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# **Rise in Public Approval of Religious Extremism in Pakistan**

Syeda Ulya Ehsen Kazmi\*

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## **Abstract**

This working paper aims to explain the rise in public approval of religious extremism in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. To focus on the religiopolitical parties who tend to have an extremist outlook and distinguish them from other religious parties, I present a scale for rating the religiopolitical parties on a spectrum of Moderate to Extremist by analysing their manifestos. Using the votes casted in General Elections of 2013 and 2018, and MICS surveys during the decade of 2010 – 2019 conducted all over Pakistan, and the Census held in 2017, I find a negative relationship between education and votes for religious extremists. On the contrary, there is a positive relation between wealth and the rise of popular support for religious extremism. The analysis of income tax reveals that the higher the income tax filed, the greater the support for religious extremists might be. The results also establish a significant positive relationship between income inequality and support for religious extremists. Furthermore, the urban middle class is more likely to vote for religious extremist parties than the rural poor. The results, however, are not homogenous across all provinces of Pakistan. Nonetheless, they raise important questions worth exploring the factors contributing to the heterogeneity.

**Keywords:** *Economics of Religion, Political Economy of Religion, Elections, Religious Extremism, Pakistan*

**JEL code:** D72, N35, Z12

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## **Introduction**

Being a country with over 96% Muslim population, Pakistan has been facing religious violence for past many years. Despite the state religion and religiously dominated culture of the society, the religiopolitical parties have never been able to form a government in Pakistan at the federal level. This is feared to change in the near future due to growing religious extremism in the country.

My motivation for this research subject were the results of the General Elections of 2018 when Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP), an extremist religiopolitical party became the third largest political party in terms of votes received in the most populous province of Punjab. Though there have been rising cases of religion-based violence, but the public approval was unexpected and rather shocking. It was followed by concerns in media and the civil society. Therefore, I decided to investigate it further as it could have been as much of a continuation as an anomaly.

Since the assassination of sitting Governor Punjab Salmaan Taseer by an on-duty Elite Force Policeman in 2011, killings in the name of anti-blasphemy vigilante justice have emerged on the forefront. The governor was assassinated because he was trying to help a poor Christian woman on death row who was wrongly accused of committing blasphemy<sup>1</sup> and was critical of the anti-blasphemy laws which were being used as an instrument to settle scores. His assassin, Mumtaz Qadri, was made a hero by the religious extremist parties. Soon after the governor, the Federal Minister for Minority Affairs Shahbaz Bhatti was assassinated for the same reasons. With these high-profile assassinations and protests by the extremists, the government got the message and categorically denied any possibility of amending the controversial anti-blasphemy laws. This was not enough for the anti-blasphemy

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<sup>1</sup> She was later acquitted by the Supreme Court of Pakistan in 2018.

mob. They wanted the accused woman to be hanged and the assassin be freed. When the demands were not met, and the assassin was later hanged in 2016, Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) came into being as the ultimate flag bearer of sharia law accusing the existing religious parties of lacking a spine.

The Centre for Research and Security Studies have recently published a report stating that 89 people have been extra-judicially killed due to blasphemy allegations since the country’s independence in 1947 to 2021. In total, 1,504 have been accused of blasphemy. Out of which, 1,287 people have been accused of committing blasphemy just between 2011 and 2021 (Nafees, 2022) which is an alarming increase.

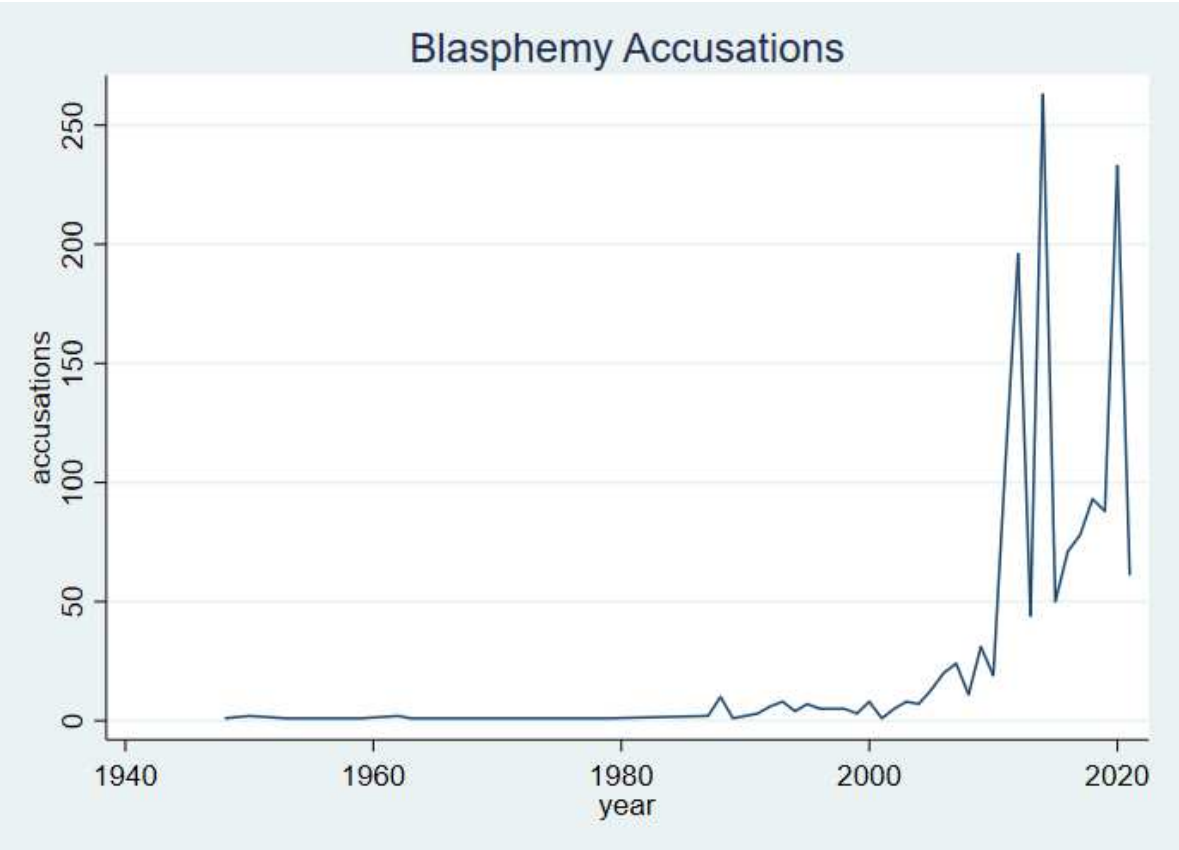


Figure 1: Number of blasphemy accusations by year

Blasphemy is a prominent example but not the only aspect of religious extremism. Religious extremism here refers to the use of religiously motivated violence, hate speech, incitement to violence, and support for individuals and organizations engaged in such activities. Apart from explicit use of violence, religious extremism also discourages critical thinking, discourse, and innovation which are essential for any society to grow. Moreover, the religious extremist political parties not only want to run the country a certain way, but they also want to dictate the lives and choices of citizens, especially women, as we can see in Afghanistan now.

In this paper, I first introduce a 12-point scale to categorize the religiopolitical parties in Pakistan into Extremist and Non-Extremist. Then, I show that the vote share of extremist religious parties has been increasing since mid-1990s as compared to non-extremist parties based on the General Elections data from 1970 to 2018 which covers ten elections to the National Assembly of Pakistan. Their vote share was highest in 2002 elections under the military dictatorship of General Musharraf after which it declined in 2008 upon the return of democracy in Pakistan, but in the last election in 2018 they appear to be fast approaching the 2002 levels.

Then, I run regressions to analyze the growing public approval of religious extremism using the lens of Economics of Religion. In the light of secularization theory, I test the relationship between education and wealth with the votes received by religious extremist parties in the last two General Elections held in 2013 and 2018 using MICS surveys data for the last decade. I found that there is a negative relationship between education and votes for religious extremists. On the contrary, there is a positive relation between wealth and the rise of public approval of religious extremism. The analysis of Income Tax Directory of 2018 further reveals that the higher the income tax filed, the greater the support for religious extremists might be.

The results also establish a significant positive relationship between income inequality and support for religious extremists. Furthermore, the urban middle class is more likely to vote for religious extremist parties than the rural poor. The results, however, are not homogenous across all provinces.

Inspired by the club model of religion, I also created ethnolinguistic and religious fractionalization indices separately, for which I used the Census 2017 data. However, no significant relationship was found between support of extremism and diversity. Similarly, I used number of mosques in a district as a proxy for religiosity, but no significant relationship was found between religiosity and the support for religious extremism.

This paper contributes to the niche of religious extremism within the field of Economics of Religion in a number of ways. First, it offers an Extremism Scale particularly designed in the context of political parties operating in a Muslim majority country. The existing scales, to the best of my knowledge, are focused on individuals and are being used in the Western countries. Secondly, it adds to the empirical studies on religious extremism in Global South, that too regarding a postcolonial Muslim country. Moreover, as far as I know, this is perhaps the first paper empirically analyzing general elections in Pakistan, countrywide and province-wise. Then, perhaps more importantly, its findings differentiate between religiosity and religious extremism. Further, the findings of urban middle class more likely to vote for religious extremists are both concerning and thought-provoking, and more research is required to shed light on this aspect.

The next section surveys the existing literature on the subject including literature focused on Pakistan. It lays the foundation for research problem and hypotheses that follow. After that, I describe the data, outline the methodology, and discuss the results.

## **Literature Survey**

Religion, religiosity, and religious extremism have been studied by anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, and political scientists. Economists have also set foot in this domain and the interest in Economics of Religion is growing.

The literature survey here is divided into two main parts. First part focuses on the works in Economics of Religion on religious extremism. Second part discusses studies on or including religious extremism in Pakistan. It is further divided into historical perspective, empirical studies, and surveys.

### **1. Religious extremism from the lens of Economics of Religion**

Though the Economics of Religion is still considered as a young subdiscipline (Iannaccone (2012), Iyer (2015)), existing literature offers various explanations for religious extremism. Some draw on the religion-market model dating back to the debate between Adam Smith and David Hume in 18<sup>th</sup> century which argues that religiosity depends on the presence of a state religion, regulation of the religion market, and the degree of religious pluralism allowed to exist in the country. Hume was of the opinion that a single state-funded religion is the solution to religious conflict. Smith, on the other hand, advocated for laissez-faire and believed that religious pluralism would benefit the state, religion, and society (Iannaccone and Berman 2006).

Another crucial theory is the secularization theory of religion which states that the level of economic development will reduce religiosity. Papers on secularization theory relevant to this paper are Swatos and Christiano (1999), Iannaccone (1999),

Gorski and Altınordu (2008), Babik (2012), and Haynes (2013). Both the religion-market and secularization theories were tested by McCleary and Barro (2003) for 61 countries over six international surveys for 20 years. They used GDP per capita as proxy for economic development and self-reported levels of church attendance, religious beliefs, and religiousness. Moreover, they used the presence of state religion and state regulation of religion as instrumental variables. They found that presence of an official state religion tends to increase religiosity and religiosity falls with reduction in religious pluralism, government regulation of the religion market and with a Communist government in place.

Club model of religion, introduced by Iannaccone (1992) to rationalize the behaviour of Christian religious sects, also offers interesting insights. The model is based on the premise that sacrifice and stigma associated with the sect increases the individual and collective utility of the sect members. It was tested in Berman (2000) for ultra-orthodox Jews, and then by Berman and Laitin (2008) in order to explain the lethality of radical religious militias and their choice of suicide attacks using data of suicide attacks by country of perpetrator 1982–2003. They concluded:

“A rational choice explanation is hopeful news for policy interventions based on constructive incentives. Those policy implications for combating terrorism flow from an understanding that three institutions compete to provide economic services to members of religious sects: market, government, and sect. When sects prevail they can use their influence and information to run militias with deadly efficiency. They form efficient militias because providing social services cooperatively and cooperative militia operations are very similar activities. If markets and governments prevail, sects are weakened because defection to the secular alternative becomes more attractive. Sect militias become harder to organize and easier to infiltrate.”



Carvalho (2016) presented another version of the single club model for religious identity-based organizations. Their model predicts the effectiveness of a religious organization in collective action (be it social good such as running schools or hospitals, or terrorism) based on its strictness and distance from the mainstream beliefs, both of which play a role in personal and social identity formation.

The club model of religion was further extended to a Multi-Agent Model of Religious Clubs by Makowsky (2012) including civil liberties, economic freedom, religious regulation, government effectiveness and mean earnings. They concluded that public provision of standard goods can reduce the share of extremist population. Their paper provided a link between weak civil liberties to potential organization of militant or terrorist groups using stigma and sacrifice. This paper and Iannaccone (2012) also noted that the club model is not unique to the religious sects, it can be applied to communes, gangs, military units, social and political movements, fraternities, and sororities as well as academic subfields wherever sacrifice and stigma is common.

Linking religious extremism with political and economic freedom, Bandyopadhyay and Younas (2011) conducted an empirical analysis of terrorism incidents in 125 developing countries and 24 OECD countries from 1998 to 2007. They used indices of political freedom from Freedom House's Political Rights Index, electoral self-determination from The Cingranelli-Richards (CIRI) Human Rights Dataset, and Rule of Law index compiled by Kaufmann et al. (2008), ethnic, linguistic, and religious fractionalization indices from Alesina et al. (2003), and socioeconomic variables such as GDP per capita and literacy rate. Their results show a distinction between domestic and transnational terrorism. They found that political freedom has a significant and non-linear effect on domestic terrorism, but none on transnational terrorism. While rule of law is a strong deter against terrorism, socioeconomic

variables had no significant impact. Moreover, ethnic fractionalization had a positive relation with terrorism and religious fractionalization, on the other hand, had a significantly negative relation.

There is also some work on the strategic use of religion by political parties. Glaeser, Ponzetto, and Shapiro (2005) explored why political parties take extreme positions on religiopolitical issues during election campaigns. Their key finding is the role of information asymmetry. When a politician takes an extreme position, in effect deviates from the center, their own supporters are more aware of this deviation than the opponent's supporters. Hence, they will be able to energize their own supporters to make an effort and vote for them on the election day. They also found that connections between religiosity (measured by the frequency of church attendance) and voting for the right-wing parties are evident in countries where church attendance is around 50 percent. Not in countries with higher or lower of church attendance. Similarly, in USA, there is a negative relationship between religiosity and voting Republican.

Two more themes of investigation that are being explored to an extent, other than religion-market and secularization, are identity and belongingness, and conflict and cooperation. Some researchers are also working on the Economics of religious extremism in a historical context. Where there is progress, there are also gaps. The criticism of existing literature includes over-generalizing the Western-focused studies to the rest of the world and over-particularizing the studies focused on Middle Eastern and Islamic sects on the extremist theology and tribal history (Iannaccone and Berman 2006). Further, religious uncertainty, and belief formation have not been formally analysed. Moreover, an extensive literature survey by Iyer (2015) suggests that there is need to study Economics of Religion in the non-Western and non-Christian societies, especially regarding the following aspects: religion and

demography; religion, political processes, and their interactions with economic processes; the marketing, and management aspects of religion; and the relation between science and religion (Iyer, 2015). McCleary and Barro (2003) mentioned that it would also be valuable to assess the relationships between religiosity and political and social indicators, including measures of electoral rights and civil liberties.

## **2. Religious extremism in Pakistan**

### **2a. Historical perspective**

Pakistan came into being in August 1947 after the partition of British India into two separate countries at the end of colonial rule. The textbooks of Pakistan Studies attribute the independence to the Two-Nation Theory supported<sup>2</sup> by All India Muslim League which argued that the Muslims and Hindus of the subcontinent were two separate nations and, therefore, needed their own separate countries.

“The Muslims of the sub-continent considered themselves a nation which possesses its own civilization, culture, history, philosophy of life, morality, politics and economy....The principles governing the life of Muslims are entirely different from those followed by the Hindus. This is the reason why a common society or a common nationality could not be formed or developed despite a close association between these two nations for a period of hundreds of years.” (Rizvi, 1997)

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<sup>2</sup> It is based on the concept of Muslim Ummah and claimed to have always been there since the advent of Islam

“The Muslims claimed separate nationhood for themselves and they were determined to maintain a separate entity for all times to come.” (Punjab Textbook Board, 2005)

Where there were proponents of partition of India, there were also leaders who called for Hindu-Muslim unity. All India Azad Muslim Conference was formed to oppose the proposal of partition by various political parties of different regions and schools of thoughts including Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind, Majlis-e-Ahrar-ul-Islam, All India Momin Conference, All India Shia Political Conference, Khudai Khidmatgar<sup>3</sup>, Krishak Praja Party, Anjuman-i-Watan Baluchistan, All India Muslim Majlis, and Jamiat Ahl-i-Hadis (Qasmi and Robb, 2017). Unionist Party of Punjab<sup>4</sup> and Sind United Party<sup>5</sup> were also against partition. Muslims in the Indian National Congress shared this view, Abul Kalam Azad who later became the First Minister of Education in the Indian government after independence, famously said in 1940:

“I am proud of being an Indian. I am part of the indivisible unity that is Indian nationality. I am indispensable to this noble edifice and without me this splendid structure is incomplete. I am an essential element, which has gone to build India. I can never surrender this claim.” (Sikandar, 2020)

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<sup>3</sup> In 1937 elections, the Khudai Khidmatgars won in alliance with the Congress Party. Khan Abdul Jabbar Khan was elected as the Chief Minister of the NWFP (present-day Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), who held this office for 7 September 1937 – 10 November 1939 and

16 March 1945 – 22 August 1947. Khudai Khidmatgars boycotted the 1947 NWFP referendum of joining India or Pakistan. (None of the other present-day provinces of Pakistan had a referendum)

<sup>4</sup> Unionist Party of Punjab defeated All India Muslim League in the elections in 1937 and 1942. They formed governments in undivided Punjab from 1937 to 1942 (Sikandar Hayat Khan being Prime Minister) and 1942 to 1947 (Malik Khizar Hayat Tiwana being Prime Minister).

<sup>5</sup> Sind United Party won most Muslim seats (21 out of 34) in the Sind Assembly in 1937. However, the Governor of Sind offered the Sind Muslim Political Party to form a government instead. Although, Allah Bux Soomro, one of the founders, served as Premier of Sindh from 23 March 1938 – 18 April 1940 and 27 March 1942 – 14 October 1942.

The Founding Father of Pakistan and the first Governor General, Mohammad Ali Jinnah in his Presidential Address to the Constituent Assembly on 11<sup>th</sup> August 1947, said:

“You are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this state of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed, that has nothing to do with the business of State.” (Bennett-Jones and Hughes, 2018)

This was, however, not taken into account while drafting the Objective Resolution in 1949 which promised an Islamic Constitution (Karamat et al., 2019). It was presented by the first Prime Minister of Pakistan, Liaquat Ali Khan and was opposed by 21 out of 75 members of the constituent assembly, including all 10 minority members (Khan, 2005). Since then, all the constitutions promulgated in Pakistan, in 1956, 1962, and 1973 have the Objective Resolution as the preamble<sup>6</sup>.

The claim for Two-Nation theory have been contested since the very beginning but it was particularly in crisis after the independence of Bangladesh from Pakistan in 1971 because, unlike in 1940s or with post-independence wars with India, this time Muslims were fighting Muslims.<sup>7</sup> Still, the Two-Nation Theory is central to the Ideology of Pakistan taught in the Pakistan Studies. The analysis of Pakistani textbooks show that Islam is used as a unifying and defining characteristic of Pakistani national identity (Yaqian, 2011).

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<sup>6</sup> The Objective Resolution was strengthened legally when became a part of the constitution in 1985 by the Eighth Amendment during the military dictatorship of Zia-ul-Haq (Ahmad, 2018).

<sup>7</sup> Ethnicities were at play here. The Bengali population, which was approximately 56% of the total population and relatively homogenous than the then West Pakistan, were deprived of their fair share of resources and representation.

Role of religion in the country's politics can also be inferred from the fact that the Constitution of Pakistan (1973) does not only adopt Islam as the official state religion and prevents any non-Muslim to hold offices of the President or the Prime Minister, but it also defines what it means to be a Muslim:

“A person who does not believe in the absolute and unqualified finality of The Prophethood of MUHAMMAD (Peace be upon him), the last of the Prophets or claims to be a Prophet, in any sense of the word or of any description whatsoever, after MUHAMMAD (Peace be upon him), or recognizes such a claimant as a Prophet or religious reformer, is not a Muslim for the purposes of the Constitution or law.”<sup>8</sup>

Being a country with over 96% Muslim population<sup>9</sup>, Pakistan have been facing religious violence for past many years. It is argued that Pakistan came under the influence of Cold War and uprisings in the neighbouring Afghanistan and Iran during the 1970s (Akram, 2020) and before that, the Pakistani society was relatively secular.<sup>10</sup> The following decade of 1980s was to witness even more intense Islamization led by the military dictator General Zia-ul-Haqq in order to support the so-called Afghan Jihad. The defeat of Soviet Union in Afghanistan gave way to the emergence of Taliban who later defeated the Mujahedeen to form government. Pakistan was first and one of the only three countries to recognize the first Taliban government in Afghanistan in 1996.

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<sup>8</sup> Article 260, Constitution of Pakistan. Second amendment, 1974. The second amendment effectively ousted the Ahmadis from the (constitutionally) Muslim community as a result of protests demanding such an amendment. Now, they are a persecuted minority that cannot call themselves Muslims, neither can do anything that Muslims do (Prayers, greetings etc.).

<sup>9</sup> Based on Pakistan Census 2017 data released by Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

<sup>10</sup> However, there have been anti-Shia violence in 1936 – 1937 in Lucknow (now in India) and in 1963 in Thehri massacre in Sindh. Similarly, anti-Ahmadi riots took place in Lahore, Punjab in 1953 in which Jamaat-e-Islami had been instrumental (Karamat et al., 2019).

Political parties and groups, as well as the Pakistani military is accused of misleading the people by abusing religion for political or strategic interests and benefitting from the lack of religious knowledge among masses (Karamat et al. (2019), Akram (2020)). Foreign funding from Saudi Arabia and the use of the nexus of mosques and seminaries has aided the spread of extremist narratives (Bennett-Jones and Hughes, 2018).

After 9/11 attack on the World Trade Centre when US decided to invade Afghanistan, the Pakistani government led by military dictator General Pervez Musharraf decided to side with the US<sup>11</sup> in the War on Terror and there began the age of what Musharraf called ‘the enlightened moderation’.

It might be important to note that despite the state religion and religiously dominated culture of the society, the religious political parties have never been able to form a government in Pakistan at the federal level. They, however, have been part of various coalition governments or opposition alliances led by others. Moreover, the violent attacks on religious minorities have been cowardly in the form of targeted killings.

Karamat et al. (2019) draws a distinction between the Old Islamists and the New Islamists. Old Islamists being the traditional Madrassas, Scholars, Heirs and caretakers of the Sufi shrines. New Islamists are those who chose violence such as the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP hereafter). These old and new Islamists do not only differ in their ideology or representation of their versions of religion but also importantly in their techniques. The Jamaat-i-Islami, for example, had facilitated the Pakistani military during its military operations in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), in Afghan Jihad, in Kashmir Jihad, and drew a governmental power when military

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<sup>11</sup> Again, because Pakistan also sided with the US during the Afghan war against Soviet invasion. However, now the enemies were Taliban.

regimes were in power and acted as a pressure group by showing street power during democratic governments. TTP, on the other hand, captured territories by force aiming to eventually capture the entire state. They also conducted suicide bombings and targeted killings of civilians and military personnel throughout the country which they openly claimed.

The last decade witnessed a change in this dynamic. Whether it was the cold-blooded assassination of sitting Governor Punjab in 2011 by an Elite Force Policeman who was assigned to protect him, the brutal lynching of Mashal Khan, a university student in the university by fellow students in 2017, the on-and-off violent protests by the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (Hereafter TLP) killing number of policemen, or the mob lynching of Priyantha Kumara, a Sri Lankan national, by his co-workers in Sialkot on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021. What all these incidents have in common is that all of these involve accusations of blasphemy and can be viewed as examples of growing religious intolerance or extremism among common people (People who apparently do not belong to any organization with a militant agenda that has announced war with the state as was the case of TTP)<sup>12</sup>. Another important aspect maybe that these people belong to the Barelvi school of thought (Basit, 2020) which is, presumably, the largest Sunni Sect<sup>13</sup> in Pakistan and they do not have a much violent history.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> TLP was proscribed by the state as a terrorist organization on April 15, 2021, but it was not dissolved as a political party and the ban was revoked on November 8, 2021

<sup>13</sup> Sects, in this paper, are not necessarily extremist in nature as opposed to the usage of the term 'sect' in existing literature for rather extremist groups in comparison with the churches who are less extreme or moderate. Instead, sect here refers to a subgroup within the followers of a religion.

<sup>14</sup> Except for the Sunni Tehreek which had been involved in anti-Shia riots but primarily focus on 'protecting' Barelvi Sunnis and their mosques from the Deobandi influence. Whereas, the UN Designated Terrorist groups operating in Pakistan like Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LEJ) are from Deobandi sect.



Khan (2015) argues that anti-blasphemy laws of Pakistan have weaponized the extremists by legitimizing the act of killing a(n alleged) blasphemer. The anti-blasphemy laws constitute the Sections 295 to 298 in the Chapter XV of Pakistan Penal Code. The origins of these laws date back to the colonial era of British Raj in India when they were a part of the India Penal Code, 1860. Nevertheless, they have been amended in 1980 (to include Holy Personalities), 1982 (to include Holy Qur'an), 1984 (to prohibit Ahmadis from acting as Muslims) and 1985 (to strengthen 295-C) (Malik, 2017). The section that has been used notoriously in Pakistan, is 295-C which states that:

“Whoever by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representation, or by any imputation, innuendo, or insinuation, directly or indirectly, defiles the sacred name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) shall be punished with death, or imprisonment for life, and shall also be liable to fine.”

TTP portrayed themselves as the saviours of Islam by eliminating the threats to anti-blasphemy laws in a statement in which they claimed the responsibility of assassinating the then Minister for Minorities Affairs Shahbaz Bhatti because he was a part of a committee to review the blasphemy laws (Khan, 2015). The TLP is doing the same by guarding the ideological frontiers of the finality of Prophethood and honour of Prophet (Basit, 2020).

## **2b. Empirical studies**

Using pooled cross-section time series data for the period of 1980 to 2010 from four provinces and the federally controlled territory, Syed, Saeed, and Martin (2015) find that public education expenditures, law & order expenditures, ethnic diversity, urban population, inequality among provinces, the presence of domestic military

operations, and military aid from USA, all result in increased terrorist activity in Pakistan.

Another empirical study focusing on sectarian terrorist attacks in Pakistan and the role of the country's foreign policy, finds that economic cooperation with India and Iran increases the sectarian terrorism, so do bilateral loans from KSA. On the contrary, Pak-US strategic partnership during the Afghan Wars helped Pakistan curb religious terrorism. Whereas the military expenditure was found to be negatively correlated with religious terrorism (Abbas and Syed, 2021).

## **2c. Surveys**

Khan et al. (2017) conducted a survey to investigate perceived severity of religious intolerance, and its reasons among different religious groups in Pakistan. Namely, Sunni, Shia, Ahmadi<sup>15</sup>, and Christian. They surveyed 199 university students about seven possible causes of religious intolerance which were, impact of the school curriculum, lack of knowledge about other groups, hate literature, lack of social justice, family background and peer pressure, media, and foreign influence and history. Respondents of all groups agreed upon the severe level of religious intolerance towards Ahmadis but disagreed on all other groups. Ahmadis and Christians cited hate literature as the most important cause, whereas Sunni and Shia respondents rated the impact of the school curriculum as the greatest cause of intolerance.

Qadri (2018) surveyed madrassa (religious seminary) students, their parents, and teachers, in nine districts of the Punjab province. Respondents, unevenly, belonged

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<sup>15</sup> Ahmadis consider themselves to be a part of the Muslim community. However, the Constitution of Pakistan counts them in Non-Muslims since the Second Amendment (1974).

to Deobandi, Barelvi, Ahl-e-Hadith, Shiite schools of thought.<sup>16</sup> They conclude that Deobandi and Ahl-e-Hadith madrassas are more inclined towards religious extremism or so-called jihad, whereas Barelvi and Shiite madrassas are not that interested.

A similar survey was conducted in 2021 by Hanif, Ali, and Shaheen to compare the religious extremism and sympathy towards Taliban<sup>17</sup> among madrassa students and the students in formal education system that is public and private schools. They found that madrassa students are more inclined towards religious extremism, however, there is no difference in sympathy towards Taliban across school types – students were sympathetic towards Taliban in general. Further, more religiosity indicated greater sympathy towards Taliban in private schools but had no such effect in public schools or madrassas.

## **Research Problem and Hypotheses**

Now the question is, what are the factors at play here which can explain the rise in public approval of religious extremism. Following the secularization theory in literature which argues that economic development makes religious appeal less attractive, the following hypotheses would be tested:

Religious extremist parties are likely to receive more votes from

- People from lower income groups than higher income groups. *H<sub>1</sub>*

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<sup>16</sup> Deobandi, Barelvi, Ahl-e-Hadith are often grouped together as Sunni Muslims among other sub-groups

<sup>17</sup> Taliban here refers to the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), a proscribed terrorist organization in Pakistan, not the Afghan Taliban.

- People with lower levels of education than higher levels of education.  $H_2$

- People from rural areas than people from urban areas.  $H_3$

Inspired by the club models and following the literature that argue that religious sects provide a sense of identity and belongingness, the following hypotheses would be tested:

Religious extremist parties are likely to receive more votes from residents of

- Districts with lower ethnic diversity than with higher ethnic diversity.  $H_4$

- Districts with lower religious diversity than with higher religious diversity.  $H_5$

The club model of religion can also be applied to religiopolitical parties. In areas with lower diversity, they can mobilize masses based on identity politics and use their influence for effective collective action. In the areas with higher diversity, they are expected to meet more competition.

## **Data**

This section introduces the data to be used to analyse the research problem mentioned above. It sheds light on the data sources and the key characteristics of each dataset including relevant variables and time period. It also briefly provides a historical context and challenges associated with analysing the elections in Pakistan.

## **General Elections 1970 – 2018**

Politics in Pakistan, as in many other places, is relatively nuanced. 120 parties participated in the last General Elections held in 2018. Currently, there are 142 political parties registered with the Election Commission of Pakistan. In our dataset for ten General Elections since 1970, we have 410 political parties in total. Out of which, 54 are religiopolitical parties.

The dataset contains per candidate votes received by parties in each constituency during ten General Elections to elect the National Assembly of Pakistan.<sup>18</sup> These elections were held in the following years: 1970<sup>19</sup>, 1977, 1988, 1990, 1993, 1997, 2002, 2008, 2013, 2018.

Over the period of 48 years, some parties changed names, split, and merged. Here, I grouped them with the major religious party they were part of for the most period of their political relevance. It reduces the number of religious parties from 54 to 16 groups. All major religious parties along with major religious alliances in the country are covered here using their commonly used abbreviations. For example, for Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, there was All Pakistan Central Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam and Nizam-e-Islam in 1970 which was active in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and there was also Jamiat Ulma-e-Islam Nazryati Pakistan in 2013 which breakaway from JUIF and rejoined it in 2016. Both these parties were grouped together with JUIF which inherited their members as well as votes arguably. JUIF itself came into being when Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam split into Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazal-ur-Rehman (JUIF) and

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<sup>18</sup> The primary source of the data on elections is the Election Commission of Pakistan. It was compiled by Nimra Ejaz and available for download at OpenData Pakistan at: <https://opendata.com.pk/dataset/election-database-1970-2018> (Downloaded on November 5, 2021)

<sup>19</sup> For the elections of 1970, only the then West Pakistan (present day Pakistan) is included in the data

Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Sami-ul-Haqq (JUIS) in 1988 which later reunited in 2020 after the assassination of Sami-ul-Haqq. Since both these parties had opposing stances on some matters of national importance and contested elections separately for 7 out of 10 elections in our sample, they are treated as two separate parties. For the remaining 3 elections, they were part of a larger alliance discussed later. The remaining religious parties about which there was insufficient information, or which nominated one or just a few more candidates in a single election, or both, are grouped together as Miscellaneous (Misc.).

A common electoral strategy in Pakistan is ‘seat adjustment’. One of the ways of seat adjustment is forming an electoral alliance before the elections. Such an alliance is registered as a party with the Election Commission of Pakistan, publishes a single manifesto for the election, and nominates a joint candidate for each seat of the National Assembly on the ticket of the alliance. Since my data is based on the votes received by each candidate representing the party (or alliance) that nominated them for that election to the Election Commission of Pakistan, I treat such alliances as single parties such an alliance for the election of 1993 that is Islami Jamhoori Mahaz (IJM) comprising JUIF and a faction of Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan (JUP). Another such case is Muttahidda Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) which is an alliance of six major religious parties that contested elections under one banner in 2002, 2008, 2018. MMA includes JUP, JUIF, JUIS, Jamaat-i-Islami (JI), Jamiat-i-Ahle Hadith (JAHS), and the Islami Tehreek Pakistan (ITP). A rather recent alliance is Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) comprising 15 smaller religious parties that contested election jointly in 2018. There have also been some alliances that included both religious and non-religious parties such as the opposition’s alliance to defeat the incumbent Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) in the elections of 1977 called Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) which included JI, JUI, JUP, Muslim League Qayyum, Muslim League

Functional, Pakistan Democratic Party<sup>20</sup>, Tehreek-e-Istaqlal<sup>21</sup>, National Democratic Party and Balochistan National Party. Apart from the last two who were rather left leaning, all other parties had a religious or conservative outlook.

It is also worth mentioning that apart from candidates nominated by parties, people can nominate themselves as independents candidates. However, the independent candidates are not part of this sample as there is little to no information available on their manifestos and electoral campaigns. Similarly, the nonparty elections of 1985 during the military dictatorship of General Zia-ul-Haqq are not a part of this analysis.<sup>22</sup>

A challenge here is that not every party participated in every election. Some parties which were active in 1970s died down later. Similarly, some parties were formed recently and only contested the 2018 election. This makes it difficult to compare their electoral performance. To address this problem, I compare them on the basis of their common extremist traits.

### **Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys 2010 – 2019**

Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) were conducted in Pakistan by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in coordination with the provincial governments during the last decade. These district representative surveys were

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<sup>20</sup> Formed by Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan in June 1967. Merged into Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in 2012.

<sup>21</sup> Formed by Air Marshal Retd. Asghar Khan in 1970. Merged into Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in 2012.

<sup>22</sup> Some other observations removed from the sample were the rare instances where a single party nominated two candidates for a single seat. Their votes were combined to a single observation to eliminate duplicates.

carried out in Punjab in the years of 2011, 2014, 2017, in Sindh in 2014 and 2018, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2017 and 2019, in Balochistan<sup>23</sup> in 2010.<sup>24</sup>

Each survey includes data on household members, their education, health, sanitation, access to clean water, energy sources, ownership of assets, and social benefits. Moreover, their asset-based wealth quintiles are also included in the data. The district codes of MICS data were recoded to analyze it with the electoral data.

### **Income Tax Directory 2018**

Fiscal year ends in Pakistan on June 30th. The last General Elections were held on July 25th, 2018.

The income tax directory of the fiscal year 2018 has microdata of the all the income tax filers in Pakistan.<sup>25</sup> It has 2.743 million entries including name, gender, tax registration number, amount of tax paid in Pakistani Rupees (PKR) and tax slab. It also indicates geographical information including province, division, and district. Approximately 83% of the tax filers were men and only 17% were women.

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<sup>23</sup> MICS was also conducted in Balochistan in 2019 but the data has not been released as of March 15, 2022.

<sup>24</sup> MICS data was downloaded from the UNICEF data repository at: <https://mics.unicef.org/surveys> (Downloaded on February 4, 2022, except for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 2019 which was released and downloaded on March 17, 2022)

<sup>25</sup> The primary source of the data on income tax is the Federal Board of Revenue, Pakistan. It was published by Gallup Pakistan and is maintained by Tahmina Shoaib. It is available for download at OpenData Pakistan at: <https://opendata.com.pk/dataset/tax-directory-of-pakistan-2018> (Downloaded on November 11, 2021)



Since the General Elections are only held in the provinces of Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa<sup>26</sup>, Balochistan and the Federal Capital Territory, I had to exclude the tax data from Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Kashmir.

### **Census 2017**

The Government of Pakistan conducted a countrywide census in 2017. I used the district level data published by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics for district population by religion and mother tongue.<sup>27</sup> The table on population by religion includes Muslims, Christians, Hindus, Ahmadis, Scheduled Castes<sup>28</sup>, and Others. The table on population by mother tongue includes Urdu, Punjabi, Sindhi, Pushto, Balochi, Kashmiri, Saraiki, Hindko, Brahvi, and Others.

### **Auqaf Mosques**

The Auqaf department is responsible for management and maintenance of *waqf* mosques and shrines.<sup>29</sup> Each province has its own Auqaf department under the Provincial government. I collected the data of mosques and shrines from each district listed on the websites of each provincial government and the federal capital.<sup>30</sup> Auqaf

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<sup>26</sup> Including the previously called Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).

<sup>27</sup> Census tables pertaining to each district are available here: <https://www.pbs.gov.pk/content/district-wise-results-tables-census-2017> (Accessed on May 7, 2022)

<sup>28</sup> Scheduled castes, also called untouchables, are Hindus that are considered outside of the four-tier (*varna*) caste system. The term “Scheduled Caste” is a colonial legacy that lives on, and these people traditionally belong to cleaning and sanitation services.

<sup>29</sup> Waqf property means donated property designated for a certain use, in mosque’s case, praying. Although, the actual number of mosques might be higher in some districts, the waqf mosques are a significantly large proportion of places of worship in Pakistan.

<sup>30</sup> Except for Balochistan province. Their website stated that there are 2 mosques managed by them, but no detail could be found regarding their location. Links to Auqaf webpages:

controls 89 mosques and shrines in Islamabad, 83 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 158 in Sindh, 712 in Punjab, and just 2 in Balochistan.

### **Distance to Afghanistan**

Pakistan and Afghanistan share a 2,640 km long border called the Durand Line.<sup>31</sup> There are deep-rooted cross-border ties of languages, religion, and culture. Politics in one country has overarching effects on the other. To account for this, I calculated the minimum possible distance from the border of each district to the Durand Line.

### **Methodology**

This section outlines the methodology to be followed for analysing the research problem using the data described above.

### **Step 1 – Extremism Scale**

Many religious parties were founded by religious scholars. Notable examples are Shabbir Ahmad Usmani who founded Jamiat Ulema-e Islam (hereafter JUI) in 1945 and Abul A'la Maududi who founded Jamaat-i-Islami (hereafter JI) in 1941. Both parties represent the Deobandi school of thought of Sunni sect in Islam and were founded before the partition. Maududi's JI was against the division of British India,

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Balochistan: <https://balochistan.gov.pk/departments/religious-affairs-and-interfaith-harmony/>,  
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: <https://auqaf.kp.gov.pk/page/districtwisemasajid>, Punjab:  
<https://auqaf.punjab.gov.pk/shrines>, <https://auqaf.punjab.gov.pk/mosques>, Sindh  
<https://arazud.sindh.gov.pk/list-of-dargahs-mosques>, Islamabad  
<http://ictadministration.gov.pk/departments/auqaf-department/> (Last accessed on May 5, 2022)

<sup>31</sup> The Government of Afghanistan has never recognized it as an international border.

whereas Usmani's JUI fully backed the creation of Pakistan. Current leaders of these parties are, however, not conventional religious scholars. JUI is led by Fazal-ur-Rehman who is the son of a former head of JUI and an Islamic scholar Mufti Mahmud. Rehman received religious education from seminaries like Darul Uloom Haqqania, his bachelor's degree from the University of Peshawar and master's degree from Al-Azhar University, Cairo. JI's current chief Siraj-ul-Haqq did bachelor's in Political Science from the University of Peshawar and earned his master's degree from the University of Punjab. Haqq joined the student wing of JI during his studies and rose the ranks from there.

The common factor among religious parties is that they focus on the Muslim identity of the populace and the state of Pakistan. Further, they emphasize on the role of religion in sociopolitical matters and draw their political positions in the light of their (interpretation of) religious teachings. Issues that unite these parties are the issues of ostensible religious importance such as the finality of prophethood, blasphemy, atrocities faced by Muslims in Kashmir and Palestine.

These parties also have their differences. Major differences include the sects they represent, the doctrines they follow, their political alliances, and their takes on matters of national and international importance such as military rule in the country or the war on terror. Due to the significant differences, they cannot be treated as a single group. Some of these parties have an extremist outlook while others are moderate in their advocacy for making Pakistan an Islamic society. To solve this problem, I have designed a scale for rating these parties to ascertain their place on the Moderate-Extremist spectrum.

The scale in the Table 1 was developed and used for rating religious political parties in Pakistan from Moderate to Extremist. This scale comprises of 12-point criteria carrying varying weights. Some of these points have binary statements which means

that the party can get a score of -1 or 1. In some rare instances, the party manifestos and/or websites had contradictory statements which made them receive both -1 and 1, hence, effectively zero. The other points have more statements and for every statement that is true for the party, they get a 1 and if none of the statements are true, they get the total with a negative sign such as -7 for Hate Speech which has seven statements or -3 for Network and Resources which has 3 statements. For the points where sufficient information was not available for certain parties, they do not get any score which essentially leaves their score zero for that point.

The weights for each of the 12 points were not kept uniform to arrive at more reasonable conclusions. For instance, representing a certain school of thought cannot be the logical equivalent to incitement to violence, however, both may be considered extreme to different extents because the former alienates others, and the latter endangers their lives.

While preparing this scale, I looked at some of existing scales for gauging extremist potential of suspects being used in different countries including Extremism Risk Guidelines (Powis et al., 2019) used in UK, Violent Extremism Risk Assessment 2 Revised (Sadowski et al, 2017) used in Netherlands, and Twenty Indicators for Monitoring Extremism (Schmid, A.P., 2014). All these scales were for individuals and mostly had a Eurocentric focus which is why none of them were adopted. The scale I developed is focused on Pakistan and is country context specific. It may, however, be modified for use in other predominantly Muslim countries especially in South Asia. It was designed to cover religiopolitical parties but as these parties are constituted of and represented by individuals, it may also be beneficial for analysing individuals.

**Table 1: Extremism Scale**

	<b>Weight</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Extremist</b>
<b>1. Identities</b>	0.025	-1	1
<b>2. Representation</b>	0.025	-1	1
<b>3. Faiths</b>	0.025	-2	2
<b>4. Women rights</b>	0.050	-1	1
<b>5. Minority rights</b>	0.050	-1	1
<b>6. Blasphemy</b>	0.100	-5	5
<b>7. Defence of Islam and Ideology of Pakistan</b>	0.100	-4	4
<b>8. Hate speech</b>	0.150	-7	7
<b>9. Violence</b>	0.150	-2	2
<b>10. Criminal history of members</b>	0.225	-7	7
<b>11. Promises in manifestos</b>	0.075	-12	12
<b>12. Network and resources</b>	0.025	-3	3
<b>Sum</b>	<b>1.000</b>	<b>-5</b>	<b>5</b>

### **Step 2 – Vote Share of Extremist Religious Parties**

Based on their final score on Extremism Scale, religious parties were divided into two groups, namely Extremist and Non-Extremist. Parties that scored above the median were categorized as Extremist and the rest as Non-Extremists. Then, their vote share was measured and graphed.

### **Step 3 – Votes for Religious Extremists and Socioeconomic Situation**

Fixed Effects Model with the following specification:

$$Y_{d,s,e} = \alpha + \beta_1 X_{1d,s,e} + \beta_2 X_{2d,s,e} + \dots + \beta_{11} X_{11d,s,e} + \phi_d + \phi_s + \phi_e + \varepsilon_{d,s,e}$$

Where,

$Y$ : Vote share of religious extremist parties in a district for a National Assembly seat(s) during a General Election.

$\alpha$ : constant term

$X_1$ : Level of education

$X_2$ : Number of household members

$X_3$ : Area (Urban/Rural)

$X_4$ : Wealth Quintiles (as determined by UNICEF in MICS)

$X_5$ : Television ownership (proxy for access to information)

$X_6$ : Ethnolinguistic fractionalization index

$X_7$ : Religious fractionalization index

$X_8$ : Mosques per 1000 people (proxy for religiosity)

$X_9$ : Distance to Pak-Afghan border

$X_{10}$ : Income inequality (Gini index)

$X_{11}$ : Income tax paid

$\phi_d$ : Unobserved time-invariant district specific effects

$\phi_s$ : Unobserved survey year specific effects

$\phi_e$ : Unobserved election year specific effects

$\varepsilon$ : error term

For this fixed-effects regression model, I benefitted from the Sergio Correia (2014) which offers an estimator for multiple levels of fixed effects for panel data analysis. I used the MICS data described above and the General Elections data for elections of 2013 and 2018 that took place in the corresponding period. All variables were aggregated on a district level.

For ethnolinguistic and religious fractionalization indices, I used the Census 2017 data discussed above. To create a fractionalization index, the following formula was borrowed from Alesina, A., Devleeschauwer, A., Easterly, W., Kurlat, S. and Wacziarg, R., (2003):

$$FRACT_d = 1 - \sum_{i=1}^N s_{id}^2$$

Where  $s_{ij}$  is the share of ethnic or religious group  $i$  ( $i= 1 \dots N$ ) in district  $d$ .

For mosques per 1000 thousand people, I used the number of mosques and shrines managed by Auqaf department in each province as discussed in the Data section above. Then I calculated the values for each district as follows:

$$Mosques \text{ per } 1000 \text{ people} = \frac{Mosques + Shrines}{Total \text{ Population}} \times 1000$$

For the approximately minimum possible physical distance to Pak-Afghan border or the Durand Line, I measured the distance from the Western, North-western, or South-western borders of each district to the Eastern border of Afghanistan in kilometres using publicly available maps.

For the last two variables, I used the tax data for the fiscal year 2018 described in the data section above. The Gini index was calculated using the income tax slabs

from the budget of fiscal year 2018 (See: Appendix 2) benefiting from Sajaia A., (2007) which offers an estimator for calculating Gini coefficient efficiently.

## **Results and Discussion**

This section discusses the results obtained by following the methodology outlined above.

### **Step 1 – Extremism Scale**

The 12-point extremism scale introduced above was used to rate religious parties on a Moderate (-5) to Extremist (5) spectrum. Point-wise results are shared below.

#### **1. Identities**

The party gets 1 if it advocates that there is no identity but Islam (in other words, people can be either Muslims or Non-Muslims). On the contrary, if it argues that all identities, be they ethnic, racial, national, etc., and diversity should be respected, it gets a -1.

AAT	IJM	JAH	JI	JUIF	JUIS	JUP	MMA	MWM	PAT	PNA	SIC	ST	TLP	TLI	TNFJ
0	-0.5	0	-1	-1	0	0	-0.33	0	-1	-0.22	0	0	1	0	1



## 2. Representation

The party gets 1 if it represents a certain school of thought such as Deobandi or Barelvi, or a sect such as Sunni or Shia, within Islam. Conversely, it gets a -1 if it claims to represent all Muslims.

AAT	IJM	JAH	JI	JUIF	JUIS	JUP	MMA	MWM	PAT	PNA	SIC	ST	TLP	TLI	TNFJ
0	1	1	1	1	1	1	-1	-1	0	-1	1	1	-1	1	-1

## 3. Faiths

The party gets 1 if it claims moral superiority over people of other faiths. Additionally, it gets 1 if it propagates perceived victimhood claiming that people of other faiths are busy conspiring against them. If, on the other hand, the party advocates for tolerance for other faiths and interpretations of Islam, it gets -2. For some parties like JI, JUIF, and TLP there was evidence to support all three statements, hence their subtotal for this point is zero. MWM got -1 as there was evidence for tolerance as well as perceived victimhood.

AAT	IJM	JAH	JI	JUIF	JUIS	JUP	MMA	MWM	PAT	PNA	SIC	ST	TLP	TLI	TNFJ
0	1	2	0	0	1	2	1	-1	-2	0.22	1	-2	0	0	2

## 4. Women Rights

The party gets 1 if it states that women should be given their rights as prescribed by Islam. Conversely, it gets -1 if it advocates that all genders should have equal rights. There was evidence for both statements for JUIF, hence, zero.

AAT	IJM	JAH	JI	JUIF	JUIS	JUP	MMA	MWM	PAT	PNA	SIC	ST	TLP	TLI	TNFJ
0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	-1	0.11	0	0	1	1	0

## 5. Minority Rights

The party gets 1 if it states that minorities should be given their rights as prescribed by Islam. Conversely, it gets -1 if it advocates that all citizens should have equal rights irrespective of their share in the population.

AAT	IJM	JAH	JI	JUIF	JUIS	JUP	MMA	MWM	PAT	PNA	SIC	ST	TLP	TLI	TNFJ
1	0.5	0	-1	1	1	0	-1	-1	-1	0	0	0	1	1	-1

## 6. Blasphemy

The party gets a 1 for each of the following statements and -5 if it does not support use of force against alleged blasphemers.

- Support death penalty for blasphemers and use of (anti)blasphemy laws
- Consider dutybound to defend the honour of Islam (Allah, Qur'an, religion in general)
- Consider dutybound to defend the honour of Prophet Mohammad peace be upon him
- Consider dutybound to defend the honour of Prophet Mohammad's companions (Sahaba)
- Consider dutybound to defend the honour of Prophet Mohammad's family (Ahl-e-bait)

AAT	IJM	JAH	JI	JUIF	JUIS	JUP	MMA	MWM	PAT	PNA	SIC	ST	TLP	TLI	TNFJ
1	4	3	4	4	4	4	3	2	-5	1.33	2	4	3	3	0

It may be argued that all these points could be combined into one which is why it important to elaborate why they have been kept separate. While all Muslims have Prophet Mohammad as the Prophet of Islam, their ways of reverence differ according to their sects and schools of thought. After the Prophet, the religious leaders and reliable sources of guidance also differ. More importantly, certain laws are used as instruments to target certain sects such as Section 298-A of the Pakistan Penal Code which relates to blasphemy of the family members and companions of the Prophet is mostly used against Shias (Rumi, 2018), whereas Section 295-C which relates to blasphemy of the Holy Prophet is used against both Muslims and people who practice other religions.

## 7. Defence of Islam and Ideology of Pakistan

The party gets a 1 for each of the following statements and -4 if it considers defence to be a function of state only.

- Consider dutybound to defend Islam
- Consider dutybound to safeguard the finality of Prophethood
- Consider dutybound to defend the ideological boundaries of Pakistan
- Consider dutybound to wage war for the spread of Islam and making Islam a global power

AAT	IJM	JAH	JI	JUIF	JUIS	JUP	MMA	MWM	PAT	PNA	SIC	ST	TLP	TLI	TNFJ
0	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	2	2	4	3	2

On a superficial level, the statements in point 6 and 7 may not appear to be very different from each other. In the context of Pakistani politics, there are significant differences. People who may be ready to kill an alleged blasphemer may not necessarily be in favour of waging war for the spread of Islam. Furthermore, as there are certain laws against blasphemy, there are certain laws to safeguard the finality of Prophethood, such as section 298-B and 298-C of PPC which are used against the Ahmadis (Rumi, 2018).

## 8. Hate Speech

The party gets a 1 for each of the following statements and -7 if it is against excommunication from Islam (LaTakfeer) and pro-acceptance of diversity.

- Hate speech and propaganda against Ahmadis (Takfeer – declaring them infidels)
- Hate speech and propaganda against Shias (Takfeer – declaring them infidels)
- Hate speech and propaganda against other religions
- Hate speech and propaganda against other countries
- Public admission, defence, or incitement to forceful conversions
- Public admission, defence, or incitement to cleansing (by forcing to flee or killing)
- Public admission, defence, announcing head money, or incitement to kill

AAT	IJM	JAH	JI	JUIF	JUIS	JUP	MMA	MWM	PAT	PNA	SIC	ST	TLP	TLI	TNFJ
2	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	-7	-7	1	1	2	4	1	-7

## 9. Violence

The party gets 1 if it justifies violence and claims that ends justify the means. Additionally, it gets 1 if it glorifies death in a militant activity or by capital punishment from a court as martyrdom. If the party argues that means are as important as the ends and violence cannot be justified, it gets -2.

AAT	IJM	JAH	JI	JUIF	JUIS	JUP	MMA	MWM	PAT	PNA	SIC	ST	TLP	TLI	TNFJ
0	2	2	2	2	2	2	1.67	0	0	0.67	2	2	2	2	0

## 10. Criminal History of Members

The party gets a 1 for each of the following statements and -7 if no such accusations or indictments were found.

- Accused of extortion
- Accused of murders
- Accused of riots or mob violence
- Accused of forced conversion
- Accused of attacks on police, law enforcement agencies, or state machinery
- Accused of attacks on religious processions or places of worship or graveyards
- Have been banned or been on watchlist in the same or another name

AAT	IJM	JAH	JI	JUIF	JUIS	JUP	MMA	MWM	PAT	PNA	SIC	ST	TLP	TLI	TNFJ
3	1.5	1	4	3	2	0	2	0	3	0.78	1	4	5	0	1

It might be important to note that I have scored on the basis of accusations and not indictment or sentences by a court of law. The choice was made due to technical reasons. Firstly, it was difficult to track court cases for all parties. Secondly, it would have favoured parties who manage to get cases withdrawn by the government using street power, such as TLP.

## 11. Promises in Manifestos

The party gets a 1 for each of the following statements and -12 if none of the following promises were made in the manifestos.

- End secularism
- Spread teachings of Islam (Tableegh)
- Mosques would be empowered
- Friday would be restored as weekend
- Education would be based on the teachings of Islam
- Separate educational institutions will be established for girls
- Law and Justice system would be based on Islamic Jurisprudence (Shari'ah)
- Role of the Council of Islamic Ideology<sup>32</sup> should be strengthened

<sup>32</sup> The Council of Islamic Ideology was initially introduced as Islamic Commission set up in the Constitution of 1956. Later in the constitution of 1962, it was designated as Advisory Council of Islamic Ideology. Re-designed as Council of Islamic Ideology in the current constitution of 1973. Its constitutional role is to advise the parliament on legislation in the light of Qur'an and Sunnah whenever sought. Historically, it has opposed the bills against domestic violence, underage marriage, death penalty. Source: CII presentation in Urdu <http://www.cii.gov.pk/aboutcii.aspx>

- Economy (including banking, insurance, finance) would be based on Islam
- Freedom of press, media, and expression would be within the boundaries of Islam
- Islamic culture, history, and positive image of Islam would be promoted
- Encouragement of good deeds and discouragement bad deeds (Amar-bil-Mar'oof wa Nahi-anil-Munkir)

AAT	IJM	JAH	JI	JUIF	JUIS	JUP	MMA	MWM	PAT	PNA	SIC	ST	TLP	TLI	TNFJ
4	5	3	9	8	6	2	11	4	2	5	0	1	7	3	7

It is important to note that while all available manifestos for each party were read carefully and completely, only those promises were included here that had a religious angle.

## 12. Network and Resources

The party gets a 1 for each of the following statements and -3 if it does not have any of these resources.

- Collect alms (Zakat, Ushr, Fitrana, Khums, animal skins)
- Runs a not-for-profit organization or does participates in welfare work
- Runs (or have influence over) mosques and religious seminaries (Madrassas)

AAT	IJM	JAH	JI	JUIF	JUIS	JUP	MMA	MWM	PAT	PNA	SIC	ST	TLP	TLI	TNFJ
3	0	2	3	3	3	-3	1.167	3	3	1.02	0	3	1	0	1

Although having network and resources may not indicate extremist tendencies per say, they might be used to perpetuate them. Moreover, having such resources at hand aid religious parties to gather street power as discussed in Qadri (2018) where 50 per cent of madrassa students surveyed said that they had participated in political rallies on the behest of administration. In the same way, such resources can be useful for election campaigns and winning votes.

### Sum

As shown in Table 1, the 12-points carry varying weights. Hence, the sum of each point was multiplied by its weight and then the result was added together to get the final score which is produced below.

AAT	IJM	JAH	JI	JUIF	JUIS	JUP	MMA	MWM	PAT	SIC	ST	TLP	TLI	TNFJ
1.5	2.225	2.075	3.1	2.85	2.55	1.6	2.596	-0.375	-0.725	1.125	2.225	3.375	1.4	-0.075

Below is a graphical representation of the final score of religious parties on the extremism scale along with their scores for Hate Speech and Criminal History to provide a snapshot of their overall position. Parties that scored above the median are categorized as Extremist.



## **Caveats: A word of Caution!**

### ***Objectivity***

For the sake of objectivity, I have refrained from scoring statements as true (1 mark for each true statement) based on prior knowledge and used the publicly available information instead for a certain score in each of the 12 points for each party.<sup>33</sup> For the most part, the primary and preferred source of information was the party manifesto following the approach of The Manifesto Project (Volgens et al, 2021). When this was not possible, other sources such as the party constitution, literature, website, and social media were used. Secondary sources like media reports or the government sources such as Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for party listings and National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) for the proscribed organizations were also used.

### ***Imperfect information***

The leading religious parties like JI or JUI have well-maintained websites and an active presence on social media. They also receive wide coverage in national and international media. The smaller parties, on the opposite, do not enjoy the same perks. It was, therefore, difficult to gather information about the smaller parties which may have contributed to their lower sum to an extent. Similarly, it was difficult to find information about the parties that are no longer active in comparison with parties which have emerged recently. When I was unable to find any evidence

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<sup>33</sup> References can be provided on request

for any of the statements to be true or otherwise, I have left that statement unscored, effectively zero. This imperfection can be traced to the points where they scored zero.

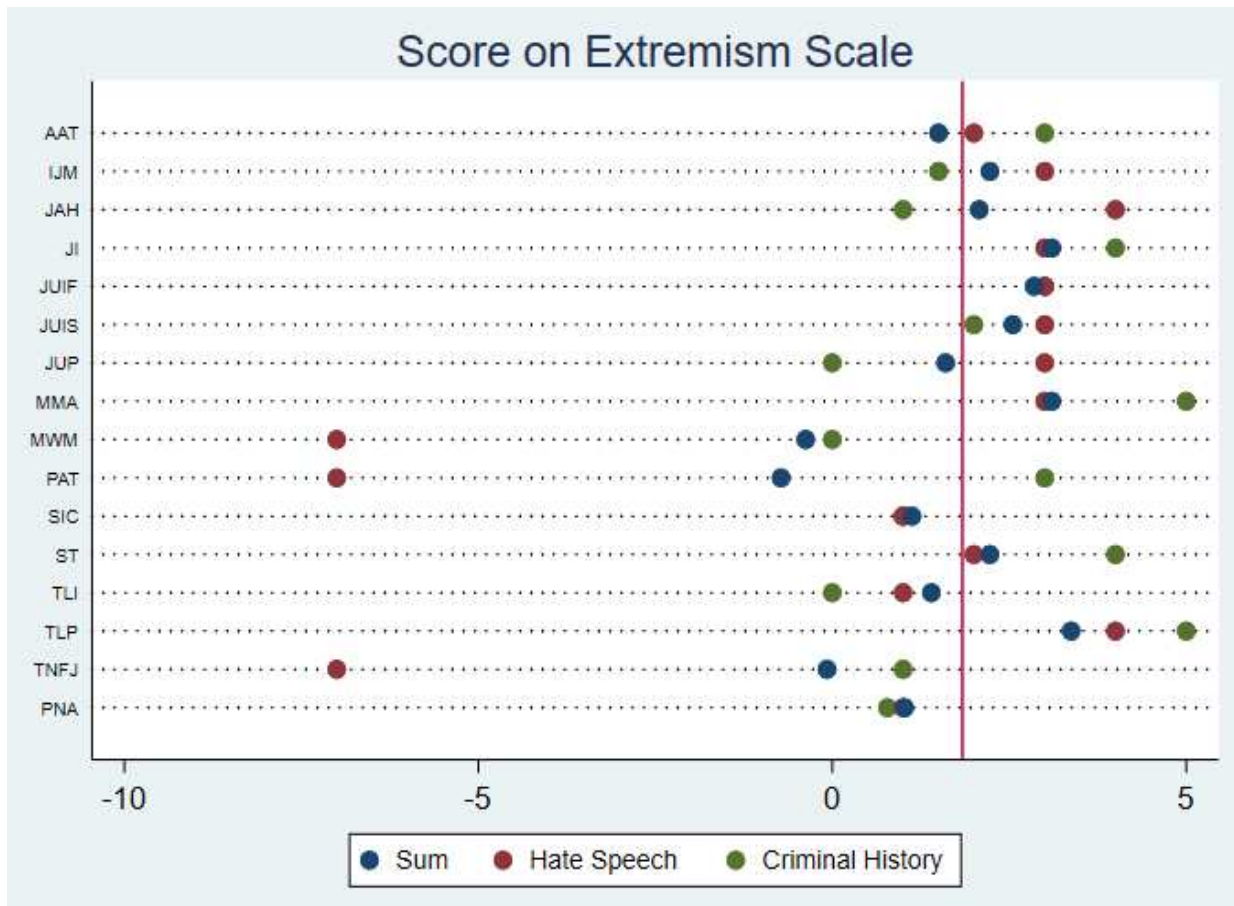


Figure 2: Final score of religious parties on the extremism scale along with their scores for Hate Speech and Criminal History. Red vertical line shows the median score. Parties that scored above the median are categorized as Extremist.

### Rating alliances

Rating alliances was a bigger challenge. They have different parties even representing different sects or schools of thought. As most of these alliances were

electoral in nature, their joint manifesto was the primary source for rating, such as in the case of MMA. This was, albeit not always the case. For the points where it was not possible to score an alliance as a single entity, there could be at least two solutions.

First, to put 1 mark for the statement which was true for any party in the alliance. This approach would result in higher scores for alliances than for single parties, essentially look them at least as extreme as the most extremist party within the alliance. In fact, using this approach, the score for MMA was 3.5 which was higher than any individual party in the alliance. In reality, alliances are expected to take less extremist positions because they have to get all parties in the alliance onboard. For instance, even if some party leaders may criticize the other sects at other occasions, they are less likely to do that from the alliance's platform or while being part of an alliance with parties representing those sects.

Second, to calculate the average of the scores secured by the individual parties within an alliance. This would place the alliance somewhere in the middle of the scores of individual parties in the alliance. For example, IJM has a score of 2.225 which is the average of 2.85 for JUIF and 1.6 for JUP.

To deal with this challenge, a mixed approach is used. For the points where there was information available for the alliance as a collective, such as for Promises in Manifestos, the alliance was scored as any other single party. Where it was not possible, the scores of individual parties were averaged out. Using this approach, the score for MMA is 2.596 which is lower than 3.1 for JI and 2.85 for JUIF but higher than the remaining four parties. It is also higher than 2.104 which is the average of six parties in this alliance.

### ***Extremist vs. Terrorist***

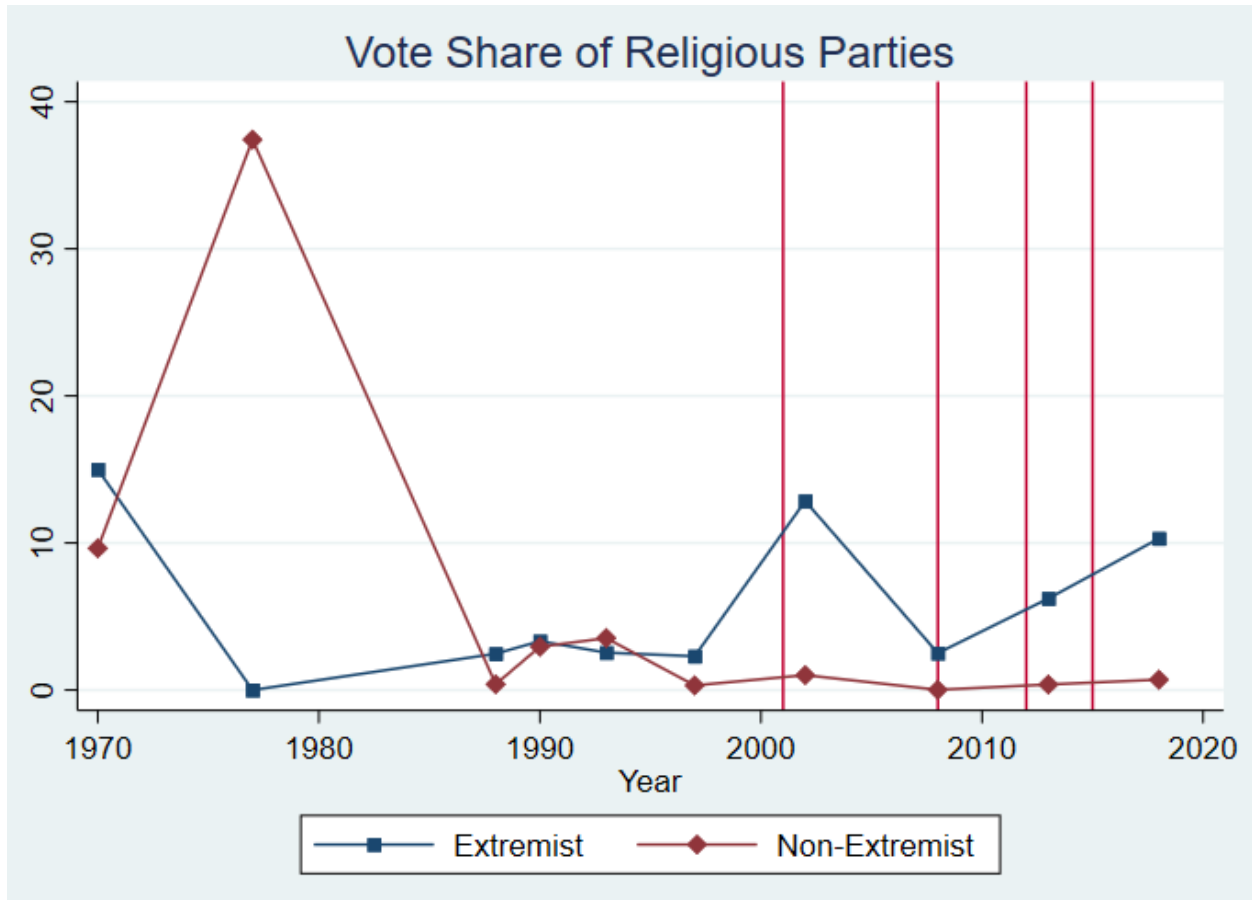
Based on the criteria for rating parties on the basis of publicly available information from or about them, it may sometimes seem difficult to distinguish between the terrorist outfits and parties that participate in the elections but have an extremist outlook. Therefore, it is important to mention here that I drew (or rather followed) the line on the fact that the parties allowed to contest elections were not designated terrorists by the Government of Pakistan for the period of given elections. Moreover, all these parties recognize the state and government of Pakistan and have faith in the electoral democracy to varying extents.

### **Step 2 – Vote Share of Extremist Religious Parties**

Figure 3 shows the share of votes received by religious parties in the last ten General Elections. Beginning with 2002, the extremist parties have secured a handsome number of votes in last four elections, higher than the non-extremist religious parties. The General Elections of 2002 were during the military regime of Gen. Pervez Musharraf and were observed to be designed to suit him better by the Commonwealth Observer Group. Mainstream political leaders were barred from contesting elections and were being persecuted. Meanwhile, the religious parties built their campaign against the US intervention in Afghanistan. Still, the observers noted that the success of religious parties was unexpected (CHRI, 2002).

The graph also shows that the number of votes received by these parties decreased in the General Elections of 2008 which were held in the month of February when the world was moving towards the Global Financial Crisis. These elections marked the return of democracy in Pakistan and brought an end to the military dictatorship

of Gen. Musharraf within a few months. However, number of votes casted in favour of extremist parties increased in the following General Elections of 2013 and 2018.



*Figure 3: This graph shows the share of votes received by religious parties in 10 General Elections to the National Assembly of Pakistan. It can be observed that the vote share of extremist religious parties is higher than non-extremist religious parties. Further, the vertical red lines depicting external shocks show that the vote share of extremists increased in 2002 after the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Centre and US invasion in Afghanistan, similarly their vote share increased in 2013 after the release of, a blasphemous film, *The Innocence of Muslims* in 2012 and in 2018 after the publication of blasphemous cartoons of Prophet Muhammad in *Charlie Hebdo* in 2015. In 2008, on the contrary, during the Global Financial Crisis, the vote share of the religious extremist parties decreased.*

The graph below offers a glimpse of variation in the share of votes received by religious parties across districts.

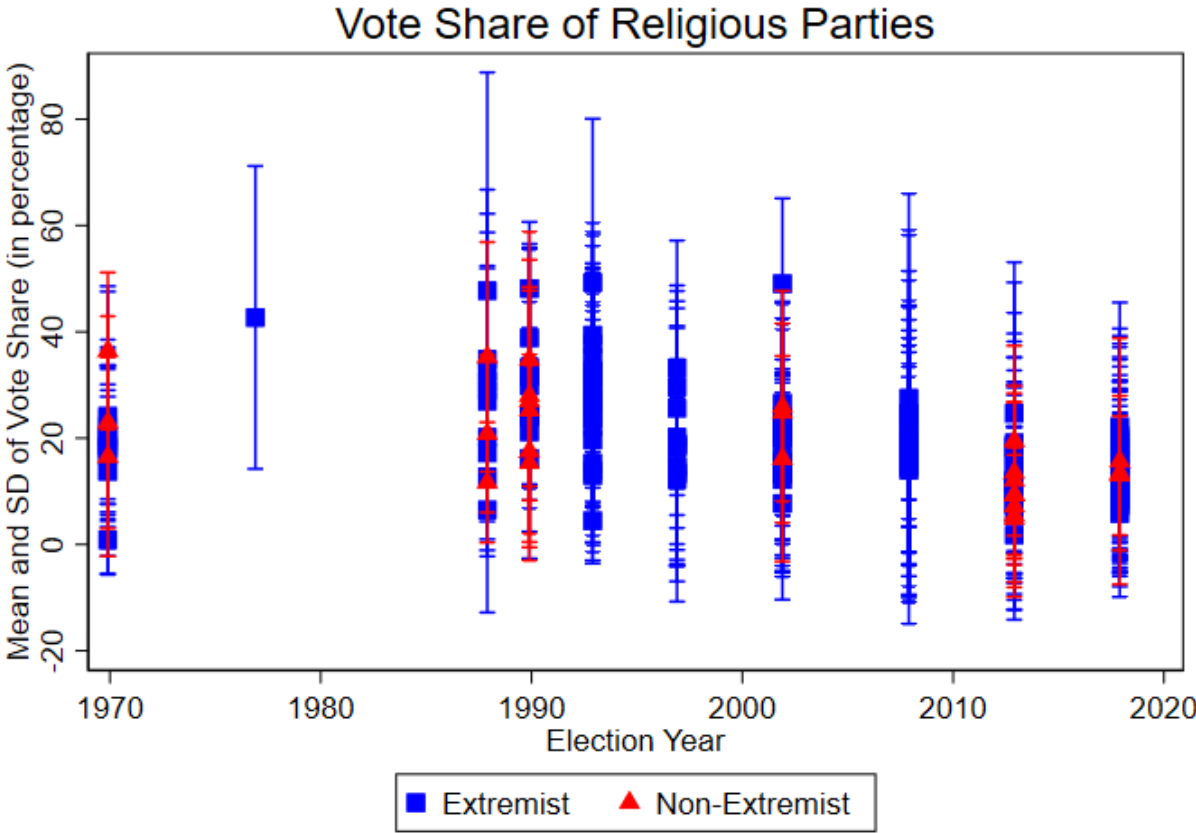


Figure 4: This graph shows the district-wise variation in the share of votes received by religious parties in the last ten elections. See Appendix 3 for geographical spread of vote share in the last two elections of 2013 and 2018.

**Step 3 – Votes for Religious Extremists and Socioeconomic Situation**

The results obtained through regression analysis are summarized in the following tables. Table 2 summarizes the results of Step 3 for all districts in the dataset. Tables

3 to 6 summarize results for each of the four provinces of Pakistan to encapsulate the provincial situation.

In Table 2, the column (1) presents the results of regression analysis where Votes for Religious Extremists are the dependent variable and explanatory variables include key socioeconomic indicators such as level of education, wealth, family size, religious and ethnic fractionalization, without controlling for fixed effects. Columns (2) to (5) control for province fixed effects, district fixed effects, survey year fixed effects and election year fixed effects respectively.

Column (6) once again presents regression results without controlling for fixed effects but also excluding the factors that might be collinear with the district fixed effects such as the religious and ethnic fractionalization, mosques per 1000 people, and distance to Pak-Afghan border. Column (7) presents the results controlling for district fixed effects, survey year and election year fixed effects. Corresponding years of available data for each district, survey, and election are mentioned in Appendix 1.

Columns (8) and (9) present the regression results of income tax paid in 2018 with the Votes for Religious Extremists in the General Elections of 2018. Columns (10) and (11) present the regression results of income inequality calculated on the basis of tax slabs (See Appendix 3) with the Votes for Religious Extremists in the General Elections of 2018. In columns (8) to (11), I have used the Income Tax Directory for the fiscal year 2018. Since this data is for a single year, I could not control for the fixed effects.

These results negate my hypothesis  $H_1$  that religious extremist parties are likely to receive more votes from people from lower income groups than higher income groups. Instead, they indicate the opposite. Districts populated by Middle class,

Upper Middle class, and Rich people are more likely to support religious extremism than those where average population is Poor, as shown in columns (1) to (7). Confirming this, column (8) and (9) show that the higher the income tax average is of a district, the more likely it is to vote for religious extremists. Column (10) and (11) establishes a positive relationship between growing income inequality and the votes for religious extremists. These results are statistically significant.

My second hypothesis,  $H_2$ , cannot be rejected by the results below. The table depicts a negative relationship between levels of education and votes for religious extremists. The results are statistically significant for Post-Secondary education in most iterations. It shows that people with Post-Secondary education are less likely to vote for religious extremists when compared with the uneducated who are the base group here. Similarly, the table establishes a negative relationship between rural area and votes for religious extremists, rejecting  $H_3$  that is the rural population is more likely to vote for religious extremists as compared to the urban population.

The results for  $H_4$  and  $H_5$ , pertaining to ethnic and religious diversity respectively, are not statistically significant. Owning a television was found to be positively correlated with the votes for religious extremists. In the same way, family size was found to be positively correlated with the votes for religious extremists. Furthermore, distance to Pak-Afghan border was found to be negatively correlated with the votes for religious extremists. It means that the closer the district is to Afghanistan, the more likely it is to vote for religious extremists. No such significant relationship was found between the vote share of extremist parties and the number of mosques present in a district.

In tables 3 to 6, the first column presents the results of regression analysis where Votes for Religious Extremists are the dependent variable and explanatory variables include key socioeconomic indicators without controlling for fixed effects. Columns



(2) also presents regression results without controlling for fixed effects but excluding the factors that might be collinear with the district fixed effects. Column (3) presents the results controlling for district fixed effects, survey year, and election year fixed effects.<sup>34</sup> Columns (4) and (5) present the regression results of income tax paid with the Votes for Religious Extremists. Columns (6) and (7) present the regression results of income inequality with the Votes for Religious Extremists in the General Elections of 2018.

Table 7 briefly summarizes the relationship, whether negative or positive, between key socioeconomic indicators and vote share of religious extremist political parties. It is based on the regression results presented in tables 2 to 6 and it only included the variables that were found to be statistically significant in those regressions. Where the relationship is not statistically significant, the cell is left blank.

The purpose of table 7 is to provide a comparison among provinces and the federation. It shows that the situation in the country is not homogenous. Where wealth is positively correlated with extremist vote share in the two larger provinces by population, Punjab and Sindh, the exact opposite is true for the smaller and rather underprivileged provinces of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Similarly, income tax paid is negatively correlated with the extremist vote share in Balochistan, whereas it is positively correlated in Sindh. The reason behind this contradiction might be that it is easier for the parties to organize and mobilize masses in the areas from where they can collect alms or donations for their political and social work. Further, in financially prosperous areas, the access to information via digital and social media makes it a lot easier to campaign and build networks as compared to the less advantaged areas where the reach of religious parties might be limited to

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<sup>34</sup> For Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, all variables in column (3) were omitted due to suspected collinearity.

their traditional strongholds which are mosques and religious seminaries. Another reason arguably is that following Zia-era's Islamization, there are certain religious organizations like the Tableeghi Jamaat that particularly target the urban middle class and upper middle class for preaching. Similarly, the student wings of religious parties, especially Islami Jammiat Talba of the Jamaat-i-Islami has a freehand in universities to recruit students and spread their narrative, whereas the student unions are banned.

Family size, on the contrary, is positively correlated with the extremist vote share in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, whereas there was no significance of family size with respect to the vote share in other provinces. The link between family size and voting for religious extremists might be family planning as the low usage of contraception are correlated with religious misinterpretations (Shaikh, B.T., Azmat, S.K. and Mazhar, A., 2013).

Education is negatively correlated with the extremist vote share in Punjab and Sindh, and there were no significant results on education in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa who have the lowest literacy rates among provinces.

For Punjab, which does not share a border with Afghanistan, and Balochistan, the results indicate a significantly negative relationship between the distance to Pak-Afghan border and the votes for religious extremist parties. In contrast, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the province which shares its entire western border with Afghanistan, the regression results showed no significant relationship between the distance to border and the votes for religious extremists. It might also be important to note that this is the only province where the religious extremist parties were once able to form a government at the provincial level in 2002 under the military dictatorship of Pervez Musharraf, and where the TTP was able to capture a significant area and impose their extremely regressive version of Islam.

**Table 2: Votes for Religious Extremists and Socioeconomic Situation in Pakistan**

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
Education (Primary)	-2.937 (2.935)	-2.616 (2.848)	-0.825 (2.835)	1.513 (2.891)	-1.636 (3.036)	3.822 (2.845)	-0.00163 (2.625)				
Education (Middle)	-5.312* (2.875)	-5.321* (2.746)	-6.230** (2.681)	4.685 (3.612)	-2.111 (3.509)	-1.935 (3.001)	-3.564 (4.326)				
Education (Secondary)	-6.664 (4.038)	-9.014** (3.872)	-14.16*** (4.606)	2.797 (4.711)	-2.924 (4.667)	1.221 (3.947)	-9.883 (7.027)				
Education (Post-secondary)	-13.25** (5.639)	-15.80*** (5.374)	-28.33*** (7.566)	-4.142 (5.873)	-9.604 (6.071)	-8.686 (5.994)	-22.70** (9.017)				
Family size	3.787*** (1.025)	2.689** (1.085)	-0.250 (2.116)	3.190*** (0.965)	3.821*** (1.021)	5.911*** (0.955)	-0.345 (1.736)				
Wealth (Lower Middle)	2.766 (2.799)	3.078 (2.660)	13.94** (6.223)	2.028 (2.549)	2.392 (2.797)	4.903* (2.777)	13.83** (6.745)				
Wealth (Middle)	8.149*** (3.074)	7.362** (2.943)	15.62** (7.130)	4.149 (2.901)	7.129** (3.128)	11.61*** (2.992)	15.44** (7.285)				
Wealth (Upper Middle)	8.279** (3.527)	5.137 (3.488)	23.89*** (8.617)	0.568 (3.498)	6.758* (3.642)	13.37*** (3.439)	23.06** (9.521)				
Wealth (Rich)	5.294 (6.251)	2.005 (6.096)	21.66** (9.736)	-5.650 (6.085)	2.750 (6.429)	13.48** (6.017)	19.78** (9.289)				
Information (Television)	11.81*** (2.451)	8.961*** (2.432)	2.451 (3.882)	10.42*** (2.345)	12.17*** (2.451)	15.85*** (2.224)	3.119 (5.066)				
Area (Rural)	-11.91*** (3.899)	-11.62*** (3.818)	2.505 (7.483)	-11.91*** (3.529)	-11.84*** (3.882)	-4.860 (3.376)	2.090 (4.645)				
Ethnolinguistic fractionalization	2.058 (4.295)	1.818 (4.230)		2.681 (4.020)	2.023 (4.276)				-5.763 (6.102)		-5.639 (5.682)
Religious fractionalization	-4.592 (5.965)	-8.570 (5.862)		-10.73* (5.562)	-5.650 (5.977)				-2.089 (8.817)		-3.729 (8.286)
Mosques per 1000 people	-254.9 (224.6)	-143.2 (220.1)		-134.8 (205.7)	-237.7 (223.9)				-255.1 (335.9)		-251.5 (315.2)
Distance to Pak-Afghan border	-0.0282*** (0.00761)	-0.0106 (0.00986)		-0.00281 (0.00878)	-0.0258*** (0.00772)				-0.0280*** (0.00984)		-0.0212** (0.00952)
Income inequality (Gini)										78.12*** (21.93)	55.39** (23.30)
Income Tax								4.881** (1.945)	3.309* (1.979)		
Constant	-11.98 (11.69)	-4.474 (11.61)	-0.260 (17.23)	-16.44 (11.05)	-14.80 (11.77)	-54.29*** (7.051)	-1.729 (14.49)	-40.81* (21.92)	-13.54 (22.50)	-18.45** (9.091)	-1.117 (10.17)
Observations	182	182	192	182	182	197	192	96	95	95	94
R-squared	0.542	0.596	0.907	0.632	0.549	0.501	0.919	0.063	0.255	0.120	0.261
Province Fixed Effects		x									
District Fixed Effects			x								
Survey Year Fixed Effects				x							
Election Year Fixed Effects					x						

Standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Table 3: Votes for Religious Extremists and Socioeconomic Situation in Balochistan**

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3) <sup>+</sup>	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Education (Primary)	8.732 (8.364)	8.073 (8.833)					
Family size	9.214** (2.287)	12.32*** (2.156)					
Wealth (Lower Middle)	-17.20* (5.947)	-14.10** (5.854)					
Wealth (Middle)	-16.41* (6.668)	-15.46** (7.070)					
Wealth (Upper Middle)	-13.30 (8.260)	-6.119 (7.474)					
Wealth (Rich)	-20.45 (10.52)						
Information (Television)	8.565 (6.988)	16.76*** (4.820)					
Area (Rural)		6.870 (9.703)					
Ethnolinguistic fractionalization	0.611 (20.30)				-19.74 (14.16)		-1.820 (15.63)
Religious fractionalization	7.702 (345.3)				28.87 (237.4)		-263.2 (263.4)
Distance to Pak-Afghan border	- 0.0933* (0.0319)				-0.108*** (0.0255)		-0.114*** (0.0271)
Income inequality (Gini)						-81.15 (64.52)	-80.16* (37.05)
Income Tax				-15.44** (5.629)	-11.96*** (2.953)		
Constant	-43.86 (25.83)	-95.28*** (18.72)	25.80*** (0)	207.3*** (67.67)	180.8*** (35.24)	57.29* (30.58)	71.57*** (17.91)
Observations	14	27	24	14	14	13	13
R-squared	0.969	0.775	0.918	0.385	0.881	0.126	0.806
District FE			x				
Survey Year FE			x				
Election Year FE			x				

Standard errors in parentheses  
\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1  
+ variables omitted due to collinearity

**Table 4: Votes for Religious Extremists and Socioeconomic Situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3) <sup>+</sup>	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Education (Middle)	7.347 (7.019)	7.452 (6.527)					
Education (Secondary)	-4.105 (13.51)	0.585 (9.294)					
Education (Post-secondary)	-10.67 (10.51)	-12.75 (9.781)					
Family size	5.622** (2.493)	4.900** (2.167)					
Wealth (Lower Middle)	10.01 (6.789)	8.863 (6.186)					
Wealth (Middle)	-0.413 (8.129)	-1.015 (7.258)					
Wealth (Upper Middle)	-14.97 (9.488)	-16.58* (8.339)					
Wealth (Rich)	-15.39 (19.68)						
Information (Television)	-2.591 (13.88)	-2.006 (6.548)					
Area (Rural)		8.270 (11.42)					
Ethnolinguistic fractionalization	-5.810 (29.32)				0.201 (24.45)		1.555 (23.83)
Religious fractionalization	596.5 (719.1)				17.77 (867.9)		155.9 (864.2)
Mosques per 1000 people	743.9 (1,791)				-900.5 (1,414)		-992.9 (1,369)
Distance to Pak-Afghan border	0.0287 (0.0834)				-0.103 (0.0947)		-0.0866 (0.0923)
Income inequality (Gini)						129.0 (89.55)	84.68 (104.7)
Income Tax				6.702 (8.370)	3.033 (9.435)		
Constant	-13.35 (32.15)	-13.02 (20.33)	26.72*** (0)	-52.53 (95.53)	-2.055 (110.4)	-32.65 (39.36)	-6.337 (49.57)
Observations	44	44	44	21	21	21	21
R-squared	0.643	0.626	0.863	0.033	0.207	0.099	0.234
District FE			x				
Survey Year FE			x				
Election Year FE			x				

Standard errors in parentheses  
\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1  
+ variables omitted due to collinearity

**Table 5: Votes for Religious Extremists and Socioeconomic Situation in Punjab**

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Education (Primary)	-1.224 (1.970)	0.711 (1.870)	5.651** (2.458)				
Education (Middle)	-4.589** (2.207)	-1.860 (2.013)	6.932 (4.318)				
Education (Secondary)	-8.499*** (2.726)	-4.894* (2.456)	5.414 (7.456)				
Family size	-0.748 (1.626)	0.329 (1.529)	-3.037 (3.179)				
Wealth (Lower Middle)	1.068 (2.315)	-0.330 (2.283)	14.04*** (3.163)				
Wealth (Middle)	3.444 (2.633)	1.823 (2.514)	14.01*** (4.084)				
Wealth (Upper Middle)	6.316** (3.144)	3.944 (2.937)	14.48** (5.887)				
Wealth (Rich)	10.77* (5.810)	7.485 (5.610)	10.51* (5.233)				
Information (Television)	1.311 (2.266)	0.649 (2.254)	-3.477 (3.169)				
Area (Rural)	-0.628 (2.946)	2.181 (2.555)	-2.484 (2.306)				
Ethnolinguistic fractionalization	-2.244 (3.198)				-6.087 (5.196)		-7.583 (5.514)
Religious fractionalization	7.099 (21.75)				23.74 (30.64)		17.40 (31.44)
Mosques per 1000 people	-230.5 (152.4)				-194.1 (206.4)		-204.6 (197.0)
Distance to Pak-Afghan border	-0.0156** (0.00666)				-0.00557 (0.00969)		-0.00494 (0.00957)
Income inequality (Gini)				-0.152 (1.623)	1.267 (2.057)		
Income Tax						3.713 (18.95)	24.41 (24.99)
Constant	14.87 (13.02)	-0.731 (11.28)	11.76 (18.54)	8.352 (17.49)	-3.596 (21.92)	5.328 (7.132)	1.332 (9.179)
Observations	70	72	72	35	34	35	34
R-squared	0.306	0.202	0.743	0.000	0.120	0.001	0.137
District FE			x				
Survey Year FE			x				
Election Year FE			x				

Standard errors in parentheses  
\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Table 6: Votes for Religious Extremists and Socioeconomic Situation in Sindh**

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Education (Primary)	-6.602 (3.962)	-4.450 (3.857)	-4.085 (3.017)				
Education (Middle)	-7.341** (2.978)	-7.822** (2.928)	-33.44*** (5.901)				
Education (Secondary)	-5.051 (7.429)	-4.336 (7.238)	-48.58*** (7.802)				
Education (Post-secondary)	- 24.72*** (6.872)	-23.13*** (6.832)	-85.47*** (12.13)				
Family size	0.975 (1.934)	2.097 (1.808)	1.116 (1.308)				
Wealth (Lower Middle)	9.258* (5.473)	9.704** (3.870)	28.35*** (4.470)				
Wealth (Middle)	18.11** (7.367)	16.92*** (5.292)	33.97*** (6.446)				
Wealth (Upper Middle)	37.13*** (9.722)	33.97*** (7.721)	62.30*** (7.198)				
Wealth (Rich)	24.28** (9.632)	24.73*** (8.948)	66.22*** (9.081)				
Information (Television)	11.21*** (3.487)	11.44*** (3.317)	6.842 (8.497)				
Area (Rural)	-2.091 (5.075)	-1.116 (4.751)	24.37*** (2.935)				
Ethnolinguistic fractionalization	-11.79 (10.02)				18.68 (13.67)		18.72 (13.57)
Religious fractionalization	-6.357 (6.722)				-18.10 (15.86)		-16.78 (18.31)
Mosques per 1000 people	123.7 (273.6)				-433.3 (638.2)		-441.8 (616.9)
Distance to Pak-Afghan border	0.000139 (0.0225)				-0.00598 (0.0367)		-0.00875 (0.0436)
Income inequality (Gini)				92.21* (52.13)	10.19 (85.71)		
Income Tax						6.935* (3.739)	0.130 (5.658)
Constant	-14.78 (20.04)	-28.30** (13.72)	-34.29* (16.92)	-66.66 (42.50)	13.92 (62.82)	-25.37 (21.29)	12.19 (28.95)
Observations	54	54	52	25	25	25	25
R-squared	0.619	0.569	0.905	0.130	0.321	0.120	0.321
District FE			x				
Survey Year FE			x				
Election Year FE			x				

Standard errors in parentheses  
\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Table 7: Votes for Religious Extremists and Socioeconomic Situation – Summarized**

	<b>Pakistan</b>	Balochistan	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Punjab	Sindh
<b>Education</b>	-			-	-
<b>Family Size</b>	+	+	+		
<b>Wealth</b>	+	-	-	+	+
<b>Information (TV)</b>	+	+			+
<b>Area (Rural)</b>	-				+
<b>Distance to Pak-Afghan border</b>	-	-		-	
<b>Income inequality</b>	+				+
<b>Income tax</b>	+	-			+

Only statistically significant variables are reproduced here

## **Conclusion**

This working paper attempts to contribute to the growing body of Economics of Religion focused on Religious Extremism. It particularly aims to add to the rise of religious extremism in a diverse, developing, post-colonial state by studying the case of Pakistan. Further, it seeks to build a methodological framework which can be extended to other countries in the region.

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan is a predominantly Muslim country with numerous political parties. The focus here is on the religiopolitical parties who tend to have an extremist outlook. To distinguish them from other religious parties, I developed a scale for rating the religiopolitical parties on a spectrum of Moderate to Extremist by analysing their manifestos. Parties with above median score were grouped as Extremists. The support for such parties has been on the rise for the past few years. Here, I have attempted to gauge the rise in public approval of religious extremism



through the votes casted in favour of the religious extremist parties in the last ten General Elections in the country.

To explain this rise, I referred to the existing literature which can be broadly classified into three categories. Religion-Market theory argues that religiosity depends on the presence of a state religion, regulation of the religion market, and the degree of religious pluralism allowed to exist in the country. Secularization theory states that the level of economic development will reduce religiosity. Club model of religion is based on the premise that sacrifice and stigma associated with the sect increases the individual and collective utility of the sect members.

Pakistan has a state religion and state is actively engaged in promoting and regulating it. Hence, the next relevant and testable theory in the context of Pakistan was the secularization theory. Following the secularization theory, I hypothesized that religious extremists are more likely to receive votes from people with lower levels of education, wealth, and who live in rural areas. These hypotheses were then tested using the votes casted in General Elections of 2013 and 2018, the Income Tax Directory of 2018, and MICS surveys during the decade of 2010 – 2019 conducted all over Pakistan. As a proxy for religiosity, I used the number of mosques in a district. Further, following the club model of religion, I hypothesized that religious extremists are more likely to receive votes from districts with lower religious and ethnic diversity. For this purpose, I created ethnolinguistic and religious fractionalization indices based on the Census conducted in 2017.

Consistent with the secularization theory, the results discussed above indicate that there is a negative relation between education and the rise of popular support for religious extremism.

The tax data reveals that the higher the income tax filed, the greater the support for religious extremists. The countrywide results, also establish a significant positive relationship between wealth and support for religious extremists. However, when bifurcated among provinces, the smaller provinces by population, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, happen to have a negative relationship between wealth and support for religious extremists. Therefore, the relationship between wealth and religious extremism is not homogenous across the country.

The rural districts were albeit found less likely to vote for the religious extremist political parties. Moreover, no significant relationship could be established between ethnolinguistic or religious fractionalization and the votes for religious extremist parties. Furthermore, no relationship could be ascertained between religiosity and support for religious extremism. Owning a television, however, had a significantly positive relationship with the votes for extremist parties.

It is concerning that data suggests that urban, middle class, informed citizens are more likely to vote for the religious extremist parties. It indicates that either the mainstream political parties have been ceding space to the religious extremists overtime or there is a vacuum in the Pakistani political arena that the religiopolitical parties are actively exploiting. This is an area that needs to be explored further.

It might be insightful to include previous election results in future research to dig deeper into the evolution of popular support for religious extremism over time in Pakistan. It might also be beneficial to explore the relationship between terrorist activities and the support for religious extremists. Further, the impacts of increase in vote share of extremist parties on legislation and the incentives for nonreligious parties to adopt religious narratives during electoral campaigns should be investigated.

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## Appendix 1: District codes and corresponding years of available data

District Code	District Name	MICS Year	Election Year	District Code	District Name	MICS Year	Election Year
201	Abbottabad	2017	2013	201	Abbottabad	2017	2018
202	Bannu	2017	2013	202	Bannu	2017	2018
203	Batagram	2017	2013	203	Batagram	2017	2018
204	Buner	2017	2013	204	Buner	2017	2018
205	Charsadda	2017	2013	205	Charsadda	2017	2018
206	Chitral	2017	2013	206	Chitral	2017	2018
207	Dera Ismail Khan	2017	2013	207	Dera Ismail Khan	2017	2018
208	Hangu	2017	2013	208	Hangu	2017	2018
209	Haripur	2017	2013	209	Haripur	2017	2018
210	Karak	2017	2013	210	Karak	2017	2018
211	Kohat	2017	2013	211	Kohat	2017	2018
212	Kohistan	2017	2013	212	Kohistan	2017	2018
213	Lakki Marwat	2017	2013	213	Lakki Marwat	2017	2018
215	Malakand	2017	2013	215	Malakand	2017	2018
216	Mansehra	2017	2013	216	Mansehra	2017	2018
217	Mardan	2017	2013	217	Mardan	2017	2018
218	Nowshera	2017	2013	218	Nowshera	2017	2018
219	Peshawar	2017	2013	219	Peshawar	2017	2018
220	Shangla	2017	2013	220	Shangla	2017	2018
221	Swabi	2017	2013	221	Swabi	2017	2018
222	Swat	2017	2013	222	Swat	2017	2018
231	Tor Ghar	2017	2013	231	Tor Ghar	2017	2018
300	Dir		2013	300	Dir		2018
302	Tribal Area		2013	302	Tribal Area		2018
501	Islamabad		2013	501	Islamabad		2018
601	Attock	2014	2013	601	Attock	2018	2018
602	Bahawalnagar	2014	2013	602	Bahawalnagar	2018	2018
603	Bahawalpur	2014	2013	603	Bahawalpur	2018	2018
604	Bhakkar	2014	2013	604	Bhakkar	2018	2018
605	Chakwal	2014	2013	605	Chakwal	2018	2018
606	Chiniot	2014	2013	606	Chiniot	2018	2018
607	Dera Ghazi Khan	2014	2013	607	Dera Ghazi Khan	2018	2018
608	Faisalabad	2014	2013	608	Faisalabad	2018	2018
609	Gujranwala	2014	2013	609	Gujranwala	2018	2018
610	Gujrat	2014	2013	610	Gujrat	2018	2018
611	Hafizabad	2014	2013	611	Hafizabad	2018	2018
612	Jhang	2014	2013	612	Jhang	2018	2018
613	Jhelum	2014	2013	613	Jhelum	2018	2018

District Code	District Name	MICS Year	Election Year	District Code	District Name	MICS Year	Election Year
614	Kasur	2014	2013	614	Kasur	2018	2018
615	Khanewal	2014	2013	615	Khanewal	2018	2018
616	Khushab	2014	2013	616	Khushab	2018	2018
617	Lahore	2014	2013	617	Lahore	2018	2018
618	Layyah	2014	2013	618	Layyah	2018	2018
619	Lodhran	2014	2013	619	Lodhran	2018	2018
620	Mandi Bahauddin	2014	2013	620	Mandi Bahauddin	2018	2018
621	Mianwali	2014	2013	621	Mianwali	2018	2018
622	Multan	2014	2013	622	Multan	2018	2018
623	Muzaffargarh	2014	2013	623	Muzaffargarh	2018	2018
624	Nankana Sahib	2014	2013	624	Nankana Sahib	2018	2018
625	Narowal	2014	2013	625	Narowal	2018	2018
626	Okara	2014	2013	626	Okara	2018	2018
627	Pakpattan	2014	2013	627	Pakpattan	2018	2018
628	Rahim Yar Khan	2014	2013	628	Rahim Yar Khan	2018	2018
629	Rajanpur	2014	2013	629	Rajanpur	2018	2018
630	Rawalpindi	2014	2013	630	Rawalpindi	2018	2018
631	Sahiwal	2014	2013	631	Sahiwal	2018	2018
632	Sargodha	2014	2013	632	Sargodha	2018	2018
633	Sheikhupura	2014	2013	633	Sheikhupura	2018	2018
634	Sialkot	2014	2013	634	Sialkot	2018	2018
635	Toba Tek Singh	2014	2013	635	Toba Tek Singh	2018	2018
636	Vehari	2014	2013	636	Vehari	2018	2018
701	Awaran	2010	2013	701	Awaran	2010	2018
703	Quetta	2010	2013	703	Quetta	2010	2018
704	Chagai	2010		704	Chagai	2010	2018
708	Jaffarabad	2010		708	Jaffarabad	2010	2018
710	Kalat	2010	2013	710	Kalat	2010	2018
711	Kachhi / Bolan	2010	2013	711	Kachhi / Bolan	2010	
712	Kech	2010	2013	712	Kech	2010	2018
713	Kharan	2010	2013	713	Kharan	2010	2018
714	Khuzdar	2010	2013	714	Khuzdar	2010	2018
715	Qilla Abdullah	2010	2013	715	Qilla Abdullah	2010	2018
719	Loralai	2010	2013	719	Loralai	2010	2018
722	Naseerabad	2010	2013	722	Naseerabad	2010	2018
725	Pashin	2010	2013	725	Pashin	2010	2018
728	Sibi	2010	2013	728	Sibi	2010	2018
730	Zhob	2010	2013	730	Zhob	2010	2018
801	Badin	2014	2013	801	Badin	2018	2018
802	Dadu	2014	2013	802	Dadu	2018	2018
803	Ghotki	2014	2013	803	Ghotki	2018	2018

District Code	District Name	MICS Year	Election Year	District Code	District Name	MICS Year	Election Year
804	Hyderabad	2014	2013	804	Hyderabad	2018	2018
805	Jacobabad		2013	805	Jacobabad	2018	2018
806	Jamshoro	2014	2013	806	Jamshoro	2018	2018
808	Kashmore	2014	2013	808	Kashmore	2018	2018
809	Khairpur	2014	2013	809	Khairpur	2018	2018
810	Larkana	2014	2013	810	Larkana	2018	2018
811	Matiari	2014	2013	811	Matiari	2018	2018
812	Mirpur Khas	2014	2013	812	Mirpur Khas	2018	2018
813	Naushahro Feroze	2014	2013	813	Naushahro Feroze	2018	2018
814	Sanghar	2014	2013	814	Sanghar	2018	2018
	Qambar				Qambar		
815	Shahdadt	2014	2013	815	Shahdadt	2018	2018
	Shaheed				Shaheed		
816	Benazirabad	2014	2013	816	Benazirabad	2018	2018
817	Shikarpur	2014	2013	817	Shikarpur	2018	2018
818	Sukkur	2014	2013	818	Sukkur	2018	2018
819	Tando Allah Yar	2014	2013	819	Tando Allah Yar	2018	2018
	Tando				Tando		
820	Muhammad Khan	2014	2013	820	Muhammad Khan	2018	2018
821	Tharparkar	2014	2013	821	Tharparkar	2018	2018
822	Thatta	2014	2013	822	Thatta	2018	2018
823	Umerkot	2014	2013	823	Umerkot	2018	2018
824	Karachi Malir	2014	2013	824	Karachi Malir	2018	2018
825	Karachi Korangi		2013	825	Karachi Korangi	2018	2018
826	Karachi East	2014	2013	826	Karachi East	2018	2018
827	Karachi South	2014	2013	827	Karachi South	2018	2018
828	Karachi Keamari		2013	828	Karachi Keamari		2018
829	Karachi West	2014	2013	829	Karachi West	2018	2018
830	Karachi Central	2014	2013	830	Karachi Central	2018	2018

## **Appendix 2: Taxable income slabs in budget FY2018**

<b>From (PKR)</b>	<b>To (PKR)</b>	<b>Difference -1 (PKR)</b>	<b>Fixed tax (PKR)</b>	<b>Tax Rate*</b>	<b>Max possible tax paid**</b>
0	400,000	399,999	-	-	-
400,000	500,000	99,999	0	2%	2,000
500,000	750,000	249,999	2000	5%	14,500
750,000	1,400,000	649,999	14500	10%	79,500
1,400,000	1,500,000	99,999	79500	12.50%	92,000
1,500,000	1,800,000	299,999	92000	15%	137,000
1,800,000	2,500,000	699,999	137000	17.50%	259,500
2,500,000	3,000,000	499,999	259500	20%	359,500
3,000,000	3,500,000	499,999	359000	22.50%	471,500
3,500,000	4,000,000	499,999	472000	25%	597,000
4,000,000	7,000,000	2,999,999	597000	27.50%	1,422,000
7,000,000	Infinity	Infinity	1422000	30%	Infinite

\*Tax rate applied on the amount exceeding the lower limit

\*\*Maximum possible income tax paid = Fixed Tax + (Tax rate x (Difference - 1))

### Appendix 3: Mapping Votes received by Religious Extremist parties

