

An Integrated Framework for Studying Political Belief System, Tolerance and Participation in Pakistan

An Integrated Framework for Studying Political Belief System, Tolerance and Participation in Pakistan

Gul Dad

Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Governance and Public Policy, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad.

Email: guldad@gmail.com

Zain Rafique

Assistant Professor, Department of Governance and Public Policy, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad.

Received on: 24-07-2024

Accepted on: 22-08-2024

Abstract

This paper introduces a new integrated framework to analyze the relationships between political belief systems, tolerance, and participation in Pakistan, grounded in Social Identity Theory (SIT), the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), and System Justification Theory (SJT). It proposes a comprehensive and context-specific tool tailored to Pakistan's socio-political environment for quantitatively assessing these constructs. The framework incorporates key determinants such as religiosity, political knowledge, political interest, and partisan as well as ideological identification to provide insights into the interplay between belief systems and political behaviour like political tolerance and political participation. With the view to gauge the centrality of the political belief systems, the study used polarized views on various policy choices specific to Pakistani contexts. These issues were identified through a pre-pilot study (N-50) while a pilot study was conducted to test the data collection tool and determine its validity. While the framework lays the foundation for future empirical studies, it does not explore the deeper, formative processes of belief systems. This limitation underscores the need for qualitative research to complement the proposed framework. Future studies may integrate this tool with qualitative approaches to capture the depth and breadth of political behaviours and attitudes in a similar or diverse national and political contexts.

Keywords: Political belief systems, tolerance, participation, framework, SIT, TPB, SJT.

Introduction

In the modern world, democracy is recognized as a fundamental pillar for fostering political engagement, tolerance, and freedom of expression. Established liberal democracies in the West have demonstrated the significance of these principles in theory and practice, although some areas still require attention (Held, 2006). However, the democratic experience in the global south often presents a stark contrast. Despite having a democratic constitution, Pakistan's operational reality often diverges from its theoretical aspirations. Political

An Integrated Framework for Studying Political Belief System, Tolerance and Participation in Pakistan

observers and scholars have highlighted the alarming rise of political intolerance within the country (Ali, Ahmad, & Bibi, 2021; Muhammad Yaseen et al., 2021). Differences in political opinion and dissent are frequently met with suppression—ranging from violence to forced silencing—in spaces such as parliament, traditional media, and social media platforms. Although social media has offered avenues for generating and sharing ideas and holding public officeholders accountable, these spaces are increasingly shrinking. Individuals expressing dissenting or novel views often face cyber-bullying and trolling (Rauf, 2019), further exacerbating the problem.

The construction of an individual's political belief system, shaped by socio-cultural norms, religious convictions, and educational background, is pivotal in determining political tolerance—the willingness to accept differing political views—and political participation. These two elements are essential for a functioning democracy (Widmalm, 2016). However, Pakistan's rising political intolerance undermines these democratic values. The inability to accommodate diverse perspectives restricts political participation, leading to negative consequences for both democracy and governance.

Although various normative prescriptions have been proposed to address political intolerance in Pakistan (Manan, 2019; Rauf, 2019), there remains a lack of clarity about its root causes and effective solutions. Existing research has yet to comprehensively explore the relationship between political belief systems, tolerance, and participation. A study is required to bridge this gap investigating how individual belief systems shape political behaviour and attitudes in Pakistan, analysing the implications for its broader democratic framework.

This requires theorizing the concept using existing research and theories, developing an adequate framework and constructing an appropriate tool before conducting a thorough study. This paper attempts to do exactly that. This theoretical framework and tool will subsequently be used in a nationally representative quantitative study using the tool. However, since the proposed quantitative study may provide insights into interlinkages between the given constructs, it will not provide the required understanding of how the political belief system is essentially formed. Hence, it is proposed that future research studies may consider employing a pragmatistic paradigm adopting mixed methods using in-depth interviews to have a better understanding of context and more comprehension of the phenomenon.

Objectives and Questions

This paper attempts to develop a framework which deciphers and decodes an individual's political belief system to understand its formation, assess its impact on political tolerance and participation, and recommend remedial measures to address intolerance. To achieve this, it seeks answers to several pertinent questions: How is our political belief system formed, and how do religious beliefs and socio-cultural norms influence it? In what ways does the political belief system stimulate behavioural change, and how does this change affect political tolerance and participation? Furthermore, the framework explores the impact of individual factors such as age, gender, education, and income on tolerance levels, and investigates the types of political information that drive attitudinal change in various individuals in addition to seeing the impact of political information, political knowledge and religiosity on political belief system.

An Integrated Framework for Studying Political Belief System, Tolerance and Participation in Pakistan

Political Tolerance and Its Determinants

The issue of tolerance, or lack of it, remained a subject of interest for political philosophers long in history and even great political philosophers wrote especially on this aspect. Voltaire (1763), in his book "*Treatise of Tolerance*", explains that it is irrational to impose intolerance on citizens who have embraced beliefs and rituals that are largely other than the official beliefs and rituals of society. The issue of intolerance got special attention in the 1950s in the US after the so-called "Red Scare" and Samuel A. Stouffer came up with his seminal work on intolerance in 1955 (Stouffer, 1955). His work has been dubbed later as a fixed-group approach. This was the landmark study on intolerance and continues to provide the framework for the General Social Survey. Questioning the validity of Stouffer's fixed-group approach, Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus (1979) came up with a conceptual modification by introducing what now has been termed as "Least-liked group" approach. Sullivan and his colleagues posited that since intolerance requires an "objective precondition", they came up with content-controlled indicators for measuring tolerance. These two approaches continued to dominate the studies on tolerance since then. Lately, Hjerm, Eger, Bohman, and Fors Connolly (2020) with a new tool that focuses on acceptance, respect and appreciation as main constructs required for measuring tolerance. The researchers questioned both fixed group and least liked group approaches for their theoretical limitations and methodological shortcomings suggesting the existing measures of tolerance conflate (in)tolerance and prejudice both at conceptual and operational levels. The researchers came up with the notion to study intolerance by conceptualizing it as a value orientation towards difference. This approach is yet to be tested in an empirical study especially related to political tolerance. Prima facie, the scholarship on the subject of intolerance has advanced due to increased focus of researchers in last over six decades, however, the researchers have not been able to come up with the clear understanding and develop a broader consensus of what actually causes intolerance.

Literature on determinants of tolerance is quite rich but somehow confusing too. The determinants of tolerance, or lack thereof, could be divided into two categories: contextual and individual-level determinants (Hazama, 2010). Threat, contact, education and authoritarianism are perceived to be individual-level determinants of tolerance with education and authoritarianism are believed to be linked to an individual's inner self while contact and threat are related to others but remain confined to individuals. Stouffer's (1955) landmark study identified rigid categorization and the authoritarian approach of parents make them intolerant towards certain communities. Earlier, Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, and Sanford (1950) held the same view that the authoritarian and exploitative parent-child relationship runs deep even into the political aspect of a child's life to an extent of appraising the strong and depreciating the weak. Similarly, Stenner (2005) blamed authoritarianism from which almost all sorts of intolerance originate including political intolerance.

Education is considered to be another determinant of political tolerance but normally it is used as a control variable with the assumption that educated people are more tolerant and this view has been held since Stouffer (1955). It is believed that education increases information and knowledge and reduces prejudice (Coenders & Scheepers, 2003). However, some recent studies raised serious questions about how education impacts tolerance so

An Integrated Framework for Studying Political Belief System, Tolerance and Participation in Pakistan

much. For example, Marquart-Pyatt and Paxton (2007) postulated that education is a weaker predictor of tolerance since the results from Eastern and Western Europe were demonstrated. This means consensus on education as the main determinant of tolerance is increasingly evaporating.

Among the exogenous or externally driven individual-level determinants, the perception of an individual about the threat to society is considered to be a notable determinant though some researchers believe that an individual's perceived threat to society is mediated by an individual's predisposition (Marquart-Pyatt and Paxton (2007) in such a way that perceived level and intensity of threat impact individual's tolerance. Interestingly, Lavine, Lodge, and Freitas (2005) linked perceived threat with personality type contending that authoritarian individuals, against the rationale of using objective information, tend to use the information consistent with their beliefs and hence become more intolerant. Some researchers tried to conceptualize threat perception from an individual's orthodoxy resulting from her religiosity contending that it increases intolerance.

The second externally driven factor impacting an individual's choices is contact and interaction as it is believed that individuals who interact with diverse people tend to be more tolerant though nature and reach of contact and interaction do matter as Persell, Green, and Gurevich (2001) identified that inter-community interaction/ contact increases tolerance while intra-community interaction has a negative affect. This emerges from the notion that inter-community interaction provides greater access to information and a better understanding of other communities thus positively impacting tolerance attitudes. In addition to socialization with other communities, political participation which is also a form of interaction is believed to have an impact (Hinckley, 2010). The contact hypothesis has also been supported by Weber (2019) who explained that social-political participation increases political tolerance while individual political participatory activities do not increase political tolerance due to the contact effect.

Researchers believe that contextual determinants of political tolerance include policies followed in the state as well as the system of the state. For example, Peffley and Rohrschneider (2003) identified that federalism and democratic stability enhance political tolerance. Weldon (2006) found the relevance of the individualistic versus collectivist approach to the society as well as the civil versus ethnic approach having an impact on tolerance showing from data that individualistic-civic centric countries are more tolerant than collectivist-ethnic centric countries. Ethnic homogeneity of the society is also believed to impact tolerance but the impact is believed to be having a dual nature as it could positively impact one but negatively impact another. For example, ethnic heterogeneity in a non-segregated environment will increase *contact* and hence it could increase tolerance (*contact* and tolerance impact already discussed in individual determinants of tolerance) but could also increase the threat from the outgroup and could increase intolerance. Wagner, Christ, Pettigrew, Stellmacher, and Wolf (2006) postulated that the *contact* effect comes into play at the local level like the community and neighbourhood level while the *threat* effect plays a role at the higher level for example metropolitan and national level. The impact of religion on tolerance has been identified to be indirect as religious commitment increases threat perception which subsequently affects intolerance (Eisenstein, 2006). Along with religious orthodoxy, the absolutist attitude/ approach of individuals also has its political cost as people

An Integrated Framework for Studying Political Belief System, Tolerance and Participation in Pakistan

with such tendencies tend to hold an uncompromising opinion and demonstrate intolerance towards disagreement (which is quite prevalent in democratic societies) and see the compromising politicians quite negatively (Arceneaux, 2019).

Political Participation and Factors Affecting It

Political participation remained the subject of interest since the birth of democracy and the subject remained the focus of attention for research around the globe. Blais (2010) categorized research on political participation into three broader approaches namely the resource model, the belief of the individual, and social capital. The resource model approach, since the notable study of Nie and Verba (1972), contends that political participation is dependent on the resources like time, money, education and required skills. The higher these resources the higher the political participation. But the important question remains whether all those having the majority of these resources might still show no tendency toward political participation. The second approach focuses on the belief of the individual whether he or she will be able to bring about the intended change through his participation and how one believes that his/ her participation will be beneficial for herself (Finkel & Opp, 1991). Individuals tend to remain politically engaged when they believe that their activities will help in bringing about a change, which has been termed as political *efficacy* (Dalton, Van Sickle, & Weldon, 2010). The third approach to seeing how political participation is impacted is the social capital approach which explains that people connected in social settings have a greater tendency to learn engagement and opt for political activities.

In the specific context of Pakistan, Mangi, Shah, and Ali Soomro (2019) have seen impact on political participation (DV) of leadership image, accessibility, security, party mobilization and democratic political party having significant and positive relations among the dependent and independent variables while the study concluded that citizen distrust negatively moderates the impact on the given dependent variable and independent variables. The buck does not stop here. Lately, corruption has been identified as having impact on political participation. Bazurli and Portos (2021) contended that perception about the prevalence of endemic corruption has a positive impact on political participation mainly on its non-electoral forms though the impact remains uneven and largely dependent on the individual's education and political interest. Religion could not be kept out of the equation as Omelicheva and Ahmed (2018) identified that membership in religious organisations, religious identity and overall religiosity have varying impacts on political participation. Moreover, religiosity instead of acting as a mobilizing force constraints political engagement. On the contrarary, membership of not only religious but also secular organisations as an enabler for individuals to remain politically engaged.

Lately, once again in Pakistan's context, Rafique, Habib, and Rosilawati (2021) while exploring legal, political and administrative barriers to political participation identified existing participatory mechanisms to be faulty; legal framework prone to excessive manipulation; politico-bureaucratic structures reluctant to share power; and bureaucratic structure dictating terms over civil society and private sector. Hence, ineffective civil society organizations, weak legal framework, lack of accountability and inadequate education regarding citizen participation were considered major factors affecting political participation. Gherghina and Geissel (2017) observed that citizens who prefer politicians as

An Integrated Framework for Studying Political Belief System, Tolerance and Participation in Pakistan

decision-makers engage in voting. In contrast, those who support citizens as decision-makers demonstrate a greater willingness to engage in participatory processes. Meanwhile, individuals favoring expert decision-making exhibit mixed results. Trying to seeing the link between narcissism and political participation, Fazekas and Hatemi (2021) posited that those scoring higher in narcissism participate more in politics while sub-traits of narcissism like authority and superiority were positively impacting political participation whereas perception of self-sufficiency negatively impact political participation.

In one way or the other, scholarship on political participation is non-definitive and a broader consensus largely missing about what exactly drives citizens to engage in political activities. This means that we might look to dig deep to find a definitive answer to such questions, especially the one that resonates with our local settings. In a nutshell, the creation of local knowledge that is consistent with our ideological, religious, socio-cultural and political moorings is not only warranted but extremely relevant.

Political Belief System: Opening the Blackbox

There is no broadly defined definition of a political belief systems as scholar of different fields, and within their fields, define belief systems differently. However, there is some convergence of opinion that *“political belief systems are the interrelationships of attitudes and beliefs relevant to politics”* (Gerring, 1997). While the issue of ideology remained the focus of attention of researchers in the past, Philip E. Converse's (1964) seminal work on the political belief system was the most notable work on the political belief system. Taking a clue from beliefs and attitudes, Converse's study extended the understanding of elite theory while taking the role of information and its social dissemination as central to the study and how it is impacted by “constraints” or “functional interdependence”. Converse believed that a change occurring in the perceived status of an idea element will require some compensation in the status of another idea element in the system. Converse posited that idea elements in a belief system vary in terms of their centrality (which also changes over time) depending on the role they play in the belief system of an individual. So, when new information brings about a change in the status of an idea element, there must be a corresponding change in another idea element within that belief system.

Dawson (1979) explained the relevance of information and its three related resultant behaviours namely reception of information, its evaluation and then the action that an individual takes. He believed that the evaluation part is the most relevant part concerning the structure as well as the formation of the political belief system. Like Converse, Dawson also believed some specific political beliefs are related to other political beliefs and this relationship holds for a substantial proportion of the electorate. Terming it a mass phenomenon, he contended that the formation of the political belief system is a common psychological process that exhibits a common resultant structure. However, the process that forms the political belief system takes place within the psychological context of an individual and the elements of this context are related to a certain individual and produce distinctive structures of political beliefs in a political context since this process cannot happen in political vacuum.

According to the model of political cognition, political attitudes are seen as responses toward political objects while instrumental beliefs are perceptions about the efficacy of political

An Integrated Framework for Studying Political Belief System, Tolerance and Participation in Pakistan

objects (issue, politician) in terms of achieving personal values which essentially is the preferred state of being. Rokeach (1968), while explaining these elements and their inter-relationship, stated that attitude is the organization or the arrangement of several beliefs on a particular situation or an object influencing an individual to respond in some preferred way. Some of these beliefs are based on facts while others are based on evaluation. So, an attitude is a collection of beliefs that explain the criteria of determining trueness and falseness, desirability or undesirability, of certain things about a specific object or situation. Values, or end-states of existence, are essentially modes of conduct. Having some values specific to an individual means that a person has a belief about personal or social preferability of a given mode of conduct or end-state of existence as compared to some other end states and modes of conduct. Once internalized, this value becomes a benchmark and criteria for guiding action; for justifying, judging and comparing self with others; and developing as well as maintaining attitudes toward relevant objects and situations.

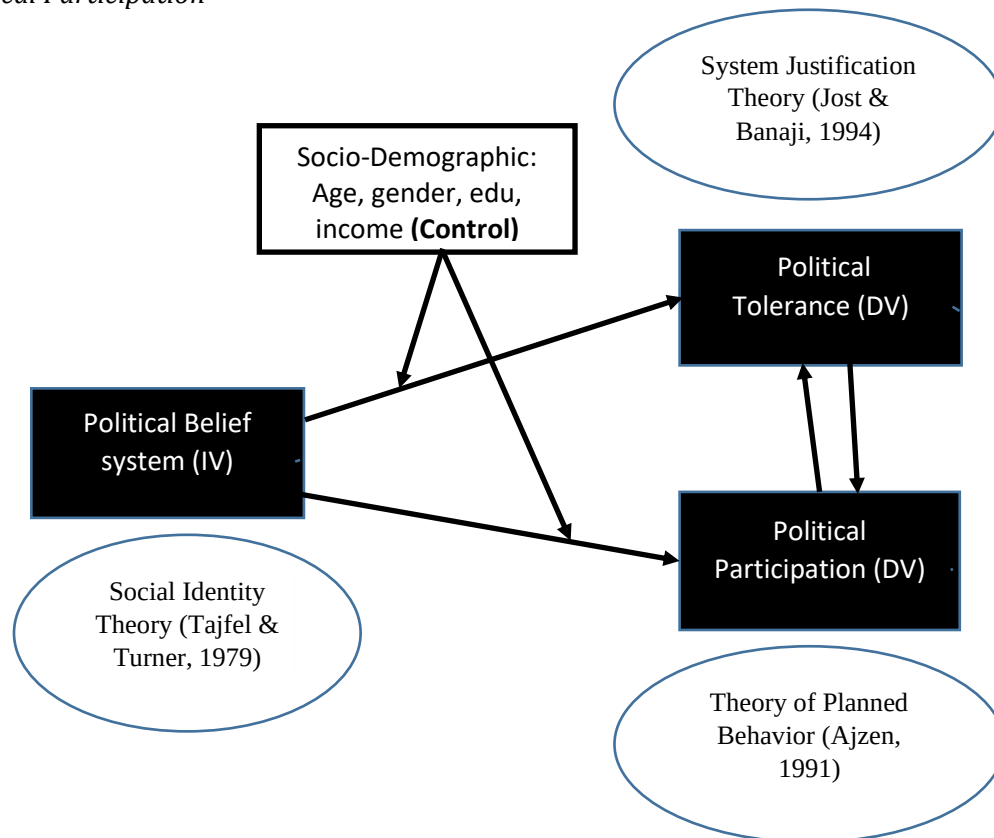
One possible way to understand tolerance and devise a mechanism to measure it is by understanding the belief system of the individuals in any society where tolerance, or lack of it, is intended to be measured. The belief system of individuals is an outcome or manifestation of religious, cultural, social, and political understandings and beliefs that one develops through these sources and processes. This belief system of the masses, which differs from one individual to another in certain ways but resonates at the aggregate societal level, is a constant adaptation and adjustment process that brings about behavioural change among individuals. It is this belief system that explains the behavioural outcome of whether people are more democratic in their approach or they adopt an authoritarian approach; whether they hold absolutist views or accommodate different views; whether they profess and exercise universalism or prefer selectivism/ particularism. This behavioural change subsequently impacts political tolerance and participation – both of which are also impacted by each other. Understanding belief systems with the view to see their linkages with political participation remains, largely, an unexplored area. This paper provides that foundation and framework to develop a new and more relevant understanding of the issues surrounding political tolerance and political participation seeing it from the political belief systems lenses.

A New Integrated Framework

The framework for studying these three constructs integrates (see figure-1) Social Identity Theory (SIT), the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), and System Justification Theory (SJT) to examine the relationships between political belief systems, political tolerance, and political participation. Social Identity Theory (Henri Tajfel, 1978; Henri Tajfel, 1979) provides a lens to understand how individuals identify with specific groups, such as political or ideological affiliations, and how these identifications influence perceptions of in-group and out-group members. Studies like those (Huddy & Bankert, 2017) emphasize that partisanship functions as a meaningful social identity, shaping political behaviour and attitudes. Similarly, Peffley, Yair, and Hutchison (2024) demonstrate the role of social identity in explaining political intolerance through left-right group attachments in Israel. These insights support the role of SIT in explaining how group dynamics and identity-based motivations influence political belief systems and tolerance.

An Integrated Framework for Studying Political Belief System, Tolerance and Participation in Pakistan

Figure-1: Conceptual Framework for Studying Political Belief Systems, Political Tolerance and Political Participation



The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) complements SIT by focusing on individual-level decision-making processes. TPB posits that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control predict intentions and behaviours, including political participation and tolerance. Studies like Hansen and Jensen (2007) apply TPB to examine voting behaviour, highlighting how perceptions of control and social norms drive political engagement. Similarly, Conner and Armitage (1998) use TPB to understand political participation in diverse contexts, showcasing its relevance in explaining individual motivations. By integrating TPB, the framework captures the cognitive and normative aspects of decision-making that influence participation and tolerance.

System Justification Theory (Jost & Banaji, 1994) provides a structural perspective, explaining why individuals justify existing systems, even when those systems perpetuate inequalities. SJT is particularly relevant in understanding political tolerance, as it examines how people rationalize and support the status quo. Jost, Banaji, and Nosek (2004) explore the psychological mechanisms of system justification in political contexts, highlighting its role in maintaining hierarchical social structures. Furthermore, Jost (2020) emphasizes how system justification influences intergroup relations and political psychology, making it an essential component for analysing tolerance and participation in the context of systemic inequalities.

An Integrated Framework for Studying Political Belief System, Tolerance and Participation in Pakistan

Together, these theories create a robust framework for exploring the interplay between political belief systems, political tolerance, and political participation in Pakistan. SIT addresses identity-based dynamics and group behaviour, TPB captures the cognitive and normative determinants of participation and tolerance, and SJT provides a structural understanding of how systemic factors influence these constructs. This integration provides an opportunity for conducting comprehensive analysis of how belief systems shape political behaviour and attitudes, contributing to the theoretical and empirical understanding of political dynamics in Pakistan.

Tool and Procedures

Quintessentially interested in developing more understanding of political tolerance and political participation, for their role and importance in democracy and governance, I intend to bring political belief systems into the equation to see their relationship with political tolerance and participation. For this purpose, the study combines the three latest frameworks, with some modifications when required, measuring political belief systems, political participation and political tolerance while adding some additional factors like religiosity, etc.

Identifying Political Belief System

According to Philip Converse (1964), a *belief system* is a “configuration of ideas and attitudes in which the elements are bound together by some form of constraint or functional interdependence”. Similarly, Dawson (1979), understood a political belief system as a “configuration of personal values, instrumental beliefs, and political attitudes in which these elements are bound together by particular forms of static and dynamic constraint.” Defining these functional constraints either as static or dynamic, Converse postulated that “centrality” of the idea-element in whole structure of a belief system determines whether an idea-element will have causality of triggering a change in another idea element somewhere else in the same political configuration. Centre-periphery nature of idea elements remained the focus of attention of numerous studies with some theories placing *political identity* accorded centrality (e.g. Brandt, Sibley et al., 2019) while others contended for *moral politics* as central to belief systems (Lakoff, 2010). Central idea-element in a belief system is, thus, supposed to fundamentally have a key feature of causality. This identification of the most central idea element could be quite helpful in predicting the attitudinal and behavioural responses of the individuals. Though researchers have lately shifted their focus more to political identity being central to belief systems (for example, Brandt, Sibley et al., 2019), the relevance of moral politics taking the central stage cannot be ignored. This political identity and moral politics debate might be relevant in the US, but the situation might be different elsewhere. Scholars favouring moral politics central to belief systems operationalize the construct using the parenting style of nurturing and strict parents believing that this cultural schema describes the deep structures underlying the liberal versus conservative worldview (Lakoff, 2010). The question arises whether moral politics could merely be restricted to parenting style only. There is a need to conceptualize moral politics in broader and clearer terms.

Mark J Brandt and Slegers (2021) identified three components of the political belief system which were connection (constraint) between elements, their causality and exogenous influences on the belief system that come from the social context of the individual. Some of

An Integrated Framework for Studying Political Belief System, Tolerance and Participation in Pakistan

these exogenous influences are identified as genetic tendencies to adopt specific attitudes; threat perception; an individual's position within the social hierarchy; and enduring influences from cultural or political contexts (Mark J Brandt & Slegers, 2021; Goldberg & Stein, 2018). Moreover, Manza and Brooks (1999) held that racial identity, besides other social attributes like class and religion, plays an important role. Notably, Baldassarri and Goldberg 2013 found that systematic differences exist between individuals so far as their structuring of political preferences are concerned. Moreover, class and religiosity were found to be causing divergence in the political belief systems. Hence religiosity will be used in our model since I believe that religious identity also exists. Boutyline and Vaisey (2017) found some "tentative evidence" of a different belief system—one centred on religious identity instead of political identity – providing us a justification for developing this framework.

The acknowledgement of this "tentative evidence" that a religious identity exists provides us with an opening. Pakistan is considered to be an Islamic ideological state with roots deep in history besides Islam still remaining an important factor in Pakistan's politics (Haqqani, 2004). Hence it is hypothesized that ideology plays a major role, if not the primary role, in shaping of political belief system of the people at large in this country. Here ideology will be treated as a "*set of beliefs about the proper order of society and how it can be achieved*" (Erikson & Tedin, 2019). In other words, ideology answers "what" and "how" questions about the intended order of society. In another context that is more relevant to our discussions, Jost, Glaser, Sulloway, and Kruglanski (2018) defined ideology as a "*learned knowledge structure consisting of an interrelated network of beliefs, opinions and values*". This could mean that the debate on whether political identity or moral politics is central to the belief system needs to be expanded. We believe that constructs like political (or any form of) identity and moral politics are not mutually exclusive because if religious identity also exists, which we believe it does, moral politics may become more relevant as research has established a link between religion and morality (McKay & Whitehouse, 2015). In a recent study, Boutyline and Vaisey (2017) using belief network analysis technique identified ideological identity as taking the central stage in the belief system. While the BNA technique could provide a more systematic way of identifying the centrality of belief structure, the results might be different if applied in a different political context and environment. As discussed earlier, religion plays an important role in Pakistan and its effect on politics cannot be discounted. Hence, seeing more closely what exactly structures political beliefs in a religious society like Pakistan where democracy is in its infancy stage would be the subject of greater interest. Hence religiosity will be added in our framework. With permission from the author, religiosity will be measured using the scale tested and validated by Vassilis Saroglou et al. (2020) and theorized by Vassilis Saroglou (2011). The scale uses four dimensions of *Believing, Bonding, Behaving*, and *Belonging* to measure religiosity across diverse cultural and religious denominations. These four dimensions correspond to four components and functions of religion: Beliefs/meaning, emotions/rituals, morality/norms, and community/identity, respectively. Adopting the scale, participants will be asked to rate from 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree) their responses to 12 given questions.

Importantly, Dawson (1979) believed that "*The psychological process by which a political belief system is formed occurs in the presence of various elements that are part of one's psychological context; for example, needs, motivations, and values.*" One can understand that

An Integrated Framework for Studying Political Belief System, Tolerance and Participation in Pakistan

needs, motivations and values vary from society to society. Similarly, in pluralistic societies and systems, there are several political environments spanning historical, geographic, social and legal. Individuals experience these different political environments in different degrees and ways. It is believed that belief systems emerge from the interactions between the attitudes and identities in the belief system (Mark J Brandt & Slegers, 2021). Most of the studies on belief systems focused US political system where ideological identities like liberal and conservative or partisan identities like Republican or Democrat are well established leaving space for studying political belief systems where there are multiparty systems and people have the choice to associate with more than one political identity. To bridge this gap, Ertan, Çarkoğlu, and Aytaç (2022) studied the political belief system in Turkey where there is a multiparty system and introduced cognitive political networks (CPN) as a framework for studying political belief system in a diverse political environment. This framework could have suited the Pakistani context as the country is more identical to that of Turkey in terms of the large number of political parties operating in the country. However, the tool is yet to be validated (Mark J Brandt, 2022) and hence has been avoided.

More recently, Mark J Brandt (2022) introduced a new framework for measuring the belief system of an individual using Conceptually Similarity Judgments that explain the interconnectedness between political attitudes as well as political identities. This framework is assessed to be the most suitable framework for studying the belief system in Pakistan. Although the framework has been used essentially for the US where the political structure is based on two political parties and thus two political identifications exist the framework is equally recommended to be used for a political system with multiple identities and a multiparty system like Pakistan. The flexibility of the framework to add as many political attitudes as well as political identities makes it more flexible to be used in a different political environment as much as that of the US. Brandt, while applying experimental design, used various political attitudes for different sets of studies based on their ideological orientation and partisan tilt. Besides, demographic information such as gender, religious affiliation, ethnicity, education, income and age is to be collected. Brandt used measures for political engagement, political knowledge, and ideological and partisan identification. Brandt model and tool will be adapted in this study while using political attitudes as well as ideological and partisan identifications that exist specifically in the Pakistani context.

One important aspect of the political life of a diverse country is the level of polarization, which essentially is the level of disagreement within a society on politically relevant issues (DiMaggio, Evans, & Bryson, 1996) – a phenomenon which is not uncommon in Pakistan. This provides us with the basis for picking all the relevant salient issues in our national politics where polarization or difference of opinion exists either with ideological or partisan differences. Baldassarri and Goldberg 2013 used moral issues, economic issues, civil rights and foreign policy issues as idea elements. Brandt (2022) used various issues more relevant to American politics including economic, cultural, health, foreign policy, legal issues, etc. This brings us to ponder which particular issues should be included as idea elements to study the belief system in Pakistan and how those idea elements are identified.

Various studies used various issues which are relevant to the context where those studies were conducted. For example, cultural issues (Goldberg & Stein, 2018), economic issues, moral issues, civil rights, foreign policy issues (Baldassarri & Goldberg, 2014), environmental,

An Integrated Framework for Studying Political Belief System, Tolerance and Participation in Pakistan

health, and defense (Mark J Brandt, 2022) were added by researchers in their studies. For this study, idea elements specific to Pakistani context were identified through a pre-pilot study, using judgmental-cum-convenience sampling method (N=50), by asking subject matter experts, politicians, academia, intelligentsia and professionals about their understanding/perception of current polarized issues in Pakistani politics. The participants were given a list of current issues to rate them from 1 = extremely polarized to 7=consensus while allowing the participants to add additional items in the list if required. Issues identified in this pre-pilot study could be classified into different categories including terrorism, economy, governance, political system, socio-cultural issues, foreign policy, women and minorities rights, religion in politics, etc. Issues were selected based on having more or less ideological direction and partisan tilt.

First, the participants were asked whether they support or oppose these political positions on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly oppose) to 7 (strongly support). The items/issues selected are (1) Addressing the issue of terrorism through force/ military operations (2) the Military's role in politics (3) Use of force for enforcement of Sharia (4) Permission for Valentine's Day celebrations (5) Improving relations with India (6) Women right to hold Aurat March (7) Non-Muslims be given equal right to be appointed in key government positions (8) Religious scholars should be appointed in key government positions (9) Amending blasphemy laws to punish wrong accuser. Once the partisan position of these issues is determined, these issues would form the idea pair in such a way that each element is checked against the other element to make attitude_x-attitude_y as well as attitude_y-attitude_x configuration. The respondents are to be asked, "Imagine that you support one attitude, how likely is it that you will support the other?" for each political position pair (1 = not at all likely, 7 = very likely). The following issues were short-listed for the pilot study: (1) the Use of force for countering terrorism (2) an Interest-free economy (3) the Government regulating prices (4) the Military's role in politics (5) Government's control over media (6) Use of force to enforce Sharia (7) Permission for Valentine's Day celebrations (8) Mandatory polio vaccination for children (9) Improving relations with India (10) Women right to hold Aurat March (11) Appointment of Non-Muslims in key positions (12) Religious scholars be appointed in key positions (13) Amending blasphemy laws to punish wrong accuser, and (14) Restrictions be placed on freedom of speech.

Partisan and ideological identification is also an important angle that also needed to determine the centrality of the belief system. Taking a clue from Brandt, partisan identification is to be measured by adding more political parties into a modified scale. Nine parties were selected for this study as these parties and alliances secured sizable votes in the 2018 general elections and apart from one exception won seats in the National Assembly. These included Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI, 16.90 million votes, 116 seats), Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N, 12.93 million votes, 64 seats), Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPP-P, 6.92 million votes, 43 seats), Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA, 2.57 million votes, 12 seats), Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP, 2.23 million votes, no seat), Awami National Party (ANP, 0.81 million votes, one seat), Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P, 0.73 million votes, six seats), Balochistan Awami Party (BAP, 0.31 million votes, four seats), Balochistan National Party (0.23 million votes, three seats).¹ With the view to reduce the number of permutations to avoid participants' fatigue, the number of parties was

An Integrated Framework for Studying Political Belief System, Tolerance and Participation in Pakistan

reduced. Hence sub-nationalist political parties MQM, ANP, BAP and BNP have been clubbed together to form a proxy of “sub-nationalist parties”. Picking leading political parties including PTI, PML-N, PPP, MMA, TLP and sub-nationalist parties would make sense as these six parties/denominations represent 79.16 per cent of the voters of 2018 general elections (securing 43.6 million votes out of 55.08 million votes cast). The respondents will be asked “Which of these political parties who were represented in Parliament in the 2018 elections or secured sizable votes are closer to representing your political thoughts/preferences?” Respondents will pick one party from the list and that will determine their partisan identification, which might of value to us for analysis. Similarly, all these six partisan identifications will be loaded with other elements (partisan issues) of idea pairs to identify the centrality of the belief system. Ideological identification will be measured using Brandt (2022) scale with the item, “When it comes to politics, do you think of yourself as a liberal, conservative, moderate, or haven’t you thought much about this?” (1 = strongly liberal, 7 = strongly conservative).

Subsequently, measure political engagement with two items (based on Brandt 2022), by asking, “How interested are you in politics?” (1 = very uninterested, 7 = very interested) and “How important are politics to you?” (1 = very important, 7 = very important). Also following Brandt’s footsteps, I will measure the political knowledge of respondents by asking 10 multiple-choice questions related to current events and facts including (1) Who is the current speaker of the National Assembly? (2) Which one is the largest political party in the Senate? (3) Who has more powers in the parliamentary form of government? (4) How members are elected on general seats for the Senate? (5) Who could be nominated as federal minister or minister of state? (6) What procedure is followed for legislation in Pakistan? (7) Under the Constitution, who is the Chief Executive of the country? (8) Support of how many members of the National Assembly are required to form the government? (9) What is the minimum age to become a voter in Pakistan? (10) What is the minimum age limit to become Prime Minister of Pakistan?

Measuring Political Participation

The taxonomy of factors or modes of political participation is long and keeps evolving especially in this new age of social media. Kim and Hoewe (2020) identified five factors of political participation that contain both traditional and modern forms of political engagement. The researchers validated the tool using conformity factors analysis and exploratory factor analysis. The same tool has been adopted. Kim and Hoewe (2020) tool contains wording, “During the past six months, how much have you engaged in the following activities?” and the responses were recorded on a seven scale Likert scale ranging from 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Occasionally, 4 = Sometimes, 5 = Frequently, 6 = Usually, 7 = Very often. Under the category of traditional political participation termed as factor-1, the tool included (1) Run for public office (2) Writing a letter to the editor of a newspaper or magazine (3) Working on any political campaign (4) Organized an internet-based boycott (5) Subscribed to a political listserv (6) Signed up to volunteer for a campaign/issue (7) Called other people to raise funds for a political organization or purpose (8) Participated in a nonviolent mass demonstration (9) Donated money to a political/social organization (10) Given money to a political party. Except for element five “Subscribed to a political listserv”, which is not

An Integrated Framework for Studying Political Belief System, Tolerance and Participation in Pakistan

relevant to the Pakistani context, all the remaining items were adopted. Under interpersonal political talk dubbed as factor-2, Kim and Hoewe placed four items: (1) Discussed politics with your family (2) Talked about public problems (3) Discussed politics with your friends (4) Discussed politics with other people. All four items were adopted for their relevance. Under voting in factor-3, items mentioned were (1) Voted in general elections and (2) Voted in local elections and the same were adopted. Under social media engagement slated as factor-4, items included (1) Shared your opinion on a social/political topic on social media (2) Expressed political opinions in online public spaces (3) Shared political information posted on social media (4) Posted political messages online (5) Participated in online political discussion (6) Clicked on “like” for political information posted on social media. All the elements were adopted for their relevance. Among the factor-5 concerning “Online information seeking” the researchers used (1) Visited websites of the government and public administration (2) Visited websites of any political parties or organizations (3) Visited the websites of the municipality (4) Visited a campaign website. All items of factor 5 were adopted.

Gauging Political Tolerance

Since Samuel Stouffer (1955) landmark study on measuring political intolerance using a fixed group approach which is still being used, with slight modification, in the General Social Survey, scholarship in the field made notable advances. Sullivan et al. (1979) came up with an intellectual and methodological content-controlled innovation of the “least-liked group” approach where respondents are required to select a group least-liked group and then respond to survey questions about that group accordingly against Stouffer’s fixed group approach. These two approaches continue to be used, to date, for the study of various aspects of political intolerance and may continue to do so in the foreseeable future until some fresh insights are introduced. A very valid criticism of existing approaches to studying intolerance has come from Hjerm et al. (2020) who contended that these approaches and tools while measuring political intolerance also unintentionally capture prejudice. The researchers developed a tool for measuring intolerance as a general concept and no new tool based on this approach has been developed and tested yet to study political intolerance. Therefore, I will use the least-like group approach for this study. Gibson, Claassen, and Barceló (2020) following Sullivan’s footsteps developed a new tool that has redefined the scope of political tolerance by limiting it to three key political rights or indicators (1) allowed to give speeches (2) running candidates for public office, and (3) hold public demonstrations. The same three indicators will be adopted for this study. Importantly, Gibson and his colleagues also brought more focus to the groups by focusing on information and perception about them as well as their attributes and emotional engagement of participants with those group(s). Similarly, threat perception about the group has also been added with its three sub-dimensions including socio-tropic threat, egocentric threat, and perceptions of group power. Socio-tropic threat will be measured by asking participants about their perception of the group posing danger/no danger to (1) society (2) normal lives of people. Egocentric threat posing danger/no danger to (1) personal freedoms (2) security. Finally, group power will be measured with three questions asking perception about whether the group is (1) powerful or not (2) likely/unlikely to gain very much power (3) likely/unlikely to affect how well my

An Integrated Framework for Studying Political Belief System, Tolerance and Participation in Pakistan

family and I live. Gibson also used the perceived commitment of the group to democracy in the framework and asked about the degree to which the selected least-liked group were willing/ unwilling to follow the rules of democracy. Gibson also used information about emotional engagement with the so-called threatening group as an important element generating political intolerance. He asked respondents to rate their most disliked group or their third most disliked group in terms of three emotional terms: Anger, hatred, and fear and found them moderately correlated and hence the same being adopted for our framework. Following Gibson, knowing a member of a threatening group has also been included in the model by asking respondents whether they know someone from that disliked group.

Since the groups used by Gibson in his framework were relevant to the American political system, we developed our list of groups consistent with our political environment. These groups, with violent to non-violent as well as liberal to religious classifications, included Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP, violent religious group); Baloch Liberation Army (BLA, violent liberal sub-nationalist group), Daesh/ Islamic State (IS, violent religious group), Lasker-e-Taiba (LeT, violent religious group), Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM, violent religious group), Sindhudesh Revolutionary Army (SRA, violent liberal sub-nationalist group), Liberals (general term associated with political liberals and progressive), Tehreek-e-Laihak Pakistan (TLP, politico-religious group), Mutahida Qaumi Movement (MQM, politico-liberal group), Pathun Tahafaz Movement (PTM, non-violent rights group), Qadians (Ahmediya community, non-violent religious minority group). Developing a better understanding of some contextual and individual elements, some additional aspects would add more understanding and hence constructs like importance attached to religion; dependence on religion for moral judgements and guidance; perception of compatibility between Islam and democracy; sources of religious information; and preference for the type of rule also needed. The tool has been adapted from the theorization of concept by Rahim (2013). Finally, the demographic information of the respondents is to be assessed including age, income, education, ethnicity, religious affiliation, and gender to see how they impact the relevant constructs.

Conclusion

This paper presents a novel framework and tool for quantitatively analyzing political belief systems, tolerance, and participation within Pakistan's socio-political context. By integrating theoretical perspectives from SIT, TPB, and SJT, the framework offers a robust foundation for investigating how belief systems influence democratic engagement. The framework can be used for a quantitative study to not only decipher political belief systems but also identify their impact on political tolerance and participation besides capturing relevant factors including religiosity, sources of religious knowledge, political knowledge, political information, etc besides capturing socio-demographic factors like age, income, ethnicity, education, etc. However, the framework primarily focuses on quantitative assessment, which limits its ability to uncover the nuanced, formative processes underlying political belief systems.

Future research should employ this tool in quantitative studies to empirically test the proposed relationships and generate data-driven insights. To address the framework's limitations, qualitative research—such as in-depth interviews, focus groups, and ethnographic methods—should be conducted to explore how belief systems are shaped by

An Integrated Framework for Studying Political Belief System, Tolerance and Participation in Pakistan

socio-cultural, psychological, and contextual factors. Combining quantitative and qualitative approaches through a mixed-methods design will allow researchers to simultaneously capture the breadth and depth of the phenomena, yielding a holistic understanding of political attitudes and behaviours. Moreover, future studies could compare the framework's applicability across regions and demographic groups, and adapt it to study belief systems in other political environments. Such efforts will enhance the framework's versatility and contribute to the global discourse on fostering political tolerance and participatory democracy.

References

1. Adorno, T. W., Frenkel-Brunswick, E., Levinson, D. J., & Sanford, R. N. (1950). *The Authoritarian Personality*: Norton.
2. Ajzen, I. (1991). The Theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior Human Decision Processes*, 50, 179-211.
3. Arceneaux, K. (2019). The roots of intolerance and opposition to compromise: The effects of absolutism on political attitudes. *Personality Individual Differences*, 151, 109498.
4. Baldassarri, D., & Goldberg, A. (2014). Neither ideologues nor agnostics: Alternative voters' belief system in an age of partisan politics. *American Journal of Sociology*, 120(1), 45-95.
5. Bazurli, R., & Portos, M. (2021). Crook!: The impact of perceived corruption on non-electoral forms of political behaviour. *International Political Science Review*, 42(2), 245-260.
6. Blais, A. (Ed.) (2010). *Political Participation* (Vol. 3): Sage.
7. Boutyline, A., & Vaisey, S. (2017). Belief network analysis: A relational approach to understanding the structure of attitudes. *American Journal of Sociology*, 122(5), 1371-1447.
8. Brandt, M. J. (2022). Measuring the belief system of a person. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.
9. Brandt, M. J., & Sleegers, W. W. (2021). Evaluating belief system networks as a theory of political belief system dynamics. *Personality social psychology review*, 25(2), 159-185.
10. Coenders, M., & Scheepers, P. (2003). The effect of education on nationalism and ethnic exclusionism: An international comparison. *Political psychology*, 24(2), 313-343.
11. Conner, M., & Armitage, C. J. (1998). Extending the theory of planned behavior: A review and avenues for further research. *Journal of applied social psychology*, 28(15), 1429-1464.
12. Converse, P. E. (Ed.) (1964). *The nature of belief systems in mass publics*. New York, NY: The Free Press.
13. Dalton, R., Van Sickle, A., & Weldon, S. (2010). The individual-institutional nexus of protest behaviour. *British journal of political science*, 40(1), 51-73.
14. Dawson, P. A. (1979). The formation and structure of political belief systems. *Political Behavior*, 1(2), 99-122.
15. DiMaggio, P., Evans, J., & Bryson, B. (1996). Have American's social attitudes become more polarized? *American Journal of Sociology*, 102(3), 690-755.
16. Eisenstein, M. A. (2006). Rethinking the Relationship between Religion and Political Tolerance in the US. *Political Behavior*, 28(4), 327-348.
17. Erikson, R. S., & Tedin, K. L. (2019). *American Public Opinion: Its Origins, Content, and Impact*: Routledge.
18. Ertan, G., Çarkoğlu, A., & Aytaç, S. E. (2022). Cognitive political networks: A structural approach to measure political polarization in multiparty systems. *Social Networks*, 68, 118-126.
19. Fazekas, Z., & Hatemi, P. K. (2021). Narcissism in political participation. *Personality Social Psychology Bulletin*, 47(3), 347-361.
20. Finkel, S. E., & Opp, K.-D. (1991). Party identification and participation in collective political action.

An Integrated Framework for Studying Political Belief System, Tolerance and Participation in Pakistan

The journal of politics, 53(2), 339-371.

21. Gerring, J. (1997). Ideology: A definitional analysis. *Political Research Quarterly*, 50(4), 957-994.
22. Gherghina, S., & Geissel, B. (2017). Linking democratic preferences and political participation: Evidence from Germany. *Political Studies*, 65(1S), 24-42.
23. Gibson, J. L., Claassen, C., & Barceló, J. (2020). Putting groups back into the study of political intolerance. In *At the Forefront of Political Psychology* (pp. 55-78): Routledge.
24. Goldberg, A., & Stein, S. K. (2018). Beyond social contagion: Associative diffusion and the emergence of cultural variation. *American Sociological Review*, 83(5), 897-932.
25. Hansen, T., & Jensen, J. M. (2007). Understanding voters' decisions: A Theory of Planned Behaviour approach. *Innovative Marketing*, 3(4).
26. Haqqani, H. (2004). The role of Islam in Pakistan's future. *The Washington Quarterly*, 28(1), 83-96.
27. Hazama, Y. (2010). Determinants of political tolerance: A literature review. *Studies*, 42(3), 437-463.
28. Hinckley, R. A. (2010). Personality and political tolerance: The limits of democratic learning in postcommunist Europe. *Comparative Political Studies*, 43(2), 188-207.
29. Hjerm, M., Eger, M. A., Bohman, A., & Fors Connolly, F. (2020). A new approach to the study of tolerance: Conceptualizing and measuring acceptance, respect, and appreciation of difference. *Social Indicators Research*, 147(3), 897-919.
30. Huddy, L., & Bankert, A. (2017). Political partisanship as a social identity. In *Oxford research encyclopedia of politics*.
31. Jost, J. T. (2020). *A theory of system justification*: Harvard University Press.
32. Jost, J. T., & Banaji, M. R. (1994). The role of stereotyping in system-justification and the production of false consciousness. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 33(1), 1-27.
33. Jost, J. T., Banaji, M. R., & Nosek, B. A. (2004). A decade of system justification theory: Accumulated evidence of conscious and unconscious bolstering of the status quo. *Political psychology*, 25(6), 881-919.
34. Jost, J. T., Glaser, J., Sulloway, F. J., & Kruglanski, A. W. (2018). *Political conservatism as motivated social cognition*: Routledge.
35. Lakoff, G. (2010). *Moral politics: How liberals and conservatives think*: University of Chicago Press.
36. Lavine, H., Lodge, M., & Freitas, K. (2005). Threat, authoritarianism, and selective exposure to information. *Political psychology*, 26(2), 219-244.
37. Mangi, S. N., Shah, N., & Ali Soomro, B. (2019). A scientific approach to measure public political participation in Pakistan. *Asian Journal of Political Science*, 27(1), 88-107.
38. Manza, J., & Brooks, C. (1999). Group Size, Turnout, and Political Alignments and the Development of US Party Coalitions, 1960–1992. *European sociological review*, 15(4), 369-389.
39. Marquart-Pyatt, S., & Paxton, P. (2007). In principle and in practice: Learning political tolerance in Eastern and Western Europe. *Political Behavior*, 29(1), 89-113.
40. McKay, R., & Whitehouse, H. (2015). Religion and morality. *Psychological Bulletin*, 141, 447-473. doi:10.1037/a0038455
41. Nie, N. H., & Verba, S. (1972). *Participation in America: Political democracy and social equality*. New York: Harper & Row.
42. Omelicheva, M. Y., & Ahmed, R. (2018). Religion and politics: examining the impact of faith on political participation. *Religion, State & Society*, 46(1), 4-25.
43. Peffley, M., & Rohrschneider, R. (2003). Democratization and political tolerance in seventeen countries: A multi-level model of democratic learning. *Political Research Quarterly*, 56(3), 243-257.
44. Peffley, M., Yair, O., & Hutchison, M. L. (2024). Left-Right Social Identity and the Polarization of Political Tolerance. *Political Research Quarterly*, 77(1), 30-44.
45. Persell, C. H., Green, A., & Gurevich, L. (2001). *Civil society, economic distress, and social tolerance*. Paper presented at the Sociological forum.

An Integrated Framework for Studying Political Belief System, Tolerance and Participation in Pakistan

46. Rafique, Z., Habib, S., & Rosilawati, Y. (2021). Legal, Political and Administrative Barriers to Citizen Participation in Local Governance: An Inquiry of Local Government Institutions. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 1-13. doi:10.1080/01900692.2021.1993908
47. Rahim, L. Z. (2013). *Muslim secular democracy: Voices from within*: Springer.
48. Rokeach, M. (1968). A theory of organization and change within value-attitude systems. *Journal of social issues*.
49. Saroglou, V. (2011). Believing, bonding, behaving, and belonging: The big four religious dimensions and cultural variation. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 42(8), 1320-1340.
50. Saroglou, V., Clobert, M., Cohen, A. B., Johnson, K. A., Ladd, K. L., Van Pachterbeke, M., . . . Çukur, C. S. (2020). Believing, bonding, behaving, and belonging: The cognitive, emotional, moral, and social dimensions of religiousness across cultures. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 51(7-8), 551-575.
51. Stenner, K. (2005). *The Authoritarian Dynamic*: Cambridge University Press.
52. Stouffer, S. A. (1955). *Communism, conformity, and civil liberties: A cross-section of the nation speaks its mind*: Transaction Publishers.
53. Sullivan, J. L., Piereson, J., & Marcus, G. E. (1979). An alternative conceptualization of political tolerance: Illusory increases 1950s–1970s. *American Political Science Review*, 73(3), 781-794.
54. Tajfel, H. (1978). The achievement of inter-group differentiation. Differentiation between social groups. In: London: Academic Press.
55. Tajfel, H. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In *The social psychology of intergroup relations*: Brooks/Cole.
56. Wagner, U., Christ, O., Pettigrew, T. F., Stellmacher, J., & Wolf, C. (2006). Prejudice and minority proportion: Contact instead of threat effects. *Social psychology quarterly*, 69(4), 380-390.
57. Weber, L. (2019). Rugged individuals and social butterflies: the consequences of social and individual political participation for political tolerance. *The Social Science Journal*, 40(2), 335-342. doi:10.1016/s0362-3319(03)00014-4
58. Weldon, S. A. (2006). The institutional context of tolerance for ethnic minorities: A comparative, multilevel analysis of Western Europe. *American Journal of Political Science*, 50(2), 331-349.

¹ Number of votes rounded to two decimal points; calculated from Election Commission of Pakistan's official figures (1) Vote share of parties in 2018 General elections: <https://www.ecp.gov.pk/frmVotebank.aspx> and (2) party position: <https://www.ecp.gov.pk/frmPartyDetails.aspx?EleId=1&EID=10070&constType=NA&Election=General%20Election%2025%20Jul%202018>