

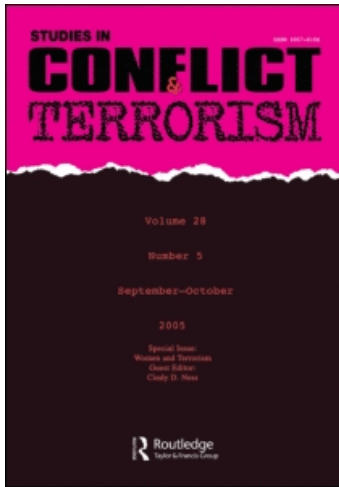
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Consenting to a Child's Decision to Join a *Jihad*: Insights from a Survey of Militant Families in Pakistan

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This study examines the factors that lead household members to give or refuse consent for other household members to become a militant (or mujahid). Using data derived from a detailed survey fielded among a convenience sample of 141 families of slain militants in Pakistan, this manuscript seeks to explain why some families support participation in jihad and why some families do not. Using the extant literature on recruitment, participation in violent political conflict, and militant Islam as a guide, we posit how and why various household attributes should affect a household member to grant or refuse permission for another household member to wage jihad. We then test our hypotheses implied by our argument using data on households' financial, religious, and social characteristics. We conclude that a number of social, economic, and religious factors account for variation in household members' support of jihad.

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This work was undertaken while C. Christine Fair was a Senior Research Fellow with the Center for Conflict Analysis and Prevention at the United States Institute of Peace. The author is now a Senior Political Scientist at the RAND Corporation. This work reflects the views of the author and not those of USIP or of RAND.

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Devout Muslim Izzedine al-Masri, 23, wandered into the packed Sbarro restaurant in downtown Jerusalem and detonated explosives strapped to his body. His family said al-Masri, a member of the Islamic militant group Hamas, had been hinting that he would become a “martyr”. Al-Masri’s family held a wake in the village of Aqaba on the outskirts of the West Bank town of Jenin. His father, Shaheel, flanked by his seven remaining sons, said he was proud of Izzedine. Shaheel Al-Masri said Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon “is continuing the policy of killing our people and my son succeeded in carrying out a suitable response”. He added that his son was a devout Muslim who had participated in Hamas rallies and funeral marches during the last 10 months of Israeli-Palestinian fighting.ⁱ

Every parent or guardian eventually has to face the likelihood that their child will ask them permission to do something that is inherently dangerous (or that the child will go ahead and pursue a dangerous course of action without asking permission). Such questions might be as prosaic as asking to borrow the car to go out on a Saturday night with friends or as unusual as asking permission to learn how to skydive or even join national military service. Parents or guardians have many reasons why they might give permission or refuse such requests. The answer is likely to have important ramifications for the child’s behavior—even if only to encourage the child to use subterfuge in pursuing a course he or she has chosen. Many parents are faced with the question of the use of the car and a smaller subset faces questions of skydiving.

This article will focus on a different kind of question that only a subset of parents or guardians are likely to face. The authors are interested in understanding what factors might impact the decision by familial authority figures to give or deny permission when a young person asks if they can have permission to join an organization dedicated to waging *jihad*. The article asks this question specifically within the context of Pakistan, basing the analysis on a survey of 141 families who have had at least one son who became a martyr in the conduct of fighting for a *jihadi* organization. Pakistan is an important site of inquiry for a number of reasons. First, dozens of Islamist militant organizations have been based in and operating from Pakistan since the 1980s when Pakistan—along with the United States and several Arab states—mobilized Pakistan’s population and the displaced Afghan refugees to raise “*mujahadeen*” to fight the Soviet Union’s forces in Afghanistan. Second, after the departure of the Soviet Union, Pakistan continued to nurture several militant groups operating in Afghanistan throughout the 1990s in effort to forge a government friendly to a wide array of Pakistani interests in Kabul. Pakistan formally backed the Taliban from 1994 onward. Third, from the late 1980s onward, Pakistan also nurtured and deployed numerous militant groups to augment the indigenous uprising in Indian-administered Kashmir from 1989 onward. However, by the early 1990s, the “insurgency” had become dominated by the so-called guest militants in Pakistan.ⁱⁱ

In recent years, much work on Islamist militancy has focused on the suicide attack. Indeed, in recent years, Pakistan has witnessed a shocking increase in suicide attacks. However, in the context of Pakistani militant groups, the suicide attack is quite new. Throughout the 1980s and most of the 1990s, groups waging *jihad* had as their primary objective killing their adversary. Many activists joined those *jihads* with a reasonable expectation of living and at some point returning to their normal lives. In 1999, the Ahl-e-Hadith group, Lashkar-e-Taiba, introduced the “high risk mission” to the Kashmir theater. On 19 April 2000, members of the Deobandi militant group Jaish-e-Mohammad executed the first suicide attack in Indian-administered Kashmir.ⁱⁱⁱ

Within Pakistan itself, suicide attacks remain rather new given the long history of militancy in that country. Although the first suicide attack occurred in Islamabad (the capital) in 1995 when suicide bombers attacked the Egyptian embassy, the bomber was Egyptian with no known links to Pakistan's militant milieu. The second attack occurred in Karachi in May 2002 and targeted French engineers outside of the Sheraton hotel. That attack was executed by Pakistan's Jaish-e-Mohammad and a related Deobandi, sectarian organization known as Lashkar-e-Jhangvi.^{iv}

Thus, this study focuses on the family's consent to a child's decision to join a militant group (*tanzeem*, as they are often called in Pakistan) in the service of fighting a *jihad* (sanctified struggle) espoused by the group in question.^v Such a decision always entailed the possibility—but not necessarily the certitude—that the child would die in the course of his participation and become *shaheed* (as slain militants are often called irrespective of the means of their death). Mariam Abou Zahab, one of the preeminent scholars of militant groups in Pakistan, has observed the significance of the family in her work on Lashkar-e-Taiba's recruitment. She found that militants were loath to join the organization without explicit blessings from their family. She found the mother's support to be most crucial.^{vi} Drawing on Abou Zahab's work and the field experience of the authors it is believed this focus on the family is a rare and important contribution to an understanding of the dynamics of non-state political violence and terrorism and the authors hope that this article is a helpful contribution in addressing this empirical lacuna.

A focus on the political role of family is generally missing from the political science literature.^{vii} That said, when examined, family can have important impacts on the political attitudes and behaviors of children and young adults.^{viii} For the most part, the empirical literature on terrorism has focused on individual-level and state-level explanations of terrorism or to a lesser extent on terrorist organizations.^{ix} Much of the focus on individual terrorists has relied on interviewing or analyzing terrorists' socioeconomic backgrounds.^x

When families do enter the picture, they usually do so within the context of looking at the general socioeconomic background of terrorists.^{xi} A close examination of the interaction between the terrorist and his or her family is usually missing even when family context is mentioned.^{xii} The paucity of efforts to study explicitly how the family relates to terrorism is problematic given that the literature that focuses on families sees them as important (albeit perhaps not as important as might be assumed) factors in political behavior and as being important in understanding terrorist behavior.^{xiii} In this effort, this study shifts focus from the individual and from the organization to the family. What factors lead families to give or deny permission for a youngster to join a *jihadi* organization, with the possibility of perishing?

Although the study's efforts are generally important to the nascent literature on the family and its effects on terror, the analyses are also specific to Pakistan, as much of the literature that touches on family background looks at Chechnya, Lebanon, and Palestine.^{xiv} An investigation of Pakistan also allows the study to address some of the existing shortcomings of the understanding of militant and terrorist behavior in Pakistan. Despite the fact that militants have been operating for decades, considerable opacity surrounds the operations of groups, the characteristics of the militants they recruit, train, and deploy, and more specifically the family backgrounds and communities from which militants emerge. In efforts to address these critical empirical lacunae, a proliferation of popular and analytical literature has relied nearly exclusively on "expert interviews." Unfortunately, these writers have made little or no effort to corroborate these interview-based data with other forms of data. This has been most prominent in the literature purporting linkages between *madaris* (plural of *madrasah*, religious school) and militancy. The extant field-based work

on *madaris* has likely over-estimated the number of *madaris* and the market share they enjoy, mischaracterized the socioeconomic background of *madrassah* students, and exaggerated the number of students educated exclusively in *madaris* that populate the ranks of militant groups.^{xv}

Contemporary understanding of militant groups and the militants they employ is poorly developed and insights into the family backgrounds of militants are even less well understood. Although there is a developing literature that focuses intently on the characteristics of known militants, very little empirical work illuminates the correlates that explain support that militants and their groups enjoy among their communities and their families.^{xvi} This oversight is unfortunate because community attitudes about militant groups, their cause, tactics, and targets may influence decisions of potential recruits to join such causes. Using the extant literature on these topics as a guide, this article posits how and why various household attributes should affect family members to support or refuse another family member to participate in *jihad*. The authors then test the hypotheses using household data on the financial, religious, and social characteristics of the household implied by their argument to affect family members' consent and refusal of another member's desire to become a militant.

Some Important Caveats

It is important to point out two caveats about this research at the beginning—one theoretical and the other methodological. Theoretically, the authors believe that cultural context matters. Although they believe that components of the present argument will be generalizable, they are testing the hypotheses only in Pakistan; thus, it is likely that some will not. Ferracuti, who looked at the socioeconomic background of Italian Red Brigade members, found that family context did not matter.^{xvii} Victoroff, who compared different studies of the socioeconomic background of terrorists, found that these factors differ by region and Post argues that different terrorist ideologies are likely to attract participants with very different relations from their parents.^{xviii} Note though that none of these studies actually look at the family as its dependent variable but focus instead on the terrorists themselves.

The methodological caveat is twofold. First, militancy is a rare event in Pakistan. In a recent poll fielded of urban Pakistanis by one of the authors, fewer than 1 percent of urban families conceded that at least one family member participated in the *jihad* in Afghanistan or Kashmir.^{xix} Thus, a nationally representative sample of Pakistani households would produce too few observations of militant households without inordinate sample size and resources. Because of this first consideration, this team employs a convenience sample of militant households identified by research time in Pakistan. Such inquiries are obviously problematic in nature and asking parents with children who may be currently involved in an activity might bring on the ire of the government. For these important reasons, the sample is a convenience sample of families whose child (or children) went off to fight for a militant group and died. Although the authors recognize issues raised by the use of a convenience sample it is believed that the innovative nature of the research and the likelihood that more truthful answers will be gotten out of families whose children are already dead justify the sampling strategy in this case.

Why Families Matter

Previous research focusing on the Hezbollah in Lebanon indicates that terrorist cells are often made up of family members and that family and family connections are important

avenues of recruitment.^{xx} Interviews of imprisoned militants from a wider sample of Palestinian and Shi'a Lebanese organizations found that most had the support of their families for their activities.^{xxi} Within the context of Islamist militancy, Orbach argues that families are central to the behavior of members and that family is one of the most important values.^{xxii} Orbach's description within the Palestinian context makes it seem like the value of a child becoming a *shaheed* for his or her family is an extraordinarily attractive option for a youngster with strong family values.^{xxiii} It is important to note that in the different cultural context of Chechnya, Speckhard and Ahkmedova report that

nearly all of the sample spontaneously deplored the tactic, thirteen saying it accomplished nothing, and two family members strongly blamed the terror sponsoring organization for having used the terrorist to further its own goals. . . . Unlike Palestinian samples where it is common for parents to simultaneously express grief and pride in martyred offspring, we did not find one parent who proudly acknowledged son or daughter as a martyr. However, at the same time nearly all of the respondents did not condemn the actions of their family member or former close associates.^{xxiv}

Why then do some families want their children to go off and join militants to fight and potentially (and in some cases certainly) die whereas others do not? In the same way that societies are bounded by culture and economic structure and that these bounds will make some families more likely than others to consent to a child going off to fight while it will push other families to be much more likely to refuse permission (although it should be recognized that sometimes different family members can give different answers to the person asking). The paragraphs that follow lay out what factors the authors see pushing families in these two very different directions.

When a Child's Death is a Good Investment: The Economics of Consent

Although there is some evidence to suggest that terrorists come from well off or richer families the authors believe that poorer families have stronger incentives to consent to having their children join a militant organization.^{xxv} If a child dies there is always the possibility of financial payoffs from the organization that may benefit the family.^{xxvi} When unemployment is high or some family member cannot work, the relative value that may be gained from earning potential death benefits from a *shaheed* should increase.^{xxvii} In the same way that a country's general level of poverty might encourage more people to embrace predation, a family's economic situation may make it easier to give consent to something so dangerous.^{xxviii} If a child is not contributing to the household, families should be more likely to support the son's decision to join a *tanzeem*.^{xxix} A recent study by Asal and Shellman finds that unemployment has a positive impact on frequency of certain types of terrorist events in India (1980–2005).^{xxx} Terrorism is a means of employment. Given the positive status associated with being a family with a *shaheed*, a household member's participation in *jihad* may confer benefits that could not be otherwise attained, more than making up for an unemployed son's contribution to the household.

Within the specific context of Pakistan, if one believes that support for a *jihadi* organization and the conflict it espouses stems from social or even financial insecurity, then families that are less well off should be more inclined to support this decision to join the group and less likely to refuse. It should be noted that although many studies of terrorism find few linkages between terrorism and poverty, analysts focusing on Pakistan consistently

make this assertion.^{xxxii} Moreover, U.S. policy toward Pakistan has identified poverty alleviation as a tool to diminish terrorist recruitment.^{xxxiii} Thus, for these reasons alone, this hypothesis merits consideration.

In many cases, families receive monetary rewards from *tanzeems* and even from government agencies when their sons become a militant.^{xxxiiii} Many movements provide social support to families such as providing free clinics, schools, food programs, and even cash support. As such, poorer households should be more likely to support their son's decision to become a militant. The child's contribution to the household should also make a difference. In particular, this article argues that unemployment will affect support for the decision to become a militant. The following hypotheses emerge from the literature and this argument.

Hypothesis 1: Families who are weaker economically are more likely to give consent.

Hypothesis 1A: Families who are stronger economically are more likely to refuse permission.

Note that family economics are not only about the general economic conditions of the family. The number of children—particularly the number of sons—has an important potential impact on the decision to give consent or refuse permission.^{xxxiv} Families with only one son (or male) may be hesitant to support the decision to join a *tanzeem* because older relatives rely on the household productivity of that son. Moreover, sons typically marry, bringing into the family a daughter-in-law who becomes an important provider of domestic production (e.g. cooking, cleaning, elderly care). She may even contribute by making products such as embroidery pieces, food snacks, dresses, and so on that may earn money for the household when sold in the market. The opening quoted narrative hints that the father still has seven other sons to enjoy and that sacrificing one was, to him, worth the costs and benefits. As the number of males in the household increases, one would expect family resistance to the child's participation in *jihad* for any one male in the household to decrease.^{xxxv} As such, increasing numbers of males in the household may increase the likelihood that someone will actively give consent and decrease the likelihood of active refusal. Thus:

Hypothesis 2: Families who have more sons are more likely to give consent.

Hypothesis 2A: Families who have fewer sons are more likely to refuse permission.

One also must recognize that all children are not created equal. Families should be even more likely to support a member becoming a *mujahid*, as militants are called in Pakistan, if the member is both unemployed and educated. Families likely make such an investment in the child's education with an expected return on investment. These returns can be financial (e.g., a better job with better pay), domestic (better household production, better educated children, better household management), social (status conferred by having an educated family, enhanced marital opportunities), or spiritual (in the case of religious education). Nonetheless, families expect return on investment; otherwise, such investments are not a rational utilization of resources. They also incur opportunity costs arising from foregoing child labor in the market *or* from foregoing their domestic productivity. Unemployment, despite being well educated, may condition a family to re-optimize their expected return on investment. Families may reason that despite education, their son will not be rewarded in the market place. This may encourage them to see the spiritual benefits as being more important *ceteris paribus*.

Hypothesis 3: Sons who are educated and unemployed are more likely to be given consent.

Hypothesis 3A: Sons who are employed are more likely to be denied permission.

Joy When a Child Dies: The Religious Economy of a Child's Martyrdom

Ali's father recounted how the whole family began celebrating when they heard the news and they distributed drinks and sweets among the neighbors. His father explained how he was extremely proud and particularly happy that Ali had been martyred during the holy month of Ramadan and one of Ali's brothers, Ahmed, declared, 'We all wish for martyrdom'.^{xxxvi}

Hafez argues, rightly the authors believe, that the ability to perform "cost-benefit calculations" about a child's likely martyrdom is only possible within a particular cultural context.^{xxxvii} "Violence must not only be portrayed as the only means to achieve desired ends, it must also be legitimated as fulfilling a duty to one's own values, family, friends, community, or religion."^{xxxviii} Part of this value is a product of economics but the very cultural context that allows for this kind of analysis on the part of family members also suggests that families have values that vary in ways that are not purely economic. Religion can provide a logic that not only justifies violence but also provides an incentive structure to consent to a child's potential martyrdom.^{xxxix} Although all the families that were surveyed are part of a larger Islamic culture they vary in terms of the intensity of their connection as well as the particular expressions of how they are connected to that culture.

Religious extremists point to the religious teachings that justify the use of violence to defeat the secular enemy. For example, many follow the teachings of Abd al-Salam Faraj, an Egyptian writer, who grounds the activities of modern Islamic terrorists firmly in Islamic tradition, specifically by reinterpreting in the Qur'an.^{xl} Faraj regards "anyone who deviates from the moral and social requirements of Islamic law to be targets for Jihad."^{xli} Moreover, there are religious benefits to those who wage *jihad*. *Shaheeds* receive 70–72 virgins in heaven. The *shaheed's* father in the opening story points out that his son was a devout Muslim and took part in low-level militant activities before becoming a *shaheed*. It is suspected that persons who espouse greater religiosity may more likely to be given consent and less likely to be refused. Furthermore, it is expected that family members who indicate greater religiosity will be more likely to give than refuse consent. This is a controversial hypothesis. An alternative argument is that more devout Muslims will reject violence because they may believe that Islam disavows violence. Without knowing the personal interpretative beliefs of the respondent, these varying contentions cannot be de-conflicted.

Hypothesis 4: Families that are more religious are more likely to give consent.

Hypothesis 4A: Families that are less religious are more likely to deny permission.

From a household perspective, parents are believed to "pick winners" and concentrate educational resources in children that are expected to be most able to perform academically.^{xliii} Families can use public, private, or religious schools and many families use more than one school type to educate their children and may even elect to educate some children while not educating others. A family's choice of school reflects some anticipated return to investment, which assumes some assessment of the child's innate capabilities. Thus if a household decides to educate a child in the first place, it tries to find resources to keep the child in school. An early household decision to send a child to a *madrassah* could reflect family opinions about how the child's capabilities may be best employed. Perhaps families believed that this child would fare better pursuing religious education and may have slotted him to become important in terms of his religious accomplishments. Therefore, a *madrassah*-educated militant could reflect household expectations about that son's

intellectual and earning potential that may have been formed when he was young. If so, a militant's religious educational background might correlate highly with a household's propensity to give consent/blessing and lower propensity to refuse to do so.^{xliii}

Hypothesis 5: Sons who are educated in a *madrassah* are more likely to be given consent.

Hypothesis 5A: Sons who are not educated in a *madrassah* are more likely to be denied permission.

The religious commitments of families could potentially be seen in the interpretive tradition they embrace. Multiple groups exist in many states that have differing beliefs on exactly how *jihad* should be waged. Some of these groups are more militant than others, for different reasons. This study posits that members of households connected to more militant organizations will be more likely to give consent and less likely to actively refuse a member to participate in *jihad*.

Hypothesis 6: Families that are connected to militant-inclined traditions should be more likely to give consent.

Hypothesis 6A: Families that are not connected to militant-inclined traditions should be more likely to deny permission.

Finally, older family members may have refined views on *jihad* and becoming a *shaheed* as a way to get to heaven. As one grows older, one may grow more pious and may be more receptive to the notion of divine rewards that a son's or relative's sacrifice may confer to himself and to his family. Moreover, supporting such sacrifice may also be seen by the respondent as the pious thing to do with his own death growing nearer.^{xliv} In many countries, the head of household (*pagdar* or *khandan ka parpara*) is not necessarily the oldest person. Rather, the head of household is the main influencer and final arbiter for household decisions. The head of household can be an uncle, a son, the father, and in some cases, an esteemed female. Because the head of household's views are extremely important in setting the norms and values for the household, his or her age may be an important factor to both a young person's decision to join a *tanzeem* and whether or not the household is a permissive environment for such a course of action. (Although in South Asia, the mother's consent is much more important than that of the head of the household.) Given the possibility that a *shaheed* can take people to heaven with him, older heads of household whose mortality is more present in their mind may be more interested in a "ticket to heaven" that martyrdom by a member of the household may provide. The likelihood of a household giving consent is expected to increase with respondent age and the likelihood of refusal is expected to decrease with his age.

Hypothesis 7A: Older heads of household are more likely to give consent.

Hypothesis 7B: Younger heads of household are more likely to deny permission.

Overall, the present argument implies that various social, economic, and religious factors will impact a household member's propensity to consent or refuse permission of another member of the household to become a *mujahid* or even a *shaheed*. Having outlined the argument and deduced the hypotheses, the article now turns to the research design.

Research Design

Pakistan is undoubtedly one of the most important states in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) for at least two reasons. First, it has captured, detained, eliminated, and/or rendered more Al Qaeda and affiliated fighters than any other U.S. partner. One notable exception

pertains to the Taliban. Until mid-2007, Pakistan had been reluctant to vigorously pursue Afghan Taliban leaders or cadre of any consequence without massive international pressure. This was true despite widespread belief that journalists and others freely access Taliban leadership in the Pakistani city of Quetta and elsewhere. However, it should be noted that Pakistan has sacrificed the lives of some 1,000 security force personnel in the conduct of operations in support of the GWOT, including those that target Al Qaeda and increasingly the so-called Pakistan Taliban ensconced in Pakistan's border areas near Afghanistan. Thus Pakistan's dedication to eradicating Al Qaeda and associated terrorism is demonstrable even if its commitment to eliminating the Afghan Taliban is more problematic.

The second reason for Pakistan's centrality in the GWOT is less positive. Although Pakistan has captured more terrorists than any other partner, this is in part because there are indeed so many terrorists in Pakistan that need to be caught. Despite its alliance with the United States since September 2001, Pakistan remains one of the most important centers of terrorist activity in the South Asian region and beyond. Terrorist groups, of various varieties, freely recruit, train, and deploy operatives from within Pakistan. Some of these groups still enjoy the explicit sanction of the state (e.g., groups operating against India in Kashmir and beyond and some elements of the Taliban operating in Afghanistan).^{xlv} Moreover, Pakistan remains a destination of choice for aspiring Islamist terrorists who radicalize elsewhere, as the various British conspiracies attest.^{xlvi}

Data^{xlvii}

To cast light both on militant characteristics as well as on family structure and support for militant activities in Pakistan, C. Christine Fair commissioned a survey of 141 families in Pakistan under the auspices of the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), Center for Conflict Analysis and Prevention. Working with two team-leaders in Pakistan, the team fielded a comprehensive questionnaire to a convenience sample of families mostly concentrated in the two provinces of the Punjab and the Northwest Frontier Province. However, families from Sindh, Baluchistan, and Pakistan-administered Kashmir were also included. Table 1 compares the geographical distribution of the USIP convenience sample to that of the sample for the most recent census of Pakistan (1998).

To collect these data, the Pakistan-based research team began with *tanzeem* reports of their martyred *mujahadeen* or *shaheeds*. It is important to note that *shaheed* does not mean "suicide operative." In the Pakistan case—as elsewhere—a *shaheed* simply denotes one

Table 1
Geographical distribution of convenience sample

Region	Census (Percentage of total population = 133M)	Distribution of sample (Percentage of total sample = 141)
NWFP	17,743,645 (13%)	78 (55%)
FATA	3,176,331 (2%)	—
Punjab	73,621,290 (56%)	37 (26%)
Sindh	30,439,893 (23%)	3 (2%)
Baluchistan	6,565,885 (5%)	5 (4%)
Islamabad	805,235 (1%)	—
Azad Kashmir	Not in Pakistan census	18 (13%)

Table 2
Descriptive statistics for estimation sample

	<i>n</i>	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	Mode
Consent	130	0.40	0.49	0	1	0
Refusal	130	0.69	0.46	0	1	1
Males	130	6.08	4.10	0	26	4
Age	130	46.19149	14.62	20	80	55 and 60
# sons who attended <i>madrassah</i> / Total # of sons	130	0.104032	0.241099	0	1	0.10
Buildings	130	0.83	0.38	0	1	1
Females in Dars-e-Qur'an	130	0.83	0.383288	0	1	1
Deobandi	130	0.63	0.48	0	1	1
Ahl-e-Sunnat	130	0.18	0.39	0	1	0
Ahl-e-Hadith	130	0.07	0.25	0	1	0
Militant attended <i>madrassah</i>	130	0.24	0.43	0	1	0
Education	130	1.72	0.92	0	4	2
Unemployed	130	0.50	0.50	0	1	0

who died in a sanctified struggle. Not all *shaheeds* are *mujahadeen* and not all *mujahadeen* become *shaheeds*. In this sample, only slain *mujahadeen* are included. In many cases, militant groups report specific family names and geographical identifiers of “*shaheed* families” and this was an important first step in identifying families. In some instances, the team worked with former or even current militants to obtain access to families. Because contact was often facilitated by group representatives, the team reported little resistance to the structured interview. Although the team aimed to recruit 150 families, they succeeded in obtaining only 141 families.

The survey instrument collected limited personal information about the respondent (e.g. marital status, age, educational attainment [secular and religious]), who in almost all cases was the male head of household. The survey also asked respondents about the household, including its size, the number of families, and a complete family roster with the educational attainment (both secular and religious) for each person identified on the roster. It collected data on the affiliation of any household member with law enforcement and armed services; employment of all males and females in the household; household income, expenditures and assets; family religiosity and attendance of religious study circles; family sectarian membership (Sh'ia vs. Sunni, Ahl-e-Hadith, Deobandi, Bareilvi, etc.); and the degree of religiosity before and after the son's martyrdom.

The instrument included questions about the militant including where he obtained militant training; where he served and where he died; where and how he was recruited; his work and educational background; his marital status at the time of recruitment and death. The respondent also answered questions (both long form and multiple choice) about the degree of support that the militant enjoyed from within his household. With all this in mind, the article moves to discussing the dependent and independent variables used in this study. All of the indicators' descriptive statistics appear in Table 2.

Table 3
Refusal and denial

	No one gave permission	Someone gave permission
No one refused permission	20 (47.62%)	63 (63.64%)
Someone refused permission	22 (52.38%)	36 (36.36%)

Dependent Variables

The study used two variables to instrument for consent and refusal to expose the characteristics of those families that supported the militant's participation in *jihad* by giving permission and blessing as well as on those families who actively refused to give permission or blessing.

The consent variable derives from the following question: "Did you or did someone in your household give permission or blessing for his participation in *jihad*?" The refusal variable derives from the question: "Did you or did someone in your household refuse to give permission or blessing for his participation?"

Although *prima facie* these should be comparable variables, there is reason to believe that families may "over report" giving blessing while choosing to "under report" refusal. This could arise due to, *inter alia*, the general support that militant families receive in Pakistan. For instance, it is not uncommon that local communities will have wells or other public facilities dedicated to a particular militant in a locality. Moreover, families of militants receive approbation—not opprobrium—from their communities for their son's sacrifices. Bearing in mind that the introduction to these families was often facilitated by current or former members of *tanzeems*, families may have been reluctant to report refusal (perhaps out of embarrassment) and may have been overzealous to report giving blessing or approval. Many households were "mixed" in that someone gave the mujahid blessing/approval and someone else refused to do so. Although overall 70 percent of all households gave permission and 41 percent reported refusal, 63.4 percent of the households gave permission with no one refusing permission. In 36.4 percent of the households, someone gave permission *and* someone refused. In 47.6 percent of the households, no one gave permission and no one refused and for 52.4 percent, no one gave permission and someone actively refused permission. These statistics are summarized in Table 3.

Independent Variables

The study operationalized economic and religious concepts using responses to several questions. To measure the economic status of the household income, the study used responses to the question of whether or not the family owned any buildings (house, business, etc.). This is preferred to a direct question about income as respondents tend to inflate or deflate their income for various reasons. To measure the child's contribution to the household, the authors created an indicator from a question asking whether or not the militant was unemployed the year before he became a militant. Finally, an indicator was created representing the number of males in the household. This indicator proxies the argument regarding the relationship between a highly populated male household and a household member's consent and/or refusal.

A household that includes more males that contribute to the welfare of the family should be more willing to sacrifice one of them for *jihad*. In terms of the educational

argument the authors created an ordinal indicator based on the level of education of the militant as reported by the respondent. The categories included no formal education, below matriculation, matriculation but less than intermediate, intermediate less than a degree, and degree and above. As the mean for the education variable indicates (Table 3), the militants in this sample are very well educated by Pakistani standards. The majority of the militants have a tenth grade education and above. In contrast, overall in Pakistan, males complete on average of 6.2 years.^{xlviii} In terms of the “ticket to heaven argument” the study began by creating an indicator of the respondent’s age (i.e., head of household’s age in most cases) to proxy whether or not older members encouraged the youth to engage in militant activities out of a sense of piety.

The study used two different proxies to measure the household’s level of religious commitment. The first is the ratio of males in the household who are attending or have attended a *madrassah* normalized by the total number of males in each household. Overall, *madrassah* attendance in Pakistan is low, with *madaris* enjoying perhaps as little as 1 percent of the market share of full-time enrolled students. Moreover, among all households that send at least one child to a *madrassah*, only about a quarter send all their children to a *madrassah*. Most use *madaris* in combination with public and private schools for their children. This suggests that for most families, *madrassah* utilization may not be due to poverty or because *madaris* are the schools of least resort.^{xlix} Rather, it likely reflects the fact that many families *claim* that they would like at least one child to become a Hafez, one who has memorized the Qur’an. Thus some families will send at least one child to a *madrassah* or a Qur’an school. Having one child at a *madrassah* may not be out of the ordinary. However, it was reasoned that families with increasing levels of religious commitment will likely use *madaris* with greater intensity. Because of “honor constraints,” families are reluctant to let girls go to schools, particularly in areas like the Northwest Frontier Province where much of the sample is concentrated. Thus, for this first metric the study used only intensity of *madrassah* utilization for males. Female *madrassah* attendance was much lower than for males in this sample.

The second metric used was an indicator for whether or not females in the household attend Dars-e-Qur’an (Qur’an study circles). For many families, allowing girls to attend such study circles may be less problematic than attending a school—even a religious school. These study circles tend to be in either the household or in the home of a relative. However, given honor constraints, only those households most interested in ensuring religious education for their females will permit such attendance. For both metrics of commitment, one would expect more committed households to be less likely to refuse to give consent or blessing and more likely to give consent or blessing.

Moreover, in Pakistan, Ahl-e-Hadith, Deobandi, and even Ahl-e-Sunnat adherents stand accused of being more strident than others. This likely stems in part from the consideration that the Taliban emerged from Deobandi *madaris* in Pakistan and maintain political, religious, and pedagogical ties with Deobandi *madaris* in Pakistan and their *ulema* (plural of *alim*, religious scholar). Ahl-e-Hadith adherents for their part are most tightly associated with Saudi-backed Wahhabism and are often reduced to the actions of the Ahl-e-Hadith militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba. Ahl-e-Sunnat (also known as Jamaat Islami), because of its ideological ties to the Muslim Brotherhood and because senior Al Qaeda operatives have been captured in Jamaat Islami safe houses, also raises concerns about the propensities of Jamaat adherents to support *jihād*. In contrast, few Pakistani analysts associate Barelvis (a sufi version of Islam) with militancy. However, of the three more strident versions of Islam, Deobandis and Jamaat Islami adherents are the most numerous and most politically and religiously organized. Together they operate the most *madaris*, for example, in Pakistan.

This reasoning would suggest that belonging to all but the Barelvi strand of Islam would be associated with increased likelihood of giving consent/blessing and decreased likelihood of refusing. One could also counter, however, that these are stereotypes are characteristics of these various strains of belief. For present purposes, the authors created dummy variables to represent each camp the household resonated with.

Methodology

Given the binary nature of the dependent variables for consent and refusal, the study used a logit model to analyze the data. In general the specification can be described as:

$$\Pr(C_i) = \mathbf{X}_i\beta + \varepsilon_i$$

$$\Pr(R_i) = \mathbf{X}_i\beta + \varepsilon_i$$

where C denotes the outcome variable “gave blessing or consent,” and where R denotes the outcome variable “refused to give blessing or consent.” \mathbf{X} is a vector of explanatory variables for household i .

The variables that were hypothesized to explain variation in both outcome measures include (next to each variable is the hypothesis believed it helps to test):

- Respondent age (almost all of respondents were heads of household) [H7a, H7b].
- Number of males in household [H2a, H2b].
- Household economic standing indicated by whether or not the household owns buildings (Most families declined reporting information on income) [H1a, H1b].
- Level of religious commitment as indicated by the ratio of all males who attended a *madrasah* to all males in the household [H4a, H4b].
- Level of religious commitment as measured by the binary variable indicating whether or not females in the household attend Dars-e-Qur'an (Qur'anic study circles) [H4a, H4b].
- Sectarian (*maslak*) followed by household (e.g., Barelvi, Deobandi, Ahl-e-Sunnat, Ahl-e-Hadith) [H6a, H6b].
- Whether or not the militant attended a *madrasah* [H5a, H5b].
- Highest degree earned by the militant (no formal education, below matriculation, matriculation but less than intermediate, intermediate less than a degree, degree and above) [H3a, H3b].
- An indicator denoting whether the militant was unemployed the year before he joined the *tanzeem* [H3a, H3b].

Results

Table 4 reports the results for our two logit models of consent and refusal. This table is mainly useful in communicating which variables have statistically significant effects and in which direction the effects run. Table 5 communicates the predicted probabilities obtained from the coefficient estimates. As such it relays a sense of the strength of each of the statistically significant relationships. To produce the predicted probabilities, the authors set the variable of interest to its minimum and maximum values and set the other variables at their mean or mode depending on whether the variable was interval, ordinal, or nominal in nature. Finally, the authors plot some interactive graphs in Figures 1–3. Logit models are inherently interactive. The functional form of the equation guarantees that each of the

Table 4
Maximum likelihood logistic estimates (Logit) for Consent and Refusal models

Variable	Consent model coefficient (std. err)	Refusal model coefficient (std. err)
No. males	.02163 (.0687)	.06422 (.0564)
Age of respondent	.03821** (.0200)	-.00497 (.0152)
Owens buildings	-2.1286* (1.161)	1.7000** (.7842)
Females in Dars-e-Qur'an	.3553 (.5853)	-1.0961** (.5331)
No. of males in <i>madrassah</i> / Total number of males	6.6109*** (2.628)	.42634 (1.017)
Deobandi	-1.7858* (.9989)	-.85637 (.8444)
Ahl-e-Sunnat	.22871 (1.094)	-.58123 (.8445)
Ahl-e-Hadith	.57826 (1.428)	.99144 (1.181)
Militant in <i>madrassah</i>	.6400 (.651)	-.95122* (.5827)
Education	.08912 (.2716)	-.23591 (.2448)
Unemployed	-.29829 (.5038)	-.76468* (.4569)
Constant	1.2592 (1.496)	.39545 (1.112)
Chi Square	41.9***	25.18***
N	130	130

Note that Bareilvi is demarcated by the constant. One tailed tests: * = significant at the .10 level, ** = .05 level, and *** = .10 level.

independent variables interact in influencing the probability of an event occurring.¹ The “variables are assumed to have both *nonlinear* and *nonadditive* effects on Pr (Y = 1).”^{li} Thus, one can observe, for example, how the probability of consent as a function fluctuates as the values of age and owning buildings change.

Table 4 shows that the Consent Model produces four statistically significant variables: age, own buildings, number of males who attended *madrassah* over the total of all males

Table 5
Probabilities for permission and refusal^a

	Permission		Refusal	
	Min	Max	Min	Max
Ratio of males in <i>madrassah</i> to total males	.82	.99	—	—
Age of respondent	.77	.97	—	—
Owens buildings	.99	.90	.27	.67
Females in Dars-e-Qur'an	—	—	.86	.67
Deobandi	.90	.60	—	—
Militant attended <i>madrassah</i>	—	—	.67	.44
Militant unemployed	—	—	.67	.49

^aAll other variables are held at their mean or mode. When all variables are held at mean or mode, the mean prediction for Consent is .90, and the mean prediction for Refusal is .67.

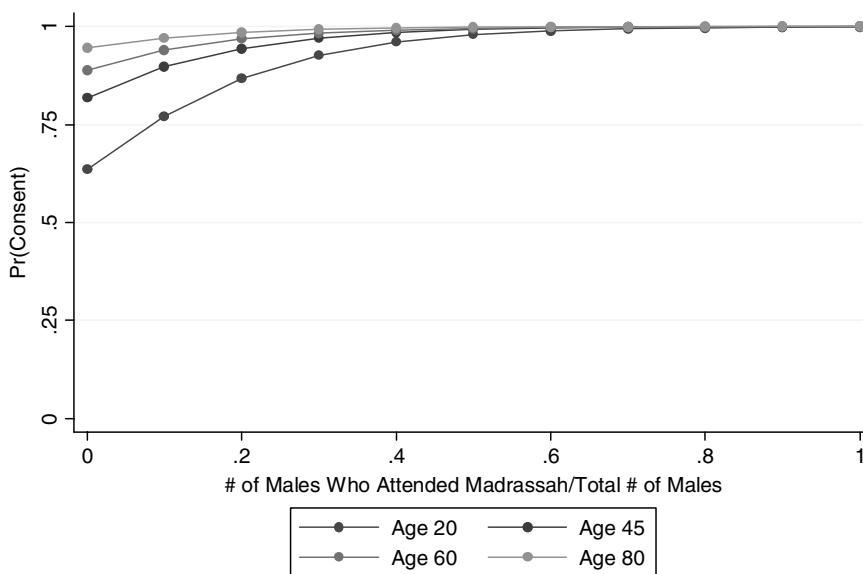


Figure 1. The relationship between age, number of males who attended *madrasah* and the probability of consent.

in the household, and Deobandi. As such, one of the economic, and three of the religious indicators produced results consistent with the present argument. Statistical support was found for some but not all of the hypotheses about why parents might give consent to their child's decision to join *jihad*. The following hypotheses—H3b, H4a, H4b, H5b, H6a,

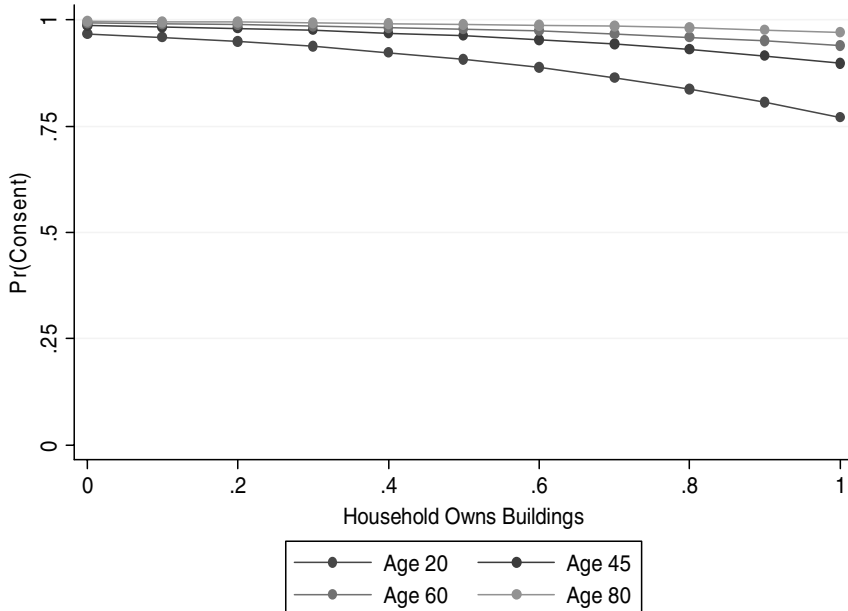


Figure 2. The relationship between age, owning buildings, and the probability of consent.

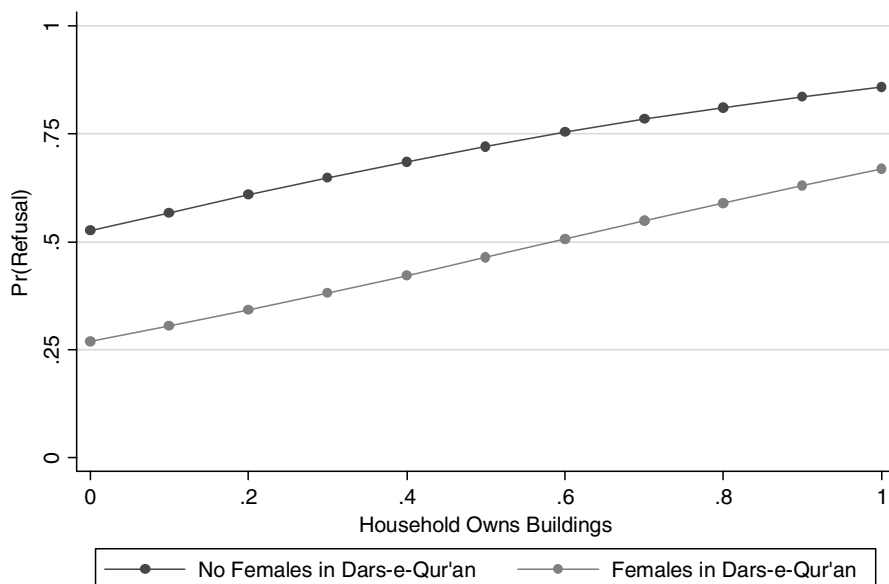


Figure 3. The relationship between the presence of females in Dars-e-Qur'an, owning buildings and the probability of refusal.

H7a—were supported. Strong support was found for the hypotheses about economic standing [H1, H1A]. Households that own buildings are more likely to refuse and less likely to give consent. The hypotheses about religious commitment were partially supported [H4, H4A]. Males' *madrassah* attendance increased consent whereas female participation in dars-e-Qur'an had a negative impact on head of household refusal. However, female attendance of dars-e-Qur'an had no impact on consent. Whether or not the militant attended a *madrassah* [H5, H5A] was also partially supported in that it had no impact on consent; however, militant's attendance at a *madrassah* did reduce the likelihood of refusal. Additionally, Respondent age (almost all of respondents were heads of household) [H7, H7A] had, as hypothesized, a positive impact on the likelihood of consent but no impact on refusal.

Several of the hypotheses were not supported by the analyses. First, the number of males in the households had no statistically significant impact on the respondent's decision to give consent or to refuse to do so [H2, H2A]. Similarly, the hypotheses about education and unemployment were mostly unsupported by the data, with the exception that those who were unemployed were less likely to be refused [H3, H3A] by their heads of household.

Hypothesis about the impact of the household's sectarian background (e.g., Barelvi, Deobandi, Ahl-e-Sunnat, Ahl-e-Hadith) [H6, H6A] was also refuted. Indeed, as explained earlier, the evidence for this hypothesis was weak, but it was included because of the popularly held notions about the Deobandi religious institutions in Pakistan, many of which (but by no means all) have traditionally been associated with the Taliban and a slew of other militant groups. However, this finding has important and interesting policy implications. Being a member of the Deobandi tradition actually *reduced* the likelihood of consent. Given pervasive concerns about Pakistan's Deobandis, this result suggests that further investigation into the relationship—if any—between household sectarian background and participation in

militancy is needed. This finding undermines the contention of some analysts and observers who view Deobandi institutions (mosques and *madaris*) with suspicion.

To get a sense of the substantive effects attention is turned toward Table 5 and Figures 1 and 2. Table 5 shows that the predicted probability of consent increases from .82 to .99, holding all other variables at their means or modes, as the ratio of males attending *madaris* to the total number of males in the household increases from 0 to 1. Almost a .20 increase in the probability of granting consent is quite large. On the other hand, a Deobandi affiliation increases the probability of consent by .30 holding all else constant at its mean or mode. Age increases the probability of consent by .20 as well. Finally, owning buildings reduces consent by almost .10. Although these variables conform to expectations, unemployment, education, the number of males in the household, the presence of females in Dars-e-Qur'an, whether or not the militant attended a *madrassah*, and the other group affiliations did not produce significant results.

Figure 1 graphs the predicted probabilities of consent associated with different respondent ages and the number of males that attended *madrassah*. One can see that both variables increase the predicted probability of consent. A 20-year-old head of a household with no males in the household educated in the *madrassah* who committed a militant action is less likely to give consent than an 80-year-old male under the same conditions, but both would just as likely give consent if all of the males had attended a *madrassah*. Figure 2 reveals the opposite situation between age and owning buildings. Although age continues to have a positive effect, buildings have a negative impact.

The Refusal Model also produced four statistically significant variables: own buildings, females in Dars-e-Qur'an, militant attended *madrassah*, and unemployed. Only one of these variables is statistically significant—buildings—in the Consent equation. As expected and consistent with the finding for consent, the variable buildings has a strong positive impact on refusal indicating that increased wealth increased the probability of refusal. One of the economic indicators is the same across models, whereas the Refusal Model produces statistically significant effects for two different religious indicators, and a second economic indicator. To get a sense of the substantive effects attention is turned toward Table 5 and Figure 3.

Table 5 shows that the predicted probability of refusal increases by .40 going from a household that does not own buildings to a household that does. The other significant variables reduce the likelihood of refusal. Specifically, households in which females attend Dars-e-Qur'an increase the likelihood that one of the household members refused consent to one of the militants. Finally, attending a *madrassah* and being unemployed independently increased the likelihood that a household member refused consent to the militant by almost .20.

Figure 3 shows the interactive relationship among owning buildings, households containing female members involved in Dars-e-Qur'an, and the probability of refusal. A household that does not own buildings but does have females participating in Dars-e-Qur'an, holding all other variables constant, yields a probability of only .25 for refusal. Families that do not have such female participation in such activities but that do own buildings, holding all other variables constant, generates a probability of more than .80. These two variables together explain a lot of the variation in refusal. Overall, owning buildings, females in Dars-e-Qur'an, militants attending *madrassah*, and unemployed militants are the four most important variables in determining refusal. In other words it is a combination of particular kinds of familial economic and religious concerns that drive the consent or refusal of permission by families. This analysis raises interesting questions to be examined in future analysis. For example, why is women's religious education related to refusal

and men's religious education related to permission? Why do relations with the Deobandi sect have such a strong impact whereas the other sects do not have any statistical impact? It is expected that some of these questions will need further data collection to be answered.

Conclusions and Implications

This study sought to empirically examine the economic and religious factors inherent in households that increase and/or decrease the likelihood that members of the household give or refuse consent for a male of the household to participate in *jihad*. The study empirically examines information contained in Pakistani survey data collected on households in which at least one male became a militant. The results suggest that different operational indicators capturing social, economic, and religious factors affect both consent and refusal. For the most part, the study expectations were confirmed by the data; however, some of the expectations were not corroborated, as detailed earlier.

While embracing the limits of this convenience sample and corresponding limits of the generalizability of these results, these results do suggest a number of important policy implications. First, much of the terrorism recruitment literature rules out economic status as a factor in militant recruitment. Yet, one of the stronger findings of this study is that wealth—or the lack thereof—conditions a family's belief about their son's *jihad*. Namely, better off households are less likely to give consent to their child's *jihad* and more likely to actively refuse. Similarly, the literature on the supply of militant manpower has tended to downplay the role of unemployment as an explanatory factor in the supply of terrorism. This study, at least in the context of Pakistan, finds that persons who were unemployed were less likely to be refused in their quest to join a *jihadi* organization. In fact, in an earlier analysis of these data, Fair found that the militants in this sample were much more well-educated but far more likely to be unemployed than non-militant males in Pakistan.^{lii} Both of these findings suggest the salience of programs in Pakistan that diminish poverty and create employment opportunities.

Given the various ongoing debates about the role of Pakistan's *madaris* in generating militants, this study did find that the intensity of males' *madrassah* attendance increased the likelihood of consent. (Similarly, females' participation in *dars-e-Qur'an* diminished the likelihood of refusal.) Similarly, whether or not a militant attended a *madrassah* diminished the likelihood of being refused while having no statistically impact on consent. This is true even though other analyses of these data found that *madaris* were not the most important place of militant recruitment and despite the fact that most militants in this survey did not attend a *madrassah*.^{liii}

The connection between *madrassah* attendance of the militant and family utilization of *madaris* on the one hand and consent and/or refusal on the other may derive from early household decisions about the would-be-militant's potential as discussed earlier in this article and about family values. These findings suggest that although *madaris* may not be "weapons of mass instruction" for the production of militants, it is possible that militant-supporting families prefer *madaris* for their children. Given the various proposals within Pakistan and without for *madrassah* reform, this question merits further investigation. If militant-inclined families prefer *madaris* because they believe *madaris* provide an education consonant with their values, they would be unlikely to select "reformed" *madaris* for their children. Moreover, as noted, most of the militants in this survey did not attend a *madrassah*. This underscores the need for continued focus on the connections between militancy and education more generally in Pakistan.

Finally, this study also refuted the common wisdom that some interpretative traditions are more inclined toward militancy than others. Indeed, Deobandis were, all else equal, less likely to give consent to their sons' decision to join *jihad*. This suggests that policymakers within Pakistan and without should perhaps embrace working with the religious communities to create consensus against the use of violence in the pursuit of political objectives rather than assume that Islamist actors in Pakistan are universally part of the problem when these data suggest that may comprise an important element of the solution.

Notes

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iv. Massoud Ansari, "Suicide City," *Newsline* (June 2004), available at newsline.com.pk/newsJun2004/cover1jun2004.htm

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xxxvii. Hafez, "Rationality, Culture, and Structure," p. 169.

xxxviii. Ibid.

xxxix. Bruce Hoffman, "Terrorism Trends and Prospects," in *Countering the New Terrorism*, edited by I. O. Lesser, B. Hoffman, J. Arquilla, D. Ronfeldt, and M. Zanini (Santa Monica: RAND, 1999), p. 17.

xl. Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), p. 82.

xli. Ibid.

xlii. This means that the attainment rate, conditional upon being enrolled in school in the first place, is higher than the national average for all children. This is because the average includes children with no attainment. For more information about probabilities of school enrollment and retention rates see Yasayuki Sawada and Michael Lokshin, "Household Decisions in Rural Pakistan," World Bank Development Research Group, Poverty and Human Resources, Policy Research Working Paper 2541 (2001). Their findings generally concurred with those of an earlier study by Jessica Holmes, *Measuring the Determinants of School Completion in Pakistan: Analysis of Censoring and Selection Bias* (Economic Growth Center, Yale University, 1999).

xliii. C. Christine Fair, *The Madrassah Challenge: Military and Religious Education in Pakistan* (Washington D.C.: UIP, 2008).

xliv. Life expectancy for males at birth in Pakistan is 62 years. Life expectancy is "the average number of years of life that a person can expect to live if they experience the current mortality rate of the population at each age." See World Health Organization background information on Pakistan, *Pakistan*. Cited 1 May 2007, available at <http://www.who.int/countries/pak/en/>

xlv. Evidence for these claims is substantial, notwithstanding Pakistan's increasingly untenable denials. See *inter alia* testimony of Director National Intelligence, John Negroponte, before a hearing of the U.S. Senate Select Committee for Intelligence, "Current and Projected National Security Threats," 11 January 2007 (cited 1 May 2007, available at <http://intelligence.senate.gov/hearings.cfm?hearingId=2467>). Also see comments made by Maj. Gen. Benjamin C. Freakley, commander of Combined Joint Task Force 76, who said that "There's Taliban leaders in Pakistan. . . . We know that this group . . . were from Jalaluddin Haqqani and we believe, though we don't know exactly where, that Jalaluddin Haqqani is operating from inside Pakistan and sending men to fight in Afghanistan ("Haqqani Recruiting Taliban in Pakistan: US Gen," *The News*, 14 January 2007). Also see interview with Barnett Rubin by the Council on Foreign Relations (Barnett R. Rubin and Bernard Gwertzman, *Rubin: Afghanistan at Dangerous "Tipping Point"*." Council on Foreign Relations, 6 October 2006. Cited 2 May 2007, available at <http://www.cfr.org/publication/11620/rubin.html>). A "U.S. intelligence source" also reported to CNN that Mullah Omar is in the environs of Quetta (Peter

Bergen, Anderson Cooper, and Charlie Moore, *Source: Mullah Omar in Pakistan*. CNN, 9 September 2006. Cited 2 May 2007).

xlvi. *Pakistan Arrests "Led to UK Moves,"* CNN.com, 11 August 2006. Cited 1 May 2007, available at <http://www.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/asiapcf/08/11/terror.plot.pakistan/index.html>; *Bomb Trail Goes Cold on Pakistani Ties*, BBC News Online (2006). Cited 27 April 2007, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4761659.stm; Paul Reynolds, *Bomber Video "Points to al-Qaeda."* BBC News Online (2005). Cited 30 April 2007, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/4208250.stm

xlvii. For more information about this survey and this project, see Fair, "Who Are Pakistan's Militants and Their Families?" pp. 49–65.

xlviii. Population Council, *Adolescents and Youth in Pakistan 2001–2002: A Nationally Representative Survey* (New York, Islamabad: The Population Council, 2003), pp. 45, 50, available at <http://www.popcouncil.org/mediacenter/newsreleases/AYSP.html> (accessed 5 September 2006).

xlix. Tahir Andrabi, Jishnu Das, Asim Ijaz Khwaja, and Tristan Zajonc, "Religious School Enrollment in Pakistan: A Look at the Data," *Comparative Education Review* 50(3) (2006).

l. William D. Berry, "Testing for Interaction in Models with Binary Dependent Variables" (Typescript. Tallahassee: Florida State University, 1999).

li. *Ibid.*

lii. Fair, "Who Are Pakistan's Militants and Their Families?" pp. 49–65.

liii. *Ibid.*