



SPECIAL REPORT

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ABOUT THE REPORT

This report examines the determinants of religious tolerance in Pakistan, particularly among Shias and Sunnis and the role that religious authorities may play in reducing sectarian prejudice. It draws insights from surveys conducted in Punjab and Quetta, Balochistan, between January and April 2014, as well as interviews conducted by the authors in Islamabad with religious leaders and experts on Shia-Sunni relations.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Michael Kalin and Niloufer Siddiqui

Religious Authority and the Promotion of Sectarian Tolerance in Pakistan

Summary

- Sunni-Shia tensions have been a recurrent problem in Pakistan for more than three decades, with the Shia minority suffering the brunt of the recent violence.
- Sectarian identity has become politicized as a result of domestic and international factors. Historical case studies and interviews suggest that sectarian networks are usually local but are often bolstered by transnational religious communities and can be highly responsive to international events.
- Surveys conducted in Punjab province and Quetta, Balochistan—regions that have experienced high levels of sectarian violence—indicate that Shia respondents consistently agree with statements in favor of sectarian tolerance at higher rates than Sunnis. Troublingly, a majority of Sunni respondents in Quetta expressed disagreement with a variety of messages of sectarian tolerance.
- Interviews with religious scholars and clerics, government authorities, and civil society activists reveal a widespread perception that clerical authorities have key roles to play in promoting tolerance. Identifying the specific religious authorities best suited to play this role is challenging, however, particularly because of the relatively decentralized nature of religious authority in Sunni Islam. Our survey results imply that clerics who are not already widely known in Pakistan are unlikely to successfully change public opinion.

Introduction

Pakistan has the world's largest share of Muslims after Indonesia and the world's largest share of Shias after Iran.¹ Although precise figures are unavailable, it is estimated that Sunnis

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comprise 80 to 85 percent of Pakistan's population, with Shias making up around 10 to 15 percent of the total remainder.² As the Sunni-Shia divide has become politicized throughout much of the world, the same has happened in Pakistan—often with lethal consequences borne disproportionately by the Shia minority.

Although estimates of the number killed or injured in sectarian attacks vary depending on the source, all statistics indicate that sectarian violence in Pakistan remains a problem today. For example, the Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) reports that 658 individuals were killed in sectarian attacks in 2013 alone.³ And in the first six months of 2014, the South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP) identified 51 distinct sectarian attacks in the country, in which 140 individuals were killed and 198 injured.

Violence motivated by sectarianism has taken many forms in Pakistan. Prominent representatives from each sect have been victims in tit-for-tat targeted killings. One group has launched armed attacks against another group's mosques and schools. Funerals and religious processions have been bombed, as have popular venues in neighborhoods demographically dominated by a certain sect. While the perpetrators are typically activists affiliated with militant organizations, because sectarian affiliations are ubiquitous and deeply felt, in the words of one expert, "this kind of violence has the potential to involve large swathes of the population and spur radicalization."⁴ A 2013 Pew Research Center report found that almost two in three Pakistanis surveyed considered Sunni-Shia tensions in their country to be a "very big" or "moderately big problem" facing the nation.⁵

For fragile states, uncovering the roots of violent ethnic or sectarian conflict is a major concern because counteracting such tendencies helps maintain political stability and security. In recent years, sectarian tensions in Pakistan have played out in a national context where the writ of the state is facing a broader and more concerted challenge from militants who justify their actions on the basis of a claim to Islamic legitimacy. Groups that recruit and organize around sectarian hatred link to and support groups that target the Pakistani state. Sectarian organizations such as the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) have strong ties with the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the umbrella organization responsible for much of the violence in Pakistan today, and several former LeJ leaders have assumed important positions within the TTP's ranks.⁶ The challenge of promoting sectarian tolerance is thus longstanding, highly sensitive, and crucial not only in its own right but also because of how it addresses the way intolerance shapes and feeds off of other forms of political violence in Pakistan today.

Together with the Pakistan Institute of Public Opinion—an affiliate of Gallup International in Pakistan—the authors of this report carried out a survey of 1,580 men in Punjab province and 800 in Quetta city in Balochistan between January and April 2014. The former survey employed a variety of techniques to oversample Shias in order to more precisely assess their beliefs, resulting in a sample of 498 Shias and 1,077 Sunnis, and used a random sampling procedure to yield a representative sample in Quetta.⁷ This survey is the first of its kind to directly address issues of sectarian harmony. We focused on measuring tolerance along three dimensions, gauging respondents' acceptance of political representation for and social intermingling with members of the other sect, as well as the strength of group loyalties in the face of communal violence. These data help us understand predictors of sectarian tolerance and assess the potential influence of Islamic religious authorities in preserving harmony between Shias and Sunnis. This report draws extensively from that work to provide guidance to policymakers in dealing with sectarian tensions in Pakistan.

In this report, we review the recent history of sectarian relations in Pakistan and emerging research from social psychology and political science on ethnic conflict and prejudice. We

explain the important role that religious authority has occupied in the development of Islam as well as the Pakistani government's efforts to involve Islamic clerics in the promotion of tolerance. We then present our survey methodology and findings before concluding with a list of recommendations drawn from our research.

Understanding the Roots of Sunni-Shia Conflict in Pakistan

Sunni-Shia relations in Pakistan remained largely peaceful until the late 1970s. Not only were Sunni-Shia relations nonviolent, they were also not particularly important when it came to politics. In the words of one expert, "Until the late 1970s, much of the Shi'i political activity in Pakistan lacked discernable signs of religious inspiration."⁸ This began to change in the early 1980s as then military dictator Zia ul-Haq implemented a nationwide Islamization policy, which privileged particular schools of extremist Sunni thought and began to polarize Sunni-Shia relations. Zia's regime reformed the constitution extensively, entrenching orthodox interpretations of Sunni Islam, which alienated both Shias and Barelvis.⁹ Such reforms included an ordinance to enforce *zakat* (religious tax), which allowed for the automatic deduction of this tithe from personal bank accounts, contradicting Shia jurisprudence.¹⁰ Islamic parties, such as the Jamaat-e-Islami, which had assisted the army in bringing down Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, were allowed to extend their influence into the bureaucracy and institutions of public education in exchange for supporting the military.

Zia's reforms followed in the wake of the Iranian Revolution of 1978–79. Sectarianism in the country became one of several arenas in a broader geopolitical competition between the governments of Saudi Arabia and Iran for influence in Pakistan. The anti-Soviet Afghan jihad, supported and financed by both the United States and Saudi Arabia, further fueled this proxy war. This funding stream strengthened and armed Sunni groups on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border and established a network of *madaris* (religious schools) following the Deobandi and Ahl-e-Hadith subsets of Sunni Islam throughout the country. In turn, Iran provided funding to Pakistani Shia clerics who had returned from studying in Najaf and Qom to establish their own religious seminaries in Punjab.¹¹

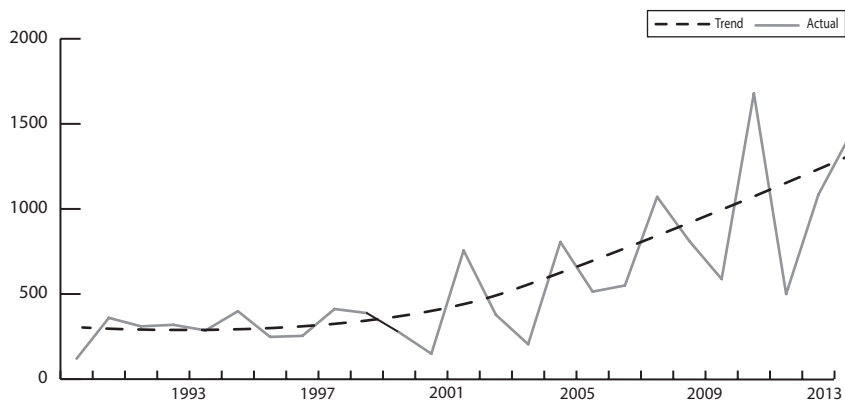
Punjab province—home to over half of Pakistan's population—became home to several sectarian organizations and militant groups that continue to operate in various forms today. In 1985, a group of Sunni clerics in Jhang district, led by Haq Nawaz Jhangvi, formed the anti-Shia Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP). The group operated as a political party, achieving some success in Punjab elections, but was involved in militant attacks as well. In response, the Sipah-e-Mohammad Pakistan (SMP), a Shia extremist group, was formed to defend the Shia community and allegedly carried out a number of retaliatory killings.

General Pervez Musharraf banned both the SSP and SMP in 2001–02. However, the SSP was reestablished under a new name, first as the Millat-i-Islamia Pakistan in 2003 and subsequently as the Ahle-Sunnat Wal-Jamaat (ASWJ). The ASWJ contested elections in 2013, despite the organization's formally banned status.¹² A militant offshoot of SSP that had formed in 1996, the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi—the Army of Jhangvi—is viewed as responsible for much of the sectarian violence occurring in Pakistan today and is said to form an integral part of the TTP.¹³ Such extremist groups consider Shias, as well as such subsets of Sunni Islam as Barelvis, as infidels deserving of death. The current ruling party, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), has been accused of turning a blind eye to ASWJ activities in exchange for help securing votes. During a by-election campaign for a provincial assembly seat in Jhang in 2010, then Punjab law minister Rana Sanaullah visited a madrasa affiliated with the ASWJ and was seen campaigning alongside its leader, Muhammad Ahmed Ludhianvi.¹⁴

Incidents have become increasingly dangerous, with an average of more than one thousand people killed or injured in sectarian attacks every year from 2009 to 2013, which is three times the annual rate during the 1990s.

According to data from media reports by the SATP since 1988, while the number of sectarian incidents has ebbed and flowed, the last five years have seen levels of violence average almost one hundred incidents per year. The rate is below the peak years of the early 1990s, but the incidents themselves have become increasingly dangerous, with an average of more than one thousand people killed or injured in sectarian attacks every year from 2009 to 2013, which is three times the annual rate during the 1990s (see figure 1).

Figure 1. Number Killed or Injured in Sectarian Attacks in Pakistan, 1989–2013



Source: South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP)

Though cities such as Quetta and Karachi have suffered relatively more than others in recent years, sectarian clashes have taken place in many parts of Pakistan. Some of the most deadly attacks have been those targeting the Hazara Shia community that lives primarily in Balochistan. An ethnic minority in both Pakistan and neighboring Afghanistan, and overwhelmingly Shia, the Hazara are especially vulnerable targets for groups such as the LeJ. Human Rights Watch estimates that “of Shias killed across Pakistan in 2012, around a quarter of the victims were Quetta Hazaras. In 2013, a little under half of those killed were from that community.”¹⁵ Many Hazara have relocated to other parts of Pakistan or sought asylum abroad.

Sectarian Conflict and the Promotion of Tolerance: Emerging Research

Sectarian violence can be thought of as a particular form of ethnic conflict, where conflict is motivated at least in part by the ascriptive identities—identities inherited by birth—of those involved. To understand and treat the causes of ethnic violence, many social scientists have studied the origins of attitudes about group prejudice. The research can be divided broadly into two distinct categories.¹⁶ On the one hand, microlevel behavioral research focuses on prejudice as the property of individuals, seeking to explain why people harbor negative beliefs toward certain groups and how these beliefs manifest themselves in opinion and behavior. On the other hand, macrolevel research privileges structural and institutional factors over individual cognitive processes. It is possible that individual attitudes and behaviors are the products of social dynamics at more aggregate levels, such as the institutional incentives generated in political or economic competition.

Though some find the link between prejudiced beliefs and prejudiced behavior to be tenuous, emerging research in social psychology suggests that social norms—defined as socially shared definitions of the way people behave or should behave—can powerfully

affect the determinants of individual behavior.¹⁷ These findings point to a psychological model of conflict reduction that prioritizes the targeting of social norms over personal beliefs to reduce prejudicial behavior over time. Among societal actors who can affect social norms, religious leaders traditionally have been crucial in defining the limits of acceptable behavior. In the context of sectarian relations in Pakistan, Shia and Sunni leaders arguably can play an especially important role in reducing tensions and engaging in peacebuilding work between the two communities.

Religious Authority and the Sunni-Shia Divide

Evaluating the potential role of Islamic religious leaders in promoting tolerance gets to the heart of the central divide between Sunni and Shia Muslims since shortly after the death of the Prophet Muhammad: legitimate religious authority. While the sectarian violence that has gripped Pakistan is not simply the unleashing of ancient religious hatreds, understanding these differing views on religious authority can be an important step in devising effective public engagement strategies.

The Shia-Sunni split originated in a dispute over who should lead the Muslim community following the Prophet's death in 632 CE. Shiism in its oldest and most literal sense upholds a privileged status of leadership for the family of Muhammad. Today it continues to place supreme authority in clerics situated at the apex of a formal religious hierarchy. Such clerics are considered models for reference and emulation (*marja-e-taqlid*) on all aspects of religious law and practice.¹⁸ By contrast, Sunni tradition has held that authority should fall to the person deemed by the elite of the community to be most capable. With fewer institutionalized mechanisms compelling believers to follow the teachings of a particular cleric, however, Sunni religious authority has become more fragmented, with those lacking formal religious accreditation often able to win significant followings.¹⁹

The institutionalization of a hierarchic clerical authority in Shia Islam has had important political effects. The highest-ranking Twelver Shia marja, Ali al-Sistani, is widely regarded as one of the most important powerbrokers in contemporary Iraq. Relying on a network of loyal clerics, Sistani has issued far-ranging and politically consequential edicts, including those urging the Shia of Iraq to restrain from unjustifiable retaliation against the Sunni community, first in early 2006 following the destruction of the Shia Al-Askari Mosque in Samarra, and again in 2014 in the wake of the capture of Iraqi territory by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Such actions have prompted some scholars to argue explicitly that Shia religious leaders are better equipped than their Sunni counterparts to contribute to conflict resolution.²⁰

Although the historical consolidation of Shia religious institutions occurred far from the Shia communities in South Asia, since the 1978–79 Islamic revolution in Iran, the doctrine of *velayat-e faqih*—which gives the Shia clergy the right to rule under a leading jurist versed in sharia law—has gained influence among many previously politically quiescent Pakistani Shias. According to one expert, “Shiism in Pakistan became more centralized, more clericalist, more Iranianized, and more integrated with the international Shia community.”²¹ This may overstate the degree of consolidation within the Pakistani Shia community; Hassan Abbas distinguishes between traditionalist Shia clergy who remained allied with the Iraqi marja and modern reformers embodied by the pro-Iranian Imamia Students Organization (ISO).²² But it nonetheless points to the sense of confidence Pakistani Shia gained after the Iranian Revolution. Interviews conducted in Pakistan further indicate that Shia clerics today continue to believe that they have wide-ranging influence over their followers in religious, personal, and political matters, including a special role to play in reducing sectarian tensions.²³

In a Pew survey in 2013, 54 percent of Pakistan Muslims said that religious leaders should have at least some influence in politics. For their part, many religious clergy and authorities across the sectarian divide consider playing a role in politics to be a religious obligation.

Engaging Religious Clerics: Efforts at Promoting Tolerance in Pakistan

In a PIPS survey in 2008–09, 55 percent of the 1,600 respondents believed that religious scholars and clerics were serving Pakistani society and Islam better than political and military leadership and academics or intellectuals.²⁴ In a Pew survey in 2013, 54 percent of Pakistan Muslims said that religious leaders should have at least some influence in politics.²⁵ For their part, many religious clergy and authorities across the sectarian divide consider playing a role in politics to be a religious obligation. This set of findings led PIPS to organize a national seminar in June 2011 that brought together 46 scholars of different Islamic traditions to “discuss the role of religious scholars in promotion of peaceful and tolerant religious/sectarian narratives in Pakistani society and to develop an understanding of appropriate ways to create a constituency for peace by engaging religious scholars.”²⁶

The above suggests that, despite the aforementioned religious fragmentation—particularly among Sunni—that limits their institutional authority, religious clerics and scholars may be uniquely positioned to influence people’s beliefs about social norms, especially to counter extremist ideologies that may confuse public opinion in the name of religion. Through their sermons at mosques and *imambargahs* or in their pedagogical role in religious seminaries, clerics have a regular platform through which to espouse tolerant messages. In Pakistan, where religious authorities often hold important political posts as well, this influence may be all the more significant. In December 2013, leaders of the Sunni Barelvi and Ahl-e-Hadith sects and Shia Ahl-e-Tashih sect signed a nine-point code of conduct in the presence of government officials in an effort to ease tensions between the two sides.²⁷ In June 2014, the Pakistan Ulama Council also issued a statement saying that no Islamic sect could be declared infidel. Efforts such as these by religious clerics should be encouraged.

The Pakistan state has also made some effort to engage clerics in promoting inter-sectarian and interfaith relations. In April 2014, the Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform hosted a roundtable conference on interfaith harmony, the first in a series aiming to bring together clerics from a variety of religious traditions. Finally, there have been grassroots efforts to combat sectarian intolerance through cross-sectarian religious forums. In 2013, local businessman Zahid Iqbal established a sect-free mosque in Islamabad where everyone is encouraged to “start praying together—in whichever way they like—under the same roof.”²⁸ These initiatives show that there are local Pakistanis actively confronting sectarian intolerance and working to promote peaceful coexistence.

A Survey of Sunni-Shia Tolerance

Are Sunnis and Shias equally likely to endorse statements promoting tolerance of the other sect? What characteristics do more tolerant individuals have in common? How can clerical leaders promote communal harmony between the two religious communities? Because the Pakistani state does not collect data on sectarian affiliation, no statistical information exists pertaining to the distribution of sects across provinces or across districts within each province. Therefore, to identify and interview sufficient numbers of Shias as well as Sunnis, we designed a survey sampling strategy to randomly select respondents within the vicinity of Shia and Sunni houses of worship across urban and rural districts in Punjab province.²⁹ In Balochistan, the ongoing security situation made it necessary to constrain our activities to Quetta, where we carried out a representative survey. The surveys allow us to construct a representative demographic profile of two distinct populations: Shias and Sunnis across Punjab living within the vicinity of Shia and Sunni houses of worship, and a representative sample of Quetta, the capital of the province of Balochistan.

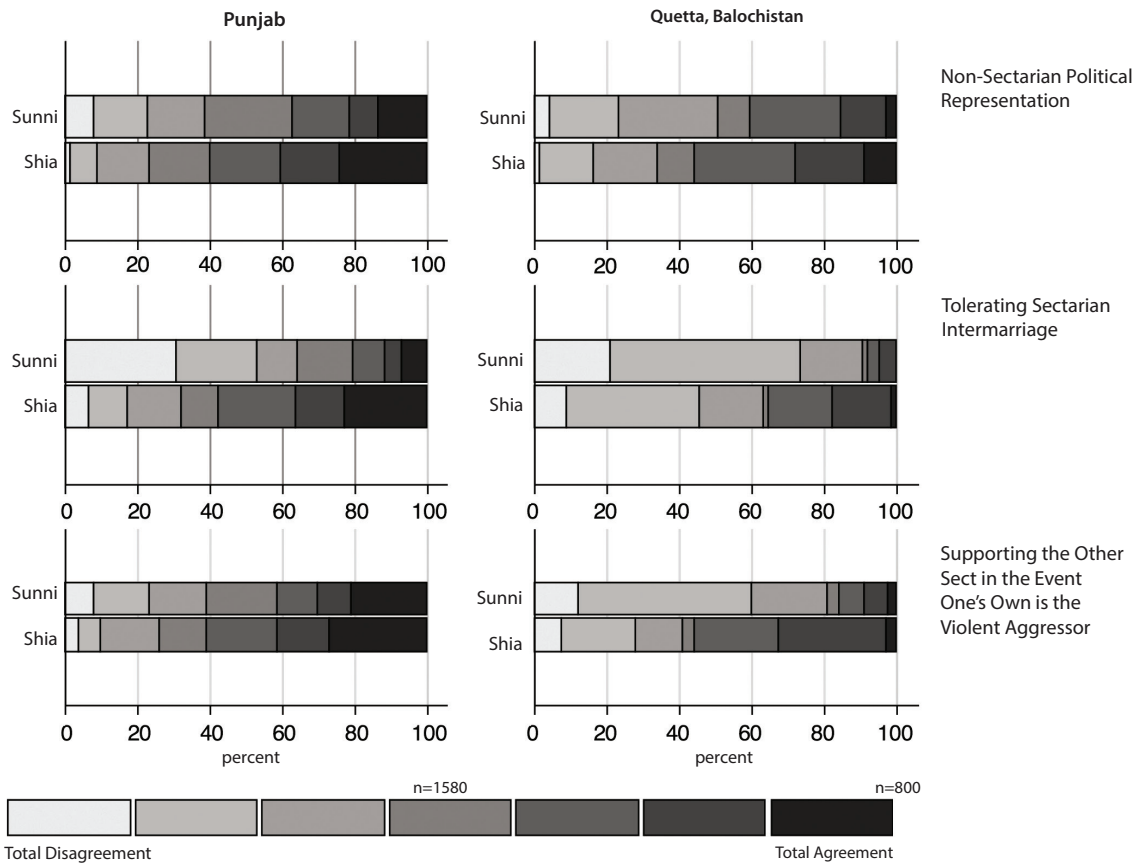
The surveys asked a series of questions intended to gauge respondents' tolerance of the sect other than the one they belonged to. We were particularly interested in measuring agreement with three concepts: sectarian political representation ("To what extent do you believe that a politician of a different sect can represent your concerns or solve the problems you and your community face?"), sectarian social distance ("To what extent do you agree with the statement that parents should not punish their children for marrying members of different sects, and that Sunnis should be free to marry a Shia and Shia free to marry Sunni?"), and sectarian allegiance and violence initiation ("To what extent do you agree with the statement that, if violence arises between Shia and Sunni communities, you should support the other sect if your group initiated the violence?").

We measured agreement on a seven-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating complete disagreement with the statement and 7 indicating complete agreement. Thus, higher numbers indicated greater tolerance. In addition, we asked respondents about their views concerning a third religious group, the Ahmadi community, widely ostracized by mainstream Pakistani society and living in virtual hiding.³⁰ In particular, we asked whether respondents believed that the Ahmadi community should be encouraged to participate in public life, whether Ahmadis should be provided economic and educational opportunities, and whether respondents would oppose an Ahmadi moving in next door.

The survey questions permit the emergence of a detailed profile of respondents, offering individual-level data on personal religiosity, political attitudes, income levels, education, exposure to outside cultures, and personal experiences with violence. Some of the results aligned with expectation, particularly in light of the sensitive nature of questions on faith and

Figure 2. Survey Responses from Sunnis and Shias on Sectarian Tolerance

Distribution of Survey Responses on Sectarian Tolerance



politics and the context of local sectarian hostilities. Shia respondents consistently endorsed statements favoring tolerance at higher rates than Sunni respondents. The generally elevated levels of Shia agreement relative to Sunnis perhaps indicates that Shias' minority status in Pakistan has made them especially sensitive to both the dangers of intolerance and the benefits of sectarian harmony.

In Punjab, roughly six in ten Shia respondents expressed some level of agreement (5 or above on the Likert scale) with statements about nonsectarian political representation, openness to sectarian intermarriage, and support to the other side in the event that one's own community initiates sectarian violence. By contrast, among the Punjabi Sunnis interviewed, overall agreement with any of these statements never went beyond 40 percent, although between 15 and 20 percent were neutral (4 on the Likert scale). Sunni respondents expressed pronounced disagreement on the question of sectarian intermarriage, with roughly one in three Sunnis surveyed indicating total disagreement (1 on the Likert scale).

Among respondents from Quetta, total agreement with any of the statements was generally rare.³¹ Shia respondents again expressed overall levels of agreement with our statements in higher proportions than Sunnis. There was general Shia disagreement with the notion of sectarian intermarriage, but most Shias expressed some level of agreement with statements on nonsectarian political representation and supporting the other side if the Shia community initiated sectarian violence. Results for Sunni respondents in Quetta were troubling. A majority of Sunni respondents in Quetta expressed some level of disagreement with all of our statements on sectarian tolerance, with pronounced disagreement on sectarian intermarriage and the question of supporting the other side in the case of Sunni-initiated violence.

Shias in both Quetta and Punjab were also more likely to express tolerant views of Ahmadis than Sunnis, believing that they deserved both to be more greatly represented in the public sphere and to have economic and educational opportunities provided to them. There were no statistically significant differences between Sunnis and Shias when it came to accepting Ahmadis as neighbors. Also, both Sunni and Shia respondents in Balochistan were more supportive of greater Ahmadi representation in public life and economic and educational opportunities than their counterparts in Punjab. For example, 68 percent of Sunnis surveyed in Punjab did not support greater Ahmadi representation in public life (3 or below on the Likert scale), while only 35 percent of Sunnis in Balochistan held this opinion.

Going beyond the sectarian divide, other patterns are noticeable.³² Even accounting for other factors, such as education, sectarian identity, and personal religiosity,³³ high income levels are associated with greater tolerance of sectarian intermarriage. Surprisingly, high-income individuals were less open to the proposition that politicians of another sect could represent their interests and were less likely to hold their own sect accountable if it perpetrated violence. In Quetta, highly educated individuals were more likely to agree with messages of tolerance, while there was no difference among more- or less-educated respondents in Punjab. Attending religious seminaries was not a predictor of tolerance. Individuals who attended Islamic madrasas were no more or less likely to express agreement with the messages than others in the sample. In Punjab, religious and less religious individuals did not report statistically significant differences in attitudes. In Quetta, among Sunnis, religious observance was associated with stronger endorsements of our tolerance statements; among Shias, we observed the opposite effect.

The more concerned an individual was with extremist religious groups operating in society, the more likely he was to express tolerant sectarian views. This was consistent in both Punjab and Quetta. In Punjab, those who said that most or all of their friends were members of a different sect were also significantly more likely to express agreement with our statements of tolerance.

The more concerned an individual was with extremist religious groups operating in society, the more likely he was to express tolerant sectarian views. This was consistent in both Punjab and Quetta.

Strong regional variation was observed in Punjab province, where belief in messages of tolerance varied greatly from district to district. Local conditions are worthy of much further study, but preliminary statistical analysis suggests that district-wide measures of education and violent incidents are not significant predictors of survey respondents' answers.

Can Religious Clerics Promote Sectarian Tolerance?

Are Shias and Sunnis in Pakistan more likely to agree with tolerance statements if a religious cleric endorses them? Do clerics affiliated with the government have more or less sway than those clerics who are considered politically unaffiliated or nonpartisan?

We embedded an experiment within our survey to measure an endorsement effect by religious clerics. We randomly selected some survey respondents to receive the same statements of tolerance given to other respondents, but also with the endorsement of a generic Islamic clerical authority. In some versions of our survey we varied the sectarian identity of the cleric—as Shia or Sunni—as well as cues indicating affiliation with the Pakistani government.³⁴ Contrary to expectations that co-sectarian clerical endorsements would generally be more effective than cross-sectarian endorsements and that nonpartisan cues would be more effective than partisan cues in prompting respondents to agree with our tolerance statements, we observed no statistically significant effect in any direction. Also, neither Sunni nor Shia respondents were more likely to express agreement with the messages of tolerance when they were attributed to religious clerics.

There are several possible reasons why our embedded experiment did not yield statistically significant results. In reality, Islamic authorities in Punjab and Quetta may simply not have the ability to influence the general public's views on sectarian relations and respond to—rather than actively shape—the views of those around them. Given the qualitative studies and interviews that we conducted, however, we deem this unlikely. Research routinely suggests that Islamic authorities, and particularly Shia clerics, exert significant influence in defining what is and is not legitimate religious activity. It is likely, however, that such authority is highly personalized and that these authorities are most effective in influencing the views of their direct followers. Hence, a religious cleric whom people do not know may not be able to influence opinions, even if the cleric has impressive qualifications or affiliations. A third explanation for our results is that the constraints of our survey limited the realism of our experimental treatment. Due to ethical considerations, the identities of the clerics used in the endorsements were hypothetical, with respondents debriefed following the survey. Within these limitations, we had expected that any statistically significant effect would represent a weak approximation of the real-world effect of an endorsement by a living and well-regarded Islamic cleric. Although we did not observe evidence to suggest that the endorsements of clerical authorities causes people to agree with statements of tolerance at higher rates than those who received such statements without the endorsement, we believe this remains a topic worthy of continued study.

Recommendations

Holding intolerant opinions about another group of people does not necessarily lead to committing acts of violence against them, but popular opinion can constrain the range of feasible policy interventions, particularly in Pakistan today, to protect minority groups. In this study, where significant proportions of the Sunni majority disagreed with pro-tolerance statements on sectarianism, this issue is of particular gravity. The questions of how to understand the formation of popular opinion and influence it on questions of tolerance remain open.

In designing policy interventions, however, there are several sound options, and this report offers the following conclusions and recommendations:

- There are Pakistanis promoting peaceful coexistence between Sunnis and Shias at governmental and nongovernmental levels. Some are formally recognized religious authorities. Others lack significant credentials and organizational support. They should be encouraged and presented opportunities to engage on this issue at both official and grassroots levels. Further research should focus on studying the effects of these real-world activists to determine what types of messages are most effective at shaping individual beliefs.
- Changing attitudes on tolerance in the short term is difficult, but emerging research suggests that this may be alleviated if policy interventions focus less on changing particular beliefs about other groups and more on changing the norms that govern the behaviors used to express such beliefs. Given their prominent social roles in defining acceptable behavior, Islamic clerics could be among elites especially well suited to shaping such norms in general and norms concerning Sunni-Shia interactions in particular.
- There is also widespread sentiment in Pakistan that Islamic clerics have an especially important role to play in promoting tolerance. Many different kinds of policy interventions are available, and each should be carefully examined in detail. Some clerics have spoken in public conferences. Others have helped draft codes of conduct to guide the behavior of their followers in respecting members of other sectarian communities.
- Care must be taken to identify authorities with actual influence. Religious networks are often highly personal and localized, existing beyond traditional centers of learning. Our survey results indicate that clerics who are unknown are almost certain to be ineffective. This makes designing and coordinating large-scale policy interventions challenging. Careful piloting is therefore crucial. Additional research to understand how ordinary Pakistanis, and Muslims in general, select which religious authorities to follow might contribute to our understanding of Muslim religiosity and potential influence networks.
- Some commonly held beliefs about the factors linked with holding intolerant attitudes—such as attending religious seminaries in Pakistan and being less educated—were not borne out by our survey and should be reexamined. More detailed research attempting to discern how curriculum, pedagogy, and peer beliefs affect individual beliefs regarding sectarian tolerance might contribute to a fuller understanding of the consequences of religious instruction.
- Sectarian violence in Pakistan cannot be divorced from an evolving political context that has witnessed the passing of laws that discriminate on the basis of religion and that have gradually redefined the notion of national identity along an increasingly sectarian basis. Efforts must be devoted to initiating a broader national dialogue to sensitize Pakistanis, including clerics, on the contributions that members of minority communities have made to Pakistan.

Notes

1. Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion and Public Life, "Mapping the Global Muslim Population," October 2009, available at www.pewforum.org/2009/10/07/mapping-the-global-muslim-population (accessed September 19, 2014). See also CIA World Factbook, "Field Listing: Religions," available at www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2122.html (accessed September 19, 2014). More recently, Pew has estimated India as having more Muslims than Pakistan. See Pew Research, "Table: Religious Composition by Country, in Numbers," December 18, 2012, available at www.pewforum.org/2012/12/18/table-religious-composition-by-country-in-numbers (accessed September 19, 2014).
2. Pakistan retains small Hindu and Christian minorities as well.
3. The South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP) numbers those killed in sectarian attacks in 2013 at 525, while the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan estimates that 687 were killed. See SATP, "Sectarian Violence in Pakistan: 1989–2014," available at www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/database/sect-killing.htm (accessed September 19, 2014); Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, "State of Human Rights in 2013," available at www.hrcp-web.org/hrcpweb/report14/AR2013.pdf (accessed September 19, 2014).
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18. In this report, when we refer to Shia Islam in Pakistan, we invariably mean Twelver Shiism, to which the vast majority of Pakistani Shia adhere.
19. While we highlight that religious authority in Shia Islam is more institutionalized relative to Sunni Islam, these differences are not absolute. Clerics with relatively wide-ranging authority can be found in Sunni Islam, while there are well-known clerics among Pakistani Shias who lack formal training or status.
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23. Interviews, Islamabad, December 2013.
24. When the Pew Global Attitudes project asked Pakistanis to assess the positive or negative influence of various institutions and individuals on Pakistan, they found slightly different results. The entity that the largest percentage of Pakistanis assessed as having a positive influence was the military, followed by religious leaders, the media, and the court system. Lower percentages of Pakistanis ascribed positive influence to the national government, the police, and President Zardari. See Pew Global Attitudes Survey.
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28. Mubashir Zaidi, "Pakistan's First Sect-Free Mosque Calls for End to Discrimination," *Dawn*, July 19, 2013. Iqbal, as imam, indicated that he did not ask about sectarian affiliations among those who attend the mosque. Interview, Islamabad, December 2013.
29. We administered the survey among an additional four hundred Shias chosen through a screening process (we identified the sectarian identity of the respondent prior to administering the complete survey) also within the vicinity of *imambargahs*.
30. Adherents of an Islamic religious movement founded at the end of the nineteenth century, Ahmadis consider themselves Muslim and believe that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was sent by God to continue and revitalize the teachings of Prophet Mohammed. Pakistan has the largest Ahmadi community in the world, but Ahmadis have faced longstanding and state-sponsored repression. In 1974, the government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto amended

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the constitution of Pakistan to declare Ahmadis “non-Muslims” and passed laws restricting their freedom of association and assembly. A decade later Pakistani authorities issued an ordinance making it a felony for Ahmadis to call themselves Muslim or in any way attempt to “act” as Muslims, for example by claiming to be Muslim on passports or national identification cards. As religious violence has increased throughout the country, Ahmadis have been targeted despite their efforts to maintain a low profile.

31. Overall disagreement by both groups surveyed in Quetta was more pronounced compared to Punjab. Although suggestive and worthy of future study, we caution against drawing strong conclusions from this simple aggregate comparison, as the sampling methodology differs between surveys and therefore represents profiles of distinct populations.
32. These correlations were determined using multiple regression analysis to estimate the relationship between various demographic and social variables and our measures of sectarian tolerance. The regression framework is one of the most commonly used tools in social science and can help clarify these relationships by allowing us to explicitly control for, or hold constant, many factors that simultaneously affect the outcome variable of tolerance. All claims of statistical significance result from two-sided tests for at least the 90 percent level.
33. The concept of religiosity was measured by taking into account how often respondents indicated that they prayed, fasted during Ramadan, and attended mosque for prayers.
34. In Quetta, sample size dictated that all religious endorsements were by nominally Sunni clerics.

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