⁰Khateeb is someone who gives public lectures and talks usually in a mosque.

mind. They are essentially trained to be spiritual guides and graduates are expected to permeate society.

*Admissions and academics*⁴¹: All subjects are taught in Urdu the national vernacular. JOAQ admits students into two separate streams or cohorts: the Hifz stream and the Dars-e-Nizami stream. The madrassa has been offering Hifz and Dars-e-Nizami for the last eighteen and ten years respectively.

The first stream is the Hifz stream. Hifz refers to the process by which the entire Quran is memorized by a student in Arabic. It is an important tool for the preservation of the actual text and great spiritual reward is associated with the process. The process takes around 3 years followed by a year of ‘Taqrar’ when the student strengthens his memory of the Quran through various exercises and debates with fellow students. This is supplemented by another year of ‘Tajweed’ (in which the practice of reciting the Quran in a beautified manner is perfected). Thus the entire process adds up to around five years but some students leave after the first three years.

The criterion for entering the Hifz cohort is that the student must be at least eight years old and have completed a few years of schooling typically till grade 5. The madrassa admits about 20 students each year and has a total of 60 Hifz students currently enrolled. The admissions process is fairly informal and each student is interviewed to help assess whether he is genuinely interested in dedicating the next three to five years of his life to the madrassa. Most of the Hifz students reside in the complex. Teachers of JOAQ are also mostly residential and go through the same workday as the students.

⁴¹ The following sections: admissions and academics, health services, teacher training, relationship with the government, institutional reforms, the typical schedule of Dars-e-Nizami students are based on a detailed interview with the Director of Education of Jamae Omer Anwarul Quran, Qureshi conducted on 15th July 2009.

Alongside the Hifz education, JOAQ teaches a general education curriculum for up till grade 8 designed by the Wifaq-al-Madaris accreditation board⁴². Currently the madrassa is trying to extend this facility up to grade 10 or Matriculation⁴³. The special curriculum is offered in an accelerated format and students upon graduating from the Hifz cohort are expected to have gained an education equivalent to grade 8 in the national curriculum. After graduating from the Hifz stream, students typically have the following choices:

- i) Continue with their secular education outside the madrassa
- ii) Return to the madrassa for continuing the Dars-e-Nizami either right away or at a later stage (such as after completing their Matriculation certification)
- iii) Seek part time/ full time employment as a Hifz or Tajweed teacher

Approximately 50% of the Hifz students are retained by JOAQ while the rest leave. There has been no systematic follow up to see what these students do once they leave the madrassa.

Occasionally, the madrassa admits students into the Hifz cohort without appropriate levels of schooling. For them the teachers design a special instructional format to bring the student up to speed with the rest of the cohort. The Director of Education at Jamae Omer Anwarul Quran, Qureshi gave a stunning example: “We have one student, who is 23 years old from Lahore. He has only studied up till grade 3 in his village school. So we teach him Hifz and side by side try to

⁴² The Wifaq-al-Madaris board has devised its own syllabus for secular education which runs parallel to the national curriculum. The idea is that students who are unable to attend a school can be quickly brought up to the required levels of literacy for entering Dars-e-Nizami. The syllabus runs up to grade 8 and students can freely enter a public or private high school afterwards.

⁴³ High school in Pakistan is divided into two certifications: Matriculation which is equivalent to grade 10 and FA/FSc which is equivalent to grade 12. In FA/FSc students are required to stream into their areas of interest before entering university such as pre-medicine, pre-engineering, commerce, arts etc.

bring his schooling up to grade 8. We want him to at least have grade 8 when he leaves” (Interview with Qureshi, 15th July 2009).

There is no guarantee whether students entering from grade 5 have all acquired comparable literacy levels due to the lack of standardization in schooling in the country particularly across the urban-rural divide. Students coming in from villages and other rural areas with a grade 5 are typically well below expected educational standards. Sometimes the teachers have to start right from grade 1 for such students despite having been in school for more than five years.

The second stream is the Dars-e-Nizami stream. Dars-e-Nizami is the 8 year curriculum sanctioned by the Wifaq-al-Madaris madrassa board which aims to train Islamic scholars. JOAQ has a total of 70 students in this cohort and admits approximately 10 new students each academic year.

Entering students must have passed at least grade 8 from the Wifaq-al-Madaris secular syllabus or Matriculation (Grade 10) from the national curriculum. The admissions process is also fairly informal and a mandatory interview is required to assess whether the student is motivated to spend the next eight years at the madrassa.

JOAQ has a fairly flexible admissions process. Sometimes applicants who do not meet the minimum admissions requirement belong to such an impoverished socio-economic background that the only available alternative is the streets. In such cases, the madrassa makes exceptions. This does pose incredible challenges for the madrassa keeping in mind its scarce resources but at the same time establishes JOAQ as an open access institution. Madaris like JOAQ, often end up accepting many under qualified students who have nowhere else to go and whose caretakers are unable to provide them better alternatives.

Health services: JOAQ does not have an official contract or arrangement with any health service provider in the city. When students get sick, they are either taken to a free charity hospital nearby or to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (a government hospital). The expenses are managed by the madrassa itself. If a student contracts a protracted illness like tuberculosis, cholera, typhoid etc then they are granted a leave and sent home. There are severe health risks at JOAQ pertaining to community living and hygiene. A through exploration of these risk factors would further help in setting the context and indicating the range of economic and social challenges that madaris face.

Teacher training: There is no formal concept of teacher training at JOAQ. Presently all teachers are madrassa graduates and thus it is assumed that they are aware of the style of teaching required. If there are issues, then the staff member works with the individual teacher on a case to case basis.

Relationship with the government: JOAQ seems to enjoy an indifferent relationship with the Government of Pakistan. The Principal who is also the Imam and Khateeb of the mosque often critically speaks against oppressive government policies in his sermons when required. No one from the government (including the Ministry of Education) has ever come to inspect the madrassa. There have been a few instances when students from the madrassa have been picked up by Pakistani intelligence agencies (particularly the FIA⁴⁴) and returned after overnight interrogations.

Institutional reforms: The madrassa is currently undergoing internal reforms indicating that the madrassa is willing to adapt to changing circumstances. Presently JOAQ offers secular

⁴⁴ FIA refers to Federal Investigation Agency.

education till grade 8 only to meet minimum admission levels outlined by the board. Administration is trying to extend general education up till Matriculation. This will allow more students to proceed to FA and into university if desired.

The Director of Education expressed his desire to train students to be useful and responsible citizens who despite their professional religious roles would love and work for humanity: “We don’t want madrassa graduates to go to waste and become a burden for society. We want to integrate them better in more useful ways. There is systematic exclusion of madrassa graduates from society... thanks to Lord Macaulay” (Interview with Qureshi, 15th July 2009).

The madrassa has started a weekly class on civics where discussions are carried out with the student body regarding current affairs, politics and societal ills.

JOAQ is a classical madrassa (in the sense that its primary focus is the Dars-e-Nizami syllabus) which is trying to ‘modernize’ and expand its mandate to include larger portions of the national curriculum. Thus, it is a madrassa in transition, but due to the absolute lack of resources the transition is extremely slow.

Typical schedule of Dars-e-Nizami students: The daily routine of students at JOAQ revolves around the five compulsory prayers spaced throughout the day. Since the timings of the prayers change periodically as the month continues it is difficult to assign an exact time to their schedule. Approximate congregation prayer timings on the date 22nd February 2010 in Islamabad are used to give a better temporal indication of the schedule for non-familiar readers. The following table displays the typical schedule of a student at this institution.

Table 4.1: Approximate daily routines of students at JOAQ⁴⁵

Approximate time slots	Scheduled activity
5:30am	Wake up bell is sounded
6:00am	Fajr prayers
6:20am	Recitation of the Quran
7:00am	Breakfast
7:30am – 12pm	Classes (each class is almost an hour long)
12pm	Lunch, followed by a nap
1:30pm	Zuhr prayers
2:00pm	Group discussions on morning lessons ('Taqrar')
4:30pm	Asr prayers
4:45pm	Sports time/leisure time
6:05pm	Maghrib prayers
6:30pm	Study period; revision of daily lessons and readings for next day
7:30pm	Isha prayers
7:45pm	Dinner
8:30pm	Group discussions
11pm	Bed time

Source: (Interview with Qureshi, 15th July 2009)

Motivations for coming to JOAQ⁴⁶: Shafiq is the first student from his entire village to have made it to a madrassa. He spoke of his decision to come here with a deep sense of pride and

⁴⁵ The five daily prayers: Fajr, Zuhr, Asr, Maghrib and Isha are offered at different times of the day. Fajr is offered just before sunrise, Zuhr at midday, Asr at afternoon, Maghrib just after sunset and Isha is offered at night time.

achievement. Shafiq chose JOAQ because of the outstanding reputation of the Khateeb and its teachers. It is interesting to note that JOAQ does not have a formal website, prospectus or any formal mode of advertising. The madrassa completely relies on the informal communication grapevine to market itself to prospective students. Now in his seventh year, Shafiq feels that the madrassa has helped him realize his place in this world and it has been a journey of self-realization. Shafiq admits that his present life circumstances are such that it is not possible for him to continue his education once he graduates. His family is now depending on him as a breadwinner and it is impossible for him to afford the tuition fees for even a public university.

Like Shafiq, Anwar too is the first person in his entire immediate and extended family to have entered a madrassa. After finishing his primary school, he wanted to join a local mosque school for Hifz. However his parents recommended that he should at least complete his Matriculation certification. So that is what he did. After passing grade 10, he spent 4 months with the Tablighi Jammāt (a grass roots organization concerned with disseminating information about Islam to local and far off communities). Then he applied for admission at JOAQ and got accepted. He was always passionate about religion which was partly because of the high religious atmosphere in his household. His parents and his villagers always hoped that he would become a religious scholar. Anwar is of the opinion that every household should at least send one of their children to a madrassa. Anwar also believes that if one is really motivated then it is possible to excel in both religious as well as secular education.

⁴⁶ This section is based on detailed individual interviews with: i) Shafiq and Anwar; both current students at Jamae Omer Anwarul Quran conducted on 25th July 2009 ii) Azam and Kaleem; both graduates of Jamae Omer Anwarul Quran conducted on 26th July 2009 and 25th July 2009 respectively.

Azam now a graduate of JOAQ, came from his village near Chitral in the northern areas of Pakistan because of a scarcity of local educational opportunities. There were only two madaris near his village which were both managed by the government.⁴⁷ . The standard of education and quality of teachers at these two madaris was extremely poor and they were not respected by the community. Azam fondly recalls when he was a young boy in his village; he would see madrassa students return home from Islamabad for the holidays:

“When I was in school, then at that time some of our companion friends who used to study in madaris [in Islamabad] would come to the village... [their mannerism and etiquettes], the way they would conduct themselves, meet and greeted others compared to the rest of us was very sober [and impressive]. Other than that, they would lead prayers for people and lead Tarawih (special night prayers in Ramadan). So I thought I should also go and understand the Quran, learn the Quran and acquire religious education” (Interview with Azam, 26th July 2009).

In his small Chitrali village, which has little infrastructure, almost no public facilities and low household incomes; madaris graduates stood out as educated, polished role models and represented a bright and attainable future. Two of Azam’s brothers are also enrolled in various madaris in Islamabad.

Kaleem, a graduate of JOAQ, came to Islamabad simply because it was the capital city. Sitting in his village in Mansehra, Islamabad symbolized opportunity. He also has extended family in

⁴⁷ There are a few state managed madaris in Pakistan. Their syllabus is set by the government and not by any of the madrassa boards. The government also takes care of all running costs and teacher salaries.

Islamabad so choosing a madrassa in Islamabad was the sensible thing to do. He admits that Mansehra has a few good madaris as well. His main complaint is against the public school system there which is characterized by poor teaching quality, unfair admission policies and ethnic discrimination. It is not easy to get an education in his village. The nearest public high school often denies the children from his village admission based on ethnicity and personal enmity between the school Headmaster with the villagers. So students have to travel considerable distances to the next nearest school which takes hours. Faced with these adversities, Kaleem felt he made the right choice of shifting to a madrassa in Islamabad: “Children have the motivation, they have the capabilities, but they go with a slate and bag in their hands [in search of education], wander in the dirt and then come back home” (Interview with Kaleem, 25th July 2009).

I asked Kaleem if he came to a madrassa in Islamabad (or youngsters from his village go to madaris in Islamabad) because: i) the government system of schooling there is substandard? ii) they cannot afford to get a better education elsewhere in the region? In response, Kaleem described the following scenario:

“My younger brother studied [in the government school in/near our village] there. His name is Omer, he studied there for five years. Till grade 5 he did not even know how to write his name. He failed fifth grade. I brought him to a madrassa in Islamabad. There he turned out to be so smart that in a short period of time he was able to memorize the entire Quran, very quickly. After Hifz, there is a madrassa in Islamabad which offers a special class for children who have not been to school. It is equivalent to fifth and sixth grades. He performed very well there then [he went back to the village] and secured a very good position in grades seventh and eight. And then he did his Matriculation, believe me till

grade five he did not even know how to write his name... because children's early education is very crucial" (Interview with Kaleem, 25th July 2009).

Kaleem pointed out that the public schools in Mansehra are free of cost. But they are of extremely poor quality and majority children either drop out or fail out. Kaleem said that public schools despite being free are useless: "I put my own nephew in a private school [of better quality than the free government school] and I paid Rs.1200 a month for him. Majority of the people cannot afford that" (Interview with Kaleem, 25th July 2009).

At least fifteen other youths came from his village to study at various madaris in the city. He says that the choice is not about choosing between various madaris in the city but whether to actually move to the city or not.

Kaleem stats that most village parents like his parents do not put too much thought into their children's educational choices. They are simple; they do not consider how having a madrassa education will impact their children's life. They have minimal religious knowledge but are generally religious minded:

"Youths from villages come to madaris in increasing numbers because now days there is at least some buzz around education, but my dad or our elders they never attended a school. In their time there were no schools and the feudal lords who were an oppressive class did not let the poor people study. There was no awareness [about education] amongst people and there is little awareness even now. Those people are aware who have been to the cities and have seen that without education there can be no system. Then they bring majority of kids to the cities" (Interview with Kaleem, 25th July 2009).

Future aspirations of current madrassa students: Students expressed their desire to study further and obtain a university degree. A Masters in Sharia Law from the Islamic International University in Islamabad was a popular choice (Interview with Shafiq, 25th July 2009). Another university for further Islamic education which was considered to be the ultimate yet unrealizable goal of the interviewees was Madina University in Saudi Arabia (Interview with Shafiq, 25th July 2009). This was considered to be the Princeton for Islamic education and had a long arduous admissions process with very low admission rates.

Students at JOAQ are encouraged to finish their Matriculation and F.A certifications along with the Dars-e-Nizami syllabus. Students are given time off to study and many chose to complete these two high school certifications either during their time at JOAQ or shortly after graduation (Interview with Qureshi, 15th July 2009). Shafiq has already completed his Matriculation and F.A certifications. Next year after graduation he plans to appear privately for his BA exams as a private candidate from Punjab University which will make him eligible to apply for a Masters program at the Islamic University in Islamabad (Interview with Shafiq, 25th July 2009). Anwar on the other hand, just in his second year feels that it is too early to start planning about the future (Interview with Anwar, 25th July 2009).

Graduates, career opportunities and life paths: All government middle and high schools require Arabic and Islamic studies teachers⁴⁸. These positions are being exclusively filled by madrassa graduates. In some high schools, there is also a position of Qari (a person who teaches others how to recite the Quran in Arabic) which is also typically filled by a madrassa graduate. So each high school in the country requires three madrassa graduates and each middle school requires

⁴⁸ This entire first paragraph is based on an interview with Jamshed, currently a teacher at Jamae Omer Anwarul Quran, conducted on 27th July 2009.

two graduates. This is the only way madrassa graduates are officially employed by the state in a religious role. Another route is to work as a Khateeb/Imam at a government managed mosque which is generally not preferred because of severe state censorship rules when delivering sermons.

Azam just completed his Dars-e-Nizami from JOAQ few months ago⁴⁹. He is currently studying for his BA (in Islamic and Arabic studies) exams privately and hopes to appear as a private candidate at the University of Malakand. Along with his studies he is also serving as a temporary Imam for a small mosque/prayer room in the high rise apartments in the sector of F-11. He hopes to pass his BA and get a good job.

I asked him why he needs a BA when he already has a Dars-e-Nizami degree which is equivalent to a MA. He replied that the MA equivalency is just in policy and theory, no employer actually considers it equivalent. That is why it is necessary for him to obtain a BA. Since Dars-e-Nizami is much more comprehensive than a BA in Islamic and Arabic studies, madrassa graduates are awarded transfer credits and just have to take a few additional exams. The BA degree will help him bridge the gap between his madrassa education and mainstream employment opportunities. According to Azam, a BA from Malakand University is extremely easy and their pass rates are extremely high compared to that of the madrassa board exams. Azam is looking for a job which will pay him a decent salary and allow him to continue to engage with some level of Islamic scholarship. The ideal job in his opinion will be that of an Arabic or Islamic studies teacher at a government high school. He thinks his BA will not be sufficient for such a job in Islamabad that

⁴⁹ The remaining paragraphs in this section are based on individual interviews with two graduates of Jamae Omer Anwarul Quran; Azam and Kaleem conducted on 26th July 2009 and 25th July 2009 respectively.

is why he is targeting his home town. He informed me that at least 32 jobs were advertised for Arabic teachers in government middle and high schools throughout the province and many of his seniors are currently teaching. He is confident that he is more than qualified to teach Arabic and Islamic studies at government schools. According to Azam, other possible career choices which previous JOAQ graduates have managed are armed forces, police services and madaris teachers.

Kaleem, now a graduate of JOAQ, is teaching at a newly opened Hifz school in sector F-11, Islamabad. He gets paid Rs.5000 a month. Most madaris and Hifz schools pay Rs.3000-Rs.5000 a month to their teachers.⁵⁰ He is less optimistic about the employment opportunities available for madaris graduates. He says many graduates have to take up side jobs mostly labour work to make ends meet. He himself works part time in construction and dry-wall painting. Kaleem asserts that having a BA and MA are minimum qualifications to get hired for a reasonable position. Kaleem possesses neither of these two degrees:

“I want to work, work towards the development of this country and want to bring forth truth and justice but I am helpless [incapacitated]; I do not know how to speak English, I cannot guide someone properly, and even though I do have the passion to do something for this country, for my village - I don't have any capabilities” (Interview with Kaleem, 25th July 2009).

Social interactions with individuals outside the madrassa: Since JOAQ is affiliated with a public mosque, it is an open access institution. There is a constant flow of people in and out of the premises. Several JOAQ students are employed by surrounding residents to tutor their children in

⁵⁰ According to a research conducted on public and private schooling in Pakistan, public school teachers on an average earn a monthly salary of Rs. 5620 and private teachers a monthly salary of Rs. 1084 (Andrabi et.all, 2008, p. 346).

religious as well as secular subjects (Interview with Qureshi, 15th July 2009). Similarly, students and instructors go out into the community every week; meet people and discuss everyday topics pertaining to Islam.

Students from JOAQ who are all residential students explained that their interaction with people from outside the madrassa is very limited. Their daily routine is so strenuous and busy that the only time they get off from their studies is between the Asr and Maghrib prayers (evening time) (Interview with Anwar, 25th July 2009). During this time slot, most students usually play cricket outside in the parking lot or some go for a stroll in the nearby public park.

JOAQ students play cricket with whoever is interested in joining them. Often young men working in the adjacent shops and stores team up with them. There is also a boy's hostel for students studying in a local engineering university nearby. Usually these residents also join the JOAQ students for playing cricket. Shafiq said in an interview that he has made many friends with the engineering students and store workers. Thus sports are an important way for JOAQ students to interact with those outside the madrassa.

Occasionally students will face harassment from other community members on account of being from a madrassa (Interview with Shafiq, 25 July 2009). Sometimes students are publically called 'terrorists' and 'fundamentalists': "The whole world is bent upon labelling us as terrorist and they have put on us the label of terrorism. Even though we are peace loving people" (Interview with Shafiq, 25th July 2009).

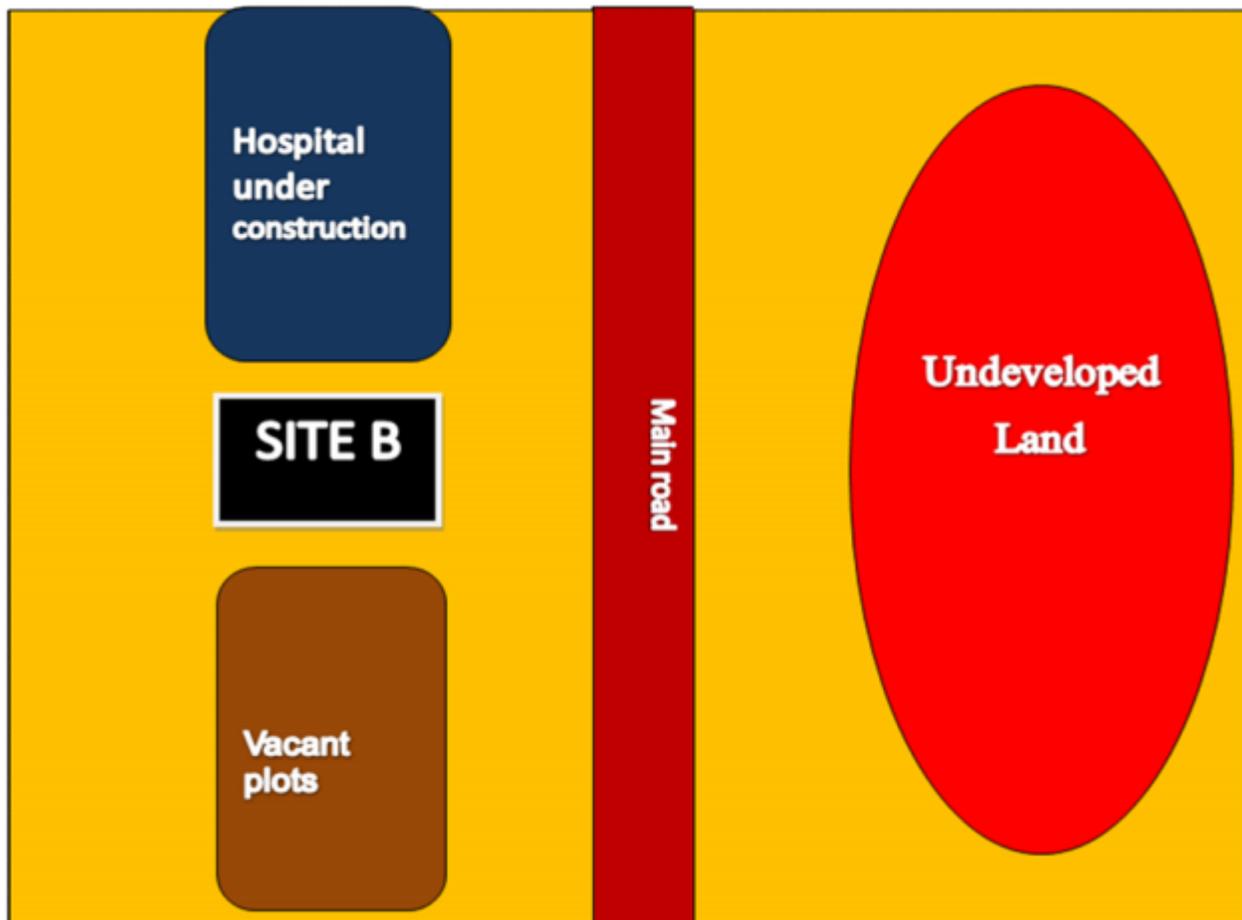
Students complained that society is becoming intolerant towards members of the religious community in general (Interview with Shafiq, 25th July 2009). It is interesting to note that both

madaris graduates and their more 'secular' counterparts use the same intolerance/tolerance debate to characterize the other group's attitude towards them.

Institute of Islamic Sciences

The Institute of Islamic Sciences (IIS) is situated in the peri-urban fringes of Islamabad city. En-route to IIS, the typical planned residential neighbourhoods of the city and its frequent green spaces are replaced with smaller plots owned by people who cannot afford to buy a house within the city proper but still want to hang at its margins. Top floors of houses are left unfinished to give an illusion that another story will be added; like a city yearning for constant up gradation-always in transition. The dress code changes; pants/suits/jeans slip away into traditional shalwar kameez for men who make up most of the public life. Shopping plazas give way to rows of CNG stations for cargo trucks, and stores turn into small carpentry studios and whole sale shops. The following figure displays the spatial location of the institution.

Figure 4.3: Spatial location of Institute of Islamic Sciences (this map is not drawn to scale)



The Institute has a purpose built campus complete with a large sign board announcing the institute's name, webpage and phone numbers in both English and Urdu. It is gated and surrounded by high walls on all four sides. At the front gate sits an elderly man who asks for identification from visitors.

The campus is large and spacious but unfinished. The walls are cemented and still require paint. There is a large courtyard across which are shoe racks where everyone is requested to place their shoes before entering the academic block. There is a uniform in place and all students are dressed in crisp white shalwar kameez.

At the time when I entered, there was no electricity indicating the power shortage in the country. I sat in the office of the Director of Education; there were computers, printers and an administrative assistant was printing out computerized report cards.

*Financial links with the community*⁵¹: The institute does not typically charge its students a tuition fee or a fee for room and board. The monthly expenditure of the institute is Rs. 2 million which amounts to Rs. 24 million annually. Last year IIS was in deep financial crisis and the administration decided to levy a fee of Rs. 2000 per student. Almost 70% of the students were ready to drop out. As a result now fee is set at a sliding scale, and students pay whatever they can afford. Out of the 650 currently enrolled students, only 100 pay the full Rs.2000 monthly fee. The Institute has 120 full-time and part-time staff including teachers who are often not paid salaries on time (Interview with Junaid, 13th June 2009).

Collection of donations from the community is a more organized process which extends beyond the usual drop boxes for charity collection and public appeals. Currently the President of IIS is on a fund-raising tour to Europe and hopes to raise funds from well-wishers from the Pakistani Muslim community resident there.

Strategic Visioning: IIS is very clear on its vision which is articulated in a similar way by all its community members. According to the Vice President, IIS trains students to be ‘Rujlul Asar’ which is Arabic for ‘man of the day’ or ‘man of modern times’. This can be further elaborated as follows:

⁵¹ The following sections: financial links with the community, strategic visioning, admissions and academics, external review of IIS, health services, teacher training, relationship with the government, institutional reforms and daily routine of IIS students are all based on a detailed interview with the Vice President of IIS Hussnain (unless otherwise stated), conducted on 13th June 2009.

- i) Students are educated to be experts in religious disciplines (Quran and Hadith)
- ii) Students are educated to have sound secular knowledge so that they can “communicate in the language of the current times”
- iii) Students are educated to perfect their faith in God so they do not “betray religion for worldly benefits”.

According to the Vice President of IIS Hussnain, the ultimate objective of IIS like any other madrassa is preserving and maintaining religion. Students are encouraged to take up any career that they desire as long as they remain committed Islamic workers.

The IIS aims to impart religious knowledge and the sensibility to apply/present Islam in modern times. The underlying assumption is that graduates will be more beneficial to the cause of Islam if they have both religious as well secular education. So technically, IIS has traditional goals but it has learned to actualize them in a better way. The Principal of IIS very eloquently summed up the motivation behind IIS’s dual educational track: “No individual can become an Islamic scholar unless he fully understands the ways [and sensibilities] of modern times” (Interview with IIS Principal Syed, 13th June 2009).

Admissions and academics: IIS is registered as a private institution with the Ministry of Education for grades 1 to 12. Even though it offers a B.A in economics it is not recognized by the Higher Education Committee as a degree awarding institution. Thus students sit for their B.A exams with the Punjab University as external candidates. The institute uses Urdu as a medium of instruction. It admits students into three streams or cohorts after a written test.

The first stream is concerned only with Hifz. Students interested in Hifz are admitted into this stream. They must have completed grade 5 and be under 15 years of age. Students do Hifz and

continue onwards from grade 5 towards a Bachelors of Arts degree in Economics and the Dars-e-Nizami certification. Boarding is available for students in this stream.

The second stream is also a Hifz stream. The applicant must be a maximum of 12 years old and have completed grade 5. These students only do Hifz and are not taught the national curriculum or the Dars-e-Nizami unlike in stream A. Due to shortage of housing; these students are not given room and boarding and return home in the evening.

The third stream is the Dars-e-Nizami stream. Applicants must not be more than 17 years old and have completed their Matriculation certification. Students study the national curriculum for their F.A and then move into their Bachelors of Arts in Economics. This is supplemented with the Dars-e-Nizami syllabus. Thus students graduating from this stream just like stream A obtain a B.A and a Dars-e-Nizami certification. Due to shortage of housing, only those students who enter with a Hifz are offered a year of housing in this cohort.

The institute has the longest working year of any school in Pakistan. Regular schools have 185 working days (including exam periods) whereas IIS has 210 working days excluding examination periods. Summer vacations are just a week long and 40 days are given off during Ramadan and another ten days for the Eid al Azha celebrations. An interview is typically required for admission into any of the three cohorts in which the institute tries to assess whether the student is motivated enough to withstand the intense workload of the school. Around 40 students are admitted in one admissions cycle out of which at least 5 drop out within the first two months.

IIS provides an exceptionally high standard of education to its students. This is proven by the fact that out of 300 students writing Dars-e-Nizami board exams in 2008, 280 secured A-1 grades

(the highest grade possible). Similarly just in 2009, two students secured top two positions in the Matriculation board examinations for the entire Federal region.

External review of IIS: Due to its excellent academic performance and its uniqueness in following the complete national curriculum, IIS serves as a model madrassa for many similar institutions in the country. Often teachers and administrators from other madaris visit and observe IIS for extended periods of time. IIS welcomes visitors and encourages them to stay on the campus premises (Interview with Syed, 13th June 2009). This allows IIS to receive continuous feedback from external observers. The following is a summary of a few observations made by such ‘external reviewers’, according to Syed:

- i) Unlike most other madaris, student teacher interaction at IIS is unique. There is no power gap between students and teachers. Students are encouraged to approach their instructors informally and critically question them. IIS has managed to reconfigure the typical power relationship between a student-teacher which is common for some madaris. This has considerable implications because the few madaris where violence and terrorism has been practiced, students were programmed into blindly following their instructors.
- ii) Students are capable of critical thinking.
- iii) Students are better able to localize themselves within the community, and there is a greater motivation for societal contribution.
- iv) Students are generally self-aware.

Health services: IIS currently has a small dispensary on its premises. They have an ambulance present on site which can be used to take students from the campus to hospitals in the vicinity. The Principal has personal contacts with doctors at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences and

the Poly Clinic Hospital near downtown Islamabad (Interview with Syed, 13th June 2009). These doctors give special consideration to students coming from IIS (Interview with Syed, 13th June 2009). This shows that the institution is being validated and recognized by even the educated professionals of the country.

Teacher training: There is no formal teacher training mechanism in place at IIS. Since most teachers are graduates of a madrassa they are expected to be aware of the teaching practices common in madaris. Similarly, a large portion of the day is spent in group discussions and teachers are informally trained for facilitation and group management. The Vice President of IIS admits that the institute does face problems with teaching quality.

Relationship with the government: IIS has a neutral relationship with the government which is characterized by indifference. Students from the school secure top positions in the national Matriculation exams and are often awarded prizes by the Education Minister in special ceremonies organized by the state. However there has never been a public recognition by the government regarding the unique nature of IIS despite media coverage by some prominent news channels.

Institutional reform: IIS is interested in getting the institution recognized as a degree awarding institution by the Higher Education Commission. Currently the students write their B.A exams as external candidates from the Punjab University. This would give greater recognition to the institute by potential employers as well as other universities. In order to be granted the status of a degree awarding institution, IIS has to follow certain guidelines and meet certain criterion set by the HEC. The institute is looking into this currently.

IIS is also committed to develop strategic relationships with reputable universities across the country. Currently they have managed to develop a relationship with Karachi Institute of Management Sciences and the Institute of Business Administration, a premier business school in the country. Students from IIS will be given added consideration in the application process and awarded generous scholarships as part of the respective universities' outreach programmes.

Three students from IIS got accepted in 2008 by the Institute of Business Administration for their MBA's (Interview with Syed, 13th June 2009). The faculty is cognizant of the fact that their students are extremely hardworking, brilliant and just need access to opportunities. Since IIS is technically a madrassa, albeit a unique one, it still largely operates outside the 'mainstream' and thus public relationship building is a crucial need for the institute.

Daily Routine of IIS students: The daily schedule at IIS revolves around the five compulsory prayers. The following is a sample schedule adjusted to the approximate congregation prayer timings on 22nd February 2010 in Islamabad:

Table 4.2: Approximate daily routines of students at IIS

Approximate time slots	Scheduled activity
5:30am	Wake up bell is sounded
6:00am	Fajr prayers
6:20am	Recitation of the Quran, get ready
7:00am	Breakfast
7:50am	Zero period
8:10am	Morning assembly
8:30am-1:30pm	Classes, non-residential students are free to go home after this
1:30pm	Zuhr prayers, lunch and afternoon nap
3:00pm-4:30pm	Homework
4:30pm	Asr prayers
4:45pm-6pm	Sports time/ leisure time
6:05pm	Maghrib prayers
6:20pm-7:30pm	Homework
7:30pm	Isha prayers
7:45pm	Dinner
8:15pm – 11pm	Revision and preparation for next day

Motivations for coming to IIS: Naseer is a grade 11 student at IIS and has been at the institute for the past three years⁵². He finished memorizing the Quran when he was 12 years old and resumed his schooling shortly after. He studied in various government schools in Islamabad before

⁵² This first paragraph is based on an interview with Naseer, a current student at IIS conducted on 14th June 2009.

coming to IIS. Since his parents live in Islamabad he commutes to school every day. His biggest motivation for coming to IIS is his father. His father a government employee took adult education classes (centred on Islamic education and discourse) at IIS and was impressed by the calibre of the madrassa. He said his father always encouraged him to become a religious scholar and gradually his personal interest grew in Islamic scholarship. He is the only one in his immediate as well as extended family to have enrolled in a madrassa. He chose IIS is because it is a ‘modern’ madrassa, comparable to any modern institute of learning. He feels that since IIS formally taught the national curriculum along with the Dars-e-Nizami, it is an ideal place for him to be.

Jamil is a grade 11, residential student at IIS⁵³. He attended IIS for a few years as a child Hifz student and then returned to his school in Rawalpindi. He attended a privately owned ‘public’ school⁵⁴. Jamil recalls that as a child when his family used to travel from the north-western parts of the country to Rawalpindi, they would pass IIS on the way. Each time they would pass the campus, he would feel excited just because it looked so grand unlike any other madrassa he had ever seen in his life. His father always sensed his excitement and encouraged his son to take on the challenge of obtaining admission at the institute. He is the only one in his immediate as well as extended family to be enrolled in a madrassa. But he admits that two of his cousins also applied to IIS but were denied admission.

⁵³ This paragraph is based on an interview with Jamil, a current student at IIS conducted on 14th June 2009.

⁵⁴ This refers to a school which is privately owned but charges considerably lower fee than an elitist private school and generally offer a better standard of education than government schools.

Junaid a graduate from IIS joined the madrassa when he was 13 years old⁵⁵. Prior to IIS, he finished his Hifz from a local madrassa in his home city. His parents wanted him to become a medical doctor but during the Hifz process he developed an interest in studying Islam academically. Two of his nephews also study at IIS. I asked Junaid if he would recommend IIS for any other student. He replied that it really depends on what the goals and aspirations of the student are: “First I would ask them a few basic questions. What are your goals? If someone wants to be a doctor then obviously this institution cannot prepare doctors, this institution cannot make engineers. If someone wants to gain a religious education then I will recommend this [institution] to him” (Interview with Junaid, 13th June 2009).

Khalid another graduate from IIS chose to come here because his cousins recommended this madrassa to him (Interview with Khalid, 15th June 2009). He came here when he was just 10 years old as a Hifz student. Syed, Principal of IIS is also an alumnus of this institute. He says that his motivation for coming to IIS was the growing realization of how incapacitated typical madrassa graduates are and that survival depends on both forms of knowledge (Interview with Syed, 13th June 2009). He recommends IIS for his family members.

Hussnain, Vice President of IIS was the first person I met who did not have a Dars-e-Nizami but chose to work in a madrassa⁵⁶. He has an interesting background nonetheless. After his high school, he completed his Hifz from a madrassa in Multan. He has a BA in sociology and education from Karachi University. He initially came to IIS to work as a Hifz teacher but

⁵⁵ This paragraph is based on an interview with Junaid, a graduate and current teacher both at IIS conducted on 13th June 2009.

⁵⁶ This paragraph is based on an interview with Hussnain, Vice President of IIS conducted on 13th June 2009.

eventually moved into administration since they were short of qualified people. Hussnain came to IIS just because he wanted to come to Islamabad and get away from the bustling life of metropolitan Karachi. He has 3 kids, two of which are studying in the same institute. His third child is just a few months old but Hussnain has already decided that he too will attend IIS.

Future aspirations of current madrassa students: Naseer is going to graduate from IIS with both a Dars-e-Nizami certification and a BA in economics⁵⁷. He also wants to take some political science courses but unfortunately IIS does not offer any. He is interested in Islamic Banking and dreams of helping Pakistan move from an interest based banking system (interest being forbidden in Islam) towards an asset-based system (commonly referred to as Islamic banking). He believes through Islamic Banking he can help overcome the class stratification in Pakistani society. Naseer like many of his class fellows wants to go for an MA in Islamic Banking from the Islamic International University in Islamabad. He believes that regular religious scholars graduating from madaris are unable to communicate with the masses specially the educated segments because of a large intellectual and language gap. He feels he can in a way lessen this communication gap.

Jamil after graduating from IIS plans to go for a MA in electronic media and communications⁵⁸. He is impressed by the powerful communicative power of the media and its potential for educating the masses. Jamil is interested in using media for educating people about Islam and countering any anti-Islam propaganda. His university of interest is the Quaid Azam Open University in Islamabad.

⁵⁷ This paragraph is based on an interview with Naseer, current student at IIS conducted on 14th June 2009.

⁵⁸ This paragraph is based on an interview with Jamil, a current student at IIS conducted on 14th June 2009.

Graduates, existing career trajectories and life paths: IIS aims to prepare its graduates to be educated professionals who are free to fully participate in the national economy while maintaining their commitment towards the Islamic religion (Interview with Syed, 13th June 2009). The institute is set out to prove that religious knowledge and secular education are not incompatible and one can attain both (Interview with Syed, 13th June 2009). Most students opt to go for a Masters degree once they graduate (Interview with Syed, 13th June 2009). Popular subjects for graduate school are Islamic banking and financing, Sharia law and other law degrees (Interview with Syed, 13th June 2009). Many graduates teach in schools and in madaris while some have managed to enter the armed forces (Interview with Syed, 13th June 2009). A handful of graduates have also obtained jobs in Islamic banks and a few work as journalists in local newspapers (Interview with Khalid, 15th June 2009). Typical madaris students are disadvantaged because of their lack of secular knowledge which limits their value and importance in society (Interview with Bashir, 14th June 2009). IIS graduates are engaged in a continuous struggle to reclaim these lost social spaces.

Bashir graduated from IIS in 2008⁵⁹. He currently teaches part-time at IIS and is also pursuing a part-time MA in English from the National University of Modern Languages. At IIS he teaches English, interpretation of Quranic text and basic Islamic jurisprudence. He believes that English is necessary to communicate in modern day Pakistan and thinks it is an essential communication tool. Bashir believes that by studying English he will be able to communicate more effectively with the educated classes of Pakistan and this will make it easier for him to convey the teachings

⁵⁹ This paragraph is based on an interview with Bashir, graduate and current teacher both at IIS conducted on 14th June 2009.

of Islam. Bashir wants to continue onto a doctorate in English. It should be noted that Bashir is the only member of his immediate and extended family to be enrolled in a madrassa.

Junaid graduated from IIS in 2005⁶⁰. His class was the second graduating class of IIS. Currently he is a part-time teacher at the institute where he teaches first year economics and Arabic grammar. He is also studying part-time for an Mphil in Islamic studies and research methods from the Allama Iqbal Open University in Islamabad. Junaid was recently awarded a scholarship to study for a MA in Islamic banking and finance at the Islamic International University. He was inspired by the fall of global capital and the resulting financial crisis to study Islamic finance. Junaid is interested in becoming a professor.

Khalid graduated from IIS in 2005⁶¹. After graduation he did his MA in Islamic studies from Punjab University. Currently he is studying part-time for a bachelor of education also from Punjab University. He is also applying for admission into a Mphil programme in Islamic studies. Khalid teaches Arabic grammar, Hadith and interpretation of Quranic texts at IIS.

Social interactions with individuals outside the madrassa: IIS is a self-contained community in its own right. Each student is allowed to leave campus eight times a month for personal trips⁶². This is due to safety and security reasons. This includes trips to get a haircut, shop etc.

⁶⁰ This paragraph is based on an interview with Junaid, graduate and current teacher both at IIS conducted on 13th June 2009.

⁶¹ This paragraph is based on an interview with Khalid, graduate and current teacher both at IIS conducted on 15th June 2009.

⁶² This paragraph is based on an interview with Hussnain, Vice President of IIS conducted on 13th June 2009.

The institute enjoys cordial relations with surrounding residents. A number of IIS students lead prayers and tarawih (special night prayers in Ramadan) in community mosques⁶³. Some students are also employed by the locals for tutoring their children in a variety of religious as well as secular subjects. Students and teachers also periodically go out in the community to impart basic Islamic education.

Naseer who commutes from his home in Islamabad to IIS has many friends and social contacts outside the madrassa⁶⁴. He is still friends with his classmates from his previous school who are now writing admission tests for major universities across the country. Naseer does not feel left behind when he compares his career path with those of his friends. They interact with him without any prejudice and in fact respect him more for taking on such a selfless path.

Jamil a residential student at IIS says he has limited interaction with people outside the madrassa during the school year⁶⁵. But his friends back home respect him and hold him in high regard because of his chosen educational path. Bashir says his classmates at the National University of Modern Languages treat him very well but there are a few individuals; classmates and teachers who single him out because of his religious affiliations: “If a person is even inclined towards religion, in today’s time if someone is a moulvi then society does not like him anyways- even if he just has a beard” (Interview with Bashir, 14th June 2009).

⁶³ This paragraph is based on an interview with Syed, Principal of IIS conducted on 13th June 2009.

⁶⁴ This paragraph is based on an interview with Naseer, current student at IIS conducted on 14th June 2009.

⁶⁵ This paragraph is based on an interview with Jamil, current student at IIS conducted on 14th June 2009.

Junaid now at the Islamic International University, also feels that some of the professors are a little prejudiced against him⁶⁶. However he feels the majority of students at the university respect him greatly for being a madrassa graduate.

Broader points of analysis

Parents' preferences for enrolling their children in madaris: Due to confidentiality reasons, I was unable to obtain addresses of parents from JOAQ and IIS respectively. However I was able to interview mothers who have one or more of their children attending any madrassa in the Islamabad/Rawalpindi region.

Fatima has her two daughters and one son enrolled in a madrassa⁶⁷. Her fourth child: a son is studying at the Allama Iqbal Open University. Fatima is a widow and her late husband always desired to put their children in a madrassa on account of the family's religious inclinations. Fatima herself never attended school but is satisfied with the quality of education her children are receiving at the chosen madaris. She informed me that she put her three brightest children in the madrassa and all three were excellent students in their schools before leaving. The fourth one she felt was not talented enough to 'survive' the academic workload of the madrassa.

Aisha has put three of her four children in a madrassa⁶⁸. Her daughter is also attending a madrassa. Aisha too feels that her fourth child is not bright enough for the madrassa therefore she

⁶⁶ This paragraph is based on an interview with Junaid, graduate and current teacher both at IIS conducted on 13th June 2009.

⁶⁷ This paragraph is based on an interview with Fatima, mother of madrassa students conducted on 1st August 2009.

⁶⁸ This paragraph is based on an interview with Aisha, mother of madrassa students conducted on 1st August 2009.

kept him enrolled in the local public school. When they were all in public school, she often worried about whether her children would enter bad company, pick up anti-social behaviour and bad habits from their peers. Now that at least three of them are in a madrassa, she feels at ease. Aisha and her husband are practising Muslims, are religiously inclined and this was a major motivation for choosing a madrassa over the public school. They belong to a middle class family and can easily afford to educate their children elsewhere. Aisha recalls that when her daughter was still at the public school, she would wait outside the house everyday at 1pm for her to return. She was always worried whether her daughter was safe and in good company. Aisha hopes that her children will learn the correct morals, appropriate Islamic world view and graduate from the madrassa as community workers who seek to work for humanity. She firmly believes that the morality of the madrassa needs to permeate society; otherwise Pakistan would keep on getting corrupt politicians and leaders. Aisha is satisfied with the economic future provided by the madrassa for her children.

Analysis of Pakistani society by the madaris community: Madaris students typically possess a strong social conscious which exceeds just the realm of religious service to society. Shafiq expressed immense concern for the residents of not only the immediate community but the city. He felt that obscenity is becoming rampant and the younger generations are slowly drifting away from the morals and ethics of Islam. His concerns are largely centred on the public loss of Islamic morals.

Anwar felt that there is a dire need to reform society and he made a link between the country's underdevelopment and rampant poverty with societal apathy and inaction. He felt that by disengaging themselves with religion and the kind of social cohesion and social sensitivity it

provides, people are becoming less motivated to work towards social change. He linked the breakdown of social capital with the nation's disengagement with religion.

Naseer believes that being equipped with both a secular as well as an Islamic education places on him a greater responsibility towards society. He feels that as Pakistan modernizes, cultural and social relationships are radically transforming. And only a thorough understanding of religion will enable Pakistanis to decipher the positives from the negatives of modernity. Jamil believes that Pakistani society has been polarized into two extremes: the religious (madrassa community) and the overly secular. He believes that bridging this gap, removing hate and promoting mutual respect for everyone's beliefs is going to be very challenging. Hussnain stated that there is a decrease in tolerance reflected in every walk of life and that as a religious worker he cannot ignore societal problems like stagnant wages and inflation.

How madaris differ from secular schools/universities: Besides obvious differences in the curriculum, these two institution types have certain key differences as perceived by the madrassa community.

There are two elements of a madrassa education: 'teleem' and 'tarbiyat'. Taleem refers to the general instruction and knowledge imparted via academic texts, class room lectures and assignments common to both traditional schools as well as madaris. However tarbiyat refers to the 'soft' processes of Islamic socialization, mannerism, morality, interpersonal values and respect for humanity which is unique to the madrassa (Interviews with Fatima, 1st August 2009; Jabbar, 15th August 2009; Syed, 13th June 2009).

There is also a shared consensus that secular schools and universities ultimately train their students to secure prestigious jobs and earn higher wages (Interviews with Hussnain, 13th June

2009; Syed, 13th June 2009). Contribution to society and humanity are not featured prominently in a secular education (Interviews with Hussnain, 13th June 2009; Jabbar, 15th August 2009). However madaris inculcate in their students the passion for initiating change, defending the poor and develop a general humanitarian ethic (Interview with Haider, 20th July 2009). Students internalize these as part of their religious obligations. Hussnain also pointed out: “The person who loves his country the most is usually the one who is religious”.

Perceived differences between previous institution of learning and current madrassa: All students interviewed at both IIS and JOAQ unanimously agreed that the level of difficulty at their current madrassa was much higher than their previous schools.

Before joining IIS, Naseer was studying in a government school in Islamabad⁶⁹. He notes that the atmosphere of both institutions is very different. In his previous school, students would get off at 2pm and the rest of the day was to the discretion of the student. At IIS, he says the entire day is regimented and the environment is highly conducive for learning. Naseer feels that the quality of education is also superior at IIS.

Jamil informed me that prior to IIS, he studied in a coeducational school and that made him feel a little uncomfortable at times (Interview with Jamil, 14th June 2009). Both Naseer and Jamil unanimously agreed that teachers at IIS are far more accessible than in their previous institutions (Interviews with Naseer, 14th June 2009; Jamil, 14th June 2009). The entire day is supervised by teachers and they can be approached at any time (Interview with Naseer and Jamil): “[During

⁶⁹ This paragraph is based on an interview with Naseer, current student at IIS conducted on 14th June 2009.

exam times], our teachers would be helping us in our studies till 2am at night” (Interview with Jamil, 14th June 2009).

Naseer also pointed out that in his previous school, everyone took private tuitions in the evening (Interview Naseer, 14th June 2009). He says that one of the most important things he has learned is time management and how much can be achieved in a single day.

IIS is ultimately a religious institution; the atmosphere is more conducive to practicing Islam and following Islamic etiquettes (Interview with Naseer, 14th June 2009; Jamil, 14th June 2009).

Bashir says that the unique thing about IIS is the teachers and their dedication to the students. There is no communication gap between teachers and students and while other institutions are just concerned about passing exams IIS tries to make each day a valuable learning experience.

Jamshed graduated from a small madrassa in a remote town in the NWFP region of Pakistan before he began teaching at JOAQ⁷⁰. He states that his madrassa was very simple; there was hardly any built infrastructure, no standardized curriculum, no division into academic years and students studied at their own pace. Most students did not finish in eight years. He himself took 15 years to finish the Dars-e-Nizami. He felt that religious education was stronger there as compared to JOAQ because students spent way more time per subject. JOAQ, he feels is more streamlined and offers the attraction of free secular education at least till grade 8.

Comparative analysis and significant findings

Some important findings and trends are identified as follows:

⁷⁰ This entire paragraph is based on an interview with Jamshed, current teacher at Jamae Omer Anwarul Quran conducted on 27th July 2009.

Madaris are not isolated from larger macro-economic and political changes: Both madaris are intrinsically linked to developments in the larger economy and society. Due to the financial crisis donations have reduced considerably over the last few months. People's businesses and jobs are being effected which affects their ability to donate. Haider pointed out in an interview that the donor who used to pay for teaches salaries, has excused himself from the commitment ever since his business collapsed (20th July 2009). Recently both IIS and JOAQ have been unable to pay their teachers for the past two or three months (Interviews with Haider, 20th July 2009; Khalid, 15th June 2009). Also as economic conditions worsen, parents are more likely to put their children to work then to enrol them in a madrassa (Interview with Hussnain, 13th June 2009).

Since both madaris are community financed, the current criticism and negative media coverage madaris have been receiving in general is discouraging donors from donating to these institutions (Interviews with Hussnain, 13th June 2009, Haider, 20th July 2009). Military operations in Pakistan and the general affiliation of the Taliban with the madaris are also severely restricting donations. Madaris require stable economic and political conditions to thrive and operate effectively.

Madaris process diversity and unite different ethnicities: Despite the population of Pakistan being 97% Muslim, there is incredible cultural, linguistic, ethnic and even religious (in terms of varying interpretations of Islam) diversity in the country and it is impossible to talk about a single Pakistani Islamic culture (Zia, 2003, p. 165). But the madaris have the ability to process this diversity and attract students from various ethnicities, mother tongues and geographies. In a madrassa everyone is equal and everyone is a Muslim. Even the identity of being a Pakistani is subservient to the umbrella identity of being Muslim. Since regionalism and nationalism are such

minimal values in the madrassa it works really well in erasing ethnic, regional and linguistic differences.

Parental motivations for choosing madrassa over any other form of schooling: It is clear that a variety of reasoning operates at this level. Two important factors are the quality of education in affordable alternatives and the general religious inclination of the household. Households who are religiously motivated are more inclined to enrol their children in a madrassa regardless of their financial standing. Parents also feel that the quality of education in affordable public schools and free government schools is substandard and feel that the madaris can educate their children better.

Parents also try to enrol their brightest and most intelligent children in a madrassa as opposed to the stereotype that only those children are enrolled who cannot survive regular schooling. The four parents interviewed had more than one child studying in a madrassa. However majority of the madrassa students, teachers and graduates interviewed were the only ones from their immediate and extended family to have enrolled in a madrassa. This indicates that there is no clear pattern for school choice in a household. Some parents chose to enrol their children in a variety of institutions and some prefer uniformity over choice.

Secular education provision and perceived importance: Teachers at IIS generally have a better grounding in secular subjects like economics and math as compared to JOAQ. However in both institutions it is usually madaris graduates who teach both streams of subjects. The IIS curriculum for secular education is much more expansive and goes all the way till B.A. JOAQ only offers preparatory classes for students who do not already possess the level of literacy (equivalent to grade 8) which is required to sit for madrassa board exams. Students who want to

pass their F.A and B.A do so privately and even though they often pass do not gain an equivalent quality of education.

IIS is trying to get registered as a degree awarding institution and JOAQ is trying to upgrade its secular schooling to Matriculation (grade 10). Both madaris are at different stages of the same continuum: attempting to expand the mandate of a classical madrassa by trying to integrate secular education into their curriculums. Administrators of both madaris feel that the dichotomy between secular and religious education needs to be broken down and that it is no longer viable to offer only either of the two curriculums. Both madaris are also aware that in order to give their graduates a better fighting chance in the current Pakistani economy, secular education is absolutely necessary.

Student intake: It is evident that IIS enrolls a better mix of students from various socio-economic classes. This is evident from the fact that some IIS students can afford to pay a Rs. 2000 monthly fee. The student body from JOAQ is relatively homogenous with respect to socio-economic status.

Both institutions have set clear guidelines and minimum requirements for admission. IIS adheres to these rules more consistently and strictly as compared to JOAQ. JOAQ is more flexible in terms of accepting students which are under qualified and often makes exceptions and employs a case-by-case approach. This makes JOAQ more accessible than IIS but at the same time results in an overall decline in student quality and complicates matters for instructors. JOAQ is more likely to be affected by the poor schooling received by incoming students unlike IIS which holds a formal entry test that filters out those who do not meet minimum literacy levels.

Graduates and employment futures: A cursory examination of the skill sets of graduates of each madaris reveals that students from IIS receive a better quality of secular education and possess more ‘soft’ skills than JOAQ. Students from IIS are more ambitious and willing to take on broader social roles as compared to those at JOAQ. Graduates and students of both institutions have internalized their adherence to Islam and are willing to let that shape and inform their career choices. Students from both institutions are committed to contributing to the cause of Islam and maintaining an Islamic social system. IIS students are however more creative in this respect and are interested in taking up a wider variety of social roles and causes. Students from both institutions are highly conscious of the social ills around them and are motivated to give back to their communities. IIS students and graduates are more hopeful about their futures, both in terms of financial stability and ambition. Their counterparts from JOAQ have identified the roadblocks ahead resulting from their inadequate secular education and feel in equipped to gain formal employment outside the madrassa. IIS also provides better transferability to a wider set of post-secondary institutions for its graduates and a more diverse list of institutions and career choices were reported during the interview process as compared to their peers at JOAQ.

Students from both madaris often spoke about the importance of learning English and believe that without the language they cannot gain meaningful employment (outside the madrassa). Students also believe that English is currently the preferred language of communication in Pakistan. This is interesting to note since the language of instruction in both madaris is Urdu. Not being fluent in English was cited as a common social impediment.

Institutional problems: Both institutions have generally the same set of core problems; the lack of a reliable financial system and a shortage of qualified teachers⁷¹. IIS has effectively managed to retain many of its graduates as teachers while teachers at JOAQ are often graduates from other madaris. This is advantageous for IIS as its own graduates are more aware of the institution's core vision but at the same time may prevent the institution from being critically assessed by an 'outsider'.

Format of education: IIS is a modern institution which is modelled along the lines of a regular school or university. Students are expected to wear uniforms, there is regular class attendance and computerized report cards are issued to parents. The campus is purpose built and there are multiple class rooms on the premises. JOAQ operates out of a single study hall with little or no internal systems. This is widely reflected in the kind of resources both institutions have. JOAQ more closely resembles the plethora of classical madaris spread across the country.

IIS students and graduates have a stronger sense of affiliation with their institution as compared to JOAQ. This is partly because of the institution's clearly articulated mission statement which seems to bind the student body together. JOAQ lacks an official mission statement but students and administrators seem to share a common understanding of what they are all set to achieve.

Marketing for recruitment: Madrassas replicate, permeate and market themselves through word of mouth. Often there are no formal mechanisms through which they are advertised with the exception of some religious newspapers. Their main mode of communication with society is through word of mouth and the grapevine of the madrasa community. Students and graduates

⁷¹ Khalid stated that he teaches 40 one hour periods each week at IIS ! (Interview with Khalid, 15th June 2009).

who return to their communities are essentially the best recruiters and ambassadors of the madrassa. This way the madrassa replicates itself in society. This is more applicable to JOAQ. IIS now has a website set up and publishes campus prospectuses.

The next chapter uses the case studies presented here to glean out the extra-religious, community development functions of madaris in Pakistan.

CHAPTER FIVE: MADARIS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - THE COMPLEX MULTIPLIER EFFECTS OF MADARIS IN PAKISTANI SOCIETY

Introduction

“How many mosques . . . [are] there in the country to accommodate all these millions of students as Imams?” – Pervaiz Musharraf (former President of Pakistan)

The madrassa as an important social institution is challenged internationally on grounds of terrorism and security. But there is also a growing internal debate within Pakistan about the viability of such institutions and their usefulness for the needs of the country. The above quote from former President Musharraf succinctly states the perceived problem of limited employability of madaris graduates. Madaris are increasingly being seen as archaic arrangements which teach an outdated syllabus inappropriate for modern times. Graduates are understood as being undereducated, pseudo-intellectuals with a narrow education, limited marketable skills and societal roles. These roles are popularly perceived to be only limited to religious functions such as those in the mosque (Imam⁷², Muezzin⁷³, Khadim⁷⁴), as ‘religious figures’ who mediate certain life events⁷⁵ and as teachers in other madaris. But the poor employment prospects of madaris graduates have less to do with the nature of their education, but more with the inability of the national state in Pakistan to create a healthy industrial base and lead the economy and

⁷² Person who leads the congregation prayers in the mosque.

⁷³ Person who sounds the Azan or call for prayer in the mosque.

⁷⁴ A secretary to the Imam who helps in the day to day running of the mosque including maintenance.

⁷⁵ Such as offering prayers on someone’s death, marriage, birth etc. A ‘religious’ figure often a graduate from a madrassa is an important cultural component of almost every life event. It is culturally expected in Pakistan for such an individual to be present on important events.

society into diversifying employment sources for its new graduates, the unemployed and the underemployed.

This unease and debate over the marketability and employability of madaris graduates raise interesting questions about what forms of knowledge are legitimized as being ‘useful’ and ‘appropriate’ for national needs and what kinds are dismissed. It is also important to identify who is involved in this legitimization process. In this chapter, I examine the complex multiplier effects madaris have within Pakistani society as gleaned from the two case studies presented in the preceding chapter. Later in the chapter, I use the 2005 Pakistani earthquake as an example to illustrate some of these important multiplier effects.

Elitist (male) community member perceptions and interactions with the madrassa

Due to the sensitive and contested nature of the issue of ‘madrassa reform’, it was impossible to interview certain key officials who are fronting the Pakistani state’s offensive against the madrassa. However I found it to be a meaningful exercise to move down a few notches and try to investigate what the madrassa represents to a typical elite male resident of Islamabad to help provide some context to the discussion.

Khan has been a resident of Islamabad, Pakistan for the last 18 years⁷⁶. He lives in the affluent sector of F-10 which houses at least five madaris of various sizes and levels of organization. The JOAQ is situated just a few blocks from his house. Khan attended an elite private British school from where he obtained his O’Level and A’Level certifications and then went to a prominent university in Canada for his engineering degree. Currently he works for a European oil company in the city.

⁷⁶ The following three paragraphs (including this one) are based on an interview with Khan, a western educated elite resident of Islamabad conducted on 2nd August 2009.

Khan is a bit sceptical of the purposes of madaris and is unaware of their ideological commitments and the fact that they are formal learning institutions with a preset curriculum and regular examinations. His interactions with the madrassa are reduced to just three occasions:

- 1) When he offers his Friday prayers in the mosque, he comes across a group of children/young adults who he thinks belong to the affiliated madrassa.
- 2) Every alternative month, Khan donates meat⁷⁷ (as charity) to the madrassa nearest to his residence.
- 3) Sometimes in the public parks and markets he notices groups of young men dressed in traditional shalwar kameez and supporting beards. He believes such youngsters belong to the local madrassa.

Khan has never held a meaningful dialogue with anyone from any madrassa during his 19 years of living in Islamabad besides cordial exchanges of ‘Asslam Alikum’ when he drops off his donations to the madrassa premises.

Javed is another elitist resident of Islamabad who shares a background similar to that of the previous respondent⁷⁸. He commented: “All I remember is that my maid’s children went to a madrassa. I remember that they used to wear white skull caps” (Interview with Javed, 15th August 2009). Javed also donates to his local madrassa especially on the two Eid⁷⁹ celebrations

⁷⁷ Sacrificing an animal and then donating the meat to a deserving organization or household is a common cultural/religious practice in Pakistan.

⁷⁸ The following two paragraphs (including this one) are based on an interview with Javed, a western educated elite resident of Islamabad conducted on 2nd August 2009.

⁷⁹ Annual religious festivals.

every year and occasionally pays a portion of his Zakat⁸⁰ to them: “In my opinion, madaris and their students are the most worthy of my Zakat” (Interview with Javed, 15th August 2009).

He also vaguely remembers that when he was a child, a ‘moulvi sahib’⁸¹ used to come to his house from the nearest mosque to teach him how to read the Quran in Arabic and memorize a few basic Quranic passages and prayers. He thought that that the moulvi sahib told him he also teaches at a madrassa.

It is not uncommon for a person to live in Islamabad and never have formally interacted with anyone from the madrassa which is very interesting since almost every sector in Islamabad houses at least one large residential madrassa. However this is highly contingent on two important factors: one’s relative position on the socio-economic class continuum and how religiously inclined that individual is (either personally or through extension of his household, friends, social circle).

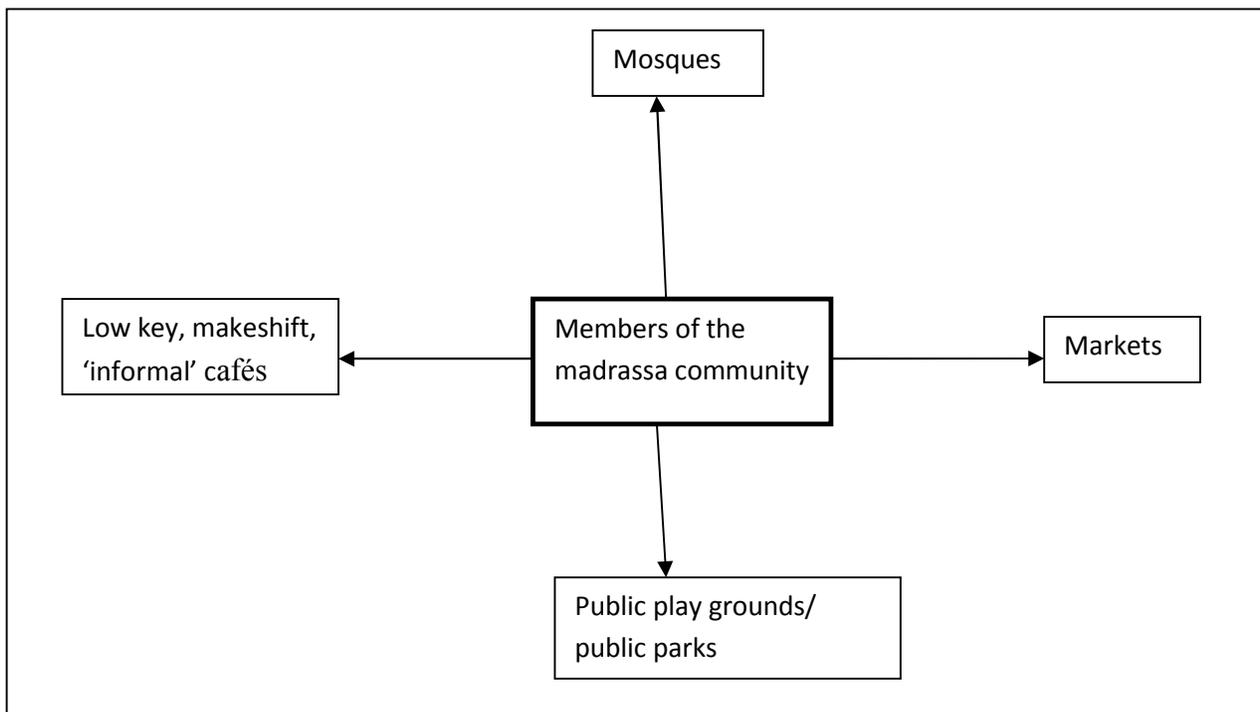
⁸⁰ Mandatory charitable payments made by affording Muslims at preset rates. They can be paid to any deserving community member or institution not necessarily a madrassa.

⁸¹ A ‘moulvi sahib’ is the common way of referring to a madrassa graduate (usually but not exclusively) who teaches young children how to recite the Quran and other important religious matters such as prayers. Interestingly in at least Islamabad, religious knowledge and teaching is not passed to successive generations from one’s elders but through an externally hired ‘moulvi sahib’. The ‘moulvi sahib’ is remunerated for his services, often minimally. The standard wage rates for a ‘moulve sahib’ in the affluent residents of Islamabad is currently (January 2010) around Rs. 1000 a month. The ‘moulvi sahib’ can also be a senior student at the madrassa. Parents view them as religious experts.

Individuals filling the roles of a ‘moulvi sahib’ do so with the intention of pro-bono community service (and internalize it as a religious duty). Parents remunerate them with an attitude of charity and generosity even though they are essentially receiving a service. Due to the religious nature of this service, the ‘moulvi sahib’ seldom negotiates the wage rates and thus there is a power imbalance between the parent and the service provider. There is no written contract, no minimum wage rates and the ‘moulvi sahib’ is at the whims of the ‘employer’.

Those living in affluent neighbourhoods of Islamabad with little or minimal religious interest normally never share any meaningful interaction with the madrassa or its students. The following diagram shows the highly minimized geographical spaces which madaris students are perceived to physically occupy by such residents.

Figure 5.1: The ‘perceived’ shared physical spaces between madrassa students and high income residents of Islamabad



(Source: Interviews with Khan, 2nd August 2009; Javed, 2nd August 2009)

As mentioned before, this will shift according to the observer’s affiliation with religion, socio-economic status and even gender. Similarly, the public face of the madrassa or the public image it enjoys within the same group of residents is also uni-dimensional, pre-defined and highly ordered. Madaris are essentially reduced and minimized to the following:

1) Sites of receiving charity: There is a general consensus that madaris are under resourced, underfunded and receive only poor students. They are seen as the “poor man’s school” (Interview

with Khan, 2nd August 2009). Thus they are deserving candidates for receiving charity (Interview with Javed, 2nd August 2009).

2) Sites of producing religious personnel: It is contested whether madaris produce religious ‘scholars’ or just religious minded people with above average knowledge of religion (Interview with Khan, 2nd August 2009). The validity of madrassa graduates as scholars and intellectuals is contested amongst the socio-economic group in question.

While madaris are ‘physically’ visible they are simultaneously ‘socially’ invisible. Social roles for the madaris have been preset and predefined. It is expected that madaris graduates can only occupy the following relatively unimportant societal roles (Interviews with Khan, 2nd August 2009; Javed, 2nd August 2009):

1) Conduct ‘Quran Khwanis’: Madrassa students are sometimes invited to a household where they read the Quran and pray for that members of the household. A ‘‘Quran Khwani’ is held to mark special life events such as for example marking someone’s death, buying a new house, starting a new business, having a child etc. The students are in turn given food and clothing; rarely a cash gift is given.

2) Conduct funeral prayers: Before a deceased Muslim is buried, a special prayer service is offered for him/her. Any one is allowed to lead it but usually it is a madrassa graduate.

3) Conduct ‘nikkah’/ marriage ceremonies: A religious figure, such as a madrassa graduate is expected to be present on marriage events and make a prayer/ give a short talk on the importance of marriage etc.

4) ‘Tabligh’: Madaris graduates and students are expected to go in communities and encourage members to be pious and religious.

5) Teach how to recite the Quran, basic prayers and important religious tenants: For some children this is the only opportunity for Islamic education they might have in their lifetime. So a madrassa graduate is an important shaper of their religious sensibilities and awareness.

6) Imams: Madaris graduates are expected to be become Imams and lead congregation prayers, sound the Azan (public call for prayer) and give public sermons.

It should be noted that all these functions and services are strictly ‘religious’ in nature. There is ambiguity surrounding the importance of these roles. They are considered crucial because not many residents can perform them themselves and believe someone from the mosque or the madrassa should be performing them. This is also culturally specific to Pakistan as in many Muslim communities, these roles are performed by community members themselves and they do not require a ‘professional’ to conduct them. At the same time they are also considered to be ‘flaky roles’ which are not very intellectually demanding (Interview with Khan, 2nd August 2009). Since the madrassa graduate performing these roles does so more with an intention of performing a religious service (and community work), there is never a preset contract of engagement and is remunerated at the convenience of the individual hiring him. There is an uneasy relationship between the provider of these services and the user; there are no clear rules of engagement and terms of remuneration. In this uneasy power relationship, the ‘service provider’ is always at the lower end.

My key informants in this category shared the view that madaris teach a non-sequential, random array of religious subjects at the expense of more useful academic subjects (Interviews with Khan, 2nd August 2009; Javed, 2nd August 2009). As Javed notes: “A madrassa has never produced a notable bureaucrat, scientist.”

The key source of information on the madaris was identified to be the media (both international and national)⁸². Both my interviewees had internalized the sceptical ambiguity characteristic of the media coverage around the madaris system in Pakistan. Madaris are viewed as archaic, medieval, substandard and mysterious locations of religious learning and socialization. Another important information source was word of mouth; mostly from the domestic workers operating in their households. But it was felt that it is usually the female head of household who engages in chit-chat with the domestic help and not the males. So they were unable to recall any specific bits of information they might have accessed through this channel of information.

Khan recalls: “Madaris were never talked about. We never heard about them, they were just one of those unimportant things in Islamabad.” Both respondents felt that the madaris have begun to feature in the media and occasionally in intellectual discourse only after 9/11 and 2007’s violent Lal-Masjid⁸³ incident. Their perception of the madaris system was heavily influenced by themes of intolerance, violence and terrorism. There is also a distinct impression that supply of madaris graduates exceeds demand: “There are too many students in madaris these days, more than needed” (Interview with Javed).

It is clear that social class and individual religious affiliation play a crucial role in relegating madrassa to certain social spaces in the community. My personal observations of a low income neighbourhood revealed higher levels of community interaction with the madrassa. The madrassa

⁸² The following three paragraphs (including this one) are based on separate interviews with Khan and Javed, both western educated elite residents of Islamabad conducted on 2nd August 2009.

⁸³ Lal-Masjid or ‘Red Mosque’ was a popular mosque/madrassa complex located in the sector G-6 in Islamabad. It housed a separate male and female madrassa. However the facility became the site of a highly politicized and controversial armed conflict against the Pakistani military.

appeared to enjoy a mutually beneficial, synergistic relationship with the surrounding residents. However I was unable to study the community any further due to lack of time.

Spatial mapping of JOAQ and IIS

I have mapped some of my interviewees from both JOAQ and IIS on two different spatial diagrams to reflect their geographical origins (home towns/villages/cities). Most respondents reported home to be either a village or a small town; hence data is reported at the district level to facilitate comparison. The first diagram provides a snapshot of the student and staff body of JOAQ with respect to their places of origin and the second diagram does the same for IIS. District level data on literacy levels, total population and high schools is also listed (Government of NWFP, 2008; Government of Punjab, 2010; Federal Bureau of Statistics, 2005; Hussain & Qasim, 2005; Academy of Education Planning and Management, 2008). High school level data is provided because the decision to switch to a madaris is usually made at grade 8, just before the start of high school. High school refers to grades 9-10 and higher secondary schools refer to grades 11-12. The scarcity of high schools in a given region is an important impetus for students to relocate to the city to either enrol in a secular institution or a religious madrasa such as JOAQ and IIS.

Figure 5.2: Spatial distribution of madrassa community of JOAQ

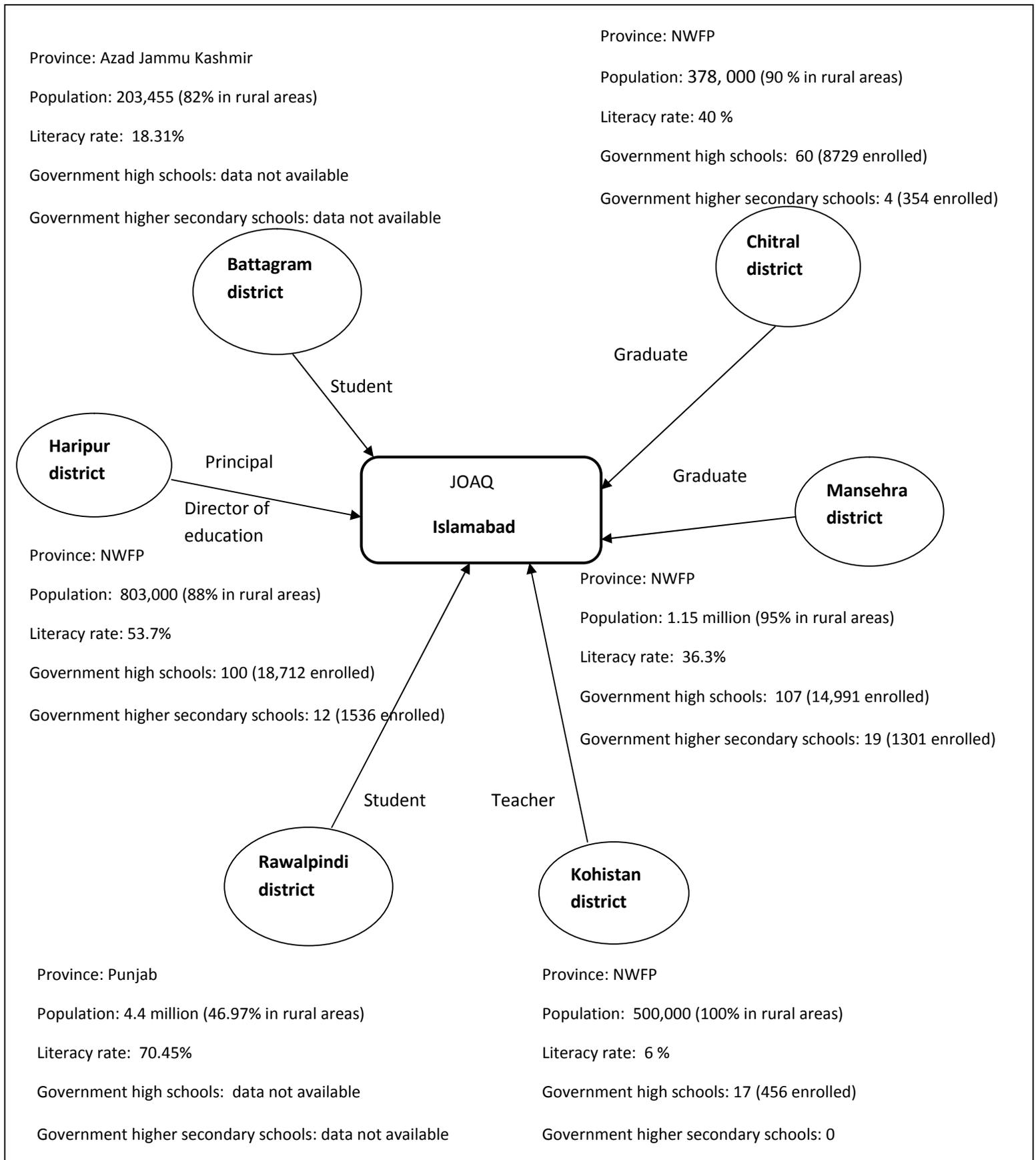
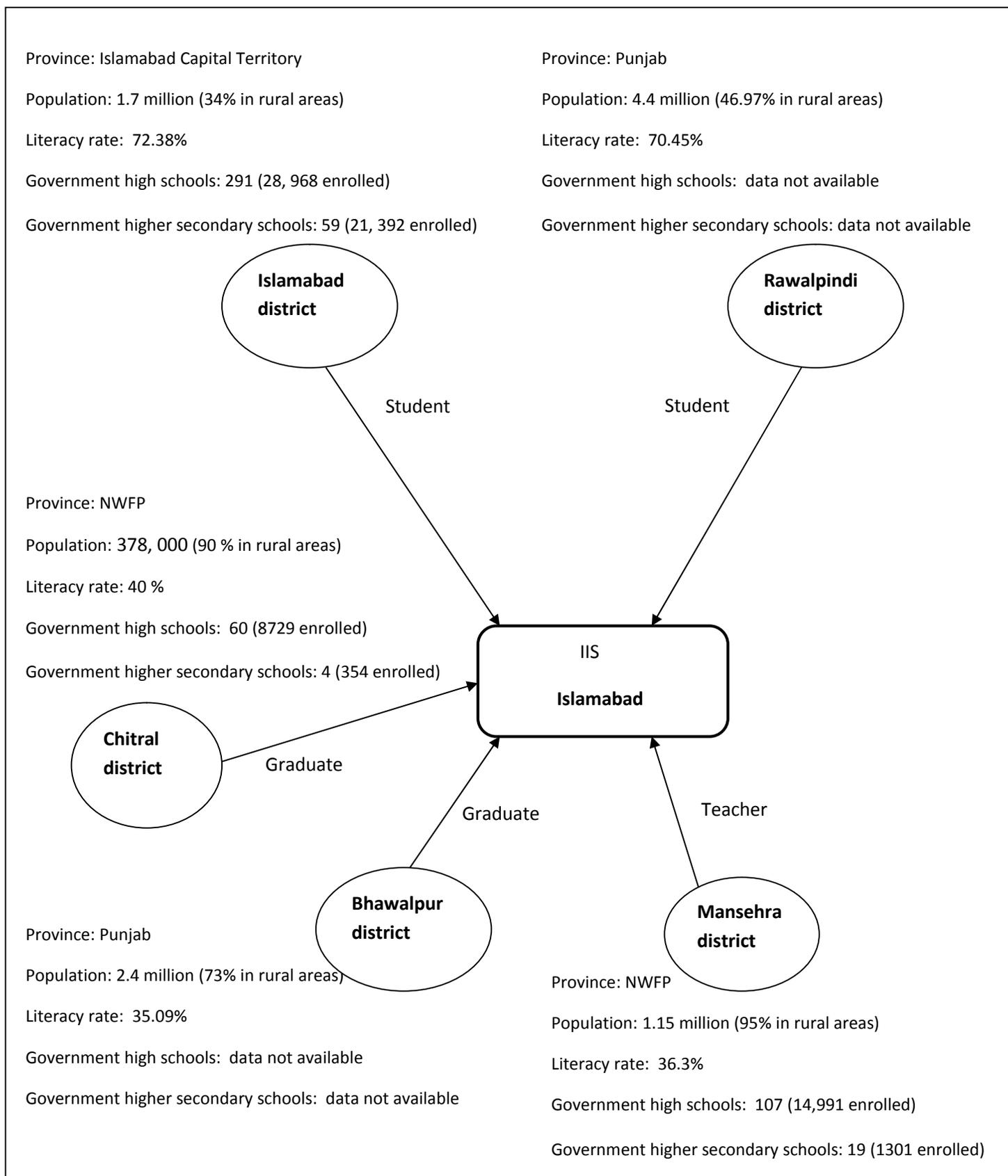


Figure 5.3: Spatial distribution of madrassa community of IIS



Madaris as drivers of urbanization

Even though both JOAQ and IIS are situated in Islamabad, they attract majority of their students from communities outside of Islamabad. JOAQ currently does not enrol a single Dars-e-Nizami student who is a resident of Islamabad (Interview with Haider, 20th July 2009). IIS manages to enrol a small percentage of its students from Islamabad, majority belong to distant communities outside the city (Interview with Hussnain, 13th June 2009). Madaris like JOAQ and IIS seem to be educating students from communities external to the ones they are situated in.

The biggest attraction for any madrassa to locate to Islamabad is accessibility of funds. Small rural towns and villages cannot afford to run a madrassa. By situating in major cities like Islamabad, at least some form of funding is guaranteed as madaris become more visible to high income groups. Thus the dynamics are such that urban communities subsidise education for rural students and low income city residents. This system is not mediated by a state governed tax system; but through charity and alms giving grounded in religious motivations of generosity and compassion. City madaris also attract better teachers and more motivated students.

Both JOAQ and IIS offer their students regional mobility. The Dars-e-Nizami degree is widely accepted throughout the country, at least within the madrassa community. Graduates are free to seek employment anywhere in the country and the madaris provide a quick exit route for students from their homes in rural Pakistan.

It can be argued that graduates from madaris should be encouraged to return to their villages/towns of origin and contribute to the social development of those populations. However it can be equally argued that the thousands of rural migrants and urban poor/illiterate in the cities also require similar outreach.

According to the latest census figures, 3.06% and 21.8% of the total migrant population of Islamabad comprise of students and employment seekers respectively (Pakistan Census Organization, 1998). In 2006-2007, Islamabad alone has at least 62 madaris with a total enrolment of 10, 871 students and 616 teachers (Academy of Education Planning and Management, 2008, p. 49). Madaris are and will continue to be drivers of urbanization; attracting populations to the urban core by offering them educational opportunities, employment and regional mobility.

The 2005 Pakistan earthquake

An earthquake measuring 7.6 on the Richter scale and depth 10km struck the northern areas of Pakistan on 8 October 2005 at approximately 8:45am local time (GDACS, 2005). The regions Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) and North West Frontier Province (NWFP) were severely affected (United Nations Systems, 2005, p. ix). The victims were mainly from already vulnerable groups living in comparatively inaccessible mountain areas with lower levels of income and service provision as compared to the national average (ERRA, 2006b, p. 9). The following table selectively lists some of the broad impacts of the earthquake to give an indication of the scale of the devastation.

Table 5.1: Some broad impacts of the 2005 Pakistan earthquake

Impact	Scale of Impact
Area affected	25 tehsils, 4000 villages, 30,000 sq km
People affected	3.2-3.5 million
School children affected	955, 000
Women affected (aged 15-49)	800,000
Casualties	73,000
School children killed (ages 4 to 16)	18,000
Houses destroyed	600,000
Houses damaged	196, 574
Roads damaged	6440 km
Individuals displaced, requiring shelter	3.5 million
Children requiring immediate access to primary education (age 5 to 9)	450, 000
Families losing primary earner	42, 600
Individuals affected by loss of income	1.6 million

Sources: (United Nations System, 2005, p. 3, 18, 22, 32, 39; ERRA, 2006, p. iii, p. 52; EM-DAT, 2005)

While the impacts of the earthquake are multiple and interlinked, I will focus my discussion on two core areas: destruction of educational systems and the creation of orphans, and how these affected the role of madaris in the relief and recovery of their communities. These two impacts severely undermine the capacity of affected communities to look after their school aged members and will provide the context for madaris stepping up to fill this need in the absence of any other viable alternatives.

i) Destruction of educational systems: According to surveys conducted by the Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) at least 67% of total educational

institutions in the 9 districts of AJK and NWFP were either partially or fully damaged (ERRA, 2006a, p. 6). This meant that 7,669 of the total 11,456 educational buildings were completely or seriously destroyed (ERRA, p. 6). Primary, middle and higher secondary schools accounted for 78% of the damaged institutions in both AJK and NWFP (ERRA, p. 6). Besides built infrastructure, the earthquake also destroyed furniture, equipment, teaching materials and education administration buildings (ERRA, p. 7). At least 18,000 students and 853 teachers were reported dead further exacerbating the ongoing teacher shortage (ERRA, p. 7). A substantial number of teachers suffered trauma and personal loss and also pulled out of the workforce.

The reconstruction work has been slow in the education sector. As of February 2010 only 19.01% of the damaged/destroyed schools have been rebuilt in the affected communities (ERRA, 2010).

ii) Orphans and vulnerable children: The earthquake created and compounded vulnerabilities. One of the most vulnerable groups identified by international aid agencies are orphaned children. Generally orphans are defined as children up to the age of 18 whose both parents are dead (ERRA, 2006b, p. 14). However children with a single parent are also considered highly vulnerable due to the traditional role of women as care givers and men as bread earners. These roles are challenged in the event of the death of a spouse and may lead to the neglect of the child. Also relevant in this category are children with a disabled caregiver who will be unable to tend to the child (ERRA, p. 14).

According to field surveys, the earthquake caused 1,700 children to lose both parents, 18,800 children lost their fathers and 22,000 children lost their mothers (ERRA, p. 31). The following table breaks this down by province and gender:

Table 5.2: Table showing the total number of orphans and vulnerable children with a single parents created by the 2005 earthquake

	Total	Total AJK	Girls	Boys	Total NWFP	Girls	Boys
Lost both parents	1,700	618	326	292	1,082	546	536
Lost father	17, 802	8,901	4,465	4,436	8,900	4,536	4,364
Lost mother	21, 441	9,883	5,045	4,838	11,558	6,019	5,539
Total	40, 943	19,402	9,836	9,566	21,541	11,101	10,440

Source: (ERRA, 2006b, p. 31).

Adoption is not common in Pakistan and a monitored system does not exist. Usually extended family networks are mobilised in the wake of such an event, but the sheer magnitude of the earthquake severely immobilised such networks due to resource constraints and loss of livelihoods. Relief agencies scrambled to relocate such children either to extended family networks, or to institutions like the SOS village. A complete ban on adoption was placed in order to prevent any abuse, exploitation and trafficking of children from the affected areas. However enforcement has been an issue and many children have either disappeared or were illegally adopted.

On February 2010, out of all the projects planned for the social protection strategy (which includes protection of vulnerable children) only 12.50% have been completed (ERRA, 2010b).

The role of madaris in earthquake relief and recovery

The madaris played a unique role in the after math of the earthquake. While the religious organizations and affiliated political parties actively went into affected areas to organize relief activities, the madaris formed a passive safety network. The madaris supplemented the ailing social welfare infrastructure of the country and acted as temporary to medium term shelters for vulnerable children until their communities became ready to take them back. The madaris also provided an opportunity for such vulnerable children to continue their education in a non

threatening environment. Some children chose to stay back in madaris and have continued on with their Dars-e-Nizami certifications.

Madaris through their communication grapevine advertised that they were willing to enrol affected children into their respective institutions⁸⁴. Since typically a madrassa does not charge for tuition, room or board they were ideal choices for desperate families and relatives. Some affected children already had their siblings, relatives or friends studying in a particular madrassa so their relatives sent them to the same madrassa to facilitate integration. Current madaris students volunteering at various relief camps also recommended their respective madrassa as a possible solution to the dilemma (Interview with Qadir, 15th July 2009). Often relief camps managed by faith based organizations and Muslim NGO's referred desperate families and relatives to consider enrolling the said child into a reputed madrassa and some even volunteered to take them to the city themselves. Even though there was a complete ban on adoption, many orphaned children were adopted albeit unofficially by affording relatives or even unrelated families. Often these children were forced to drop out of school and made to enter the labour force. Many such children eventually managed to run away from their adopted homes or were taken back by concerned relatives and enrolled in a madrassa as a last resort.

The earthquake struck during the month of Ramadan in which madaris are typically closed for about forty days till after Eid celebrations. Some madaris opened up their campuses as a gesture of good will and converted them into temporary shelters for displaced peoples (Interview with Jabbar, 15th August 2009). They acted as temporary shelters until relief agencies managed to shift the displaced to a more suitable facility such as purpose built relief camps (Interview with

⁸⁴ This paragraph is based on an interview with Waseem; a teacher at a madrassa other than JOAQ and IIS and also a relief camp volunteer conducted on 20th August 2009.

Jabbar, 15th August 2009). They also helped in collecting donations from communities which they then forwarded to relevant relief organizations.

Like many madaris, JOAQ too received numerous requests to enrol additional students from affected communities (Interview with Qadir, 15th July 2009). The madrassa accepted approximately 30 children and a majority of them have returned home to their respective communities (Interview with Haider, 20th July 2009). However the process is ongoing and even four years after the catastrophe, orphaned children are being brought to the madrassa: “We have a student here who has brought an earthquake survivor kid whose entire family has died. He brought him from his village a few months ago and he is taking care of that child in this very madrassa” (Interview with Qadir, 15th July 2009).

Due to its outstanding reputation, IIS received an overwhelming number of requests to enrol additional students from the earthquake affected communities (Interview with Khalid, 15th June 2009). However only two students were admitted due to the institute’s strict admission criterion (Interview with Khalid, 15th June 2009). While JOAQ’s flexibility in admissions made the institution more accessible for deserving yet unqualified students, IIS continued to restrict admissions. Students were however recommended to other madaris in the city (Interview with Khalid, 15th June 2009). One of the main reasons for IIS to decline such students was that the institute did not have the capacity or funds to support them (Interview with Hussnain, 13th June 2009). IIS requested the non-profits and charities referring students to the institution to construct living quarters for these additional students and pay their expenses for a year; however their proposal was rejected (Interview with Hussnain, 13th June 2009).

I randomly surveyed ten madaris in the Islamabad region and asked their administrators two questions: i) Did you receive admission requests from earthquake affected communities? ii) Did you admit students from such communities? Out of the ten madaris randomly chosen 7 responded as having accepted students from earthquake affected communities on the basis of need. This is tabulated as follows:

Table 5.3: Survey of ten madaris in the Islamabad region

Name of madrassa	Curriculum offered	Received applicants from earthquake affected areas	Admitted students from earthquake affected areas
Jamae Abu Ayub Ansari	Hifz	X	X
Jamae Masjid Al-Aba	Dars-e-Nizami, Hifz	√	√
Madrassa Al-Huda	Dars-e-Nizami, Hifz	√	√
Idara Maruf Islamiya Asariya	First four levels of Dars-e-Nizami	√	√
Madrassa Jamae Ashrafya	Dars-e-Nizami, Hifz	√	√
Madrassa Anwarul Al-Quran (House for orphans)	Hifz	√	√
Jamae- Faridya	Dars-e-Nizami	√	√
Jamae Masjid Riyaz Al-Jannah	Hifz	X	X
Jamae Madrassa Madina	Hifz	X	X
Madrassa Usmania	Hifz	√	√

One of these madaris caught my attention: Madrassa Anwarul Al-Quran, which had a special sign painted on a black board outside their premises. The sign read: “House of orphans and destitute children.”

The madaris benefitted from their favourable relationship with religious organizations and Muslim NGO’s who referred any suitable and desperate children/families to the madaris. The government was not overtly involved in this but this was a public process and the government did not object in any way. This indicates that the Pakistani state was in need of the madaris as

temporary shelters, education providers and orphanages. This also reflects the high level of trust the communities place on the madaris system.

The madaris network is a network of social relations and each institution is linked to each other and the community via social relations, such as those formed by graduates and current students of a madrassa and their community, or between one Islamic scholar to the other down to the Imam in a particular village. When emergencies like the 2005 earthquake occur, these networks are mobilised and help shape an organic, grassroots response to the catastrophe. If the Pakistani state develops robust and culturally validated social support institutions, would the relevance of the madrassa in such an event be minimized? The answer to this question is beyond the scope of this research but is worthy of a considered analysis.

The reconstruction of madaris and mosques

There is a wide spread complaint that government and international reconstruction organizations did not rebuild any of the madaris destroyed during the earthquake (Interviews with Qadir, 15th July 2009; Anwar, 25th July 2009; Kaleem, 25th July 2009). Some claimed that often even the mosques were not rebuilt (Interviews with Kaleem, 25th July 2009; Anwar, 25th July 2009; Waseem, 20th August 2009). It seemed as if the earthquake provided the government and international pressure groups an opportunity to eradicate the madaris networks altogether (Interviews with Qadir, 15th July 2009; Waseem, 20th August 2009; Syed, 13th June 2009). The government also did not allot any funds for the reconstruction of madaris and mosques and communities had to organize and rebuild them on their own (Interview with Waseem, 20th August 2009).

International NGO's are perceived as having a dubious role in the earthquake. Most respondents shared an experience where they lauded the development efforts of such organizations but at the same time felt that they openly violated the cultural and religious sensitivities of the local people. One shocking piece of information was brought up by respondents and has been published widely in various locally owned newspapers and pamphlets: international aid workers paid up to Rs.20, 000 per person to hire local women for prostitution in Kashmir. When locals organized to stop such activities they were portrayed in the mainstream media as fanatics who wanted to kill aid workers (Interviews with Anwar, 25th July 2009; Kaleem, 25th July 2009). There were also complaints about public displays of affection by aid workers which is considered against local cultural norms and opposes the local understanding of modesty (Interview with Anwar, 25th July 2009).

There is no way for me to verify these allegations but they were part of the shared knowledge amongst madaris community members. Some respondents requested not to be quoted for saying this and they have not been referenced accordingly.

Misconceptions and assumptions about the role of madaris in earth quake relief efforts

The issue of orphans and destitute children being referred to madaris was negatively featured in the international media. An article in the 2006 online edition of Gulf News states:

“Charities linked to jihadist groups have been using humanitarian aid operations to extend their influence over children orphaned by last year's earthquake in north Pakistan. Contrary to government rules that earthquake orphans must be cared for only by the state or relatives, large numbers have been taken into care by religious charities and madrassas. A senior cleric, Qazi Mahmood-ul-Hassan, who runs the Jamia Dar-Uloom Al Islamia

madrassa in Muzaffarabad, said that he had taken 55 orphans into care. His madrassa helped the Al Rashid Trust carry out relief work immediately after the earthquake last October. The trust has been accused by the United States of channelling funds to Al Qaida” (Gulf News, 2006).

Another article on the BBC news website titled “UN quake aid went to extremists” writes:

“The BBC has discovered that one of the charities linked with extremists is now using its position to gain access to orphaned or fatherless children.....One Jamaat leader told us that people were now trusting them with their children - they hadn't before the earthquake - and they had actively recruited hundreds of children left orphaned or fatherless. He said they had already sent 400 such children under the age of nine to board at their madrassas, or religious schools, some hundreds of miles from their homes. That's despite a Pakistan government promise a year ago that these vulnerable children would be looked after either by their extended families or by the state, not by outside agencies” (Clark, 2006).

And finally an interesting article by a research analyst at the International Crisis Group, argues:

“The most important implications of jihadi and Islamist involvement in the earthquake response are likely to be felt in the education sector. AJK is one of the country's most literate regions, and the earthquake destroyed almost all of its education institutions. Integral to jihadi and Islamist relief efforts was the establishment of schools and madrassas for young people in AJK. The Deobandi Wifaq-al-Madaris Al-Arabiya (Pakistan's largest union of madrassas) plans to build 1,500 mosques and 300 madrassas in AJK and NWFP. The purely Islamic education that these institutions will provide will

inevitably sideline provincial/state curricula. In the medium and long term, if the jihadis and Islamist groups are allowed to continue with their rigid religious curriculum this will radicalise the young in AJK, and will form a convenient recruiting base for the militant activities of these organisations. The Jamaat-ud-Dawa has openly called for all orphans to be handed over to the organisation for an Islamic education” (Qureshi, 2006, p. 3).

There are interesting assumptions made in these three articles which I would like to deconstruct one by one:

1) Religious organizations (mostly political parties) are the parent organizations for all madaris:

In my research neither of the two madaris was affiliated with any religious political party or organization.

2) The mandate of a religious organization is unanimous with the mandate of a madrassa: This is again a highly controversial assumption; madaris have a distinct ideology which is centred on the provision of religious and even secular education as discussed in the previous chapter. Unless a religious organization is concerned with education there can be no overlap in terms of organizational mission and mandate.

3) Madrassa graduates are recruited by religious organizations and political groups: None of my interview respondents mentioned working for a religious organization other than in the capacity of a madrassa teacher as a career choice. Both case studies in my research do not support this generalization. Rather madaris graduates are eager to take on wider roles in society.

4) It is assumed that political education is part of the madrassa curriculum and the madrassa specifically trains graduates to work as Islamic political workers: Not a single class in both IIS and JOAQ were geared for this purpose. Madaris train students to be Islamic scholars who are eager to take up a variety of roles in society. The idea of joining a political party or Islamic

militant organization was never brought up in my interviews and would be considered offensive by the respondents.

5) *A synergistic relationship between madaris and religious trusts, NGO's and organizations exists because of a shared political view:* My research rather points out that such an affiliation exists because of a mutual respect for Islamic teachings and a general assumption that the madaris with hold Islam as the highest guiding system. I found education at both JOAQ and IIS to be rather apolitical.

6) *Religious organizations and militant political groups manage their own madaris:* This can be true. For example the Jammat Islami (a prominent Islamic political party though not militant) has its own madrassa board. However the overwhelming majority of madaris are not registered with the Jammat Islami board. It is possible that a certain extremist group manages and runs a madrassa exclusively and then tries to influence the curriculum to support their ideologies. However this is an exception rather than a rule of thumb and should not be generalized. This is also a direct result of the scarcity of funding available to madaris from other sources and a madrassa might feel pressured to comply.

7) *All madaris shun the national curriculum:* As evident from my research, madaris have long realized the necessity of teaching the national curriculum. They are working to do this more effectively and the greatest reason for the lack of progress is the lack of funds.

8) *The syllabus used in the madaris is synonymous with the 'syllabus of Jihadi and extremist' groups:* Only those institutions in the country are recognized as being madaris who use the syllabus mandated by one of the five madrassa boards. All other places of learning are technically not madaris and should not be labelled as such. Schools run and managed by extremist groups (if any) which teach their own syllabus are definitely a cause of worry.

9) *Madaris graduates cannot contribute to the socio-economic development of a region:* In my research, every madrassa graduate yearned to be given an opportunity to do exactly the opposite.

10) *Madaris are convenient sites of recruitment for extremist and militant groups:* students from JOAQ and IIS were more interested in working for educational institutions, the armed forces and even in banks rather than for such groups. However it is possible that due to a lack of other employment opportunities and financial strain, a madrassa graduate might be inclined to join such an organization. But this holds equally true for other unemployed and uneducated youths of the country. There is nothing unique about a madrassa graduate that makes him a better candidate for such unscrupulous organizations.

“Fifty speeches”, constructing meaning from a publication geared for madrassa graduates

Many madaris such as JOAQ often have a book shop which sells popular religious books and texts for both the madrassa community and the general public. While I was visiting JOAQ, I picked up a two volume book set titled, “Fifty speeches: effective and thought provoking speeches on different topics for student of schools, colleges and madaris”. The book was in Urdu and written by Muhammed Aslam Shaikhopuri and was published by Maktab Haleemiya.

These speeches are geared primarily for advanced madrassa students, madrassa graduates and other individuals interested in doing community outreach work. Some interesting relevant speeches centred on the following themes:

1) The characteristics of a leader and the hypocritical lives national leaders lead. It then compares national leaders with the Prophet Mohammed and how his speeches reflected his actions and personal convictions. The purpose of the speech is to encourage students to take on leadership roles with sincerity and self-sacrifice.

- 2) The ideal university which was instituted by the Prophet Mohammed albeit on an abstract plane. There are strong references to class struggle, inaccessibility of modern day schools by the non-affording and other issues related to educational access and equity.
- 3) Some pieces challenging the reader's role in the national development agenda of the country and identifying ways to engage with the process.
- 4) Apparent economic polarisation of Pakistani society and how resources are concentrated in the hands of the few rich. Class consciousness is very apparent throughout the book.
- 5) Few pieces on the use of drugs and substance abuse and preventive mechanisms.
- 6) Human rights defined through the lens of tolerance, citizenship and respect.
- 7) Citizen responsibility, participation in public works and community projects.

This book is relevant and interesting because it echoes the kind of roles madaris graduates are willing to occupy and need to occupy in society. The book and its wide coverage of topics reflect the desired spirit of madrassa reforms which will be discussed in the next chapter. It also reflects the need to challenge the status quo and how madaris graduates might be instrumental in a nationwide struggle for equity.

Synopsis- identifying the extra-religious community development functions of madaris

It is now possible to glean out the extra-religious functions of madaris. Some of the multiplier effects madaris typically have in Pakistani society are:

- 1) Madaris provide some level of general education based on the national curriculum to those who do not have access to schooling in their home regions for a variety of reasons. This role is expected to grow as madaris are realizing the importance of having such a system in place.

- 2) They increase the chances for securing both formal and informal employment for incoming students. More and more students are interested in gaining employment outside the typical ‘religious’ sector. Madaris are providing such a route, some more successfully than others.
- 3) The position of a religious scholar is prestigious and attracts high social capital depending on setting and location. In typical rural settings, the religious scholar occupies a prestigious role and thus graduates are able to attain such respect and social capital through their madrasa certification.
- 4) Some madaris provide outreach services such as the Darul-Iftah department at JOAQ where community members are invited to consult with a resident scholar. Since religion is such a vital component of public and private life, community members often find it useful to consult a religious figure even for non-religious affairs.
- 5) Madaris provide regional mobility to its graduates who are free to seek employment anywhere in the country due to the nationwide recognition of their certifications.
- 6) Some madaris engage in relief and reconstruction activities either directly or by sending their students and teachers to volunteer in various organizations.
- 7) Madaris can serve as temporary shelters in times of crisis.
- 8) Madaris serve as sinks for receiving children who are either poor, orphaned or have no one to take care of them due to a variety of circumstances. Since most madaris offer free room and boarding for the entire eight years of the Dars-e-Nizami, they often serve as good alternatives for destitute households.
- 9) Due to the relational and networked nature of madaris, they are able to access those on the margins of society. Madaris have a better ‘reach’ than most other social welfare institutions in the country.

10) Madaris enjoy the confidence and acceptance of religious organizations, Muslim NGO's and religious political parties. Such parties are usually very active in regions recovering from conflict and natural calamities and often refer madaris to destitute families thus increasing madrassa outreach.

11) Madaris provide the possibility of transferring to secular graduate schools. If a student has completed high school and finished his Dars-e-Nizami, the student can gain a B.A in Islamic studies by just taking a few additional exams. This allows student to apply for graduate programs anywhere in the country.

12) Graduates from madaris are highly motivated and willing to initiate positive social change perhaps more than most graduates of secular universities.

13) Madrassa graduates are well positioned to challenge the status quo, and religious education can act as "weapons of the weak to oppose hierarchies and the elites who control them" (Zachariah & Mehran, 1996, p. 2). Madaris graduates are very class conscious and aware of the oppressive systems around them and are extremely motivated to challenge them.

14) Madaris provide an alternative to state sanctioned systems of education and socialisation.

15) Madaris are free, open access institutions.

"If the rich don't come, the poor should be free to... the poor is devoid of [wordly] education, they cannot attain worldly education because [for that] you have to pay heavy fees, if they [the poor] want to come here then they should at least have some way to do so" (Interview with Syed, 13th June 2009).

The next chapter talks about the contested issue of madrassa reforms. Any discussion on madrassa reforms must be informed by the diverse roles madaris play in Pakistani society. This chapter thus serves as a good guiding document for such a debate.

CHAPTER SIX: MADRASSA REFORM - THE ARGUMENTS AND MECHANISMS FOR MADRASSA REFORM, RECOMMENDATIONS AND POSSIBLE FUTURES

Introduction

In this final chapter, I will first briefly discuss the various educational plans devised by the government over the course of the last forty years. I am interested in highlighting how the madaris featured in these documents to indicate that the government's distrust for the madaris system and Islamic education is a fairly recent phenomenon. This discussion links well with Chapter 3 where the government-madaris nexus was briefly discussed. The motivation to start from the 1970s instead of 1947 (when the country gained independence) is to reflect the period when this change in policy mood was beginning to be realized. Secondly, I present the local voices and perspectives on the need to reform the madrassa system, as well as some critical voices around state-sanctioned madrassa reforms. Finally, I offer some recommendations based on madrassa-connected people's views as well as my own analysis of how the madrassa system can reform, rejuvenate and thrive well in contemporary society.

Prior government engagements with madaris and religious education

In this section I present the following chronology of government education documents in order to show the key features of the national state's policies around the madrassa system and how they have radically changed over time.

1970: 'New Education Policy' document released by the government. The document positively acknowledged the role of madaris and mosque schools in providing education. It also called for the strengthening of Islamic Education Departments to produce graduates "well-versed in religion but also fully responsive to the challenges of the contemporary world" (Government of Pakistan, 1970, p. 15).

1972-1980: ‘The Education Policy 1972-1980’ document followed the dissolution of Bangladesh from Pakistan. It stated that “status-quo will be maintained with respect to institutions imparting exclusively religious instruction, such as mosque schools⁸⁵ and madaris etc., run by Muslims, and similar institutions run by any other religious denomination” (Government of Pakistan, 1972, p. 37). This thus gave religious institutions permission to operate as private institutions in accordance with government guidelines (Zia, 2003, p. 170). The policy paper failed to address the need to streamline private religious school and standardize them (Zia, p. 170).

1979: ‘The National Education Policy and Implementation Programme’ once again reasserted the role of mosque schools. The policy document recognized the need of establishing Arabic Language Centres in various cities to help the masses understand the meaning of the Quran (Government of Pakistan, 1979, p. 49). The conditions of madaris improved during this time and the Dars-e-Nizami degree was made equivalent to a Masters degree (Zia, 2003, p. 170).

In the late 1970s, the government decided to use the help of madaris and mosque schools in its campaign for universal literacy (Zia, p. 172). The government sponsored the opening of new mosque schools and strengthened the infrastructure of existing ones (Zia, p. 172). The Policy of 1979 proposed the opening of mosque schools in areas with no primary school and by the late 1990s there was a substantial increase of mosque schools in the public sector (Zia, p. 172). ‘The National Education Policy and Implementation Programme’ was the first document to give comprehensive “administrative and educational guidelines, along with detailed resource allocations for the mosque schools, and allowed the admission of successful students in the formal education system at the secondary level” (Zia, p. 172).

⁸⁵ Mosque schools are usually day-time schools held in a mosque which teach younger children Hifz, recitation of the Quran and some basic Islamic texts.

1992: 'The National Education Policy' document had an entire chapter on 'Religious and Moral Education' (Government of Pakistan, 1992, p. 13). It was the first government policy document to express "dissatisfaction with the limited worldview expressed in the world of science and technology, judging it to be insufficient for the full intellectual and moral development of young people" (Zia, 2003, p. 170). The policy advocated the use of informal modes of education, i.e. use of media (TV, electronic media) outside the classrooms to "emphasize character building, high moral values and societal development based on injunctions of the Quran and Sunnah" (Zia, p. 170).

1998-2010: 'The National Education Policy IQRA' delineated an Islamic ideology. The document highlighted the urgent need to integrate religious schools and modern schools (Government of Pakistan, 1998). It called for the establishment of a new Board that would work to integrate all willing institutions into the public education system. Incentives such as financial resources, printing of textbooks, training of teachers, opportunity for higher education, equivalence of degrees, and facilities and concessions to students, etc., were offered to the affiliated institutions (Zia, 2003, p. 170).

By the late 1970s, in a desperate attempt to increase literacy rates, the government tried to revive indigenous intuitions like the mosque schools and the madaris. There are no clear reports or appraisals conducted to assess the success of this strategy. However issues of relevance and quality became apparent as the process continued. The madaris and mosque school teachers themselves were not schooled and not equipped to teach subjects like math and science and no training was given to them (Anzar, 2003, p. 14). The government failed to standardize teaching methodology, design a well rounded curriculum, and establish assessment criterion and

equivalency with public schools. This led to a wide disparity in the quality of education being imparted in madaris and mosque schools. The government was aware of the disparity in the educational instruction imparted by the different streams of educational institutions (the public, private and religious schools) and yet failed to streamline procedures for continuous monitoring and assessment of these institutions (Zia, p. 175). Religious schools however became really problematic in the 1980s when they were used by both the Pakistani military and the U.S to deal with the Afghan crisis.

The roots of radical Jihadi culture can be localized to the Afghan civil war in the 1980s, when the United States set up camps in Pakistan for mujahideen to fight Soviet troops in Afghanistan (Stern, 2001, p. 44). The message of a jihad against communism was directly advocated in the 1980s through an expansive USAID project, with specially designed textbooks distributed at Afghan refugee camps and Pakistani madaris⁸⁶ (ICG, 2002, p. 13). These books promoted Jihadi values and militant training (these were later used by the Taliban in Afghanistan and were dropped only recently from Afghan schools) (Zia, 2003, p. 173). At the same time, the military regime in Pakistan moved to mobilize the support of religious groups in the country (Zia, p. 173).

Thus in the 1980s, the military which sought to legitimize itself by using religion to further its agendas, external factors such as the Afghan war and the government's desperate attempts to use religious schools to increase literacy- "combined in such a manner as to bring about a change in the ethos of the madaris in the country" (Zia, 2003, p. 176). It was only after these regional and national changes that successive governments started to distance themselves from religious

⁸⁶ This adds credibility to Charakla's previous comments on the motives of education aid.

education. The way the madaris have been exploited by both national and international actors explains their distrust for any external interference.

Internal recognition of the need to reform the madrassa

It should be apparent by now that the madaris themselves seek to reform and revitalize. As discussed earlier, this implies altering and expanding the actual mission and mandate of a madrassa as evident by institutions like IIS and even to a lesser extent JOAQ. Administrators are aware that their institutions require significant improvements in the quality of education being offered and need to position their graduates better to be able to access mainstream employment opportunities (Interview with Qureshi, 15th July 2009). The Wifaq-al-Madaris board also revises its curriculum periodically and individual madaris are free to use any supplementary books at their institutions as desirable (Interview with Qadir, 15th July 2009). Currently the board has instituted an education committee which is working towards improving the Dars-e-Nizami syllabus (Interview with Hussnain, 13th June 2009).

There are some exciting changes developing with respect to the admissions criterion of entering into a Wifaq-al-Madaris accredited madrassa. Students are being encouraged to enter with at least a Matriculation certification and the board has recently passed a rule that students cannot write year two external exams unless they have passed Matriculation (Interview with Qureshi, 15th July 2009). This will pressure madaris into extending their secular schooling provision for up to grade ten if they want to remain accredited with the board. However this is also problematic as it will add to the strain on the already dwindling financial resources of most madaris and highlight their shortage of qualified teachers. It is feared that the quality of secular education provision in madaris as a function of the previous two factors might drop significantly.

My intention of listing these developments is to indicate that there is an internal desire to reform the madrassa and that madaris administrators are not oblivious to the flaws in the system. There are four main stakeholders to the entire reform debate:

1) The government which is basically interested in being able to monitor the madaris network in Pakistan and influence them according to its own national goals

2) The madaris themselves, they have been going through a major intellectual review and the main question which has been raised is ‘what roles should a madaris graduate play in society?’ (Interview with Charakla, 18th July 2009).

3) The citizens of Pakistan: the role of Pakistani society has not yet been defined in the madrassa reform debate. But this includes issues like; what do parents want the madrassa to do for their children? What new social roles should madaris graduates play in public life? Etc.

4) Foreign interest groups: mainly the United States of America (discussed later on in this chapter).

Currently the main actors featured in the reform debate are the government (under the covert influence of the U.S) and the madaris themselves in the minimal capacity of reactants to top down reforms.

Critical voices around state sanctioned madrassa reforms

The general consensus is that the state is too inexperienced to manage the madaris and its performance with the government educational system is so dismal that it is impossible that they can do a better job with them. Madrassa reform sanctioned by the state is interpreted as being primarily about state control and does not seek to maintain the best interests of the madaris

(Interview with Jabbar, 15th August 2009). The two most common government regulations and demands are:

1) Registration⁸⁷: All madaris need to be registered. This includes providing details about the number of students, number of teachers and most importantly the donors responsible for running the madrassa. Madaris administrators feel that if they release information about donors, they might be tracked down and prosecuted. If donors find out that their information is being shared with the government than they might even stop their donations. This is because in the current war on terror, everyone is a suspect particularly someone who donates to a madrassa or for an Islamic cause. The donors would not feel comfortable and safe being pulled into this. If the donations stop, then the madaris will cease to function. The registration process for a madrassa is very different from the registration process of a regular school/ educational institute and this again reflects state attitude towards religious education (Interview with Hussnain, 13th June 2009).

2) Curriculum reform: “A medical college is never instructed to teach Quran and Hadith, so why are only madaris told to teach math, English etc? I think this is unfair” (Interview with Jabbar, 15th August 2009).

The government is interested in increasing the percentage of the national curriculum in the madrassa syllabus. So is the madaris community. The only problem is there have been no consultations with individual madaris administrators or the madaris boards. The madaris community feels it should be left up to them to decide which components of the national curriculum should be taught and in which ways or it should at least be a participatory process (Interview with Qureshi, 15th July 2009). The madaris community believes that the government

⁸⁷ This paragraph is based on an interview with Qureshi, Director of Education at JOAQ conducted on 15th July 2009

is interested in converting a madrassa into a public school which is not acceptable to administrators like Qureshi. The introduction of the national curriculum cannot be allowed to interfere or replace the mission and mandate of the madaris.

Currently, compliance is voluntary and the government has put in place the incentive of cash donations for those madaris which comply. However like any donation/form of financial aid, there are bound to be certain conditions and stipulations which have not been made entirely clear by the government (Interview with Hussnain, 13th June 2009). Some stipulations for government grants include i) amendment of syllabus ii) textbook selection iii) approval of syllabus from the government iv) a two month mandatory summer holiday period (Interview with Junaid, 13th June 2009).

The madaris community has unanimously decided that they do not want to compromise their intellectual freedom by accepting government grants (Interview with Hussnain, 13th June 2009). The Wifaq-al-Madaris board has strictly disallowed any member madaris from accepting any form of government aid and if any aid is offered to any madrassa it is to be channelled through the board (Interview with Jabbar, 15th August 2009).

Internal voices and solutions to reform the madrassa

‘Internal voices’ refers to the opinions, directives and solutions presented by the madaris community itself. It is my aim to privilege these ‘internal voices’ organic to the madrassa discourse over all other forms and modalities of knowledge. Some of this ‘internally’ generated debate around madrassa reform is discussed as follows:

1) Generate better employment possibilities: Meaningful employment for madrassa graduates is a challenge (Interview with Jamshed, 27th July 2009). If students are unemployed or

underemployed, then they would not be in a healthy frame of mind and cannot work for the community (Interview Hussnain, 13th June 2009). Four main solutions were proposed to this dilemma:

i) Increased components of the national curriculum should be taught at madaris. Some advocated for a model similar to the one at IIS where students should be taught at least up till their B.A degrees. Some felt it is not possible to do so and teaching larger components of the national curriculum will compromise the main objectives of the madrassa: teaching religious education (Interviews with Anwar, 25th July 2009; Qadir, 15th July 2009).

ii) Teaching life skills at madaris as part of the curriculum was another recommendation (Interview with Charakla, 18th July 2009). The World Health Organization defines life skills as "abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life" (UNESCO). Both UNESCO and UNICEF subdivide these life skills into three major components, represented in the table below:

Table 6.1: Life skills as defined by UNICEF and UNESCO

LEARNING TO KNOW - Cognitive abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision making/problem solving skills • Critical thinking skills
LEARNING TO BE – Personal abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills for increasing internal locus of control • Skills for managing feelings • Skills for managing stress
LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER - Inter-personal abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpersonal communication skills • Negotiation/refusal skills • Empathy • Cooperation and Teamwork • Advocacy Skills

Sources: (UNICEF, 2004; UNESCO)

The exact definitions provided above need not be used but a selective approach could be applied. Some believe that madaris graduates should be essentially doing scholarly work after they graduate because that is what they have been trained to do (Interviews with Charakla, 18th July

2009; Hussnain, 13th June 2009). The miniscule functions left for them such as leading prayers, giving the azan (call for prayer) can be performed by almost anyone and do not require an eight year madrassa education (Interview with Charakla 18th July 2009).

iii) Teaching concrete technical skills (vocational education) such as construction work, carpentry, dry-wall painting, motor mechanics etc was also proposed (Interview with Kaleem, 25th July 2009).

iv) Another idea was to have a mechanism to award small interest free micro loans to graduates (interest is forbidden in Islam mainly due to reasons of equity) (Interview with Jamshed, 27th July 2009). This would allow them to start a small business which would provide them a stable income and they could continue to engage in scholarly work and community outreach (Interview with Jamshed, 27th July 2009).

2) Establish a sound, stable financial system: Lack of stable financial resources is the main problem cited by madaris administrators. Since madaris often do not charge a fee they do not have any stable sources of revenue. A variety of solutions were proposed:

i) Madaris should look into forming small business units which would allow them to generate revenue (Interview with Jamshed, 27th July 2009). These could include a variety of things such as book shops and selling Islamic merchandise.

ii) A sliding scale fee was also proposed such as the one in place at IIS (Interview with Hussnain, 13th June 2009). Students should be encouraged to pay a fee which is affordable to them on a regular basis.

iii) Establishing a for-profit sister school was also proposed (Interviews with Hussnain, 13th June 2009; Charakla, 18th July 2009). IIS is considering establishing a sister school which will target the affluent segments of society and charge a full-fee. The school would be an Islamic school;

which is typically a school that teaches the full national curriculum albeit with an Islamic orientation (Interview with Charakla, 18th July 2009). The profit generated from this school could then be used to subsidize madaris like the IIS (Interview with Charakla, 18th July 2009).

iv) Another opinion was to establish neighbourhood committees in those communities which send their children to the local madrassa (Interview with Kaleem, 25th July 2009). These neighbourhood committees should be responsible for managing the day to day costs of running the madrassa including teacher salaries (Interview with Kaleem, 25th July 2009).

3) *Remove perceived divisions between the 'secular' and the 'religious' in society:* Research participants commented that there is a national mentality that undermines religious education and religious occupations⁸⁸. Society has become polarized and there is now a neat division between the secular educated and the religiously educated. Too often students from madaris are dubbed as illiterate which indicates exactly which forms of knowledge are validated and by whom. Individuals belonging to either of the two sides have limited interaction with one another and people are being forced to take sides. Some ways proposed to mitigate these are as follows:

i) There needs to be a platform for dialogue between madaris students and students from other colleges and universities. Instructors from each side should be invited to lecture at the other institution in a non-threatening and cordial environment. Debate competitions between various forms of institutions could be promoted to engage students with one another.

ii) Madaris also need to establish public information and public relation cells which could interact with the masses and the media in an organized fashion (Interview with Qureshi, 15th July 2009). One madrassa official commented that the media refers to those studying in colleges and

⁸⁸ These two paragraphs are based on an interview with Haider, Principal of JOAQ conducted on 20th July 2009.

universities as 'students' but does not use the same word to classify our students (Interview with Qureshi, 15th July 2009).

iii) Many respondents felt that Pakistan should have a single, unified educational system and curriculum (Interviews with Qureshi, 15th July 2009; Charakla, 18th July 2009; Hussnain, 13th June 2009; Syed, 13th June 2009; Kahlid, 15th June 2009). The curriculum from grade 1 to grade 10 should be uniform with a baseline religious education component. Once the student completes Matriculation (grade 10), he/she should be allowed to stream into whatever areas of specialization they are interested in before entering university. Currently after Matriculation students are stream lined into pre-engineering, pre-medicine, pre-commerce etc and another option should be added that is pre-religious studies. This is commonplace in countries like Iran and Saudi Arabia

4) *The issue of demand and supply:* There is a general conception that madaris produce too many graduates, more than what society requires. As far as strictly religious roles are concerned, a madrassa graduate remarked that there are many communities all over the country particularly in far-flung rural areas which are badly in need of literate Imams and religious teachers etc (Interview with Kaleem, 25th July 2009). However madaris need to expand their roles which would allow their graduates to take on even broader roles of society. This is intrinsically linked to curriculum choices as discussed before. Graduates should not only be religious scholars but also trained as formal community workers (Interview with Kaleem, 25th July 2009).

5) *Establish cordial working relations with the state*: Madaris administrators are interested in establishing working relations with the government⁸⁹. The task of educating Pakistan is so enormous that both parties cannot be successful without mutual support.

Madaris such as the IIS, suggest that the government should take on the responsibility of supplying qualified teachers to the madaris who are well trained in the national curriculum. Their salaries and related costs should be afforded by the government. The government can strategically use madaris as sites for imparting secular education as long as it does not interfere with the mission and mandate of the madrassa. This is a missed opportunity. According to Hussnain, the state is missing out on the madrassa's ability to reach and congregate students from faraway, remote places. It will be more cost effective to send teachers to existing madaris than to actually send them out to isolated regions or build a school from scratch in remote areas. The Wifaq-al-Madaris board and other madrassa boards should be given official status of an education board such as the Federal Board (which administers Matriculation and FA/FSc exams for the federal capital and region). This will give the madaris mainstream accreditation and it will make it much easier for students to enter universities.

Madrassa reforms: ambiguity of intentions, challenges and road blocks

The United States is the most important interest group in Pakistan's education sector reform. Since 2002, through its principal development agency USAID, the country has invested over \$682 million to reform and revitalize Pakistan's education system (USAID, 2009). About 64% of this budget is allotted for basic education and 36% for higher education reform (USAID, 2010).

⁸⁹ These two paragraphs are based on an interview with Hussnain, Vice President of IIS conducted on 13th June 2009

Some interesting motivations for improving third world education include i) human capital improvement so developed countries can outsource low-key services (such as call centres) and assembly lines to such regions ii) Education increases demand for consumption which again favours developed countries in lieu of their position in international trade. And yet, the desired positive effects of these state-led improvements and interventions funded by international development agencies have not been felt by many local communities, especially poor families, in Pakistan.

Some of my interview respondents (i.e., Charakla, Syed, Hussnain, Haider) for example, felt that all such ‘conventional’ motivations for education aid are only secondary to the main motivation behind education cooperation: to instil the American (Western) mindset and intellectual framework in the third world mind. The battle of education aid is an ideological battle which seeks to ruin the self-image of the citizens of the developing country and make them doubt and reject their own intellectual foundations (Interview with Charakla, 18th July 2009). The privatization of religion and limiting the scope of Islam in the dominant culture is an important component of this assault. As Charakla notes in an interview, “Americans are now thinking of doing what the English did from day one. That is domination through education.”

According to Charakla, dialogue between madaris and state officials is also expected to break down almost immediately because of the absence of a common ‘language’. The government is trained in Western systems of knowledge which is accompanied by pre-existing theoretical frameworks such as the secular/religious dichotomy, privatization of religion etc.. Dialogue and consultation will be extremely difficult because of the absence of a mutually understandable, basic communicative language which does not drag in preconceived notions about the world.

The way forward

The recommendations generated from this research are the result of the interaction between the dialogue generated ‘internally’ by the madaris community (as discussed before) and my own ‘expert’ outside knowledge as a professional planner. In this dialectic, I am cognizant of the fact that local knowledge and voices need to be privileged over any other forms of expertise and also combined with other forms of “expert” outside knowledge. Thus in the capacity of a professional planner I will try to weave these ‘internal’ voices into some of my proposed plan of action.

Teresa Poppelwell, former staff of the UN-Habitat commented, “When we go in communities we look for partners through whom we like to implement programs. The madrassa is definitely a NGO and we need to look into the possibilities of working with them if we really want the benefits of international aid to reach down to the society’s poorest. The only problem is that they aren’t registered with the government and just because of that we cannot engage with them” (Interview with Poppelwell, 10th March 2009).

Internal Respect and Recognition: There is great benefit for the madaris community to get accepted and recognized by the state. This will give them access to state funding and the potential to ally with aid agencies. The madrassa certainly has the ability to reach out to the country’s poorest. However the government needs to be very flexible with its policy of reforms and needs to allow the madaris to operate in the academic space they deem fit. The purpose and the intent of the madrassa should be preserved and allowed to remain intact. This is where planners and development practitioners fit in. They need to mobilize a participatory dialogue between the state and the madaris community and exact this crucial integration of indigenous institutions (in this case the madrassa) into mainstream development policy.

A series of confident building measures need to be set in place which will allow the madaris administrators to recover their faith in the state. It will become increasingly difficult for the madaris system to continue to operate outside the formal education system and their potential for positive change is being deeply undermined by this. Nobody will take the madrassa seriously unless they are recognized and respected by their own government.

Once state acceptance is achieved, planners need to work on the possibility of setting up student exchanges between the madaris and the secular education systems in an attempt to foster community and cooperation amongst each other. The madrassa needs to win back its prestige and it needs to be accepted as an alternative path to schooling and not as an inferior substitute or an antithesis to modern day education.

Continuing Partnerships and Dialogues: For the madrassa system to regain its prestige and acceptance there has to be more meaningful partnerships and genuine dialogue between various stakeholders, state actors and the madaris community. The problem of madaris reforms needs to be framed in a language that is mutually intelligible to all stakeholders. For this conversation and dialogue to take place, the people leading the process must be conversant in both the languages of the madrassa (religious) community as well as the secular community.

Labour Market Development for Madrassa Graduates: Considerable amounts of planning and work needs to be done to integrate graduates of the madaris into mainstream society and the job market. Madrassa graduates need to win their place back in academia and be allowed to teach Islamic studies in schools and at the university level as appropriate. Planners may help to design teaching programs and workshops to enable such individuals to breach this distance and become

effective teachers. Similarly, the wage of an Imam⁹⁰ needs to be raised to comparable levels of any entry level job and a compensation mechanism needs to be established which takes into account the experience and education of religious leaders. The image surrounding the profession needs to be completely reconstructed. Conversion courses are required which allow madrasa graduates to apply to professional schools such as medicine, engineering and business. This might include minor adjustments in the madrasa curriculum if developed in consultation with all stakeholders. A monitoring system needs to be set up to enable madaris to formally keep track of their alumni and create a working relationship between alumni, current students and recent graduates. These alumni are important assets for the madaris specially those who have made it to influential positions both nationally as well as abroad.

More importantly, the national state in Pakistan must not be left off the hook. It should take a more pro-active role in ensuring that there is a vibrant local and national economies and well-developed labour markets to absorb not just madaris graduates but graduates of the public and private school systems who are also seeing high unemployment rates.

Earmarking Foreign Funding for Education Reforms: All foreign aid and funding earmarked for education needs to be invested in such a way that the academic standards (in terms of teaching staff and facilities) of secular schools and madaris are made comparable, so that there is no longer a class system in place which arbitrarily places the rich into secular schools and the poor into the madaris. A formal funding mechanism needs to be instituted for madaris which could be a combination of community contributions, government grants and foreign aid earmarked for specific functions such as infrastructure and teaching equipment purchase.

⁹⁰ Imams currently earn as low as Rs.7000 a month, similar to that of a labourer

National Governance Structure: It will also be beneficial to consider a national structure of governance for madaris regardless of their affiliations with different schools of thought and corresponding madrassa boards. This structure could be independent of government ministries and bureaucracy and can play a crucial role in the systemic integration of madaris into mainstream national development discourse. It will also grant the madaris a formal seat on the government's 'planning table' for Pakistan's education and development policies.

Local and Foreign Media Training: There are also lessons to be learned here for local and foreign media agencies and the dire need of sensitivity training for journalists. By opting for a 'one-size' fits all approach, madaris are a lost cause for crucial opportunities like interfaith dialogue and community service learning. Likewise, many recommendations can be drawn for the United States government and their construction of the global war on terror which localizes terrorists and terrorism within certain geographical spaces and specific social identities.

Conclusion

I began this research by expressing my own discomfort over the negative representation and stereotyping of the madrassa and its graduates. I expressed this alongside my own discomfort with how various governments have used Islam over the years as a distraction to divert the attention of the masses away from important issues such as inept governance, mismanagement of the economy and increased corruption. Still, I am aware that the situation is so fluid and volatile that the madaris can be the targets of censure and closure, if suspected of harbouring people who are threats to national security. I am aware that there are madaris in Pakistan who do not view the increased incursions of fundamentalist educators from Wahabi and Sunni sects into religious schools in Pakistan, particularly those receiving funds from petro dollar-rich Saudi Arabia. In

some cases, these incursions are not viewed as unwelcome outside interventions but as positive, perhaps even welcomed, attempts at linking local madaris to influential and prestigious sites of Islamic learning. However, if madaris are clamped down, religious education will still continue underground, perhaps under a tree or secretly in someone's basement, and thousands of students will be denied the social welfare and educational opportunities provided by madaris. Society will become deprived of a socially validated cultural institution which will only make government inefficiencies and lack of social welfare infrastructure more apparent.

I have demonstrated in this thesis the complexity of the madaris system and the diversity of voices between and among various stakeholders connected to madaris and the reform efforts. There is great diversity within the madaris system in Pakistan as evident from just the two cases of JOAQ and IIS. Although there is a blanket state policy to integrate madaris into the mainstream national agenda, there is also a need to understand each madrassa as a unique local institution. There is perhaps a need to move away from uniform and standardized policies towards madaris and consider localized, place-based policies tailored to the specificities and unique of each madrassa.

The Pakistani society is in a flux and madaris provide their students not only a meaningful life mission but an opportunity to safeguard their identities in an increasingly uncertain and morally ambiguous world. They also contribute to the creation of a national identity which has also remained in a state of continuous flux since 1947. While university graduates automatically transfer into the next socially sanctioned role of public / private employment, for madaris graduates, such options do not exist. Besides limited jobs in their field (formal or informal), madrassa graduates have to radically readjust their worldview, career goals and further upgrade

their education. Madaris administrators and educationists need to think beyond their institutions and work to bring the madrassa back into mainstream national discourse. The ongoing valuable contributions made by madaris to the social and religious life of Pakistan cannot be denied. Change in the madaris system will not occur overnight. The system took centuries to disintegrate and regress to the state it is currently in, and it will take some time for the madaris to broaden their mandate and establish new roles for their graduates. I hope that this study contributes a small step towards creating that new future.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A



The University of British Columbia
Office of Research Services
Behavioural Research Ethics Board
Suite 102, 6190 Agronomy Road, Vancouver,
B.C. V6T 1Z3

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL - MINIMAL RISK

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Leonora Angeles	INSTITUTION / DEPARTMENT: UBC/College for Interdisciplinary Studies/Community & Regional Planning	UBC BREB NUMBER: H09-00399
INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT:		
Institution		Site
UBC		Vancouver (excludes UBC Hospital)
Other locations where the research will be conducted: The following sites will all be in Islamabad, Pakistan: Offices of government officials Residences of parents of students attending madaris Madaris class rooms Offices of madaris teachers Offices of madaris administrators Shops/businesses surrounding madaris Houses surrounding madaris Offices of related non-profits Offices of related volunteers Homes of related volunteers		
CO-INVESTIGATOR(S): Omer K. Aijazi		
SPONSORING AGENCIES: N/A		
PROJECT TITLE:		

CERTIFICATE EXPIRY DATE: March 2, 2010

DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THIS APPROVAL:		DATE APPROVED:	
		March 2, 2009	
Document Name	Version	Date	
<u>Protocol:</u>			
proposal	0.1	February 25, 2009	
<u>Consent Forms:</u>			
Consent Form	0.0	January 29, 2009	
<u>Advertisements:</u>			
Advertisement	0.0	February 1, 2009	
<u>Questionnaire, Questionnaire Cover Letter, Tests:</u>			
Sample Interview Questions	0.0	January 29, 2009	
<u>Letter of Initial Contact:</u>			
Initial Contact	0.0	January 29, 2009	
<u>Other Documents:</u>			
Snowball Recruitment Script	0.0	January 29, 2009	
<u>Other:</u>			
N/A			
<p>The application for ethical review and the document(s) listed above have been reviewed and the procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.</p>			
<p><i>Approval is issued on behalf of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board and signed electronically by one of the following:</i></p> <hr style="width: 80%; margin: auto;"/> <p>Dr. M. Judith Lynam, Chair</p>			

Dr. Ken Craig, Chair
Dr. Jim Rupert, Associate Chair
Dr. Laurie Ford, Associate Chair
Dr. Anita Ho, Associate Chair

Appendix B

List of interviewees and their respective roles/affiliations

All interview participants are listed in an alphabetical order. These interviews were conducted in Islamabad, Pakistan:

1. Aisha, mother of madrassa students, interviewed on 1st August 2009
2. Anwar, current student at JOAQ, interviewed on 25th July 2009
3. Azam, graduate of JOAQ, interviewed on 26th July 2009
4. Bashir: graduate and current teacher both at IIS, interviewed on 14 June 2009
5. Charakla: executive director of an education based non-profit which conducts teacher training programmes for madaris amongst many other things, interviewed on 18th July 2009
6. Fatima: mother of madrassa students, interviewed on 1st August 2009
7. Haider: Principal of JOAQ, interviewed on 20 July 2009
8. Hussnain: Vice President of IIS, interviewed on 13 June 2009
9. Jamil: current student at IIS, interviewed on 14 June 2009
10. Jamshed: current teacher at JOAQ, interviewed on 27 July 2009
11. Junaid: Graduate and current teacher both at IIS, interviewed on 13 June 2009
12. Javed: Western educated, elitist citizen of Islamabad, interviewed on 2nd^h August 2009

13. Jabbar: Teacher at a madrassa other than IIS and JOAQ, earthquake relief camp volunteer, interviewed on 15th August 2009
14. Khalid: Graduate and current teacher both at IIS, interviewed on 15th June 2009
15. Khan: Western educated, elitist citizen of Islamabad, interviewed on 2nd August 2009
16. Kaleem: Graduate of JOAQ, interviewed on 25th July 2009
17. Naseer: Current student at IIS, interviewed on 14th June 2009
18. Qureshi: Director of Education at JOAQ, interviewed on 15th July 2009
19. Qadir: Teacher at JOAQ, interviewed on 15th July 2009
20. Syed: Principal of IIS, interviewed on 13th June 2009
21. Shafiq: Current student from JOAQ, interviewed on 25th July 2009
22. Waseem: Teacher at a madrassa other than IIS and JOAQ, earthquake relief camp volunteer, conducted on 20th August 2009