

The Roots of Militancy: Explaining Support for Political Violence in Pakistan

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Abstract

Combating militant violence—particularly within South Asia and the Middle East—stands at the top of the international security agenda. Despite the extensive literature on the determinants of political attitudes, little is known about who supports militant organizations and why. To address this gap we conducted a 6000-person, nationally-representative survey of Pakistanis that measures affect towards four important militant organizations. We apply a novel measurement strategy to mitigate social desirability bias and item non-response, which plagued previous surveys due to the sensitive nature of militancy. Our study reveals key patterns of support for militancy. First, Pakistanis exhibit negative affect toward all four militant organizations, with those from areas where groups have been most active disliking them the most. Second, personal religiosity does not predict support, although views about what constitutes jihad do. Third, Pakistanis who support core democratic rights are more supportive of some militant organizations than average Pakistanis. Fourth, contrary to conventional expectations poor Pakistanis dislike key militant groups compared to their middle class countrymen. Longstanding arguments tying support for violent political organizations to individuals' economic prospects or attitudes towards democracy—and the subsequent policy recommendations—may require substantial revision.

Introduction

Combating militant violence—particularly within South Asia and the Middle East—stands at the top of the international security agenda. Despite the extensive literature on the determinants of political attitudes, surprisingly little is known about who supports militant organizations and why. Given the massive suffering violent non-state political organizations cause and their prominence in driving international politics, this is a striking gap in the literature.

The dearth of empirical studies on this topic is especially striking in light of the fact that political scientists have developed and tested a range of arguments about factors that influence reactionary or violent political attitudes more generally. These arguments can be usefully categorized according to the independent variable thought to drive political attitudes. Five variables stand out in this literature and related policy discourse: (1) religiosity, with more religious people expected to be less supportive of destructive political attitudes in general but more supportive of groups using religious justifications for violence (Putnam 2000; Jefferis 2010); (2) education, with more educated individuals hypothesized to be more tolerant and therefore less supportive of groups employing violent tactics (Stouffer 1955; McCloskey and Brill 1983); (3) income, with poorer people expected to be more supportive of violent politics or more likely to participate in violent groups (see Sambanis 2004 for a thorough review); (4) democratic values, with those valuing democracy expected to be less supportive of militant groups (e.g. Almond and Verba 1963; Kirwin and Cho 2009); and (5) anti-Americanism, with people holding negative views of the United States hypothesized to be more supportive of certain forms of violence (Tessler and Robbins 2007).

As with most any kind of political behavior, there are conflicting findings about the influence of each of these variables in different contexts. Given the manifest importance of the political violence and lack of clarity in the extant literature, it is rather striking that political scientists have not extensively studied the politics of militant organizations. To address this lacuna, we designed and conducted an original, 6,000-person nationally-representative survey of Pakistani adults that measures affect towards four specific militant organizations. We apply a novel measurement strategy to mitigate social desirability bias and item non-response, which plagued previous surveys due to the sensitive nature of militancy in the region. Our

“Endorsement Experiment” (detailed below) overcomes these issues.¹

Asking respondents directly whether they support militant organizations has numerous problems in places suffering from political violence. First, it is often unsafe for enumerators and respondents to discuss such issues. Second, item non-response rates to such sensitive questions are often quite high given that respondents fear that providing the “wrong” answer will threaten their own and their family’s safety. Third, responses to direct questions are subject to social desirability bias. In other words, they are a combination of respondents’ true attitudes and what they believe to be the socially appropriate response. Our empirical strategy overcomes these issues by employing an endorsement experiment. As described in more detail below, we measure differences in support for various policies unrelated to militancy between two experimental groups—those told only about the policy and those told a militant organization supports it. The difference between the two conditions reveals how much policy support decreases as a consequence of being associated with a militant group, and therefore is an indirect measure of support for militancy. However, unlike a direct measure, non-response and social desirability is less of a concern since respondents are reacting to the policy and not to the group itself. By using a novel design that asks respondents about multiple policy issues and randomizes the pairing of issue with group, we can identify effects for multiple groups that are unlikely to be biased by the details of any specific policy.

Our survey breaks new ground in other important respects. Ours is the first survey of Pakistan that is representative of both urban and rural Pakistanis and is designed to permit reliable inferences about variation in political attitudes across the four provinces of Pakistan. This allows us to evaluate how important the local politics of organizations are in predicting support. As it turns out, they are essential, and previous surveys that have only examined urban areas or non-representatively sampled various regions have been missing an important part of the picture.

Using this survey instrument we can identify a number of key facts about support for four groups plaguing Pakistan and the international community: militants fighting in Kashmir, the Afghan Taliban, al-

¹ Work that suffers from these issues includes Shapiro and Fair (2010); Fair, Ramsay, and Kull (2008); WorldPublicOpinion.org (February 2009); the Pew Global Attitudes Surveys (2002, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008); and WorldPublicOpinion.org (July 2009).

Qa'ida, and the sectarian militias in Pakistan. First, Pakistanis exhibit negative affect toward all four militant organizations. However, there is striking variation in attitudes towards militant groups across Pakistan, with those from areas where groups have been most active disliking them the most. Second, personal religiosity does not predict attitudes towards militants groups but views about what constitutes jihad do. Third, Pakistanis who support core democratic rights are more supportive of some militant organizations than average Pakistanis. Fourth, contrary to conventional expectations poor Pakistanis dislike key militant groups compared to their middle class countrymen.

While these results may seem counterintuitive given existing theories which give pride-of-place to big trends such as relative deprivation (Gurr 1970) or ethnic and religious cleavages (Huntington 1996), they make a great deal of sense once one takes into account the particular politics of Pakistani militant organizations and their operating patterns. The key point for understanding militancy in Pakistan is that the specific political circumstances of violent organizations matter a great deal and patterns of support cannot be understood without taking them into account. More generally, arguments tying support for violent political organizations to individuals' economic prospects or attitudes towards democracy—and the subsequent suggestions for policy—may require substantial revision.

The remainder of this paper proceeds as follows. Section 1 provides background on Pakistani militant organizations to motivate the empirical analysis. Section 2 outlines two sets of hypotheses about the politics of militancy in Pakistan: (1) those based on the conventional wisdom and existing political science literature; and (2) those based on a more nuanced view of the political dynamics in the region. Section 3 describes our survey and experimental design in greater detail. Section 4 presents our core results. The fifth and final section discusses the implications of our findings for addressing the problem of militancy in Pakistan.

1. Pakistan's Militant Landscape: Groups and Goals²

In this section, we provide a background of the landscape of political violence in Pakistan as well as

² For more detailed discussions of Pakistani militant organizations see [AUTHORS' PREVIOUS WORK].

overviews of the four major militant organizations in the country. We do so in order to acquaint the reader with the local political climate before delving into the analytical results.

Pakistan has used militant groups to prosecute its foreign policies in Afghanistan, Kashmir and the rest of India for decades. This pattern began in the early weeks of Pakistan's independence when a "tribal lashkar" (militia drawn from the tribal areas) moved to take Kashmir with support from the Pakistan army (Swami 2007; Nawaz 2008). Pakistan began using Afghan militant groups to shape events in Afghanistan in 1974 and, with the support of the United States and others, developed an extensive infrastructure to produce Sunni Islamist militants ("mujahideen") to wage a guerilla war ("jihad") after the Soviet invasion in 1979 (Rubin 2002; Hussain 2005).

From 1990, Pakistan intensified its covert operations relying upon Islamist militants in Kashmir and elsewhere (Evans 2000; Rashid 2008; Ganguly 2008). From 1994 on, Pakistan's involvement with militants fighting in Afghanistan became even deeper as the Taliban extended their control over Afghanistan. Some Taliban received direct support from the Pakistani government and business interests, while others had lived for years in refugee camps in Pakistan and thus shared strong ties with Pakistan (Rashid 2000). After 2001 Pakistan officially distanced itself from a wide range of militant organizations but took few concrete actions to sever ties with them or to delegitimize them in the minds of average Pakistanis (Jamal 2009)

Consistent with this history, the militant landscape in Pakistan is extremely complex and populated by groups that vary in their sectarian commitments, targeting choices, theatre of operations, ethnicity of operatives, and political objectives. To understand patterns of popular support for these groups, a fairly nuanced picture of Pakistani militant organizations is in order. Table 1 provides an overview, describing the different groups we asked about, the specific organizations falling into those groups, their espoused goals, and where they operate. The remainder of the section provides more detailed background on the groups.

[INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE.]

Militants Fighting in Kashmir

There are several organizations Pakistanis group under the title of "Kashmiri tanzeems" (Kashmiri groups).

These organizations can be usefully categorized according to the Sunni interpretive tradition they follow.

Deobandi Kashmir-oriented militant organizations include Jaish-e-Mohammad (JM) and Harkat-ul-Ansar/Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HUA/HUM) and their splinter groups. While they have traditionally focused upon Kashmir and their recruitment materials suggest a Kashmir-oriented mission, they now operate in India and in Afghanistan and have had close ties to al-Qa'ida and the Afghan Taliban. In recent years groups like JM have become intimately involved with the Pakistan Taliban, including the provision of suicide attackers for assaults on Pakistani targets. JM has also attacked international targets within Pakistan. These Deobandi "Kashmiri groups" have operational and personnel linkages with Deobandi anti-Shia groups as well as the Deobandi Islamist political party Jamiat-e-Ulema Islami (JUI).

Jamaat-e-Islami oriented groups operating in Kashmir under the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) include Hizbol Mujahideen, al Badr, and related factions. These groups primarily recruit Kashmiris, operate mostly in Kashmir, and arose in Kashmir rather than being raised by Pakistan's intelligence agency, the Interservices Intelligence Directorate (ISI) (Tellis 2008). These groups remain focused on securing autonomy or independence for Kashmir, have not been involved with the Pakistan Taliban, and have not targeted the Pakistani state or international targets within Pakistan.

There is one important Ahl-e-Hadith oriented group operating in Kashmir, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), which was formed in 1986 to fight in the Kunar province of Afghanistan (Sikand 2007; Zahab 2007). After 1990, LeT shifted operational focus to Indian-administered Kashmir. For much of the 1990s (with few exceptions), LeT operations were restricted to Indian-administered Kashmir. LeT conducted its first attack outside of Kashmir in 2000. In recent years LeT has attacked international targets in India as well as U.S. and allied forces fighting in Afghanistan even though it remains firmly under ISI control (Fair 2009). LeT has not targeted the Pakistani state nor has it pursued western targets within Pakistan.

Afghan Taliban

After the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan, various factions fought over the remnants of the country. Pakistan backed Hizb-e-Islami, led by a Pashtun named Gulbuddin Hekmatyar in hopes that he could

establish a stable, pro-Pakistan government that would accept the contested international border (the Durand Line), deny India access to Afghanistan, and provide Pakistan advantageous access to Central Asia and its resources.³ By 1994 Pakistani leaders concluded Hekmatyar could not deliver on these goals and shifted its patronage to the newly-emergent Taliban. From 1994 to 2001, Pakistan provided military, diplomatic, and financial assistance to the Pashtun Taliban movement.

The Taliban government provided some security but lacked international legitimacy and became an international pariah due to its alignment with al-Qa'ida, brutal mistreatment of women, and other outrages. Some of Pakistan's security elites increasingly saw the Taliban as a liability, especially after al-Qa'ida organized the 1998 attacks on American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania from Afghanistan. The September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks made it impossible for Islamabad to continue supporting the Taliban (Musharraf 2006). When the United States-led coalition routed the Taliban in late-2001 many fled to Pakistan's tribal areas to regroup. In 2005, the Afghan Taliban launched a renewed insurgent campaign run by leadership *shuras* in Quetta, Peshawar, and Karachi (Levin 2009, Katz 2009).

The Afghan Taliban remain focused on ousting foreign forces, aid workers and other foreign civilians from Afghanistan, overthrowing the Karzai regime, and restoring their role in governing Afghanistan (Giustozzi 2007).

Pakistan Taliban

Since 2006 a cluster of militant groups whose activists describe themselves as "Pakistani Taliban" have developed in Pakistan. While we were unable to measure support for these groups due to the high level of political sensitivity surrounding them when our survey was fielded, understanding the differences between them and the Afghan Taliban is important for interpreting our results.

The Pakistan Taliban became prominent in early 2006 as local militias established micro-emirates in large swathes of Pakistan's Pashtun areas. Popular characterization of all Pakistan Taliban as being part of the

³ During the Soviet jihad, Pakistan backed seven Pakistan-based militant groups, six of which were Pashtun dominated. Burhanuddin Rabbani's Tajik-dominated Jamiat-i-Islami was the only non-Pashtun group supported by Pakistan (Rubin 2002).

Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) are incorrect, the term most accurately refers to a loose group of local militias espousing a particular view of shari'a law. The so-called Talibanization of the tribal areas began in North and South Waziristan, but quickly spread to parts of the other tribal agencies. Beginning in 2007 local Taliban also emerged in parts of the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP). Throughout the summer of 2007, militants associated with the *Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi* (TNSM) battled elements of the Pakistani military and seized the Swat Valley in late October of that year. Violence in the valley continued with control passing between the government and the TNSM until a peace deal was reached in early-2009. The deal ceded sovereignty over Swat to the TNSM in the guise of government sanctioned imposition of *sharia* (Nizam-e-Adil) in Swat and Malakand.⁴ The peace deal broke down shortly after its implementation and in early-May 2009 the Pakistani Army moved to retake Swat. This proved to be tremendously popular and presaged a series of operations against various Pakistan Taliban in the FATA which continues to the present.

The goals of the militants grouped by Pakistanis as the “Pakistan Taliban” are focused on undermining the Pakistani state in select areas and establishing their own parallel governance structures organized around commanders’ particular understanding of shari’a. At the time our survey was in the field these groups had conducted few operations outside of attacking police forces in the FATA and parts of the NWFP. This has unfortunately changed in subsequent months as TTP-affiliated militants have conducted attacks across Pakistan in response to government offensives against them in the FATA.

Al Qa’ida

The most important militant group operating in Pakistan to Western policy makers and politicians is al-Qa’ida, the group responsible for the September 11, 2001, attacks. British Prime Minister Gordon Brown summed up these concerns when he reported that “three quarters of the most serious plots investigated by the British authorities have links to al Qa’ida in Pakistan.”⁵ Important al Qa’ida leaders remain in the FATA and many al Qa’ida operatives—Abu Zubaidah, Khalid Sheikh Mohammad, and others—have been arrested

⁴ There is very little scholarly literature on this phenomenon, with most coverage taking place in the popular press or security publications (Bakhtiar 2007; Ali Khan 2007, Tohid 2004; Gopal 2009).

⁵ Coates and Page (2008).

in Pakistani cities (Negroponte 2007; Kronstadt 2008).

Al-Qa'ida operatives in Pakistan have targeted the Pakistani state and executed terrorist plots targeting the west and allies. The July 7, 2005, bombings in London have been linked to al-Qa'ida in Pakistan, for example, as have five foiled plots since 2004 (Sageman 2009). Importantly, few Pakistanis link al-Qa'ida to its most important actions. In a 2009 poll, for example, only 4 percent of Pakistanis said al-Qaida was responsible for the September 11 attacks while 29 percent blamed the United States, and 4 percent blamed Israel (Kull 2009). Many Pakistanis are also dubious about the existence of al-Qa'ida *per se*. All focus group participants in our pre-testing, however, understood what we were referring to when we explained that al-Qa'ida was "Osama bin Laden's militia."

Sectarian Tanzeems

Pakistan is also home to a number of militant groups seeking to advance a sectarian agenda. These *firqavarana tanzeems* include the anti-Shi'a Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) and Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP).⁶ Both of these anti-Shi'a groups have ties to the legal Deobandi organization Jamiat-e-Ulema Islami (JUI) and are funded by wealthy Arab individuals and organizations. The Sunni sectarian groups grew to prominence in the 1980s and are now a well-established part of Pakistan's political landscape (Nasr 2000). In the past, Shi'a sectarian groups targeted Sunni Muslims, although these groups have largely disappeared.

The anti-Shia groups all claim to be fighting for a Sunni Deobandi Pakistan by purging the country of Shia, whom they view as apostates.⁷ Their actions typically take the form of attacks on Shi'ite mosques and community gatherings and they have periodically attacked Christian targets as well.

In reality, a great deal of the anti-Shia violence is motivated by class issues and urbanization. The large land-holding families in Pakistan have historically been Shia and have not treated their tenant farmers well. Thus a class agenda has been executed through a narrative of apostasy (Nasr 2000; Zaman 1988). This

⁶ Many of these groups have been proscribed numerous times only to re-emerge. Many now operate under new names. We use the names which are likely to be most familiar to readers.

⁷ While an exact accounting of Shia in Pakistan is impossible because the Pakistani census is not fielded in areas where Shia are populous (e.g. the Northern Areas), they are believed to comprise 20 percent of the population (CIA 2009).

relationship is important for understanding the fact that while support for the other groups is highest among those with high income, support for the sectarian tanzim is not affected by income after controlling for other factors.

2. Explaining the Politics Militancy in Pakistan

This section outlines two sets of hypotheses about the politics of militancy in Pakistan. We begin by quickly describing those based on the conventional wisdom and parts of the existing political science literature (*H1-H5*). We then offer an alternative set of hypotheses based on a more nuanced view of the political dynamics in the region (*H1A-H5A*). Our goal in this section is to outline two competing sets of expectations that we can test in section four.

The Existing Literature and Conventional Wisdom

Scholars have identified several empirical regularities that imply various predictions about the politics of militancy. A syncretic reading of these with the policy literature on militancy points to a number of individual characteristics that should predict support for Pakistani militant groups. These can be summarized neatly in hypotheses about the effects of different independent variables.

The role of religion in influencing political views is a fraught topic. Some argue religion is an important form of civic engagement, which is associated with constructive political attitudes (Putnam 2000). Others suggest that under some conditions religious sentiment can be used to effectively rally support for violent actions (Jefferis 2010). Thus the broad implication that more religiously-engaged Pakistanis would be less supportive of violent politics is complicated by the fact that many of most problematic political organizations in Pakistan rely on religious appeals. These conflicting possibilities lead to the following hypothesis:

H1: Individual religiosity—measured by proxies for how seriously they take their faith—will have an ambiguous impact on support for specific militant organizations.

Turning to education we find less ambiguous implications from the literature. The key argument is that better educated individuals are more tolerant of social and political differences (Stouffer 1955; McCloskey and Brill-Scheuer 1983). The implication is clear; Pakistanis who have achieved higher levels of education should be less supportive of militant organizations that are, to say the least, intolerant of opposing viewpoints. This consensus is reflected in the policy literature and in the following hypothesis:⁸

H2: Educational attainment will be negatively correlated with support for violent political organizations.

Arguments about the role of income and material well-being in generating political attitudes are among the most well-known and commonly cited from the field of political behavior. The hypothesis that poverty predicts support for violent political organizations is widespread in the policy literature but finds little support in rigorous empirical tests (Abadie 2006; Kreuger and Maleckova 2003).⁹ With respect to violence itself scholars have argued that levels of political violence are increasing in: short-term poverty (Miguel, Satayanth, and Serengeti 2004); dashed expectations for material gain (Gurr 1970); and income inequality (Sigelman and Simpson 1977; Muller 1985). An overly-simplified version of these findings is reflected in the following hypothesis which animates policy discourse in and about Pakistan (Aziz 2009):

H3: Income will be negatively correlated with support for violent political organizations.

One of the driving bodies of theory in American politics and in American foreign policy in the last 50 years has been the idea that greater support for core liberal democratic values leads to a rejection of destructive political activities (e.g. Almond and Verba 1963; Traub 2008; Kirwin and Cho 2009). The

⁸ Fair (2008) provides a summary of the policy literature and outlines the complications of applying this prediction in Pakistan given the nature of the secular curriculum.

⁹ For summaries of the policy literature see Authors (forthcoming) and Piazza and von Hippel (2009).

implication of this theory in Pakistan can be articulated in the following hypothesis:

H4: Support for democratic values will be negatively correlated with support for violent political organizations.

Finally, prominent arguments by academics and others have linked anti-Americanism explicitly to support for violent politics (Paz 2003; Tessler and Robbins 2007), or the production of political violence (Kreuger and Maleckova 2009). The direction of causality in these studies is not well-established and theoretical arguments suggest that regimes facing internal threats have strong incentives to foment hatred of others (Glaeser 2005), thereby potentially creating a spurious correlation between support for violent groups and anti-Americanism. While our research design does not allow us to distinguish the direction of causality, there is a clear hypothesis in the existing literature:

H5: Negative views of the U.S. will be positively correlated with support for violent political organization.

Each of these hypotheses should seem unremarkable at first glance. They are, after all, the distillation of a variety of well-established research traditions. Yet each presumes a certain homogeneity in the ways in which individuals evaluate different groups. That is an odd starting point for explaining attitudes towards political groups that, after all, spend a great deal of time and energy articulating specific goals. So what would a more nuanced set of hypotheses based on the political circumstances look like?

The Politics of Militancy in the Pakistani Context

Each of the four groups whose support we studied in our survey has a particular history and fit into a specific political context. While the hypotheses above provide a nice starting point for thinking about variation in support for these groups, taking that context into account leads us to a much more nuanced set of

hypotheses.

With respect to *H1*, it helps to distinguish between the uses to which these organizations put religious justifications. All four groups claim a religious justification for their actions. We should therefore expect support for them to be increasing in *jihadism*, measured in our survey as acceptance of the principle of militarized jihadi by nonstate actors.

Where a nuanced view diverges from *H1* is in expectations on religious seriousness. Each of the four groups we study uses religion differently. The Kashmiri tanzems articulate Islamist goals but they are, by and large, relatively mainstream ones: defend Muslims in Kashmir from oppression by Hindu India. The Afghan Taliban represent a more complicated case. Based upon the authors' experiences in Pakistan they are, by and large, perceived as crude rustics with little religious understanding. Many of their leaders' actions could easily be seen as offensive to religious Muslims, especially the 1996 incident when Mullah Omar donned a cloak said to belong to the Prophet Muhammad to rally soldiers fighting against other Muslims. Similarly the Taliban's use of Islam to justify recondite policies such as stoning women and denying them education are also likely offensive to a large portion of religiously serious Pakistanis. Al-Qa'ida adheres to the doctrine of *takfir*, claiming the right to accuse other Muslims of apostasy. Few religiously well-educated Pakistanis would agree with this doctrine, and since the doctrine has the corollary that all who do not agree with it are apostates (and hence subject to violent retribution) it is easy to see why the religiously serious would dislike al-Qa'ida. The sectarian tanzem undertake actions that are problematic under some interpretive traditions but enjoy substantial support in others, leading to an ambiguous prediction about the relationship between religious seriousness and support. These observations lead to the following alternative to *H1*:

H1A: Support for all four groups will be increasing in jihadism. Support for the Afghan Taliban and al-Qa'ida will be *decreasing* in religious seriousness.

Note also that *H1A* suggests a more nuanced conception of the relationship between Islam and political violence. It is not simply that greater adherence to Islam *per se* leads to militancy, but rather a specific

interpretation of religious doctrine.

Turning to *H2* the key piece of context is that since the late-1980s militants fighting in Kashmir have been lauded in the curriculum taught in Pakistani government schools. Longer exposure to formal schooling will thus correlate very strongly with longer exposure to messages about how the Kashmiri tanzems are defending beleaguered, oppressed Muslims. This observation leads naturally to an alternative to *H2*:

H2A: Any negative effect of education on support will be substantially weaker for the Kashmiri tanzems than for other groups.

To understand where *H3* might fail it is useful to put it in the context of prominent recent work in American politics on the relationship between income and political attitudes. Here scholars have shown that income's influence on partisan preferences in American politics is highly variable, with income mattering much more in poorer states (Gelman et. al. 2008, Bartels 2006). Gelman et. al. argue that the strong relationship between income and support for Republican presidential candidates in the South is driven by the fact that wealthy Southerners are much more socially conservative on average than the wealthy elsewhere in America, so there is no conflict between their economic interests and cultural attitudes as there are in other parts of the country.

Similarly, the effect of income in Pakistan is highly contextual. For many years militant groups fighting in various places have been seen by Pakistani political elites as useful tools of statecraft. Since the mid-1990s, for example, Pakistan's security elites and media have upheld the importance of the Taliban as a "stabilizing force" in Afghanistan who fought back the ruthless and corrupt warlords that ravaged the country in the wake of the Soviet withdrawal. Their benign name, which translates to "Students," facilitated the popular imagery of the Taliban as a religiously-motivated movement interested in securing social justice for war-ravaged Afghans. As income correlates strongly with political status in Pakistan one might naturally expect those with higher incomes to view militant groups in a more positive light.

At the same time, the negative externalities of militant violence fall unevenly across Pakistani society.

Most of the violence occurs in urbanized areas and while the disruptions to economic activity that inevitably result from attacks are small (leaving aside the potential long-term deterrent of foreign direct investment), they can be expected to hit hardest at poor urban Pakistanis who have little in the way of an effective social safety net. Because the costs of militancy among those not directly affected fall unevenly we might expect the following alternative to *H3*:

H3A: Dislike of militant groups will be strongest among low-income respondents and this affect will be most pronounced among the urban poor.

Understanding the relationship between democratic values and support for militancy is complex in Pakistan because to many Pakistanis some of the groups we studied are defending freedom and self-representation against corrupt governments. This is obvious for the Kashmiri tanzeem but it turns out to be true for the Afghan Taliban as well. As Table 6 (described in detail below) shows the vast majority of our respondents believe the Afghan Taliban are more legitimate than the Karzai government, did more for the Afghan people, and are fighting an occupying power. Given those beliefs, what good supporter of democracy would not rally to the Afghan Taliban? We thus have a clear alternative to *H4*:

H4A: Support for the Kashmiri tanzeems and Afghan Taliban will be increasing in support for democracy.

Turning finally to the relationship between views towards the U.S. and support for militants we should note that of the four groups we asked about only one, al-Qa'ida, articulates a clearly anti-American platform, or at least justifies its actions with the argument that the United States is a harmful actor on the world stage. But this is the group that was least well-known by our respondents. For each of the four groups we asked respondents whether "their actions are helping their cause?" The mean "don't know" rate across the Kashmir tanzeems, Afghan Taliban, and sectarian tanzeems was 7 percent. For al-Qa'ida fully 17% of our

sample said they did not know whether the organization's actions were helping its cause. This implies a low level of familiarity with the group's rhetoric. Combined with the fact that many of our enumerators (a very educated group by Pakistani standards) were unclear before training on what al-Qa'ida is, a reasonable alternative to *H5* is:

H5A: Support for militant groups will be unaffected by attitudes towards the U.S.

As a whole these alternative hypotheses take some of the nuance of Pakistani politics into account while incorporating the received wisdom from studies of other political settings. We now turn to a detailed description of our efforts to test them.

3. The Survey

Many organizations have conducted surveys on Pakistani attitudes towards extremism since 2001, including Gallup, Zogby, The Pew Foundation, World Public Opinion.org (WPO), the International Republican Institute (IRI), and Terror Free Tomorrow among others. None of these surveys, however, provide leverage on the empirical questions we address.

Three specific weaknesses stand out. First, respondent level-data are not available for most of the extant surveys. Gallup and Zogby are proprietary without any pre-purchase means to assess the quality of the data and limit access to top-line results. IRI and Terror Free Tomorrow do not release respondent-level data. Pew and WPO do provide access to respondent-level data but their samples are limited in important ways.

Second, the existing surveys do not measure attitudes towards specific militant organizations with great precision. Some surveys ask directly about affect towards groups and get high don't know/no opinion rates in the range of 40% (Terror Free Tomorrow 2008; Pew 2009). Other surveys indirectly measure affect. For instance, they ask whether groups "operating in Pakistan are a problem" (IRI 2009) or pose "a threat to the vital interests of Pakistan" (WPO 2009). Although item non-response on such questions is lower, these

indirect measures are subject to strong social desirability bias.¹⁰ As is well known, respondents in many survey settings anticipate the views of the enumerator and thus answer questions in particular ways (Krosnick 1999; Marlowe and Crowne 1964, p. 109). These tendencies may be exacerbated on sensitive issues where fear and the desire to avoid embarrassment come into play. In the Pakistani setting respondents can determine significant information about class, ethnicity and sectarian orientation based on the name and accent of the enumerators. This makes social desirability concerns even stronger for surveys studying the politics of militancy in Pakistan, as respondents may be wary to signal pro-militant views to high-status enumerators. Equally important, responses to such indirect questions are also deeply ambiguous: one can be very supportive of an organization and still think its actions pose a threat to Pakistan's interests.

Third, existing surveys are not designed to identify sub-national variation. Most either exclusively or disproportionately include urban respondents and all include too few respondents to make reliable inferences about sub-national variation in support, let alone identifying sub-national variation in the correlates of support.

Our survey was designed to overcome these problems via two main strategies. First, we employ a sampling design that allows us to make reliable inferences for all four provinces of Pakistan. Second, we measure group support in a way that avoids high non-response rates and minimizes social desirability bias.¹¹ Working with our Pakistani partners, Socio-Economic Development Consultants (SEDCO), we drew a random sample of 6,000 adult Pakistani men and women from the four "normal" provinces of the country: Punjab, Sindh, the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) and Balochistan. The respondents were selected randomly within 500 primary sampling units (PSU), 332 in rural areas and 168 in urban ones (following the rural/urban breakdown in the Pakistan census) and we substantially oversampled in the smaller provinces, Balochistan and the NWFP. The face-to-face questionnaire was fielded by six mixed-gender teams between April 21, 2009 and May 25, 2009.

We employed a three stage stratified sampling designed to be representative at the provincial level for

¹⁰ Item non-response rates for such indirect measures of support on IRI's 2009 survey varied between 1 and 31 percent. The overall survey response rate was 74%.

¹¹ For full details see [Authors 2009].

both rural and urban areas.¹² In the first stage the country was stratified into four provinces. We substantially oversampled in Balochistan and the NWFP to ensure we could generate valid provincial-level estimates in these sparsely populated provinces. In the second stage, the districts (second level of sub-national governance) within each province formed the strata and were selected at random following the Population Proportional Sampling (PPS) method using the most recent FBS population estimates. In the third stage, we randomly selected Union Councils (the third level of sub-national governance in urban areas) within each district. For urban PSU we then randomly selected one urban area within each selected Union Council as the Primary Sampling Unit (PSUs). For rural PSU, we randomly selected one village within each selected Union Council as the Primary Sampling Units (PSUs).

We conducted interviews in 12 households per PSU. To identify households each PSU was divided into four hypothetical quarters and a starting point was selected in each quarter randomly. Households were then selected via the Right Hand Rule (RHR) and our enumerators used the Kish grid method to select respondents aged 18 and above. For quality control purposes, field supervisors back-checked either by phone or in-person 20 percent of each interviewer's questionnaires.

SEDCO also provided us with a set of post-stratification survey weights, based on population figures from the 1998 census, the most recent one available. Following procedures outlined by Lee and Forthofer (2006), all analyses reported below were weighted and clustered to account for survey design effects.

The overall response rate was over 90 percent, which rivals the extremely high response rates achieved by the United States Census Bureau. Table 2 reports the sample demographics. Full question wordings are provided in online Appendix A. All variables described below were coded to lie between 0 and 1, so that we can easily interpret a regression coefficient as representing a $\beta\%$ change in the dependent variable associated with moving from the lowest possible value to the highest possible value of the independent variable.

¹² Our sample did not include the insurgency-riven Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) because the security environment was questionable, and we omitted the Northern Areas and Azad Kashmir because they are not consistently surveyed by the Pakistan Federal Bureau of Statistics (FBS) in its household survey and so the data to generate a consistent sample frame do not exist.

[INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE.]

Measuring Support for Islamist Militant Organizations: The Endorsement Experiment

We used an endorsement experiment as an indirect means of measuring our dependent variable: support for specific Islamist militant organizations. The experiment involves assessing support for various real policies which are relatively well known but about which Pakistanis do not have strong feelings (as we learned during pretesting). The experiment works as follows:

- Respondents are randomly assigned to treatment or control groups (one-half of the sample is assigned to each group).
- Respondents in the control group were asked their level of support for four policies. Support for policies is measured on a five-point scale, recoded to lie between 0 and 1 for the analysis.
- Respondents in the treatment group are asked identical questions but then are told that one of four groups supports the policy in question. Which group is associated with each of the four policies is randomized within the treatment group.
- The difference in means between treatment and control groups in the sample provides a measure of affect towards the group, since the only difference between the treatment and control conditions is the group endorsement.

Figure 1 provides a sample question, showing the treatment and control questions, and illustrates the randomization procedure in visual form. Online appendix A provides all questions measuring support.

[INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE.]

The advantage of this approach is that the militant organization is not the primary object of evaluation; the policy is. We expected respondents to be more willing to share their opinions on uncontroversial policies rather than controversial groups. However, by embedding endorsements within the questions, we are able to indirectly ascertain support for militant organizations.

We used this method to measure support for four groups: the Kashmiri tanzeems, the Afghan Taliban, al-Qa'ida, and the sectarian tanzeems. This required asking about four policy issues: polio vaccinations, reforming the frontier crimes regulation (the legal code governing the FATA), redefining the Durand line (the border separating Pakistan from Afghanistan), and requiring madrassas to teach math and science. In our pre-testing most respondents knew about all four issues but did not have strong opinions on them, meaning a group's endorsement might affect their evaluation of the policy. This procedure would not work in the U.S., for example, if one asked about a policy such as banning abortion for which prior attitudes are strong. By randomizing which group is associated with which policy among the treatment group, we control for order effects and randomize the pairing of issue with group. This allows us to identify effects for multiple groups that are unlikely to be biased by the details of any specific policy.

Since our enumerators were not able to bring computers into the field—doing so was both culturally inappropriate and physically risky—we developed a procedure that allowed our field team to conduct the randomization with printed survey forms. There were 25 experimental conditions: 1 control questionnaire form, and $4! = 24$ possible treatment forms. We assigned the control form number 1 and the remaining forms numbers 2 to 25. Using a random number generator we randomized the order of these forms, repeating the control form 24 times. SEDCO's team then laid out the 48 boxes with these forms in randomized order and proceeded to staple them one-at-a-time onto the serialized base forms. This procedure effectively randomized across treatment and control as well as within treatment. We then randomly ordered the 500 PSU and assigned the serialized forms to PSU in order, so form 1 went to PSU 1, form 2 went to PSU 2, etc. This added another layer of randomization. We audited every survey form in 10% of PSUs before they went into the field and found that SEDCO carried out the randomization perfectly, as the randomization checks in online Appendix B attest.

Measuring the Independent Variables

As discussed previously, existing theories and policy debates point our attention to five key independent variables that could drive support for militant Islamist organizations: (1) religiosity, (2) education, (3) income,

(4) support for democratic values, and (5) attitudes towards the United States.

Religiosity. Of the five factors described above, religiosity is in many ways the most complex as it has at least two relevant components. The first is sympathy with extremist doctrines couched in the language of Islamic theology, what we call *jihadism*. The second is the depth of personal religious sentiment, what we call *religious seriousness*. We measure *jihadism* by creating an additive index from questions that ask respondents their position on two debates within Islam: (1) whether “*jihad*” is a militarize struggle to protect the *umma* or a personal struggle for righteousness; and (2) whether *jihad* is the sole province of governments or if individuals can undertake it. Respondents who say *jihad* is strictly militarized and individuals can undertake it received a 1, respondents who said *jihad* involves personal struggle for righteousness and only governments can undertake it received a 0, and others received .5 (i.e. we averaged responses to the two items).¹³ We measure *religious seriousness* with a similar procedure. There are a host of Islamic interpretive traditions represented in Pakistan, akin to the different denominations of Christianity in the United States. Associating with a specific tradition signals a sign of religious seriousness in the Islamic community. We asked respondents to name the tradition they would want their children educated in and asked how often they attended *dars-e-koran*, or Koran study sessions. Respondents who could name a tradition and attended study sessions daily received a 1, respondents who could not name a tradition and attended less-than-daily received a 0, and all others received .5.

Education and Income. Measuring education and income is much simpler. We created a *higheducation* dummy variable that takes 1 for respondents who have completed some education after high-school and 0 otherwise.¹⁴ We divide income into three levels (low, middle, and high) and used dummy variables for each level to capture possible non-linearities in the relationship between attitudes and income. Respondents from households making below the 25th percentile of monthly household case income in their province/strata (e.g. NWFP/urban) received a 1 on the variable *lowincome*. Respondents making above the 75th percentile of monthly case income in their province/strata received a 1 on the variable *highincome*. We take this approach

¹³ In the absence of strong theoretical priors, there is uncertainty as to how exactly to translate survey responses to numerical scales. To remain conservative, we simply average across items in constructing various measures. The results are robust to alternative operationalizations.

¹⁴ This education cut point represents what is generally considered higher education in Pakistan (similar to college attendees in the United States).

because theories relating income to political attitudes are usually based on relative income and so our measure should account for the fact that purchasing power and the proportion of household income in cash vary systematically across provinces and across urban and rural areas.

Support for Democratic Values. To measure support for democratic values we created an index based on the extent to which six core principles were considered important features of society to respondents: property rights, free speech, independent courts, being governed by elected representatives, having civilian control over the military, and freedom of assembly. For each aspect of liberal democratic governance we asked respondents to rate on a five-point scale how important it was to live in a country where that right was respected. All respondents who stated it was “extremely important” for a given right were assigned a 1 for that right and then we simply created an additive index of their scores across the rights (rescaled to lie between 0 and 1) to create our measure *democraticvalues*.

Anti-American Sentiment. To measure anti-American sentiment we created an index that combines two attitudinal questions on (1) the impact the U.S. has had on world and (2) the impact the U.S. has had on Pakistani politics. Each question was measured using a five-point scale ranging from extremely positive to extremely negative. We then created the variable *negativens* by adding these responses and scaled them to range from 0 to 1.

Table 3 provides the descriptive statistics on these individual-level characteristics.

[INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE.]

Methods of Analysis

Our measure of support for the militant organization is the treatment effect of the endorsement, or the difference in policy support between the control group and the treatment group. Recall that respondents in the control group reported their support level for all four policies without any endorsements. Respondents in the treatment group also reported their support for the four policies, but each policy was endorsed by one of the four militant organizations. The assignment of group to policy was randomized within the treatment

group. Hence, for a given militant organization j , we compare the overall policy support (P_i) in the control group (i.e., the average support across all four policies) to overall policy support in the treatment group for those responses associated with group j (which will comprise all four policies as well but only approximately one-fourth of the treatment group).¹⁵ We estimate the following regression via ordinary least squares (OLS) separately for each group, j :

$$P_i = \beta T_i + \alpha_p + \varepsilon_i \quad (1)$$

where T_i is a dummy variable indicating that respondent i is in the treatment condition, α_p are province fixed effects, and ε_i represents random error. The coefficient estimate on β represents overall support for group j .

We re-estimate version of equation (1) for each of the four provinces, removing α_p .

Some policies will exhibit greater treatment effects than others because prior attitudes are less well-formed. We use the variance of the responses in the control group to proxy looseness of pre-treatment attitudes. We weight each policy response by this variance. Hence, we place greater weight on policies where we expect there to be a greater likelihood that attitudes will be shifted in response to the endorsements.¹⁶

To assess which individual-level characteristics drive support for militancy, we estimate the following regression specification via OLS:

$$P_i = \beta T_i + \boldsymbol{\eta} \mathbf{x}_i + \boldsymbol{\gamma} T_i \mathbf{x}_i + \alpha_p + T_i \alpha_p + \varepsilon_i \quad (2)$$

where \mathbf{x}_i represents a vector of the five individual-level characteristics mentioned above.¹⁷ The parameters of interest are represented by the vector $\boldsymbol{\gamma}$, or how the treatment effects vary by the individual-level characteristics.

¹⁵ We only include respondents who provided responses to all four policy questions. 10.7% of respondents did not provide complete data.

¹⁶ The results are substantively similar without this weighting and so we report weighted results throughout as we believe they more accurately capture the impact of cues on attitudes. The weight vector \mathbf{w} for the four policies (vaccination plan, FCR reforms, Durand line, curriculum reform) was: (.983, 1.15, 1.28, 1.18), meaning that the weight for the control group was the average of these four individual weights (1.15). The post-stratification weight was multiplied by \mathbf{w} to produce the overall sampling weight.

¹⁷ In estimating equation (2), we lose an additional 5.0% of the sample who did not provide complete data on the individual-level characteristics. Appendix table 1 shows the distribution of attitudes about policies in the control groups is single peaked and so weighting by the variance will not mistakenly give high weight to a policy upon which people have fixed but highly polarize attitudes, e.g. abortion in the United States.

4. Results

Understanding the politics of militancy in Pakistan can inform both current policy debates and also speak to some basic questions in political science. By examining how the relationship between key independent variables and support differs across militant organizations we gain insight into why predictions about the politics of militancy derived from patterns observed in traditional politics fail in important respects here. In this setting we will see that where the results deviate from common expectations, they do so in ways that make complete sense once one takes the particular local politics of Pakistan into account.

Support for Militancy in Pakistan

At the most basic level this survey arguably provides the most valid measurement of how Pakistanis feel towards militant groups obtained thus far. Figure 2 reports our core results, showing the difference in support for policies between control and treatment groups for the entire country and then for each of the four provinces.

[INSERT FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE.]

The striking result here is that Pakistanis are generally negative towards Islamist militant organizations. This negative affect is revealed by our measurement strategy and is a substantial improvement on the deeply ambiguous findings of previous surveys. A July 2009 survey by World Public Opinion.org, for example, found that 80% of respondents in the NWFP felt that al-Qa'ida's activities posed a "critical threat" to the "vital interests of Pakistan", yet 47% agreed that they "supported al-Qa'ida attacks on Americans and share its attitude towards the U.S." What one should make of such findings is unclear, there seems to be a deep inconsistency in these responses. In contrast, our finding that no group's endorsement had a positive effect on evaluation of policies is a striking demonstration that Pakistanis, on average, do not like the militant organizations operating in their country. Table 4 presents the estimates from equation (1) more formally.

[INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE.]

Table 4 further highlights the fact that there is substantial sub-national variation in support across the four provinces of Pakistan. The starkest finding in this respect is that support for all four groups is strongly negative in the NWFP. This makes sense in so far as all four groups have engaged in substantial violence in that area and so residents there have borne the consequences of their actions more than other Pakistanis. This finding is important because it tells us we cannot draw simple inferences about attitudes towards militants by observing patterns of attacks. Of the four groups we asked about the Afghan Taliban are the most active in the NWFP, yet respondents were 4% less likely to support a policy if told the Afghan Taliban supported it.¹⁸ In other words, where the Afghan Taliban operate most is where they are most disliked. Policy makers and analysts should take this as a cautionary note; observing militant activity in an area is not a sign that average people in an area support the militants.

Three other interesting patterns in these data merit mentioning. First, residents of Punjab do not exhibit negative affect towards any of the groups we study. This may derive from the long history of the state raising and deploying “jihadi groups,” most of which are based in the Punjab. Second, the province of Pakistan with the highest Shia population according to our sample, Balochistan, is the area where negative affect towards the anti-Shia sectarian tanzems is greatest. Third, respondents in Sindh have negative affect toward the Kashmiri tanzem or Afghan Taliban. This is sensible in so far as a large proportion of the population of Sindh resides in Karachi which is both the most globalized city in the country and the city with the strongest ties to India, which has been targeted most heavily by these two groups.

Overall the sub-national variation in support for the groups we study is sensible given the local political dynamics. Moreover, the variation of support by region underscores not only the value of obtaining a sample that is representative for each province, but also the importance of regional political factors in driving support or opposition to militancy.

¹⁸ This is a substantively meaningful effect as the standard deviation of support across policies in the control group is approximately 8%.

Explaining Variance in Support

Understanding variation in support for specific groups is complicated by the fact that many of the variables we expect to influence support move together. More educated people, who *H2* predicted would be less supportive of groups, also tend to have higher incomes. Discerning the independent effect of factors like education thus requires a multivariate approach. This section provides just that.

Table 5 reports the results of applying the approach outlined in section 3 to a model that controls for the possible cross-cutting effects of the independent variables: jihadism, religious seriousness, education, income categories, democratic values, views of the US, and provincial effects. These regressions are a severe test of the data. If after controlling for all these factors we still identify meaningful difference-in-difference estimates, we can be quite confident the effects are real.¹⁹

[INSERT TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE.]

Across all four groups the coefficient on the interaction between group cue and jihadism is positive and statistically significant, indicating support for H1A. The coefficient estimates range between .03 and .05, meaning that support for militant groups is 3-5% higher among jihadists than other Pakistanis. Religious seriousness negatively predicts support for the Afghan Taliban and al-Qa'ida. Those who have a secular affiliation and who are regular attendees of *dars* on average exhibit 3% less support for these two groups than Pakistanis who are less religiously serious. Our interpretation of this result is that these groups utilize an interpretation of Islam that is an anathema to those who take their religion seriously. An alternative possibility is that religious civic engagement has positive spillovers in terms of building social capital (Putnam 2000). Whatever the mechanism, it is clear that religiosity has a complex effect on support for militancy. It is not adherence to Islam *per se* that drives support, but rather a specific fundamentalist, textual reading of the Koran.

Higher levels of education produce less support for the Afghan Taliban and sectarian tanzim but no

¹⁹ These results remain substantively unchanged if we also include field team fixed effects to control for any team-induced mean shifts in measurement of support for policies.

have no effect on support for the Kashmir Tanzeem or al-Qa'ida, providing some support for H2. The result on the Kashmir Tanzeem is in line with *H2A*. We expected that long-term exposure to the Pakistani education system would have an ambiguous effect with respect to the Kashmir Tanzeem as the tolerance inducing effects of education conflict with the ideology being pushed.

Low income respondents are no more supportive of any militant group than are middle income individuals and are less supportive of the Kashmiri Tanzeem and Afghan Taliban, meaning that we soundly reject H3. However, as *H3A* predicted, low income respondents are *less* supportive of all militant groups and the effect is statistically significant for the Kashmiri Tanzeem and Afghan Taliban. This pattern makes perfect sense in light of how the costs of militancy are spread within Pakistan. What is even more informative is that these results are driven entirely by an intense dislike of all four militant groups among the urban poor. When we stratify the sample (results not reported), we find the urban poor are 7.4% less supportive of the Kashmiri Tanzeem, 9.2% less supportive of the Afghan Taliban and al-Qa'ida, and 7.2% less supportive of the sectarian tanzeem. Figure 3 provides graphic intuition for these results, showing average support for policies in treatment and control groups among urban and rural respondents.

[INSERT FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE.]

Respondents placing high importance on democratic values were *more* supportive of the Kashmir tanzeem and Afghan Taliban, thereby refuting H4. Table 6 provides the context for this finding by summarizing our respondents' views towards the Afghan Taliban and the United States.

[INSERT TABLE 6 ABOUT HERE.]

There are some fascinating patterns revealed in Table 6. First, Pakistanis simply think the Kashmir Tanzeem are fighting for justice (81%), democracy (73%), and to protect Muslims (85%). Second, Pakistanis clearly think the Afghan Taliban are fighting on the side of right, if not for democracy *per se*. 60% think they

are the more legitimate government for Afghanistan, 58% think they did a better job of helping the Afghan people, 72% think they are fighting to liberate Afghanistan. Third, 83% of Pakistanis think U.S. is occupying Afghanistan, and over 63% think the U.S. has had an extremely negative influence on the world and on Pakistani politics.

Given these patterns, *H4A*'s prediction that there would be a positive impact of democracy on support for militancy makes perfect sense. Pakistanis view the Kashmir tanzim as fighting for the rights of the beleaguered Kashmiri Muslims and our respondents clearly believe the Afghan Taliban are fighting an illegitimate occupier-supported government. Neither al-Qa'ida nor the sectarian tanzim are executing a pro-democratic agenda and so the null result on belief in democracy and support for them is sensible.

Finally, respondents with negative views of the U.S. were actually less supportive of militants than others (though not at statistically significant levels), meaning that we reject *H5*. *H5A*, however, is supported in that there is no effect of anti-U.S. sentiment on support for any group. We thus find no evidence that after controlling for regional differences in support and a vector of socio-economic variables that anti-Americanism plays any role in driving support for militant groups in Pakistan.

Across all five hypotheses then we see clear deviations from the first set theoretically-driven expectations, but those deviations make sense when we take the particular politics of Pakistan into account.

5. Conclusion

In order to better understand the politics of militancy in Pakistan and to shed light on larger theories about political attitudes we designed and conducted a 6,000-person nationally representative survey of Pakistani adults, measuring affect towards four specific militant organizations. We applied a novel measurement strategy within a groundbreaking survey to mitigate social desirability bias and non-response given the sensitive nature of militancy in the region. Our endorsement experiment overcomes several issues that have plagued past efforts to use surveys to study the politics of militancy.

Our approach yields a number of interesting findings. Most generally, broad-brush theories about the impact of individual-level characteristics on political attitudes perform poorly at predicting support for

specific organizations. This makes sense given that these groups put tremendous amounts of energy into articulating their particular goals and so it would be odd if the specific politics of each group were not critical. The broader theoretical implication is that models of political attitudes towards militant organizations may need to move in the nuanced direction that models of attitudes in normal politics are heading.

Turning to specific findings, there are four clear implications from this study. The first implication is that the impact of education on political attitudes depends critically on the content of that education. This may seem like a truism but its consequences are often neglected. Many states, including prominently Pakistan and the Palestinian Authority, endorse curricula that encompass irredentist claims and intolerant attitudes. Aid and development projects that give such states greater capacity to educate their citizenry may very well lead to larger populations with politically destructive views, negating any tolerance-enhancing impact of education.

The second implication is that improving individual material outcomes will not unambiguously impact political attitudes, the poorest respondents are already less supportive of these groups than others, at least those living in urban areas. Studies of the relationship between political and economic development should shed the empirically untenable notion that rising standards of living and constructive political attitudes correlate at the individual level. Instead, our findings should encourage an already robust focus on the role of institutions instead of attitudes as key determinants of economic and political growth (Acemoglu et al. 2001). Additionally, it should be noted that income is not randomly assigned in society. Future research should attempt to exogenously vary opportunities for the disadvantaged to see if increasing income decreases support for political violence, something we are pursuing in ongoing work.

The third implication is that religion can be a force for order or for disorder; it is the details of doctrine that matter. The roots of religious militancy lay not in the extent of personal devotion, but in the content of organizational doctrine. Those who are sympathetic with views supporting violent mobilization in the name of religion are naturally more supportive of violent groups. Those who value a personal connection to the spiritual are not.

The fourth implication is that spreading democratic values will not necessarily reduce support for

violent politics. This should be no surprise to those familiar with America's own history; the Revolutionary War, after all, was fought in the name of democratic ideals and saw no shortage of terrorism and irregular violence (Edgar 2001). The fact that the relationship between political values and support for specific organizations depends on what cause those organizations are advancing bears repeating, however, in light of policy arguments that view the spread of democratic values as contributing inevitably to a more peaceful and orderly world. So long as people in Pakistan and elsewhere view violent political organizations as fighting to protect oppressed and occupied populations, there is little reason to think that enhancing respect for democracy will reduce political violence.

From a policy perspective, the implications of this study are extremely hopeful. If background individual characteristics like income and religiosity explained support for militancy, then policy efforts to reduce support for violent political organizations would be quixotic at best. Changing levels of education in any society is a decades-long process and there is little reliable knowledge on how to help large developing countries like Pakistan to advance economically. Politics however, can change very quickly. The striking variation across groups in both levels of support and the predictors of support should lend a hopeful note to efforts to reduce support for violent political organizations. Changing the politics of militancy is eminently feasible as the rapid declines in the fortunes of the Pakistan Taliban since April 2009 illustrate. The focus on U.S. and Pakistani efforts to combat militancy should therefore focus on the political and leave the business of societal change to the long arc of history.

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Figure 1: Illustration of The Endorsement Experiment

Control

[POLICY DESCRIPTION]. How much do you support such a plan?

Treatment

[POLICY DESCRIPTION]. [GROUP NAME] have voiced support for this program. How much do you support such a plan?

Randomization Procedure

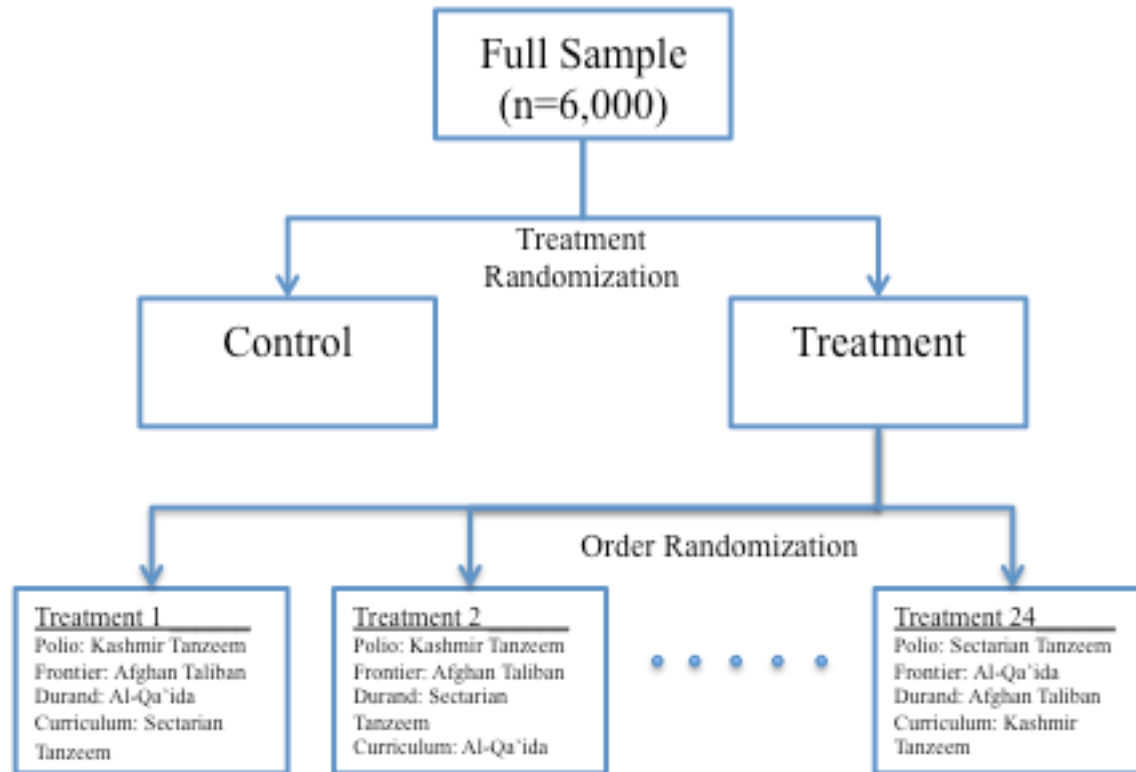
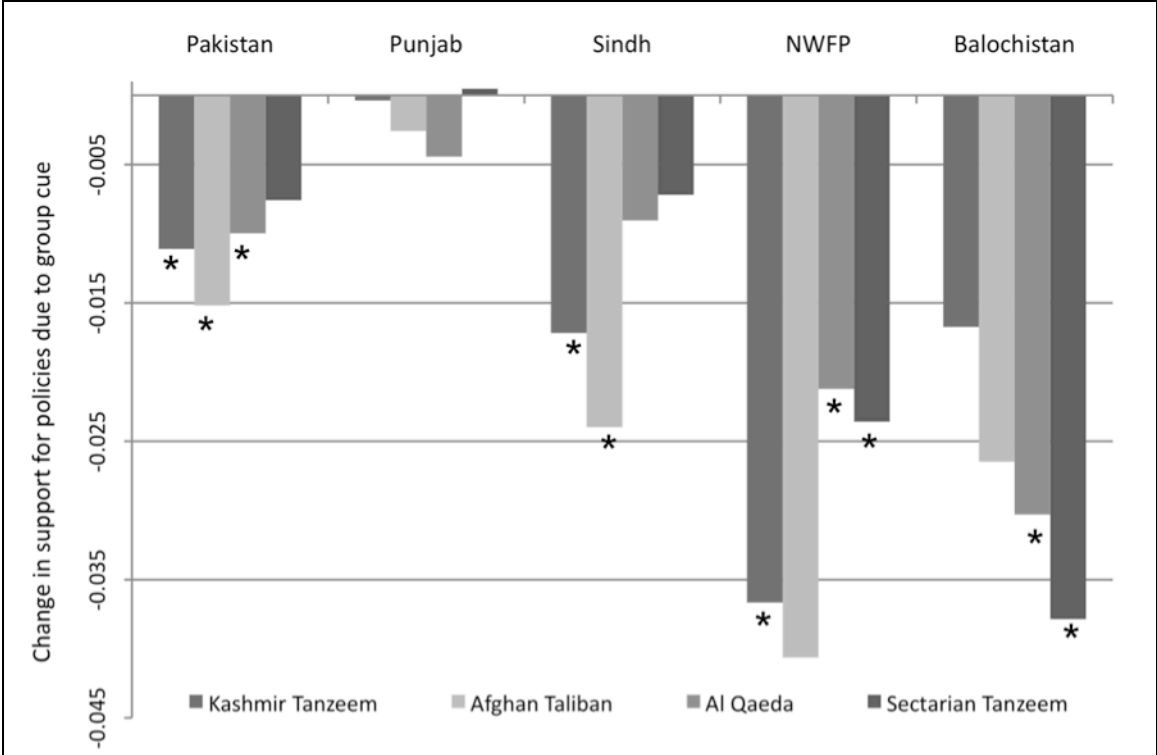


Figure 2: Support for Militant Groups by Region



* $p < .10$ (two-tailed)

Figure 3: Support for Policies by Group/Urban-Rural

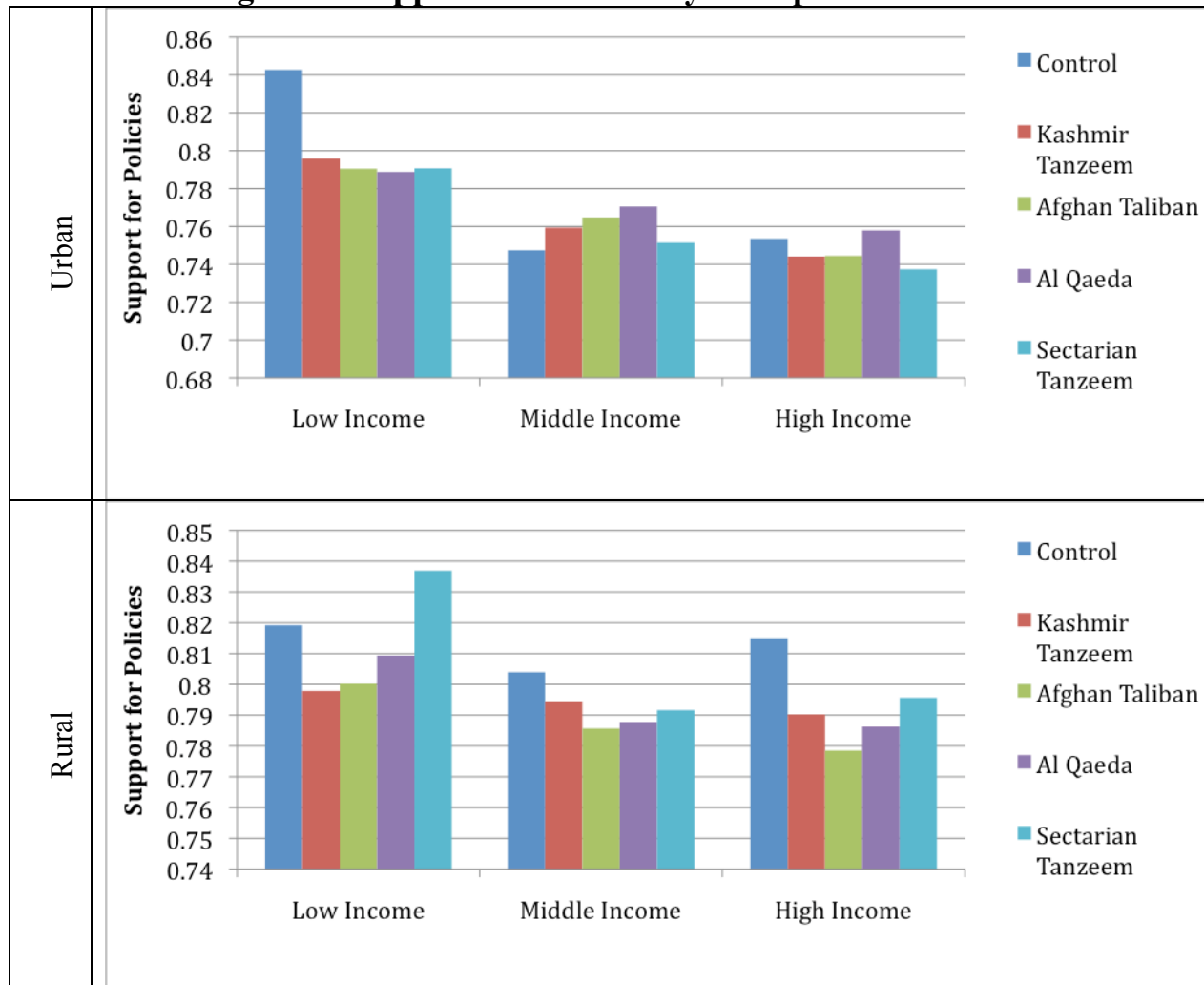


Table 1: Summary of Militant Groups Operating in and From Pakistan

Militant Group	Specific Organizations	Regional Activities	Stated Goals
Kashmir Tanzeem	- Jaish-e-Mohamed - Harkat-ul-Mujahedeen - Harkat-il-Jihad-Islam (JUJI)	- Attacks in Indian-administered Kashmir. - Has operated in Afghanistan. - Has targeted Pakistani government and international targets in Pakistan.	- Wrest Kashmir from India - Assist Afghan Taliban
	- Hizbul Mujahedeen - al Badr	- Attacks in Indian administered Kashmir.	- Wrest Kashmir from India.
	- Lashkar-e-Taiba	- Attacks in Indian administered Kashmir - Attacks in India against government and commercial targets.	- Wrest Kashmir from India. - Foster Hindu-Muslims discord in India - Target the “Hindu-Jewish-Christian” alliance
Afghan Taliban	N/A	- Wages insurgency in Afghanistan - Enjoys safe havens in Pakistan, especially ‘Quetta Shura. - Some elements have ties to Pakistani military	- Overthrow government of Afghanistan - Oust foreign civilian and military forces
Pakistan Taliban	- Tehreek-e-Taliban-e-Pakistan (TTP) - Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM)	- Targeting the Pakistani state - Restricted violence to FATA before June 2009 - Some commanders mobilize fighters in Afghanistan	- Undermine Pakistan government, establish local parallel governments as self-styled sharia, engage in other criminal activities
Al-Qa’ida	N/A	- Facilitated attacks worldwide - Has planned international attacks from Pakistan	- Undermine Pakistan government - Conduct international terror attacks
Sectarian Tanzeem	- Sipha-e-Sahaba-Pakistan - Lashkar-e-Jhangvi	- Anti-Shia attacks, heaviest in Sindh - Some support to Pakistan Taliban	- Cleanse Pakistan of apostate Shi’a - Establish Pakistan as a Sunni state - Assist Afghan and Pakistan Taliban

Table 2: Sample Demographics

<u>Gender</u>	
Male	53.1%
Female	46.9
<u>Urban/Rural</u>	
Urban	32.5%
Rural	67.5
<u>Province</u>	
Punjab	55.6%
Sindh	24.3
NWFP	13.9
Balochistan	6.3
<u>Religious Sect</u>	
Sunni	96.1%
Shi'ite	3.9
<u>Age</u>	
18-24	22.9%
25-29	18.7
30-39	29.1
40-49	17.5
50-59	7.8
60+	4.1
<u>Education</u>	
Illiterate	32.2%
Primary	13.1
Middle	14.9
Matriculant	19.3
Intermediate	12.3
Graduate	6.4
Professional	1.9
<u>Monthly Income</u>	
Less than 3000 PKR	12.3%
3,000-10,000 PKR	53.9
10,001-15,000 PKR	22.9
15,001-25,000 PKR	8.8
More than 25,000 PKR	2.2

Note: N=6000 for all variables except monthly income (N=5779). Data weighted and adjusted for sampling design.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics on Individual-Level Characteristics

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard Dev.</u>	<u>Maximum</u>	<u>Minimum</u>
Jihadism	.33	.31	0	1
Religious Seriousness	.28	.31	0	1
Education	.21	.41	0	1
High Income	.20	.39	0	1
Low Income	.22	.41	0	1
Democratic Values	.52	.33	0	1
Negative View of U.S.	.84	.22	0	1

Note: N=5092

Table 4: Support for Militant Groups by Region

		<u>Kashmir Tanzeem</u>	<u>Afghan Taliban</u>	<u>Al Qaeda</u>	<u>Sectarian Tanzeem</u>
Full Sample (n=5358)	Group Cue	-.011 ⁺ (.006)	-.015* (.006)	-.010 ⁺ (.005)	-.007 (.005)
	Constant	.82*** (.01)	.83*** (.01)	.82*** (.01)	.82*** (.01)
	R ²	.04	.04	.03	.03
Punjab (n=2207)	Group Cue	.000 (.009)	-.003 (.009)	-.004 (.008)	.005 (.008)
	Constant	.82*** (.10)	.82*** (.10)	.82*** (.10)	.82*** (.10)
	R ²	.00	.00	.00	.00
Sindh (n=1373)	Group Cue	-.017 ⁺ (.010)	-.024* (.011)	-.009 (.009)	-.007 (.008)
	Constant	.75*** (.01)	.75*** (.01)	.75*** (.01)	.75*** (.01)
	R ²	.00	.00	.00	.00
NWFP (n=992)	Group Cue	-.037** (.012)	-.041** (.012)	-.021 ⁺ (.011)	-.024 ⁺ (.012)
	Constant	.81*** (.01)	.81*** (.01)	.81*** (.01)	.81*** (.01)
	R ²	.01	.01	.00	.00
Balochistan (n=786)	Group Cue	-.017 (.017)	-.026 (.018)	-.030* (.014)	-.038* (.015)
	Constant	.73*** (.02)	.73*** (.02)	.73*** (.02)	.73*** (.02)
	R ²	.00	.00	.00	.01

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; + $p < .10$ (two-tailed)

Note: Data weighted and adjusted for sampling design. Region fixed effects included but not reported for “Full Sample” regressions.

Table 5: Support for Militant Groups by Individual-Level Characteristics

	<u>Kashmir Tanzeem</u>	<u>Afghan Taliban</u>	<u>Al Qaeda</u>	<u>Sectarian Tanzeem</u>
Group Cue	.00 (.03)	.01 (.03)	.00 (.03)	.01 (.02)
Jihadism	-.07*** (.01)	-.07*** (.01)	-.07*** (.01)	-.07*** (.01)
Religious Seriousness	.02 (.01)	.02 (.01)	.02 (.01)	.02 (.01)
Education	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)
High Income	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)
Middle Income	.05*** (.01)	.05*** (.01)	.05*** (.01)	.05*** (.01)
Democratic Values	.12*** (.01)	.12*** (.01)	.12*** (.01)	.12*** (.01)
Negative View of U.S.	.06** (.02)	.06** (.02)	.06** (.02)	.06** (.02)
Sindh	-.05*** (.01)	-.05*** (.01)	-.05*** (.01)	-.05*** (.01)
NWFP	.03** (.01)	.03** (.01)	.03** (.01)	.03** (.01)
Balochistan	-.03* (.02)	-.03* (.02)	-.03* (.02)	-.03* (.02)
Jihadism x Group Cue	.03+ (.02)	.05** (.02)	.04* (.02)	.03* (.02)
Religious Seriousness x Group Cue	.00 (.02)	-.04* (.02)	-.03* (.02)	-.02 (.02)
Education x Group Cue	-.01 (.02)	-.04* (.01)	.02 (.01)	-.02+ (.01)
High Income x Group Cue	-.02 (.01)	-.01 (.02)	-.02 (.01)	-.01 (.02)
Low Income x Group Cue	-.03* (.01)	-.03* (.01)	-.02 (.01)	-.01 (.01)
Democratic Values x Group Cue	.04* (.02)	.04* (.02)	.03 (.02)	.02 (.02)
Negative View of U.S. x Group Cue	-.03 (.02)	-.03 (.03)	-.02 (.03)	-.03 (.03)
Sindh x Group Cue	-.01 (.01)	-.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)
NWFP x Group Cue	-.03* (.02)	-.04* (.02)	-.01 (.01)	-.02 (.01)
Balochistan x Group Cue	-.01 (.02)	-.02 (.02)	-.02 (.02)	-.04* (.02)
Constant	.69*** (.02)	.69*** (.02)	.69*** (.02)	.69*** (.02)
R ²	.11	.11	.10	.10

***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05; +p<.10 (two-tailed)

Note: N=5243. Data weighted and adjusted for sampling design.

Table 6: Attitudes toward Pakistan Taliban, Afghan Taliban, and the United States Government

Views on Kashmir Tanzeem

Percent agreeing with statement that:

Justice is their objective	81.1%
Democracy is their objective	72.5
Protecting Muslims is their objective	84.5
N	6000

Views on Afghan Taliban

Which government has a more legitimate claim to ruling Afghanistan?

Current Karzai government	40.4%
Former Taliban Government	59.6
N	4544

Which government did a better job of helping the Afghan people?

Current Karzai government	42.5%
Former Taliban Government	57.5
N	4475

Here are two statements people make about the Afghan Taliban. Please tell us which you agree with more.

The Afghan Taliban are trying to liberate Afghanistan from the United States and other foreign powers.	72.3%
The Afghan Taliban are rebelling against the government of Afghanistan.	27.7
N	5159

Views on United States Government

Do you think the United States is occupying Afghanistan?

Yes	82.9%
No	17.1
N	6000

Please tell us about the U.S. government's influence on the world. Is it...?

Extremely positive	1.3%
Somewhat positive	6.0
Neither positive nor negative	8.7
Somewhat negative	20.9
Extremely negative	63.1
N	5859

Please tell us about the U.S. government's influence on Pakistan's politics. Is it...?

Extremely positive	1.4%
Somewhat positive	6.0
Neither positive nor negative	9.8
Somewhat negative	18.2
Extremely negative	64.5
N	5874

Note: Data weighted and adjusted for sampling design.

Table A1: Support for Policies in the Control Group

	<u>Vaccinations</u>	<u>FCR Reforms</u>	<u>Peace Jirga</u>	<u>Curriculum Reform</u>
Not at all	2.3%	6.2%	10.6%	3.6%
A Little	4.8	7.1	6.1	11.3
A Moderate Amount	9.2	20.4	19.9	17.3
A Lot	27.4	34.2	30.3	22.4
A Great Deal	56.2	32.2	33.0	45.4

N=2772

Online Appendix A: Question Wordings

Policies for Endorsement Experiment

The World Health Organizations recently announced a plan to introduced universal Polio vaccination across Pakistan. How much do you support such a plan?

- A great deal
- A lot
- A moderate amount
- A little
- Not at all

The newly-elected national government has proposed reforming the Frontier Crimes Regulation and making tribal areas equal to other provinces of the country. How much do you support such a plan?

- A great deal
- A lot
- A moderate amount
- A little
- Not at all

Governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan have explored using peace jirgas to resolve their disputes for example the location of the boundary [Durand line/Sarhad]. How much do you support such a plan?

- A great deal
- A lot
- A moderate amount
- A little
- Not at all

In recent years the government of Pakistan has proposed curriculum reform for madaris to minimize sectarian discord. How much do you support such a plan?

- A great deal
- A lot
- A moderate amount
- A little
- Not at all

Religious Seriousness

If a child in your house were to study hafz-e-Quran or nazira, what kind of madrassa or school would you like them to attend?

Jamaat-e-Islami
Ahl-e-hadith
Deobandi
Barlevi
Shi'ite
Ahle-sunnat

Do you attend dars-e-Quran?

Yes
No

How many times do you go to dars-e-Quran per week on average?

Jihadism

Some people say jihad is a personal struggle for righteousness. Others say jihad is protecting the Muslim Ummah through war. What do you think?

Jihad is solely a personal struggle for righteousness.

Jihad is both a personal struggle for righteousness and protecting the Muslim Ummah through war.

Jihad is solely protecting the Muslim Ummah through war.

Some people say only a Muslim state/government can use military force to protect a Muslim country or Ummah in the name of jihad. Others say individuals and non-state organizations can use military force in the name of jihad. What do you think?

Only states/governments should use military force in the name of jihad.

Both states/governments and individuals should use military force in the name of jihad.

Only individuals should use military force in the name of jihad.

Neither can use military force in the name of jihad.

Democratic Values

How important is it for you to live in a country that is governed by representatives elected by the people?

Extremely important

Very important

Moderately important

Slightly important

Not important at all

How important is it for you to live in a country where the decisions of the courts are independent from influence by political and military authorities?

Extremely important
Very important
Moderately important
Slightly important
Not important at all

How important is it that individuals be able to express their political views, even though other people may not agree with them?

Extremely important
Very important
Moderately important
Slightly important
Not important at all

How important is it that individuals be able to meet with others to work on political issues?

Extremely important
Very important
Moderately important
Slightly important
Not important at all

How important is it that individual property rights be secure? This means the state cannot take away their things without proper court proceedings?

Extremely important
Very important
Moderately important
Slightly important
Not important at all

The 1973 Constitution of Pakistan says civilians should control the military. This means the military cannot take action without orders from civilian leaders. In your opinion, how much control should civilians have over the military?

Complete control
A lot of control
A moderate amount of control
A little control
No control at all

Attitudes toward Pakistan Taliban, Afghan Taliban, and the United States Government

We're now going to ask you about a number of different groups. For each group, please answer

to the best of your ability. The first group is “Pakistani militant groups fighting in Kashmir”
What do you think is the group’s objectives? Please tell us all that apply.

Justice
Democracy
Protecting muslims
Ridding the Muslim umma of people who have moved away from their religion
Freeing Occupied Kashmir

Which government had a more legitimate claim to ruling Afghanistan: the current Karzai government or the former Taliban government?

The current Karzai government
The former Taliban government

Which government performed better: the current Karzai government or the former Taliban government?

The current Karzai government
The former Taliban government

Here are two statements people make about the Afghan Taliban. Please tell us which you agree with more:

The Afghan Taliban are trying to liberate Afghanistan from the United States and other foreign powers.
The Afghan Taliban are rebelling against the government of Afghanistan.

Do you think the United States is occupying Afghanistan?

Yes
No

Negative Views of United States

Please tell us about the U.S. government’s influence on the world, if it is: extremely positive, somewhat positive, neither positive nor negative, somewhat negative, or extremely negative?

Extremely positive
Somewhat positive
Neither positive nor negative
Somewhat negative
Extremely negative

Please tell us about the U.S. government’s influence on Pakistan’s politics, if it is: extremely positive, somewhat positive, neither positive nor negative, somewhat negative, or extremely

negative?

Extremely positive
Somewhat positive
Neither positive nor negative
Somewhat negative
Extremely negative

Demographics

Are you Sunni or Shi'ite?

Sunni
Shi'ite
Non-Muslim [WRITTEN IN BY INTERVIEWER IF NON-MUSLIM]

What is your age in years?

What was the highest class you completed?

Primary
Middle
Matriculant
Intermediate (F.A/F.Sc)
Graduate (B.A/B.Sc.)
Professionals (M.S.C., M.A., Ph.D. or other professional degree)
Illiterate

What is the approximate monthly income in your household?

Less than 3000 rupees
3000 to 10,000 rupees
10,001 to 15,000 rupees
15,001 to 25,000 rupees
More than 25,000 rupees

Online Appendix B: Randomization Checks

	<u>Control</u>	<u>Treatment</u>
<u>Gender</u>		
Male	53.1%	53.1%
Female	46.9	46.9
<i>F: p=.99</i>		
<u>Urban/Rural</u>		
Urban	32.6%	32.3%
Rural	67.4	67.7
<i>F: p=.78</i>		
<u>Province</u>		
Punjab	55.8%	55.3%
Sindh	24.4	24.1
NWFP	13.5	14.3
Balochistan	6.3	6.2
<i>F: p=.72</i>		
<u>Religious Sect</u>		
Sunni	96.3%	96.0%
Shi'ite	3.7	4.0
<i>F: p=.51</i>		
<u>Age</u>		
18-24	23.2%	22.5%
25-29	19.3	18.2
30-39	28.2	29.9
40-49	17.5	17.4
50-59	7.9	7.6
60+	3.9	4.3
<i>F: p=.63</i>		
<u>Education</u>		
Illiterate	32.4%	31.9%
Primary	13.7	12.6
Middle	13.8	15.9
Matriculant	19.6	19.0
Intermediate	12.8	11.9
Graduate	6.1	6.7
Professional	1.7	2.1
<i>F: p=.21</i>		
<u>Monthly Income</u>		
Less than 3000 PKR	9.7%	9.6%
3,000-10,000 PKR	55.8	53.6
10,001-15,000 PKR	23.9	24.7
15,001-25,000 PKR	8.8	9.8
More than 25,000 PKR	1.8	2.2
<i>F: p=.31</i>		

Note: N=6000 for all variables except monthly income (N=5779).
Data weighted and adjusted for sampling design.