

Poverty and Support for Militant Politics: Evidence from 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. The policy literature often focuses on poverty as a root cause of support for violent political groups and on economic development as a key to addressing the problem. Unfortunately, there is little evidence to support these contentions. To address this gap, we conducted a 6000-person, nationally representative survey of Pakistanis that measures affect towards four important militant organizations using a novel measurement strategy to mitigate item non-response. Our study reveals that Pakistanis exhibit negative affect toward all four militant organizations and, contrary to expectations, poor Pakistanis dislike militant groups more than middle-class citizens. This dislike is strongest among poor urban residents, suggesting that the negative relationship stems from exposure to the externalities of terrorist attacks. Longstanding arguments tying support for violent political organizations to individuals' economic prospects should be revisited.

Combating militant violence, particularly within South Asia and the Middle East, stands at the top of the international security agenda. Economic development aid has become a central tool in prosecuting this agenda on the belief that “...underlying conditions such as poverty, corruption, religious conflict and ethnic strife create opportunities for terrorists to exploit...Terrorists use these conditions to justify their actions and expand their support” (U.S. State Department 2003).¹ Beyond terrorism, there is a widespread expectation in the policy and academic literatures that poorer people are either more susceptible to the appeals of violent groups (DFID 2005) or are more likely to participate in violence (Sambanis 2004).

Drawing on this perception, policies intended to combat militant violence have focused on using aid to reduce abject poverty and move people into the middle class. Underlying this approach are two tacit hypotheses: first, all other things being equal (education, ideology, and the like), poor people are more likely to support and/or participate in violent political organizations (see e.g. USAID 2009); and second, the correlation is sufficiently strong that the changes in income that can be achieved through external aid will have a meaningful impact on support for violent groups.

To evaluate this posited relationship between poverty and militancy we conducted a 6,000-person provincially representative survey in Pakistan, a country plagued by militant violence. Our April 2009 survey breaks important methodological ground in two respects. First, we assess support for specific militant organizations instead of taking the path of existing work which examines attitudes toward general tactics such as suicide bombing (Shafiq and Sinno 2010) or attacks on the United States (Tessler and Robbins 2007). Assessing the correlates of support for militant groups by measuring attitudes on the tactics they use is a bit like trying to identify the correlates of support for the Republican Party by asking people about their opinions on lowering marginal tax rates. It is

¹ Similar arguments are made in policy documents by other donors. The UK Department for International Development’s (DFID) “Fighting Poverty to Build a Safer World” policy statement, for example, argues that “Poverty and lack of access to basic services contribute to perceptions of injustice that can motivate people to violence” (DFID 2005).

relevant, but not quite the variable we are interested in.

Second, we apply a novel form of “endorsement experiment” to assess support for specific groups without asking respondents directly how they feel about them. Doing so is critical because attitudes toward these groups can be highly sensitive and asking about them directly is dangerous in some areas. Accordingly, even more than in other contexts respondents may offer what they believe to be the socially desirable response or simply not respond to certain questions.² Endorsement experiments have been used for years (e.g. Lupia and McCubbins 1998), but they have not previously been used to study support for sensitive political topics.

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 are less prominent since respondents are reacting to the policy and not to the group itself. By asking respondents about multiple policy issues and randomizing 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.

Using this approach we find that poor individuals hold militants in *lower* regard than middle-class Pakistanis, even after controlling for a wide range of potentially confounding factors. Pakistanis as a whole generally dislike a range of militant organizations a bit, but poor Pakistanis are more than twice as negative towards these groups as their middle-class counterparts. This result is strikingly at

² In WorldPublicOpinion.org polling in Pakistan, for example, item non-response on questions about al-Qa’ida ranged from 68% in February 2007, to 47% in September 2008, to 13% in May 2009. Work that suffers from high item non-response and social-desirability bias 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).

odds with the conventional view that income and support for militancy are positively correlated. Admittedly, the fact that those who are currently poor dislike militant groups more than middle-class citizens is not direct evidence that increasing incomes of the poor will not reduce support for militancy, but it does beg the question of why past improvements in material status—which are presumably reflected in current status—did not apparently do so.

Although we cannot directly identify the source of this negative correlation with survey data alone, we leverage contextual data on violent incidents to uncover three empirical patterns suggestive of the underlying mechanisms for the correlation. First, the province in which most violent attacks take place, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP), is also the one where Pakistanis dislike the militant organizations responsible the most. Second, militant violence in Pakistan is strongly concentrated in urban areas (Hussain 2010), and we find that the urban poor harbor much more negative views of militant groups than do the rural poor and the urban middle class. This effect is strongest in Punjab, the province that is, on average, most supportive of the groups. Third, past qualitative fieldwork in Pakistan since 1991 finds that the burden of militant violence, and the consequences of the economic disruptions it engenders, fall most heavily on the poor (Hussain 2010).³ Taken together, these findings reflect the possibility that dislike of militant groups is driven largely by the extent to which individuals suffer the negative externalities, economic and otherwise, of militant attacks. This perspective suggests the conventional wisdom about the poverty-militancy relationship may be deceptively simple. It is not that the people are vulnerable to militants' appeals because they are poor and dissatisfied. Rather, it is the poor who suffer most from militants'

³ See also Hussain (2010), who uses the Global Terrorism Database to show that of the 2,590 terrorist incidents recorded between 1974 and 2007, they mostly occur in the four provincial Capitals—Karachi (1211, 49%), Peshawar (133, 5%), Lahore (109, 4%), Quetta (82, 3%), and the country capital Islamabad (69, 2.7%). Several rural districts were hosts to more than twenty terrorism incidents (e.g. in the tribal areas, Swat, Southern Punjab and the central Baluchistan). This comports with our analysis of data from the Combating Terrorism Center, which we discuss at length below. These incidents occur in urban markets served by small shopkeepers and others of modest means and the persons who frequent these areas also tend to be from modest means. In recent years, terrorists have attacked traditional shrines, which are predominantly frequented by Pakistan's poor.

violence and so most intensely dislike them.⁴

The remainder of this paper proceeds as follows. Section 1 provides background on the different militant groups operating in Pakistan. Section 2 summarizes the literature on poverty and militancy in Pakistan. Section 3 describes our survey and measurement strategy. Section 4 presents the results and Section 5 discusses their implications.

1. Militancy in Pakistan

As is well known, Pakistan has employed Islamist militancy in India and Afghanistan as a tool of foreign policy since the early weeks of statehood and has continued to date (Swami 2007; Rubin 2002; Hussain 2005; 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 and so this section summarizes the main active groups.

Militants Fighting in Kashmir

There are several organizations Pakistanis group under the title of “Kashmiri tanzeems” (Kashmiri groups). Jaish-e-Mohammad (JM), Harkat-ul-Ansar/Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HUA/HUM), and their splinter groups have traditionally focused upon Kashmir and while they recruit within Pakistan, their recruitment materials describe their mission as “liberating” Indian-administered Kashmir from India’s dominion. In recent years, JM has become intimately involved with the Pakistan Taliban and has provided suicide attackers for assaults on Pakistani and international targets within Pakistan.

There are also several Kashmiri groups tied to the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) (a religious political party with ties to the Muslim Brotherhood), which include Hizbol Mujahideen, al Badr, and related factions. They tend to recruit Kashmiris and operate mostly in Kashmir with the goal of wresting

⁴ DFID (2005) argues there is a correlation between poverty and exposure to physical insecurity but does not posit a further link between that exposure and attitudes towards militant groups.

Kashmir from India (Fair 2011).

The most prominent of the so-called “Kashmiri groups” is the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), which was formed in 1986 to fight in the Kunar province of Afghanistan (Zahab 2007). After 1990, LeT shifted operational focus to Indian-administered Kashmir and subsequently expanded operations throughout India. LeT is responsible for the November 2008 Mumbai hotel attacks. Since 2004, LeT has attacked U.S. and allied forces fighting in Afghanistan. In contrast to the Deobandi groups, LeT has not targeted the Pakistani state, nor has it pursued western targets within Pakistan, and it remains generally under the control of the Interservices Intelligence Directorate (ISI) (Fair 2011).

Afghan Taliban

The Taliban government achieved dominance over most of Afghanistan by 1996 with the assistance of the ISI (Rubin 2002). The September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks made it impossible for Islamabad to continue supporting the Taliban (Musharraf 2006) and 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). The Afghan Taliban, despite considerable organizational changes since 2001, 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 2009).

Pakistan Taliban

Since circa 2004 clusters of Pakistani militant groups began describing themselves as “Pakistani Taliban.” In the fall of 2007, Baitullah Mehsud announced the formation of the Tehreek-e-Taliban-e-Pakistan (TTP, Pakistani Taliban), which is a confederation of several militant commanders then operating under his leadership.⁵ While we were unable to measure support for these groups due to

⁵ Militant commanders and their cadres began operating under the moniker “Pakistan Taliban” as early as 2004 when the Pakistan military began military operations in South Waziristan. The so-called Talibanization of the tribal areas began in North and South Waziristan, but quickly spread to parts of the

the combination of sample size limitations and 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 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 Khyber Paktunkhwa (KP), formerly the Northwest Frontier Province or 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” (Coates and Page 2008). 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 in Pakistani cities (Negroponte 2007).

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 numerous foiled plots since 2004 (Jones and Fair 2010). Importantly, few Pakistanis link al-Qa’ida to its most important actions: the 9/11 attacks on the United States. In 2009, only 4% of Pakistanis said al-Qaida was responsible those attacks while 29% blamed the United States, and 4% blamed Israel (Kull et al. 2009). Many Pakistanis are also dubious about the

other tribal agencies as well as parts of KP. After Baitulah Mehsood’s death in August 2009, Hakimullah Mehsood leads the network of militants (Jones and Fair 2010).

existence of al-Qa'ida *per se*. Perhaps part of the confusion stems from the fact that Pakistanis regularly understand “Qa’ida” to mean a “grammar book.” 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.” For this reason, our enumerators *always* explained this to respondents.

Sectarian Tanzeems

Pakistan is also home to a number of militant groups seeking to advance a sectarian agenda. These *firqavarana tanzeems* (“sectarian groups”) include the anti-Shi’a Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) and Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP).⁶ 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-Shi’a groups all claim to be fighting for a Sunni Deobandi Pakistan by purging the country of Shi’a, whom they view as apostates.⁷ Their actions typically take the form of attacks on Shi’ite mosques and community gatherings and they have increasingly attacked Christian, Sufi and Ahmediya places of worship and even individuals as well. In reality, a great deal of the anti-Shi’a violence is motivated by class issues and urbanization. The large land-holding families in Pakistan have historically been Shi’a and have not treated their tenant farmers well. Thus a class agenda has been executed through a narrative of apostasy (Nasr 2000; Zaman 1988).

2. Poverty and Militancy in Pakistan

The policy literature on the causes of militant violence frequently focuses on poverty as a root cause of support for violent political groups (see e.g. Aziz 2009). Moreover, much of U.S. and Western policies toward Pakistan over the last ten years have been geared toward encouraging economic and

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

⁷ While an exact accounting of Shi’a in Pakistan is impossible because the Pakistani census is not fielded in areas where Shi’a are populous (e.g. the Northern Areas), they are believed to comprise 20% of the population (CIA 2011).

social development as an explicit means of diminishing the terrorist threat. Legislation before the U.S. House of Representatives in April 2009, for example, called for the United States to “strengthen Pakistan’s public education system, increase literacy, expand opportunities for vocational training, and help create an appropriate national curriculum for all schools in Pakistan” (House 2009).⁸ In testimony on this bill, U.S. Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke argued that Washington should “target the economic and social roots of extremism in western Pakistan with more economic aid” (Holbrooke 2009). This view also played a pivotal role in the April 2009 donors’ conference in Tokyo, where nearly thirty countries and international organizations pledged some \$5 billion in development aid explicitly intended to “enable Pakistan to fight off Islamic extremism” (“Donors pledge” 2009).⁹ These policies reflect a belief that poverty is a root cause of support for militancy, or at least that poorer and less-educated individuals are more prone to militants’ appeals.¹⁰ Despite the strong beliefs about links between poverty and militancy that these aggressive policy bets reveal, there is little solid evidence to support this contention in the case of Islamist militant organizations. So what do we know?

First, although the hypothesis that poverty predicts participation in violent political organizations is widespread in the policy literature it finds little support in rigorous empirical tests (Abadie 2006; Kreuger and Malečková 2003). That hypothesis is likely so prominent because cross-national evidence typically shows a positive correlation between overall poverty and levels of militant

⁸ The terms of the bill were included in the “Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act of 2009,” passed by U.S. House and Senate in September 2009 (Senate 2009).

⁹ See also Wood (2009).

¹⁰ These arguments are reflected in both Pakistani and Western discourse. On the Pakistani side, see “Marshall Plan,” April 17, 2009. On the Western side, see the 9-/11 Commission’s claim that “Pakistan’s endemic poverty, widespread corruption, and often ineffective government create opportunities for Islamist recruitment. Poor education is a particular concern” (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States 2004). A more nuanced argument is that Pakistan’s derelict public schools and poverty compel Pakistani families to send their children to the madaris (religious schools), which provide recruits for Pakistan’s jihadi groups (Stern 2000). For an alternative view, see Fair (2008).

violence.¹¹ However, the perpetrators of militant violence are predominantly from middle class or wealthy families (Krueger and Malečková, 2003),¹² and there is no reliable link between poverty and support for specific terrorist tactics. Further damaging the empirical foundations of the poverty-militancy hypothesis, Tessler and Robbins' (2007) moderately-sized ($n \approx 1,000$) surveys from Algeria and Jordan find that “neither personal nor societal economic circumstances, by themselves, are important determinants of attitudes toward terrorism directed at the United States” (323). Using Pew World Values surveys, Shafiq and Sinno (2010) show that the relationship between “educational attainment and income on support for suicide bombings varies across countries and targets” (146).

Second, there is a mixed or negative relationship between indicators of poverty such as unemployment and rates of militant violence within countries (Berman et. al. (2011) find a negative relationship; Dube and Vargas (2008) find mixed evidence). Across countries scholars have argued that levels of political violence are increasing in: short-term poverty (Miguel, Satyanth and Serengeti 2004); dashed expectations for material gain (Gurr 1970); and income inequality (Sigelman and Simpson 1977; Muller 1985), but the overall evidence at the individual and sub-national levels is deeply ambiguous (Blattman and Miguel 2010).

Given this indeterminacy, making progress in understanding the relationship between poverty and militant violence requires testing specific mechanisms by which poverty could influence levels of violence. One such mechanism would be if poverty and deprivation make the general population more susceptible to militants' political appeals, thereby predicting greater support for militant groups. That support in turn could affect realized levels of violence in several ways. First, militant groups are political organizations and so even the most violent of them respond to popular

¹¹ There is a considerable body of literature on the connections between the supply of terrorism or the prevalence of terrorism in a given country and economic standing. Burgoon (2006) provides a nice review. The literature on the connections between individual-level support for terrorism and income is less developed (see e.g. Von Hippel (2008), Fair and Shepherd (2006), and Shapiro and Fair (2010)).

¹² Selection of operatives by terrorist groups plays a role here, as predicted by Bueno de Mesquita (2005) and shown decisively by Benmelech, Berrebi, and Klor (2010).

sentiment.¹³ Second, greater support in a given region almost certainly makes it easier for groups to operate and recruit new members there.¹⁴ It therefore makes sense to ask a simple, tractable question: do poor people support violent militant groups more than others?

That the evidence here is lacking to date should not be too surprising. Scholars studying American politics have only recently revealed how complicated the relationship between income and political attitudes can be (Gelman et al. 2008). Income's influence on partisan preferences in American politics is highly variable, with income mattering much more in poorer states. Gelman et al. (2008) argue that the strong relationship between income and support for Republican presidential candidates in the poorer Southern states 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.

There are good reasons to expect that the effects of income on support for militancy in Pakistan will be similarly 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 Afghanistan when the Soviets withdrew in 1989. Their benign name, which translates as "seminary 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 expect those with higher incomes to view militant groups more positively.

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

¹³ The September 2009 iteration of the Afghan Taliban "Book of Rules," for example, includes the dictate that "(3) The utmost steps must be taken to avoid civilian human loss in Martyrdom operations" (NEFA Foundation 2009).

¹⁴ Unfortunately the secretive nature of militant groups means that good data on militants' day-to-day operations (not attacks which can happen far from groups' bases) or localized data on recruiting are simply unavailable to scholars for any group of consequence at the moment.

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 be most acutely affect poor urban Pakistanis who have little in the way of an effective social safety net. For example, many of the recent attacks have taken place in locations such as Saddar Bazaar in Peshawar (KP) or in the traditional markets in and around Pakistan's Mughal-era "walled cities" such as Lahore, Rawalpindi and Peshawar. Saddar Bazaar in Peshawar, for example, is populated by poor vendors and serves mostly poor and middle-class customers. With the formation of modern suburbs in Pakistan, the wealthy and middle class have moved out of the "old cities" where violence has been concentrated and into these newer conurbations with their various amenities.¹⁵

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 solid 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.¹⁶ Second, the existing surveys do not measure attitudes towards specific Pakistani militant organizations. Surveys that do so tend to focus upon al-Qa'ida, Afghan Taliban and increasingly on the Pakistan Taliban. However, these surveys ask directly about groups and obtain high don't know/no opinion rates in the range of 40% (Terror Free Tomorrow 2008; Pew 2009). Surveys that indirectly measure attitudes by asking whether groups "operating in Pakistan are

¹⁵ Author fieldwork in Pakistan provides the qualitative assessment of the nature of the targets and victims. Details of the hundreds of attacks in recent years can be found in the various monthly and annual "Security Reports," published by the Pak Institute of Peace Studies, http://san-pips.com/index.php?action=reports&id=psr_1.

¹⁶ 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.

a problem” (IRI 2009) or pose “a threat to the vital interests of Pakistan” (WPO 2009a) are also hard to interpret and still suffer high item non-response.¹⁷ Third, existing surveys are not designed to identify sub-national variation and are not representative of several areas of the country. 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.

We therefore fielded a 6,000-person survey designed to achieve three goals. First, we wanted to survey a representative sample of the Pakistani population, including rural and urban areas in each of Pakistan’s four main provinces. Second, we sought to measure attitudes towards specific militant organizations in a way that minimized item non-response on sensitive questions that plagued previous surveys in Pakistan. Third, we aimed to mitigate social desirability bias in measuring affect towards militants, our key dependent variable.

As is well known, respondents in many survey settings anticipate the views of the enumerator and thus answer in particular ways to please or seem high-status (Krosnick 1999; Marlowe and Crowne 1964). 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.

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, KP, and Balochistan) using the Pakistan Federal Bureau of

¹⁷ Item non-response rates for such indirect measures of support on IRI’s 2009 survey were as high as 31% and the overall survey response rate was 74%.

Statistics sample frame. The respondents were selected randomly within 500 primary sampling units (PSUs), 332 in rural areas and 168 in urban ones (following the rural/urban breakdown in the Pakistan census) and we substantially oversampled in Balochistan and KP to ensure we could generate valid estimates in these provinces, which have small populations and spatially concentrated ethnic enclaves owing to their rugged terrain. We calculated 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 face-to-face questionnaire was fielded by six mixed-gender teams between April 21, 2009 and May 25, 2009. Females surveyed females and males surveyed males, consistent with Pakistani norms. The overall response rate was over 90%, which rivals the extremely high response rates achieved by the United States Census Bureau. Table 1 reports the sample demographics and randomization checks for the endorsement experiment described in detail below. 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 $100*\beta$ percentage-point change in the dependent variable associated with moving from the lowest possible value to the highest possible value of the independent variable.

Measuring Support for Islamist Militant Organizations: The Endorsement Experiment

Asking respondents directly whether they support militant organizations has numerous problems in places suffering from political violence. First, and perhaps most importantly, it can be unsafe for enumerators and respondents to discuss such issues. Second, as noted above, 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. We therefore used an endorsement

experiment to measure support for specific Islamist militant organizations.¹⁸

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) and 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, measured on a five-point scale, recoded to lie between 0 and 1 for the analysis.
- Respondents in the treatment group were asked identical questions but were then told that one of four groups mentioned in the first section 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 provides a measure of affect towards the groups, 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 visually. Online Appendix A provides the four endorsement questions.

Since our enumerators were not able to bring computers into the field—doing so was culturally inappropriate, physically risky, and complicated by severe and sustained power outages—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

¹⁸ This approach builds on the technique introduced in Lupia and McCubbins (1998).

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 PSUs 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 balance tests in Table 1 attest.

The advantage of the endorsement experiment 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. Because we randomize both assignment to the group endorsement and the pairing of issues with groups, any difference in policy support can be attributed solely to the group.

We used this method to measure support for four groups: the Kashmiri tanzeems, the Afghan Taliban, al-Qa'ida, and the sectarian tanzeems.¹⁹ This required asking about four policy issues: polio vaccinations, reforming the frontier crimes regulation (the colonial-era legal code governing the FATA), redefining the Durand line (the border separating Pakistan from Afghanistan, which the latter contests), and requiring madrassas to teach math and science. 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.

For an endorsement experiment of this type to work the policies need to have two

¹⁹ We did not employ this method to assess support for the Pakistani Taliban. Within our budget for the survey we could only interview 6,000 respondents (twice as large as any other extant survey of Pakistani public opinion). This meant we could only study four groups (i.e., divide the sample into four cells) while getting reasonable precision at the provincial level. Given this constraint, we omitted an endorsement experiment on the Pakistan Taliban because: (1) at the time the survey was designed, the group was not as prominent as it has since become; and (2) there were safety concerns for enumerators as mentioned above.

characteristics. First, they need to be ones about which respondents do not have overly strong prior opinions so that 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. Second, they have to be at least somewhat familiar to respondents since the group endorsement has to be meaningful and salient. For instance, in the U.S., one could not ask about an obscure mining regulation since respondents may not provide meaningful responses and endorsements may have limited impacts. While the policies we studied may seem high valence to professional students of politics, they do not appear to be so for most Pakistanis based on intensive pre-testing with 200 residents of Islamabad, Peshawar, and Rawalpindi between March 20 and 26, 2009.

There is empirical evidence in the survey that attests to the validity of the policies as well. Figure 2 shows the distribution of policy attitudes in the control groups. Importantly, it is single peaked on all but one issue and there it is close to being so, implying respondents do not have fixed and highly polarized attitudes, as they would for something like abortion in the United States.²⁰

This approach unambiguously drove down item non-response. Our survey posed a number of direct questions (i.e., without an endorsement experiment) such as "What is the effect group X's actions on their cause?" Non-response on these items ranged from 22% for al-Qa'ida to 6% for the Kashmir Tanzeem. Item non-response on the endorsement experiment questions, by contrast, ranged from a high of 7.6% for al-Qa'ida endorsing Frontier Crimes Regulation reform to a meager 0.6% for the *firqavarana tanzeems* endorsing polio vaccinations. While this approach is not perfect, the low item non-response rate in our survey provides *prima facie* evidence that this technique reduced

²⁰ The variance in responses to these policies in the control group ranged from .98 (polio vaccinations) to 1.28 (redefining the Durand line) on a 5-point scale. For comparison purposes, the 1987 General Social Survey (GSS) asked whether respondents agreed that "The government should provide a decent standard of living for the unemployed" on a five-point scale. The variance on that item was approximately .657.

respondents' concerns about reporting sensitive information.²¹ That the endorsement experiment drives down item non-response is not necessarily evidence that it also ameliorates social desirability bias. Nonetheless, one would need to tell a fairly contorted story to explain why a technique that drives down item non-response so dramatically would fail to address social desirability biases that stems from respondents' concerns about how enumerators will react to their answers.

To construct our dependent variable of support for militancy, we measure the average support the respondent reports for the four policies. Recall that one of the four militant groups was randomly assigned to be associated with each policy in the treatment group. Below, we leverage random assignment into treatment (endorsement) and control to measure differential support for militancy—as proxied by support for the policies. The main dependent variable therefore is a twenty-point scale, recoded to lie between 0 (no support for all four policies) to 1 (a great deal of support for all four policies). In the control group, the policy scale had a mean value of .79 (s.d. = .15). As described below, we also examined support for each of the groups individually.

Independent Variables

Our key independent variable of interest is socioeconomic status. Unfortunately, measuring socioeconomic status directly is complicated. In Pakistan, as in most countries, both wages and the cost of living vary widely across regions as well as between urban and rural areas. A useful way to see this variation is to look at how the income distribution varies across provinces. The mean household income for the 3rd quintile of the income distribution (40th-60th percentile) in urban areas of Sindh

²¹ Compared to other surveys, the contrast between direct questions and this approach is even starker. The WorldPublicOpinion.org 2007 survey of urban Pakistanis, for example, had a DK/NR rate of around 20% on most of the questions but for questions about the activities of Pakistan-based militant groups, the DK/NR rate was sometimes in excess of 50%. When they asked different samples of Pakistanis “How do you feel about al Qaeda?” in 2007, 2008 and 2009, DK/NR rates were 68%, 47% and 13%, respectively. When Pakistanis were asked who perpetrated the 9/11 attacks, DK/NR rates were 63% and 72% in 2007 and 2008, respectively (Fair et al. 2008). The Pew Global Attitudes Survey encountered similar problems when they asked (predominantly urban) Pakistanis whether they have “a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion” of al Qaeda. In 2008 and 2009, the DK/NR rates were 41% and 30%, respectively. When the same question was posed about the Taliban in 2008 and 2009, the DK/NR rates were 40% and 20%, respectively (Pew 2009).

in 2007-8 was Rs 12,664 (Pakistan Federal Bureau of Statistics 2009).²² The same income would place a household well above the mean for the 4th income quintiles (60th-80th percentile) in urban Punjab or rural Sindh, but below the mean for the 2nd income quintile (20th-40th percentile) in urban Balochistan. In fact, the mean income in the 2nd income quintile in urban Balochistan is quite high, placing one well above the mean in the 4th income quintile for all of Punjab. Put simply, a nominal income that would put one in the bottom third of the income distribution in urban Balochistan could put one in the top third of the income distribution in Punjab.

Given this variation, using a measure of nominal income to tap socio-economic status seems misguided because the relationship between nominal and relative income is highly variable. Instead we code income as a trichotomous variable, placing respondents into high, middle, or low-income categories given their province and strata (urban/rural). Those in the top quintile for their province*strata are coded as high income, those in the bottom quintile for their province*strata are coded as low income, and all others are coded as middle income. In the analysis we use dummy variables for high and low income to capture a potentially non-monotonic relationship (i.e. middle income respondents may view groups more or less favorable than low or high income respondents). Table 1 provides summary statistics for the income variable, as well as the control variables used in the multivariate analyses. In what follows we will explicitly test the robustness of the results to the choice of this income cut-off.

In order to assess levels of violence by district and province in Pakistan we geo-located all incidents in Pakistan from 2008 on in the National Counter-Terrorism Center's Worldwide Incident Tracking System (WITS). WITS is the most reliable data source on terrorism for our purposes as it

²² 2007-8 is the most recent year for which provincial income and expenditure data are available. Similar variation across provinces and regions is found in the expenditure data and in the cost of key commodities, the cost of housing, and the like. Though the sample design for the Pakistan Household Integrated Economic Survey (HIES) was not designed to provide district-level inference we have run key regressions using district-level estimates based on the micro-data. Because those estimates are so noisy (some districts are missing or have only one PSU) we do not report them here.

captures all incidents of “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents” from 2004 onwards. The WITS data capture 4,299 terrorist incidents causing 21,432 casualties between January 1, 2008 and April 21, 2009, when our survey went into the field.

We additionally measured several control variables, which we include in our models both additively and multiplicatively: gender, marital status, age, access to the Internet, whether respondents possess a cell phone, ability to read, write, and do math, education level, and sectarian affiliation (Sunni/Shi’a). These variables have all been cited as potential correlates of support for violent politics including: age (Russel and Miller 1977), marriage (Berrebi 2007), media access (Bell 1978; Dowling 2006), education (Becker 1968), and religion (Juergensmeyer 2003). We also controlled for various attitudinal measures on variables which could impact support for militancy, including attitudes towards democracy, views on the U.S. government’s influence on the world, views on the U.S. government’s influence on Pakistan, and belief that sharia law is about physical punishment. Online Appendix A includes question wordings for all the variables and Online Appendix B describes coding of variables that combine multiple items. We also include province fixed effects in the regression models below to account for regional differences.

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, so we can construct a dependent variable measuring support for militancy by averaging the respondent reports across the four policies. Below,

we leverage random assignment into treatment (endorsement) and control to measure differential support for militancy—as proxied by support for the policies. We can also examine support for a given militant organization j , by comparing the overall policy support (P_i) in the control group (i.e., the average support across all four policies) to 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).²³ We estimate the following regression via ordinary least squares (OLS) separately for each group, j , and for the pooled average across groups:

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

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 .

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 and 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.²⁴

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 individual-level characteristics mentioned above, $\boldsymbol{\eta}$ identifies how

²³ We only include respondents who provided responses to all four policy questions. 10.7% of respondents did not provide complete data.

²⁴ 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.

these characteristics impact support for policies in the control group, and $T_i\alpha_p$ accounts for the possibility that there are province-specific treatment effects.²⁵ The parameters of interest are represented by the vector γ which captures how the treatment effects vary by the individual-level characteristics. This is simply the standard difference-in-differences estimator for identifying heterogeneous treatment effects controlling for potentially confounding factors.

4. Results

Support for Militancy

Before turning to the test of the poverty-militancy hypothesis, we briefly review the top line findings of the survey, which is arguably the first valid, national measurement of attitudes toward militant groups in Pakistan. While the overall treatment effects from the endorsement experiment are substantively small relative to the variation in support for policies in the control group, they will prove useful as a benchmark for thinking about how poverty impacts views towards militant groups.

We find that Pakistanis in general are weakly negative towards Islamist militant organizations, as shown in Table 2. β_i in the first panel shows the unconditional difference in means between treatment and control groups. Each column presents the results for one militant group. The coefficients, even in the unconditional regression, are negative and statistically significant at the 10% level for all but the sectarian tanzeems, suggesting that Pakistanis hold militant groups in low regard. The effect is statistically and substantively strongest for the Afghan Taliban, where the treatment reduces support by 1.5%, roughly 10% of a standard deviation in support for policies in the control group. Although this is a substantively small effect, it is substantively unchanged and statistically stronger once we control for differences in demographic factors (gender, age, marital status, education, media exposure, and sectarian affiliation) and attitudinal variables (views of the United States, beliefs about sharia law, and attitudes towards democracy) (see Panel B).

²⁵ In estimating equation (2), we lose an additional 5.0% of the sample who did not provide complete data on the individual-level characteristics.

Figure 3 presents the results graphically, showing the difference in support for policies between control and treatment groups for each of the four groups. The top panel shows the unconditional treatment effects for each group from Panel A, and the bottom illustrates the results from Panel B of Table 2 where we control for a range of potential confounding factors. While these results are pooled across the entire country, we note that the treatment effect is roughly three times as negative in Khyber-Pakhtunwa (-4.5% in the model from column 1 of panel B), the province that suffered the most militant attacks in the year before our survey was fielded. As the results of the basic endorsement experiment are consistently negative across all four groups, for simplicity we focus the subsequent analysis on how the average attitude across groups varies with income.

Poverty and Support for Militancy

The poor in Pakistan hold militant groups in much lower regard than do middle-class Pakistanis, challenging the conventional wisdom that expanding the size of the middle class via economic development will decrease violence. The treatment effect of the endorsement cue—our measurement of mean affect towards militant groups—is much more strongly negative for the poor, as shown in Table 3. The treatment effect for the middle class across all four groups, β_1 , is weakly negative, but the difference between the treatment effect for the middle class and for the poor, measured by β_4 , is large and statistically strong. Low-income Pakistanis are roughly 2 percentage points less supportive of policies endorsed by militant groups than are their middle class countrymen. The leftmost part of Figure 4 depicts the treatment effects for the poor and for the middle class, and shows that the mean support for militant groups is much lower among the poor than among the middle class in Pakistan as a whole.

The difference in affect toward militant groups between the poor and among the middle class is substantively large and important. While the overall treatment effect for the middle class—the difference in evaluation of policies between the treatment and control groups—varies

between 0.1% and 0.6%, the treatment effect among poor respondents ranges from 1.8% to 2.3%. To put this effect in perspective, the poor are 2 to 23 times more negative towards militants than their middle class compatriots.

This finding is consistent in magnitude and statistical significance across a wide range of model specifications, and is robust to controls for differences across provinces and demographic factors. Table 3 shows the simple difference-in-differences estimate with provincial fixed effects in column (1). The other specifications presented in Table 3 include additional covariates: demographic controls (column 2), attitudinal controls (column 3), and all main and interactive effects for these factors as well as region-specific treatment effects (column 4).

Mechanisms

Why do poor Pakistanis generally dislike militant groups more than middle-class citizens? Although we cannot directly answer this question, we can offer suggestive evidence. We argued earlier that one mechanism linking lower affect towards militant groups with poverty could be that the poor are more heavily impacted by the negative externalities associated with violence. If terrorist attacks suppress commercial activity (for example, in street markets) for the short or medium term, it is the poor selling wares in those markets that will be most affected. Middle-class Pakistanis, whose incomes are more likely to be dependent on salaries from firms or the government (and who do not need to do much shopping for themselves, since most middle-class households in Pakistan have domestic employees who run such errands), may not be directly or at least immediately affected by these localized economic shocks.

In order to test this hypothesis we need to have a sense of where violence in Pakistan was concentrated during the year before our survey was fielded. Unfortunately, the precise geographic locations of Pakistani militant attacks in relation to urban and rural areas are unknown. The main source of disaggregated data on terrorist attacks (WTIS) includes geographic information on attacks,

but largely associates attacks with the closest city, not necessarily with the precise longitude and latitude of the attack. This makes directly attributing attacks to urban or rural areas impossible, but we can identify the district of each attack.

With this information we can leverage the stratified nature of our survey design to learn about the distribution of violence across urban and rural areas of Pakistan. Because our survey is stratified by province and urbanity, we have eight random samples of respondent clusters, one for rural areas and one for urban areas within each of the four “normal” Pakistani provinces. This means we can compare the proportion of urban PSUs that are in violent districts to the proportion of rural PSUs that are in violent districts and test whether these proportions are equal. Though this approach does not provide direct evidence about whether violence occurs more frequently in specific PSUs in our survey, it does provide evidence as to whether urban residents are more likely to be exposed to violent militant attacks than are rural residents.

As anecdotal accounts would lead one to expect, militant violence in Pakistan appears, in fact, to be disproportionately concentrated in urban areas. In Punjab Province, only 8.6% of rural PSUs are in violent districts, whereas 37.7% of urban PSUs are. A two-group difference-in-proportions test confirms that these proportions are statistically significantly different ($p < 0.0001$), suggesting that urban PSUs (and thus urban respondents) are much more likely to live in violent districts than are rural PSUs (respondents). No rural PSUs in Sindh Province are in violent districts, while 17.5% of urban PSUs are, and the test confirms the two are significantly different ($p = 0.0006$). Though the difference-in-proportions test fails to reject the null hypothesis that urban and rural PSUs are equally likely to be in violent districts in KP and Balochistan, these provinces are very small compared to Punjab and Sindh (17 million and 6 million, respectively, as compared with 74 million and 30 million, respectively, according to the 1998 Pakistan census). We therefore find that for the entire country only 22.6% of rural PSUs are in violent districts, compared to 35.5% of urban

PSUs, a statistically significant difference ($p = 0.0022$).

Given these patterns, if the externalities of violence are driving the attitudes of the poor, we should expect attitudes towards militant groups to be much more negative among the urban poor than the rural poor, which is exactly what we find (see Table 4). Here we extend our earlier results by allowing the treatment effect to vary across both income groups and by urban or rural residence. The results show that the relationship between poverty and dislike of militant groups is driven in large part by the disdain of the urban poor toward these groups. The point estimate on the three-way interaction between urbanity, low income, and the treatment dummy is $-.059$ ($p < .020$) in the model including a full set of controls and their interactions with the treatment dummy (column 4). This means that the difference-in-differences estimate described above (i.e., the difference in the endorsement treatment effect between low-income and middle-income Pakistanis) is 5.9 percentage points larger in urban areas as compared to rural areas. In other words, the negative relationship between poverty and support for militancy is three times stronger in urban locations than in Pakistan as a whole. Among this population, the treatment effect also starts to look quite large as the total endorsement effect among the urban poor is 5.1% ($-.012 - .003 - .059 + .023$, $p = 0.106$), roughly 50% of the standard deviation in support for policies in the control group.

Importantly, these results appear to be driven by those furthest down the income distribution. As we move the relative income threshold that defines poverty lower, the main poverty effect (as well as the urban-poverty interaction) becomes stronger. In Tables 5 and 6, we vary the cutoff for being considered poor from the 10th to the 30th percentile by 5% increments. Both tables report a specification that includes demographic and attitudinal controls along with province fixed effects, the same model shown in column 3 of Tables 3 and 4.²⁶

The overall income effect is not sensitive to movements below the 20th percentile, remaining

²⁶ The results are similar to using the more complete model from column 4 of the earlier tables.

close to .025 in magnitude and staying significant at approximately the 3% level. While the overall effect is sensitive to moving the low-income threshold up above 20%, the interaction is not. The urban poor continue to strongly dislike groups as we move the threshold up. Even when the threshold for poverty is set at the 30th percentile of the empirical income distribution from our survey, we find that poor urban Pakistanis are roughly 3.3% more negative towards militants than rural citizens and roughly 5% more negative than their middle-class co-urbanites (see Table 6). Interestingly, the difference-in-differences estimate of dislike by the urban poor is almost 33% larger when the poverty threshold is dropped to the first decile, suggesting the results are driven, in part, by intense dislike for militants among Pakistan's poorest urban dwellers.

5. Conclusion

In order to better understand the relationship between socio-economic status and support for 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 study the politics of militancy.

Using this approach, we uncover three important empirical patterns. First, Pakistanis are weakly negative towards a range of militant groups. Second, poor Pakistanis dislike militant groups more than their middle-class counterparts. Third, this effect is strongest for the urban poor, who are most exposed to the negative externalities of terrorist violence. The average dislike among the urban poor is roughly three times stronger than for poor Pakistanis overall and roughly six times stronger than for Pakistanis overall. These results call into question conventional views about the perceived correlation between socioeconomic status and militant attitudes in Pakistan and other countries.

Our study yields one additional but important implication: it is unlikely that improving individual material outcomes will reduce support for violent political organizations. The poorest respondents in our survey are already less supportive of these groups than others (at least those living in urban areas). While this is not direct evidence of a causal effect, it does beg the question of why past changes in socioeconomic status, which are reflected in current income, did not apparently have those effects. In ongoing work we are attempting to establish this causal link directly in two ways. Our first approach involves survey experiments in which we employ differential framing to manipulate respondents' perceived location in the socio-economic distribution. Our second approach builds a battery of questions on political attitudes onto the tracking system of a large job-training program that uses a lottery to handle oversubscription and so exogenously varies participants' long-term income prospects. Both efforts will provide direct evidence on the causal impact of changing socioeconomic status on support for militant groups.

More generally, this research shows that nuanced studies of sensitive political attitudes are possible in even the hardest contexts. Scholars are aware of the pitfalls of measuring such attitudes in developed countries, mostly in the United States. However, they know far less about issues involved in studying such attitudes in the developing world, especially in countries ravaged by enduring violence. The fields of security studies and political behavior would be well served by focusing more attention in this area.

Figure 1: Illustration of The Endorsement Experiment

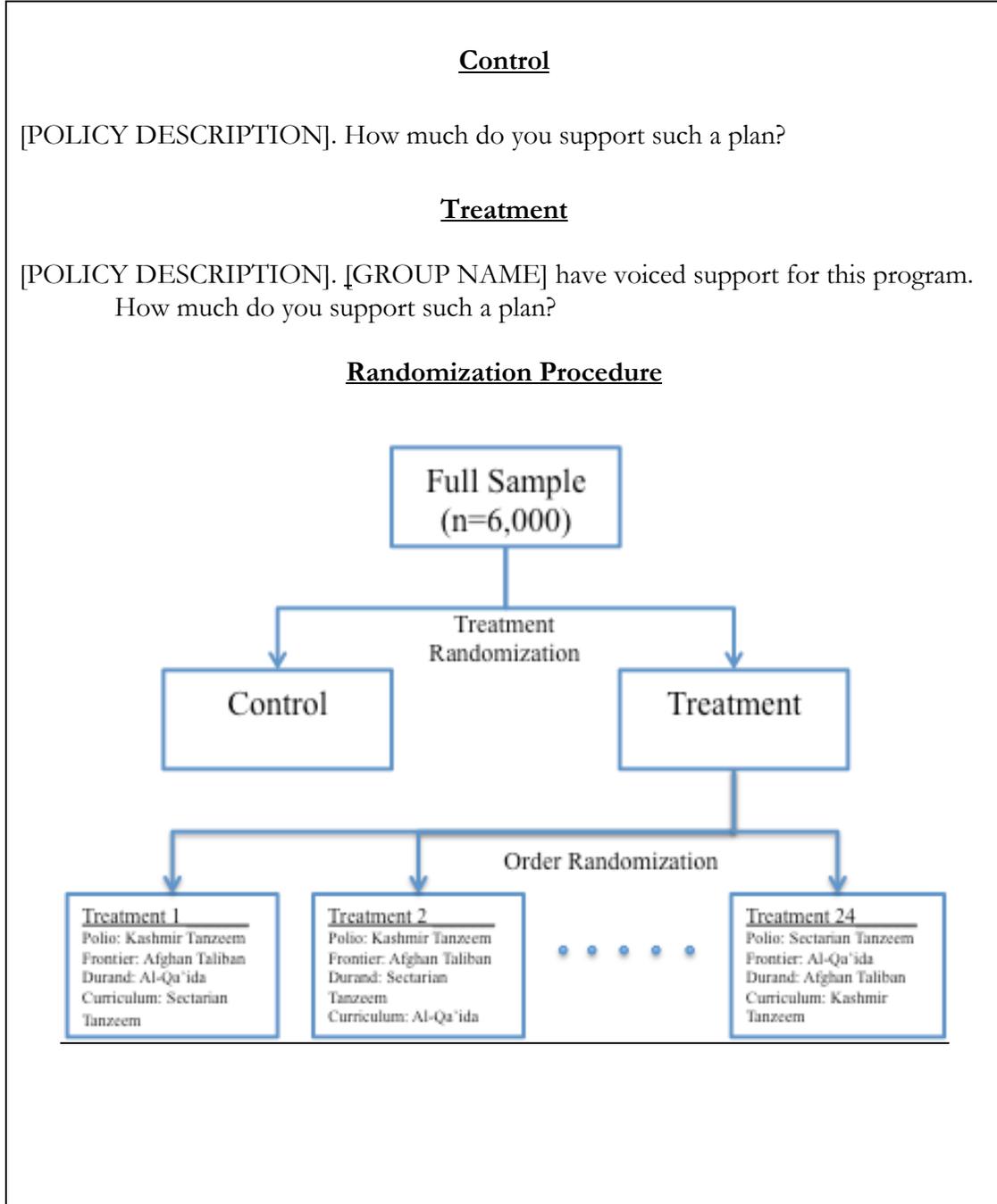


Figure 2: Distribution of Support for Policies in Control Group

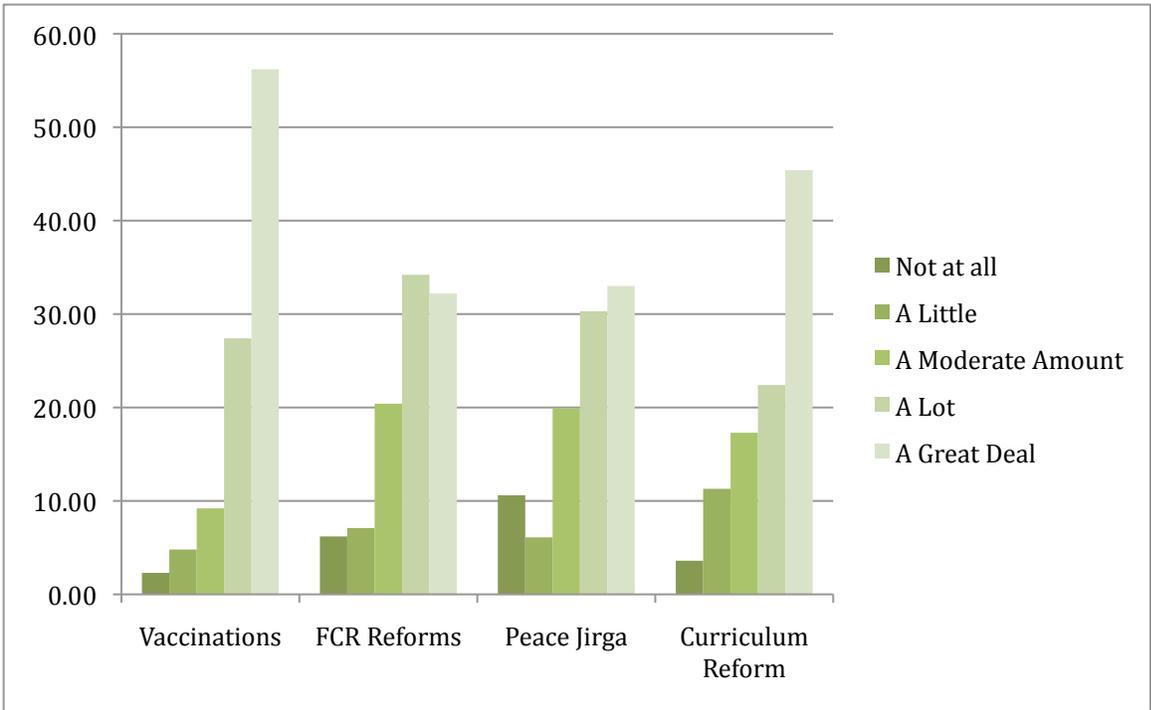
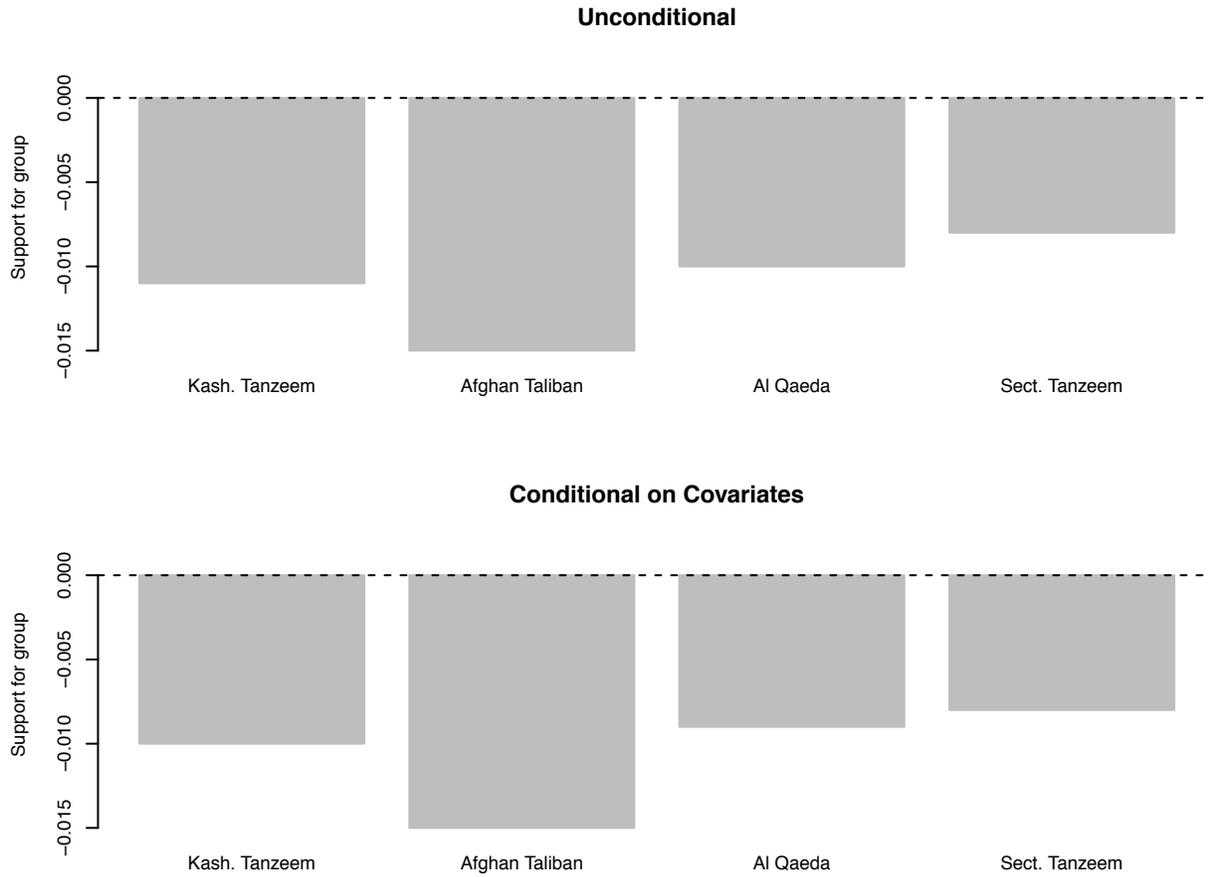
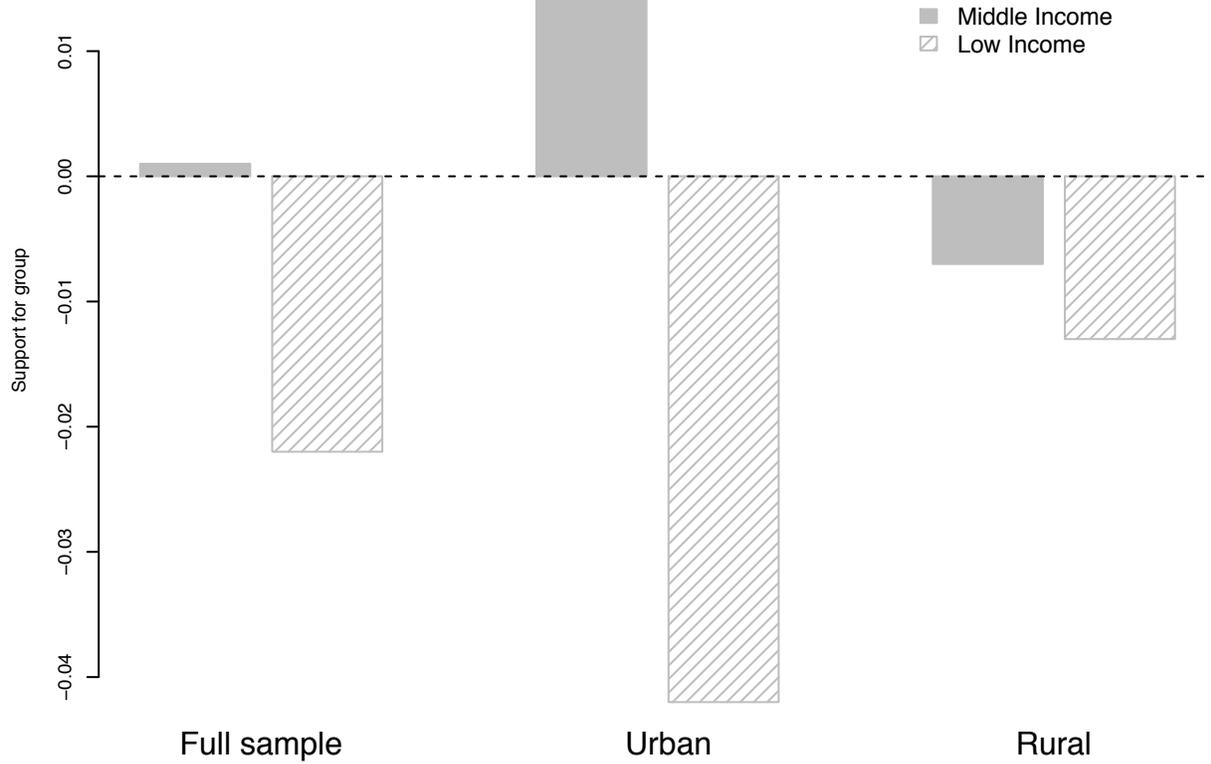


Figure 3: Support for Militant Groups in Pakistan



Note: The top panel presents difference-in-means estimates for each group for the endorsement experiment. The bottom panel presents difference-in-means estimates controlling for demographic and attitudinal characteristics. Demographic controls include: gender, marital status, age, access to Internet, possession of cellular phone, ability to read, ability to write, ability to perform arithmetic, formal education level, and religion sect. Attitudinal controls include measures of attitudes toward United States, views of sharia law, and attitudes towards democracy.

Figure 4: Treatment Effect by Income and Strata



Note: Difference-in-means estimates averaged across groups for the endorsement experiment, controlling for demographic and attitudinal characteristics. Demographic controls include: gender, marital status, age, access to Internet, possession of cellular phone, ability to read, ability to write, ability to perform arithmetic, formal education level, and religion sect. Attitudinal controls include measures of attitudes toward United States, views of sharia law, and attitudes towards democracy. Individuals below the 20th percentile within an individual's province-urban/rural strata group are classified as "low income." Individuals above the 80th percentile are classified as "high income."

Table 1: Sample Demographics and Randomization Checks

	<u>Full Sample</u>	<u>Control</u>	<u>Treatment</u>
<u>Gender (F: $p=.32$, N = 6000)</u>			
Male	53.1%	53.1%	53.1%
Female	46.9	46.9	46.9
<u>Strata (F: $p=.46$, N = 6000)</u>			
Urban	32.5%	32.6%	32.3%
Rural	67.5	67.4	67.7
<u>Province (F: $p=.92$, N = 6000)</u>			
Punjab	55.6%	55.8%	55.3%
Sindh	24.3	24.4	24.1
NWFP	13.9	13.5	14.3
Balochistan	6.3	6.3	6.2
<u>Religious Sect (F: $p=.43$, N = 6000)</u>			
Sunni	96.1%	96.3%	96.0%
Shi'ite	3.9	3.7	4.0
<u>Age (F: $p=.93$, N = 6000)</u>			
18-24	22.9%	23.2%	22.5%
25-29	18.7	19.3	18.2
30-39	29.1	28.2	29.9
40-49	17.5	17.5	17.4
50-59	7.8	7.9	7.6
60+	4.1	3.9	4.3
<u>Education (F: $p=.37$, N = 6000)</u>			
Illiterate	32.2%	32.4%	31.9%
Primary	13.1	13.7	12.6
Middle	14.9	13.8	15.9
Matriculant	19.3	19.6	19.0
Intermediate	12.3	12.8	11.9
Graduate	6.4	6.1	6.7
Professional	1.9	1.7	2.1
<u>Monthly Income (F: $p=.63$, N = 5779)</u>			
Less than 3000 PKR	12.3%	9.7%	9.6%
3,000-10,000 PKR	53.9	55.8	53.6
10,001-15,000 PKR	22.9	23.9	24.7
15,001-25,000 PKR	8.8	8.8	9.8
More than 25,000 PKR	2.2	1.8	2.2
<u>Categorical Income (F: $p=.16$, N = 5636)</u>			
Low income	23.7%	23.4%	23.9%
Middle income	62.8	62.3	63.5
High income	13.5	14.3	12.6

Note: Balance tests calculated on all respondents who gave data on the variable. F-stats are joint test of equality across treatment and control conditions.

Table 2: Support for Militant Groups

Panel A. Unconditional mean support levels				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	<u>Kashmeer</u> <u>Tanzeem</u>	<u>Afghan</u> <u>Taliban</u>	<u>Al Qaeda</u>	<u>Sectarian</u> <u>Tanzeem</u>
β_1 : Group Cue	-0.011+ (0.006)	-0.015** (0.006)	-0.010+ (0.005)	-0.008 (0.005)
Constant	0.796*** (0.006)	0.796*** (0.006)	0.796*** (0.006)	0.796*** (0.006)
R ²	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.000
N	5358	5358	5358	5358
Panel B. Conditional mean support levels				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	<u>Kashmeer</u> <u>Tanzeem</u>	<u>Afghan</u> <u>Taliban</u>	<u>Al Qaeda</u>	<u>Sectarian</u> <u>Tanzeem</u>
β_1 : Group Cue	-0.010* (0.005)	-0.015** (0.006)	-0.009* (0.005)	-0.008+ (0.005)
Constant	0.798*** (0.031)	0.783*** (0.032)	0.791*** (0.032)	0.808*** (0.033)
R ²	0.150	0.137	0.142	0.148
N	5243	5243	5243	5243
Region Fixed Effects	Y	Y	Y	Y
Demographic Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y
Attitudinal Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y
Group Cue-Demographics Interactions	N	N	N	N
Group Cue-Region Interactions	N	N	N	N

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

Note: Data weighted and adjusted for sampling design. Demographic controls include: gender, marital status, age, access to Internet, possession of cellular phone, ability to read, ability to write, ability to perform arithmetic, formal education level, and religion sect. Attitudinal controls include two measures of attitudes toward United States, attitudes towards democracy, and views of sharia law.

Table 3. Poverty Reduces Support for Militant Groups

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
β_1 : Group Cue	-0.001 (0.006)	-0.002 (0.005)	0.001 (0.005)	-0.006 (0.028)
β_2 : Low income	0.039*** (0.010)	0.042*** (0.009)	0.047*** (0.009)	0.045*** (0.009)
β_3 : High income	0.007 (0.011)	-0.000 (0.010)	-0.006 (0.010)	-0.007 (0.010)
β_4 : Group Cue x Low income	-0.018+ (0.010)	-0.020* (0.010)	-0.023* (0.009)	-0.020* (0.009)
β_5 : Group Cue x High income	-0.002 (0.013)	-0.005 (0.012)	-0.009 (0.012)	-0.007 (0.013)
Constant	0.813*** (0.010)	0.886*** (0.019)	0.770*** (0.030)	0.773*** (0.032)
R ²	0.058	0.184	0.249	0.257
N	5067	5067	4978	4978
Region Fixed Effects	Y	Y	Y	Y
Demographic Controls	N	Y	Y	Y
Attitudinal Controls	N	N	Y	Y
Group Cue-Demographics Interactions	N	N	N	Y
Group Cue-Attitudinal Interaction	N	N	N	Y
Group Cue-Region Interactions	N	N	N	Y

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

Note: Data weighted and adjusted for sampling design. Demographic controls include: gender, marital status, age, access to Internet, possession of cellular phone, ability to read, ability to write, ability to perform arithmetic, formal education level, and religion sect. Attitudinal controls include two measures of attitudes toward United States, attitudes towards democracy, and views of sharia law. Individuals below the 20th percentile within an individual's province-urban/rural strata group are classified as "low income." Individuals above the 80th percentile are classified as "high income."

Table 4. Income and Urban Residence Reduces Support for Militant Groups

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
β_1 : Group Cue	-0.010 (0.007)	-0.008 (0.006)	-0.007 (0.006)	-0.012 (0.029)
β_2 : Low income	0.021+ (0.012)	0.025* (0.011)	0.032** (0.010)	0.030** (0.011)
β_3 : High income	0.023+ (0.013)	0.009 (0.012)	0.003 (0.012)	0.000 (0.012)
β_4 : Urban	-0.048** (0.015)	-0.038** (0.013)	-0.033* (0.014)	-0.030* (0.014)
β_5 : Low income x Urban	0.061** (0.022)	0.059** (0.020)	0.053** (0.019)	0.053** (0.019)
β_6 : High income x Urban	-0.025 (0.021)	-0.015 (0.020)	-0.015 (0.019)	-0.013 (0.019)
β_7 : Group Cue x Low income	0.001 (0.013)	-0.004 (0.012)	-0.006 (0.011)	-0.003 (0.011)
β_8 : Group Cue x High income	-0.014 (0.015)	-0.015 (0.014)	-0.015 (0.015)	-0.009 (0.015)
β_9 : Group Cue x Urban	0.029* (0.012)	0.021+ (0.012)	0.026* (0.011)	0.023* (0.012)
β_{10} : Group Cue x Low income x Urban	-0.060** (0.021)	-0.051** (0.020)	-0.055** (0.020)	-0.059** (0.020)
β_{11} : Group Cue x High income x Urban	0.015 (0.029)	0.018 (0.027)	0.003 (0.027)	-0.005 (0.027)
Constant	0.827*** (0.011)	0.887*** (0.019)	0.773*** (0.030)	0.775*** (0.032)
R ²	0.071	0.191	0.254	0.262
N	5067	5067	4978	4978
Region Fixed Effects	Y	Y	Y	Y
Demographic Controls	N	Y	Y	Y
Attitudinal Controls	N	N	Y	Y
Group Cue-Demographics Interactions	N	N	N	Y
Group Cue-Attitudinal Interaction	N	N	N	Y
Group Cue-Region Interactions	N	N	N	Y

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

Note: Data weighted and adjusted for sampling design. Demographic controls include: gender, marital status, age, access to Internet, possession of cellular phone, ability to read, ability to write, ability to perform arithmetic, formal education level, and religion sect. Attitudinal controls include two measures of attitudes toward United States, attitudes towards democracy, and views of sharia law. Individuals below the 20th percentile within an individual's province-urban/rural strata group are classified as "low income." Individuals above the 80th percentile are classified as "high income."

Table 5. Poverty and Support for Militant Groups, Varying Definition of Poverty

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	<i>10% cutoff</i>	<i>15% cutoff</i>	<i>20% cutoff</i>	<i>25% cutoff</i>	<i>30% cutoff</i>
β_1 : Group Cue	-0.001 (0.005)	0.000 (0.005)	0.001 (0.005)	-0.002 (0.005)	-0.001 (0.006)
β_2 : Low income	0.039*** (0.011)	0.046*** (0.009)	0.047*** (0.009)	0.043*** (0.008)	0.045*** (0.008)
β_3 : High income	-0.011 (0.010)	-0.008 (0.010)	-0.006 (0.010)	-0.005 (0.010)	-0.002 (0.010)
β_4 : Group Cue x Low income	-0.026* (0.012)	-0.026* (0.010)	-0.023* (0.009)	-0.010 (0.009)	-0.013 (0.008)
β_5 : Group Cue x High income	-0.007 (0.012)	-0.008 (0.012)	-0.009 (0.012)	-0.006 (0.013)	-0.008 (0.013)
Constant	0.781*** (0.030)	0.774*** (0.030)	0.770*** (0.030)	0.768*** (0.030)	0.763*** (0.030)
R ²	0.243	0.246	0.249	0.251	0.251
N	4978	4978	4978	4978	4978
Region Fixed Effects	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Demographic Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Attitudinal Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Group Cue-Demographics Interactions	N	N	N	N	N
Group Cue-Attitudinal Interaction	N	N	N	N	N
Group Cue-Region Interactions	N	N	N	N	N

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

Note: Data weighted and adjusted for sampling design. Demographic controls include: gender, marital status, age, access to Internet, possession of cellular phone, ability to read, ability to write, ability to perform arithmetic, formal education level, and religion sect. Attitudinal controls include two measures of attitudes toward United States, attitudes towards democracy, and views of sharia law. The table shows cutoffs for the “low income” group ranging from the 10th-30th percentiles, with analogous cutoff for the “high income” group ranging from the 70th-90th percentiles.

Table 6. Income, Urban Residence, and Support for Militant Groups, Varying Definition of Poverty

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	<i>10% cutoff</i>	<i>15% cutoff</i>	<i>20% cutoff</i>	<i>25% cutoff</i>	<i>30% cutoff</i>
β_1 : Group Cue	-0.008 (0.006)	-0.006 (0.006)	-0.007 (0.006)	-0.010 (0.006)	-0.007 (0.007)
β_2 : Low income	0.019 (0.014)	0.025* (0.011)	0.032** (0.010)	0.029** (0.010)	0.032*** (0.009)
β_3 : High income	-0.002 (0.012)	-0.000 (0.012)	0.003 (0.012)	0.003 (0.012)	0.005 (0.012)
β_4 : Urban	-0.028* (0.013)	-0.033* (0.013)	-0.033* (0.014)	-0.036* (0.014)	-0.038* (0.015)
β_5 : Low income x Urban	0.070*** (0.021)	0.073*** (0.020)	0.053** (0.019)	0.051** (0.019)	0.048** (0.018)
β_6 : High income x Urban	-0.018 (0.019)	-0.014 (0.019)	-0.015 (0.019)	-0.012 (0.019)	-0.011 (0.019)
β_7 : Group Cue x Low income	-0.001 (0.014)	-0.010 (0.012)	-0.006 (0.011)	0.005 (0.011)	-0.002 (0.010)
β_8 : Group Cue x High income	-0.013 (0.015)	-0.015 (0.015)	-0.015 (0.015)	-0.012 (0.015)	-0.014 (0.015)
β_9 : Group Cue x Urban	0.024* (0.010)	0.022* (0.011)	0.026* (0.011)	0.026* (0.012)	0.022 (0.013)
β_{10} : Group Cue x Low income x Urban	-0.081** (0.027)	-0.054* (0.023)	-0.055** (0.020)	-0.047* (0.020)	-0.033+ (0.019)
β_{11} : Group Cue x High income x Urban	0.005 (0.026)	0.007 (0.026)	0.003 (0.027)	0.003 (0.027)	0.007 (0.028)
Constant	0.782*** (0.029)	0.778*** (0.029)	0.773*** (0.030)	0.770*** (0.030)	0.766*** (0.030)
R ²	0.248	0.253	0.254	0.256	0.257
N	4978	4978	4978	4978	4978
Region Fixed Effects	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Demographic Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Attitudinal Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Group Cue-Demographics Interactions	N	N	N	N	N
Group Cue-Attitudinal Interaction	N	N	N	N	N
Group Cue-Region Interactions	N	N	N	N	N

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

Note: Data weighted and adjusted for sampling design. Demographic controls include: gender, marital status, age, access to Internet, possession of cellular phone, ability to read, ability to write, ability to perform arithmetic, formal education level, and religion sect. Attitudinal controls include two measures of attitudes toward United States, attitudes towards democracy, and views of sharia law. The table shows cutoffs for the “low income” group ranging from the 10th-30th percentiles, with analogous cutoff for the “high income” group ranging from the 70th-90th percentiles.

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Appendix to “Poverty and Support for Militant Politics: Evidence from Pakistan”

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

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

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

Views of Shari'a

Here is a list of things some people say about Shari'a. Tell us which ones you agree with.
Shari'a government means:

Good governance, a government that provides services.
A government that does not have corruption.
A government that provides personal security.
A government that provides justice through functioning non-corrupt courts
A government that uses physical punishments (stoning, cutting off of hands, whipping) to make sure people obey the law

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

How much money in cash did you and your family earn in the last month?

Are you married?

Yes
No

Do you ever go online to access the Internet, do web site browsing, or to send and receive email?

Yes
No

Do you have a personal cell phone?

Yes
No

Can you read in any language with understanding?

Yes
No

Can you write in any language, more than signing your name?

Yes
No

Can you solve simple math (addition, subtraction) problems? Like 10 plus 7, or 30 divided by 5?

Yes
No

Online Appendix B: Covariate definitions

Income. We measured nominal income by asking “How much money in cash did you and your family earn in the last month?” using the same question wording in Urdu as the Pakistan Federal Bureau of Statistics does in its surveys. We divided responses 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 20th percentile of monthly household case income in their province (e.g. KP/urban) were coded as 1 on the variable *lowincome*. Respondents making above the 75th percentile of monthly case income in their province/strata were coded as 1 on the variable *highincome*. We take this approach 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.

Educational Attainment. We measure education as a continuous indicator of the highest education level completed by the respondent, scaled to range between zero (no education) and one (master’s degree).

*Support for Democratic Values.*²⁷ 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

²⁷ In other work we provide a full analysis of the relationship between support for democratic values and support for militant organizations in Pakistan.

measure *democratic values*.

Views of sharia law. We include an indicator for whether the respondent believes that “sharia is a government uses physical punishments.”

All other variables are measured straightforwardly.