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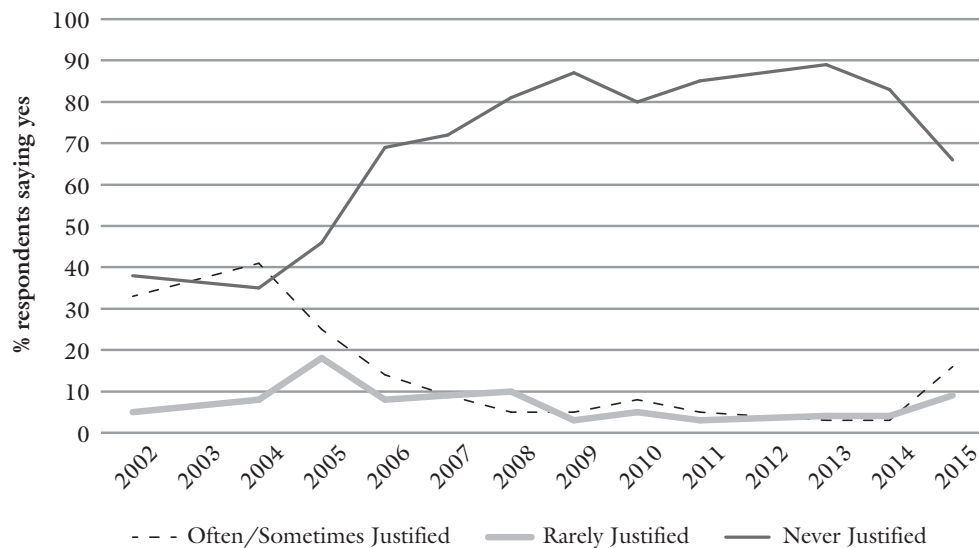
A Country of Radicals? Not Quite

Are ordinary Pakistanis radicalized? According to the most recent Pew polls, Pakistanis overwhelmingly oppose what some in the West call “radical Islamic terror”—that is, violence against civilians to “defend Islam from its enemies.” Defending Islam and fighting for it: this is how terror groups such as al Qaeda and the Taliban justify their violence against civilians. It is part of their version of jihad.

In 2013, 89 percent of Pakistani respondents said such violence was never justified.¹ But in 2004, nine years earlier, only 41 percent of Pew respondents opposed such violence. More than a third—35 percent—said it was justified (see figure 1-1). The trend over the years suggests it is Pakistan’s own experience with large-scale terrorist violence—an abstract phenomenon before 2004 that became more widespread and multiplied in scale after 2006—that has driven Pakistanis’ clear opposition to violence against civilians, even when in the name of Islam.

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FIGURE I-1. Violence against Civilians Justified to Defend Islam?



Source: Author's graph, using Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes survey data for Pakistan for the years 2002–15 (excluding 2003 and 2012; www.pewglobal.org/datasets/).

Interview Question: Some people think that suicide bombing and other forms of violence against civilian targets are justified in order to defend Islam from its enemies. Other people believe that, no matter what the reason, this kind of violence is never justified. Do you personally feel that this kind of violence is often justified to defend Islam, sometimes justified, rarely justified, or never justified?

Note: Only a small number of people refused to respond to this question or said they didn't know their answer (this was a problem for other questions), making this a particularly good question to study.

Does the average Pakistani sympathize with terrorist groups? Do his or her views vary according to the terrorist group—say, groups that attack Pakistani civilians versus ones that attack Pakistan's "enemy," India? What about those groups that attack the West and Western targets?

We will see that the majority of Pakistanis do not express sympathy with extremist groups—no matter who the group targets. But common narratives on terrorist groups—some riddled with conspiracy theories—paint a less positive picture. This chapter sets forth the survey evidence and common narratives on how Pakistanis think about terrorist violence and militant groups, including al Qaeda, the Taliban, and Lashkar-e-Taiba. Related to these views are citizens' perceptions of India, of the United States, and of Pakistan's place in the world.

A WORD ON THE DATA

Before we go forward, let me say a few words on the survey data. For Pakistanis' views on terrorist groups, I primarily analyze the data from the Pew Global Attitudes surveys conducted annually in Pakistan (and other countries) since 2002. Pew conducted face-to-face interviews with adults eighteen years and older in Pakistan. In most years, approximately 1,200 individuals were surveyed; in 2002, 2007, and 2010, about 2,000 people were surveyed.² Until 2006, Pew conducted interviews in Urdu; after 2007, in Urdu and regional languages. The polls are nationally representative of 80 percent to 90 percent of the population; Pew excluded regions that were insecure. Their sampling was disproportionately urban, but I weight the results to account for Pakistan's true urban/rural composition.^{3,4}

Polls typically suffer from a number of common problems, and the Pew surveys are no exception. Respondents may not be truthful and, instead, may choose the socially desirable response (social scientists refer to this as social desirability bias); or they could refuse to answer specific, sensitive questions—with the result that we may not know what many respondents think, and our results may be biased because those who refuse to respond may systematically conceal specific views (this is termed nonresponse bias). An advantage of the Pew polls is that they offer an unparalleled timeline on Pakistanis' views, allowing us to trace attitudes from shortly after 9/11 to today.

I complement the Pew data with data from the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) poll, conducted in May 2009.⁵ This survey used careful question wording and enumerator training to successfully deal with sensitivity concerns, yielding low nonresponse rates to a set of sensitive questions. All interviewing was conducted in Urdu, with 1,000 face-to-face interviews across a hundred locations in rural and urban Pakistan.⁶

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I also use data from the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, a multi-country survey on religion and society conducted in Pakistan in November 2011. This survey was also conducted face-to-face, with about 1,500 adults, and was nationally representative of 82 percent of the adult population.

A (VERY) BRIEF PRIMER ON PAKISTAN-RELEVANT TERRORIST GROUPS

Here, I briefly introduce the four militant groups we consider in this chapter: the Pakistan Taliban, the Afghan Taliban (AT), Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), and al Qaeda (AQ).

The Pakistan Taliban, also known as the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), was founded in December 2007 by Baitullah Mehsud, a semi-literate village imam, as an umbrella organization of smaller outfits in Pakistan's tribal areas; its principal target is the Pakistani state. The group has attacked politicians, military and intelligence targets, and police academies. It has also attacked civilians—women and children—in mosques, schools, hotels, parks, and churches. It has posed the main threat to Pakistan's security for the last ten years, and continues to do so today, though it has been significantly weakened by the army's operations against it since 2014.

The Pakistan Taliban claims to fight the Pakistani state's alliance with the United States in the war in Afghanistan and the Pakistani military's post-9/11 crackdown on militant outfits in the country's tribal areas. It aims to remove Pakistan's democratically elected government and to impose Sharia. The group is closely allied to but distinct from the Afghan Taliban. It pledged allegiance to Mullah Omar—the head of the Afghan Taliban whose death was disclosed in 2015, two years after he allegedly died at a Pakistani hospital, according to Afghan officials—as its own supreme commander but has its own set of managing leaders.

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Some members of the Pakistan Taliban became radicalized from their involvement in the jihad against the Soviets in Afghanistan in the 1980s. In 1989, Sufi Muhammad, who had fought in that jihad, formed the Tehrik-e-Nifaz-Shariat-Mohammadi (TNSM) to impose Sharia in Dir. The TNSM was one of the precursors of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan. His son-in-law, Fazal Hayat, known publicly Mullah Fazlullah or just Fazlullah, is the current leader of the Pakistan Taliban. He is a former chairlift operator with no formal religious training. In chapter 2, I discuss the rise of the Pakistan Taliban.

The Afghan Taliban is an Islamist fundamentalist group that came into power in Afghanistan in 1996 after years of fighting between various groups of mujahideen (Soviet war-era fighters) over control of post-Soviet Afghanistan. As groups of mujahideen fought for control of Afghanistan in the 1990s, Benazir Bhutto's government made a decision to back the Afghan Taliban in its bid for power; she later admitted she and her government had made a mistake. Mullah Omar headed the Taliban until the announcement of his death. The Afghan Taliban ruled Afghanistan with regressive, draconian interpretations of Sharia. It required women to be covered head to toe in a burqa; women and men were treated at separate hospitals; men were required to wear beards; music and television were banned. Anyone in violation of the Taliban's rules was punished severely, often in public.

Post-9/11, the Afghan Taliban was ousted from Afghanistan by the United States' invasion of that country; members of the group sought sanctuary across the border in Pakistan and many, including the leadership, are thought to be in Quetta—although Pakistan officially denies this. Over the last fifteen years, the Afghan Taliban has attacked American forces, and Afghan government and civilian targets, from its reported base in Pakistan. It is fighting against the United States and the U.S.-backed Afghan government in Afghanistan.

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Pakistan treats the two Talibans very differently. It has engaged in a military operation (Zarb-e-Azb) against the Pakistan Taliban since June 2014 even as it continues to give sanctuary to the Afghan Taliban. The Pakistani state justifies this sanctuary, though not openly, as giving Pakistan leverage and “strategic depth” to insure against fears of Indian involvement in Afghanistan.

Lashkar-e-Taiba is one of the main anti-India militant groups based in Pakistan, fighting to free Kashmir from Indian control. Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) is the other. These groups do not attack the Pakistani state or Pakistani targets; they target Indian forces in Kashmir, and government and civilian targets in India. These groups, the Kashmiri jihadists, began functioning at a heightened capacity in the 1990s; they drew from the ranks of the mujahideen trained for the Soviet jihad once that war ended. Scholars and analysts argue that Pakistan’s spy agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence, harbors ties with and supports Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad and that it directed the mujahideen toward the Kashmir cause. Though the Pakistani army denies this, it is well known in Pakistan that despite these groups being proscribed, their leaders are largely allowed by the state to conduct their activities and live freely. The head of LeT is Hafiz Saeed, an erstwhile engineering university professor. The charitable arm of Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD), is widely visible (see box 1-1 for details).

Al Qaeda is well known globally. It was the terrorist group led by Osama bin Laden, responsible for 9/11 and a host of mass-casualty terror attacks at high-profile Western targets. It is now led by Aymen al-Zawahiri. Its jihad is global, against the United States and the West. Osama bin Laden was killed in a U.S. Navy SEAL operation in Abbottabad, Pakistan, in May 2011. He had been living there for several years but how he wound up there and who knew he was there is unclear. Given that Abbottabad houses Pakistan’s military academy, it is likely that at least someone in Pakistan’s intelligence agencies knew.

BOX 1-1 Jamaat-ud-Dawa's Charity

Hafiz Saeed is quoted: “Islam propounds both dawa [proselytizing] and jihad. Both are equally important and inseparable. Since our life revolves around Islam, therefore both dawa and jihad are essential; we cannot prefer one over the other.”^a

Jamaat-ud-Dawa runs schools and ambulances and organizes emergency relief. By 2009 it claimed to run the second largest ambulance fleet in Pakistan. At that time it also ran 173 al-Dawa educational institutions with about 20,000 students.^b After the devastating October 2005 earthquake that hit Kashmir and Pakistan's northern areas, JuD was at the forefront in providing relief to those affected. It provided effective medical care from well-stocked field hospitals it had established after the earthquake. The *Washington Post* reported from Muzaffarabad that the JuD field hospital there had “X-ray equipment, [a] dental department, makeshift operating theater, and even a tent for visiting journalists.”^c After the massive 2010 floods, *The Telegraph* reported that JuD provided “food, medicine and wads of rupee notes to hundreds of thousands of people affected.”^d

a. Stephen Tankel, “Lashkar-e-Taiba: Past Operations and Future Prospects,” New America Foundation: National Security Studies Program Policy Paper, April 2011, p.3.

b. Ibid., p.12.

c. John Lancaster and Kamran Khan, “Extremists Fill Aid Chasm After Quake,” *Washington Post*, October 16, 2005.

d. Rob Crilly, “Pakistan Flood Aid from Islamic Extremists,” *The Telegraph*, August 21, 2010.

While the four militant groups discussed—the TTP, the AT, LeT, and AQ—are distinct, and function separately in Pakistan, their boundaries blur. Foot soldiers cross over and ideologies overlap. All invoke Islam; all want to enforce Sharia. What varies is their geographical focus: whether it is national or regional in

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scope. Their targets of violence are correspondingly different. For al Qaeda, it is the West; for the Afghan Taliban, U.S. forces in Afghanistan and the Afghan government; for the Pakistan Taliban, the Pakistani state; and for Lashkar-e-Taiba, the target is India. The Pakistani state effectively treats these groups differently from each other, only recognizing the Pakistan Taliban as a threat, and even that only in more recent years. But how do Pakistani people see these militant groups? Do they recognize the common militant threat? Do they sympathize with the common ideology? Or do they discriminate according to who the group targets?

PAKISTANIS' VIEWS OF TERRORIST GROUPS: WHAT THE POLLS SAY

Polls show that Pakistanis are, on balance, unfavorable toward all terror groups, including those that do not attack Pakistani civilians, such as the Afghan Taliban, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and al Qaeda. That does not mean that no Pakistanis hold favorable views of these groups, but rather that more of them are unfavorable toward these groups than not. A sizable section of respondents refuse to answer questions about these groups, but whether the nonresponses conceal views that are favorable or unfavorable is not clear. Nonresponses may vary by location or be dependent on specific factors like the respondents' perceptions of the pollster asking the question. Respondents could also truly be indifferent or not have enough information to answer the question.

Views vary somewhat across groups, as can be seen in table 1-1. Pakistanis are more positive toward the LeT than other terror groups (14 percent say they have favorable views of LeT) but the number is still small. Favorability toward al Qaeda is the lowest across terror groups (7 percent) and is 9 percent for both the TTP and Afghan Taliban. Thirty-six percent of Pakistani respondents say they have unfavorable views toward Lashkar-e-Taiba. Unfavorability is

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Table 1-1. *Pakistanis' Views of Terrorist Groups*

<i>Response</i>	<i>Percent</i>			
	<i>Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan*</i>	<i>Lashkar- e-Taiba*</i>	<i>Afghan Taliban*</i>	<i>Al Qaeda**</i>
Very favorable	3	3	3	0
Somewhat favorable	6	11	6	7
Somewhat unfavorable	17	13	16	15
Very unfavorable	43	23	37	32
Don't know/refused to respond	30	49	38	45

Source: Pew Research Center Global Attitudes Pakistan survey dataset, spring 2015 (www.pewglobal.org/datasets/2015/).

* Interview Question: Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of: a) TTP, b) LeT, c) AT. (Pew has fielded this question since 2010.)

** Interview Question: And thinking about some political leaders and organizations in our country, please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of al Qaeda. (Pew has fielded this question since 2008.)

highest for the TTP (60 percent), and lower, at 53 percent, for the Afghan Taliban and 47 percent for al Qaeda. Nonresponse rates are high for LeT, AT, and AQ—between 38 percent and 49 percent—and lower for the TTP (at 30 percent).

Across terror groups, Pakistanis express the most negative views of the Pakistan Taliban, the group that directly targets them and the Pakistani state, and also have the highest response rates to questions about the TTP. If fear of terrorist groups alone motivated nonresponse, it would be highest for the TTP, given its imprint in Pakistan. That we see such high unfavorability and low nonresponse despite the TTP's terror suggests that the high nonresponse rates for LeT, AT, and AQ may, in fact, reflect ambivalence.

The views of the TTP discussed here were recorded in 2015, a few months after the December 2014 attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar, which was thought to have significantly hardened Pakistanis' views against the militant group. Before the

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attack, in 2013, unfavorable views toward the TTP were already very high, at 56 percent; they went up slightly in 2015 to 60 percent. The bigger change seems to be lower favorability post-attack (from 16 percent in 2013 to 9 percent in 2015), and somewhat higher nonresponse. It is interesting that views changed not only for the group that perpetrated the attack—the TTP—but also for the LeT, whose favorability declined from 24 percent in 2013 to 14 percent in 2015, and AQ and the AT whose favorability also declined after the Peshawar attack (from 13 percent and 12 percent in 2013 to 7 percent and 9 percent in 2015 for AQ and the AT respectively). Similarly, unfavorability went up slightly for these groups, and nonresponse rose somewhat, as well. To sum up, Pakistanis were already very negative toward the TTP before the Peshawar attack, and they turned further against the TTP as well as other terror groups after the attack.

Looking back, Pew respondents' views on the TTP did not change much between 2010 and 2013. A Pew question that asks respondents about their views of the Taliban—without the Pakistan qualifier but prefaced with a statement that the question is about “organizations” that function within Pakistan—has the advantage of being asked since 2008. A look at that data shows that Pakistanis' views on the Taliban changed significantly between 2008 and 2009; nonresponse and favorability declined and unfavorability rose dramatically—both as Pakistanis learned more about the group and as they became targets of its terror.⁷

This change in views between 2008 and 2009 also holds for al Qaeda. Pakistanis became less favorable, less nonresponsive, and more unfavorable toward al Qaeda between 2008 and 2009. Combined, this evidence suggests that as Pakistanis were increasingly targeted by terror they became more unfavorable toward all terror groups, not only the group that struck them directly. For al Qaeda, nonresponse has risen and unfavorability has fallen after 2012, as the terrorist group has become less of a global threat after Osama bin Laden's death.

We have another snapshot of views of al Qaeda with the PIPA data in 2009, and with better response rates. PIPA ascribed its lower nonresponse to asking respondents about bin Laden’s organization (*bin Laden ki tanzeem*) rather than al Qaeda (the word *Qaeda* may be confusing to Pakistanis, since it means literally *book* or *guide-book*; and while some respondents may not have known the organization al Qaeda by name, they had heard of bin Laden). This data suggest more positive views toward al Qaeda in 2009 than the Pew surveys—with 27 percent of PIPA respondents reporting positive feelings, 16 percent mixed, 45 percent negative. Twelve percent did not respond. For comparison, Pew in 2009 reported 9 percent favorability, 61 percent unfavorability, and 30 percent nonresponse. We cannot come to a definitive conclusion with one comparison point, but this suggests that, for al Qaeda, nonresponse may have disguised positive or favorable views.

Data from surveys other than Pew and PIPA confirm these findings. In a 2009 survey of 6,000 Pakistanis, a group of academics (Graeme Blair, C. Christine Fair, Neil Malhotra, and Jacob N. Shapiro; henceforth referred to as the BFMS survey team) used endorsement experiments to mitigate nonresponse and to derive truthful views of militant groups.⁸ They asked their respondents about the Afghan Taliban, al Qaeda, and Kashmiri jihadist groups (but not the Pakistani Taliban). Their results show that Pakistanis are on average negative toward these groups—corroborating my findings.

What about ISIS, a growing player in Pakistan? In 2016 and 2017, it was responsible for multiple large-scale attacks across Pakistan, although in some cases it appears to have “outsourced” these to other militant groups—including Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, a Sunni sectarian group. Pew asked a question on ISIS in 2015, but 62 percent of Pakistani respondents did not answer it. Nine percent of respondents were favorable toward the group, and 28 percent reported unfavorable opinions. That nonresponse rate likely reflects lack of knowledge or ambivalence about the group,

thus we cannot yet reach a conclusion about Pakistanis' views on ISIS.

It is clear that Pakistanis disapprove of extremist violence, but denouncing terrorists' ideology is a different matter. Both the polling data and citizens' narratives make this apparent.

NARRATIVES ON TERRORIST GROUPS, AND AMERICA, INDIA, AND ISLAM

Pakistanis' views on al Qaeda are closely tied to their views on the United States; their views on Lashkar-e-Taiba to their views on India. In what follows, I describe their narratives on these two countries, relying on further survey data and interviews, and relate these to their views on the terror group that attacks either country. Next, I lay out deeper narratives on the Taliban based on open-ended interviews and show how these narratives, in turn, relate to and are driven by Pakistanis' views on India, on America, and on Islam, jihad, and Sharia.

Al Qaeda and America

For al Qaeda, two things are simultaneously true: a clear majority of Pakistanis do not support its attacks on the United States, and a majority of Pakistani respondents sympathize with al Qaeda's attitudes toward the United States (see table 1-2). Sixty-two percent of PIPA respondents said they opposed al Qaeda's attacks on Americans, but 34 percent of respondents said that, while they opposed such attacks, they nevertheless shared many of al Qaeda's attitudes toward America—that is, more than half of the 62 percent of respondents who oppose attacks said they still shared al Qaeda's attitudes toward the United States. Twenty-five percent of respondents said they supported attacks on Americans (clearly disturbing) *and* shared al Qaeda's attitudes toward the United States—

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Table 1-2. *Al Qaeda Attacks and Values*

<i>How do you feel about al Qaeda?</i>	<i>Percent</i>
I support al Qaeda's attacks on Americans and share its attitudes toward the U.S.	25.44
I oppose al Qaeda's attacks on Americans but share many of its attitudes toward the U.S.	33.58
I oppose al Qaeda's attacks on Americans and do not share its attitudes toward the U.S.	28.06
Don't know/no response	12.92

Source: Program on International Policy Attitudes Pakistan 2009 survey dataset.

adding up to a total of 59 percent of PIPA respondents who said they shared al Qaeda's attitudes toward America. Twenty-eight percent of respondents said they opposed al Qaeda's attacks *and* did not share its attitudes toward the United States.

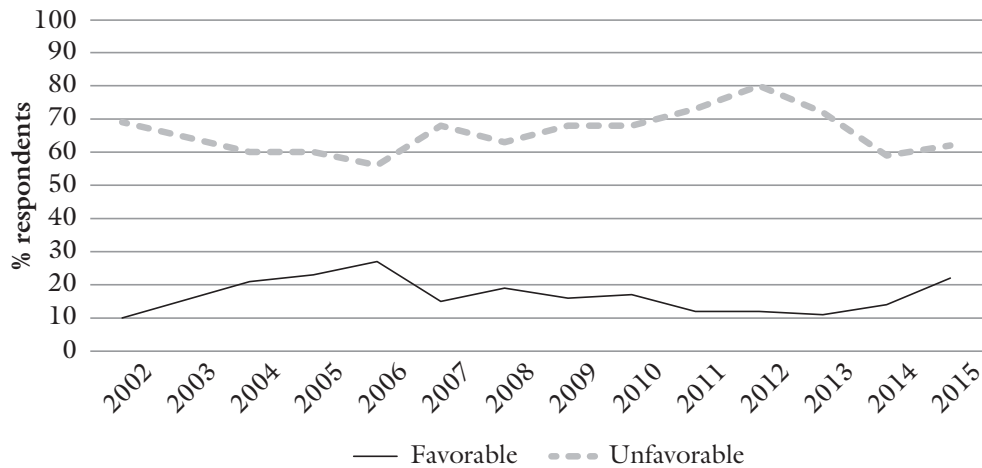
These attitudes are undoubtedly linked to Pakistanis' unfavorable views of the United States. I discuss these next.

The United States

Figure 1-2 shows Pakistanis' views of the United States since 2002. Views are clearly unfavorable (unfavorability never falls below 50 percent), but these numbers have varied over the years. The low for unfavorability was 56 percent in 2006—attitudes toward the United States were boosted by American aid in the wake of the massive 2005 earthquake in Pakistan and Kashmir⁹—and the high was 80 percent in 2012—the year after three major events (the Raymond Davis incident, the Osama bin Laden raid in May, and the November NATO attack that killed twenty-four Pakistani soldiers) severely undermined the United States' standing in Pakistan. Davis was a CIA contractor in Lahore who, while driving on a crowded street in that city, shot and killed two men on a motorcycle in January 2011. A U.S. consulate car dispatched to help him then killed another man while driving on the wrong side of the road. Pakistan arrested and charged Davis, but after the American and Pakistani

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FIGURE 1-2. Pakistanis' Views of the United States



Source: Author's graph, using Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes survey data for Pakistan for the years 2002–15, excluding 2003 (www.pewglobal.org/datasets/).

governments reached a deal to pay blood money to the victims' families, he was cleared of all charges and flown out of Pakistan. American authorities are said to have pressured Pakistan into that agreement with the possibility of Congress holding up its civilian aid.

Polling data and interviews yield a picture of Pakistani anti-Americanism that, with help from a classification system developed by prominent political scientists Peter Katzenstein and Robert Keohane, we can delineate into four different categories—radical, socio-religious, sovereign-nationalist, and liberal (although these categories are not exclusive or nonoverlapping).¹⁰

Underlying a socio-religious anti-Americanism in Pakistan are notions of a conflict between Islam and the West and that of “Islam in danger” from the West. The narrative posits the American superpower pitted against the Muslim world, with Pakistan's identification and sympathy firmly ingrained on the side of other Muslim countries (it is the old “us versus them” argument). Polls reveal that Pakistanis think it is a “U.S. goal” to “weaken and divide the Islamic world” (78 percent of PIPA 2009 respondents) and to “impose American culture on Muslim society” (79 percent of PIPA respondents). High school students I interviewed in

Punjab confirmed these views. One said: “They can’t see Islam rising. . . . America doesn’t want Muslims to survive in Pakistan, in fact not in the whole world.” In the words of another: “America and other countries—their main aim is to divide and rule, to finish our unity.”

Pakistan’s strain of sovereign-nationalist anti-Americanism, on the other hand, focuses on American policies seen as harming Pakistan, as impinging on its sovereignty, and as unfair to it. Pakistanis consider the United States to be a bully who is unfair to their country. Ninety percent of PIPA respondents said that, in their view, the United States abuses its greater power to make the Pakistani government do what it wants (as opposed to treating Pakistan fairly). In the words of a student I interviewed, “We are America’s slaves.” My interviewees often called on the Raymond Davis case as an example of a strong-handed America impinging on the sovereignty of a weak Pakistan. In this context, they almost always contrasted the fate of Aafia Siddiqui with that of Davis. Siddiqui was an MIT-trained Pakistani neuroscientist who was suspected of having links to al Qaeda and to the 9/11 attackers. She “disappeared” for five years between 2003 and 2008. She was taken into custody in Afghanistan in 2008 and, shortly after that, attempted to kill American security officers guarding her; she was convicted by a New York court on charges of attempted murder in 2010 and is serving an eighty-six-year sentence in the United States. But she is a *cause celebre* in Pakistan: Pakistanis are skeptical of her links to terrorists, believe her to have been held in American custody and tortured in the years she was missing, between 2003 and 2008, and to have been driven insane by this torture. It is a case of two sides—American and Pakistani—seeing two completely different angles to the same story. Pakistanis of all types—including politicians—defend Siddiqui as the “daughter of the nation” and argue for her to be returned to Pakistan.

Pakistanis also keenly feel that the United States favors India over Pakistan when it comes to America’s relationships in South

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Asia (53 percent of Pakistani Pew respondents in 2015 believed American policies toward India and Pakistan favored India; only 13 percent said they favored Pakistan). They also feel that America sides with India in the India-Pakistan conflict and in the two countries' nuclear ambitions, although Pakistan is, in fact, the official U.S. "ally." A popular narrative invokes the economic sanctions imposed on Pakistan after it responded to India's nuclear tests with tests of its own in 1998; these sanctions were deemed deeply unfair to Pakistan. This kind of episode feeds Pakistan's mistrust of America and its sense of betrayal.

Pakistanis are also acutely sensitive to what they perceive as American operations that violate their sovereignty. In the Pew survey conducted immediately after the Navy SEAL raid that killed Osama bin Laden in May 2011, 63 percent disapproved of the raid. Pakistanis also have no tolerance for U.S. counterterrorism operations on their territory despite agreeing with those measures on principle. As an example, almost 90 percent of respondents to the PIPA poll thought al Qaeda training camps and Afghan Taliban bases should not be allowed to exist in Pakistan, yet 80 percent of respondents also said the United States would not be justified in bombing such camps or bases.

Drone strikes—deeply unpopular—also fit into this sovereignist nationalist narrative. Fifty-five percent of Pakistani Pew respondents in 2012 had heard (a lot or a little) about drone attacks. Of these, nearly all (97 percent) thought drones were "a bad or very bad thing," and that they killed too many innocent people (94 percent of respondents). Three-quarters of respondents said that drone strikes were not necessary to defend Pakistan from extremist groups. More Pakistanis think such strikes are being conducted without the approval of the Pakistani government than not. While nonresponse rates and (lack of) knowledge of drone strikes are a concern here, the polls reveal a population wary of violations of Pakistan's sovereignty and civilian casualties in drone strikes. Pakistanis look

at drones as yet another example of what they see as a blatant American disregard for Pakistani lives.

Liberal Pakistani anti-Americanism focuses on America's perceived hypocrisy in saying one thing and doing another, and on failing to live up to its own liberal and progressive goals and ideals. Examples of American actions that generate such sentiments in Pakistan are the failure to close down Guantanamo Bay and propping up dictators in contexts where it suits its own interests to do so, including in Pakistan. Sixty-six percent of PIPA respondents said that the United States tries to promote international laws for other countries but is hypocritical because it often does not follow these rules itself. Liberal Pakistanis tend to disapprove of U.S. foreign policy, both as it concerns Pakistan and the wider Muslim world—overlapping with strains of the socio-religious and sovereign-nationalist arguments. That manifests in disapproval of U.S.-led efforts to fight terror; 62 percent of Pakistani Pew respondents in 2011, for example, said they opposed such efforts. Liberal Pakistanis are also deeply skeptical about U.S. drone strikes and their cost to innocent Pakistani citizens.

Al Qaeda's narratives against the United States follow from the socio-religious anti-American argument, though some may resonate with those with sovereign-nationalist and perhaps even liberal anti-American sentiments. Only a person ascribing to a radical anti-Americanism, however, would support al Qaeda's violent extremism toward the United States.

Overall, Pakistanis are negatively predisposed to the United States, and their attitudes toward the United States range from mistrust to bias. These attitudes have deep historical roots and continue to evolve with current events that get woven into the anti-American narrative in Pakistan. One important aspect of this narrative deals with the anti-Soviet Afghan jihad of the 1980s, which Pakistan and America (and Saudi Arabia) together supported. Pakistanis cite American withdrawal from the region, characterized

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as abandonment, in the 1990s (leaving Pakistan to deal with a swarm of Afghan refugees, among other problems, on its own), as a form of deep betrayal.

Yet all is not negative when it comes to Pakistanis' views toward America. Pakistanis crave American approval and respect; their views do change with events and aid; and they admire America's successes—economic, political, scientific, and technological. And while the main story on Pakistanis' attitudes is their rejection of violent extremism, sympathy for the underlying ideology of extremists targeting America remains a concern.

Lashkar-e-Taiba and India

Recall that 20 percent to 25 percent of Pakistanis say they have favorable views of the LeT, according to Pew—a higher proportion than for al Qaeda, the TTP, or the Afghan Taliban. Nonresponse rates are high, as well, but the main takeaway is still the dominance of negative views over positive views of the group. This is despite the fact that the group has made deep inroads into the provision of charity via Jamaat-ud-Dawa, that it functions openly in Pakistan (at least its charity and political fronts do), and that the Pakistani state does not officially acknowledge LeT's role in terror. Given this, nonresponses may actually conceal respondents' lack of understanding about the significance of the LeT as a terror group. Consider, for example, that an injured man whose two children died in the 2005 earthquake in Muzaffarabad, Kashmir, said, after receiving care from Jamaat-ud-Dawa (according to the *Washington Post*), that he “did not know whether the group was involved in violence, nor did he care.” What mattered to him was that “every 10 minutes a doctor or medical attendant comes in to check on me. I have a very high opinion about this organization.”¹¹

Pakistanis believe that the Indian occupation of Kashmir is illegal, that on the eve of partition, the Hindu raja of Muslim Kash-

mir went against the wishes of his people to accede to India. Pakistanis believe that Muslim Kashmiris are harmed by Indian rule, and they support self-determination for Kashmir. Thus the cause of Lashkar-e-Taiba naturally resonates with them.

There is also some evidence that Pakistanis ascribe goals to the LeT that go beyond fighting for the Kashmir cause. The results of the 6,000-person BFMS survey mentioned earlier reveal that respondents, in large majorities, ascribed the following goals to Kashmiri militant groups: fighting for justice, for democracy, to protect Muslims (and ridding the ummah of those who have abandoned their religion, or apostates).¹² Smaller numbers—large minorities to small majorities—of respondents also ascribe these goals to AQ and the Afghan Taliban.

In the Pakistani narrative, a pro-Kashmir stance goes hand-in-hand with an anti-India posture. India is deeply unpopular in Pakistan. Seventy percent of respondents reported unfavorable views of India in the Pew 2015 survey. This is unsurprising given that the two countries were formed after the breakup of the British-ruled Indian subcontinent in 1947. Partition was traumatic, and India and Pakistan have fought three major wars since then—two over Kashmir and another in 1971 over the secession of Bangladesh from Pakistan—and relations have frequently plummeted to other near-wars. There are plenty of warmongers in both countries, and the dispute over Kashmir—unlikely to be resolved—continues to be the primary bone of contention.

Each country considers the other to be its greatest enemy and threat. Asked by Pew to assess threats posed by specific groups and countries to Pakistan in the spring of 2014, 75 percent of Pakistani respondents saw India as a serious threat, while 62 percent said the same for the Taliban and 42 percent said that for al Qaeda. Asked to choose between the three, 51 percent stated that India was the greatest threat to the country, relative to 25 percent who identified the Taliban and 2 percent who named al Qaeda. In 2015, after the Peshawar attack, the percentage that viewed the Taliban

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as a serious threat increased to 73 percent, but respondents still considered India a greater relative threat than the Taliban, albeit by a smaller gap than in 2014: 46 percent compared to 38 percent. For reference, Indian views are a mirror image: in a 2011 Pew poll, 65 percent of Indians had unfavorable views of Pakistan and 45 percent viewed Pakistan as the greatest threat to the country when asked to choose between it, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Naxalites (members of the Communist party of India's Maoist group engaged in an insurgency against the Indian state), and China; many Indians consider LeT to be an agent of Pakistan.

In Pakistan, there is a pervasive sense that India is out to get it. The anti-India narrative starts with anti-Hindu sentiment before partition (the very reason for which was the fear of domination by a Hindu majority), extends to perceived unfair division of assets immediately following partition, to India's role in Bangladesh's secession from Pakistan, and to its unyielding stance on Kashmir. Pakistanis consider India to be a bully and Pakistan a victim.

Despite the likely resonance of LeT's anti-India stance with Pakistanis and the fact that they see more to the group than its actions against India, their rejection of the militant role of LeT is clear from the survey data (though this is presumably why we see higher favorable numbers for LeT than for other militant groups).

It is also worth noting that Pakistanis' anti-India views are not immutable. There is movement in the numbers: unfavorability has ranged over the years between a low of 56 percent in 2013 to a high of 82 percent in 2011—ebbing and flowing with tensions on Kashmir and the intensity of the nationalist rhetoric on both sides. Pakistanis and Indians both want relations to improve between the two countries. Seventy percent of Pakistani respondents in 2015 favored talks between India and Pakistan.

Before moving on to Pakistanis' narratives on the Taliban, it is important to briefly discuss their views on Islam, jihad, and Sharia.

Jihad, Sharia, and Islam

Pakistanis are religious, and many seem to believe in a version of Islam that is exclusionary. Ninety-two percent of Pakistani Pew respondents thought Islam is the one true faith leading to eternal life in heaven, though it is worth noting that the corresponding numbers for Egypt, Iraq, and Morocco are even higher.¹³ Eighty-five percent of Pakistani respondents said Muslims have a duty to try to convert others to Islam.

Pakistanis are favorable toward Sharia (Islamic) law. In the November 2011 Pew poll, 84 percent of respondents said they favored making Sharia the official law of the land in Pakistan. Only 41 percent believe the laws in the country currently closely follow Sharia, but 71 percent think the way most people live their lives in Pakistan reflects the Hadith and Sunnah (the Prophet's sayings and practice); that is, they believe people are religious but the laws are not completely Islamic. Pakistanis believe, in overwhelming majorities, that a system of Sharia provides services, justice, and personal security and eliminates corruption, according to findings from the BFMS survey.¹⁴ Seventy-five percent of Pakistanis say Sharia allows women to work, and 83 percent say it allows girls to go to school, according to data from the PIPA 2009 poll. Thus they understand it to be a system that enforces good governance and fairness.

What do Pakistanis understand of jihad? A plurality thinks of jihad both as an internal (personal) struggle and as involving violent action. Forty-five percent of respondents in the BFMS 2009 survey said jihad is both a personal struggle for righteousness and a struggle to protect the Muslim ummah through war, and about 25 percent said it is each of those interpretations alone.¹⁵ The view of jihad as an armed struggle plays an important role in the Pakistani psyche.

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Pakistani narratives on the terror the country faces at home—mainly at the hands of the Pakistan Taliban (although sectarian groups play a significant role, and most recently, ISIS has become active)—are complicated. What Pakistanis see is not as simple as terrorists striking at the Pakistani state and killing innocent civilians while claiming to implement their distorted version of religion. This would be something straightforwardly condemnable.

Instead, their narrative is confused, and their finger of blame does not point at the Taliban alone. Sometimes they recognize that the Taliban is responsible, but they also absolve it of blame. At other times, they call into question the very existence of the Pakistan Taliban as an autonomous group. Here I lay out some narratives that hold across Pakistan, illustrated at points with quotes from interviews I conducted with a large set of high school students and teachers in Punjab (more on these interviews in chapter 4).

A popular Pakistani narrative draws a direct link between the post-2001 U.S. “war on terror” and terrorism in Pakistan. This argument is simple and one-sided; it says the Pakistan Taliban is conducting attacks in Pakistan in retaliation to the U.S. war in Afghanistan and in response to American actions such as drone strikes in the tribal areas, as well as the Pakistani military’s attacks against the Taliban in these areas. The argument goes that the U.S. war is not Pakistan’s war, and the Taliban is punishing the Pakistani government for its alliance with the United States. This argument is usually accompanied by language that indicates that the militants’ actions are justified. As a Lahori shopkeeper interviewed by the author Anatol Lieven put it: “The Taliban are doing some bad things, but you have to remember they are only doing them in self defense, because the [Pakistani] army took American money to attack them.”¹⁶ This narrative aligns closely with the Pakistan Taliban’s own narratives of defensive action, and it doesn’t

always draw a clear distinction between the Afghan Taliban and the Pakistan Taliban.

There is partial truth to this narrative, but a more complete explanation goes back to the Afghan jihad in the 1980s, and to the United States, Pakistani, and Saudi roles in that war, and to the mujahideen that returned to Pakistan from that war, as discussed later. Of course a complete version would not absolve the Taliban of blame nor justify sympathy for the Taliban's actions, yet the prevailing narrative seems to accord the Taliban that indulgence.

A second narrative on the Pakistan Taliban is a straight-up conspiracy theory—that the Taliban is funded (or trained or armed) by India and America, who want to destroy, destabilize, and embarrass Pakistan. A student I interviewed put this theory thus: “We say that bomb blasts are done by the Taliban . . . [but] the major cause is the Americans and the Indians . . . the American agencies and the Indian agencies.” A corollary of this narrative holds that the Taliban cannot be [real] Muslims because “Muslims can never kill Muslims. International powers are involved,” in the words of a high school teacher I interviewed. The argument draws on reports of “foreign” militants caught in the tribal areas—they are Uzbeks or Chechens; the rumors say that they are not circumcised, so they can't be Muslim. There is sometimes an elaborate reference to an article or a video that shows this conspiracy theory in action. “Let me tell you, there was a place they showed in America, where there were religious Islamic men (maulvis), with long beards, who were being taught the Quran, but they were all kafirs [nonbelievers]—they were being sent in the midst of Muslims to derail/sidetrack Muslims,” according to a student I interviewed.

Even this conspiracy theory has roots in history, specifically the training of the Afghan mujahideen in the 1980s, leading to arguments that “America created the Taliban” and al Qaeda. A teacher I interviewed voiced this view: “These groups are formed and raised by the U.S. from their early age. . . . Like in Afghanistan they were

told that they have to get freedom from Russia. Bin Laden till yesterday was America's friend."

A third narrative on terror, less common, says that the Taliban engages in terrorism in the name of Islam to establish "an Islamic system" in Pakistan. A high school teacher told me: "They want Islam too. It is the duty of Muslims to spread God's words. They are just fulfilling their duties. Now you can call them either terrorists or jihadis." Given Pakistanis' religiosity and support for Sharia, as well as their views of jihad as an armed struggle, it is not surprising that this narrative resonates with them.

These narratives mix together in people's views, similar to the terrorists' own pronouncements—in the words of a man interviewed by Anatol Lieven in the Mohmand agency, who put his views in the most succinct terms: "The Taliban just want to fight the American occupiers of Afghanistan and bring Islamic law, and everyone agrees with that."¹⁷

A high school teacher told me the following when I asked him about the causes of terrorism in Pakistan: "Write down CIA, MOSSAD, RAW. I will not say Taliban because the day we stop drone attacks they will stop terrorism because they are believers of God and Prophet Muhammad. The Taliban is being funded by India and Israel and we are being supported by America and we are just fighting with each other. Why is that this war is not ending? Because both parties (Taliban and we) are getting support from outside. It's our own fault."

The first two narratives are clearly connected with anti-India and anti-America worldviews, and a sense of Pakistani victimhood—as a victim of circumstances, and of India and America—is evident. The conspiracy theory narrative—that America is out to get Pakistan—can be linked to a socio-religious anti-Americanism ("They can't see Islam rising"). The defensive narrative on the Taliban's actions is connected with the sovereign-nationalist form of anti-Americanism ("When somebody kills one's family, like America does in FATA/Waziristan, then he/she has to take revenge").

Thus any Pakistani sympathy for the Taliban is either defensive or ideological. It is not, however, based on views of superior governance or any positive illusions about Taliban rule, at least according to polling evidence from the PIPA 2009 survey. That survey was conducted in May 2009 following the government's deal in March with the TTP in the Swat valley. In return for the militants laying down arms, the government had agreed to impose Sharia law there. The deal did not last long.

Seventy percent of PIPA's respondents said their sympathies were more with the government than with the Taliban; they had a fairly realistic view of the latter. Respondents had little faith in the Taliban's potential provision of public services or governance. They expressed more confidence in the government than in the TTP for providing effective and timely justice in the courts, at preventing corruption in government, and at helping the poor. (This is despite respondents not having much absolute confidence in the government. In the concurrent spring 2009 Pew survey, 67 percent of respondents thought the government was doing a bad job dealing with the economy, and 53 percent thought the government was a bad influence on the way things were going in the country.)

Soon after the Swat deal, a video emerged showing the Taliban flogging a teenage girl in the Swat valley; it was widely circulated and evoked enormous backlash by ordinary Pakistanis against the militants. The PIPA poll showed that respondents understood the Taliban's regressive treatment of women and children: around 80 percent of PIPA respondents said the TTP did not allow women to work and girls to go to school in the areas where they had control; 69 percent said they thought the Taliban did not allow children to get vaccinated in these areas.

Thus, Pakistanis' views on Taliban governance are clear-eyed, and were so even in its early days. And many do denounce the Taliban. One of the students I interviewed said: "The Taliban are ruining the reputation and the name of Islam." But such denunciations of the Taliban can coexist with conspiracy theories

or other narratives that promote misguided justifications for the militants' actions.

Pakistanis' views of terrorist groups are not as extreme as you may expect, but while Pakistanis are negative on militant groups and their violence writ large, their wider narratives surrounding these groups are far from simple. They clearly recognize extremism is a problem—82 percent of respondents in 2015 said they were concerned about “Islamic extremism” in Pakistan—yet their narratives on extremism are muddled by a sense of national victimhood, by a blindness toward Pakistan's own faults, by anti-American and anti-Indian sentiment and a deep-rooted sense of a struggle between Islam and the West. Adding to the confusion are strong ideological and religious convictions and positive views of Islamic law, which lead to sympathy for militants who claim their goal is to impose Sharia in Pakistan.

This book explores why Pakistanis think this way. It examines what factors drive their anti-Americanism. Why do they believe in Sharia? Why do they consider India to be Pakistan's greatest threat? Why do they suffer from a national sense of victimhood? Why do they subscribe to an “us versus them,” an “Islam versus the West” narrative?

Before we go there—do these views really matter? If Pakistanis denounce violence, aren't we done here? Need we care about these wider narratives? The answer is yes. Militants thrive where their narratives find acceptance; they also find in such contexts fertile ground for recruitment. Citizens' narratives also affect their government's action against militant groups. In Pakistan, muted civilian demand for such action is at least one reason the government engaged in peace talks with the Pakistan Taliban in 2013–14 (the peace talks, in turn, also influenced the narrative, as I discuss in chapter 2).