Militarised Safety: The Politics of Exclusion

Arsalan Rafique and Ayesha Sarfraz

At a time of escalating global conflict, cities and urban centers have become the battlefields for contemporary warfare. With urbanisation rates soaring across global economies, cities have evolved into networked entities that are physically unfortified and seemingly borderless. Militarised entities operating within urban shells are well aware of advantages the urban infrastructure and institutions provide them with.[1] As critical nodes within a globalised system of exchange,[2] cities are now not only the sites but also the very medium of warfare.[3] Urban arenas in developing countries like Pakistan constitute a wide and complex array of economic, demographic and geopolitical factors, which have hitherto proven evasively incomprehensible to the discourse surrounding cities in conflict. It therefore becomes imperative to understand not only the new typologies of threats but also the role of the developing world in the urban century specifically.

Conflicts such as sectarian violence, socio-economic friction and the threat of terror attacks that used to be at the periphery of developing-world cities have grown into global trends that define the outcomes of geopolitical events across the globe. They have also become crucial to the everyday mobility of citizens in the urban battle space and affect the functionality of state mechanisms. With layered scales and levels of conflict and violence, the distinctions between wars within nations and wars between nations dissolve, leaving military/civilian binaries inseparably intertwined and complex.[4] The effect of this radical blurring proves to be quite precarious for citizens as well as governing bodies, rendering 'life itself [as] war';[5] engendering an ongoing, boundless exercise that places almost everybody within the xenophobic targeting mechanisms deployed in cities all over the globe. Cities in developing countries provide an insight into the lives of those who reside as functioning civilians while circumnavigating a perpetual state of chaos, which dictates their everyday lives.

The idea of a globally networked system of power and economics is certainly not new.[6] A more updated analysis of a 'networked urban world' would confirm that cities as vital conduits for conflict have direct or indirect linkages with global issues, resulting in an entanglement of physical scales – from the global to the neighborhood; interventions at any scale have direct consequences on all the others through multiple expressions. The Arab Spring did not reach the same conclusions in Egypt and Syria, but sheer political mobilisation of urban masses across the Middle East was undoubtedly accelerated by broadcast images of the spectacle at Tahrir Square. The idea of revolution being tied intrinsically to public space was exemplified in the following months: populations in Libya, Syria, Hong Kong, Brazil and Pakistan, amongst others, recognised the potency of converting their symbolic public spaces, which include social media platforms, into active battlegrounds. Furthermore the standard techniques of urban control – cordoned off security zones, walling, tracking, targeting, and biometric profiling – are similar in Gaza, Baghdad, New York and Karachi,

rendering the contested cities as connected, consistent and harmonious – at least to the state security mechanisms. The attacks on Paris and Brussels have led major European cities to rethink their perceived distance from the war zones and to reassess the idea of security and global inclusion. Combined with the mass migration from Syria and other affected countries, the situation is becoming more complex by the day. The essence of the European Union being borderless and permeable, as it stands today, is on the brink of malfunction. It is already apparent that the global issue of terrorism is proving detrimental to tolerance and diversity, creating conflicts that are offshoots of a wider epidemic. What was perceived as a condition of the East is slowly transfixing itself onto the entire globe, flattening geographies and de-territorialising the notions of threat and threatened in its wake.

The fragility of the targets and the global impact of conflict on complex urban networks pose a dilemma that state mechanisms, even with numerical advantage and technological superiority, have been unable to address so far. State-sanctioned militaries have faced an unprecedented setback in neutralising insurgencies, which do not rely on matching strengths, or direct confrontation, to balance the odds against the global super powers and their shared resources. For instance, it is disturbing and revealing that a handful of undetected armed men can sabotage Pakistan's entire natural gas distribution system by walking a few miles from their homes in Dera Bugti with great ease.[7] The mobility of the attackers in Paris in November 2015 or the Mumbai attacks in 2008 further testify to the fact that even with supposedly sophisticated countermeasures of defense, such as satellite surveillance and advanced weaponry, the threat is still able to effectively permeate the city by means of camouflaging itself within the urban fabric. The attack on Bacha Khan University in Charsadda in January 2016, in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan,

is an iteration of the December 2014 attacks on the school in neighboring Peshawar where more than 140 children were killed during a five-hour siege of the campus. The small number of attackers in the above-mentioned cases and their disproportionate impact is another indicator of how institutions and infrastructure are targets of an extremely mobile and elusive threat. Perpetrators have proved how vulnerable the idea of perceived security is by circumventing systems in one way or another to create more complex catastrophes.

The Global Terrorism Index Report 2015 stated that terrorism has remained concentrated with most of the activities befalling developing countries. Furthermore roughly 70–75 percent of attacks were aimed at entities within various cities across these countries, again reinforcing the position of vulnerability of comparatively denser populations with a diverse involvement and role in shaping the fate of said nations. The unique responses and aftermaths of unfolding terror in these cities are highly enlightening pieces of information which shed light upon the vividly unreal mechanisms shaping the urban space in developing countries within the global landscape of conflict. With the statistics of conflict zones around the world set to include previously safe urban hubs such as European and Far Eastern cities the need to study the wide spectrum of threats and targets alike becomes obvious, and pressing. By concentrating on Pakistan as a country where war and peace exist simultaneously and perpetually, the aim of this article is to preach caution as well as to learn from the heavy toll on Pakistani society and cities as a whole.

Since 2001, Pakistan has been heavily invested in the so-called 'War on Terror'. Starting off as peripheral allies, they are directly engaging with the threat that was once bred in the lawless regions of the country. This *engagement* has seeped into the major cities as the army's actions in the Federally

Administered Tribal Area evoke militarised reactions that target the lively urban hubs that were insulated from the direct effects of war. Societal and ethnic differences have been made prominent by a massive influx of refugees testing the limits of cities. Furthermore, sleeper cells have been plugged seamlessly into the fabric of the city. While the targets are innumerable, their motives to instigate violence can span from commercial and territorial gains to political strong-arming and sectarian subjugation. These factors make cities in Pakistan highly volatile and are reflective of how the urban fabric is increasingly becoming a contested and divisive entity.

A complex amalgamation of both global and regional factors cause these unique conditions for conflict to thrive perpetually within the ever-growing expanse of cities in Pakistan, and the developing world in general. With an increasing number and frequency of events leading to unrest across the country, there seems to be no time to mourn and remember the dead collectively. News broadcasts and social media patterns are testament to this short-term memory where headlines and comments keep piling upon one another, which in turn creates a blur of events, allowing the observers to create their own narratives. Survival becomes the mode of operation when one dwells in the cities of perpetual insecurity. Remarkably, these hubs remain alive with pockets of functional compromise as a skewed normality resumes after temporary disturbances. Even in completely war-torn countries like Iraq and Syria, a sense of the civic is present and visible, albeit barely. A closer look reveals that rather than isolating the conflict and the threat, cities in Pakistan absorb it, making them porous entities that tread on the border of resilience and dysfunctionality. Conflict, in cities of the developing world, has become a part of daily life. In order to function, their inhabitants have to conjure mechanisms that are not sanctioned by any official entity but are rather *hyper-situationist* exercises of circumnavigation

around the various obstacles that lie across the cities.

This article presents an unfolding history of violence in Pakistan as a causal study into the functionality of cities, their streets and public spaces. This is an attempt to make sense of the various factors that play a major role in defining how cities are locally perceived and navigated and what mechanisms are devised to keep one as safe and functional as possible in these volatile conditions. Furthermore, we will analyse how cities have embraced the violence on their streets and in their buildings' ornamentation, thereby actively playing multiple roles in the enactment and proliferation of both local and global conflicts.

Divided nation: the case of Pakistan
Today Pakistan is one of the countries in the world most affected by terrorism. In the past twenty-five years more than fifty thousand people have lost their lives to terrorism, the national economy has incurred losses estimated in billions of dollars, and the social fabric of Pakistan's society and cities has been exposed to immense stress.[8] Yet the current situation in the country cannot be fully comprehended based on the last 20 or so years of conflict alone. It has a history of violence, disguised in almost every political move and revealed in how citizens conduct their everyday lives. A mere retelling of the history would not only be redundant, but also prove insufficient in understanding how major cities like Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Gilgit and Quetta (the five provincial capitals) have evolved alongside the conflicts that they endure. [Fig. 1]

The very idea of diversity has historically been used to create instability in the region. The British policy of 'divide and rule' can be quoted in this context as a mechanism to maintain imperial rule by identifying pre-existing ethno-religious factions and then manipulating them in order to prevent any possibility of a unified uprising.[9] This eventually

festered and in 1947 resulted in the division of the Indian subcontinent into what is today India and Pakistan, with Kashmir as the disputed region that is still the core of the troubles between the two states. It was one of the most violent migrations in history and left more than fifteen million uprooted, and between one and two million dead.[10] These countries have had the principle of divisiveness and exclusion of the 'other' as the foundations on which they were legitimised as independent nation states. These were the first roots of the xenophobia that to this day still dictates the course of regional history.

Fractures in the societal fabric became starkly visible across urban centers in the region as the losses from mass migrations started becoming apparent. Pre-partition Karachi, the largest city and the first capital, was 47.6 percent Hindu while Delhi, India's capital, was comprised of a roughly 30 percent Muslim population. In the following decade, Karachi hardly had any Hindu population left whereas Muslims vacated Delhi by the hundreds of thousands. As cities became less diverse and moved towards homogeneity, the drive and intensity for conflict increased and tolerance decreased, which is manifested in the fragmentation of the society and the urban fabric in different factions. The division of East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, was the first of many fractures within the flawed idea of unity under the banner of one religion, as we can see in many other manifestations on micro levels.

Pakistan's geographic location has been vital in shaping not only its own destiny but also that of its neighbors. The Cold War brought Pakistan into the foray of global politics, with demands of allegiance being made of many previous neutral countries. The Afghan War fought against the Russians had Pakistan playing the role of a conduit between the US, Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan, training and arming jihadists that had been facilitated by military dictatorships which have plagued Pakistan's independent history for a long time. Internal instability

was increasing, with the dictator General Zia-ul-Haq overtly promoting a right-wing *Wahabbi* sect of Islam, popularised by Saudi interests. After the Soviet Afghan War, many immigrants and different groups of fighters, including Taliban who had trans-border ethnic and cultural ties with the Pakhtuns of the Federally Adminisitered Tribal Areas (FATA), were welcomed into the country as future assets to realise its regional ambitions.[11] While immigrants found sanctuary in various urban hubs, 'warriors' were recruited by the government through political cover and financial aid, as well as autonomy to function within *madrassas* (religious schools) which were left undeniably unchecked. Throughout the 1990s, events in Afghanistan were dictated by the mountainous regions of North West Pakistan, which served the country and its broader allies in Saudi Arabia and the US.

The situation changed after the World Trade Centre attacks of 11 September 2001. The global war on terror was primed to be exported to many parts of the world, and the effects are visible today. It was undoubtedly a tough situation for Pakistan, which was once again under a military regime (curiously, just like during the Soviet-Afghan War) that had deep-seated interests in and sympathies for the militants harboured on both sides of the country's western border. Furthermore, careful treading was advised in the state's internal circuits, in part because of the fact that the militant organisations are not only confined to the northwestern border territory but have spread out across the country during the years before 9/11.

When Pakistan's complicity in the 'War on Terror' was violently challenged by the Taliban and other militant factions who were against US involvement in the region, the government and the army realised the urgency as well as their responsibility to fight extremism head-on, thus making this war their own.[12]
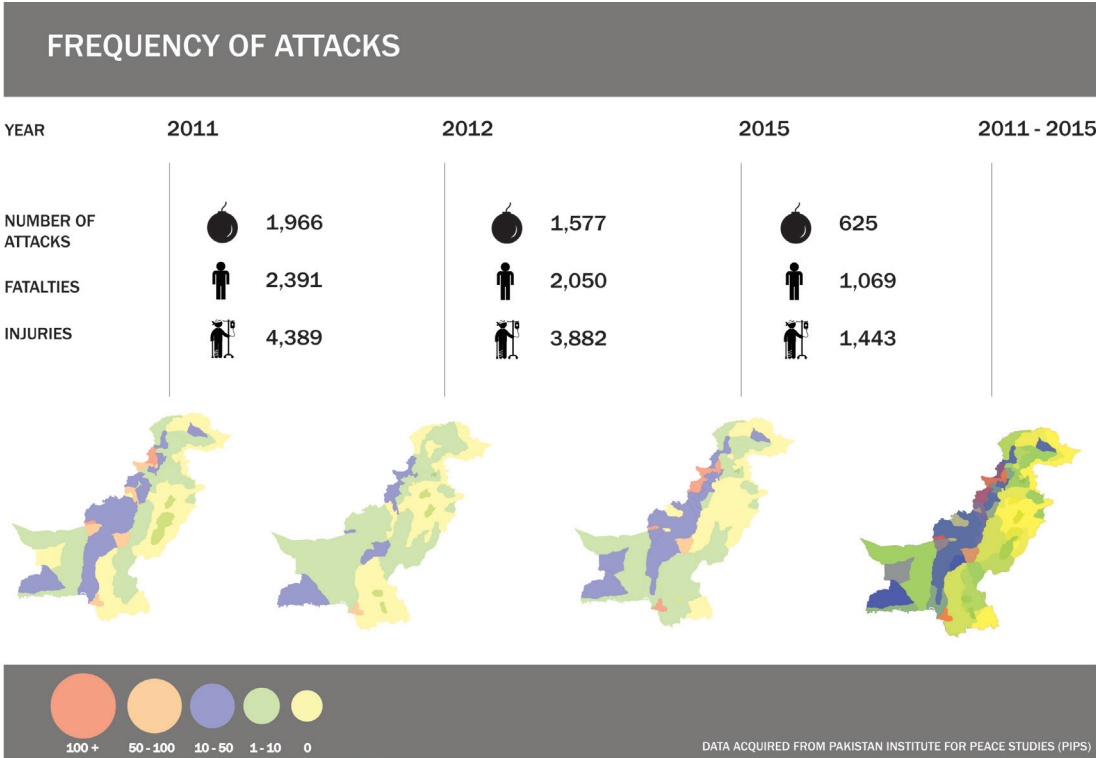
FREQUENCY OF ATTACKS

YEAR	2011	2012	2015	2011 - 2015
NUMBER OF ATTACKS	1,966	1,577	625	
FATALTIES	2,391	2,050	1,069	
INJURIES	4,389	3,882	1,443	

100 + 50 - 100 10 - 50 1 - 10 0

DATA ACQUIRED FROM PAKISTAN INSTITUTE FOR PEACE STUDIES (PIPS)

Fig. 1: Frequency of violent attacks nation wide. Map: author.

What results from this direct onslaught against recently outlawed extremist outfits is an unprecedented increase in securitisation across key urban areas within Pakistan. In a society already battling to embrace differences of opinion, citizens became further removed from each other, as the insidious impact on their daily lives increased and their interactions with other citizens diminished. The migration of internally displaced persons has also added to the friction between different ethnic groups. In a cultural landscape where more than seventy local languages are spoken, communication and cooperation have evidently become strained, which leads to reliance solely upon the most immediate support networks.[13] Neighborhoods that were once heterogeneous in their demographics are becoming starkly parsed, territorial, intolerant and hostile to outsiders.

(In)security: the rise of urban introversion
Segregation and intolerance have replaced the vibrancy of the heterogeneous aggregations of diversity that were once symbolic of South Asian cities. In 1947, when Pakistan had just gained independence, close to 23 percent of its population was non-Muslim. Today that figure has aggressively declined to approximately three percent.[14] Furthermore, religious minorities, including Islamic factions, have suffered and been the targets of attacks, including forced conversions amongst other forms of violence.

The variegated level of conflicting interests and ideas of the diverse sects and strata of society in Pakistan have had a significant impact on its urban fabric. There has been a visible ghettoisation of minorities who have become increasingly vulnerable with the rising intensity of conflict, as was the case with the arson attack in the Christian community in Badami Bagh in Lahore in March 2013.[15] However, it is not only the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum that is being ghettoised. The city's elite also tend to cocoon themselves in their 'safe' ghettos, often articulated as gated communities. This phenomenon is especially evident in the army cantonments that double as elite civilian residential quarters around the country. Both typologies reflect introversion and vulnerability and speak volumes about social control. But by the creation of protective bubbles in cities with high crime rates, these enclaves also cause a drastic shrinking of the public domain, challenging democracy and polarising space.[16] As a result, these pockets of space perpetuate divisions which translate into various forms of repression and control such as exclusive access to safety. The *demonisation of space* through the exclusionary attitude in turn has an antagonising effect on the environment.[17] [Figs. 2a, 2b, 2c]

As Sobia Ahmad Kakar observes, that with the focus of state authorities in overlooking informal governance over the blind spots in the city, a number of low-income settlements start gaining relevance as 'breeding grounds' for terrorism and other subversive channels.[18] For instance, Sultanabad, a low-income high-density settlement located in the neighboring areas of one of Karachi's highest security zones, is reported to be controlled by the outlawed terrorist organization, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).[19] This polarity and proximity coupled together inevitably increases the volatility and the potential for conflict in already vulnerable environs.

In order to minimise damage and ensure the safety of the immediate support networks, communities that are threatened and targeted on a regular basis are forced to reconfigure their location within the city on the basis of anticipated attacks.[20] A visible introversion is practiced with paranoid self-policing, multiple checkpoints and an aggressive demarcation of habitable limits as *modus operandi*. Marriabad, a Shia Hazara town in Quetta, is a case in point. Instead of the prosperous expanding community it was in the 1980s, the Hazara minority
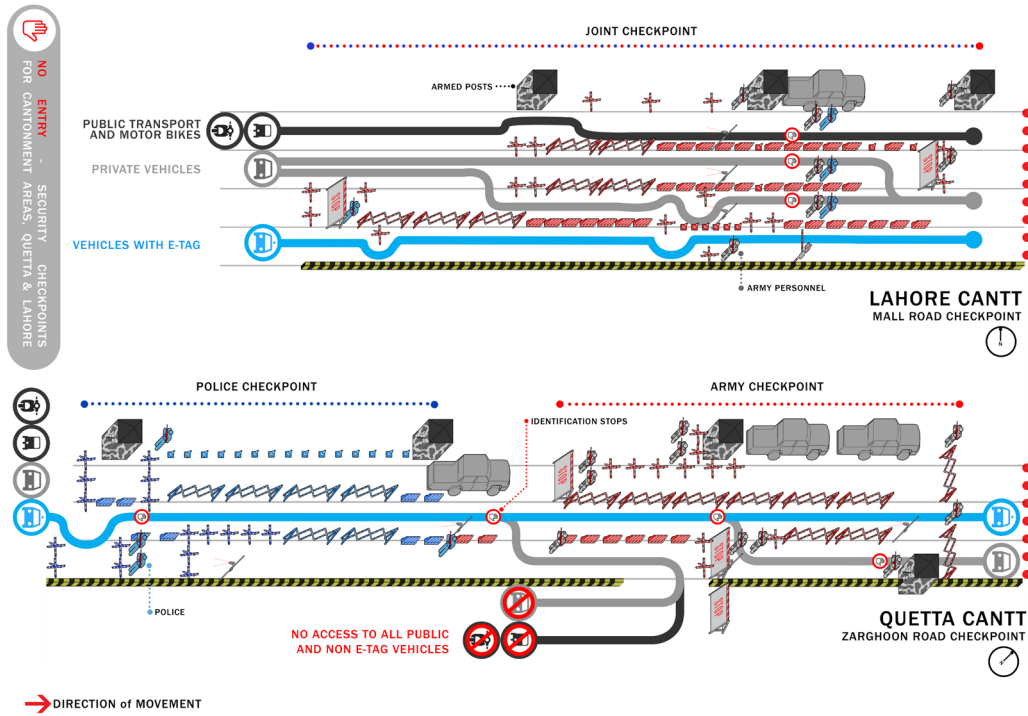
Fig. 2a

Fig. 2b

Fig. 2c

Fig. 2a: Cantonment checkpoints in Lahore and Quetta. Map: author.
Fig. 2b: Cantonment checkpoint, Lahore. Photo: author.
Fig. 2c: Cantonment checkpoint, Lahore. Photo: author.

has now confined themselves to an extremely restricted area. The perceived threat and the threatened have become inseparably intertwined yet starkly distinct within the city limits. This particular instance can also be seen as an attempt to homogenise cities in myopic ethno-nationalist terms where cultural diversity is antagonised and viewed as a 'cultural pollutant'.[21]

Another typology is the compound Nine Zero in Karachi, the headquarters of the powerful political party, the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM). The party was founded to represent the interests of the *Mohajirs*, the migrants who poured in after the partition and though seemingly secular and moderate, the party itself is actively involved in many a violent occurrence in the largest city of Pakistan. Mechanisms of *self-securitisation* that tend to come about in regions with weak governance are most effectively demonstrated here as the notions of safety and vulnerability diffuse through streets and neighborhoods. The compound is a hub of illicit activities and is guarded by tight security justified by their stance as a party for the minority; they have reacted robustly, and at times violently, to form and protect their base of operations.

Cultures that suffer through a weak writ of the state resort to vigilantism, making their own rules of civic and administrative operations. Both Marriabad in Quetta and Nine Zero in Karachi are self-sustained community units where policing is controlled by the inhabitants and barriers or checkpoints overseen by the weaponised youth. These communities perceive themselves to be threatened, and have resolved to rely on some of the most nuclear forms of social organisation, i.e. neighborhood and family, as the only support networks. Saskia Sassen saw these emerging roles as tending towards 'territorial fractures that the project of building a nation state sought to eliminate or dilute'.[22] These areas possess the sharp edge of violence and in order to exercise their authority, they rely on social pressure.

They are providing facilities that include but are not limited to education, infrastructure and security, eventually becoming autonomous and rejecting the state altogether.

The rise of private security has wide-ranging implications for the landscape of security architecture, as the likelihood increases that state control will be contested by violent means – at times, even by the armed forces where they see fit. The limited possibility of territorial control in complex urban scenarios creates further opportunities for both state or non-state actors to challenge the state and establish quasi-structures and different modes of security governance. Both the government and private security have begun remodeling their forces along (para)militarised lines.[23] All of this demonstrates the fragmentation and paranoia in the city as more and more institutions are failing or disappearing from the public realm.

Landmarked: the politics of symbolism and threat

As Georges Bataille once observed,

> Monuments inspire social prudence and often even real fear. The taking of the Bastille is symbolic of this state of things: it is hard to explain this crowd movement other than by the animosity of the people against the monuments that are their real masters.[24]

The idea of landmarks and monuments is inclusive, as they are primarily serving as places of gathering and refer to the spirit of the people throughout time. While historically they hold their place as memorials, they have also been the symbolic background and stage where conflict unfurls into a spectacle, as it has at places like Palace Square (St Petersburg), Red Square (Moscow) and Tahrir Square (Cairo) as symbols of patriotism, nationalism and identity.

Furthermore, the permanence of architecture has long been its strength, and has aided

the validation of regimes to mark their territory and power. Historically, it is the destruction of this architecture that symbolises the victor's conquest of territories. The more politically and historically relevant the structure is, the more it is prioritised on the list of *urbicide*. For instance, the outlawed separatist party Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF) targeted the Ziarat residency (home of the nation's founding father, Muhammad Ali Jinnah) in 2013 and burnt it to the ground. Targeting a popular historic symbol of the birth of the nation was a strategic move in getting their message across. However, what is equally interesting was the state's response, wasting no time to rebuild an exact replica of the structure. Though architecturally the effort seemed nothing short of kitsch, it stresses the importance of symbolism for both the state and its enemies.

Similarly, the structures built during the British rule, that riddle the boulevards of Lahore and Karachi, represent the history of a troubled colonial past. Architecturally, subjugation was in effect when those buildings were planned and designed. The fabric of the cities was radically altered by the spatial experimentation of the British, in order to better understand and exercise control over the urban territory. Such restructuring is not particularly unfamiliar, as in the case of Marshall Thomas Robert Bugeaud in the 1940s and his success in putting an end to the insurrection in Algiers by, amongst other atrocities, the removal of entire settlements to make way for large boulevards.[25] Initially, high Victorian designs replaced the organic order prevalent in the old capitals of Indian subcontinent, which over time evolved into a more accepted Indo-Saracen style. This is evidence of the built fabric responding directly to the British policy in the region throughout the years. These buildings are still prioritised targets for destruction as they are still active and house state and institutional functions.

Sufi shrines, churches, Shia mosques and other places of devotion that are not right-wing Islamic tend

to become victims of severe destruction as well. The terrorist attack on the Federal Investigation Agency in 2009, on the shrine of Data Sahib in 2010 and the twin attacks on Saint John's Catholic Church and Christ Church in the Christian-dominated district of Youhanabad in 2015 are just a few examples that all took place in Lahore – perceived to be the safest city in the country. [Figs. 3a, 3b, 3c] These targets represent the vulnerability of state security institutions and their giving way to a process of ethnic cleansing – both symbolising domination in terms of governance and populace.

All these attacks have legitimised a new architectural vocabulary that has defense as its primary function, thus materialising exclusion and paranoia as security tectonics, or mere *ornamentation*. Though security tectonics were already a part of the cityscapes, especially in government and religious buildings, the attacks on the Army Public School in Peshawar prompted the government send an official security document to educational institutions across the country. This memo provided strict instructions for 'Foolproof Security Arrangements', including the construction of an eight-foot-high boundary wall with an additional two feet of barbed wire protection, the erection of concrete barriers at entrance points, the provision of snipers and vehicular search devices, the installation of surveillance cameras and so forth.[26] Notices of this kind are obviously responding to concerns about attacks but they also represent the failure of the state to provide safety, resulting in demands for private security. [Fig. 4] The rapid securitisation of institutions by barring access through the security ornament gives an updated meaning to the symbolic structures around Pakistani cities. At the same time, however, it poses a dilemma as to which other buildings need to be secured. The targets and their typologies change as the insurgents find soft spots within the city fabric.

Questions arise about the effectiveness of the defense apparatus and what the state refers to

Fig. 3a

Fig. 3b

Fig. 3c

Fig. 3a: Security outside Data Sahib's shrine, Lahore five years after the attack. Photo: author.

Fig. 3b: Security ornamentation in Lahore. Photo: author.

Fig. 3c: Entrance to the High Court, Lahore. Photo: author.

Fig. 4: Security at a private school in Lahore. Photo: author.

as 'fool proof security'. The same visual cues that seemingly protect a place can also make it more conspicuous and in turn more vulnerable. [Fig. 6] As Stephen Graham puts it in his essay 'Cities and the 'War on Terror', '[by] publicising the probabilistic absurdity of places of targets, the geography of para-noia is expanded to contain the most obscure and remote sites (as well as the obvious one) rendering these sites into a regime of anxiety'.[27] How far can architecture and its programs be pushed to ensure the safety of the city? If geographic specificities and the idea of grounded and permanent structures are effective targets then can the traditional under-standing of architecture be considered prosaic and expired?

The street as a reconstruction of conflict
The points of intersection between major routes and arteries of cities across the globe have been impor-tant in establishing the unique inherent character of those cities. Likewise, in Pakistan, nodes and points of traffic have a highly charged meaning and signifi-cance in the political and sociocultural landscape. As distinct symbolic markers of the cities' various economic and social culmination these visually prominent devices often mark territory and serve as symbols of authority and power.

A considerable budget of all major cities in Pakistan goes to identifying these points with follies or other symbolic markers, such as fighter planes (*China Chowk*, Lahore), giant marble swords (*Teen Talwar* – literally translated as three swords – Karachi) or just a flailing angry fist (*Mukka Chowk*, Karachi); they all warn of the hostility towards unwanted elements. The symbolism is inherently aggressive, seething with anger and reprisal, and reflective of the tension inherent in these nodes. While these visual symbols often refer to a heroic feat or a memorable historic event, their confrontational nature is lending them a different identity. This perceived aggression becomes the backdrop of many political rallies, most noticeably

at the time of political elections. Banners over-crowd the view around these intersections while every neighbourhood showcases its allegiance and seemingly displays its predicted voting patterns with flyers and flags competing for space. Aside from their political value, the physical material from the campaigning often has an extended use as shade for market places and hot pavements, while others can be seen constructing makeshift shelters for themselves out of it. However, the metaphorical canopy of political affinities offers one a fair idea of how to navigate one of the many political micro-climates that must be encountered in streets and everyday life.

Public protests and rallies like the *D-Chowk* sit-in by the political party *Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf* (Pakistan Movement for Justice) in Islamabad towards the end of 2014, played out as a festival with concerts and free food to ensure the longevity and inclusion of people in the demonstration. Whether the seriousness of the demands or the financing of these events came across as suspicious was a secondary concern. With the shrinking public space in the city, people found evening entertain-ment and the media gave daily prime time coverage to the leader of one of the major political parties of the country. This form of *protest-ainment* quickly became a popular trend; one may even attribute the originality of the idea to Cairo's Tahrir Square. Other demonstrations often get tense and confrontational as competing parties try to compete for higher turn-outs, louder concerts with bigger celebrities, and of course more food.

In an earlier example, the 2006 Anti Danish Cartoon riots in Lahore, protestors rampaged the Mall Road – one of the main arteries built by the British in the late 1800s to connect the old quarters of the city with the new cantonment, flanked with iconic and important buildings – violently destroying buildings and looting goods; acts that had nothing to do with the cause of their protest. Due to the

official silence of the government, police were reluctant to regain control. As the protest and plundering continued an interesting mix of people, ranging from beggars and small-time thieves to a thrill-seeking populace (including women and children) joined in.

Mobility is becoming an increasingly important factor to determine how users navigate conflict thus allowing the streets to enact and reconstruct the state of affairs of a society through demonstrations and other public performances. Movement is also a way of ensuring some form of safety, as events will manifest and dissipate before they can become the target of an attack, whether by state authorities or terrorists. [Figs. 5a, 5b, 5c]

The first instinct of protection has architecturally always been to raise walls. Historically, the wall has represented security, and some semblance of durability. However, walls are also a primary instance of exclusion – the most significant example would be the endless Israeli wall running through the West Bank, its gloomy precedent the Berlin Wall or the potential violence of the (as of yet) unbuilt wall between the United States and Mexico. As a counter-narrative to the permanence of the wall, the roads of Pakistan are cluttered with mobile security checkpoints.[28] Checkpoints are set up fairly sporadically – for annual celebrations, Friday prayers, upon the visit of dignitaries or state guests or sometimes for no reason at all. Some points are more intense, like those around the cantonment areas, which are multiple and labyrinthine in nature, flanked with armed army personnel and streamlined. Other checkpoints are more dubious – like the ones that stop cars suspected of possession of alcohol, only to blackmail the drivers into giving bribes. Road users are left more or less to their own devices to conjure up new navigations in what Eyal Weizman refers to as 'elastic geographies', which are revised and redistributed with every political development and decision.[29]

In a time when public gatherings are deemed a threat to the establishment, exacerbated by an overload of political *protestainment*, most public places in Pakistan are either re-appropriated into inaccessible areas or heavily securitised. To prevent even the streets and nodes from being used as public spaces or places to demonstrate, the state uses Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code, forbidding groups of more than five people from gathering on the streets, as a way to prevent protests and demonstrations in the name of security. The result is that the public has barely any space left, except for the affluent minority who use sprawling golf and country clubs for their leisure activities. We witness an impromptu utilisation of other infrastructure that was not designed or sanctioned to be used as public space. One can witness hordes of people swimming in the canal in Lahore, officially used for grey water and irrigation, in times of intense heat. Picnics dot the place on any regular hot weekend; the fact that the canal is flanked on both sides by high-speed traffic is no deterrent. Similar leisurely activities can be seen around green belts, traffic roundabouts and shrines. The elastic geographies that are constantly re-formed allow the public to tend to their civic needs, and are fascinating in the multiplicity of their manifestations.

As Pakistani cities become a series of spontaneous obstructions and revised geographies,; inconspicuous passages, defiant spaces and cracks in the urban fabric have become some of the most important traits in the navigational realm for the citizens to navigate. This is reminiscent of the Situationists' 1950s plea for as an increasingly personal contact with urban surroundings that would transport the citizen away from the overloaded spectacle of the city.[30] As an intuitive itinerary, this *psychogeography* is elusive and ephemeral in nature.[31] Additionally, the *dérive*, as they called the delicate balance of chance and planning, suggests a novel way of experiencing the city in an unprescribed, temporal and an all-encompassing

fashion.[32] Tertiary routes which have always carried connotations of the fear of unused territories, have as a result become crucial to understand the city as it stands today. [Figs. 6a, 6b]

Whereas the Situationists were fighting for 'anti-spectacular' spaces or streets, looking for spatial experiences, cities like Lahore or Karachi need the obscure spaces to keep running smoothly, as a 'spectacle' in such cities has the potential of costing hundreds of lives. Similar to the *dérive* itself, the cartography of this experience questions conventional mapping techniques and challenges one to be creative. It is ironic that where Debord and his peers hoped to explore an urban condition where the personal human experience and interaction would take precedent over the monotony of planned modern cities, the users of Pakistani cities have no choice but to be *flâneurs* in order to navigate on an everyday basis.

Tentative avenues – conclusions
It is difficult to distinguish between acts of terror and other forms of violence in the developing world generally. This is particularly true for Pakistan, given the 'conceptual minefield that is the current state of classification and understanding of political violence'.[33] Moreover, local acts of urban political violence can become entangled, making it difficult to decipher among various forms and causes of aggression. In adapting to insecurity, it is also important to note that aside from the imposed violence, the fragmentation of the urban fabric itself is causing breaks in social systems and structures that exacerbate these very frictions. This goes to show how the relationship between the city and violence is deeply complex, multifaceted and interdependent on a variety of supporting structures that already exist within the urban realm. These relationships also reveal how the *new military urbanism* produces political subjectivities that heighten marginality and vulnerability for minorities.[34] Even though the factors to create unrest and eventual chaos were

culturally and geopolitically unique, the destruction of cities like Aleppo, Baghdad, Tripoli and Homs serve as a warning to societies on the brink of divisiveness and potential demise. Since reliance on state mechanisms and of course the perpetrators does not preserve the intention of safeguarding the resilience of urban hubs, citizens are compelled to mobilise what Stephen Graham calls 'counter geographies' – these are a step further towards not only understanding the critical conditions of Pakistani cities but to 'contest and disrupt the circuits and logics of the new military urbanism, with its normalised separation of "us" and "them"'. As observed in this article, traditional modes of resistance such as street protests and political movements can easily get derailed by the multiple complexities, and as such other creatively deployed mobilisations are important complements if we are to spark a multifaceted discourse between the currently scattered and divided public.

Beyond the visual clutter of security arrangements and political banter, one has to pay attention to the sort of culture of anticipation that is brewing as everyone in society, including children, are in a near-constant state of preparation for some form of an attack or hijacking of space – either from the terrorist as a form of a physically violent attack, or from the state under the guise of protection. The same sensibility also has the tendency to desensitise one to different forms of violence, as weapons and bomb drills in schools become daily part of casual conversation. Artist Bani Abidi's work Security Barriers A-L, 2008 is an attempt to catalogue security mechanisms, which suddenly sprouted around the city of Karachi during a time of heightened paranoia. Modeling these temporary architectural elements as innocuous 3D objects against a pure white background, the work provides an analysis of how state violence and demarcation can become a habitual occurrence in cities, thereby preparing the masses for the diminished freedom of movement.[35] One might see this as a form of
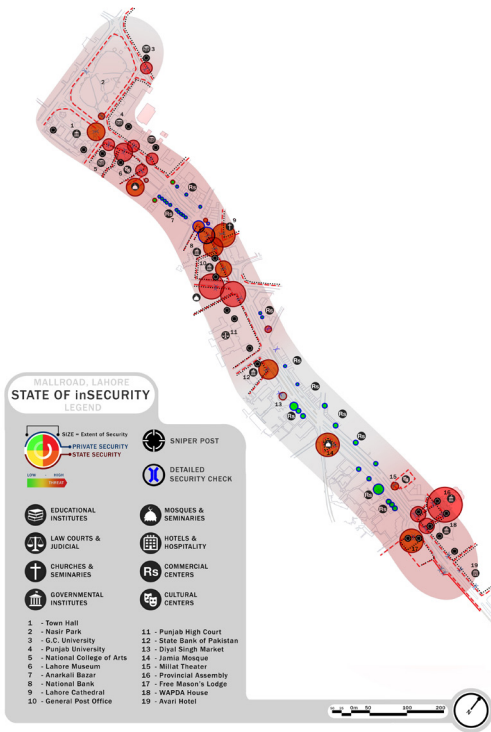
Fig. 5a

Fig. 5c

Fig. 5b

Fig. 5a: Security mapping Lower Mall, Lahore. Map: author.
Fig. 5b: Entrance to the Government House, Lahore. Photo: author.
Fig. 5c: Recently cocooned Government College, Lahore. Photo: author.

resilience, but such adaption or desensitisation is also precarious. Abidi makes a point of highlighting the obvious, yet disturbing, trend that has engulfed Pakistani cities.

South Asian cities have historically come a long way, through times of political mutinies and violence, and have managed to retain their cultures of vibrancy while maintaining their core characters and identities, which has still kept them considerably habitable. What becomes important here is to identify the factors that unify a nation, rather than the ones that are inherently divisive. A comprehensive re-imagination of permanent geographies towards fluid ones is called for. One such project, *Exhausted Geographies 2015* published by a multidisciplinary team of artists, architects and lawyers, examines the alternative narratives of Karachi. Writings are accompanied by both conventional and unconventional maps, which evoke the parallel realities of a metropolis in turmoil. The themes explored in these works range from 'the politics of development/ displacement, missing persons and state-enforced disappearances, cartographic silences of local knowledge productions, eighteenth-century narrative geographies of Sindh, colonial reordering of the city, community mapping and regularisation politics, visual architectures of desire and longing, spatial memories and embodied subjectivities'.[36] Another artist, Farida Batool focuses on the anxious experience of walking through a city laced with tension in her work Kahani Aik Sheher Ki – Story of A City, 2012. Her walk through the Mall Road in Lahore, exhibited as a 70-foot long lenticular image, demonstrates the various politics of exclusion, insecurity and consumerism from a very personal perspective. These examples are attempting to engage the issues of representation in a critical fashion while allowing the perspective of the public to seep into the works. Perhaps understanding these cities from an objective perspective is difficult, as the nuances that inhabitants experience on a daily basis during

configurational navigation cannot be fully comprehended through traditional mapping.

Strategies of surveillance and the increasing limits of physical or administrative control are reducing the already confined pockets of democratic space with echoes of an Orwellian dystopia. It becomes relevant to note the long-term value of such strategies and their social and political repercussions, as they seem to be mutating proportionately with the sophistication of the threat, and increasingly omit a growing demographic from the public realm. In response to increasingly privatised, securitised and segregated public spaces, Beyond Walls, 2011 by the Tentative Collective organised a tea-drinking gathering of around 50 strangers on top of the boundary wall around one of Karachi's most beloved parks, to which public access had been restricted by building a boundary wall and charging an entry fee.[37] This mobilisation is similar in essence to the hordes of people swimming in Lahore's irrigation canal, and is bordering on dissidence punishable by law. Furthermore the gathering included immigrants from a nearby settlement, thus it can be said that both the events in discussion were confronting the politically and economically motivated filtration of marginalised masses. It would be prudent to note that this marginalisation is the trickling down of global binaries that are being sanctioned through localised ideas of threats. In light of such tensions, novel forms of resilience can be fascinating to observe as they not only shed light on how life carries on in times of conflict but also act as a litmus test for communities and cities to deal with a perpetual state of insecurity. Observation of such traits can provide valuable clues in order to re-establish civic order to some extent.

Whereas these creative endeavours display strong sentiments and protest against the violation of space in cities, it needs to be taken into account that these voices do not penetrate the public realm

Fig. 6a

Fig. 6b

Fig. 6a: Approach to the Punjab Assembly, Lahore. Photo: author.
Fig. 6b: Newly raised walls at the Punjab Assembly, Lahore. Photo: author.

for the most part. However, it is of value that many artists and activists report directly from the front lines where violence is not romanticised or theorised, but instead is conveyed through first-hand transliteration of experiences. Pushing these forward for political agendas to reclaim democratic domains would require alliances in the mainstream and public sectors where visionary efforts can be accessed beyond the confined spaces of art galleries through effective channeling like those of social and televised media. It is imperative that these matters be catered to with critical understanding and a multi-pronged approach that prioritises the safety of the civilians and the democracy of space while taking into account that cities are ever-evolving and ever-adapting organisms, and that the concretisation of security alone would not contain, mitigate and eradicate threats and conflicts.

Notes

1. Daniel Esser, 'The city as arena, hub and prey – patterns of violence in Kabul and Karachi', *Environment and Urbanization* 16, no. 31 (2004), 37.

2. Saskia Sassen, *Cities in a World Economy* (California: Pine Forge Press, 1994).

3. Eyal Weizman, 'Lethal Theory', *LOG Magazine* (Fall 2005), 53.

4. Arjun Appadurai, *Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay on the Geography of Anger* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).

5. Phil Agre, 'Imagining the Next War: Infrastructural Warfare and the Conditions of Democracy', *Radical Urban Theory* (September 2001).

6. Manuel Castells, *End of Millennium, The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture* vol. 3 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998).

7. Bugti Militia was a militant group formed in Dera Bugti, Balochistan by Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti in 1952. The group believed in Baloch nationalism and fought for autonomy and more economic and political rights. The group took an active part in the 1970s insurgency in Balochistan, and launched sporadic strategic attacks on Pakistan's administrative and resource infrastructure to pressure the government into accepting its demands.
Safdar Sial and Abdul Basit. 'Conflict and Insecurity in Balochistan: Assessing Strategic Policy Options for Peace and Security', October–December 2010, Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies, www.pakpips.com. Accessed 11 January 2016.

8. 'National Internal Security Policy – 2014–18', Ministry of Interior, Government of Pakistan, nacta.gov.pk/Download_s/Rules/NISP.pdf. Accessed 15 December 2015.

9. Alex Von Tunzelmann, *Indian Summer: The Secret History of the End of an Empire*' (New York: Picador, 2008).

10. William Dalrymple, 'The Great Divide: The Violent Legacy of the Indian Partition', *The New Yorker* (29 June 2015). http://www.newyorker.com.

11. Amin Saikal. *Modern Afghanistan: A History of Struggle and Survival* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris & Co., 2006).

12. Khaled Ahmed, *Sleepwalking to Surrender – Dealing with Terrorism in Pakistan,* (London: Penguin, 2016), 47.

13. Ethnologue: Languages of the World, seventeenth edition, 2014 – Pakistan, http://www.ethnologue.com. Accessed 11 January 2016.

14. Farahnaz Ispahani, 'Cleansing Pakistan of Minorities', *Hudson Institute*, 31 July 2013. http://www.hudson.org. Accessed December 14 2015.

15. Faisal Muhammad Ali, '125 Christian Houses Burnt Over Blasphemy', *Dawn News* (9 March 2013). https://www.dawn.com.

16. Sobia Ahmad Kakar, 'Enclaves, Insecurity and Violence in Karachi' (2014). http://blogs.lse.ac.uk.

17. Stephen Graham, *Cities Under Seige: The New Military Urbanism* (London: Verso, 2010).

18. Moreau, Ron and Zahid Hussain, 'Failed cities: terror's urban jungle', *Newsweek International* (14 October 2002): 39.

19. Kakar, 'Enclaves, Insecurity and Violence in Karachi'.

20. Esser, 'City as arena, hub and prey', 34.

21. Cato, *The Weaponization of Immigration,* Center for

Immigration Studies, Backgrounders and Reports, February 2008. www.cis.org.

22. Saskia Sassen, 'When the City Itself Becomes a Technology of War', *Theory, Culture & Society* 27 no. 6 (November 2010): 33–50.

23. James Shepptycki. 'Editorial – Reflections on Policing: Paramilitarization and Scholarship on Policing', *Policing and Society* 9 (2000): 117–123.

24. Dennis Hollier. *Against Architecture: The Writings of Georges Bataille* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992).

25. Graham, *Cities Under Seige,* 12.

26. Habib Khan Ghori, 'Private Schools Told to Make Own Security Arrangements', Dawn News (7 January 2015). http://www.dawn.com.

27. Stephen Graham, 'Cities and the War on Terror'*, International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 3 no. 2 (2006).

28. Sadia Shirazi, 'Lahore: Architecture of In/Security', *The Funambulist Pamphlet 01: Militarized Cities* (September 2015): 14–19.

29. Eyal Wiezman, *Hollowland: Israel's Architecture of Occupation* (London: Verso, 2007).

30. Simon Sadler, *The Situationist City,* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998).

31. Psychogeography was defined in 1955 by Guy Debord as 'the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organised or not, on the emotions and behavior of individuals'.
Guy Debord, *Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography,* trans. Ken Knabb (Paris: Les Lèvres Nues 6, September 1955). http://www.cddc.vt.edu.

32. Sadler, *Situationist City,* 86–91.

33. Martin Shaw, 'New Wars of the City: Relationships of "Urbicide" and "Genocide"', *Cities, War and Terrorism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 143.

34. Graham, *Cities Under Seige,* XIII .

35. Bani Abidi, 'Security Barriers A–L' (2008), on the artist's website, http://www.baniabidi.com.

36. Zahra Malkani and Shahana Rajani, eds., 'Exhausted Geographies – an experimental art publication mapping the city of Karachi' (2015).
http://www.exhaustedgeographies.com.

37. Tentative Collective, 'Beyond Walls', http://

tentativecollective.com. Accessed 9 October 2016.

Biographies

Ayesha Sarfraz is a co-founder and principal architect of the Lahore based studio, MAS Architects. She is also a visiting faculty member at COMSATS University, Lahore. She previously worked as an architect at the Office for Conservation and Community Outreach and has taught at the National College of Arts. Ms. Sarfraz was a Fulbright scholar and has a Masters of Architecture from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. She earned her undergraduate degree in architecture with a distinction from the National College of Arts in Lahore.

Arsalan Rafique is working as a creative director of the game development studio, Caramel Tech Studios. In the past he has worked at Anti-Statics in Beijing as an architect and taught at COMSATS University in Lahore. Mr. Rafique earned his Bachelors of Architecture with a distinction from the National College of Arts in Lahore. He attended graduate school at Cornell University's College of Art, Architecture and Planning on a Fulbright Scholarship and was awarded the Outstanding Performance in Architecture.