Pakistani Foreign Fighters in Afghanistan, Kashmir and Syria:

A Comparative Analysis of Drivers of Radicalization

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Abstract

This study compares the drivers of radicalization of Pakistani foreign fighters in Afghanistan, Kashmir and Syria. It tries to understand what unique drivers attract Pakistani foreign fighters to each of these conflict zones. It also examines the degree to which the existing literature on radicalization in general and foreign fighters in particular, mainly produced in a western context, can be used to understand the Pakistani foreign fighters. The study is based on twenty-two semi-structured interviews conducted with experts from police counter terrorism departments, journalists, researchers, senior officials from National Counter Terrorism Authority, and members of religious groups in Pakistan, which were then analysed to determine the relative significance of different drivers for Pakistani fighters travelling to Kashmir, Afghanistan, and Syria. The results show that many drivers that feature prominently in the existing radicalization literature, such as ideology, propaganda, and recruitment networks, are useful for explaining what draws Pakistani foreign fighters to particular conflicts. At the same time, however, the results of my analysis also identified several drivers that have not been highlighted in the Western literature on Muslim radicalization thus far, including geographical proximity and access to a conflict, previous experience as a foreign fighter, and the role of veteran foreign fighters. All of these were pointed out as major drivers in the Pakistani case by my interviewees. These results of this study therefore suggest that the studies of radicalization would benefit greatly from additional studies of foreign fighters outside the context of Europe and America.

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1. Chapter One: Introduction

Foreign fighters—people who leave their homeland to join a conflict in another country—have long been a subject of fascination for political romantics and the public. During 1820s when Greece fought for independence from the Ottoman Empire, Lord Byron and other Britons encouraged their countrymen to join the fight on the basis that the descendants of Classical Greece should be liberated. Later, during the 1936 Spanish Civil War, foreign fighters from Germany, Italy and Portugal travelled to support the fascist military coup d'état, while Joseph Stalin sent sympathizers to support the Republicans. Today, foreign fighters are largely associated with conflicts throughout the Muslim world. During the recent conflict in Syria, the global recruitment tactics of the erstwhile Daesh or so-called "Islamic State (IS)"[1] garnered considerable media attention, as sympathizers of the self-styled Caliphate, as well as American foreign fighters set on destroying it, swarmed the region (Patin 2015, Fritz & Young 2017).

Unlike mercenaries, who are primarily motivated by monetary compensation, foreign fighters are usually understood to be individuals with strong ideological or personal motivations for participating in a conflict. There are hundreds of examples of foreign fighters who have not travelled for monetary gain, and who were untouched by the local events catalysing the conflict in their destination country.

The question of why people would want to fight in someone else's war is an intriguing one. Surprisingly, however, it is a question that has received little theorization from scholars in the field of security studies, who have largely focused on explaining the phenomenon of "radicalization." Working mostly with Muslim populations living in Western countries, such scholars have produced a wide variety of models that identify the potential causes, or "drivers," of radicalization, as well as the stages or process through which radicalization occurs. While is a clear overlap between radicalization (a process

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[1] As its name suggests, the Islamic State projected itself as the supreme authority of the Islamic world, although this claim was never universally recognized by the global Muslim community. This lack of universal recognition led many scholars and reporters to use the term "so-called Islamic State" when referring to the organization. For the sake of brevity and concision, this paper simply refers to the organization as the "Islamic State" (IS). This should not be taken as suggesting that IS successfully established a claim of authority over the entire Muslim world, indeed, as this paper shows, there were Muslims who traveled to Syria for the express purpose of taking up armed opposition to IS.

through which individuals develop extreme ideological views) and foreign fighters (who are often motivated by extreme ideological views), the differences between the two phenomenon raises interesting questions: Are the "drivers" identified by theorists of radicalization in Western countries sufficient to explain the motivations that drive foreign fighters throughout the world? Are there motivations and factors that distinguish foreign fighters form other types of extremists, such as home-grown terrorists? What lessons from the literature on radicalization should be taken by scholars in the budding field of studies on foreign fighters?

This study seeks to address these questions through a comparative analysis of the drivers motivating foreign fighters from a single country (Pakistan) to participate in three distinct conflicts (Kashmir, Afghanistan, and Syria). Based on semi-structured interviews with twenty-two experts on the subject of terrorism in Pakistan, including police officers, journalists, leaders of religious organizations, researchers, and directors general of the National Counter Terrorism Authority, I examine the degree to which drivers identified in theories of radicalization explain the motivations of Pakistani fighters in each of these contemporary conflicts. The results of this analysis, I argue, suggest that while the literature on radicalization provides an excellent foundation for understanding the phenomenon of foreign fighters in general, it is possible to identify several drivers unique to the Pakistani context. In particular, my analysis suggests that geographic access or proximity to a conflict, as well as previous experience as a foreign fighter, are important factors in determining whether Pakistani individuals chose to participate in a foreign conflict. Moreover, I suggest that as scholars of foreign fighters begin to develop more elaborate theorizations of their subject, they will find it more profitable to abandon strictly ordered "processual" models of radicalization in favour of approaches that emphasize the general, intersecting influence of multiple drivers on an individual's decision to become a foreign fighter.

1.1. Foreign Fighters in Historical Perspective

While there are varying definitions of foreign fighters, such individuals are generally understood to be people who leave their country of nationality or residence to participate in a conflict in another country. UN Security Council defines foreign fighters as,

"nationals who travel or attempt to travel to a State other than their States of residence or nationality, and other individuals who travel or attempt to travel from their territories to a State other than their States of residence or nationality, for the purpose of the perpetration, planning, or preparation of, or participation in, terrorist acts, or the providing or receiving of terrorist training, including in connection with armed conflict" (UN CTITF, 2017 p.1). The Geneva Academy of International law and Human Rights similarly defines a foreign fighter as "an individual who leaves his or her country of origin or habitual residence to join a non-State armed group in an armed conflict abroad and who is primarily motivated by ideology, religion, and/or kinship" (Kraehenmann 2014 p.6). David Mallet (2015) defines foreign fighters as "non-citizens of conflict states who join insurgencies during civil conflict" (p.3). Building upon Mallet's definition, Hegghammer (2010) seeks to offer additional specificity by defining a foreign fighter as an "agent who has, and operates within the confines of an insurgency, 2) lacks citizenships of the conflict state or kinship links to its warring factions, 3) lacks affiliation to an official military organization, and 4) is unpaid" (Hegghammer, 2010 pp.57-58). The main defining feature of foreign fighters is their distinction from mercenaries and the employees of private armies and security companies, who are usually recruited by the state and driven by a desire for financial gain. Foreign fighters, by contrast, often work voluntarily and are primarily motivated by their ideological drive rather than financial desire or necessity.

While scholarly interest in foreign fighters is relatively recent, the phenomenon of foreign fighters is not; people have long travelled to foreign lands to take part in local conflicts. Nor is it related to Islam alone—other ideological, ethnic, racial and religious identities have also motivated people become foreign fighters. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union helped provide foreign fighters (many of whom joined out of free will) to many local conflicts. During the Spanish Civil War, many individuals were drawn to the conflict from other European countries, as well as South and North America. Jewish foreign fighters, thousands of whom were from the Western diaspora, were a major presence in the 1948 Arab-Israel war. Many were motivated by a desire to ensure protection to the survivors of Holocaust in a state of their own (Heckelman, 1974).

More recently, Muslim foreign fighters have gained prominent media attention. Hagghammer (2010) studied Muslim insurgencies and interstate wars from 1945 to 2009. His study reports that since 1945, foreign fighters participated in 18 out of 70 armed conflicts in the Muslim world. No conflicts before 1960s had a foreign fighter element; between the 1960s and 80s, only two conflicts attracted them. The phenomenon of Muslim foreign fighters primarily started with the Soviet-Afghan war and expanded with the recent war in Syria. While there are no exact figures, the number of foreign fighters present in Syria has been estimated to be around 30,000 (Barrett, 2017 p3), whereas those who travelled to Afghanistan during the 1980s were a more modest 5,000-9,000 (Heghhammer, 2010 p.61). The phenomenon became a subject of debate in security studies, as many IS recruits were Muslims from the West.

Pakistan is, in many ways, an ideal case study for the subject of foreign fighters. As a nation, Pakistan has long been a source of combatants in both regional and global conflicts. This began almost immediately after the country's inception in 1947, when the state of Kashmir became disputed territory between Pakistan and India following the partition of British India into two separate countries. Alongside Kashmir, conflicts in Afghanistan (beginning in the 1980s) and Syria (beginning in 2011) have continued to draw Pakistani fighters to this day.

The state of Jammu and Kashmir has been a disputed territory between India and Pakistan since 1947, when British India was divided into two separate countries. Kashmiris, being predominately Muslim, wanted to join Pakistan, but the territory's ruler, a Sikh by religion, wanted to stay independent. In 1947, when rebel forces in Kashmir tried to push for accession with Pakistan, the Kashmiri ruler requested India to supply reinforcements to block the accession. India provided the reinforcements and forced the Maharaja sign an instrument of accession. Since then, Pakistan has offered both open and clandestine support to the insurgency in Kashmir. Kashmiri fighters came to Pakistan to get training and many fighters from Pakistan went to Kashmir to join the freedom movement. While Lashkar-e-Taiba was created during Afghan jihad, it shifted its focus to Kashmir in 1990s. It has allegedly radicalized, trained, and sent many foreign fighters to Kashmir in order to take part in the on-going freedom movement there.

Aside from Kashmir, Afghanistan became the second destination for Pakistani foreign fighters. During the Cold War, the US, in partnership with Saudi Arabia, forged an alliance with Pakistan to halt the Soviet revolution in Afghanistan. Pakistan became the frontline partner in the anti-Soviet campaign, providing financial and military aid to the Afghan Mujahedeen (Coll, 2005). The Pakistan military, with CIA support, established training camps in the tribal areas bordering Afghanistan. With the help of Saudi money, Salafi religious schools were established, where students were radicalized and encouraged to take part in Afghan jihad (Prados, 2002). Thousands of Pakistanis, with direct help from their government, joined the Afghan jihad. Not only Pakistani nationals, but Muslims from throughout the Middle East, Central Asia, South East Asia and other parts of the world came to join the jihad. They came to Pakistan, received training in Pakistan's tribal areas, and then headed to Afghanistan (Bearden, 2001).

These two battlegrounds on Pakistan's eastern and western borders played a direct role in spreading a radical mind set and spurring the creation of militant organizations in the country. With the rise of IS, many members of existing militant groups were inspired by the new organization, particularly those who felt frustrated with the inactivity of their old outfits. A case in point is the Saad Aziz group, which was previously affiliated with Al-Qaeda, and launched terrorist attacks in the name of IS. Similarly, many other militants disillusioned with their own organizations joined IS and travelled to Syria to take part in the jihad. While their exact numerical strength is not known, there are many estimates about the number of Pakistani Foreign Fighters in Syria. As per the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), between 7,000-8,000 Pakistanis joined Daesh (Parvez, 2016). However, this number includes combatants as well as local networks and support elements. In 2016, the then Punjab Law Minister stated that around a hundred people had left Pakistan to join IS in Syria. By contrast, the Sufan Group stated in its annual report on foreign fighters that by 2015 some 70-330 Pakistani nationals joined IS in Syria and Iraq as foreign fighters (Parvez, 2016). Pakistani Foreign fighters are reported to still be an active part of IS, not only in Syria, but also in its Khurasan Chapter in Afghanistan (ISK). Interestingly, since its beginnings in 2015, the top leadership of ISK comes from Pakistan. Recently, a Kurdish-led force that is fighting the remnants of IS arrested five IS

foreign fighters. Two of these five were Pakistan nationals. It is interesting to note that while IS has lost almost all of its territory; Pakistani foreign fighters are still part of its active rank and file in Syria (Hussein & Omer, 2019).

1.2.Outline of the Study

While Pakistan is a non-western country, its status as an "Islamic Republic" means that many of its citizens have areas of cultural and religious overlap with the Western Muslims who have been the primary subjects of much of "radicalization" literature. This study of the motivations behind Pakistani foreign fighters therefore offers an opportunity to test the applicability of primarily Western-produced models of radicalization to non-Western foreign fighters. At the same time, Pakistan's cultural and religious landscape is similar enough to draw upon the key drivers of radicalization from existing models of radicalization. In Chapter 2 of this study, I therefore provide an overview of the existing literature on "radicalization," as well as the smaller body of work that exists on foreign fighters specifically. In particular, following Haifz and Mullins (2015), I focus on the distinction between what I refer to "cause models" of radicalization, which simply attempt to highlight the multitude of drivers behind radicalization, and "cause-and-process models" which attempt to identify an orderly, standardized set of "stages" that individuals pass through in the radicalization process. I argue that while both of these strands of radicalization literature provide valuable insight into the potential drivers of foreign fighters, "process" models of radicalization have generally failed to live up to the promise of identifying an orderly set of stages defining radicalization. I suggest that while scholars of foreign fighters would do well to glean drivers from the existing literature on radicalization, they should refrain from adopting the processual model posited by some of their peers.

In Chapter 3, I outline my sources and methodology for this study. I begin by identifying a list of potential drivers of foreign fighters gleaned from the existing literature on radicalization, as well as an explanation of how I consolidated them into a more general set of drivers that I then used to structure the questionnaire I employed when speaking with my interviewees. These interviewees were individuals with long-term expertise on the subject of militancy, foreign jihad, and terrorism in Pakistan, and

came from diverse fields including policing, journalism, academic research, counter-terrorism, and religious instruction. The sample was selected using a convenient sampling technique. The experts whom I interviewed had years of experience of dealing with foreign fighters in their respective fields.

In Chapter 4, I present the results of my interviews, quantifying the number experts who cited a given driver as a factor motivating foreign fighters in Kashmir, Afghanistan, and Syrian conflicts. In addition to discussing the prominent drivers in each of these cases, I also provide contextual information on the history of each conflict.

Chapter 5 builds on this data by discussing the similarities and differences in the drivers I identified across all three of the conflicts examined. I highlight several unique drivers that appeared repeatedly in my data set but have received little to no attention in the existing literature on radicalization. I argue that future studies of foreign fighters may benefit from attention to these drivers, and that while the literature on radicalization provides an excellent foundation for understanding foreign fighters, it should not be assumed that the literature on the former provides a complete explanation of the latter.

In Chapter 6, I conclude by discussing the broader implications of my study for future work on foreign fighters. In particular, I suggest that scholars of foreign fighters would benefit from following what I call "cause models" of radicalization rather than "cause-and-process models." In addition, I suggest some of the limitations of my current study that future scholars may wish to address.

2. Chapter Two: Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

In this chapter, I examine the existing scholarly literature on radicalization and foreign fighters in security studies, using it as a foundation upon which to build a tentative model of the drivers of foreign fighters. I begin by examining the various debates that have occurred over the definition of the radicalization, before discussing what I refer to as "cause" and "cause-and-process" models of radicalization. I also discuss the burgeoning literature on foreign fighters, which I argue largely follows the approach of "cause models" of radicalization. I suggest that while it may be too soon to dismiss the ambitions of "processual" scholars of radicalization, those studying foreign fighters would probably benefit most from focusing on the *drivers* outlined in the literature on radicalization, rather than the *processes* different theorists claim to have identified.

2.1. Radicalization

In security studies, radicalization is a widely used concept that has been a core of the discipline since 2004. Generally, radicalization is considered to be a process through which individuals adopt extreme beliefs. However, like terrorism, "radicalization" lacks an agreed-upon definition. Bakker & Coolsaet (2008), part of a group of experts on violent radicalization established by the European Commission, state that the very idea of radicalization is "ill-defined, complex and controversial" (p.240). Consider the proliferation of governmental and scholarly definitions in Tables 1 and 2.

Part of the difficulty with establishing a common definition lies in the fact that radicalization, in itself, is not necessary a negative concept. Many people who hold radical ideas are not terrorists and do not believe in the use of violence to achieve their goals. Social movements such as the Gandhian non-cooperation movement in India or women's suffrage movements are examples of groups with radical ideals that have created positive changes in society without using violence. Nevertheless, radicalization is often used interchangeably with concepts like violent extremism, which is generally defined as "political ideologies that oppose a society's core values and principles" (Borum, 2011 p.10). For the purposes of this study, we will define radicalization as an individual's adoption of violent extremism and ultimately terrorism. Some authors refer

to this as violent radicalization (Borum, 2011), in order to distinguish it from radicalization leading to non-violent forms of social action.

Table 1: Government Definitions of Radicalization	
Government or Agency	**Definition of Radicalization**
British Government	Defines radicalization as **"**the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism" (2011 p.36).
US Department of Homeland Security	"Radicalization is the process whereby an individual or group adopts extremist beliefs and behaviors" (2006 p. 1).
Danish Intelligence Service (PET)	"A process by which a person to an increasing extent accepts the use of undemocratic or violent means, including terrorism, in an attempt to reach a specific political/ideological objective" (Sedgwick, 2010 p. 484).
European Commission Expert Group on Radicalization	Radicalization is "socialization to extremism which manifests itself in terrorism" (European Commission Expert Group, 2015 p.2).

Table 2: Scholarly Definitions of Radicalization	
Author(s)	**Definition of Radicalization**
Peter R. Neumann	Defines radicalization as "the process whereby people become extremists" (2009 p.10).
John Horgan & Bradock	"Radicalization is social and psychological process of incrementally experienced commitment to extremist political or religious ideology" (2010, p.17)
McCauley & Moskalenko	"Change in beliefs, feelings, and behaviors in directions that increasingly justify intergroup violence and demand sacrifice in defense of the in-group" (2008 p.416).
Wilner & Dubouloz,	"Radicalization is a personal process in which individuals adopt extreme political, social, and/or religious ideals and aspirations, and where the attainment of particular goals justifies the use of indiscriminate violence. It is both a mental and emotional process that prepares and motivates an individual to pursue violent behavior" (2010 p.38).
Crossett & Spitaletta	"The process by which an individual, group, or mass of people undergo a transformation from participating in the political process via legal means to the use or support of violence for political purposes (radicalism)" (2010 p.38).
Doosje, et al.	Define radicalization as "a process through which people become increasingly motivated to use violent means against members of an out-group or symbolic targets to achieve behavioural change and political goals" (2016 p.79).
Hafiz and Mullins	"Adopting an extremist worldview, one that is rejected by main stream society and one that deems legitimate the use of violence as a method to effect societal or political change" (2015 p.960).

Just as the definition of radicalization is much debated in security studies, so too is the extent to which it can be considered a "process." In a 2011 paper, an Australian team of experts concluded that the only thing about radicalization on which a majority of experts agree is that it is a process. Their conclusion, however, has been disputed by Hafiz & Mullins (2015), for whom the term "process" implies an orderly sequence of steps or procedures that produce an outcome. Yet, the absence of a clear pattern or pathway to radicalization is precisely what is frustrating for scholars and intelligence analysts alike. Hafiz and Mullins argue radicalization specialists ought to seek the more modest goal of identifying conditions under which extremism grows and resist the temptation to develop strict archetypes. While almost all models of radicalization offer up a set of causes or "drivers" to explain how individuals become violent extremists, the distinction between models which emphasize "process" (in terms of a strict or orderly sequence of steps) and those which limit themselves to focusing on motivating factors is a useful one for framing the literature.

2.2. "Cause Models" of Radicalization

While it is probably true that all models of radicalization recognize that individuals are drawn into violent extremism through a personal 'sequence' of events, theories that I refer to as "cause models" do not place heavy emphasis on delineating a common or universal set of stages defining radicalization. Instead, they tend to view radicalization as the outcome of one of more drivers pushing individuals in the general direction of extremist views.

An excellent example of this approach is found in the "social movement theory" of Zald and McCarthy (1996), who define social movements as a set of opinions and beliefs in a population, which represent preferences for changing some elements of the social structure and/or reward distribution of a society. Social movement theory began in 1940s claimed that individuals join a movement because they succumb to overwhelming social forces. Klandermans and Oegema (1987) suggest that most social movements tend to develop a characteristic set of features: mobilization potential, recruitment networks, and the removal of barriers to participation. In social movement theory, rational actors use information to find likely recruits and persuade them to join the group. In terms of

Muslim radicalization, the strength of the social bond is central to radicalization through socialization.

While social movement theory tends to emphasize large-scale sociological drivers, other cause models of radicalization focus on specific triggers that are sometimes more individual in nature. One branch of French sociological theory, for example, argues that radicalization can also be triggered by an identity crisis. Roy (2002), Keppel (1997) and Khosrokhava (2010) conducted an empirical study and did qualitative interviews of individuals charged with terrorism. They argue economic deprivation alone is insufficient to explain radicalization, which they suggest only occurs when individuals also experience social exclusion—in this case taking the form of Muslim alienation from mainstream French society.

Humiliation-revenge theory (Victoroff, 2005) expands upon these ideas, arguing that humiliation and traumatization caused by unfair treatment stimulates and justifies the use of violence, thereby radicalizing people. Political ideologies and extremist religious narratives may frame an unjust situation and reinforce an identity of victimhood, contributing towards the acceptance of radical thoughts and behavior. Terrorist organizations build upon an 'us versus them' identity and inculcate a feeling of undeserved humiliation. (Crossett & Spitaletta, 2010).

Somewhat broader than humiliation-revenge theory is Kruglanski & Orehek's (2011) theory of radicalization as a quest for significance. While there is a plethora of literature that discusses various drivers of radicalization in terms of honour, rewards in this life and in the life hereafter, revenge, religious obligation and many others, Kruglanski & Orehek seek to encompass all of these motivations in the concept of a quest for significance. This term refers to a basic desire to be important, respected, and known –to 'be someone.' The desire to be significant was first mentioned in a social science context by Abraham Maslow, a psychologist who placed self-actualization at the apex of his motivational hierarchy. A quest for significance follows a social approved pathway to gaining respect and Kruglanski & Orehek (2011) argue that a desire for significance radicalizes people only when they identify violence as an effective means for achieving such respect. In this view, acts of terrorism are shortcuts to fame and intragroup respect

for the members of violent organizations. Within this world, acts that cause large scale causalities, mark history, produce global fame, win group recognition and promise a life hereafter are particularly valorised (Dugas & Kruglanski, 2014).

Among scholars of radicalization, Haifz and Mullins (2015) offer what is probably the most explicit and fully developed version of social movement-style thinking, arguing that radicalization does not happen in a process of stages or phases. Instead, this duo provides a non-linear model of radicalization. For them, there are four underlying conditions for radicalization: grievances, networks, ideologies, and enabling support structures. Grievances include economic marginalization and cultural alienation, a deeply held sense of victimization, and strong disagreements regarding the foreign policies of states. Networks including pre-existing kinship and friendship links that tie ordinary individuals to radicals and lead to the diffusion of extreme beliefs. Ideologies are master narratives about the world can help forge a new rebellious identity by giving meaning to acts of personal risk and sacrifice. Enabling environments and support structures such as the Internet, social media, prisons, or foreign terrorist training camps can provide ideological and material aid for radicalization and can deepen the commitment of radical milieus. These four factors appear in different combinations, and the context and circumstances of their convergence varies.

In a similar vein, Alex Schmid (2013) discusses the idea that the causes of radicalization are diverse, whether on the personal (micro), macro, or meso-level. For Schmid, micro-level causes include identity problems, humiliation, marginalization, discrimination, relative deprivation, and failed integration. On the meso-level, causes include injustices in society, grievances, and complicit surroundings. On the macro level causes include the role of governments, the overall radicalization of society, radical cohorts, tense minority-majority relations, and a lack of opportunities.

2.3. "Cause-and-Process Models" of Radicalization

In contrast to "cause models" of radicalization, what I refer to as "cause-and-process models" seek not only to highlight the drivers of radicalization, but also to identify a fairly orderly and generalizable sequence of stages or steps that individuals pass through in their journey towards violent extremism.

A good example of this is Marc Sageman's (2004) use of social movement theory as a base for his famous 'bunch of guys' theory of radicalization. Rejecting the importance of economic and political grievances, which affect millions of individuals who do not become terrorists, Sageman instead highlights four stages in radicalization: first, individuals develop a sense of moral outrage about a perceived injustice in the world; second, they adopt a interpretative framework to explain this injustice (such as a supposed war on Islam); third, they have direct personal experiences of the injustice (such as discrimination); fourth, social networks enhance his experience of injustice and catalyse individuals to action. For Sageman, jihadi terrorism is thus a product of socialisation, and a process mediated by relations of friendship and kinship, a progressive intensification of beliefs leading to acceptance of Salafi ideology.

While Sageman's theory emphasizes social factors, many cause-and-process models of radicalization attempt to outline a kind of psychological progression. In his framing model, Wiktorowicz (2004) takes this approach, arguing that political and economic circumstances are insufficient explanations of radicalism. Based on his study of Al-Muhajiroun in the UK, Wiktorowicz's model has four stage. The first is "cognitive opening," a psychological crisis in which an individual's previously accepted beliefs are shaken and he or she becomes receptive to other views and perspectives. The next stage is "religious seeking," in which an individual gets exposed to a network of radicals while attempting to find religious answers to his or her discontent. After this comes "frame alignment," when a social movement's frame resonates with the frame of a potential recruit. The individual links his own values and beliefs with the beliefs of the movement. In the fourth and final stage, "socialization and joining," an individual internalizes the ideology and joins the radical group. The individual maintains the new identity and segregates himself from society.

Many authors have taken this kind of stage-wise approach to radicalization. Borum's (2011) four-stage model of the terrorist mind-set is one example, which examines diverse groups and their ideologies with the intention of finding common trends in the process of radicalization. Using grievances and hatred as his basic drivers, Borum argues that these emotions justify the use of violence. The first stage of Borum's model is

the framing of some disturbing event, grievance or condition. In the second stage, this event is called unjust. In the third stage, the unjust event is blamed on some external enemy. This can be a person, nation, a government policy, or anything else. In the final stage, the opponent is dehumanized, which enables the use of aggression and violence.

More elaborate is Maghaddam's (2005) six-stage "staircase to terrorism" model, a psychological theory of radicalization that covers the cognitive journey of an individual who is on the path to become a terrorist. Based on a variety of psychological constructs, the staircase model consists of six "floors" which narrow as they ascend. Maghaddam argues that most of the people who feel disadvantaged remain on the ground floor level; only a few climb up to become part of terrorist organizations. Like many other authors, Maghaddam asserts that poverty cannot be an absolute driver of terrorism, otherwise the poorest people would engage in it the most. Moreover, it is not simply unjust treatment but *perceptions* of unjust treatment that are essential to radicalization. A poor man living in Dhaka may not feel unjustly treated, but a person living in London comparatively better conditions may feel unjustly treated.

Because "cause-and-process" models offer a sequential narrative for how radicalization occurs, they are particularly appealing to security forces, who can only disrupt radicalization through targeted interventions rather than large scale social change. For example, the New York Police Department's model of "home-grown radicalization," prepared by Silber and Bhatt (2007), employs four phases: pre-radicalization, self-identification, indoctrination, and jihadization.

Some "cause-and-process" scholars, such as Precht (2007), have attempted to develop radicalization models that posit a process while still acknowledging the diverse and varied environmental factors that operate on an individual. Pretch's theory tries to identify the specific phases, major features, and catalysts in the process of radicalization. He argues that no single factor can start the process of radicalization; it is combination of factors that leads individuals to radicalization. Taking up the case of home-grown Islamist terrorism in the Europe, he argues a combination of three categories of drivers determines the radicalization process. These are: background factors (Muslim identity, peers, alienation and experience of discrimination or trauma, and absence of critical

Muslim debate), trigger factors (Western policies, a desire for activism, presence of a mentor), and opportunity factors (the mosque, internet, sporting activities, cafes etc). Like the NYPD model, Precht claims radicalization happens in four phases, which are separate but overlap: (1) pre-radicalization, (2) self-identification by adopting extreme religious beliefs, (3) indoctrination and increased group bonding, and (4) actual acts of terrorism (Precht, 2007).There is no logic of progression in the process and individual may enter in the process, leave, and then re-enter after some time. The process may happen over the period of few months or few years. Only a few individuals end up becoming terrorists; others drop out in the process.

Another theory blending an environmental and processual approach is MacCauley and Moskalenko's (2008) model of twelve mechanisms, which stresses the reactive nature of radicalization. Similar to Schmid, their model claims radicalization happens at three different levels: at the individual level, at the group level, and at the mass level where a whole society can become radicalized. Individual radicalization happens slowly due to personal victimization and political grievances. Group radicalization happens in like-mined groups. When groups have powerful cohesion, they are likely to be radicalized as a whole. Mass radicalization happens when an in-group is in conflict with an out-group, which leads to extreme hate and dehumanization of the enemy. There are twelve pathways to radicalization and ten out of these are reactive in nature. The model stresses the importance of the environment or social context.

2.4. "Cause models" of Foreign Fighters

While the body of literature on radicalization is large and well-established, there is a growing field of study focused more specifically on the drivers behind the phenomenon of foreign fighters. General discussions about foreign participation in local conflicts can be found in academic literature produced about civil wars since 1960s, although the study foreign fighters as an independent and separate category did not begin until after the September 11 attacks on the United States. Most of these studies follow a simple, "cause model" approach rather than attempting to delineate a "process" in the sense discussed above.

In this context, Reuven Paz's (2005) work was first of its kind, noting the presence of Arab fighters killed in Iraq, Afghanistan and Bosnia. However, scholarship about the *drivers* of foreign fighters is still in its infancy, with much of the literature coming from the journalistic sphere and being limited to a very specific group, i.e. the foreign fighters of the IS in Syria. These studies have listed a number of reasons that people become radicalized and travel to foreign conflicts. Krueger (2006) finds that countries where civil and political liberties are restricted, and regimes are repressive, produce a conducive environment for foreign fighters who want to travel abroad. Hewitt and Kelly-Moore (2009) report that a low human development index is positively correlated with the number of foreign fighters a country produces. Similarly, Dawson et al. (2016) interviewed Canadian foreign fighters and concluded that socioeconomic marginalization did not drive people to become foreign fighters. Countries with larger Muslim populations, more youth, and/or immigrants also produce more foreign fighters. Mishali-Ram(2018) finds that when Muslim countries supress Islamist movements, these movements transform into transnational movements. Similarly, Pokalova (2018) finds that states that are involved in armed conflict, or where Internet use is massive, may have higher number of foreign fighters. Rohan Gunaratna (2002) writes that foreign fighters travel abroad because they are part of transnational groups such as Al-Qaeda. Along with sociocultural or national factors, individual factors are also cited as playing a key role. Dawson and Amarasingam (2017) analyzed a number of studies about European foreign fighters and concluded that Dutch foreign fighters left for Syria because they felt they had low prospects in their home countries and found a sense of purpose in the Syrian jihad. Belgian foreign fighters travelled due to hopelessness with the future and some other groups were driven by a "promise of more" (p.198).

Matt Venhaus (2010) reviewed interview reports of 2,032 fighters who were detained by Coalition forces in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Guantanamo Bay. He also reviewed information from open sources and concluded that foreign fighters were all looking to define themselves and Al-Qaeda promised to fulfill this need. He categorizes foreign fighters into four types, i.e. revenge seekers, status seekers, identity seekers, and thrill seekers. Vinci (2006), on the other hand, suggests that there are four clusters of motivation and some are more application on foreign fighters. These are loyalty to a

group or cause, self-help by gaining personal benefits, economic incentives, and coercion by someone to fight.

Perhaps the most synoptic study of Muslim foreign fighters is Thomas Hegghammaer's (2010) of conflicts in the Muslim world from 1945 to 2009. His work reveals that out of 70 armed conflicts, only 18 had a global contingent of fighters, and that foreign fighters form a very small part of most jihadi movements. He gives a number of explanations for the global movements of foreign fighters. First, transnational recruitment of fighters occurs when local insurgents try to maximize their power by broadening the scope of conflict. Second, the nature of the conflict—how bloody it is, whether it is interreligious, etc.—also helps determine whether foreign elements will participate. Third, the qualities of the host insurgent group also determine the level of foreign influx. Fourth, foreign fighters mobilize only when governments allow this to happen. Fifth, media and communication technologies expand the access to the conflict. Six, the evolution of Islam as an ideology and a political force has also given an impetus to movement of foreign fighters.

Perhaps the most noteworthy pioneering work in the study of foreign fighters is David Malet's (2015) comparative study of transnational mobilization for the Spanish Civil War, Israeli War of Independence, Texas Revolution and Afghan War. While discussing a number of drivers of foreign fighters, Malet grounds his argument in the claim that ethno-nationalism is used in civil wars to ensure cross-border assistance from diaspora populations. Large contingencies of foreign fighters are possible when states promote participation. Without the state's resources, it is difficult for foreign fighters to flourish. By examining a variety of conflicts, Malet's work pushes examination of the foreign fighter phenomenon beyond its narrow focus on Muslim groups and towards a broad understanding of a global and historical phenomenon.

2.5. Discussion

The literature on radicalization reveals a diversity of causes and stages for the process of radicalization. Different theories emphasis different types of drivers, such as individual and personal drivers (Kruglanski & Orehek, 2011) or a combination of personal and

social drivers (Victoroff,2005; Roy, 2002; Keppel, 1997; Khosrokhava, 2010; Alex Shmid, 2013, Wiktorowics, 2004). Some theorists place huge importance on social factors in the process of radicalization (Sageman, 2004). Critically, most theories have been developed in a Western context. Therefore, while these theories may explain the processes of radicalization in western Muslim populations, they cannot fully explain the processes of radicalization in Muslim majority countries. Because their samples are drawn primarily from the Western Muslim diaspora, which has been facing issues of social adjustment for decades, many theories disproportionately emphasis the importance of 'push' factors of an individual, interpersonal and social nature and give less importance to the 'pull' factors such as role of the internet and jihadi organizations in radicalization. Moreover, these theories explain the factors specifically pertinent to Muslim radicalization, potentially limiting their usefulness in understanding the radicalization or extremism of other groups such as Buddhists in Burma or Hindus in India.

Aside from its focus on Western Muslims, the other major shortcoming of the existing literature on radicalization has been its inability to define an orderly "process" of radicalization. It may be premature to state that it is impossible to develop a universal "cause-and-process" model of radicalization. To-date, however, no single theory has been able to distinguish itself as such a model, and the diversity of drivers and pathways in the nuanced stage-wise models of authors such as Pretch (2007) cast doubt on the utility of a single, simplified "process" of radicalization. Rather than attempting to outline a "process" of radicalization among Pakistani foreign fights, this study follows the lead of what I have called "cause model" theories, particularly Hafez & Mullins's call for studies that emphasize a multitude of drivers acting on potential recruits in concert. Hafiz and Mullins discuss both push and pull factors at the micro, macro and meso level, emphasing the importance of underlying conditions for the process of radicalization to happen. The generality of the theory make it more applicable in Pakistani context than other theories which emphasis context specific factors such as cultural conflict in European societies. In the following chapter on method, I attempt to carry out such approach by identifying a list of potential drivers of foreign fighters gleaned from the literature on radicalization.

3. Chapter Three: Methodology

In order to determine to what extent theories of radicalization can explain the motivations of foreign fighters, it is necessary to collect data on what the drivers of foreign fighters actually are. The data for this research came primarily from semi-structured interviews with counter-terrorism experts in Pakistan. The process of collecting, sorting, coding and analysing the data is discussed below in detail.

3.1. Data Collection: Questionnaire & Interviews

Twenty-two interviews were conducted after taking the informed consent of the interviewees. The interviewees included police officers from counter terrorism department (9 interviewees), journalists (5 interviewees), academic researchers (2 interviewees), leaders of religious organizations (3 interviews), and director generals of the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) (3 interviewees). All interviewees had years of experience of dealing with foreign fighters heading to the three conflict destinations under study (Afghanistan, Kashmir, Syria). The interviewees came from four provinces: Khyber Pakhtun Khawa (KPK), Punjab, Sindh, and Baluchistan.

My interviews were guided by a questionnaire of potential drivers derived from reviewing the literature on radicalization and comparing it with media reports on foreign fighters from Pakistan. This produced the list of 23 potential drivers listed in Table 3, which I used to structure my questionnaire. During my interviews, I would initially ask interviewees to tell me about the main factors driving Pakistani foreign fighters to each of the conflicts under study (Afghanistan, Kashmir, and Syria). To keep the data between the conflicts comparable, I asked only about foreign fighters who had recently participated in these wars, i.e. from circa 2014 to present. If the interviewees were not forthcoming on this broad, initial question, I prompted them with questions about more specific drivers from my questionnaire. This was usually sufficient to get the interviewee to loosen up and discuss the subject in an open-ended manner. Out of the 22 interviews conducted, 20 were face-to-face, and two were conducted via telephone. It took more than a month's time to travel around the country and meet people for interviews. I had to find the right connections to build trust with the interviewee. Some interviewees allowed audio recording while others did not. I took notes during those interviews.

Table 3: List of Prospect Drivers of Pakistani Foreign Fighters
1	Identity crisis (Keppel, 1997; Roy, 2007; Khosrokhava, 2010; Hafiz & Mullins, 2015; Schmid, 2013; Roy, 2002, Grage, 2006)
2	Ideologies (Silber & Bhatt, 2007; Hafiz & Mullins, 2015; Roy, 2002; Sial, 2013)
3	Networks, Peers, family, religious organizations, local demand (Klandermans and Oegema, 1987; Sageman, 2004; Wiktorowicz, 2004; MacCauley & Moskalenko, 2008; Hafiz & Mullins, 2015; Schmid, 2013, Roy, 2002; ARY New, 2016; Fair, 2013)
4	Enabling environment or complicit social surrounding /support structures (Zald & McCarthy, 1996; Hafiz & Mullins, 2015; Schmid, 2013, Roy 2002)
5	Grievances against in-group/out-group (Hafiz & Mullins, 2015; Schmid, 2013; MaCauley & Moskalenk, 2008; Fair, 2013)
6	Education or lack of it (Hafiz & Mullins, 2015; ARY, 2016)
7	Marginalization (Maghaddam, 2005; Schmid, 2013; Zahid, 2014)
8	Stigmatisation and rejection/segregation/discrimination/deprivation of oneself or others (Precht, 2007; Schmid, 2013; Khan, 2013)
9	Revenge (Victoroff, 2005; Borum, 2003; Schmid, 2013; Dawn, 2014; Khan, 2013)
10	Role of government home or Abroad/Foreign Policy (Carpenter, 1994; Bearden, 2001; Coll, 2005; Malet, 2015; Heghammer, 2010; Roy, 2002; Felbab-brown, 2018; Sellin, 2019; Robin, 2019; Sial, 2013)
11	Radicalisation of public opinion/Help Muslim Ummah(Schmid, 2013; Dawn, 2014; Sommerland, 2019; Sial, 2013)
12	Local Demand (Hegghammer) (Asad Hashim, 2013)
13	Quest for significance (Kruglanski, 2011; Stern, 2000)
14	Single provocative incident (Precht, 2007; Abbas, 2013, Ahad, 2013; The Nation, 2013)
15	The myth of jihad(Pretch, 2007; Roy, 2002; ARY, 2016)
16	Presence of a spiritual advisor/handler, mentor (Precht, 2007; Roy, 2002; ARY, 2016, Fair, 2013)
17	The Internet (Precht, 2007; Cheema, 2015)
18	Ethnic affiliation (Malet, 2015)
19	Prisons, mosques School, University, Youth Clubs, Workplace (Klandermans & Oegema, 1987; Precht, 2007; MaCauley & Moskalenk, 2008; Roy, 2002, ARY, 2013).
20	Out group hatred (MaCauley and Moskalenk, 2008; Dawn, 2014; Khan, 2013)
21	Martyrdom and shortcut to paradise (MaCauley & Moskalenk, 2008; Roy, 2002; fair, 2013, Sterm, 2000)
22	Propaganda/ideology/use of religious sources (Hegghammer, 2010; Sterm, 2000)
23	Fight against foreign occupation (Sterm, 2000; Heghammer, 2010; Fair, 2013; Malet, 2015)

After collecting my interviews, I proceeded to transcribe and code each of them, checking off when an interviewee mentioned one of the potential drivers I had identified from my list. In addition, I noted down whenever an interviewee mentioned a driver that was not on my list, checking to see whether other interviewees mentioned it as well. This resulted in the follow list of drivers unique to my study (Table 4).

Table 4: Unique Drivers Mentioned by Interviewees	
1	Credibility of the organization
2	Adventure/organizational Chrisma /vigour
3	Better jihad/jihad-e-Afzal
4	Pashtun nationalism
5	Financial reasons/poverty
6	Strong Shia sectarian identity
7	Defence of sectarian heritage
8	Emotionally charged sermons of clerics
9	Previous experience of foreign jihad
10	Active role of Madrasas
11	Porous border and access to the conflict
12	Apocalyptic narrative
13	Local demand from the conflict
14	Caliphate
15	Role of Veteran jihadists
16	Geographical proximity, porous border

For the purposes of analysis, I compiled a complete list of drivers reported in my interviews. As there was considerable overlap between many drivers, I consolidated those which were similar and developed a final list of consolidated drivers. For example, while "Pashtun nationalism" was a unique driver reported by my interviewees, this is clearly just a more specific example of "ethnic affiliation" or "identity" as discussed by Malet (2015). Similarly, some interviewees reported that Shia foreign fighters went to Syria due to their 'strong sectarian identity,' while other interviewees reported that foreign fighters

went to Syria to defend sectarian heritage, i.e. the shrines of the Martyrs of Karbala. I combined these two drivers into the single category of "Sectarian identity." Similarly, a desire for jihad, martyrdom, earning paradise through martyrdom, finding "better jihad," influence of apocalyptic narratives, and the ideology of the IS Caliphate were consolidated into one category: 'propaganda and ideology'. The jihadi narrative, the privilege of being a fighter, and the honour of martyrdom are part of the propaganda of militant groups. The concept of jihad is sold as the only way to achieve the ideological objectives of the organization, be it liberation of Kashmir, establishment of Caliphate of IS/ISKP, restoration of Taliban control over Afghanistan, or strengthening of the Assad regime in Syria. Recruitment by family members, peers, friends or colleagues, the influence of fire brand speeches, the role of mentors or spiritual leaders, madrasas, religious organizations or places of recruitment such as school, college, and places of work were consolidated into one category of "recruitment by individuals or organizations." This is because the handlers of foreign fighters usually recruit people in familiar spaces (home, work place, schools, colleges, madrasas etc.) and from their close and trustworthy social circles (family, friends, colleagues etc.). Similarly, some individuals have religious influence over people such as clerics, religious scholars, and the heads of religious organizations. These people either run madrasas or are linked to them. If they support a particular jihad, they use their religious authority to justify that jihad and motivate people to join these battlefields. At times their organizations are in direct contact with local militant groups, as in the case of Afghanistan, Kashmir and some Shia religious organizations, which have connections with the Iranian Revolutionary Guard. These organizations run campaigns for foreign jihads and help with the logistical arrangements.

After undertaking all of these and other consolidations, I was able to produce a final list of the drivers motivating Pakistani foreign fighters to participate in one of the three conflicts under study. This list of drivers, along with the number of counter terrorism experts mentioning each, is given in Table 6.

No	Drivers of Foreign Fighters	Afghanistan		Kashmir	Syria	
Table 5: Final List of Drivers with the frequency of reporting for each war zone and category of jihadi host organization						
		Afghan Taliban	ISKP	Kashmiri Fighters	IS Fighters	Shia Fighters
1	Ethnic Identity	15		14		
2	Strong Sectarian Affiliation	12	5		18	22
3	Recruitment by Individuals or Organizations	22	11	22	15	22
4	Geographical proximity and Access to Conflict	11	8	5	0	0
5	Previous Experience as Foreign Fighters	7	0	5	8	0
6	Desire for Adventure	0	7	0	8	0
7	Organizational Credibility and Charisma	9	6	0	8	0
8	Propaganda and Ideologies	22	12	22	22	13
9	Enabling environment and supporting structures	18	6	22	7	10
10	Reaction to Social discrimination/ Quest for Significance	0	0	21	0	0
11	Financial Motivations/Poverty	9	6	8	8	5

3.2. Scope

This study has some limitations. The data collection was a challenging task. Some interviewees were not comfortable talking about the subject; therefore, at times the interview went much longer than one and half hours. I had to spend time building rapport and asking many questions indirectly. Apart from the trust issues of some interviewees, logistics was another challenge. I had to travel around the country for interviews, managing accommodation, food and travel with limited finances, which was a daunting task. To collect the data, I had only one month and it was extremely difficult to move

around the country for interviews. Transcribing twenty-two interviews and analysing them was another challenge.

3.3. Ethics

After the formal ethical approval from the University of Glasgow, the interview process was started. The interviews were conducted and recorded with the consent of the interviewee and a formal document of permission was signed before the start of the interview.

4. Chapter Four: Results

The Pakistanis who travel to participate in foreign conflicts destinations are motivated by a combination of drivers. While some of the motivations are common across all conflicts, others are unique and specific to that conflict, as a detailed analysis of each case study illustrates.

4.1. Case study two: Kashmir

4.1.1. History of Kashmir Issue

The phenomenon of foreign fighters going to Kashmir is as old as the Kashmir conflict itself. The flawed partition of British India in 1947 left many issues unresolved, Kashmir being one of them. The principle guiding the division of 600 princely states, including Kashmir, was that the Muslim majority areas would join Pakistan and Hindu majority areas would be part of India. However, although 96% of Kashmir's population was Muslim and wanted to join Pakistan, the ruler of Kashmir, who was a Sikh, wanted to keep it an independent state (Bose, 1999; Punjabi 1995). This did not sit well with the people and led to the launch of an uprising, which has continued to this day. When the Maharaja's forces couldn't cope with the insurgency, he requested help from India, which promised help on the condition of annexation of Kashmir to India. Tribal Pashtuns from the newly created state of Pakistan entered Kashmir to support the local insurgency and helped local Kashmiris free themselves from the India control to create Azad Kashmir (Free Kashmir). This was the first time that foreign fighters from Pakistan went to the state of Kashmir (Schofield &Tremblay, 2008; Schofield, 2010 ; Malik & Wirsing, 2002; Swami 2006).[2]

In this environment of political turmoil and hostilities between two states, India took the matter to UN and the decision to conduct a plebiscite was made when the UN passed two resolutions in favour of it and asked for ceasefire (Ankit, 2016). However, seeing the sentiments of the Kashmiri people, the India government never risked

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[2] 65% of the state is still controlled by the India having a population of 12.55 million

conducting the plebiscite (Ankit, 2016).[3] The Indian state narrative promoted the idea that the independence of Kashmir may lead to a break-up of the Indian state, which has sanctioned a tough crackdown on the local people that has lasted until today. Pakistan supported the demand for a plebiscite diplomatically at international forms, politically in the region, and strategically by empowering pro-Kashmir jihadist groups.

4.1.2.   Drivers of the Foreign Fighters in Kashmir

Foreign fighters who went to Kashmir are unique in many ways. The majority did not come from madrasas (religious schools) as usually believed. Largely, they are ordinary people who were radicalized outside madrasas. A former Inspector General of the Punjab Police said during his interview, "A big chunk of Kashmir fighters are not from madrasas. In Kashmir, the fight had a tacit state support. Lashkar-e-Taiba people would give a sermon about Kashmiri jihad in Friday Prayers. Common people would be motivated by their sermons and join" (Interviewee 1, 17 April 2019).

Most of the foreign fighters who go to Kashmir are from the Ah'le-Hadith or Deobandi sects of Sunni Islam. The primary reason for this is that the leadership of the organizations involved in the Kashmir jihad comes from these sects. A majority of their members are uneducated, or junior school drop outs working in low-income jobs and usually very religious. In terms of age range, they tend to be between 18-35 years of age. While these people went through different organizations, neither the police nor other security agencies have recorded the number of people who have gone to fight in Kashmir.

Most of the interviewees were reluctant to talk about the Kashmiri foreign fighters, primarily because it is a sensitive issue for the military establishment and making a statement about it can quickly land one into trouble. Therefore, it is likely that some drivers are underreported in the case of Kashmir.

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[3] Rakesh Ankit, a known historian explains that Nehru made this decision of conducting a plebiscite under the auspices of UN because he was confident about pro-India position of Sheikh Abdullah, a known Kashmiri leader, and his popularity among the people of Kashmir.

Table 6: Drivers of Pakistani Fighters in Kashmir		
No	**Driver**	**Frequency**
1	Recruitment by Individuals or Organizations	22
2	Propaganda and Ideologies	22
3	Enabling environment and supporting structures	22
4	Reaction to Social discrimination/ Quest for Significance	21
5	Ethnic Identity	14
6	Financial Motivations/Poverty	8
7	Previous Experience as Foreign Fighters	5
8	Geographical proximity and Access to Conflict	5

1.   Recruitment by Individuals or Organizations

Eighteen interviewees (81%)[4] said that jihadists select Kashmir because someone from their very close social circle radicalizes them for the Kashmir jihad. A family member, a peer or a colleague associated with pro-Kashmir groups influences them, puts them in contact with jihadi organizations, or shares radical material with them. Nine respondents (41%)[5] said radicalization happens in spaces such as mosques, madrasas, schools, universities, youth clubs, workplaces or prisons. In this regard, the role of the veterans is very important. They share stories of their bravado and eyewitness accounts of Kashmiri persecution. Two interviewees (9%)[6] reported that veterans radicalize more people in their circle than anyone else. However, sometimes unknown people such as firebrand religious clerics also radicalize Pakistani fighters for the Kashmiri jihad. Pro-Kashmir religious scholars give sermons in favour of the Kashmir jihad and paint it as the highest cause on earth for a Muslim. An Assistant Professor from National University of Science and Technology (NUST) who interviewed Kashmiri jihadists shared the case of one such foreign fighter. He shared that a fighter told him that, "I had nothing to do with jihad earlier but then during a Friday Prayer Sermon I attended a speech of Molana Masood

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[4] Interviewees 1-9, 11, 14-19, 21, 22.
[5] Interviewees 1,3,4,8,9,10,12,13,16
[6] Interviewees 10, 16.

Azhar. It was emotional that I voluntarily gave my name to Masood Azhar Saab for Kashmir jihad (Interviewee 18, 13 April 2019)."

Eight interviewees (36%)[7] said that in the case of Kashmir the single strongest driver is the role of pro-Kashmir jihadi groups. The pro-Kashmir jihadi groups are the most proactive among the foreign fighters for all three-conflict zones of Afghanistan, Syria, and Kashmir. These organizations include Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Muhammad and Hakar-tul-Mujahideen. They are well organized, spread around the country, have sympathizers in every field, and look after their fighters and their families. LeT, which also have a charity wing named Jamat-ud-Dawa(JuD) is involved in social service. The interviewee from NUST said, "If a guy killed in Kashmir, Hafiz Saeed would go for his *namaz-e-janaza* (funeral prayer) in his village and it was advertised through posters and celebrated that it was a martyr's funeral prayers. His family was looked after by Hafiz Saeed (Interviewee 18, 13 April 2019)."

These organizations run propaganda campaigns, on social and print media, and spread their ideology. They establish pro-Kashmir jihadi camps and run donation campaigns for Kashmiris. They also have a network of madrasas and have influence in many others. Madrasas have historically played a role in radicalizing their students and preparing them for jihad. Within these madrassas the role of the mentors and teacher is very important. The position of these mentors, or trainers, whom madrasa students call "Amir" is very strong. Whether a young jihadist will go to Kashmir or Afghanistan is often decided by the Amir. This is particularly true in the case of 'first-time' foreign fighters. Their choice of Kashmir primarily depends on the ideological leaning of their mentor in the religious school. After they get trained and have real battlefield experiences, these fighters develop their own networks and form their own impressions. At this stage some may switch organizations, go to other places for jihad, or even quit jihad. Talking about the role of the mentors the head of a Deobandi religious organization said, "This depends on thinking. If he thinks jihad and his country, he will go to Kashmir, if he thinks about jihad, Emirate and Islamic government he will go to Afghanistan. But it is up to their Amir, that which jihad he selects for them (Interviewee 21, April 1 2019)."

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[7] Interviewees 1,2,3,4,8,16,18,19

2. Propaganda and Ideologies

All interviewees (100%) said that foreign fighters prefer Kashmir because they are motivated by the ideology that the jihad in Kashmir is "*jihad-e-afzal*," i.e. better than all the other jihads. They use religious decrees to justify this claim, which states that if the infidels attack a Muslim country, the nearest lands need to be liberated first. They also justify the supremacy of the Kashmiri jihad on historical grounds. Kashmir is a disputed territory and historically the people of the area wanted to join Pakistan at the time of partition in 1947. Indian occupation of the area forced accession and the continued resistance movement by the local people reinforced the jihadi ideology. In this context, the jihad in Kashmir is not a matter of Muslims freedom from a non-Muslim occupation; it is the defence of one's own country. Kashmir also holds the water resources of the country and sits at a very important geostrategic location. The propaganda for the Kashmiri jihad thus blends together patriotism, nationalism, and religion in a unique way. Kashmiri jihadists believe that if they are killed there, they will be martyred and reach paradise—the highest achievement for a jihadi. The concept of martyrdom is so elevated for some jihadists that it drives them to fight in foreign lands.

3. Enabling environment and supporting structures

Fifteen interviewees (68%)[8] said that many jihadists choose Kashmir because general public sympathy for Kashmiris creates an enabling social milieu. A bloody history of communal riots, injustices at the time of partition, and the forcible accession of Kashmir to India is part of Pakistani national history. The pro-Kashmir fighters allegedly have the tacit support of the state; therefore, police and other security agencies do not crack down on them. Fighters are not arrested or prosecuted like other people who support militancy. They can go to Kashmir jihad and live a normal life when they return. This makes Kashmir a doable jihad for many fighters.

The conditions in Kashmir also create a supportive environment for people who want to go on foreign jihad. Eighteen interviewees (36%)[9] said that the Indian occupation of Kashmir and persecution of people of Jammu and Kashmir at the hands of the Indian army plays a role in the selection of the Kashmir conflict. Mistakes committed by New

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[8] Interviewee 1,3,4,7,9,12-19,21,22
[9] Interviewee 1-9, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 22.

Delhi have fed into the narrative of jihadi organizations. Three interviewees (14%)[10] said that fighters also have a strong desire to avenge Indian brutalities. Three others (14%)[11] said that pro-Kashmir jihadi feel grievances against the global community, which they believe has abandoned the Kashmiris and does not pay attention to blatant human rights violations.

4.   Reaction to Social discrimination/ Quest for Significance

Social discrimination was a highly reported personal driver, mentioned by thirteen respondents (59%)[12]. Social discrimination includes stigmatization, social rejection, segregation, deprivation, and humiliation. People who come to the Kashmiri jihad are mostly those who are estranged from the society either because of their financial status or social class. An assistant professor from NUST said, "People who join this path, they must have been disenfranchised from the society. They must have been marginalized at the front and then they join these groups" (Interviewee 18, 13 April 2019).

The perception of being a victim of discrimination, and the experience of neglect and rejection in their community, family or society, kindles a desire for significance. People motivated by a sense of insignificance try to associate themselves with powerful social groups, which in some cases are the pro-violence jihadi organizations. In the case of Kashmiri jihad, many individuals who join pro-Kashmir jihadi organizations derive a sense of significance out of it. Since the Kashmir jihad sanctioned by the state narrative , therefore, being a Kashmiri jihadist is a respected figure in society. This sense of significance compensates the marginalization some have suffered during their early lives.

5.   Ethnic Identity

Fourteen interviewees (64%)[13] said that people go to Kashmir because they identify with the Kashmiri people and the cause. The local people of Azad Kashmir see the freedom movement in Jammu and Kashmir as an important political issue. For them, it is less a matter of jihad and more a matter of political freedom from Indian occupation, which is controlling 65% of the state. Their families are divided across the border as they have

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[10] Interviewee 16, 21, 22.
[11] Interviewee 1, 3, 4.
[12] Interviewee 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 18, 19
[13] Interviewee 1-9, 16,18,19,21,22.

relatives living in Indian controlled territory. Therefore, supporting the insurgency in Kashmir is a popular stance in Azad Kashmir. There are some villages in Azad Kashmir from where every family has sent at least one person. These people are not interested in the grand narratives of jihad and Muslim identity. They are motivated by the strong ethnic identity of a being Kashmiri.

Many Kashmiri migrants who are living in the province of Punjab also share these sentiments. There are also people from other ethnic groups who identify with the Kashmiris on the basis of a shared religious or national identity, or a sense of moral duty. A member of a Salafi religious organization said "It's moral, it's not ethnic only. Punjabis go to Kashmir to take part in struggle because they feel it as a moral obligation. There is no radicalization or extremism involved in it" (Interviewee 22, 16 April 2019). Similarly the head of CTD interrogation team in KPK said, "Islamic outfits that support Kashmir are mostly in Punjab that's why most of the Punjabis join and not people from Baluchistan and Sindh" (Interviewee17, 11 April 2019).

6. Financial Assistance

Two interviewees (9%)[14] said that pro-Kashmir jihadists belong to poor families and six others (27%)[15] said that when fighters decide to go on jihad, they get a financial guarantee as well. If they were killed during the fighting, their families are looked after by their organization. While financial assistance is not the primary motivation, it can play a significant role in the selection of theatre. Speaking about financial assistance, a Director General (DG) of the Intelligence Bureau of Punjab said, "If people who go to Kashmir are martyred their families get very good support and there are specific persons who are deputed by the jihadi groups to look after families of martyrs. Otherwise further recruitment is not possible. For example, when a poor guy sees that a person went from his village, got killed, but his family is being looked after, he feels motivated" (Interviewee 15 16 April 2019).

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[14] Interviewees 3, 4.
[15] Interviewees 8,15,16,18,19,21.

7. Previous Experience as Foreign Fighter

Five interviewees (22%)[16] said that Kashmiri jihadists are career fighters, who are trained for nothing but jihad. They had previous experience fighting in Kashmir and developed local connections there. The DG of the Intelligence Bureau of Punjab said, "There are hundreds of such people who went to Kashmir and stayed there for long time. They got merged into local jihadi organizations, developed networks there, and became a part of society. Some of them got married there. When they come back to Pakistan, they do not feel at home and repeatedly go to Kashmir to support the local insurgency" (Interviewee 15 16 April 2019). Moreover, when such individuals come back, they feel they cannot adjust to society. They defined their purpose by their cause; therefore, they felt motivated to go to Kashmir over and over again.

8. Geographical proximity and Access to Conflict

Five interviewees (22%)[17] said geographical contiguity makes the Kashmiri jihad attractive for many. Unchecked points along the shared border with Pakistan entice people to go to Kashmir. Geographical proximity also becomes a reason that many jihadists go to Kashmir instead of Syria or other places. In particular, people who live near border know about the unchecked points.

4.2. Case study Two: Afghanistan
4.2.2. History of Afghan Conflict

The Afghan conflict started in 1978, when a communist government came to power through a coup in Afghanistan and signed a treaty of friendship with Soviet Union. The next year, the USSR sent military forces into Afghanistan to support the communist regime. Entry of Soviet troops did not pacify the situation; rather it exacerbated nationalist sentiments and resulted in increased unrest. The move also internationalized the internal strive of Afghanistan (Grau, 2009).

In 1979 the Iranian Revolution also took place, depriving the US of a staunch partner in the region. In the broiling climate of the Cold War, expanding communist influence in South Asia was not acceptable to the US. It wanted to defeat Soviets at all

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[16] Interviewees 3,8,9,16,21
[17] Interviewees 3,4, 9,16,21,

costs and became involved in the Afghan insurgency through intelligence operations and alliance-building, most notably with Pakistan and Saudi Arabia (Hilali, 2017).

These three allies began to fund anti-Soviet in insurgents in Afghanistan. Among the insurgents two types of groups were fighting: nationalists and religious rebels. The US and its allies decided to support the religious rebels and used the concept of jihad, i.e. a holy war, to motivate the militants fighting the Soviets. For the US, declaring the Afghan fight against Soviets a jihad had two dimensions. First, the local population was promised heaven after death, a strong motivation. Second, since religious scholars declared the conflict to be a holy war for Muslims, it became an obligation for Muslims all over the world to join their brethren in Afghanistan in fighting against the Soviets and their allies. This sowed the seeds for the first global wave of Muslim foreign fighters to arrive in Afghanistan. In Pakistan, the sitting dictator-general-turned-president, Zia-ul-Haq, wanted to bring Islamic reforms to his country, and supporting Afghan Islamist rebels complimented his local programme. Similarly, the Saudis supported religious insurgents due to their desire to export Salafism [18] and create a Salafi proxy in the region. For this reason Saudis also helped Taliban to rise to the power in early 1990s (Coll, 2005).

To support the Afghan insurgency, Pakistan became a factory producing thousands of foreign fighters to support the Afghan jihad. Hundreds of new Deobandi madrasas were established with Saudi money, where jihad was taught as the fundamental responsibility of every Muslim. Militant organizations like Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, Harkat-e-jihad-e-Islami, and Lashkar-e-Taiba openly recruited fighters from Pakistan (Rubin, 2000). Generous funding was provided by the US and Saudi donors. To train the newly inducted jihadists, Pakistan's leading intelligence agency, ISI, and the American CIA established training camps in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan, which border Afghanistan (Prados, 2002). From 1979 to 1989, hundreds of thousands of Pakistanis participated in the Afghan jihad. Since it was a declared government policy to support the erstwhile Afghan Mujahideen, Pakistani foreign fighters were openly recruited. This was, broadly, the first phase of Afghan conflict and the first wave of

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[18] In terms of faith and religious practices, Deobandis, one of the main Muslim sects in South Asia, are very close to Salafism.

foreign fighters to enter Afghanistan from Pakistan. This began in 1979 and culminated in 1989 with the withdrawal of Soviet troops (Roy, 2002).

The second wave of Pakistan foreign fighters to enter Afghanistan occurred after the withdrawal of Soviet troops. While their numbers were smaller, these Pakistani fighters took part in the on-going civil war and played a substantial role in the victory of the Taliban in Afghanistan in 1996 (Laub, 2014 ; Rubin, 1999). The third wave of foreign fighters in Afghanistan began after the fall of the Taliban government in October 2001, this time in opposition to the US led invasion. By this point in time, however, Pakistan had become one of the largest US allies outside of NATO and joined her War on Terror (Rashid, 2008). Consequently, the Pakistani government now sought to stem the tide of fighters flowing into Afghanistan and targeted pro-Taliban groups. As a result, the flow of Pakistani foreign fighters into Afghanistan decreased tremendously, but did not halt. The conflict in Afghanistan evolved further with the creation of IS's "Khurasan Province" (ISKP) in 2014, giving Pakistani fighters in Afghanistan a new host organization (Osman, 2016; Azami, 2016).

4.2.3.   Drivers of Pakistani Foreign Fighters in Afghanistan

Demographically speaking, Pakistani foreign fighters in Afghanistan believe in the Deobandi and Ahl-e-Hadith schools of Islam. Afghan Taliban fighters are mostly madrasa graduates and associated with religious organizations. These people have limited or no secular education; and socially they are relatively deprived. A majority belong to lower income groups from underdeveloped and rural parts of the country. Such a socio-economic background may play a foundational role in motivating some people to participate, however, these are generally not the factors that drive them to the Afghan theatre. In case of IS Khurasan, the majority of fighters recruited are either ex-members of local terrorist groups in Pakistan, who were fed-up with inactivity of their own organization, or entirely new recruits who were inspired by the propaganda of IS. As pointed out to me by the head of the Punjab CTD Interrogation Team, "Daesh people, who are recruited from here, are 90% from Al-Hadith, and these 90% are 100% JuD recruits. 10% of Daesh force is coming from other groups. Members of these groups have grievances against their organizations and leaderships" (Interview 10, 15 May 2019).

Table 7: Drivers of Pakistani Fighters in Afghanistan			
No.	Driver	Afghan Taliban	ISKP
1	Propaganda and Ideologies	22	12
2	Recruitment by Individuals or Organizations	22	11
3	Enabling environment and supporting structures	18	6
4	Ethnic Identity	15	
5	Sectarian Identity	12	5
6	Geographical proximity and Access to Conflict	11	8
7	Organizational Credibility and Charisma	9	6
8	Financial Motivations/Poverty	9	6
9	Previous Experience as Foreign Fighters	7	
10	Desire for Adventure		7

1. Propaganda and ideology

All interviewees (100%) said that the ideology of the Afghan Taliban played a huge role in winning fighters. Ironically, the narrative built during the 1980s calling all Muslims to protect a Muslim country from attack remains relevant in Afghanistan to this day. The general public and the followers of religious groups endorse this narrative. The Afghan Taliban's ideology of establishing a Muslim Emirate, implementing Sharia law, and liberating Afghanistan from invaders struck a chord with religiously conservative groups in Pakistan. An element of the Taliban ideology, which was basically incorporated by Al-Qaeda, states that Zionists and Christian powers are fighting a war against the Muslim world and, therefore, Muslims need to gather together to defeat US. This narrative got an additional impetus when President Bush referenced the idea of the Crusades in one of his speeches. Many experts believe that this speech won the Taliban thousands of foreign fighters by resonating with their ideological narrative. As a director projects and senior research analyst from Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) said, "Many Afghan veterans who quit jihad, forgot about Afghanistan and were living normal lives, Bush's Speech mobilized them (Interview 19, 16 May 2019)."

Pro-Taliban propagandists, media persons, and religious scholars all played upon

Bush's speech. Many Pakistani fighters motivated to take part in the Afghan battle believe it is the highest form of jihad and the holiest act they can perform on earth. The desire for martyrdom in jihad was reported seventeen times by interviewees (77%).[19] The burning desire to take part in Afghan jihad is especially strong for Madrasa students.

For ISKP, twelve interviewees (55%)[20] said that ISKP's ideology of a global Caliphate, as well as its apocalyptic narrative, also won it the loyalty of many fighters in Afghanistan. IS presented the Caliphate as the answer to all the problems of Muslim world. They offered a new, jubilant, and prideful Muslim identity created in the shadow of a glorious global caliphate. ISK emphasized the importance of Khurasan in apocalyptic jihadi literature. These apocalyptic scriptures, attributed to the Prophet Muhammad, prophesize a final victory for the black flag bearers of Khurasan as the world comes to an end (Al-Islam, 2017). Director projects and senior research analyst from PIPS said, "When IS established its Khurasan province, jihadis in Pakistan saw it as a fulfilling of divine prophecy of Prophet (Interviewee 19, 16 May 2019)."

IS proclaimed itself to be the only legitimate jihadi group to lead fighters, and after the fall of IS in Syria, jihadists were encouraged to go to Afghanistan instead. Many of IS's top leadership moved to Afghanistan as well, planning to re-launch their global jihad from this new base of operations. This reconfirmed the apocalyptic narrative that the final battle of Islam will start from Khurasan and gave an impetus to the recruitment drive in Pakistan.

2. Recruitment by Individuals or Organizations

Individuals and organizations that support the Afghanistan jihad play a major role in recruiting foreign fighters. Radical preachers or religious leaders influence young people by speaking from a position of authority. These individuals spread their pro-Taliban views through speeches, video talks, and through writing in religious magazines. Some of them are veteran jihadists from Soviet-Afghan conflict. They are local connections for the Afghan Taliban and the main line of recruitment for jihadists for Afghanistan. The head of the Interrogation Team at the Punjab CTD said, "The fighters of 1980s have

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[19] Interviewees 2, 4, 6, 8, 10-22
[20] Interviewees 1, 2, 3, 4, 10, 12, 14, 15, 18, 20, 21, 22.

grown old now, and they cannot go themselves. So, they recruit people, arrange logistics, give them reference slip with their jihadi ID and do their Tazkia (brainwashing) before sending" (Interviewee 10, 15 May 2019).

Some veterans who were injured during Soviet-Afghan war act as symbols of the Afghan Taliban's resilience and in religious gatherings they are introduced as role models whom future Mujahidden should follow. The head of the Interrogation Team at the Punjab CTD also shared an example of such a fighter, "who had lost his leg and would go to religious gatherings and processions of his organization in Pakistan. He would be introduced as Ghazi, a part of whose body has already gone to paradise (Interviewee 10, 15 May 2019)."

Some jihadi veterans are local partners of the Afghan Taliban and some are also heads of religious organizations, which are active in politics and run madrassas as well. Jamat-e-Islami, Jamiat-ul-Islam Fazlur-Rehman, Jamiat-ul-Islam Sami-ul-Haq, Ahl-e-Sunnat-Wal-Jamat, and Ansar-ul-Ummah are few examples. They have broad networks of religious schools, madrasas, political offices, and charity wings across the country. These organizations propagate the Afghan jihad. Eleven interviewees (50%)[21] said that the leaders of these organizations are mentors to many jihadi fighters who have gone to Afghanistan. Having personal ties with the top leadership of Taliban and once being close friends and associates of Osama Bin Laden, they radicalize their followers by building up the charisma of his personality and the mighty jihad.

Fourteen interviewees (64%)[22] said that the Madrasas run by these senior clerics are like nurseries producing fighters for the Afghan jihad. The Afghan Taliban has a strong network in these madrasas, which has helped them maintain a supply of fighters throughout the years. Madrasas established with Saudi money during the 1980s and 1990s included jihad as a fundamental element of the curriculum. While a change in state policy in 2002 and a strict crack down on these seminaries restricted their active involvement in recruiting, the 1980s syllabus is still part of the curriculum in many madrasas. The pro-Taliban narrative is the number one thing on the educational agenda of

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[21] Interviewees 1,2,3,6,9, 10,12,15,18,19,21
[22] Interviewees 1-7, 13-19

these madrasas. Many of the alumni of these religious schools are fighters and leaders of Afghan Taliban. Madrasa Haqania, Akora Khattak is one case in point. The slain principal Molana Sami-ul-Haq, famously known as "Father of the Taliban," once proclaimed he was proud of students who go to join the Taliban. Many of the top leadership of Afghan Taliban like Jalaludin Haqani,and Akhtar Mansoor are alumni of his madrasa (Leon, 2017).

Regarding ISKP recruits, however, eleven interviewees (50%)[23] said that madrasas were *not* the place of radicalization, while the other social places like schools, universities, youth clubs, and workplaces were. People who joined the group influenced their peers, family members, friends and colleagues; radicalization of others is a highly personal task that requires bonds of solidarity and trust.

3. Enabling Environment and Support Structures

Eighteen interviewees (81%)[24] said that the continuation of the Afghan conflict, local demand for fighters, and radicalization of Pakistani society created a supportive and enabling environment for foreign fighters. The Afghan conflict is an ongoing conflict, which started in the 1970s. After the Soviet-Afghan war, a civil war broke out; in 1996 the Taliban took over and in 2001 US and NATO forces attacked Afghanistan, beginning a war, which has now entered its nineteenth year. The prolongation of conflict sustained the demand for Pakistani fighters. Similarly, during the Soviet-Afghan war, the concurrent creation of a global jihad and active involvement of Pakistani government led to a fundamental transformation of Pakistani society. An elaborate and deep militant infrastructure for radicalizing, recruiting, training, and deploying foreign fighters was put in place all over the country. For many interviewees, the most important consequence was a radicalization of society at large. This mass-level evolution moved Pakistani society from the center to right and created an incubating environment, which inculcated a desire in youth to go to Afghan for jihad.

In the case of ISK fighters, six interviewees (27%)[25] said that the existence of a radicalized mind-set, trained and battled hardened militants, and use of Internet to

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[23] Interviewees 1,2,3, 9,10,11, 17,18,19,20, 21.
[24] Interviewees 1-10, 12-19,21.
[25] Interviewees 1, 9, 10, 11, 15 19.

connect these people to ISK created conducive atmosphere. Many members of existing militant groups, who had been to Afghanistan before, joined ISKP. In this regard, the Internet played a huge role by connecting inspired individuals to a virtual ideological community with easy access, secrecy, and weak regulations. The idea of creating a Caliphate in Afghanistan, where fighters were encouraged to bring their families or offered brides, was an alluring scenario. ISKP's sympathizers and aspirant members connected through chat rooms, where they guided and helped each other to reach Khurasan. They pooled in funds for the organization as well. Their efforts outmatched the recruitment drives of the Taliban and other local organizations due to their ability to reach to people through the virtual world, without relying on direct human contact.

4. Ethnic Identity

Foreign fighters who go to Afghanistan are sometimes driven by identity affiliations. Fifteen interviewees (68%)[26] said ethnic identity motivated people to go to Afghanistan. A substantial number of Pakistani foreign fighters who go to Afghanistan belong to the Pashtun ethnic group. They live in tribal areas, mostly KPK and Baluchistan. They have relatives in Afghanistan and consider Afghanistan their second home. These Pashtuns believe that the US and NATO forces are occupying forces in Afghanistan, but they are neither motivated by religion nor they are radicalized through the logic of jihad.

The second type of foreign fighters who prefer to fight under command of the Taliban are Afghan refugees living in Pakistan. These people have lived in Pakistan for decades; some have acquired Pakistani citizenship. Their youth is mobilized by a desire to liberate their country of origin where their parents and forefathers own land and property. Living in camps, these refugees are often not well assimilated in society and feel marginalized and rejected. They fall in the lowest socioeconomic segments and work in low level jobs. Social discrimination against them and the nostalgia (or dream) of being first-class citizens of their own country drives them to take part in the fight. They go to fight against the foreign forces as well as the Kabul government, which they consider traitorous.

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[26] Interviewee 1,2,3,5,6,10,12,13,14,15,17,19,20,21.

Unlike the Afghan conflict, as an extension of a religious state, ISK did not have a specific ethnic pull according to any of my interviewees. This makes sense, as in many ways the dream of the IS Caliphate was built around a rather diverse and global idea of Islam. Thus, while the ISKP conflict could potentially appeal to a wider variety of foreign fighters, it lacked a strong and specific ethnic appeal.

5.   Sectarian identity

Seventeen interviewees (77%)[27] said that a sectarian identity drove people to join the insurgency in Afghanistan. These fighters are from Deobandi or Ahle-hadith sect. They consider their slain leader, Mullah Omer, their Amir and go to take part in jihad to restore Sharia Law and the Muslim Emirate, which Omar had once established in Afghanistan. The head of a Deobandi religious organization said during his interview that "The Afghan Taliban movement is not about only Pashtuns, its about ideology and Emirate. When it comes to Islam then there is no discrimination of Pashtun, and Punjabi" (Interviewee 21, April 1 2019).

Sectarian identity is also a motivating factor for ISKP fighters, but to a less extent. Five interviewees (22%)[28] said that ISKP fighters strictly practice sectarian beliefs. For this subset of individuals, any deviation from the word of the book is apostasy and they consider all other sects *takfiris* (heretics) especially Sufi, Shia and Ahmediya Muslims. They identified ISKP as an organization that can purify South Asian Islam of all the impurities added by other sects. They became proud members of a revolutionary, global jihadi group, which would ultimately restore the Caliphate and help 'true' Islam prevail. The foreign fighters who go to join ISKP due to sectarian identity are mostly from Ahl-e-Hadith sect, which is closest to Salafi Islam. However, there are some Deobandi fighters as well.

6.   Geographical contiguity and porous border
Eleven interviewees (55%)[29] said that people with an inclination towards foreign jihad prefer Afghanistan to other battlefields, due to the porous border. The border between Pakistan and Afghanistan is called the Durand Line and it is 1509 miles long. Thousands

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[27] Interviewees 1-7,9,10,12-17,19,21.
[28] Interviewees 4,5,10,19,20.
[29] Interviewees 1,3,5,6, 8,10,13,16,17,19,21.

of people cross it daily for business, family, and other purposes. There are many checkpoints, but most of the border is unguarded, making it very easy for militants to cross over, smuggling weapons and ammunition. Many militant networks have hideouts around the border, which have led it to be called the most dangerous place on earth. Although Pakistan started border fencing in 2007 and has regulated movement around the border, much of its length is still not covered. Speaking about Afghan foreign fighters, a researcher from PIPS said, "In FATA [the region along the Afghan border] there is some fencing on the border. But the terrain is such that it cannot be completely fenced" (Interviewee 19, 16 April 2019). Another interviewee, who is an investigative journalist from Punjab and has covered issues related to Islamist militancy for many years, also highlighted the role of porous border in the case of Afghanistan. He said, "Fencing will not change anything, how much they will fence? It will not completely stop the movement of militants across the border. And fence is not that strong that it cannot be broken (Interviewee 8, April 05 2019)."

Crossing the Afghan border is so easy that many fighters live in Pakistan and go to Afghanistan to take part in jihad on a weekly or even daily basis.[30] Some go on a seasonal basis. Every year when the Taliban launches its "spring offensive," such fighters cross over to Afghanistan, fight in the ranks of Taliban, and come back to Pakistan in winter. Many of the Afghan Taliban have kept their families in Quetta and KPK for security reasons. They have shops and businesses in Pakistan, which they run in winter, when it starts snowing in Afghanistan and the Taliban take a break for recuperation and planning. As the journalist from Baluchistan stated, "The geography of conflict matters. Suppose if there is a conflict in Africa people will not be interested but they will be attracted if something is happening in Afghanistan, Iran, or Kashmir" (Interviewee 7, 22 April 2019).

Eight interviewees (36%)[31] said that IS followers want to go where they can live under the caliphate and fight for it. However, since going to Syria is very difficult and going to Afghanistan is very easy because of the lax border, they come to Afghanistan to join ISKP. After the fall of Caliphate in Syria, these people were encouraged by their organization to flock to Afghanistan to strengthen the Khurasan province.

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[30] Such fighters will leave in the early morning, fight, and come back in the evening.
[31] Interviewee 3,5,8,11,12,13,14,17.

7. Organizational Credibility and Charisma

Nine interviewees (41%)[32] said that the organizational credibility of the Afghan Taliban is a major reason that fighters prefer to join them for jihad. Mullah Omar's refusal to hand-over Osama Bin Laden due to the local culture of valuing guests won the Afghan Taliban support of thousands of religious Pakistani youth. Among jihadi organizations, the Afghan Taliban are highly revered. They are seen as reliable friends, warm-hearted hosts, and fierce fighters. While talking about Afghan Taliban, the head of a Deobandi Religious Organization said, "America is in a rush, Taliban are not. They are sitting with a calm mind. They are people who believe in rules. They don't interfere in anyone's country. US used to call them terrorists, now talking to them and celebrating that they are willing to talk. This is a proof of Taliban's *haq* and *sach* (being truthful)" (Interviewee 21, April 1 2019). The Afghan Taliban's victory against a super power and seventeen long years of resilience have given them the image of credible jihadists who are capable of achieving their goals.

Six interviewees (22%)[33] said that when ISKP launched, many jihadists, including those who had fought along the Taliban, found the newly created group a charismatic, forward-looking organization. According to an investigative journalist from Punjab, "After Israel and Pakistan, IS was the third ideological State, so it persuaded many" (Interviewee 8, April 05 2019). The extremely violent tactics of beheading enemies, burning them alive, and video tapping the executions, impressed many old foreign fighters. Additionally, IS was the first jihadi group of its kind to give equal opportunity to women by calling onto them to come and join a foreign jihad. Fighters were invited to bring families and raise children in the shade of Sharia and Caliphate. Many women convinced their husbands or, in some cases, left their husbands, and took their children to live under the Caliphate. Well-educated city-dwelling women were among the recruits. The case of Bushra Cheema, who took four of her children along with a group of families, is a famous one (Cheema, 2015). Its increasing presence around the global and ability to successfully launch sophisticated attacks made IS (and by extension ISKP) a status symbol in the crowded jihadi world of South Asia.

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[32] Interviewees 3,5,6,12,13,17,18,19,21.
[33] Interviewee 4,5,6,1,12,13.

8. Financial Motivations/Poverty

The Afghan Taliban do not pay monthly salaries, however, they provide modest financial assistance to their fighters to sustain themselves. Nine interviewees (41%)[34] said that fighters of Afghan Taliban are from poor families and have some financial motives. In the case of Pakistani foreign fighters for ISKP, six interviewees (27%)[35] said that many of the fighters were driven by financial motivations. In the first years of ISKP in 2015-2016, the fighters were being paid $300-600, which is good money for a jobless jihadi. Not only did they get a chance to do jihad but also to earn some money. As a security journalist from PKP said about ISKP that "They still pay. Regular fighter earns $700, local commander earns $1200 and district commander $2500" (Interviewee 5, 11 April 2019). Later on, after the decline and ultimate collapse of IS in Syria and Iraq, the amount paid to fighters decreased but the foreign fighters still received some paid.

9. Previous Experience as Foreign Fighter

Seven interviewees (32%)[36] said that foreign fighters going to Afghanistan are career jihadists—i.e. they have previous experience of fighting in Afghanistan. jihadists who took part in the Soviet-Afghan conflict developed connections with Taliban leadership. They remained active until the Taliban took over in 1996. When US attacked Afghanistan in 2001, many of them, who had abandoned the jihad, went back to Afghanistan to fight against 'another army of infidels' that had attacked Afghanistan. Being known to the Taliban leadership, well-trained in guerilla warfare, and familiar with the terrain and procedures, joining the conflict every year is very easy for these individuals. Moreover, believing strongly in the cause, to them jihad is the purpose of life. One such case was mentioned by a Former Additional Inspector General of the Punjab CTD. He shared case of a senior Pakistani jihadi who served as commander of Afghan Taliban. He said that the commander told him during an interrogation, "We are good for nothing but jihad. Sir, that is what we believe in and we are trained to do. As long as we live, we will keep on fighting. If conflict is over in Afghanistan, we will go to liberate another Muslim land, but in any case this is our goal till end" (Interviewee 9, 10 April 2019). In some cases, career fighters kept on going because they fear arrest and prosecution at home. Whenever

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[34] Interviewees 1,3,4,5,11,12,13,15,18
[35] Interviewee 3, 7,10, 15, 17,19,
[36] Interviewees 3,9,10,13,14,16,17

they feared that they were being watched by security forces, they left for Afghanistan.

10. Desire for Adventure

ISK offered adventure and vigor by giving legitimacy to unbounded ferocity, unmatched brutality, and volunteer brides. Fighters got training in the tactics of extreme violence and unbounded aggression. Some career fighters who have been to Afghanistan and Kashmir many times, felt disappointed with the relative inactivity of their organizations and switched to ISK instead. They were also disillusioned with fighting in the same ranks for years. ISKP provided opportunities to experienced fighters by making them commanders, paying them lucrative salaries, and empowering them with status and control. It also developed a system of providing brides to unmarried fighters. Women who were part of ISKP had to marry one of the single men in the organizations if their husband died.

The brutal killings of Shias were also a thrilling experience for many anti-Shia Deobandi jihadists groups, who call Shia apostates and target them. The anti-Shia Lashkar-e-Jhangvi is one such organization. Some fighters who went to join Afghan Taliban, later on switched their affiliation to ISK due to these factors.

4.3. Case study three: Syria
4.3.1. History of Syrian Conflict

The Syrian civil war erupted during the Arab Spring in 2011. It is the second deadliest war of the 21st century and started with anti-government protests in Damscus and Aleppo (Bay, 2017). The protests were brutally crushed by the police and military, which gave birth to a mass uprising. Fighting started between the government and many pro- and anti-government factions. Among these, IS was one of the main actors. It first appeared under the name Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL), later on becoming the Islamic State (IS) when its membership spread around the globe (Laub & Masters, 2016).

In June 2014, ISIL took control of Mosul, proclaimed itself a global Caliphate, declared Abu Bakr the Caliph of Muslim world, and changed its name from ISIL to IS. Foreign fighters also started coming to the Islamic State the same year. Using the Internet and social media in an unprecedented way, IS made a global appeal and invited fighters from all over the world. It also called professionals such as doctors, engineers, builders,

journalists, and IT experts to come and work under the new State. Being the richest terrorist group in the world at the time of its creation, IS offered lucrative salary packages to professionals and jihadists. It became the first terrorist group to establish a state and asked its jihadists to bring their families along and settle down under the shadow of the Caliphate (BBC, 2019).

At its peak, IS was estimated to maintain an army of 100,000 men (Sly, 2018 para. 7). The United Nations said that more than 40,000 foreign fighters from 110 countries travelled to Syria and Iraq to join the Caliphate. The International Centre for the Study of Radicalization (ICSR) at Kings College London reported in its 2018 study that 41,490 people went to Syria by July 2018. Among these 32,809 were men, 4,761 were women, and 4,640 were children (BBC, 2019 para 3-4).

As in many other countries, many militant groups and radicalized individuals in Pakistan showed their support for the group. Some small groups were inspired to carry out attacks in the name of IS in Pakistan, the most famous being an attack on Ismaili workers, which killed 46 people (Boone, 2015). The presence of Pakistani fighters in IS ranks led to the establishment of a training camp in Syria named after a Pakistani extremist cleric, Abdur-Rashed Ghazi, who died in a security operation in Pakistan (Zahid, 2016).

4.3.2. Drivers of Foreign Fighters of Syria

Pakistani foreign fighters who went to Syria were not just joining IS, however, some went to fight against it. Thousands of Shia volunteered to fight on the side of the Syrian and Iraqi government against IS. They were largely fighting due to their sectarian affiliations and got paid by Iran.

Table 8: Drivers of Pakistani Fighters in Syria			
No.	Driver	IS Fighters	Shia Fighters
1	Propaganda and Ideologies	22	13
2	Strong sectarian affiliation	18	22

3	Recruitment by Individuals or Organizations	15	22
4	Financial Motivations/Poverty	8	5
5	Previous Experience as Foreign Fighters	8	-
6	Desire for Adventure	8	-
7	Organizational Credibility and Charisma	8	-
8	Enabling environment and supporting structures	7	10

1. Propaganda and Ideologies

Twenty-two interviewees (100%) stated that propaganda and ideologies were significant drivers for IS fighters from Pakistan. Three interviewees (14%)[37] said that IS played upon an apocalyptic narrative to attract foreign fighters from Pakistan and across the world. They occupied the town of Dabiq and used their occupation as the fulfilment of a Quranic prophecy to legitimize their cause. The Hadith they used for this purpose says, "the Last Hour would not come until the Romans land at al-A'maq or in Dabiq. An army consisting of the best of the people of the earth at that time will come from Medina [to defeat them] (Patrikarakos, 2016 para.2). IS also named its magazine, *Dabiq*, after the town. The group claimed the ultimate battle to be fought between Islam and Christianity was at hand. This sophisticated propaganda, based on religious sources, drove many fighters towards the group, including Pakistani jihadists wanted to be part of the final battle before the apocalypse. Another important point of IS ideology which gained popularity among Pakistani militants was an anti-Shia agenda. Sunni fighters belonged to Salafi or Deobandi sects and viewed Shia as apostates who should be killed. This is especially true for fighters belonging to local terrorist group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi. Propaganda made available through the Internet and social media connected Pakistani fighters with IS.

In the case of Shia foreign fighters, seven interviewees (32%)[38] stated propaganda spread by Shia religious groups about the Syrian conflict was built on grievances that the honour of holy shrines was being violated and Shia identity was under attack in the region. The propaganda stated that the Assad government was the only trustworthy

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[37] Interviewees 5,10,19
[38] Interviewees 3,4,6,8,10,11,15.

guardian of the shrines, and those who came to defend the shrines and the government would have elevated status. Two other interviewees (9%)[39] said that the Internet and social media were the highly used tools to spread propaganda material.

2. Strong sectarian identity

Sectarian enmities were major drivers of both IS (Sunni) and Shia foreign fighters. Among the drivers motivating IS recruits who went to Syria, one was the possibility of engaging in organized attacks on Shia, whom Salafis call *takrifi* and *murtad* (apostates). Anti-Shia terrorist organizations in Pakistan, especially the members of Lashkar-e-Jhangi were inspired by the brutal killings of Shia and other Muslim minorities such as Yazidis.

Shia fighters who went to Syria were also motivated by sectarian identity. Shia sectarian identity is very strong among Pakistani Shia Muslims. While Shia fighters hardly figure among the foreign fighters who travel to Kashmir and Afghanistan, many of them went to Syria as it is an epicentre of Shia identity. The Director General of the Intelligence Bureau of Punjab said, "Khunza and Parachanar districts of Pakistan have 95% Shia population. They have very strong sectarian affiliation with Iran and Syria. Thousands of people went from there" (Interviewee 15, 16 April 2019). Similarly, as Iraq and Syria have Shia governments and religious shrines, they are revered by the Shia community of Pakistan. The Syrian cities of Damascus, Qom, Karbala, and Najf are the holiest cities in Shia Islam. This connection motivated many to travel to there.

Most Shia fighters from Pakistan had no history of jihad nor they were radicalized in the political sense of the word; rather they went to guard their sectarian heritage. The majority of them were extremely religious, belonging to small villages and towns. The narrative that Shia holy places, mostly shrines of martyrs of Karbala,[40] are being attacked by IS charged them with religious sentiments. IS's 2012 attack on the Shrine of Hazrat Zainab was a particularly notable trigger. While Shia foreign fighters had been going to Syria since the beginning of the civil war, the attack on Hazrat Zainab's shrine boosted the trend tremendously. A journalist from Punjab said, "The attack on Hazrat Zainab's

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[39] Interviewee 10, 19.
[40] Karbala is place in Iraq where grandson of Prophet Muhammad and other members of his family were martyred by the armies of Yazid, the second Caliph of Umayyad Caliphate.

Shrine brought back the experience how Ahle-e-Bait [the family of the Prophet] were treated by the Yazid. People felt as if her honour was violated again. That motivated many Shias to go there" (Interviewee4, 19 April 2019).

Hazrat Zainab, the granddaughter of Prophet, is one of the most celebrated personalities of Shia Islam. Zainab, who led the caravan of Karbala war survivors, is sometimes referred to as "Kaabatu Rizaya" (catastrophes revolved around her). Attacks on her shrine shook the Shia community emotionally. The first attack on her shrine happened in 2012; later, when the war escalated, a series of attacks struck the heavily guarded shrine and damaged its walls (AFP, 2016). Protests were held across Pakistan after the attacks on the shrine and the Shia community demanded the Pakistani government put up pressure on the international community to end the war in Syria. Thousands of Pakistanis joined the Syrian conflict after the attacks on her shrine. Most of these people worked directly as security guards around the holy sites and shrines.

3. Recruitment by Individuals or Organizations

The importance of networks is well-acknowledged in the process of radicalization. Foreign fighters of IS radicalized other people, including their family members, trusted friends and colleagues. Radicalization happens mostly in places of socialization like home, schools, universities etc. because these places provide a safe environment for radicalization. Existing IS recruits convinced people living in their communities to join the organization and travel to Syria with their families. This is especially true of those who had already arrived in Syria. The head of the interrogation team at CTD Punjab shared one such case. He said, "A guy we arrested, his uncle went to Syria. His uncle was sending him extremism content through Telegram [an instant messaging app] and convincing him to come to Syria along with his family (Interviewee 10, 15 May 2019)."

In case of Shia fighters, individuals and their networks also played a huge role. Some militants who fought in Syria started radicalizing and recruiting other people from their social circles when they returned by sharing emotional stories of the battlefield. Others highlighted incentives such as the payments fighters received. Along with fighters, families also played a role. Some women who were motivated by the narrations of religious scholars, convinced their sons to embank on a Syrian jihad, viewing sending

their sons as a great religious service and test of their faith. Like Shia militants, Zakir (Shia clerics) inspired their audiences with charged sermons. The interrogation officer of CTD Sargodha told that "a famous Zakir, Hasan Zafar Naqvi, said in one of his sermons that nobody left his or her homes to show support for Bibi Zainab [a Shia martyr]. This is history repeating itself, that happened in Karbala, that's why only 72 people of Prophet's family survived. Where are those who were talking about going to Syria to mark the death anniversary of the Martyrs of Kabala? (…) What scares you? Death? How do you want to die like scared men or like lions who die while fighting?" (Interviewee 11, 16, April 2019).

Eight interviewees (36%)[41] said Shia organizations played a major role in providing reinforcements to Assad government. These organizations have strong links with the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, connections in Iranian Consulates, and a heavy influence over Shia Madrasas. These organizations controlled the whole narrative around the Syrian war. Wahdat-ul-Muslameen, Tehrek-Fiqa-i-Jafria, Tehrek-i-Nafaz-e-Jafria are some Shia organizations in Pakistan which were allegedly involved in the process of Shia recruitment. These organizations used the platforms of religious events and spiritual gatherings to highlight the urgency and importance of participating in the Syrian conflict. These organizations had the money, infrastructure, and resources necessary to produce print, audio, and visual material narrating the atrocities being committed in Syria. They exerted their influence over Shia madrasas and actively supported recruitment in Pakistani madrasas such as Madrassa Urwa-tu-Wus , which is based in Lahore. They also have links to madrasas in Iran especially Jamia-tul-Mustafa Qom, Jama-tul-Mustafa Mashad Iran. These madrasas incited their students through their teaching and actively recruited those willing to go on jihad.

4. Financial Motivations/Poverty

In the early years of Daesh, fighters were paid handsomely, which motivated many (36%)[42]. They were offered housing and other facilities as well. Those who were single got wives and bought slaves. As there was a counter terrorism operation going in

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[41] Interviewees 1, 4, 6, 10, 11, 13, 15, 19
[42] Interviewee 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13

Pakistan from 2014 till 2017, fighters found IS a very attractive refuge. They found money an additional benefit of joining, which they did not have in their old organizations.

About Shia fighters, five interviewees (22%)[43] said that financial reasons drove people to embark on the Syrian jihad. Pakistani CTD interrogation officers revealed that many Shia foreign fighters belonged to poor families and they were trying to find employment in Dubai or Saudi Arabia. When they did not get that, their travel agents recommended they go to Iran on a religious tourism visa. They were told they would get a chance to take part in the holy war and earn good money as well. A CTD interrogation officer from Sargodha city told me during the interview that "When these people got trained in the Iranian training camps, then they were sent to Syria on a three-month fighting period, for which they will get sustenance money. After they complete their fighting period, they will get credit card having a sum of around 3,000 USD, which is a handsome salary for an unemployed person. The recruitment agent would get more money than the fighter. The more men a recruiting agent brought in, the more money he got from the Iranian sources" (Interviewee 11, 16, April 2019).

If a Shia was killed while fighting in Syria, he was promised that he would be buried in Mashhad, the sacred city of Iran, and his family would be looked after by Iranian sources.

5. Previous Experience as Foreign Fighters

When IS established its global caliphate, foreign fighters who had been going to Kashmir or Afghanistan for years found the Syrian conflict larger and more enticing. Eight interviewees (36%) said that they believed that IS's fight was considered jihad-e-afzal (a "better or more preferable jihad") because it was staged at a global level and therefore more important to join. The declaration of the IS Caliphate also happened at a time when Pakistani militants were on the run. Counter terrorism operations were under-way and members of local groups were hiding from security forces. Their own organizations were dispersed and among all three foreign conflicts of Afghanistan, Kashmir and Syria, IS was the most appealing. IS was the richest organization, paying monthly salaries to the fighters, which happens less frequently in Kashmir and Afghanistan. Some older fighters

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[43] Interviewees 4, 5, 10, 11, 15

were disappointed with the stalemate in Afghanistan and Kashmir, and decided to join IS, which at that time was growing very fast. IS also welcomed these experienced fighters, as they did not need to be trained.

6. Desire for Adventure

IS seduced many of its fighters with its extreme practices and flashy recruitment videos, neither of which were part of the organizational culture of the Afghan Taliban nor Kashmiri insurgents. IS burnt enemies alive, stoned people to death for adultery, beheaded individuals on camera, and allowed members to keep young girls as slaves—all of which was given a veil of religious, political, and historical justification. Some foreign fighters joined IS just because it was an opportunity to travel abroad.

7. Organizational Credibility and Charisma

Being a Salafi jihadi group, IS claimed legitimacy by attempting to get other jihadi groups and Muslims throughout the world to pledge allegiance to their leader, Baghdadi, and accept him as their Caliph. Eight interviewees (36%)[44] said that the establishment of the Caliphate convinced many fighters that IS's claim to be the supreme jihadi organization might be true. IS also asked recruits to bring their families and live under Caliphate, inviting men and women and offering roles to people from every field. If an engineer wanted to join, he would probably get an engineering job. A doctor worked as a doctor in the hospitals of the newly create Caliphate. IS had territory, a state, delivery of services and much more—it was "real" in a way that neither Afghan Taliban nor Kashmiri Insurgents could match.

8. Enabling environment and supporting structures

In the case of IS, an enabling environment was created by the local demand from IS. Seven interviewees (31%)[45] reported that demand from IS was a strong factor. Some foreign fighters who went to Syria got encouraged by their handlers and leaders to motivate more people to come and join the fight. Some women who got radicalized took their children along and left for Syria.

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[44] Interviewees 3,8,9,10,13,14,18,19
[45] Interviewees 3,4, 8,9,10,11,19

In the case of Shia foreign fighters, ten interviewees (45%)[46] said that enabling conditions were created by the Iranian and Syrian governments. The Iranian government issued religious tourist visas to recruits, who would go to Iran, train, fight in Syria, and return after four months. Every year, hundreds of thousands people go to Iran on pilgrimage; therefore it is difficult to identify those who were going on a Syrian jihad in the disguise of a pilgrimage. In 2018, during two Islamic months of Muharam and Saffar, over 75,000 Shia Muslims went to Iran on pilgrimage (Tehran Times, 2018). Speaking about Shia fighters, the head of the CTD interrogation team from the province of Balochsitand said that "These people go via flights as well as via road trips, as Pakistan and Iran share a border. These pilgrims go with families and they go through legal channels, i.e. on issued visas and after the period of pilgrim they come back. Due to these factors it is very difficult to tell how many men among these pilgrims went to Syria for fighting" (Interviewee 13, Baluchistan, 21 April 2019).

The Iranian government was running four training camps for militias in the city of Qom: Zainbeen Brigade (Pakistani), Fatimeen Brigade (Iraqi), Haidereen Brigade (Afghani), and Hizb-e-Islami (Irani). Pakistanis who went to Iran to fight in the pro-Assad militia were send to the Zainbeen Brigade training camp, where they received four weeks of training. After this they were flown to Syria.

It is pertinent to note that not all Shia went to Iran with the intention of join pro-Assad militias. Some went for educational purposes and got radicalized in religious schools in Iran. Others went on religious pilgrimage and got radicalized by the speeches and information given to them during their religious tours. Along with the active support of Iranian government, the local demand by Bashar-ul-Assad government for fighters who can join their ranks and willing to die in the line of fire was also an important factor.

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[46] Interviewees 1,3,4,5,8,9,10,11,12,13

5.   Chapter Five: Discussion

Set side by side, the drivers motivating Pakistani foreign fighters to participate in the Afghanistan, Kashmir, and Syrian conflicts make for an interesting comparison. Indeed, there is considerable overlap in the most significant drivers in each case study, with (1) *Propaganda and Ideologies*, (2) *Recruitment by Individuals or Organizations*, and (3) *Enabling environment and supporting structures, and financial motivations/poverty* scoring high marks of significance in each conflict and among most participating foreign fighter groups. In short, whatever the substantial differences between foreign conflicts may be, it would seem that the major driving forces behind the participation of foreign fighters are the ideological messages they receive, their contact with handlers, and encouragement from their surrounding social milieu. This last point in particular is interesting, as is the relative insignificance of *Reaction to Social discrimination / Quest for Significance,* which was only mentioned as a driver in the case of Kashmir (albeit as a major one). These results suggest that while experiences of social isolation and disconnect may be a major driver for radicalization of Western Muslims—as evidenced by this driver's prominence in theories of European radicalization—it may be relatively less important in the case of countries such as Pakistan, where Muslims are mainstream rather than minorities.

Still, the question of why a quest for significance is so highly rated for Kashmir and not Afghanistan and Syria remains puzzling. Part of the explanation may have to do with the fact that unlike Afghanistan and Syria, the Kashmir conflict is a national territorial dispute for Pakistan. It touches the heart of national identity in a way that other foreign conflicts do not—indeed, it is something of a hybrid between a domestic and foreign conflict. Consequently, the respect accorded to Kashmir jihadists is more widespread throughout Pakistani society and they enjoy relative immunity from state repression when compared to other foreign fighters. By contrast, Pakistani fighters who head to Syria or Afghanistan often need to keep a low profile. From this perspective, it makes that individuals seeking to boost their social standing would tend to gravitate towards a conflict whose participants are openly accorded respect by society at large, rather than conflicts where the respect one gains will be limited to a smaller network of

likeminded individuals. The state plays a major role in this regard, as the actions of its agencies help to determine how openly fighters from particular conflicts can live their lives. The nationalistic aspect of the Kashmiri conflict also somewhat dilutes the importance of religion in that conflict, while sectarian affiliation remains a strong driver for fighters in Afghanistan and Syria. In this sense, we could call Kashmir Pakistan's 'mainstream jihad,' and Afghanistan and Syria 'niche jihads.'

Somewhat predictably, the significance of ethnic and sectarian identities seems to vary as per the nature of the conflict in question. Ethnic identity was a strong driver for fighters joining the Afghan Taliban or Kashmir conflict due to the ethno-nationalist and regionalized nature of these conflicts. It was not a motivation for people joining IS or pro-Assad militias. Sectarian identities were major drivers for IS and Shia fighters in Syria, due to the global nature of these conflicts and the religious terms in which they were cast. The lesser impact of sectarian identity among ISKP fighters is interesting, and might be explained as a result of the regional limitations of the group's ambitions. Unlike the main branch of IS, ISKP could not aspire to the same grandeur of its parent organization in Syria. However, more than any other militant group, both IS and ISKP attracted jihadists looking for adventure. The extreme practices and unprecedented use of violence appealed to many jihadists who were earlier affiliated with Afghan Taliban or Kashmiri Jihadi groups. While the adventure seeker joined IS/ISKP, it was a newly created organization and did not have the credibility of established groups like the Afghan Taliban. The Afghan Taliban stands out as one of the most credible host organizations in any conflict zone, and their credibility won them trust of new and old foreign fighters.

Examined more broadly, the results of my data analysis suggest that drivers identified by scholars of radicalization in the West (primarily from Europe and/or the United States) do provide a strong foundation for analysing the phenomenon of foreign fighters recruited from elsewhere in the world. At the same time, my results suggest that there are unique aspects of the foreign fighter experience—researchers should not assume that the existing literature on radicalization provides a full and ready explanation for the motivations that drive foreign fighters.

In this context, several unique drivers were identified in my data set that are not present in European theories of radicalization. The first, *Geographical proximity and Access to Conflict* is clearly linked to the specific nature of the foreign fighter phenomenon. Foreign fighters, after all, must travel to their conflict of choice and the logistics of that journey may have a strong bearing on their decision to participate. This driver is one that likely has an overlapping relationship with several others. In the case of Shia fighters in Syria, for example, the role played by the Iranian state in granting religious visas, training, and transportation to foreign recruits (a *Supporting Structure*) surely reduced the logistical hurdles these fighters might have otherwise faced. Similarly, it seems likely that the influence of *all* motivating drivers (whether ideological, financial, etc.) would have to be stronger in cases where a fighter has to travel a substantial distance to participate in the conflict. Geographical proximity influenced decision of many Salafi jihadists who wanted to go to Syria but ended up in Afghanistan or Kashmir due to the logistical hurdles.

Previous Experience as Foreign Fighters is another driver unique to my data set, and one that exposes a somewhat different limitation of radicalization theory. Indeed, radicalization theory, particularly stage-wise theories of radicalization, tends to focus exclusively on the *initial* transformation of an individual into an extremist. In other words, radicalization theory seeks to explain how an 'innocent' person is transformed into a dangerous radical—what happens after that is often not examined. By contrast, my data suggests that scholarship on foreign fighters will have to deal much more directly with the afterlife of the radicalization process, i.e. the 'career' of a fighter pursues after taking the first momentous steps into the world of armed conflict. Indeed, understanding the actions of seasoned foreign fighters is important not only because they may participate in and shift between multiple conflicts, but also because of their importance as inspiration and handlers for new recruits. These fighters move from conflict to conflict and also cause globalization of terror tactics. Previous experience is a common driver of fighters who join Afghan Taliban, Kashmiri jihad and IS/ISKP. It is not a motivating factor for Shia foreign fighters who joined pro-Assad Militias.

Role of veterans in further recruitment and radicalization is also a unique driver in my data set. Veterans who grew old or lost a limb during a conflict could not go

themselves, but they kept the motivation alive by being actively involved in the recruitment process, by narrating stories of their chivalry, and by motivating the youth. This will likely be a very relevant theme of study for researchers studying European returnees from Syria. This is also a very important question for policy makers who are weighing the pros and cons of giving a second chance to the returnees of IS. A detailed study of how veterans get involved in the recruitment process and sustain the supply of fighters is also relevant for security agencies, who are concerned about how to deal with the problem. This also rise questions about that how disillusioned returnees can go back to support extremist ideologies when new conflicts emerging in the global arena.

Table 9: Drivers of Foreign Fighters Across all Conflicts					
No	**Drivers of Foreign Fighters**	**Afghanistan**		**Kashmir**	**Syria**	
0		**Afghan Taliban**	**ISKP**	**Kashmir**	**IS Fighters**	**Shia Fighters**
1	Propaganda and Ideologies	22	12	22	22	13
2	Recruitment by Individuals or Organizations	22	11	22	15	22
3	Financial Motivations/Poverty	9	6	8	8	5
4	Enabling environment and supporting structures	18	6	22	7	10
5	Strong Sectarian Affiliation	12	5		18	22
6	Ethnic Identity	15		14		
7	Reaction to Social discrimination/ Quest for Significance			21		
8	Geographical proximity and Access to Conflict	11	8	5		
9	Organizational Credibility and Charisma	9	6		8	
10	Previous Experience as Foreign Fighters	7		5	8	
11	Desire for Adventure		7		8	

6. **Chapter Six: Conclusion**

Pakistan has a long history of supplying foreign fighters to outside conflicts. Pakistani foreign fighters started going to Afghanistan on organized basis in 1980s and then to Kashmir in 1990s. After the start of Syrian civil war many groups started going to Syria, particularly after the establishment of IS, when the Caliphate called its followers to come and live under the Sharia law. The old history of foreign fighters, the existence of many local jihadi groups, the passive role of security institutions and changing geo-political dynamics created an incubating environment for the foreign fighters in Pakistan. These foreign fighters were faced with multiple theatres of conflict in which they could participate.

The results of this study show that the decision of foreign fighters to select a particular theatre depends on multiple factors. Some people, who get radicalized by the motivational sermons of firebrand clerics, take the help of the local jihadi groups to reach the conflict destination. People going to a conflict zone may not join the same ideological groups. For example, fighters who go to Afghanistan, either go to join the Afghan Taliban or ISKP. If they believe in the Emirate of Mullah Umar, linked with pro-Taliban groups in Pakistan, and are interested in fighting against foreign occupation, they will join Afghan Taliban. If they are jihadists fed-up with the local project of the Afghan-Taliban, belong to the Salafi sect, have strong anti-Shia sentiments, and are inspired the idea of global caliphate, they will join ISKP. Similarly, in Syria if a foreign fighter is Shia, he will join one of the pro-Assad militias, if he is a Salafi, he will join IS. In Kashmir, all Pakistani foreign fighters join local pro-Pakistan groups.

The combination of motivating factors is somewhat unique for every individual and for every conflict zone. However, there are some patterns in the drivers of foreign fighters for each conflict area. In Kashmir and Afghanistan geographical proximity played a huge role. Also, ethnic Pashtuns prefer to join the Afghan Taliban and ethnic Kashmiri prefer to join the Kashmir jihad. Foreign fighters who had been to one of these conflict areas often prefer the same place for their future foreign jihadi trips. Fighters who had fought in the ranks of Afghan Taliban would prefer to go to Afghanistan, as they are familiar with the host culture, terrene, fighting conditions, etc. In the case of Pro-

Assad Shia fighters and IS/ISKP, sectarian identity and financial compensation are common motivating factors. Pakistani Shia have historically participated in neither the Afghan jihad nor in the Kashmir jihad. Propaganda and the ideologies of the militant groups play a tremendous role in recruitment for foreign jihad; be it from groups based in Afghanistan, Kashmir or Syria. However, the ethnic link motivates Pashtuns for Afghan war and Kashmiris for Kashmir. The organizational credibility of Afghan Taliban also makes them more trustworthy hosts, while due to its extreme tactics; extended control, money and allegiance of regional groups ISKP/IS offers more adventure and prestige in jihadi circles. Reaction to social discrimination and quest for significance only drives Kashmiri jihadists, as Kashmir jihad is part of national narrative, has the general public sympathy and support of the establishment. Ethnic identity is not a driver of radicalization for Syrian conflict. Similarly, defence of sectarian heritage and provocation for jihad due to a single incident is unique in the case of Syria. Many Shia fighters went to Syria when shrines of Karbala Martyrs were attacked during the war.

This study was designed to examine the degree to which radicalization theory and existing literature about foreign fighters, mainly produced in a western context, can be used to understand foreign fighters from Pakistan. My results show that there are many drivers from radicalization theory useful for explaining the motivations of Pakistani foreign fighters such as the role of groups, individuals, and societies (Borum, 2011). There are also some drivers specific to Western societies that do not help explain the Pakistani case. For example, the identity crisis of European Muslims, caused by experiences of discrimination, segregation and living in a parallel society seems unique to that region (Precht, 2007). Similarly, there are some unique drivers to foreign fighters reported in my data, like access to the conflict zone, that encourage people to travel to Afghanistan and Kashmir. My second unique driver, previous experience of foreign jihad, also encourages people to keep going once they have started. A third unique driver is the role of the veteran foreign fighters in the recruitment, radicalization, and logistics arraignment of the new foreign fighters.

Instead of being generalized drivers of radicalization, these three drivers seem unique to the phenomenon of foreign fighters and jihadists. Future scholars might want to

consider examining their role in other conflicts or regions. But, more generally, they should be open to discovering new drivers unique to foreign fighters and ignored by radicalization theory. Future studies of foreign fighters should also extent their samples beyond Europe to determine if there is any broad pattern in the modern phenomenon of Muslim foreign fighters, and the phenomenon of foreign fighters generally. Indeed, while Muslim extremism currently occupies most of the attention of security experts, there is no reason to believe that the foreign fighter phenomenon will not take hold among other religious, ideological, or ethnic groups. Future studies should probably use a "cause model" of radicalization, which focuses on the determining the causes of the problem, rather than a "cause-and-process model" which saddles itself with the task of constructing stepwise stages of a radicalization "process."

Another area for further research is the in-depth study of how drivers often overlap with one another. For example, in the case of Shia recruits in Syria, sectarian identity, a single provocative incident (the attack on Hazrat Zainab), and a desire to protect shrines, overlap with one another. Similarly, ethnic motivations, the propaganda narrative of host militant groups, a desire for jihad, martyrdom, short-cut to paradise, and a fight against foreign occupation all overlap within the ideology of groups like the Afghan Taliban. These drivers feed into each other and expedite the process of radicalization. Therefore, it might be more useful to study how drivers intersect and/or reinforce one another, rather than trying to find a sequence of steps that defines the radicalization of foreign fighter.

The main limitation of this study lies in the fact that the data was collected from interviews with security experts who have dealt with foreign fighters rather than from direct interviews with foreign fighters. Interviewing foreign fighters was a security risk and would also have required much more time and multiple interviews, as these individuals tend to be secretive about their organizational identity and reluctant to reveal the details of their activities. Nevertheless, the data provided here does deliver some suggestive results for future scholars, and it is hoped that at least a few many benefit from some of the results, insights, or suggestions offered.

List of Interviews

Interview 1, Director General Counter Terrorism at NACTA. (20 April 2019). Interview conducted at NACTA Office Islamabad.

Interview 2, Director General Research and Data at NACTA. (20 April 2019). Interview conducted at NACTA Office Islamabad.

Interview 3, Former National Coordinator of NACTA, at NACTA. (20 April 2019). Interview conducted at NACTA Office Islamabad.

Interview 4, Freeland Journalist from Punjab. (20 April 2019). Private Media House, Islamabad.

Interview 5, Security Journalist from KPK. (11 April 2019). Interview conducted at Private Office Peshawar.

Interview 6, Journalist from Hum News. (21 April 2019). Interview conducted at Hum News Office, Islamabad.

Interview 7, Investigative Journalist from Baluchistan. (22 April 2019). Interview conducted at Geo News Office Islamabad.

Interview 8, Freelance Investigative Journalist. (05 April 2019). Interview conducted at residence of Interviewee in Lahore.

Interview 9, Former Inspector General of CTD Punjab. (10 April 2019). Institute for Policy Reforms, Lahore.

Interview 10, Head of Punjab Interrogation Team Counter Terrorism Department (CTD). (15 April 2019). CTD Headquarters Chung, Lahore.

Interview 11, Interrogation officer of CTD office Sargodha. (16 April 2019). Interview conducted at CTD Office Sargodha City.

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Interview 14, Additional Inspector General CTD Sindh. (15 April 2019). Telephonic Conversation.

Interview 15, Director General Intelligence Bureau Punjab. (16 April 2019). Interview conducted at Intelligence Bureau Punjab Headquarters. Rawalpindi.

Interview 16, Former Inspector General Punjab Police. (8 April 2019). Interview conducted at Gymkhana Club Lahore, Lahore.

Interview 17, Head of CTD Interrogation Team KPK. (11 April 2019). Interview conducted at CTD Provincial Headquarters Peshawar, Peshawar.

Interview 18, Assistant Professor at NUST. (13 April 2019). Interview conducted at NUST. Islamabad.

Interview 19, Director Projects and Senior Research Analyst Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS). (16 May 2019). Interview conducted at PIPS, Islamabad.

Interview 20, Member of Religious Organization. (1 April 2019). Interview conducted at private residence of the interviewee in Rawalpindi.

Interview 21, Head of Deobandi Religious Organization. (1 April 2019). Interview conducted at Madrasa Khalid Bin Walid, Rawalpindi.

Interview 22, Member of Salafi Religious Organization. (16 April 2019). Interview conducted at Institute for Policy Reforms, Lahore.

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Appendix A

Semi- Structured Interviews Questionnaire for Security experts

1. **1. Personal questions**

1) Interview recording OK?
2) Direct quotes in scholarly publications OK?
3) Anonymous quotes in scholarly publications OK?
4) What is your position (police officer, analyst etc.)?
5) What is your experience of dealing with FF?
6) Share your views on Pakistani foreign fighters? Have many have joined Jihad in Kashmir/Afghanistan or Syria?
7) Why Pakistani people go to Kashmir for Jihad, what are the reasons?
8) Why Pakistani people go to Afghanistan, what drives them?
9) Why Pakistani people go to Syria, what drives them to choose Syria?
10) How Pakistani foreign fighters make a selection between Kashmir, Afghanistan and Syria?
11) Do you see any changes in the trends of Pakistani foreign fighters?
12) What were the unique features of the "Islamic State" that many Pakistani foreign fighters went to Syria instead of Afghanistan or Kashmir?
13) Why did some Pakistani foreign fighters come back, what was the primary motivation?
14) How has the Pakistani state responded to these returnees? What is the structural or instrumental response of the state?
15) Are Pakistani foreign fighters mostly part of some militant group or they travel alone?